Whispers From the Grave: Stories of the Evans Family and Other Early Settlers on Swauk Prairie

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Whispers From the Grave

Stories of the Evans Family and Other Early Settlers on Swauk Prairie

Mary Malinda Evans and Her Unborn Child Were the First to be Buried in Swauk Cemetery

Book Includes a Name Index of over 1500 Early People in the Swauk Area of Washington State

Wesley C. Engstrom
Mary Lou Dills

2014
**Wesley C Engstrom.** I first became involved with the historic gold mining camp of Liberty in 1971 when I purchased Mamie Caldwell’s old house in Liberty intending to use it as a weekend home-base while prospecting for gold. I did not have much interest in Liberty history at the time. That changed in 1986 when I married Ralph and Henrietta Fackler’s daughter, Carole. Carole was born in Liberty and her mother was the town historian. In 1993 I retired from Boeing after 33 years and Carole and I moved into Mamie’s old house while building a brand new “old” house on the hill where the Liberty school once stood. After completing the house Liberty history became my passion. I started with the material my mother-in-law, Henrietta Fackler, had researched and have been collecting stories and pictures of Liberty ever since.

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**Mary Lou Dills.** My interest in family history began at an early age, attending family gatherings such as picnics, dinners and birthday parties. All family information was given to me in the form of many notes, hand written letters and photos. Since that time I have completed three family history’s; The Dills Family, The Doornink Family and Evans-Fletcher Descendants. This book begins with the story of my great grandparents Simeon & Mary Malinda Evans traveling the Oregon Trail with their immediate family and other relatives. They settled in Liberty, Swauk Prairie and the Green Canyon areas of Kittitas County, Washington Territory. I continue to search for more pieces to my family history puzzle.

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**Mary Malinda (McDonald) Evans.** Mary was born April 15, 1850 in Tennessee, the daughter of Alexander and Catherine McDonald. She married Simeon James Evans and they had four children in Ozark County, Missouri. In 1882 they followed the Oregon trail by wagon to Portland, crossed the Columbia River and then went through Ellensburgh and on to Seattle, Washington Territory, before returning to settle on Swauk Prairie in 1883. Mary died in childbirth on June 26, 1884 and she and her unborn child became the first to be buried on Swauk Prairie on a grassy hillside that became the Swauk Cemetery.  

*Photo courtesy of Mary’s great granddaughter, Mary Lou Doornink Dills.*
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White painted rocks and engraved stone markers stood silently, only the breeze whispering through the unmowed grass hinted at the stories of those lying silently beneath. As a stranger strolling between the graves one can only guess at what the hopes and dreams were of those under each old stone. The names on the markers are just names. Names without stories. The whispers are just that—the breeze blowing through the grass. The dead cannot speak from the grave—or can they?

I was in the oldest part of the graveyard. The markers were in rows—sort of. There were short rows, long rows and curved rows. Grave markers were both close together and far apart. Most had names, some neatly engraved, others scratched in wet concrete, many being just a natural rock with chips of white paint hanging loosely from the surface and no name at all whereas some were simply concrete blocks with “unknown” stamped into them.

In 2006 my wife, Carole, had buried her mother, Henrietta Fackler, in a different part of the old cemetery. Her mother is in a casket within a sealed concrete vault because she couldn’t stand the thought of bugs eating her. Half of Carole’s father’s ashes are in a walnut box held in her mother’s hands because her father, Ralph, loved the woods and wanted his ashes scattered over his beloved Table Mountain. Henrietta wanted him beside her. Dividing his ashes half and half seemed like an appropriate solution. The headstone reads “Ralph and Henrietta” even though there is only one body in the grave.
Cemeteries Have Character

The Swauk cemetery, located on Swauk Prairie, Kittitas County in Washington State, is different than most. It is a private cemetery where burial is free if approved by the neighbors. The criteria for approval is having an ancestor buried there or having made a significant contribution to the local community during your lifetime. Henrietta earned her final resting place by devoting years of her life to saving the historical gold mining camp of Liberty from being burned down and made into a National Forest camp ground.

In this old cemetery the families of those buried are responsible for the upkeep of the grave. There are no funds and no organization to maintain the grounds. It is a private non-endowed cemetery, a rarity in this day and age. Trees and shrubs grew unrestrained between and on the graves unless a family member kept them at bay. There are graves kept neat as a pin and others where it was difficult to find a marker in the overgrowth.

The Swauk cemetery was in stark contrast with the cemeteries I remember as a boy growing up in North Dakota. In my small community of 250 people there were just two cemeteries. The Protestant one was one mile south of Portal, and the Catholic one two miles east of town right on the Canadian boundary line. My great aunts, my grandparents and my parents are buried in the Protestant cemetery, its graves in neat even rows, the grass mowed and a few trees along the fence line. In that cemetery you bought the grave site and there was an association that maintained it—hopefully forever.

Also, in that cemetery in North Dakota there is a small, unheated, white-painted concrete block building in the back near the fence. My father, in his shiny wooden casket, was placed in that building until spring when the frozen ground thawed and a grave could be dug and a proper burial made. I remember being concerned whether he would be safe in his casket draped with a grey burlap cover in that cold, grey, dark block house with no one to watch over him. He was. A proper burial was made in the spring. Twenty-four years later we buried Mother beside him holding the love letters in her hands that he had written to her 75 years earlier. The thin red ribbon around the letters also held her high school ring which she had worn until it was so thin that it broke and she put it in the little box on her dresser with her other valued possessions.

The Unexpected Happens

Was it ordained or just a coincidence? Did those whispering from the grave in the Swauk cemetery arrange it or did it just happen? I’m beginning to believe in some unknown, mysterious, unexplainable spirit that does arrange for the impossible, or at least the improbable, to happen at just the right time. Regardless of what one believes about chance, what did happen was one day in the summer of 2011 Mary Lou Dills came through Liberty asking if anyone knew about a saloon that her grandfather, Bert Fletcher, once owned in Liberty.

Although I wasn’t in town that day, as the leading historian of this metropolis of 14 people, Mary Lou’s question eventually got to me. After Henrietta’s death I had picked up where she had left off collecting Liberty history and most people seeking Liberty information eventually find their way to my door. I contacted Mary Lou via the e-mail address she had left in town. After exchanging e-mails it was clear we needed to meet and such a meeting was arranged.

On Wednesday morning, August 3rd, at 8 am we met for breakfast at Perkins restaurant at the West Interchange in Ellensburg. I was to look for a lady with short silver hair carrying a canvas bag with MWR printed on it in blue, she for a silver haired man with thinning hair who looked just like the picture I had e-mailed her. It worked. We met.
In that bag Mary Lou had a four inch thick three ring binder full of family history. Her great great grandfather, Jesse James Evans, had brought half his family from Missouri, pioneered settlement on Swauk Prairie and attracted other family members and friends from Missouri to also settle on Swauk Prairie. Her great grandmother, Mary Malinda Evans, married to Jesse James Evans’ son, Simeon, was the first person buried in the Swauk Cemetery. Her name, Mary Malinda Evans, was one of the names written in concrete in the old part of the Swauk Cemetery. In fact Mary Lou’s four inch binder included most all the names in the southwest corner of the old cemetery.

Even more amazing, there was a picture of the Bert and Lizzie Fletcher’s house in Liberty. It was what I knew as the Humphrey Monahan house. After the Monahans left in 1906 it had been moved from its original site and became part of Mamie Caldwell’s house which I had bought in 1971. Also, there was a picture of Bert’s saloon that once sat right across the street from the present location of Mamie’s house. I had never seen a picture of the saloon before.

Eureka! A pay streak! We both struck pay dirt! Mary Lou wanted to know about the place her grandfather settled 130 years ago and I wanted to know about the people who first settled the Swauk.

Mary Lou had questions about what her ancestors did when they first arrived. Did they have to fight the Indians? Were other people already there? Where did they buy their necessities? Family history suggested they had to travel 200 miles by wagon to The Dalles, Oregon, to buy supplies. How did they acquire their land? Did they buy it or homestead it? Family records mentioned both. Where did they go to school and were there churches? Finally, how did they bury their dead? There were no funeral homes so did they just dig a hole and wrap the body in a sheet and cover it up? Or was there more to it than that?

I, in turn, still wanted to know about the people buried beneath the markers in the Swauk cemetery. How did they get there and were all those in the southwest corner with its whispering grass somehow related? Why was it they could not agree on how to spell their name? Was it “Evans” with an “a” or “Evens” with an “e?” What were the stories being whispered to me on that afternoon five years before?

We made an agreement. I would find what could be learned about the early days on Swauk Prairie. After all I had extensive material on the early gold miners in the Swauk and it should be easy to expand the data to include settlers on Swauk Prairie. Mary Lou would collect all the information she could about the people resting under the stone markers in the southwest corner of Swauk Cemetery. Perhaps we could create a book that would be of interest to others. It shouldn't take but a few months to put it together. What optimists we were.

A year and a half later we had the outline of a book—not the book itself. It still needed to be written. I had gathered the names of people living in the Swauk and Swauk Prairie from Federal and Washington Territorial census, had determined who lived where from old maps and Federal land agency records, located where the schools were and who attended them from county school records, read microfilm of thousands of local newspaper to glimpse the important events in the lives of the early settler and finally, I had sketched the location of grave sites in the southwest corner of the cemetery, the known, unknown and possibly unrecognized grave sites. Mary Lou dug through all her papers and pages of family history searching for each individual known to be buried in the cemetery, hoping to find that nugget—that person who might be under a concrete block labeled “Unknown.”

Life’s Events Intervened

There were interruptions that threatened to scuttle the entire project. I remember thinking that the ambulance needed better springs as they drove me, strapped to a backboard with my head taped securely, the 25 miles from Liberty to Ellensburg. When the helicopter couldn’t fly to Seattle and Snoqualmie Pass was too iffy for an
ambulance ride, I wondered if that slip on the ice, with both feet straight up in the air and the back of my head coming down first, was going to be a life changing event to end many projects. I was lucky. My neck wasn't broken. I recovered. Mary Lou in turn, had her own problems. She had to move from her home to another state, then back to her home, then out again all the while hauling all her files with her. She didn't lose any of them.

On August 13, 2012, the Taylor bridge fire started with a spark from a welding torch and before the fire, driven by 50 mph winds, was stopped it had destroyed 60 homes, burned over 23,000 acres and cost 10 million dollars to fight. It was stopped on the east bank of Swauk Creek and the south slope of Lookout Mountain; the east and south sides of Swauk Prairie. If it had made it to the dry grass of Swauk Prairie many of the landmarks of our story, including the Swauk Cemetery, would have been permanently changed.

Then, on September 8, 2012, about 8 p.m., Carole and I sat on our front porch watching the biggest lightning storm we had ever seen. Dozens of fires were started, including one we saw start just below Lion Rock on Table Mountain, three and half miles from Liberty. The fires on the mountain became the largest, most intense wildfires ever seen in this area. Thirty days later the fire was stopped—a mile short of Liberty. It had burned 42,000 acres and cost 17 million dollars to fight.

When ordered to evacuate we had packed up the car with what we could. There was no room for all the historical material that had been collected, and only the back-up hard drive from my computer made it to the car. If there had been no house and no material left to come back to, there would be no book. There is simply not enough lifetime left to build a new house and restore twenty years of historic research.

The spirits must be with us, because we are still here, and all is in intact and the story of the whispers from the grave still has our attention.

Cemetery Keeps Secrets

What we thought would be the easiest part to write, namely the “whispers from the grave” part, turned out to be the most challenging. Mary Lou Dills had all the family information in her files and all we had to do was arrange it in a logical fashion.

Not true. Not all the relationships were as expected. For instance, we thought surely there was a connection between the Evans family and the Wright family other than being neighbors. There wasn't one we could find in spite of the fact they had names common to both families and they both came from Missouri.

We gave it our best effort, but in the end decided we couldn't know it all and needed to print copies of what we did know so other people can add to the stories. A draft was printed on May 25, 2013 with the hope that additional “whispers” would make themselves heard and errors would be revealed. Many small errors were revealed and corrected but no major changes were made to the genealogical information.

We are Our Past

It is humbling to think about all the individual, small and sometimes seemingly insignificant choices made by our ancestors that resulted in us being here.

Just go back one generation and ask how did your parents meet? How many choices did they have based on where their parents chose to live? Did they marry their first choice or second choice? What month did the decide to get amorous? and finally, which sperm won the race to the egg?

Change just one of those events and you wouldn't be you—somebody else would. Mind boggling

Enjoy history,
Wesley C. Engstrom

Mary Lou Dills
Swauk Prairie is located within Sections 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34 of Township 20 North, Range 17 East in the center of Kittitas County which in turn is in the center of Washington State. The land is a rolling prairie area between two mountains and is the terminal moraine of a glacier of the last ice age. Section 29 is in the center of Swauk Prairie and contains the Swauk Cemetery. From a Google Earth’s viewpoint Swauk Prairie looks a lot like areas in Ozark County, Missouri where the Evans family came from.

Liberty is an old gold mining camp started in 1880 and is located about five miles north of Swauk Prairie. It is now a historic district within the Wenatchee National Forest with about 14 people living there full time. Green Canyon is a small gap between two mountains about five
miles East of Swauk Prairie and is occupied by a small farm. In 1877 water was diverted from First Creek through Green Canyon to provide irrigation in Kittitas Valley. Members of the Evans family spread out from Swauk Prairie and lived in both Liberty and in Green Canyon.

Kittitas County is one of the more rural and least populated counties in Washington State with most of it being mountainous Federal forest land. The population in 2010 was about 40,500. The crest of the Cascade mountain range with its 3,000 foot Snoqualmie Pass forms its western boundary and the crest of the Wenatchee mountain range with its 4,000 foot Blewett Pass forms its northern boundary. The Columbia River forms its eastern border.

Ellensburg is in the center of Kittitas Valley; it is the county seat and the largest city in the county with a population of 18,000. Ellensburg is a half cowboy and half university town. Central Washington University with its 500 staff and 10,000 students is its main industry.

The main products of Kittitas Valley are cattle and high quality timothy hay, most of which is exported to Japan. At one time logging was also a major industry of the county but the endangered species spotted owl shut down almost all logging in the county.

Locals may object when the entire twelve sections shown on the map are lumped together and referred to as “Swauk Prairie” as the eastern three sections, No’s 22, 27, and 34, are locally known as Lauderdale and Horse Canyon and Liberty is up Swauk Creek north of Swauk Prairie. I acknowledge that is true, but for the purpose of this story they are considered as one community as they were in the beginning when first settled.

The following time-line puts the events of this story about settling in the Swauk area in perspective.

The Book in Perspective

This book starts with the Evans family story and then describes the people, towns, land claims, schools and churches as they existed when the early settlers first arrived in the Swauk area. The book goes on with descriptions of the three burial places in the Swauk area and the customs the early settlers may have followed in burying their dead. The final chapter attempts to describe the relationships between the people buried in the southwest corner, the oldest part, of the Swauk Cemetery and the part that provided the title for the book, “Whispers From the Grave.”
The story of how Mary Malinda Evans came to be buried on a hillside in Swauk Prairie started years before with roots in the American Civil War, a war that generated antagonisms and hatreds that caused people to leave their established homes to find new opportunities. For some reason, perhaps because the neighbors harbored antagonism towards Jesse James Evans, Mary’s father, for being on the wrong side in the Civil War or being married to an Indian, Jesse felt he needed to move. Missouri was torn apart by the Civil War. It was deeply divided with half the population supporting the south and half the north. Missouri, where the Evans family lived, had come close to being the 13th Confederate State and was the scene of many savage battles that left the country, especially the Ozarks, a destitute area for years. For whatever reason Jesse decided he needed a change. By 1882, at age 67, he had his preparations made and affairs settled. He gathered up his family and moved West, intending to settle in Puget Sound, Washington Territory. Instead he and his family settled on Swauk Prairie.
Evans’ Family Journey

According to Mary Lou Doornink Dills, her great great grandfather, Jesse James Evans, besides being a tiller of the soil, was a school teacher and also served in Captain Stone’s Calvary Co. A, of the Ozark County, Missouri, Home Guards from July 1861 to October 18, 1861. While he was away from home during the war, soldiers or bushwhackers, came to his house and found that his wife, Bartema, was hiding a man that had been wounded in a battle near the home. They ransacked the house and set it on fire. They had told Bartema she could leave the house, but could not take anything with her. She started with only her Bible but they made her take it back and throw it in the fire. She and the children and Synthia Welch, who was staying with them, all spent the night in the blacksmith shop, with only their night clothes and no shoes. The weather was cold. The bushwhackers also stole their chickens and they tied the wounded man behind their horses and drug him up the road. No one knows what happened to him.

Jesse James Evans was born July 22, 1815 in Murphy, Cherokee County, North Carolina and married Bartema Welch, a half Cherokee Indian, in Putnam, Indiana on August 7, 1837. They went to Hammond, Missouri, and proved up on a homestead in 1850. Jesse and Bartema had ten children, seven of whom lived. Bartema died in 1879.

In April of 1882, Jesse James Evans together with three of his children and their families started traveling to Washington Territory. The families were: Simeon James Evans, his wife Mary Malinda and their children Bartema Elizabeth, age 9, Sarah Elda, 4, and Robert Huston, 2; Simeon’s sister, Nancy Adeline, and her husband Marion Jasper Evans, with their son, William J., age 3, and expecting a child, and Simeon’s brother James Alfred Evans, his wife, Martha Ann, with two children, Bartema Adeline, age 4, and Jessie Mansfield, age 2.

Jessie James Evans, being a blacksmith, made his own wagon of white oak with trees from his farm, which he cut, curved, and fashioned with his own hands. His son, James Alfred M., also had a homemade wagon. It was in such poor condition that some of the family tried to keep him from starting out in it, but he refused to listen.

The Oregon Trail

These together with others made up a train of eight wagons. They started west over the Old Oregon Trail, went through Independence, Missouri, then Nebraska, crossed the Platt River, fording it with their mule teams and wagons. Sometimes they had to put the wagons on logs and float them across the river. At these times, Simeon would tie a rope around his waist and on the mules so he could lead or pull them across. They averaged about twenty miles a day. The way was not an easy one, nor was it free from danger. At night they would circle the wagons, making camp. This would protect them from thieves and Indians.

They had small Dutch ovens to bake their bread in; the cooking was done on an open fire. Martha Ann would fry bacon and fix potatoes and then biscuits in the oven. She would cook about three pans full to last all day. She had sourdough starter in a stone jar in the back of the wagon that she covered with three layers of paper and a cloth tied securely over it to keep the dust out. She would take out some starter for biscuits and add flour, water and sugar to replenish the starter for the next day.

They took some groceries with them such as ham and bacon and they bought milk and butter from farmers on the trail. At times they were able to buy a fat hen for a dime.

Mary Jane remembered her father, James Alfred M. Evans, tell of a storm that was coming up, and as they had no place to tie the mules, they held on to their halter ropes from under the wagon where they had taken shelter. But soon hailstones as big as hen’s eggs began falling, the mules could not endure it any longer and they jerked free and ran away. They hunted for the mules for half of the next day. Imagine being stranded in the middle of nowhere with no mules. Mary Jane said if the mules had been tied to the wagon, there wouldn’t have been much left of the wagons.

They had little trouble with the Indians, giving them food to eat so they would not harm them. However, one time after they had stopped for the night, but had not unhitched the mules from the wagons, the Indians were hiding and gave a big yell which scared them causing the mules to run with the wagon. Inside the wagon were James Alfred M.’s children, Bartema Adeline, age 4, and Jessie Mansfield, age 2. The men got on their horses and caught the wagon. No one was hurt nor any damage done. They breathed a prayer of relief.

The children had whooping cough on the trail and the sun was hot and sometimes they had to wait a storm out before they could go on; or they would have to go back to shelter if a big storm was coming. Several people had to walk along picking up wood or buffalo chips to build cooking fires. At places they had to purchase water for themselves and the animals at a cost of 10 cents per gallon. They would hobble the
mules and turn them loose to feed at night, the men taking turns watching them to keep the thieves or Indians from stealing them. Life on the trail was a challenge and not for the faint of heart.

Indians Were Dissuaded

One night, when the wagon train had stopped to camp, an Indian came down from the woods and asked the men how many white people were with them. He did this to see if there were too many for them to attack them. James Alfred M. Evans scooped up a handful of sand and poured it out and asked the Indian if he could count the grains of sand. He told the Indian that there were as many white people as the grains of sand. The Indian agreed not to do them any harm. Jim probably knew better how to deal with the Indians than anyone for his mother was Indian.

The wagon train traveled through the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, followed the Big Horn to Wind River, crossed its beautiful valley and reached Green River. They crossed over the Continental Divide into the Snake River Drainage, a tributary of the Columbia River. This was the historic gateway to the Oregon Country, a route discovered by Robert Stuart and used by many legendary mountain men, or “the beaver hunters.”

The Evans family traversed the crescent of the Snake River plains from east to west, more than 300 miles, leaving it at Fort Boise on the western edge, where the turbulent river turns north and forms a natural boundary with what is now Oregon and part of Washington. This part of the Oregon Trail crossed some of the roughest country the wagon train had yet encountered. Eventually they reached the lovely valley of the Grand River, thence crossing the Blue Mountains, and reaching the Umatilla River, a tributary of the Columbia River. After reaching Pendleton, Oregon, the Oregon Trail took them to the Columbia River and the small town of Arlington, with Portland another 200 miles west.

When they got to the mouth of the Snake River, where it empties into the Columbia River, they went down to Portland, Oregon, crossed at Vancouver, Washington and came up the Washington side, following a trail, crossing the Simcoe Mountains which took them to Fort Simcoe, then to Union Gap where the wagon’s wheels were repaired and the mules shod. Then it was onto Ellensburgh, just a trading post at the time formerly called “Robbers Roost.”

Thomas Evans Born In Thorp

Jessie James Evans and Marion Jasper Evans stopped at Thorp because Marion’s wife, Nancy Adeline, was about to give birth to a son, Thomas, who was born October 1882. Simeon James Evans, and James Alfred M. Evans continued on to the west side of the Cascade Mountains. It took five weeks to cut a trail to cross the mountains [The wagon road across Snoqualmie Pass was not made easily passable for wagons until 1883.] They went on to Enumclaw and it was there that a daughter, Mary Jane, was born to James Alfred M. Evans and Martha Ann, on April 24, 1883. [Martha
Ann had conceived while on the trail probably in Idaho.]

Simeon and Alfred quickly decided that they did not like the climate on the west side as it was too wet and they told Jessie James and Marion Jasper Evens to stay in Thorp and look for land there. They came back to the Kittitas Valley the next spring as soon as Snoqualmie pass was free of snow in 1883 and Jessie James Evans, Simeon James Evans, James Alfred M. Evans and Marion Jasper Evens all settled on adjoining places on Swauk Prairie on unsurveyed land. They were later, after the land was surveyed, able to file for homesteads or purchase their land from the Northern Pacific Railroad.

**Evans Family Shows in 1883 Census**

The 1883 Washington Territorial Census for King County shows the Simon and Jim Evans families as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
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There is no date on the census sheet except the year, 1883.

**Unidentified Pioneers Crossing A Stream.** Although this picture is not of the Evans family wagons, it is a good example of what they must have experienced in going from Thorp to the Puget Sound over Snoqualmie Pass in 1882. *Picture from the book “The West - An Illustrated History” by Geoffrey C Ward published in 1996 by Little, Brown and Company, page 94.*
Mary Malinda Evans’ Grave Marker in 2005. The original painted rock and glass jar are still in place today. The concrete marker was added much later by family members who are still responsible for the upkeep of the grave. There is no clue as to what the paper in the jar says. It should recount that Mary Malinda Evans died in childbirth and both her and her unborn child lie in the grave beneath the stone. According to Mary Lou Dills her birthplace should be Tennessee and her death place should be Washington Territory.

Photo by Wes Engstrom.
In the early 1880’s, when the first settlers begin arriving on Swauk Prairie, there were only Indians and gold miners to welcome them. It was only a few years before, in 1870, that Ben Burch and Andrew Jackson Splawn started a trading post called “The Robber’s Roost.” Their business strategy was to buy 300 traps and give them to the Indians and then trade for the furs they brought in. In the spring the furs were hauled by wagon to The Dalles, Oregon and sold, more supplies bought and the yearly cycle was repeated. However, in 1871 John A. Shoudy bought the trading post along with the west half of the northeast quarter of section two and in 1875 platted a town of twenty-four blocks which he named Ellensburgh after his wife, Mary Ellen. Gold was discovered in Swauk Creek just three miles above Swauk Prairie in 1873 which brought a rush of miners who in turn brought wealth and business to the village. A settlement built up around Ellensburgh in the early 1880’s but Swauk Prairie was still pretty much unsettled.
Many Sources Used

Many sources were used to assemble a list of names of the people who greeted the Evens family when they arrived on Swauk Prairie in 1882 and the Evans family when they arrived in 1883. History books, old newspaper articles, family stories and census records, both Federal and Territorial, provide names of the people settling in the Swauk and on Swauk Prairie between 1880 and 1900.

History books tell us that the fighting with the Indians had ended twenty years earlier and even then only one skirmish took place in Kittitas county. There were Indian scares in the late 1870’s that may have created some lingering anxieties for the settlers in 1882. But, for the most part interactions between the settlers and Indians were friendly.

There is one newspaper article describing Swauk Prairie in 1880 but it is without a complete list of settlers. Other newspaper articles published later do recount the memories of early settlers and their encounters with the Indians.

Early census records provide a snapshot of the people in Swauk Prairie and the Swauk for the years 1880, 1885, 1887, 1889 and 1900. These snapshots account for all people in the area on census day, both permanent and temporary. They do not tell when individuals came or left nor do they account for those who came and left between census dates. Annual school census in the chapter on schools and churches do provide a glimpse of the movement of families with school age children.

Indians and Chinese Were Settler’s Neighbors

Although the Evans family in 1883 clearly settled in Indian country, conflict with the Indians had ended with the Indian war of 1856-58. One of the last skirmishes of that war did happen in or near Swauk Prairie. As related in the book “Kittitas Frontiersmen” by Earl T. Glauer and Merle H. Kunz, published by the Ellensburg Public Library in 1976, page 138:

Garnett Expedition and Engagement Near Swauk Prairie

From the Summer Campaign in 1856 until 1859 when Ft. Simcoe was abandoned as a military post, there was only one expedition of importance to Central Washington Territory. That occurred in August and September, 1858, when Major Robert S. Garnett led his troops into the Kittitas Valley. Originally, Garnett proposed to march into the Wenatchee Valley to lend rear support to Col. George Wright. Just as the expedition began, however, Garnett received word of a hostile attack on a group of miners headed for the Fraser River. On the fourth day of the march, scouts reported to Garnett that several of the Indians involved in the attack on the miners were camped twenty miles up the Yakima. A small command led by Lt. Jesse Allen rushed to the area and stormed the camp in a pre-dawn attack. Garnett’s battle strategy, preparations for the expedition, and the course of the campaign are detailed here in Garnett’s letters to Major W. W. Mackall, Asst. Adjt. Gen., July 7, 1858 to September 24, 1858.

There are nine letters reproduced in the book; only one pertains to the skirmish near or on Swauk Prairie. It follows:

Head Quarters Yakima Expedition
Camp on the Upper Yakima River, Aug 15, 1858

Major:

It has become my painful duty to communicate to you for Gen. Clarke’s information and that of the Adj Genl of the Army the sad intelligence of the death of Lieut. Jesse K. Allen, of the 9th Infy who expired at the camp at half past two o’ck today. Lieut. Allen died the death of a soldier. He fell at 3 o’ck this morning at the moment of accomplishing a successful surprise at a camp of hostile Indians. There is reason, however, to fear that he was shot accidentally by one of his own men in the darkness of the hour.

I must be permitted to express my own sorrow of the untimely death of this young officer and to offer thus officially my tribute to his worth. He was an officer of rare energy and zeal and an acquaintance with our army of seventeen years duration warrants me to uttering the conviction that his place will not again be readily filled in our service. His loss to the command can scarcely be over estimated. His remains will be taken back tonight to Fort Simco by his company commander and personal friend Capt.
Frazier 9th Infy who will take charge of his effects as required by regulations. It is perhaps proper to report in this connection that Lt. Allen’s party (15 mounted men) captured in this affair 21 men, about 50 women and children, 70 head of horses & 15 head of cattle besides considerable Indian property. Three of the men having been recognized as participants in the attack on the miners were shot in compliance with my general instruction on this subject.

I am, Sir, Very Respectfully
Your Servt
R. S. Garnett
Maj. 9th Infy. Com’dg

By 1882 Indians in Kittitas County had adapted to many of the new settlers ways. Many had farms and ranches or worked for the settlers as farm hands. Some also fell victim to the settlers vices and diseases. The following article illustrates the problem Indians had with the white man’s whiskey.

YAKIMA RECORD
September 23, 1882

A Disgraceful Affair.

A correspondent at Ellensburg sends us the following: Our usually quiet town was to-day (Thursday, the 14th) the scene of an excitement not equaled since the troublesome Indian times of four years ago. The chief actor to-day was “Enmesetia Bill,” son of the old chief of the Chelans. This Bill is well known to our Yakima citizens as a prominent actor at the time of the capture of Moses. He is a giant in stature, a desperado of undoubted courage, and when filled with whiskey the most dangerous Indian in the upper country. From the best information to be obtained the facts are as follows:

Another Indian, name unknown, had a difficulty with George Morgan, the result of which was the Indian struck at Morgan, who, to avoid difficulty, went into the store of Blummuer, being pursued by the Indian, who broke in the door of the store as Morgan closed it. Upon emerging from the store Morgan was again pursued by the Indian with an uplifted knife. He being unarmed attempted to avoid the Indian, and in doing so tripped and fell to the ground, the Indian falling on top made a murderous thrust with his knife, entering Morgan’s neck in close proximity to the jugular vein; but before he could repeat the blow Mr. John A. Shoudy, who was near the parties at the time, caught the Indian by the hair and threw him aside. Morgan went immediately for a weapon to defend himself. In the meantime “Enmesetia Bill,” seeing the fracas, rushed upon the Indian and severely pumped him. The Indian, breaking from his grasp, ran down the street closely pursued by Bill, who shot at him as he ran. At this juncture Morgan appeared upon the street again, armed with a “bull dog” revolver. The rage of Bill at the Indian then appeared to be turned upon Morgan, whom he immediately shot at. Morgan returned the fire, his ball entering the mouth of the Indian and passing through the cheek breaking the jaw.

Bill, whose brain was by this time muddled with whisky and maddened by the pain of his wound, began an indiscriminate shooting on all sides. By this time the inhabitants of the town, aroused by the firing, gathered from all quarters. Very few had arms, but those who did opened fire on Bill. Finding it too hot for him, he stripped to the waist, gave the war whoop, emptied the remaining chambers of his revolver at the bystanders, and then ran for his horse, which he quickly mounted and attempted to escape. He had proceeded but a few steps when a shot brought down his horse. Hastily disentangling himself from the animal with a lively bound he made for the sage brush, while shots from the now thoroughly aroused citizens were whistling around him. His flying leaps soon carried him beyond the reach of the rifles.

This, and outrages of a similar nature by this and other Indians having been quite frequent in our town of late, our citizens were determined that a stop should be put to these abuses. Mounting their horses a dozen men with arms in their hands pursued him. In the meantime one of Bill’s friends overtook him and gave him his horse, which he mounted and rode away at a wild gallop. A race now ensued for several miles, but he was finally overtaken, disarmed, brought back to town, and is now in close confinement, together with three or four of his friends who took a hand in the affair. There they will remain till an examination can be had before a magistrate. Fortunately for the Indians none of our citizens were seriously injured. Had the result been otherwise, a small delegation, with Bill at their hand, would have been made permanently “good” Indians.

Since the above from our correspondent was in type the editor of the Record visited Ellensburg. In the main the facts as stated above are correct, though the prime cause of all this difficulty was undoubtedly caused by some white villain furnishing the Indians with whiskey. We are getting about tired of condemning these disgraceful affairs, and though we are no advocate of mob law, yet we would not mourn if the citizens of Ellensburg should “let no guilty man escape.” On Saturday
last the two Indians in confinement, (caused by conduct of a brutal nature,) were in a dangerous condition. In fact it is thought both will die. Accordingly bonds were given if alive in one month they were to be returned. They are now in care of their friends.

**YAKIMA RECORD**

**October 14, 1882**

**Dead.**

“Enmesetia” Bill, who was shot in the Indian row at Ellensburg, not long since, is dead. The probability is also against the recovery of the other Indian.

**Indians Suffer from New Disease**

Indians did continue to use their traditional hunting and food gathering areas of Swauk Prairie long after it was settled. The following newspaper article by Christine Bettas about Chester Virden's boyhood memories growing up on Swauk Prairie appeared in the local Ellensburg newspaper in 1975 and illustrates early days of living with the Indians. Chester M. Virden was born September 7, 1891 on Swauk Prairie. Chester's parents came to the Swauk via wagon train in 1876 from Kansas.

**ELLENSBURG DAILY RECORD**

**January 18, 1975**

**Chester Virden Recalls Early Swauk Days**

...Another recollection worth recounting was how the Indians attempted to cure smallpox, a disease brought by the white man. He recalls at about age 6, [1897] a large tribe of Indians numbering well into 400, camped on Swauk Creek on a trip to their annual berry picking excursion to the Skokum area high in the Middle Fork of the Teanaway. Many became ill and the tribal leaders attempted to cure the sick by “sweating them out.” They built sweat-houses of bent Willows covered with mud. A fire was built inside with large rocks around it. When the rocks became heated, they laid the ailing Indians around the heated rocks until they perspired profusely and then “dowsed” them in the cold waters of Swauk Creek looking for a cure, but instead they died. Chester’s father, George D. Virden, had told them such treatment would be disastrous but they would not heed his advice. The many who died were buried in graves which used to be marked by rocks on the hillside on the former Will Virden ranch, now owned by the Hartman brothers. Chester can still point to many grave sites and that years ago, during spring and fall plowing many relics were dug up such as beads, cutting implements, arrows, etc. He also told of many years ago finding an Indian buried sitting up holding an axe with a wooden handle.

He also recalled vividly when a tribe of Indians stopped at the same encampment on their way to the berry fields one Spring when the Swauk Creek water was perhaps the highest it had ever been. The Indians said the waters of Swauk Creek were “wild waters” and the entire tribe spent the night chanting and yelling, perhaps to frighten the water spirits away.

In contrast to today’s many break-ins, Chester noted that in those early days no one locked their doors and never lost anything. People trusted one-another and were trustworthy. Speaking of unlocked doors, Chester chuckled when he recalled an early day scare. It seemed he and an older brother were home alone when an Indian squaw approached the home and opened the door and walked into the house. He and his brother quickly ducked behind the door but before they knew it she slammed the door shut and they stood there completely exposed. Seeing their frightened faces, the kind squaw told the boys that she would not harm them and that they were not wild people. ...

**William McCallum Remembers**

Thanks to Fred Kruger sharing historical material he has gathered we have another description of early settlers in Swauk Prairie sharing the prairie with the Indians. William McCallum was born on Swauk Prairie in 1890 and attended the Virden school. His story:

The Indians from Ellensburg meandered their way thru Swauk Prairie on their way to Stampede Pass to pick huckleberries and fish Ellthe high lakes. They had stayed overnight for many years in our valley. They hobbled their horses and turned them loose to graze. They took them to the spring on the Dunford place for their fill of water and also carried water for their cooking. They set up their teepees, built their fires and had their meal. They circled around for playing games, the children ran and played and everyone was happy since they were on their first day going to the mountains. As soon as it got dark we could hear them chanting, first high, then low. This would go on for several hours.

There were about 45 to 50 Indians in the group plus the children. The men rode bareback,
but most of the women had saddles with brightly colored blankets under the saddle. The women had saddle bags, and many of them carried a baby laced to a cradle on their back. Some had a travois loaded with necessary provisions for the trip. Sometimes an old person would be on the travois. On their return they would camp here again. They brought us huckleberries as they came back. Mom used them for a pie or two and with the rest she made jam. We had a crab apple tree, so Mom would use the crab apple juice to get the huckleberries to jell.

Our valley had lots of camas growing in the meadow which is a staple to the Indians. One old Indian lady, known to us as “Aunt Lucy” daughter of the Indian “John” that the Cle Elum rest area is named for, would come every year while it was in bloom to dig the camas bulb. They came while it was in bloom so they could tell the blue bloom, which is edible, from the white bloom, which is poison.

Aunt Lucy came one year in late April by herself, riding on her small pony with a sack hanging on each side of her saddle. She dug the camas with an old cow’s horn that had been shaped and sharpened. It was fastened to a sturdy cane like stick with wet leather thongs. She would dig 40 or 50 bulbs then sit down and with her gnarled fingers rub off all the dirt from them and drop them in her sack. When she finished digging she would come back by the house, open the door and walk in. If there was something on the stove cooking she’d whip the lid off, stick her dirty finger in and lick her finger. If she liked it she would do it again and again until Mom dished her up some, cooked or not. She loved Mom’s bread and with her little short teeth, would chew and chew. She had worn her teeth off almost to the gum line chewing on hides to soften them.

Earliest Descriptions of Swauk Prairie

There are two descriptions of the Swauk and Swauk Prairie that I have found published in local newspapers of the 1880s and 90s. The first, published in 1883, was a passing description of Swauk Prairie and a more complete description of the miners in the Swauk at the time. The second was a description published in 1892 by a pioneer who remembers the area when they first arrived in 1882.

KITTITAS STANDARD

July 14, 1883

Picnic to Swauk and Vicinity.

Ed. Standard:

Thinking a few notes of a picnic excursion of a party of Ellensburghers, who left here on the morning of July 3rd, would be of interest to your readers, I herewith transmit the following:

Aurora had scarcely opened the portals of the morning ere we had started upon our intended picnic to the sylvan shades of Swauk. Our happy, joyous party consisted of the following persons: Miss L. Learning, Miss C. Maxey, Miss S. Maxey, Miss Annie Sallady, Messrs. J. McCloud, G. Hoge, M. Maxey, C. Maxey, and J. J. McGrath. The gents of the party had generously procured a four horse team, two saddle horses and all the luxuries of the market. Merrily we traveled onward, fanned by the gentle zephyrs of morning until we reached Dry creek, where a bounteous midday repast seemed to reanimate us with an elasticity of spirit unknown to the weary habitat of the city. Again we journey toward the everlasting hills that seem like silent sentinels in the dim distance, pass through Swauk’s environed hills, and reach about twilight the clear meandering Teanaway, with its picturesque scenery that amply repays the visit of the tourist. Here we pitch camp and after a pleasant evening spent in song, jest and merriment we enjoyed the sweet embrace of Morpheus in the realms of dreamland. After an early breakfast we journey back to Swauk,
participate in, and no doubt we shall all treasure pleasant picnics that it has been my privilege to just as we were. Thus ended one of the most and have one dozen grouped photo’s taken in Ellensburgh, proceed to the photographers to mar the pleasure of the occasion we arrive duty. After a long and pleasant drive with nothing preparations are made to return to home and fire pleasantries are enjoyed, and at early dawn shades of night overtake us, the usual camp kind and generous friendship. Once more the return many thanks to Mr. Livingstone for his that we would be ingrates indeed if we did not Mr. Livingstone, and here, Mr. Editor, we feel partook of a splendid supper kindly tendered by the mountain side to the quartz mill where we obtaining specimens we wend our way down that greeted our vision. Before us in plain sight ledged and were amply rewarded by the prospect of crushing and extracting the precious metal. With that courtesy characteristic of the true gentleman Mr. Livingstone kindly conducted us to the principal ledge of the company, located on a mountain at an elevation of 3200 feet above sea level. After a pleasant jaunt over a good wagon road we finally reached this elevated ledge and were amply rewarded by the prospect that greeted our vision. Before us in plain sight lay any amount of gold bearing quartz that only awaits capital and labor to enrich and develop all the various avenues of trade. After obtaining specimens we wend our way down the mountain side to the quartz mill where we partook of a splendid supper kindly tendered by Mr. Livingstone, and here, Mr. Editor, we feel that we would be ingrates indeed if we did not return many thanks to Mr. Livingstone for his kind and generous friendship. Once more the shades of night overtake us, the usual camp fire pleasanties are enjoyed, and at early dawn preparations are made to return to home and duty. After a long and pleasant drive with nothing to mar the pleasure of the occasion we arrive in Ellensburgh, proceed to the photographers and have one dozen grouped photo’s taken just as we were. Thus ended one of the most pleasant picnics that it has been my privilege to participate in, and no doubt we shall all treasure up in the tablet of memory recollections of the pleasant hours spent together on this occasion.

One of the Boys.

The following article by an early pioneer in the area published in the Cle-Elum Tribune describes conditions on Swauk Prairie in 1882. James Masterson had settled to the west of Swauk Prairie, half-way between Swauk Prairie and present Cle Elum.

CLE-ELUM TRIBUNE
January 6, 1892

Then and Now.
The Pioneer Days of the Upper Kittitas Recalled.

It is just eleven years since the first actual white settlers wintered in the upper Yakima valley. No white family lived west of the Swauk which was then, as now, a small mining camp of uncertain possibilities. Two years previous, Mr. Virden and family had settled on a ranch on the Swauk, about five miles below the mines where they have made a comfortable home and where they still live in prosperity and contentment. It was about two years after the Columbia river Indian out break and, although this beautiful valley lay here all unclaimed excepting as a camping and grazing ground for the Indians, white people were charry of beginning home making so far on the frontier. There was plenty of unclaimed land in Kittitas valley, even close to the tiny, though vigorous, village of Ellensburgh and among numbers of individuals, the majority like to be near each other though some like to push on farther. As above mentioned, there was a small beginning which in two years began increasing considerable, notwithstanding many prophesies that nothing could be raised without irrigation, that the soil was poor, the winters too severe and that no stock could be raised here on account of the gnats, which really tortured many animals in those days and many were the discussions held as to how the animals could be protected from them. Now this is considered a fine stock country and gnats are seldom mentioned.

The winter of 1880 and 1881, as all old settlers of Washington know, was an uncommon winter there being such an enormous snow fall. According to a rough estimate we kept, there fell during the winter, ten feet of snow, there being five feet on the level. For two months perhaps one could not stir out except on snow shoes. We kept no stock, only a few chickens, a cat and dog made what little life there was besides ourselves. Hunting and trapping was all the business and amusement and glorious sport
it was, gliding so smoothly and swiftly over the hills on Norwegian snow shoes in the bracing air chasing the deer generally with success, visiting traps and carrying in game. Indoors, we were playing chess and reading, over and over, old papers and magazines and had an occasional visit from some hunter or trapper, we managed to pass the time very pleasantly. The scenery was grand and beautiful. No life, no fences or paths, only the slinder marks of snow shoes here and there between the storms.

In March, several logging camps were established along the Yakima which brought in some life and business. Logging had been carried on for several years at intervals along the river and the ruins of several old camps were to be seen, namely one large camp where Cle Elum now stands, which as deserted and forlorn as it then appeared, was perhaps the means of starting the town at that particular point. A year from March Mr. Mack moved on his ranch with his family which made it much pleasanter for now one had good neighbors which was a great blessing at this time. In October '82 Mr. Seaton settled on the Teanaway with his large family. There were quite a number of families settled on the Swauk prairie, several unmarried men having taken claims here which they have now sold or traded off. Many have shifted around, others left for good, so that I have not attempted to chronicle their movements, although many have staid and made themselves homes.

This, then was the place in early days. Inland our nearest post office was twenty five miles off—all supplies being at the same point. Everything was then hauled in freight wagons from The Dalles so that all supplies were very high and a dollar, which by the way was very hard to get hold of, bought only about half as much as it does now. We soon found that we could raise nearly any kind of produce but there was no market. But in 1886, the railroad came through with a rush. Little towns sprung up. The great coal mines at Roslyn were opened. People have flocked in until now this particular locality with its great coal business, its possibilities in iron, the gold, silver and copper prospect adjacent, awaiting development, is considered one of the grandest localities in our state.

Mrs. James Masterson.

1880 Federal Census

The 1880 Federal Census for the Swauk area was done on June 22, 1880. At that time the area was part of Yakima county which extended from the Wenatchee Mountain range to the Wenatchee river. The Swauk area was enumerated as “East Kittitass Precinct” which included all lands east of the Yakima river and south of Wenatchee. Swauk Prairie and the Swauk and Peshastin gold camps were not specifically identified. However, the enumeration preserves the order in which houses were visited, therefore neighbors are grouped and that helps in establishing where people lived. I assumed that all persons listed as miners and their neighbors were in Swauk Prairie or the Swauk or Peshastin gold camps as the coal deposits in Roslyn had not been discovered yet. The Indians listed as neighbors of the miners were probably camped at Lauderdale, Liberty or Mountain Home above Liberty. All three areas were summer hunting grounds for the Indians.

For each person in every household, the census asked name; whether white, black, mulatto, Indian, or Chinese; sex; age; month of birth if born within the year; relationship to the head of the household; whether single, married, widowed, or divorced; whether married within the year; occupation and months unemployed; name of state, territory, or country of birth; parents’ birthplaces; school attendance within the year; whether able to read if age ten or older; and whether sick or temporarily disabled on the day of enumeration and the reason therefore. Those who were blind, deaf-mute, “idiotic,” insane, or permanently disabled were also indicated as such. Only part of that information is listed below. The rest of the information can be found on web sites such as Ancestory.com.

George Virden was listed as a farmer but he was both a farmer and a miner and was successful at both occupations. His family was probably the only one living on Swauk Prairie in 1880.

There were 71 white people, 34 Indians and 26 Chinese in the area in 1880.
### 1880 Federal Census
#### Yakima County Washington

#### Selected Entries

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Chinese Pests.

On Wednesday last a wagon load of Chinese passed through town en route for the Swauk mines. The recent finding of a $700 chunk by one of the heathens, an account of which we give elsewhere, has evidently caused them to come hither. It is to be hoped the whites will keep them out of the mines in some manner.

YAKIMA RECORD
September 4, 1880

Kittitas Valley Notes

...Chinamen are going into the Swauk mines in great numbers. We met 13 headed for there and we learned a crowd went in shortly before.

1885 Territorial Census

The Washington Territorial censuses were taken for the purpose of determining whether the population was great enough to become a state. In Kittitas county territorial censuses were taken in 1885, 1887 and 1889. The territory did become a state on November 11, 1889.

The census recorded name; age; gender; occupation; marital status; and place of origin. Again, the Swauk Prairie and Swauk areas were not listed separately. I assumed the order was the same as the Federal census; neighbors were listed in order. By adding a few names on each side of recognized Swauk Prairie and Swauk residents the following lists were created. The complete list can be found in “Kittitas County Territorial Census 1885-1887-1889” published by Yakima Valley Genealogical Society, 1981, Yakima, Washington.

1885 Washington Territory Census

Selected County

Name Sex Age Birth

Kittitas

Wm. McClellan m 41 Ohio
Anna f 34 Ohio
Jennie f 9 Ohio
Ida f 6 Idaho
Ora f 2 Oregon
N. Snow m 26 England
### Whispers From the Grave

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**Antagonism Builds Towards Chinese**

Indians were not counted in the Territorial Census and thus do not show in the census. Chinese were still counted though there was increasing antagonism toward them. Newspaper articles of that time still refer to many Chinese in the area.

In 1885 there appears to have been more Chinese miners than white miners even though the Swauk mining district had reorganized in 1884 and one of the articles adopted by the mining district was the following which illustrates the prevalent attitude towards the Chinese. From Kittitas County Miscellaneous Records, Book A, page 127, 12 May 1884:

Minutes of Miners Meeting held at John Black’s Cabin on Swauk, Kittitas County W. Ty.

May 7th 1884, for the purpose of Organizing the Mining District and enacting Local Laws and Regulations for the Government thereof. D. L. Evans being elected Chairman.,

G. L. Howard Secretary

**Article 1.** Resolved this District Shall be Known and Called by the Original Name of Swauk and shall contain within its Limits—All Mineral Lands Lying Within the following Boundaries to Wit: Beginning at the Mouth of Teanaway running up and along East bank of the same to the Swauk Trail thence to and along summit of the Swauk and Teanaway divide thence to and along Summit of Peshastin and Swauk divide thence to and along Summit of Wilson Creek and Swauk divide thence along and down the same to the (19) mile post on Dry Creek thence Westerly to and across the Yakima River thence up the same to a Point Opposite the Mouth of Teanaway River and across the Yakima to place of Beginning. (Carried Unanimously)

**Article 2.** Resolved all mining claims and transactions in this District shall be recorded in the County Recorders Office in Ellensburg, Kittitas Co. W. T. (Carried Unanimously)

**Article 4.** Resolved that—All Chinamen within the boundaries of Swauk Mining District shall leave and shall not be allowed to work or hold any mining ground in the District and that—No Chinaman shall hereafter be allowed to come into the same for the purpose of mining, and that a notice be served on those now in the limits of this district to leave at once. (Carried Unanimously)

**Article 5.** Resolved that a committee of three consisting of James Boxall, D. L. Evans and J. C. Pike shall present the Chinamen now in the District with the following notice:

At a miners meeting held at John Black’s cabin Swauk District, Kittitas County, Wash. Ty., May 7th 1884, We the undersigned unanimously decided that all Chinamen within the boundaries of Swauk Mining District shall leave, and shall not be allowed to work or hold any mining ground in the District and that—No Chinaman shall hereafter be allowed to come into the same for the purpose of mining, and that a notice be served on those now in the limits of this district to leave at once under penalty of the Law.

“Signed”

Luke McDermott         J. C. Pike
T. Lloyd Williams     W. H. Elliott
S. Bandy             T. F. Meagher
Jas. A. Gilmore        L. McClure
Zeb. Keller          A. J. Wintz
Moses M. Emerson      Louis Queitsch
Chinese Exclusion Act

The resentment against the Chinese miner was more national in nature than it was local. Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia, had this to say about the act.

The first significant Chinese immigration to America began with the California Gold Rush of 1848-1855, and continued with subsequent large labor projects, such as the building of the First Transcontinental Railroad. During the early stages of the gold rush, when surface gold was plentiful, the Chinese were tolerated, if not well received. As gold became harder to find and competition increased, animosity toward the Chinese and other foreigners increased. After being forcibly driven from the mines, most Chinese settled in enclaves in cities, mainly San Francisco, and took up low end wage labor such as restaurant and laundry work. With the post Civil War economy in decline by the 1870’s, anti-Chinese animosity became politicized by labor leader Denis Kearney and his Workingman’s Party as well as by California Governor John Bigler, both of whom blamed Chinese “coolies” for depressed wage levels. Another significant anti-Chinese group organized in California during this same era was the Supreme Order of Caucasians with some 60 chapters statewide.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 excluded Chinese “skilled and unskilled laborers employed in mining” from entering the country for ten years under the penalty of imprisonment and deportation.

The Act also affected those who had already settled in the United States. Any Chinese who left the United States had to obtain certification for reentry, and the Act made Chinese immigrants permanent aliens by excluding them from U. S. citizenship. After the Act’s passage, Chinese men in the U. S. had little chance of ever reuniting with their wives, or of starting families in their new homes. They were forced to go back to China if they wanted a family.

The Act was tightened in 1884 and extended in 1892 and made permanent in 1902. The Act was not repealed until the 1943 Magnuson Act which permitted Chinese nationals already residing in the country to become naturalized citizens and stop hiding from the threat of deportation.

The fact that the Chinese were excluded from becoming U.S. citizens explains why they only leased gold claims and did not file on them in their own name. One had to be a citizen, or intended on becoming a citizen, to file a mineral claim under the 1872 mining laws.

There weren't any Chinese listed in the Swauk area in the 1887 or 1889 Territorial Census for Kittitas County. This is strange because there were references in local newspapers indicating they were mining in Liberty at that time. They may have been left off the census because they were classified as permanent aliens under the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Territorial census taker simply did not count them as citizens. After all, the purpose of the census was to demonstrate there were enough potential citizens to justify creating a state out of the territory. It may also have been that the undocumented Chinese miner simply disappeared from the area on the day the census taker was to come by. After all, they were subject to deportation if discovered.

There were references to the Chinese miner in newspaper articles from 1891 and in the 1897 publication “Mining In Eastern & Central Washington” by L. K. Hodges published by the Post-Intelligencer, Seattle, Washington.

CLE ELUM TRIBUNE*
July 18, 1891
The Swauk District.
Development Work Being Done On Some Promising Mines.

There are probably at this time more miners and prospectors at work in the Swauk territory than at any other period in the history of the camp since the first great excitement. All the placer properties are being successfully worked and the quartz claims on the Swauk and both the east and west forks of Williams creek are being steadily developed. The celestials who have leased the Green Tree placer claim No. 1 are working away with the perseverance for which they are noted, and every day a sufficient quantity of precious dust is panned out to make them extraordinarily good wages....
MINING IN EASTERN & CENTRAL WASHINGTON  
by L. K. Hodges  
1897  

The Swauk

Page 68 ...On the two next claims Dexter Shoudy has a tunnel running 400 feet, and the furthest work down the creek is being done by two gangs of Chinamen, who strip off the surface dirt and haul the pay dirt to sluice boxes....

William McCallum Liked Chinese Food

Fred Kruger, a Cle Elum high school history teacher shared unpublished historical material he had gathered including a description of early settlers in the Swauk doing business with the Chinese in the 1890s. The material was from William McCallum who was born on Swauk Prairie in 1890 and attended the Virden school. A portion of his undated story about early days in the Swauk is as follows:

...Father [Peter McCallum] hauled provisions from The Dalles, Oregon, before the railroad was built and sold provisions to the miners on the Swauk and hauled gold down to Ellensburg to be shipped to the U. S. Mint. I went up to the mining camps with Father and we would have dinner with the Chinamen. They were fine cooks. There were about 200 in the camp. There are still a few miners in that area getting sprinkles of gold....

The Chinese Left Few Traces

There is every indication that the Chinese were a significant factor in the early development of the Swauk; however, they left few relics behind. They even took their dead back to China as illustrated by the following newspaper article:

ELLENSBURGH CAPITAL  
April 12, 1894  
A Chinese Funeral.

Last Monday the remains of Jung Fow, the Chinaman who was killed last week by Le See, were buried by his countrymen, and, as was the case with Mark Twain’s “Buck Fanshaw,” he was given a “good send-off.” After some ceremony peculiar to the Chinese the remains, which were in a very fair coffin, were placed in a hearse and driven to the old cemetery, followed by half a dozen vehicles loaded with Chinamen and white men about equally divided. In one wagon was a liberal supply of provision, including chickens, ducks, Chinese pastry, etc., which was placed on Fow’s grave so that he would start to his expected goal with a full stomach. With a few salaams his countrymen hastened back to town before the clods were settled on his grave. They were as jolly as Chinamen ever are, and no traces of grief were to be seen.

A few Coxeyites, who had seen Chinese funerals before and knew that it meant a good square meal, lingered fondly behind and no doubt gave their stomachs a surprise party at the expense of the celestial grubsatke prepared for the defunct traveler toward the unknown haven so dear to the minds of all disciples of Confucius.

After Mr. Fow has reposed in the grave long enough for his flesh to return to mother earth, his bones will, according to the universal custom of his people, be disinterred and shipped to China, as it is part of their creed that the bones of no man, however poor, shall be allowed to crumble to dust in any other land but the Flowery Kingdom. If he or his friends are too poor to carry out the plan, the Six Companies will come to their relief, and his bones are as sure to repose under his native sod as if he had been the wearer of a silk cap with a red button on it.

1887 Territorial Census

1887 Washington Territory Census

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### 1889 Territorial Census

#### 1889 Washington Territory Census

#### Kittitas County

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**Notes:**
- Gender abbreviations: m for male, f for female, ? for unknown.
- Some names have additional information such as occupation or relationship, indicated with brackets.
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**1890 Federal Census Destroyed**

There was a 1890 Federal census taken but a portion of the census records were destroyed by a warehouse fire in 1921 and the United States Congress, in their wisdom, decided that all 1890 census records should be destroyed. Genealogists have been cursing them every since for this left a big blank space during a critical time of western expansion in our country. Having three fourths of the records would have been better than having none.

The 1900 Federal Census records show a dramatic jump in the number of people in the Swauk area. Curiously it does not include any Chinese miners nor are there any newspaper articles about Chinese miners in the Swauk.

**1900 Federal Census**

The 1900 Federal census listed a person's name; relationship to head of household; color or race; sex; date of birth (month, year); age at last birthday; whether single, married, widowed, or divorced; number of years married; mother of how many children; number of these children living; place of birth; place of birth of person's father; place of birth of person's mother; year of immigration to the United States; number of years in the United States; naturalization; occupation, trade, or profession of each person ten years of age and over; months not employed; school attendance (in months); ability to read, write, and speak English; home owned or rented; home owned free or mortgaged; farm or house and number of farm schedules. Again, the entire census data can be found on on-line sources.

The 1900 census was divided into distinct precincts; the Liberty Precinct and the Swauk Precinct. It no longer included the Blewett mines which are now in Chelan County as of 1889. The Swauk Precinct was enumerated by James A.
Piland on June 1, 1900 and the Liberty Precinct on June 11, 1900.

### 1900 Federal Census

**Kittitas County, Washington State**

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By 1900 there were 383 people living in 117 households in the Swauk area. Of these 156 were children, 71 women and 156 were men. Only one Chinese person was left in the area. There may have been a number of Indians, however, they were not identified in the census as such. The population had changed dramatically in the twenty years from 1880 when there were 71 white people, 34 Indians and 26 Chinese in the area.
Washington Territory as Mapped in 1878. This hand colored map of Washington Territory is the most detailed I have found for the era when the Evans arrived in Kittitas County. It purports to show wagon roads but does not show them between The Dalles and Yakima via Fort Simcoe nor Walla Walla and Yakima via Walula. I have placed the towns of Thorp, Liberty and Cle Elum approximately where they should be on the map. The area around Swauk Prairie had not been surveyed and the existing maps of the time were grossly inaccurate. Swauk Creek was known as Schwak creek at the time. Map from Washington State On-Line Digital Archives.

In 1882 when the Evans family first arrived there wasn’t any Kittitas county; the area was known as the Kittitas valley of Yakima county. When Simeon and Jim came back to Swauk Prairie in 1883 Kittitas county had been formed from the north half of Yakima County and Ellensburg was the county seat. There were the fast growing towns of Ellensburg and Thorp as well as the trading post at McCallum and the gold mining camp at Liberty. Cle Elum soon became a booming coal mining town as well. All supplies for these communities had to come by wagon from Walla Walla or The Dalles with The Dalles being the primary supply point; it in turn being supplied by boat from Portland. The route from Seattle to Ellensburgh was over Snoqualmie Pass via a seldom maintained wagon road, better suited for pack trains. Thus, Seattle was not a significant supply point for Kittitas county in 1882.
When one was living on Swauk Prairie and it came time to trade the choices were: Ellensburg (17 miles); Thorp (12 miles); Cle Elum (8 miles); Liberty (5 miles) and McCallum (1 mile). The distances do not seem long today but when the average distance a horse drawn wagon could go was 15 to 25 miles in a day even a trip to Thorp or Ellensburg was a one or two day affair. The occasional trip to the larger towns of Yakima (50 miles), Seattle (80 miles), The Dalles (150 miles) or Walla Walla (170 miles) would be a one or two week affair.

The gold mines on Swauk and Peshastin Creeks provided hard cash for the area seeing as agricultural products, except for cattle, could not be transported to market in an economically feasible way. Cattle were made to walk on their own to markets in British Columbia to the north and Seattle to the west. The mines also provided a local market for produce. Miners were occupied with digging holes in the ground to look for gold. They used the gold they found to buy their picks and shovels from merchants in Ellensburg and they bought their meat, eggs, chickens, potatoes and vegetables from the local farmers.

McCallum’s trading post at what is now called Lauderdale was the first to provide a place for farmers to exchange, eggs, butter and vegetables for other things they needed such as salt, coffee, sugar and cloth. In 1884 it became the first post office in the area.

Gold was discovered on the Swauk in 1873 but, stores didn’t spring up in the gold mining camp until the early 1880’s and in 1892 a post office was established. The post office was called Liberty and from that time on the Swauk gold mines were called Liberty gold mines.

A water powered sawmill was built at Thorp in 1879 that supplied cut lumber for houses and barns. A grist mill was built next to the sawmill in 1883 where farmers could exchange their wheat for flour. The mill still exists today as a National Historic Site and one of the best preserved pioneer flour mills in the nation.

Cle Elum did not become a trading post for Swauk Prairie settlers until after 1886. When it was dedicated in 1886, two stores opened and the Northern Pacific railroad arrived at the same time. The development of the coal deposits for the railroad ignited the city’s growth and it quickly became the favored supply point for Swauk Prairie. The railroad, of course, changed all aspects of trade in Kittitas valley. All supplies became cheaper and produce could be transported to market much more economically. Cle Elum was only 8 miles away without large hills for the horse and wagon to negotiate.
Robbers Roost—Ellensburgh—Ellensburg

Ellensburgh in 1886. E. J. Hamacher, photographer, took this photo in 1886 and it is the earliest picture I could find of Ellensburg. In the foreground is a pond and ice-house for “harvesting” ice in the winter and storing it for summer use. The large white building on the right was the Ellensburg Academy, a school that later became the First Presbyterian Church of Ellensburg. The building with three stories in the center is the Johnson House Hotel. Nearly every building in this picture was destroyed by a massive fire in 1889. Photo courtesy of Ellensburg Public Library.

Kittitas Valley’s First Trading Post

Settler William Bud Wilson had a claim and built a log cabin in 1868 where Ellensburg now stands. Cowboys A. J. Splawn and Ben Burch moved his 14 x 18 foot hewn log house to a spot nearby so they could open it as a store in 1870. John Gillispie, a young settler, made a sign for the store and dubbed it “Robber’s Roost.” Settlers were few and the post depended on trade in furs and horses with Native Americans to prosper.

In 1872, John A. Shoudy bought the store and the 160 acre claim. A Civil War veteran, he had come to the valley in 1871 to create an improved road connection with the Yakima country. In 1873, John started a postal service in Ellensburg. John and his wife Mary Ellen platted the town and it was officially filed in April 1875. John named the new town Ellensburgh for his wife.

Between 1878 and 1883, the town grew dramatically: a bank was established; Hook and Ladder Company Number 1 was organized; and the first newspaper, The Kittitas Localizer, was published on July 12, 1883. Kittitas County was formed in 1883 with a population of 2,768 and Ellensburgh became the county seat. In 1894 the “h” was dropped from the name.

Washington became a state in 1889 and Ellensburgh could have become the capital if a fire had not destroyed most of the city on July 4, 1889. The town recovered quickly, with brick buildings rising to replace the former wood ones.

Ellensburgh was clearly a rapidly growing town with great pioneer spirit. The following two articles from local newspapers illustrated the expected growth.
Improving—In the short space of a month the town of Ellensburg has improved wonderfully. Many new building have gone up and others are in the process of erection. Barnett’s new hotel is nearly finished, and will soon be ready for occupancy. The Lyen boys have built a new stable and will soon open a livery business. An addition has been built to the old drug store of Dr. Reed, by Mr. Shoudy and when this is finished the post office, we hear it rumored, will be removed from Shoudy’s store and then taken charge of by Mr. Lawrence, the drug business also being continued by that gentleman. Mr. Crouch is also building a neat and cozy cottage upon the bank of the creek. The City hotel is also receiving a substantial addition. Martin Mehan has also put up a cottage, which is already occupied by a renter. Robt. Fleming is building a house in the northern addition. Odd Fellows’ Hall is being fitted up and will soon be ready for the accommodation of the brethren. Blacksmith Becker, our Teutonic friend is building a $2,000 dwelling a little northwest of town. About a mile and a half from town, and a little southeast, Mr. R. P. Tjossem has nearly finished his grist mill, and soon will be ready to furnish his patrons with “cracked corn.” Mr. Woods has opened a neat and cozy barber shop, where he flourishes the “razor and hone” to the delectation of his patrons. Many of the farmers in the immediate neighborhood are also putting up neat dwelling houses. Altogether the entire community wears an aspect of substantial thrift and prosperity. If the evidences of substantial improvement is a criterion from which to judge of the faith which these people posses in the stability of their country, then indeed do the residents of Ellensburg and vicinity have an abiding faith. As to the business outlook: There seems to be a large increase in the volume of trade. Merchants are yearly adding to the amount of their orders upon houses below. Bell of the Stockade, has just received a portion of his stock of winter goods. Shoudy is below laying in his stock, while Blummer is everlastingly doing good for his country by disposing of his wares at reasonable prices. One thing that has materially added to the business prosperity of Ellensburg is the growth of trade between it and the mines of the Swauk and Peshastin. These mines are growing in importance yearly, and we do not hesitate to say that in the near future a large population will be in these mines, and hence Ellensburg, from its natural position, reaps the advantages of its trade.

The Kittitas Standard newspaper published the following letter that describes Ellensburgh in 1883.

**KITTITAS STANDARD**

**Ellensburg**

“Standard,” December 8, 1883.—We are not ashamed of the following statement concerning our town, valley and surroundings, sent by Postmaster Reed to Charles S. Fee, assistant superintendent of traffic, Northern Pacific Railroad, in response to a circular from that gentlemen asking for the same:

“First, Ellensburg is located about one mile north of the Yakima River. Second, population 450, and increase in two years of 400. Third, water-power abundant by using water of the Yakima. Fourth, has two hotels, capacity 150; one National bank, capital $50,000; two public halls, also an Odd Fellows and Ancient Order of United Workmen combined, and a Masonic hall; four general merchandise stores, carrying $50,000 in stock; six retail stores and sundry minor establishments, shops, etc.; two newspapers, two livery stables and a fine two-story public school building erected entirely by private subscription. Fifth, in immediate vicinity are five grist mills of ten to twenty barrel capacity and excellent equipment. Also three sawmills, capacity eight to twenty thousand feet per day. Sixth, in adjacent mountains $75,000 in placer and $100,000 in quartz gold has been taken out by primitive process and during the past season an extensive field bearing copper ore (black oxide) assaying from 50 to 80 per cent copper and carrying $15 to $1,000 in silver per ton has been discovered. In the same vicinity large bodies of magnetic iron ore of high grade have long been known to exist and in the last six weeks a belt of bituminous coal (pronounced the best yet discovered in Washington Territory) lying in veins of five to eight feet has been discovered adjoining the copper and iron fields and immediately upon the line of the proposed Cascade division of your road. Seventh, Ellensburg is located in the center of Kittitas Valley and is the county seat of Kittitas County, recently established by legislative action. The valley proper comprises twenty by thirty miles of well watered, highly productive agricultural prairie lands; to the east and south are almost boundless bunchgrass grazing lands, and upon the north and west are half open, half timbered lands extending back into the Cascade Mountain range. Eighth, productions are grain, hay and vegetables of all kinds, crops never fail and will compare favorably in quality and amount, to the acre, with those of any other section in the northwest.
**Ellensburg Business Growth Between 1871 and 1881.** The sketch of the Ellensburg plat shows the business establishments that were added to the city in the ten year period between 1871 and 1881. *Sketch by Wes Engstrom based on material from the Ellensburg Public Library.*

(or anywhere else), large numbers of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs are also grown. Ninth, our shipments are live-stock to the amount of $500,000 per annum, driven chiefly over the Snoqualmie Pass wagon road to Puget Sound markets; and wood hauled 150 miles by wagon and shipped to Portland, Oregon. Tenth, in game we have deer, bear, grouse, prairie and sage chickens, ducks, and geese; while in fish, every stream carries in season fine salmon and speckled trout. Eleventh, our neighboring towns are Yakima City, 50 miles, stage fare $5; Ainsworth, 125 miles, stage fare, $15; The Dalles, Oregon, 150 miles, fare $15—daily stages; and Seattle, Washington Territory, 125 miles. To reach the latter the Snoqualmie Pass wagon road is being constructed upon which mail service has been ordered and by which the stage fare will be $12.”

The foregoing statement is one every person at all acquainted with our section can heartily endorse and will certainly prove to the world at large that Kittitas County comes into existence with a queenly natural dowry.

The trip from Swauk Prairie to Ellensburgh was
a 17 mile wagon ride down Horse Canyon and up over Hayward hill. The trip to Thorp was a 12 mile ride down Horse Canyon and up Hayward hill with an even steeper descent to a ford of the Yakima River. The trading post at McCallum offered a much easier place for trading.
Shopping for the Miners

Once the Swauk mining camp formed there was an opportunity for someone to open a store to supply the camp. Although gold was discovered in 1873, the camp did not really grow until the mid 1880’s. After the initial rush, most miners thought the camp was already mined out and it wasn’t until hydraulic mining was introduced and miners also found the quartz veins that the camp prospered. Initially all supplies came from Ellensburg until the first local store was established at what is now called Lauderdale, a
place on Swauk Creek at First Creek. Lauderdale had a trading post, a stage stop, a post office, and a school. In the early 1890's a boarding house and post office were started on Swauk Creek at Williams Creek, and called Liberty. A little later similar businesses were established on Williams Creek at Lyons Gulch and called Meaghersville.

Crossroads at Lauderdale Junction

The present junction of Highways 97 and 970 was one time the crossroads for wagon traffic in the upper county. The location was originally called McCallum on early maps. It then became known as Virden and later as Lauderdale. On today's maps it does not have a name, it is just the junction of two highways.

During the era of wagon roads in the 1880's and 1890's the area was the crossroads for traffic between Cle Elum, Thorp and Ellensburg and the gold mines on Swauk Creek (Liberty) and Peshastin Creek (Blewett.) Wagons could not make it through the Yakima River canyon between Cle Elum and Ellensburg nor could wagons make it through the Peshastin River gorge between the old gold mining camp of Blewett and Wenatchee. All supplies for both the Liberty and the Blewett mining camps had to come from Ellensburg or Cle Elum through the junction at McCallum. The wagon road south from McCallum went through Horse Canyon and then split, one branch going down Dry Creek to Ellensburg and the other over Hayward Hill to Thorp.

Peter McCallum was the first to have a commercial business at the Lauderdale Junction. The traveler of the day used horses and horses require a “stage stop.” Peter McCallum’s descendents have described his pioneering effort in the book “A History of Kittitas County Washington, 1989,” page 638. A portion of the description is as follows:

“In the spring of 1882, Peter (McCallum) and two friends hiked across Snoqualmie Pass via a narrow Indian trail, leading a horse packed with equipment to sell to miners in the Swauk camps, and to search for land. Peter homesteaded 160 acres in Horse Canyon in August, 1882. He built a log cellar where Sarah and his three children joined him in October, 1883. He purchased 320 acres of railroad land that joined the homestead, 160 acres of it in 1891. He sold vegetables, beef, chicken, eggs, milk, cream, butter, cheese, pigs, cured hams and bacon to the camp of miners on the Swauk. He opened McCallum post office and store in his home, which was also used as a land office. He freighted goods from The Dalles, Oregon, to Liberty, and hauled much gold from the mines to Ellensburg, which he sent to the U.S. Mint. He opened a larger store and post office on Swauk Creek. He gave land above the road from where Virden School now stands for the McCallum School (District 15).”

The McCallum Post Office is also described in the book “Postmarked Washington, Chelan, Douglas and Kittitas Counties” by Guy Reed Ramsey, page 53:

“Peter McCallum and his wife Sarah (Harrison) were among the first farmers to homestead just south of the Swauk Mining District. In August 1882 they filed a homestead on 160 acres and immediately began to develop a farm. Other settlers followed suit, and McCallum saw an opportunity to serve both farmers and miners with a grocery and post office. His post office, established in 1884, was the first post office in the Kittitas Valley proper west of Ellensburg and north of the Yakima River. In 1892 Postmaster McCallum was elected County Commissioner on the Democratic ticket. He served in that capacity for two terms. In that same year the Liberty post office was established just four miles to the north and soon Liberty became a thriving town. Cle Elum and Teanaway had been established to the southwest. As a result the McCallum office was no longer needed to serve the area. Peter McCallum opened a grocery business in Seattle in 1897 and soon afterwards his post office was discontinued. He retained ownership of his farm lands, however, and in 1902 he returned to Cle Elum.”

Cars Replace Horses

In the 1920s the method of travel was changing to the automobile. The Lauderdale family responded to that need with a new Lodge for travelers and a “service station” for their cars. Charles (Frank) Lauderdale came to the area in 1893 when he bought a store in Liberty from Dexter Shoudy. In 1921 his son, Henry, built the

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Lauderdale Lodge and service station. The lodge building still stands today.

The service station changed hands a number of times over the years. The Gault family ran the station from 1936 to 1941. C. P. and Elma Arrowsmith bought the buildings and leased the land from 1941 until 1961. Joe Micheletto owned it from 1961 to 1968, Ralph and Henrietta Fackler from 1968 to 1971 and Bill and Jerry Snyder from 1971 to 1973 at which time the State Highway Department realigned the highway and eliminated the station. Today when you stop at the intersection of highway 970 and highway 97 you are right on spot where the old Lauderdale service station once stood. There is no indication that the place was once called McCallum, then Virden and finally Lauderdale. Today maps just show it as the intersection between highway 970 and highway 97.
“Old Liberty”—1912. The Swauk mining camp came to be called “Liberty” when the post office was established in 1892. The first post office was in the log building that became the “Chic Cafe” later and is not visible, hidden by the trees on the left in this picture. The camp and post office no longer exists. Meaghersville, now called Liberty, is two miles up the valley—it still exists.  

Photo courtesy of Kittitas County Historical Museum.

Gold Miners Create a Town and a State Highway

Gold was discovered in Swauk Creek in 1873, just four years after the first settlers arrived in the Kittitas Valley, and the small mining camp that followed played an important part in the development of the County. The initial rush to Swauk Creek involved most of the pioneer settlers of Kittitas County and there were great expectations for the gold fields. Two mining camps evolved, both of which came to be called “Liberty.” Unlike many mining camps, Liberty did not boom and then bust. It rose and fell, certainly, but it did not become a ghost town. Instead, it became a living ghost town that still exists today.

The highway the miners created is known as the “Blewett Pass” highway today. The Swauk and the Peshastin were two mining districts formed in the 1870’s. One was where Liberty is located today and the other is over Blewett Pass where only a historic marker exists today. The mining districts were connected by an Indian trail and as the Peshastin district developed, the Indian trail became a pack animal trail because supplies had to be hauled from Ellensburg or Cle Elum through the Swauk and over the Wenatchee mountain range to build the mining camp that eventually became known as “Blewett.” In the 1890’s when large machinery was needed in Blewett mines, the miners built and maintained the wagon road themselves. Hence, when the first maps were made, the pass over the Wenatchee mountains
Meaghersville (Liberty) Looking West—1905. The school house sat on the hill overlooking the town while the community hall sat below it on the main road about in the middle of the camp. This picture, looking west from the east end of camp, was taken about 1905, after the school was built but before the front porch was added. The two story building in the foreground was the Liberty hotel. It is still standing as are a number of the building shown in this picture. The camp was called Meaghersville until 1912 when the post office was moved from the Liberty camp on the Swauk; the camp was then called Liberty, as it is today.

Photo from Wes Engstrom collection, photographer unknown.

Gold Discovered in Swauk Creek

The Swauk Mining District was formed in 1873 after gold was discovered in Swauk Creek. The discovery was at a gravel bar a few hundred feet north of the present Liberty Road turnoff from Highway 97. There are many stories about the event. The earliest accounts were in the form of letters to the editor of the Walla Walla Union, the closest newspaper published at the time of discovery. Seattle, of course, was closer but there wasn’t a road over the mountains yet. All trade with the Kittitas valley was from the south,
much of which came through Walla Walla. The following article was probably the first announcement of the gold strike in the Swauk. It was as follows:

**WALLA WALLA UNION**

Oct. 18, 1873.

**Discovery of Gold Mines**

Quite an excitement in Yakima County from our regular correspondent.

Kittitas Valley W. T. Oct 18, 1873.

I write you in a hurry to let you know that important gold discoveries have been made in the mountains north of Kittitas on a small creek called the Smock. Ten men made the discovery some three weeks since. They kept the thing secret until a few days ago. An Indian messenger was dispatched to Mr. Bull for him to come forthwith — that they had struck a good thing. Mr. Bull got the news in the evening, and started in two hours, it was dark when he left. Persons left at all hours of the night. Seventy persons were on the ground in less than two days.

The specimens I saw were coarse, weighing respectively, 1/2 ounce, $5.20 and $4.37. I saw about $70 of the precious stuff at the store of Shoudy and Dennis. There will be 2,000 men here in less than two days. The news has gone over to Seattle several days since. Mr. Stubbs, who is at work in the interest of the Walla Walla
and Seattle railroad, left a few days ago. No person has time to talk railroad now.

I do not want to be understood that the gold is all coarse like the nuggets I have mentioned, but some of the chunks are clear gold, and some have quartz in them, but these weighed in my presence are almost entirely free from quartz. Everybody has left — all my neighbors have gone, married and unmarried.

There is no doubt of the existence of gold in paying quantities. The discovery party sent down some $300. Gold is coming down and goods are going up—in a double sense.

I write you this at two o’clock in the morning. Will leave in a couple of hours. All work has ceased in a measure. The all absorbing topic is the new mines which are distant only about twenty-five miles—good trail all the way. A good wagon road can soon be made into the mines. The stream upon which they are situated enters the west of the valley, and joins the Yakima some twelve miles above here.

I have never witnessed a greater excitement. The house of Shoudy have claims. One of the latter has been up and returned and the other left immediately on his return.

You can tell your friend that I think the mines will pay, but there cannot be much done before next spring. The snow falls pretty deep there, and the nights, the boys say, are cool now. An ounce piece has been taken out. I did not see it, but persons who did tell me so. I have seen several men who have been up and returned. They have twenty days to represent their claims in. The discovery party passed their laws and got everything set before they proclaimed the news. Joe Davis and two of the Goodwin boys are of the number.

I am of the opinion that this will lead to a thorough prospecting of the adjacent country, and will lead to more important discoveries in the Cascade Mountains. The Smock affords plenty of water for mining purposes. I did not learn how deep it is to the bedrock, but my impression is the diggings are shallow and easily worked. It is my firm belief that it is a good camp. I will know more about it in a few days. You will hear from me again.

D.J.S.

Note: “D.J.S.” was probably Dexter J. Shoudy, the son of John A. Shoudy, the founder of Ellensburgh. John Shoudy and his son, Dexter, were actively involved in the development of the Swauk and Peshastin mines, both as merchants and mine owners.

A second letter shortly after the discovery probably gives the most accurate description of the event as the information was supplied by a “Goodwin” presumably one of the two Goodwin brothers in the discovery party.

**THE WEEKLY PACIFIC TRIBUNE (TACOMA)**

**November 14, 1873**

**The Swauk River Mines**

The Walla Walla Statesman of the 1st furnishes us with the following concerning the new gold mines in our territory:

For many years it has been known that gold in large quantities existed in what is known as the Yakima country, but just precisely where none were able to discover. The belief was strengthened by the fact that on several occasions Indians belonging to the Yakima reservation had sold to the traders at The Dalles considerable quantities of coarse gold. On being questioned, the Indians invariably refused to disclose where they had obtained the precious metal. Confident that gold was to be found in paying quantities, several prospecting parties were organized. They all found the color, but none were successful in finding sufficient to warrant them in remaining. The reports reached the ears of several men residing near Yakima City, and confident of the existence of gold in that locality, organized themselves into a prospecting party, and about the first of August last started out, fully prepared to thoroughly explore a large extent of country. After an examination they concluded to commence operations on a small creek which empties into the Weenatchie. At the expiration of ten days a clean up was made, disclosing that they had only realized about 75 cents a day to the man. This meager showing discourage the party and they at once determined to return home. On the 20th of September, after traveling several days, they camped on the bank of the Swauk, a stream of about the size of Mill Creek. While some were preparing the evening meal, others were examining the stream with the vague hope that possibly they might be fortunate enough to “strike it.” Raking around among the loose dirt near the water’s edge one of the men discovered a piece of gold worth about six bits. Encouraged by this favorable indication, the men commenced crevicing the bed rock, which in places was exposed. Their exertions were soon rewarded by the sight of a $12 nugget. During the afternoon and before supper, the party had secured in the neighborhood of $40. The journey homeward was indefinitely postponed. The next day they prospect up the creek for a distance of a quarter of a mile. The
The result of the day’s work was $164, near $25 to the man, there being seven in the party. The stream was then explored for a distance of six miles, and the farther they went up the richer the prospects. The dirt from the hills from either side of the creek averages seventy-five cents to the pan. Wherever the bed of the creek is exposed, gold in large quantities is to be found. In some places the water is quite deep, and to remedy this the course of the creek will have to be turned, which can be accomplished without difficulty. The gold is coarse; the largest piece found so far weighing $180 and very much resembles the Kootenai dust. Three hundred and fifty claims have been taken up and recorded. The diggings are two hundred miles from Walla Walla and sixty-five from Yakima City. Along the creek there is heavy growth of timber, and therefore, there will be no lack of lumber for mining purposes. It is thought the miners will be able to work through the winter, as the weather in that locality is mild. For the main facts we are indebted to Mr. Goodwin, who came here from the diggings.

A Pautzke Photo of Hydraulic Mining in 1899. Otto Pautzke was a pioneer photographer in Ellensburg and took a series of photos in Liberty in July of 1899. This photo shows a hydraulic mining operation just west of Liberty. The water was from Boulder Creek through the Meagher ditch. A Pautzke photo in the Wes Engstrom collection.

The Walla Walla Union newspaper had an update on the mines the next spring:

**WALLA WALLA UNION**

Feb. 28, 1874

In his regular letter our Kittitas correspondent has this to say of the Swauk mines:

There have been several new arrivals this week from Walla Walla of persons who are going to try their luck in the Swauk diggings, or on the other side of the range. Some of the people of this valley who took up claims among the first are now either working their claims themselves or doing so by proxy. A miner's meeting was held last week at which time it was decided that representing day should be the 15th of March, instead of the 15th of June. At the last meeting the time was set in June because it was thought that little or nothing could be done before that time to prospect and open up claims. There is water plenty now, and in May or June there will be entirely too much. It snows more
or less daily, and sometimes nightly too, on the Swauk. At one time snow fell to the depth of 18 inches in 24 hours. And my informant says there is now about 2 1/2 feet of snow where they are mining, and further up it is much deeper. It is of such depth that snow shoes are required to reach two miles above discovery, and fifteen miles up no person knows how deep it is. I have seen good specimens of gold quartz. Gold was visible all through it. If I may be allowed to judge, it is rich, but it was found some fifteen miles up the Swauk on the divide between the creek and the Teanawanes. This runs parallel with the former and lies to the westward. Discovery is being worked right along during all the good weather. They had a clean up last week after a run of two days with six hands. They obtained $78. There was a nugget got out of this run that weighed $12. This run is some 200 to 300 feet below the first spot of ground worked. This information I gleaned from a hand who worked for the company during the time. You will see by this that the precious stuff is not confined to one particular spot on the discovery claims. The French company, spoken of before, are making preparation to work the ground they have in earnest. They have their own blacksmith, and, he has just finished making three dozen picks for their own use. If there is gold in their ground they will be most likely to find it. They have every confidence in the mines and think that they will get a good return for their labor ultimately.

**The Gold Discovery Remembered.**

The story of discovering in the Swauk becomes more complete as time goes by. The most authentic version appears in a book published 30 years after the event.


During 1873 occurred an event of great moment in the settlement of the future Kittitas county, namely, the discovery of gold in the Swauk region. As early as 1867 a prospecting party, of which N. Thomas Goodwin, Benton Goodwin and Edward Towner were members, had passed through this country, and while following one of the many Indian trails, namely, that leading to the Peshastin district, had made a discovery, the importance of which they did not realize at the time. While camped for their midday meal near Swauk creek, Benton Goodwin busied himself in panning one of the bars of the stream. He was ignorant of the appearance of native gold, but suspecting that some yellow particles he found in the bottom of his pan might be the precious metal, he showed them to Towner, the only experienced prospector in the party. The latter pronounced the find gold. His statements were received with considerable doubt by the party in general, which passed on, having first jocularly named

**A Gold Nugget Worth $1,120 in 1901.** The nugget was taken from the Henton-McCauley mine, the Elliott, in 1901. In 1901 the price of pure gold was set at $24 an ounce and the going price for Liberty nuggets was $16 an ounce, indicating that Liberty gold nuggets were 16/24 or 66 percent pure gold. Therefore the nugget must have weighed 70 ounces, 46 of which was pure gold. At today’s value of $1,600 per ounce, it would be valued at $74,000. However, its specimen value to a mineral collector would be much higher. Dr. McCauley took the nugget to New York to exhibit it at the Buffalo Exposition; from there its fate is unknown. Picture from “History of Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas Counties Washington, 1904,” Interstate Publishing Company, Page 284.
the place where the gold was found Discovery bar.

During the ensuing two or three years the region was prospected occasionally, but no one found enough gold to warrant the establishment of a camp. In the fall of 1873, however, a party of men met with better success than had any of their predecessors. In this fortunate company were Newton Thomas Goodwin and Benton Goodwin, who had been in the party that made the discovery six years previous, also W. H. Beck, George Mycock, whose name was later changed by the legislature to Starr, and a young Kentuckian named D. Y. Borden. The men were very much dispirited, having been unsuccessful in their quest of fortune and being exhausted and nearly out of provisions, but Benton and N. T. Goodwin accepted the proposal of the Kentuckian to prospect Swauk creek. Benton Goodwin soon discovered a small nugget. He called the others to him, who soon found a pot hole in the center of the stream. To dig down to bedrock was the work of but a short time, as there was nothing in the cavity but wash gravel. From a pan full of dirt taken out of the bottom of the hole, Borden washed a small nugget worth about fifteen cents. The rest of the men were summoned. Leaving their sizzling supper to take care of itself, they set to work panning the gravel from the pot hole, and within an hour they had over five dollars worth of coarse dust and nuggets, one of the latter weighing a dollar.

Next day the party divided its forces, Starr and Beck going below and the rest above the camp. Those who ascended the creek found a spot where, as evidenced by the protruding roots of a large fir tree, the bedrock was close to the surface. Digging here, Borden took out a nugget weighing over an ounce, and worth about $16. He also found gravel that yielded thirty to forty cents to the pan.

News of the discovery soon precipitated a rush of miners and others and ere long there were many hundreds on the ground. That fall the Swauk creek mining district was organized with D. Y. Borden as the first recorder. It was agreed that claims should be 200 feet long and from rimrock to rimrock. Soon the creek was located from its mouth, five miles below Discovery bar, to the forks fifteen miles up the stream, but the miners were unable to find gold in paying quantities except on and in the immediate vicinity of the bar. As a result most of the people left as speedily as they had come, and that winter less than fifty were there. These consisted of the Discovery Company (then increased to twelve by the addition of John P. Beck, G. W. Goodwin, Al. Churchill, David Munn, James and Samuel Bates and another), and three other companies, namely Walter A. Bull & company, on Starr bar, a French association led by Joseph Superneau, operating on Williams creek, and a co-operative company at the mouth of that stream. The Williams creek miners met with little success that winter, though subsequently some rich ground was discovered there. Indeed the explorations and operations of the first three years failed to bring to light the wealth of the region, except on Discovery bar, where, in the spring of 1874, sluices were built of whipsawed lumber and

Liberty Crystalline Wire Gold Specimen—2006. Crystalline wire gold, found mostly on Flag Mountain just east of Liberty, is much sought by mineral collectors to this day. It is a rare form of gold found in only about a half dozen places in the world. There are displays of Liberty crystalline wire gold in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. and in mineral collections around the world. This particular specimen probably came from Ollie Jordin’s old mine on Flag Mountain. Ollie’s mine is still being worked for specimen gold. The gold specimen shown was originally encased in calcite which was etched away by acid, leaving the very delicate features intact. Sometimes crystalline gold is found in a pocket of mud and only needs to be washed with water to reveal the structure. 

Photo by Wes Engstrom.
where an ounce a day to the man was averaged that season. But the next year the lead played out and in 1876 the mines were abandoned. In the late ‘seventies, activity was renewed in the Swauk district: lost leads were discovered; the region became a prominent producer and ever since it has continued to yield considerable quantities of gold. Many who were attracted to the country by the first discoveries remained to assist in the development of Kittitas county’s latent resources, so the finding of the yellow metal may be considered one of the most important events of the early days, not alone in its direct but in its indirect effects.

Two Mining Camps Started

There were only two mining camps within the Swauk Mining District and they both were named Liberty, not at the same time but in sequence. One still exists and the other is just a memory. The first mining camp was in the area where gold was first discovered on Swauk Creek. That is the area where the present Liberty Road connects with Highway 97. It was called Swauk. In April of 1892 a Post Office was established which the locals wanted to call the Swauk Post Office. However, the postal authorities did not approve the name because there already was a Sauk Post Office on Sauk River and it would be confusing to also have a Swauk Post Office on Swauk Creek; the two names sound too much alike. The story goes that the postmaster, “Bull” Nelson (Gustaf Nilson), had invited some of the miners into the new post office and told them “You’re at liberty here boys, so set down, lay down or do as you please.” Later, when the postal inspector asked for a name different from Swauk, the boys suggested “Liberty.” Thus Liberty, the name of their camp, represents freedom and miners like freedom.

In the 1890’s stores started opening in both the Swauk camp and in Meaghersville on Williams Creek. When the post office opened in the Swauk camp the McCallum post office closed and the Swauk camp became known as Liberty.

The second mining camp was on Williams Creek about two miles east of the first camp. By 1895 most of the activity had moved to this camp, called Meaghersville. (It was pronounced “Mearsville.”) In July of 1912 the Post Office was moved to Meaghersville and instead of changing the name of the Post Office, the name of the camp gradually changed to Liberty. From old photographs it appears the “Liberty Post Office” sign was simply taken off the building in old Liberty and put on a store in Meaghersville (Its possible that the entire building may have been moved, Post Office and all). There wasn’t any formal paper filed anywhere changing the name. Only a change of location was filed with the Post Office Department, changing the location of the post office but not changing its name. Map makers have been confused ever since, and some state maps still show Liberty on Highway 97 and Meaghersville where present Liberty is.

Over time the Post Office moved to at least five different stores in Meaghersville (Liberty) and in 1951 the post office was closed. Mail is now handled through the Cle Elum Post Office.

Most of the structures in Old Liberty were destroyed when the highway was improved in the late 1930’s. The last structure in the original Liberty location, the Chic Cafe, burned in 1962 and now no trace of the old camp remains.

Long Time Resident Remembers How It Was

There are few old-timers still living who can remember how it was in Liberty in the “old days.” There is one person, however, who came to Liberty as a bride who did write down her thoughts about the place before she died.

Liberty in 1938
By Henrietta Fackler

My first acquaintance with the town of Liberty occurred in August of 1938. I was 18 years old at the time when I visited there with my husband, Ralph Fackler, soon after our marriage on August 2, 1938. We were on a honeymoon tour of the state of Washington and Liberty was one of our agenda listings.

My husband was eager to introduce me to the historic gold mining town of Liberty and the friends he had made there on earlier visits.

The town was situated 25 miles north of Ellensburg lying just 2 miles off the Blewett Pass highway. After leaving Yakima this was the route we followed and, as we turned off the
highway onto the Liberty road, I was caught up into my husband’s enthusiasm and could hardly wait for my first glimpse of the town. At last! There it was! The antiquated remains of a once thriving gold mining town. Houses with weathered board and batten exteriors altered in color to a dark brown or dull golden yellow lined the roadway on both sides and among them were four log cabins. There was still a United States Post Office, community hall, gas station and store in existence. There were hardly any modern conveniences in the town. Most people had wells and used a pitcher pump to draw their water. The citizens used coal oil lamps, gas lanterns or candles to light their homes. I felt as though we had passed through some kind of time lapse ending up here in this quaint small village.

Ralph suggested that we stop at the home of Lela and Ollie Jordin who he had enjoyed visiting with at various times. The Jordins greeted us cordially and, after we had chatted for a time, they encouraged us to spend the night with them and attend a dance to be held in the community hall.

The four of us danced until the wee hours of the morning. We met many other of the townspeople at the dance who were interesting and cordial. We hoped that we would have the opportunity to get better acquainted with them in time.

We slept the night in the upstairs bedroom of the Jordin home and were delighted of the opportunity to sleep on a genuine feather mattress.

The Jordin house, during the 1890’s, served as the town boarding house, and was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Needham.

Ollie had mined in the Swauk along with his brothers Amos, Clarence and Al at an earlier time, but left the area and settled in Spokane, Washington, and there he met and married his

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Early Log Cabin Store In Old Liberty—1900’s. Gold was discovered in Swauk Creek in 1873, about a quarter mile above where this building was located. Subsequently a small mining camp sprang up with stores, post office and this large two story log building. At various times it was the Carson boarding house, the Lauderdale boarding house, and the Livingston store. The mining camp was simply called “Swauk” until 1892 when a post office called Liberty was established there. The name of the mining camp then became “Liberty.” When the post office was moved, in 1912, two miles east to the Meaghersville mining camp, the Meaghersville camp was then called “Liberty” as it is to this day. The old Liberty camp on the Swauk no longer exists.

*Al Nicholson Photo in the Fred Krueger collection.*
wife, Lela, and went to work for Washington Water and Power Company.

Ollie had a premonition the 16th of September in 1932, which was also his birthday, to return once again to Liberty and join his brothers on a prospecting venture.

While out prospecting on Swauk Creek Ollie by chance ran into Roy Lilne who offered to sell his worthless claim on Flag mountain. Lilne had salted his claim and the unsuspecting Ollie paid him $200 down and was given another three days to cough up $500. Where to get another $500 was going to be a problem for Ollie. Then he recalled that before leaving Spokane, his boss had told him that he would be willing to go in as a partner and loan the necessary capital should he happen to come on to something that looked promising. Ollie wired him immediately asking for a loan of $500, but was turned down.

Ollie was forced to go out and borrow the necessary capital to pay off Lilne. Meanwhile, Lilne was back in town bragging how he had fleeced Ollie and had sold him a lemon of a mine.

Ollie Jordin worked that so-called mine for about three weeks, he was down to his last four bits, when he struck it rich. Mrs. Jordin, when Ollie struck pay dirt, wasn’t one bit surprised because she had the feeling that he would.

The Ellensburg Capital came out with this quote at the time of Ollie’s find: “Ollie Jordin uncovered the richest gold in the Swauk area in more than a quarter of a century. In less than two hours, in a pocket two feet long and eighteen inches wide, the man took out twenty-six one to four pound avoirdupois pure gold nuggets estimated at $10,000 and took it to the Cle Elum bank. The gold is heavy wire gold so pure it needs no refining. In addition Mr. Jordin placed in the vault many fruit jars filled with gold not so pure and three hundred pounds of gold ore. Armed guards are protecting the property night and day.”

What Ollie actually took out that day was $5000 in chunks and in an overall period of time he took out from $70,000 to $80,000 worth of gold.

Ollie repeatedly told the story of his big strike and laughingly recounted how on the day after his big strike he walked up to Roy Lilne with chunks of gold in both hands and told him that he had picked all the lemons out of the mine he had sold him. According to Ollie, old Lilne liked to had a fit.

Latter that same year Ollie and Lela and one of their daughters and her husband drove to Chicago in a brand new red car to take in the Worlds Fair.

The Evans Family Connection To Meaghersville

Bartema E. Evans, the daughter of Mary Malinda and Simeon Evans, married Bert Fletcher in 1897. Their first home was in Meaghersville where Bert and his partner, Billy Turner, had a saloon. The saloon no longer exists and an article published in the local Ellensburg paper in 1940 preserves its history.

ELLENBURG DAILY RECORD
January 18, 1940
Liberty
by Harry A. Kirwin.

A landmark in Liberty, well known to old timers, is being torn down, and I have been asked to tell the story as I pieced it together from the lips of the few who remember the days when Liberty was a live town, instead of a ghost town.

The old house was built about the time Grover Cleveland was running for president, and the records say that this was about the year 1896. The house stood originally where Gus Ziegel’s home now stands, and the first owners were Billy Turner and Bert Fletcher, of Seattle. They both have now gone to their rewards. Turner is remembered as a hack driver in the coast city, when horses were the only means of locomotion.

Coming to Liberty, which was a prosperous town then, they opened up a saloon that did a thriving business for about three years. Then they left and took their fixtures and bar with them to open up another saloon, in Yakima.

Turner died there and Fletcher went to a place near Wapato and started a fruit orchard, about the year 1910. He had with him his wife, whom he married in Liberty. Her last name was Evans, and she lived in the house that is now next to the service station. She is believed to be still alive and living near Wapato.

The old house is remembered for its gambling tables and many a big poker game was held in the back room.

There was no prohibition in those days and whiskey, wines and beer were available every day in the week. The owners tended bar and were well liked by the miners who spent their money freely. They managed to keep their place in an orderly manner and no rough stuff was
permitted. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that there never has been a killing in Liberty.

There were plenty of miners in Liberty then and the hills were dotted everywhere with mining operations and the men made good money.

The only lights then were kerosene lamps for gasoline lamps had not been invented yet. Candles were much used then, too. Everyone seemed to be working, mostly for themselves, as old timers remember.

The old building was about 20 feet wide and 50 feet long, and it had a peak roof, and an attic 12 feet high was over the saloon. The building had one large room that served as the barroom, and in back there were several small rooms used as an office, storage space, gambling room, kitchen and a bedroom. The bar itself was about 20 feet long, and there were plenty of mirrors on the walls. Most of the business was for spot cash.

When Turner and Fletcher departed with their bar furnishings, the saloon was closed for a long time. Then a Monahan family lived in it, and two boys of theirs are remembered by name—they were Jimmy and Johnny. Then a Mrs. King occupied the place and served lunches to the dancers who drifted over from Liberty hall, a block away. She also boarded miners.

Then Amos Jordin bought the place for $90.00 and moved in with his petite wife, Ina, and remodeled it inside to make it more habitable. In the meantime, the old house had been moved across the road and put in its present location. Amos moved in about the year 1903.

Billy Anderson, who is demolishing the house, informed us that the lumber used is still in good condition and in a state of good preservation. The lumber was cut by a sawmill operated by John Bloomquist, the father of Dolph, Charley and Frank, and an uncle of Amos by marriage. The sawmill was put up about the year 1895, where the Vining place is now. He then took it down eight or 10 years later and moved it to the Swauk, where Dolph’s

A Store in Old Liberty—1912. This may be the store building that Charles (Frank) Lauderdale bought in 1894 and ran as a mercantile and post office until 1898. It may be that this is the building that was moved from Old Liberty to Meaghersville in 1912. After the post office was moved, Meaghersville then came to be called Liberty as it still is today. All the buildings in Old Liberty have disappeared and there isn’t even a marker to say a gold mining camp once existed there. Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection.
Store and Post Office in Meaghersville (Liberty)—1914. This may be the store and post office that was moved from the old Liberty camp, two miles down the road, in 1912. The automobile appears to be a 1910 Thomas Flyer similar to one owned by John A. Gellarly of Wenatchee who was the first to drive a car over Colockum pass. In 1914 William D. Ford was the postmaster. The building no longer exists.  

Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection.

house is now. It burned down about the year 1916 [1921], and was never rebuilt.

Two children were born in the house to Mr. and Mrs. Jordin and one also died.

Fire visited the house six time at least, but Liberty's bucket brigade, sometimes armed with snow shovels, always fought them successfully.

Many prominent mining men have stopped at the old house and many important deals were made under it hospitable roof.

When the Jordins suffered that last fire, a few weeks ago, they decided to move next door, and demolish the house.

Many events run through the minds of the owners today as they view the end of their former home. They remember the year 1916, for instance, when the snow came down to a depth of six feet, and a tunnel was dug through the great bank from their door to the road so that they could get in and out.

Mr. and Mrs. John Powles, parents of Mrs. Jordin, once occupied the old house, and they, too, gave suppers to the dancers of yester year.

And so another landmark tying Liberty to the past disappears.

Note: Harry Kirwin, the author of the above article, was another of the many colorful characters that somehow find their way to Liberty.

Harry Kirwin was born August 3, 1891 in New York. He had only completed the seventh grade when he was orphaned at the age of 13. Rather than go into an orphanage, he signed on as deck hand on a ship going to South America. He jumped ship in Argentina and spent 16 years working where he could. He became a photographer, a reporter, a translator (fluent in Spanish, French, Italian, German and Portuguese) and a paper publisher before returning to New York where he worked as a reporter and photographer. He traveled to Seattle with the promise of a job. The job fell through and he worked for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and a newspaper in Spokane before going back to sea.
The Humphrey Monahan House in Meaghersville—1904. The new Liberty school building under construction is in the background. This house was owned by Bert and Lizzie (Bartema Elizabeth Evans) Fletcher and on February 25, 1901, they sold it to Humphrey Monahan who lived in it until 1906. Mamie Caldwell then bought the home, moved it next door and added it to her house which still exists in Liberty. 
*Photo courtesy of Kathleen (Monahan) Nebout, photographer unknown.*

While at sea, he was injured and ended up coming to Liberty in 1939 to recuperate. He had married Marguerite C. McConihe whose father, L. F. McConihe, had set up the first mill in Williams Creek. Kirwin had no money and managed to survive by writing for both the Cle Elum Miner Echo and Ellensburg Record newspapers, taking and selling photographs and receiving a lot of charity from friends and neighbors. When World War II broke out he left Liberty and became a captain’s yeoman and ship’s photographer aboard the Rescuer, a salvage ship manned by a civilian crew under control of the Navy. He was recommended for a hero’s medal from the Soviet Union for saving the life of a seaman aboard a Soviet freighter the Rescuer was attempting to salvage.

Later Kirwin wrote and took pictures for the Marine Digest magazine and wrote a history picture book, “This Was Seafaring.” He was admitted as a special student at the University of Washington after passing entrance examinations and in 1948, just before his 57th birthday, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He then went on to get a master’s degree and teaching certificate. He died in Seattle at age 96 with no surviving family and no money. A lost soul with no one to remember him.

The Liberty Townsite Faces Challenges

In the 1960’s a large mining operation attempted to evict the residents of Liberty and mine the townsite itself. The residents resisted forcibly and the case ended up in the State Supreme Court before it was settled in favor of the residents. In the process a number of buildings, including the community hall, were destroyed.
Then in the 1970’s the Forest Service attempted to evict the residents, claiming they were squatters on federal land. The residents believed they were in a legally created mining townsite and much research was done to find the piece of paper setting it aside as a townsite. The piece of paper was never found but enough documentation was found to create a Liberty Historic District. The case ended up in the United States Congress before it was settled. After 10 years of conflict the residents gained clear title to their land by buying it from the government.

The townsite survived all those challenges and today exists as an example to others that you can fight city hall (the government) and win.

The story of how the residents first stood off a challenge from a mining company and then a bigger challenge from the Forest Service can best be told by the writings of Henrietta Fackler. For years she led the Liberty residents in their seemingly impossible task of saving their town.

A Mining Company Threatens Liberty Townsite
by Henrietta Fackler

On March 29, 1963, the Golden Thunderbird Mining Company (later named Gold Placers Inc.), with Virgil Hiner as general manager bought the holdings of Nugget Properties, Inc. There were patented and unpatented claims included in the sale. These claims were situated along Williams and Boulder Creeks beginning near Deer Gulch. Among the unpatented claims was the New Discovery, and it was occupied by the Liberty townsite. Gold miners and families
had begun to settle along Williams Creek in 1883. By 1890 the surface of the New Discovery was measured out into town lots and residences and business buildings were constructed. This settlement was recognized as a town called Meaghersville (pronounced Mearsville) by Washington State and Kittitas County.

Trouble for the town residents and property owners began to surface soon after the sale of the mining properties. Virgil Hiner tacked up notices on all the town buildings which stated: “In compliance with Forest Service regulations prohibiting the use of unpatented mining claims for cabin and home sites, this structure must be moved from this claim immediately.” He also drove through the town and using a loud speaker demanded that the people vacate the claim because it now belonged to the Thunderbird Mining Company. The mining company and the residents alike appealed to the Forest Service for help, but they adopted a hands off policy. Personnel of the mining company continued to display a belligerent attitude toward the townspeople and it soon became apparent they would use any means at their command to assert what they believed to be their right of ownership to the Liberty townsite, the New Discovery claim.

In the meantime the company began work on the Bigney claim that lay adjacent to the Liberty townsite. Noise from their machinery droned incessantly through the pine studded valley and the great iron jaws of their equipment tore viciously into the overburden of the Bigney claim. As they worked they heaped huge piles of tailings and debris onto a portion of the town, and rocks and dirt soon begin to slide into the clear mountain waters of Williams Creek.

When the townspeople of Liberty made no effort to vacate their properties, Virgil Hiner and his cohorts burned down the town hall and a log cabin that at an earlier time served the community as a United States Post Office. The residents were highly incensed by this hostile act and mourned the loss of these historical building. It was learned later in time that
Fourth of July Celebration In Liberty—1916. The entire county was invited to a two day Fourth of July celebration in Liberty in 1916. The dancing lasted until 4 a.m. when a case of dynamite was set off on Kingfisher Ridge to announce breakfast was being served. Below: a gentleman’s tug-of-war. The participants only removed their coats—not their hats. Everyone was dressed in their Sunday best. Pautske prints in the Wes Engstrom collection.
The Liberty Community Hall—1916. The community hall was the biggest building in camp. Built by the miners in 1892, it was the place for community events. The “Wildcat Dance Hall” title for the community hall was for the Fourth of July celebration in 1916 when most of the upper county people must have been in town for the celebration. There was five cent non-alcoholic “Malt Beverage” from the Roslyn Brewery called Cascade Pride for sale (prohibition was in effect), as well as tug-of-war contests, double-jacking contests, great food and ice cream with everyone dressed in their Sunday best. When the old hall was no longer safe in 1944, it was torn down and in 1948 the old Liberty School was moved down from the hill to become the new community hall. 

Photo from Wes Engstrom collection, photographer Pautzke.

District Ranger, Warren Drake, was in favor of the burning.

The buildings were burned during the day, while the men were away at work. The women in town were intimidated by this aggressive action and were at a loss as to what they should do. One of the women climbed the hillside and helplessly watched the act of desecration, while her tears coursed down both sides of her cheeks.

The town hall was a former school house built in 1904 and attended by children of the district up until 1939, when Liberty School District 44 was consolidated with the Cle Elum School District. From that time until present the children have attended Cle Elum and Roslyn schools, and are transported there by bus.

When the school house was vacated the residents bought the building from County School Officials and converted it into the town hall. This was done as a replacement of the original hall built in 1892 that was torn down in 1944 because it had deteriorated to such a degree that town citizens felt it was no longer safe to use.

The community hall had always been the central gathering place for the people in the town and the whole of the surrounding community, and was used for multi-purposes, such as, Swauk Mining District miner’s meetings; Church and Sunday School services; weddings and receptions, bridal and baby showers; Saturday night dances, where gold nuggets were given away as door prizes; a poling place for the Swauk Precinct from 1892 until 1961; the Women’s Literary Society organized in 1904; and occasionally a theatrical presentation performed by traveling actors groups.
Hiner’s animosity toward the people grew in intensity and he continued with any means at hand to try and drive them out of their homes. His next venture was an attempt to divert all of Williams Creek into the town ditch. Fearing that the town would be washed out by this action two of the town’s women made an effort to stop Hiner and his co-workers. Elsie Hale held a rifle on the culprits, while Henrietta Fackler contacted the local State Game Department Warden to alert him of the infraction of state game laws about to take place. The warden soon arrived upon the scene and advised Hiner of the regulations of the game department that did not allow hydraulic projects such as, diverting a creek from its natural stream bed. He further stated, “That if Hiner attempted to continue with the violation he would be arrested on the spot.”

The next move made by Hiner to intimidate the townspeople was an attempt to cross the creek for the purpose of dumping huge loads of tailings, separated as residue from the gold ore, into the middle of the town. On the day this was to take place, Graham Thorne, a resident and World War II veteran patrolled the creek bank carrying a rifle that he was prepared to use if the occasion should arise. Fortunately, the game warden arrived in time to settle the matter and protect the creek waters from the trucks that would have driven through.

It was not long before a serious assault occurred, Clarence Jordin Jr. was attacked by Virgil Hiner and his brother while working in his yard. Clarence Jordin Jr. said he was hit on the head by one of the men’s pocket knife. There also was a third man present with the Hiner brothers. Jordin’s stepfather came to his defense, and between the two of them they fought off the onslaught perpetrated by the Hiner brothers and their friend. Jordin sued the Hiner brothers. He won the court decision and between the two of them they received a rather sizable sum to compensate for his injuries.

After the assault on Clarence Jordin Jr., several of the miners started packing their guns. The County Sheriff became fearful that there would be a loss of life, and made the remark that the Liberty area was a powder keg ready to explode.

Hiner began to complain that he was unable to carry on with his legitimate mining operations, because of the Liberty occupants. He blamed the Forest Service for its refusal to prosecute what he felt was trespassers upon the land. He soon filed suit against the Liberty homeowners in an effort to evict them.

The Liberty residents hired Jack McSherry, a Cle Elum attorney, to defend them in the Kittitas County Superior Court. The decision made by Judge Cole was in favor of the residents based on the testimony of Amos Jordin, a long time resident in Liberty, that in an earlier time it was first named New Yakima, then Meaghersville. He testified to assisting Thomas Meagher and one David Long in surveying and dividing up the townsite into 100 foot frontage lots in the year 1885.

Virgil Hiner and company immediately filed an appeal to the State Supreme Court, but to no avail. The State Supreme Court handed down a decision in favor of the residents on August 10, 1967.

Jack McSherry set a precedent case in securing the decision in favor of the Liberty residents. Ordinarily cases concerning mining properties are held in the federal courts. The decision was based on the precept of estoppel and laches, with the explanation that various mining claimants spent years of acquiescence and silence while the Liberty inhabitants continued to live on the property they regarded as their own. However the Judge had stated: As against the United States, residents are squatters or mere occupiers of the land. It will avail them nothing to show that the buildings were built 10, 20, 50 or even 80 years ago, for no one can acquire by holding adversely to the United States.

Hiner and company did make one last appeal to the United States Supreme Court, but because of lack of support from the Forest Service and the length of time it would take to get their case before the court more than likely discouraged them, and they withdrew their appeal.

**Forest Service Challenges Liberty’s Existence**

Liberty has had a long running feud with the Forest Service, beginning when the Wenatchee Forest was formed in 1907. The miners didn’t like the Forest Service telling them what to do and the Forest Service didn’t think most of the people in the camp were really miners but instead were squatters on Federal land. The standoff came to a head in 1971 when the Forest Service attempted to evict the residents of Liberty and turn the site into a campground. The conflict was finally resolved in 1980 by an act of Congress allowing the present residents to purchase their property from the Federal government. The mining camp of Liberty, which once had 200 to 300 miners...
spread over many square miles, is now precisely defined as 15.94 acres. There are 18 houses and 11 full time residents. It is on the state and national historical registers as a place where the independent miner’s traditions still exists. Miners are still working in the surrounding hills in search of that elusive gold. Henrietta Fackler describes the conflict that began in 1971:

**Forest Service Claims Townsite Not Officially Recorded**

*by Henrietta Fackler*

According to 1872 mining laws, which were based on the peculiar customs usages and laws of the mining districts dating back to ancient times, miners within a plotted mining district could stake a mining townsite claim and hold it by occupation of the property to the time of patent, and there was no stipulation as to a specific time the patent should be applied for.

On the other hand, a mining claim is held by the claimant for an indefinite time by completing $100.00 worth of assessment work each year.

In the case of the Liberty Townsite claim, it was staked and platted long before the Forest Service was ever established. There were two streets within the town. One was named Main Street and ran from west to east through the middle of the town. The other street was called Swauk Avenue and began at the town hall crossing Main Street and stopping at the school house on the north side hill.

In January of 1971, members of the Ellensburg Ranger District, United States Forest Service, appeared in Liberty unexpectedly one day. They brought with them restrictive use-permits, an instrument allowing the residents to continue to live there under rigid terms conforming to Forest Service policy, and told the people that they had no alternative but to accept the use-permits or face eventual eviction from their homes. These agents of the Forest Service said, “You people in our opinion are considered to be squatters residing upon public lands, but because of your long tenure upon the land we have decided to try to resolve your occupancy problem by means of a use-permit.”

The people felt that the use permit was merely a sham offering and its only purpose was to coerce them into relinquishing all legal rights to their property. They refused to accept the permits, because they felt they had legal rights and title to their properties.

The people knew that their historic mining town would be destroyed by fire if they were evicted, because Andrew Wright, Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest, told them so. He said they planned to create a campground on the site. From that day forward American flags flew day and night over the Liberty townsite; a constant reminder of the imminent danger that threatened the town and its citizens. The people rallied from the initial shock of the Forest Service proposal, and began to explore all available resources and possible support that would be of benefit to them.

Attorney Jack McSherry was engaged to represent the Liberty residents and property owners. Jack McSherry had been a champion of the people for over 25 years. He outlined a plan of action for the people to take under consideration. He said, “Taking a government bureau into court and expecting to win is like butting your head against a stone wall.” He continued, “The better way to handle the situation would be to gain public interest and support by airing the problem through the news media and seeking political help.”

Letters were mailed to state and federal legislators, local and state newspapers, TV
stations, and radio stations. The people were overwhelmed by the response from the news media. The news items were eventually picked up and aired by the Associated Press, New York Times and French National News. Repeat TV specials were shown throughout the United States. Some of the local television stations that helped were: KOMO Channel 4 and KING Channel 5 in Seattle and KAPP TV and KIMA TV in Yakima. Local newspapers involved were: Grange News, Seattle PI, Tacoma Tribune, Ellensburg Daily Record, Northern Upper County Tribune, Yakima Herald and Wenatchee Daily World.

Petitions were circulated throughout Kittitas County and Washington State describing the perilous situation the Liberty citizens were faced with and the necessary support they must engender in order to save their homes and historic townsite. Many signatures of those offering support were collected by means of the petitions, and later in time, were included in the packet of legal documents sent to U.S. Representative Mike McCormack and Senators Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson.

The Liberty Coalition was organized as a non profit corporation and proved to be a formidable force in the on-going controversy with the Forest Service. The Liberty Coalition held monthly meetings within the town. They were attended by local officials, members of the State Parks and Recreation Board, Vista representatives, local historians, concerned citizens, old timers having once lived in Liberty, state legislators and Federal Congressmen. Coalition members carried on a low key campaign and never hesitated to invite the local forest ranger to their meetings and kept him informed of activities relating to the Liberty crisis.

Vista representatives, Tom and Julie Ahern, joined the coalition members and lent invaluable assistance to the cause. They helped to organize Liberty research materials, designed and printed “Save Liberty” bumper stickers, and printed brochures (material written and researched by Henrietta Fackler). The brochures called attention to the struggle the Liberty people were involved in to save their properties. Inserted within the brochures were cards addressed to Congressmen appealing to them to help save the Liberty townsite. Later it was learned that hundreds of these cards found their way into the offices of Representative Mike McCormack and Senators Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson via the recipients of the brochures.

Tom Ahern wrote the application to the State Parks and Recreation Board for the placement of Liberty on the national roll of historic places. Dr. Earl Glauert and Henrietta Fackler furnished advice and material for the application.

Wes Engstrom and Ralph Fackler built a booth that was taken to the Ellensburg fair grounds for the purpose of passing out brochures and “Save Liberty” bumper stickers. It was well worth their efforts. Much support was realized from it.

Early-on a team was organized to research records concerning the townsite and the predecessors who settled the area. Members of the team were Clara Barker, Connie Guse, Joyce Osgoodby, Joyce Engstrom, Evelyn Hawton and Henrietta Fackler. Although beginners in the field of research, records researched by this team later proved to be most helpful in establishing the people’s legal right of ownership to their property.

The residents revived the early custom of holding a Fourth of July celebration. Many interested people came from throughout the county and state to partake of a pot-luck picnic and to join the celebrations. There was fun for all; horse shoe pitching, gold panning contests, exhibitions by the Legendary Gun Fighters (a group who donated their services to the Liberty campaign), three legged races, bingo and pie auctions. The auctions and bingo games helped finance the campaign to further the cause, and the guests upon leaving resolved to join in the efforts to save Liberty.

Things seemed to be going well for the campaign to save the town and properties when the Forest Service issued an ultimatum—Sign use-permits or move out! Immediately telephone calls and telegrams went to the Congressmen.

At the advice of their attorney the residents barred themselves inside their houses. They suspected that U.S. Marshals might appear at any time to evict them.

Friends and old timers in the area received word of the eviction notice and were all fired up and ready to come to Liberty and build barricades on the road and defend them with rifles. The people refused the offer not wanting to place these good friends in jeopardy.

At the last minute Congressmen intervened and told the Forest Service to back off and give the people ample time to research the records they needed to establish the legal claim to their properties.

**The Forest Service Decides To Help**

At the request of the Congressmen, the Forest Service gave the residents a number of extensions...
and in the end helped the residents get clear title to their property.

The paper establishing a mining townsite was never found, however, enough information was found to create the Liberty Historic District. When that happened the Forest Service decided the best way to resolve the conflict was to have the residents submit a new application for a townsite under the 1866 townsite laws. The Forest Service helped the residents submit such an application. Symbolically, it was submitted on July 4, 1976, the day of the U.S. Bicentennial Celebration. Things looked good for the residents.

However, that fall the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 was passed by Congress and became law. It repealed homestead and townsite laws, including the 1866 law the Liberty residents had filed under. The new law did not have a provision for creating a new townsite on federal land. After all, no one had filed for a townsite under the law for many years. It looked like Liberty residents had won the battle with the Forest Service but lost the war with the U.S. Government.

The Forest Service suggested a special interest bill be passed by Congress saying Liberty could be an exception to the new law. They had determined that there was a provision in the new law that provided for the transfer of federal land to a town that needed to expand but was completely surrounded by federal land. That didn't exactly apply to Liberty as the townsite didn't legally exist and hence there was no political entity for the U.S. government to transfer the land to. The special interest bill that was proposed said that in our case the land could be transferred to the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners in turn could transfer the land to the residents.

Again the residents used all the political influence they could muster to get the entire Washington State delegation in Congress to support the bill. It worked. The bill was passed by Congress and signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. Victory at last. Celebrate.

However, the celebration was short lived.

Two Additional Roadblocks Materialize

Two additional obstacles surfaced that would have to be overcome. There is a Washington State law that says property cannot be disposed of by County Commissioners except at auction to the highest bidder. The second law, The Federal Historical Preservation Act, says property of historical significance cannot be disposed of by the Federal government without the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The first roadblock was removed by getting a special interest bill passed by the Washington State Legislature and signed by Governor Dixie Lee Ray. It sounds easy to say but it never would have happened without a special effort by Senator Frank “Tub” Hanson, a friend of Liberty. The session in 1980 was supposed to be “bare bones” with no special interest bills. Senator Hanson managed to pull it off anyway and Liberty became an exception to the state law.

The concern of the Office of Historical Preservation took more intricate negotiations but was finally resolved by proposing a county zoning ordinance to preserve the character of the Liberty Historic District. Back to lobbying. This time lobbying the County Commissioners. Again success: the “Liberty Historical Zone” was added to the county zoning code. Any new structure would need to have the look of the old. That is, board and batten or log exteriors, plain galvanized roofing, wood windows, no paint and wooden fences.

When the historic district was created it was not the architecture that was stressed as important to preserve but instead the independent spirit of a mining community. It was based on the Liberty sign—“You Have Just Visited The Living Remains Of A Ghost Town.” The spirit of the miner is still here. You just can’t see a spirit, you have to feel it. The county zoning would assure that the look of a ghost town would also be preserved. The spirits of the old miners are happy to have a familiar place to hang out.
Again the residents celebrated—and again the celebration was short lived.

**Liberty Becomes More Costly**

The next roadblock showed up in 1979 when the Forest Service appraiser came to place a “fair market value” on the Liberty property. The original 1866 townsite laws provided for the federal land to be sold for a townsite at $2.50 an acre. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 specified land to be sold at fair market value. The special interest bill passed by Congress was silent on the subject of price. The appraiser decided fair market value was $2,500 per acre, the going price of recreation land at the time.

The residents hadn’t expected to pay that much for land they already owned. Another special interest bill was considered, one that would specify a more reasonable price. However, Senator Jackson had died and a new slate of representatives was in office. It would be another huge effort to solicit political support for yet another special interest bill. More importantly, what looked easy to the politically naive residents the first time was now recognized as a truly heroic, or lucky, effort. A special interest bill was truly “special” and not easy to do. So instead, it was decided to pay the U.S. government their asking price. However, one small concession was won. The original price included the county road. The residents told the Forest Service that if they had to buy the county road they were going to erect a toll gate and recoup their money. The county road was removed from the deal.

Raising the money was not easy because some residents simply did not have it. However, friends and family did come through for those in need and $39,650 was deposited with the County Board of Commissioners. The process of title transfer started. In December 1981 the residents finally received clear title to their property.

The struggle for clear title would not have been successful if it weren’t for the widespread feeling of “community” that county residents felt for Liberty. People who had lived here and people who had gone to school in Liberty were amongst the most helpful supporters. There were also the large number of people who identified with Liberty because they had mined or played here over the years. The pioneer families of Swauk Prairie were solidly behind the Liberty residents as Liberty was part of their culture.
The Thorp Mill in 2003. The Thorp Mill began operation in 1883 as the North Star Mill. The four-story grist mill, built by Oren Hutchinson, ground grain into flour, bran, or feed for livestock. The Thorp Mill continued active operation until its closure in 1946. It sat idle and untouched until 1977 when the Thorp Mill Town Historical Preservation Society was organized to preserve and restore the building. The mill was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and is now one of the best preserved mills of its type. The historic site is maintained through a partnership of the local society and Central Washington University.

Photo by Wes Engstrom.

Thorp was Milton in 1882

When the Evans wagon train stopped at “Thorq” in 1882 there wasn’t a Thorp townsite yet. The post office was at the James L. Mills sawmill and it was called “Milton.”

F. M. Thorp and his son-in-law, Charles Splawn, each established homestead claims in 1868 at the head of Taneum Canyon two miles southwest of the present Thorp townsites. This was on the newly established Snoqualmie Wagon Road and Charles Splawn built a roadhouse at this location which served as an overnight stop for travelers crossing the Snoqualmie Trail. This was probably the stopping point for the Evans wagon train in 1882.

James L. Mills had built a water-powered sawmill one mile west of the present Thorp townsites in 1878. In 1883 Oren Hutchinson built a gristmill powered by the same water diversion that ran the sawmill.

In 1887 the Northern Pacific railroad company built a siding near the gristmill and called it Thorp after the pioneer F. M. Thorp and his family. The railroad station was moved in 1895 to the present site of Thorp and the railroad built maintenance facilities there. The location had been settled by the John Newman family in 1878 and in 1895 a town was platted around the site of the Northern Pacific depot. Stores and a hotel followed and the small town flourished.
Michael Dreisverner had established a post office near the sawmill in 1881 and he called it “Milton.” Then in 1882 James L. Mills became postmaster and he moved the post office to his sawmill and then in 1884 moved it to the gristmill and renamed it “Oren” after Oren Hutchinson. In 1891 the post office was moved again, this time to the Northern Pacific depot and renamed “Thorpe,” the name the Northern Pacific railroad had given to the railway station. The name of the post office and the town has remained Thorp to this day.

A newspaper article written in 1901 gives a feeling for the town at that time.

ELLensburg Dawn
May 10, 1901

All The Current News

…L. F. Ellison came down from Thorp Friday on business and says that they have just finished their new mill race, and now have fully 50 horse power, and that as soon as a little more machinery can arrive, they will be ready to cut all the lumber the dear people may wish. He thinks they will be ready to start up inside of two weeks.

The little village of Thorp, nine miles up the road, is one of the nicest little places in central Washington. It is quiet, no saloons to mar the pleasure of the inhabitants, has a good church, a good public school building, a saw mill and good flouring mill, both of which are operated by water power, a manufacturing establishment—land roller and box factory, and in fact you can get about all the accommodations in Thorp you can get in most towns in much larger population. We are glad that Thorp is in Kittitas county….

In 1907 the water wheel in the grist mill was hooked to a 40-kilowatt electric generator. Now when the mill wasn’t grinding grain it furnished electricity for laundering clothes two mornings each week and for lighting homes for a few hours each evening. This gave Thorp the distinction of being among the first towns in Washington to have electricity, and the smallest unincorporated town in the Northwest to have electric lights.

The settlers on Swauk Prairie had the option of taking their grain by wagon down Horse Canyon then up to the top of Hayward hill and either down to the Tjossin mill in Ellensburg or down to the North Star Mill in Thorp to have it ground into feed or flour.
Cle Elum Did Not Exist in 1882

Thomas Gamble and Walter Reed bought a quarter section of farm land in 1883 and in 1886, when the Northern Pacific Railroad was completed to their land, they platted 65 acres of their 160 acres as a townsite. They named it Cle-elum after the name the railroad had given to that station.

Coal seams had been discovered by Swauk miners as stated in the “History of Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas Counties, Washington, 1904,” page 249:

...To George D. Virden and “Nez” Jensen [both Swauk miners] belong the honor of exporting the first coal from the Roslyn mines. The former took his out in a sack and tried it in a blacksmith shop in Ellensburg. On June 24, 1884, Jensen started with his first load, and throughout the whole summer he made fortnightly trips with team and wagon, supplying the Ellensburg blacksmiths. This ore was taken from what became known as the “Dirty” vein, opened by Jensen, Brosious, Branam and others....

In 1886 the Northern Pacific found a large ledge of good coal in paying quantities which made it clear that a most important stage had come in the history of the region and populations in the region began to increase.

In October 1886 the first Northern Pacific Railroad train pulled into the new Cle-elum...
station. Following the arrival of the railway, the small town began to grow rapidly. Two stores were opened in 1886. The old Reed cabin was transformed into a schoolhouse, and the salary for the teacher was raised by subscription. Mr. Reed had meanwhile built a hotel, which continued to be the major hotel in Cle Elum for many years.

According to Guy Reed Ramsey in his book “Postmarked Washington, Chelan, Douglas and Kittitas Counties 1973,” page 61, the post office, and also the town, had three variations of its name.

The post office was established as Cle-elum January 13, 1887 with James W. Wheelock as postmaster. The spelling of the name was altered to Clealum July 11, 1903 with Harry C. Bilger postmaster. The spelling of the name was altered to Cle Elum December 14, 1904. There was no change in location involved in the name-changes.

Harry C. Bilger preferred the one-word form of the name to the hyphenated form by which the post office started but the difficulty which persons not familiar with the name had in pronouncing it, prompted him to solve the problem by returning to the original spelling but deleting the hyphen, spelling it Cle Elum.

The Railroad Changed Things For Swauk Prairie Settlers

When the Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1886 Cle Elum rapidly became the economic center of the upper county. The development of the coal mines by the railroad as well as the establishment of private mines brought people and stores. Now, instead of a 12 mile wagon ride to Thorp or a 17 mile ride to Ellensburg, it was only an eight mile ride to Cle Elum—without a steep hill.

The railroad made the essentials much cheaper to buy and provided a means to sell produce at a reasonable cost to be transported cheaply to market. The Swauk mines and Swauk Prairie became closely associated with Cle Elum and later when post offices and schools consolidated in Cle Elum the communities became part of the upper county centered in Cle Elum.
Land Claims

First Survey of Township 20 North, Range 17 East Done in 1892. The survey of T 20 N, R 17 E. was done by Moses Emerson in 1892 and published in 1894. The survey enabled the squatters on Swauk Prairie to apply for homestead claims. Map Courtesy of Bureau of Land, Portland, Oregon.

When Simeon James Evans and James Alfred M. Evans and their families continued on to the west side of the Cascade Mountains from Thorp in 1882 it was their intent to settle in Puget Sound. It took five weeks to cut a trail to cross the mountains as the wagon road across Snoqualmie Pass was not kept passable for wagons until 1883. Although a group of six wagons managed to cross Snoqualmie Pass in 1865 by clearing their own trail, the pass was plagued by blown down trees and washed out bridges and the Evan's party had to clear the trail themselves to get through in the fall of 1882. According to Yvonne Prater, author of “Snoqualmie Pass, From Indian Trail to Interstate,” published by The Mountaineers, in 1883 the “Seattle and Walla Walla Trail and Wagon Road Company” was incorporated to build a toll road over Snoqualmie Pass which was completed in August of 1884.
The Yakima Record may have recorded the Evans family as they passed through as noted by the following newspaper article.

**YAKIMA RECORD**
August 26, 1882

**Immigrants.**

The excess of arrivals of new comers this week has been largely over that of the last two weeks. Most that come use the early and primitive mode of conveyance—the wagon—reminding us forcibly of pioneer days. All are seeking locations, though a few were en route for the Sound country by the way of the Snoqualmie Pass.

Then on October 7, 1882 there was another article.

**YAKIMA RECORD**
October 7, 1882

**Ellensburg Items.**

The emigrants who started across the mountains last week for Seattle all got through, but were obliged to abandon one wagon. They report the road as being “perfectly awful.”

Simeon and Alfred quickly decided that they did not like the climate on the west side as it was too wet and they told Jessie James and Marion Jasper Evens to stay in Thorp and look for land there. They came back to the Kittitas Valley the next spring as soon as Snoqualmie Pass was free of snow in 1883 and Jessie James Evans, Simeon James Evans, James Alfred M. Evans and Marion Jasper Evens all settled adjoining places on Swauk Prairie which was unsurveyed land at the time. Later, after the land was surveyed, they were able to file for homesteads or purchase their land from the Northern Pacific Railroad.

The Evans family may very well have been influenced by an article published in the Yakima Signal newspaper on April 14, 1883 extolling the virtues of Swauk Prairie—although it wasn’t called that at the time.

**YAKIMA SIGNAL**
April 14, 1883

**The Swauk and Teanawins.**

There is a fine district of country lying between the Swauk and Teanawins that is well worthy of the attention of immigrants, who are in search of good land for settlement. The place in question is a rolling prairie, situated some 20 miles nearly west of Ellensburg. The land although rolling is susceptible of cultivation, every foot of it. The soil is of a better quality than most bunch grass land and is free from rock or underbrush. Located as it is between two streams, gives it an abundant supply of stock water. There are several springs breaking out from the surrounding mountains of most excellent water. The prairie is sufficient in area to make 12 or 14 ranches of 160 acres each, and is surrounded with mountains on all sides, which afford an inexhaustible supply of timber, such as tamarack, fir, cottonwood and bull pine. There is a good road to it and beyond, in the direction of the Snoqualmie pass, which runs through the center of it. The bottom lands, on both streams, are of unusual fertility. There is but one ranch taken on the Swauk Bottom and several on the low land of the Teanawins. The soil skirting both streams is not excelled anywhere in the county. The rolling prairie is dotted over with smattering of bull pine around the edges, mostly of a small growth. Situated in close proximity to the quartz and placer mines on the north, as well as the quartz of the Cle-el-um on the west gives it a favorable opportunity to supply these camps with butter, milk and vegetables. This delightful spot being hemmed in by high mountain ranges is afforded a greater supply of rain, as rains are more frequent than in the open country. There is little doubt in our mind about raising excellent crops of wheat by sowing it in the fall. Water for culinary purposes and drinking may be obtained by digging from 10 to 25 feet, almost anywhere on it. The only drawback we are aware of is that the snow fall is greater than it is in the valley below, along the Yakima river. This, however, has its advantages; it will protect the fall sown grain. The prairie though small, will be able to afford one good school, or perhaps two, including the settlements on the bottom on either side of it. It is only about 80 miles to Seattle, and when the wagon road shall have been completed, it will be more favorably situated than any unoccupied portion of Yakima county. The people of Ellensburg would do well to direct the attention of strangers and immigrants to this place, as one every way worthy of attention. It is one of the best places for a small settlement known to the writer.

The early settlers expected that they would be able to acquire the land they had settled on by filing for a “homestead” on unclaimed land. The Yakima Record newspaper published an article on how to do just that on January 20, 1883. The article had been reprinted from the Walla Walla
Union newspaper and is as follows:

**Yakima Record**

January 20, 1883

**How to get Homesteads.**

More than common interest is being manifested of late among the people of this and other Pacific States to secure homesteads on the public lands. How to secure these is a question that is often asked; and we shall answer it as briefly as possible. A homestead entry must not exceed 160 acres. It may be for 80, or 40 or a smaller number of acres; but one homestead is all that any one person is entitled to. Women as well as men are entitled to homesteads, by compliance with the law.

The first step is a written application to the Land Office in the district where the land to be entered is located. It must state the full name of the applicant; the section, township and range where the land lies, and the number of acres applied for; and the land must have been surveyed by the United States; and there must be no prior, adverse, veiled right to the land. On this application—and none but citizens of the United States, or those who have filed to become such, are legally entitled to a homestead entry—the Register of the Land office issues a certificate to the applicant. This states that the person is legally entitled to the entry, the class of the land, and that it is surveyed. The applicant then makes affidavit that he has filed his application; that he or she is the head of a family or not, as the case may be; that he is a citizen, or has filed his declaration of intention to become such, are legally entitled to a homestead entry—the Register of the Land office issues a certificate to the applicant. This states that the person in legally entitled to the entry, the class of the land, and that it is surveyed. The applicant then makes affidavit that he has filed his application; that he or she is the head of a family or not, as the case may be; that he is a citizen, or has filed his declaration of intention to become such; that he or she is 21 years of age; or, if a soldier, that he has service not less than fourteen days in the army of the United States or in the navy in the time of actual war; that the application is made for his or her exclusive benefit, and for the purpose of actual settlement, and not for the benefit of any other person; and finally, that he or she has not before had the benefit of the homestead law. This is sworn to before the Register or the receiver. The next step is to pay the Land Office fee and commission, and to take possession of the land entered. The fees and commissions for homesteads are: For 160 acres of land within the belt of any railroad grant on the even numbered section, fee $10, to be paid at the time of making entry, and commission $12, to be paid at the same time. When the certificate of title issues, $12 more must be paid; a total of $34. The fees and commission, payable as above stated, amount to $22 for 160 acres, half as much for 80 acres, and $8 for 40 acres. The resident owner of a farm of 80 acres may enter as a part of his homestead 80 adjoining acres on the same terms as above and the same forms. Or, if he owns 40 acres he may enter 120 acres additional of adjoining public lands. This is by the Act of March 31, 1879.

To perfect title to a homestead entry five years’ continuous residence is required. A single woman who has homestead land does not lose her right by marriage, but she must settle on and cultivate the land. Married women are entitled to homesteads. An abandoned wife, if she continues to live on a homestead entered by her husband, is entitled to a certificate of title in her own name. Minors under 21 years of age are not entitled to homestead entry. The application, to be legal, must be made at the office of the Receiver, in office hours, and accompanied by the legal fees and commission.

After continuous residence and cultivation for five years the homesteader receives his patent of perfect title to the land. The law as to residence does not prohibit him from working off the land for others for two or three weeks at a time. If he dies before the end of five years his widow or heirs may reside on the land for the remainder of the time and get the title. Where a man and a woman have made separate homestead entry on lands that join, they marry and complete title to both by building and living in a house on the line of the two tracts. A husband loses none of his rights by the refusal of his wife to reside on the land. – Walla Walla Union.

The land the Evans family settled on was in Township 20 North, Range 17 East, public domain land which was not officially surveyed until 1892, although pioneers had begun settling on the land as early as 1882. The settlers could not officially file on the land they chose nor did they know exactly where the section lines would be until a survey was made. For some reason Township 20 North, Range 17 East was not surveyed until 1892. The township to the south, Thorp, was surveyed in 1872 and the township to the west, Cle Elum, was surveyed in 1880. The lack of a survey was an irritant to the settlers as reflected in the following four articles published in local newspapers.
They Want A Survey Made.
Fund for Survey of Government Lands

Improvements Greatly Delayed by Government Neglect.

The Settlers Don’t Know Whether They are On Their Own, or On Somebody Else’s Land.

In the recent apportionment of the fund for the survey of government lands in Washington, one township in Kittitas county that has for years been neglected, was again overlooked, either purposely or unintentionally. The peculiar feature in this instance is that this Township was among the first settled in the upper Kittitas valley and the ranches there are the equal of any in the Northwest in fertility of soil, extent of cultivation and value of improvements. The land to which reference is made lies in township 20 north, range 17 east, in the rich valley of the Swank and the Teanaway. The township has been occupied for ten or twelve years, and is figuratively speaking, the garden spot of the whole Kittitas country. Although two applications have been made to have the land surveyed, the department has given the matter no attention, to the end that, further improvement is in a measure retarded. To convey a more comprehensive idea as to the value of the ranches in this un-surveyed territory the following estimates might be made, all of which are low: Wm. Mack, $15,000; W. H. Knight, $12,000; Geo. Verdin, $6,000; T. Cooper, $5,000; Mr. McDonald, $5,000; C. Cook $3,000; C. Wright, $2000; W. Carr, $3,000; Wm. Kinney, $3,000; S. Evens, $4,000; Jasper Evens, $5,000; James Evens, $4,000; F. Noble, $3,000; E. Evens, $3,000; John Hanson, $5,000; Mr. Piland, $3,000; Doc Kenworthy, $3,000; J. Friend, $3,000; G. Guillaume, $2,000; Mr. May, $6,000; P. McCullom, $6,000; Jaq. Kinney $3,000; J. M. Perry, $3,000; Wm. Graves, $2,000.

It will thus be observed that a number of very fine ranches are to be found in this unsurveyed territory. While several of the settlers are opposed to the advent of the surveyor, by reason of their present exemption from realty taxes, the majority of the landholders are anxious to have the lines established before further improvements are made. It is scarcely probable that anything can be done this year for the reason that the apportionment has already been made, and the time at which the fund in available is only a few weeks distant. Preparation can be made however, to come in early in the next deal.

Pursuant to an announcement, a meeting of the settlers in the unsurveyed township twenty north, range seventeen east, was held at the Advent church on Swauk prairie Monday for the purpose of signing a petition and executing the necessary affidavits to be forwarded to the surveyor general. A fair representation was present and the papers essential to secure the relief desired were prepared under the direction of Capt. J. P. Smith. While the affidavits executed were in number sufficient to attract the immediate attention of the surveyor general the cause would be greatly strengthened and possible speedier action prompted if the statement of every actual settler was presented. It is necessary that these documents be forwarded before July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year, and it would be a practical idea for those interested and whose affidavits have not been secured to call at the office of Capt. Smith before June 25.

There are between thirty and thirty-five bona fide settlers in the township in question, and as near as the Tribune can ascertain, with but a few exceptions, all are exceedingly anxious to have a survey of the township made. As is well known throughout this section, township twenty north, range seventeen east, was one of the first settled districts in the upper Kittitas county, and the ranches found there are among the most productive and the best improved in eastern Washington. On Swauk prairie proper, embraced in this township, fine crops are raised without irrigation, and in some sections of the township where water is available the yields have in some years been very large. The ranchers as a whole are prosperous and progressive. An increased acreage is put in cultivation each successive year, and improvements are constantly being made. However, advancement is in a great measure retarded by the uncertainty of the lineal boundaries, and the great majority of the occupants of the township pray for a speedy survey of their land.

Moses Emerson was sworn in on Tuesday as surveyor of the Swauk prairie township. His sureties for the faithful performance of his duty are Joseph McCloud and J. H. Smithson, in the sum of $9,000.
Moses Emerson finished his survey on the Swauk prairie last week. The contract was for one township. The people of that prairie will be pleased to learn the boundary lines of their claims.

After the Northern Pacific Railroad was given a land grant for building the railroad through Kittitas County, those settlers who had claimed land in odd sections were not allowed to file for a homestead because the land was already set aside for the railroad. However, the railroad needed to sell the land in order to recover the money they had put into building the railroad. The deal the railroad offered the settlers was even better in some ways than homesteading. They could acquire the land immediately for a cash payment rather than living on it for five years to prove up on the homestead. The following article in the Yakima Record explained the situation.

Northern Pacific Railroad Lands.

The fact that the Northern Pacific R. R. Co. owns a great portion of the arable lands of Washington Territory, now in great demand for settlement, has such importance to the public that general interest is taken in relation to the management of the land department of that company and the system adopted for the disposal of their lands. Previous to last autumn the company sold lands without question at the minimum price -- $2.50 per acre. Last summer a new system went into operation; lands were examined and graded according to quality of soil, nature of surface and various other considerations. Of course, the grading of such an extensive body of land required time, and the lands were withdrawn from sale until the land examiner did his work, or parties were allowed to make their applications, to have preference for purchase of same when appraised. Good lands have been appraised in the Big Bend country at $3 to $5 an acre, which is very reasonable in view of the fact that much of the land grant in that region is scabby and inferior and cannot be sold for any price for years to come. While this is true, it is also true that half, probably, of that region of country is of the best quality of soil and is rapidly being taken up by entry of government lands or purchase of the odd sections belonging to the railroad.

The company sells its lands for cash or on time, making no discrimination as to price. One-fifth is required down. In a year from date of purchase the buyer pays the accrued interest of 7 per cent for the year. Each year thereafter the purchaser pays one-fifth and interest to date, until the land is paid for. These terms are very reasonable and easy for the settler, as money in this country commands a much higher rate of interest.

The work of appraisement will be pushed as rapidly as possible the coming season, especially in that portion of the company’s land grant that is within the limits where settlement is greatest.

The company requires of all purchasers compliance with certain conditions that are made positive terms of sale, and are intended to prevent purchase of land by land speculators. The first condition is cultivation in good and husband-like manner of one sixth of the number of acres within two years of date of sale. And second, payment of one-fifth of the purchase price of the land applied for, to be made at the time of making the application.

Status of Railroad Lands.

We have heard considerable comment lately as to the status of railroad lands in this county. Grumblers declare the railroad company will demand extortionate prices for their lands in this section when placed on the market; that those having claims will be unable to pay for them. In our opinion those who make such assertions are but borrowing trouble, and know but little whereof they speak. East of the Columbia the company are grading their lands on a system which in some instances barely pays for the survey, while in no instance does the price per acre range over $7.50. There is not a particle of doubt in our mind but that a similar policy will be pursued with the lands of this section. It is the policy of the company to have their lands settled upon. The greater the population adjacent to their road, the greater is their profits derived from transportation of products. In other sections of our Territory the company have pursued this policy with favorable results, and if faith can be attached to the utterances of President Villard, the people of this section have no reason to fear.
published in the Yakima Record. He has kept his promises. Work has been commenced upon this division, and we shall, ere another season rolls around, see thousands of busy laborers at work upon the line. Having kept his promise in one particular, why should he not in another. We are not his defender or apologist, but we like to see exact justice meted out, and as long as the company pursue the wise policy they have hitherto manifested, we for one will not grumble. As we have stated before, it is the policy of the company to have their lands settled upon. An extortionate system of prices would deter settlement. This, as business men, they recognize, and the principle is clearly recognized in the following remarks made by President Villard, which we clip from the Columbia Chronicle:

“In cases where in past years a settler has gone on railroad land and in good faith resided upon and improved it for a home, the company propose to allow such actual settler the privilege of purchasing the quarter section of land on which his buildings and improvements have been made, at the minimum price of $2.60 per acre, or $4.00 per acre on time. It is intended that the privilege to make purchase at these minimum prices shall, so far as practicable, be confirmed by the company to the actual settler, whether any application for the purchase of the land may have been made by him or not.”

Commenting upon this speech our Yakima contemporary, the Record, says:

“It will be observed that Mr. Villard here promises that the settler who has in good faith resided upon and improved railroad land, shall have the privilege of purchasing the quarter section of land on which his buildings and improvements have been made, at the minimum price of $2.60 per acre, or $4.00 per acre on time. It is intended that the privilege to make purchase at these minimum prices shall, so far as practicable, be confirmed by the company to the actual settler, whether any application for the purchase of the land may have been made by him or not.”

Squatters Rights Were Bought and Sold

Even before the settlers received an official title to their lands they bought and sold their squatters rights as illustrated below. Book O page 272 of early land records for Kittitas County has the following entry:

E. L. Evens to Martha A. Piland - Quit Claim Deed.

This indenture, made the 25 day of November 1891. Witnesseth: that E. L. Evens of Cle Elum, Kittitas County, State of Washington party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of six hundred dollars, gold coin of the United States of America, to him in hand paid by Martha A. Piland of the Swauk County of Kittitas State of Washington, party of the second part, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, does by these presents, remise, release and forever quit claims unto the said party of the second part, and to her heirs and assigns forever all of the following described real estate situated in Kittitas County, Washington to wit: The South east quarter of Section 29, Twp No Twenty N, R. 17 E.

Together with all and singular the tennents hereditaments and appurtenances belonging or appertaining hereto, and also all his estate, right , interest, possession, claim of dower and homestead; and the rents, issues and profits of in and to said real estate; To have and to hold the same is the said party of the second part, and to her heirs and assigns forever.

In witness whereof, the said party of the first part has herewith set his hand and seal the day and year first above written.

Signed and sealed in presence of: James P. Smith, J. A. Piland and A. B. Kenworthy.

E. L. Evens (ss)

Six hundred dollars in gold seems to be a high price for a quit claim deed for a piece of property that was known to be granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad as part of their land grant. Even though the railroad was granted a patent to the land in 1896 they had not sold any of the land in Township 20 North, Range 17 East as of 1900.

The following three sketches show the transition from “Squatters Claims” to “First Government Issued Patents” to “1934 Land Owners” for the nine sections that include Swauk Prairie in Township 20 North, Range 17 East.
Swauk Prairie Squatters Claims in 1892. Beginning in the early 1880’s the pioneers on Swauk Prairie settled on open unsurveyed public domain land, unable to formally make a claim to the land until it was surveyed, which didn’t happen until 1892. Moses M. Emerson did the first survey and duly noted each pioneer building and fence he found in place in 1892 including a school house and store in Section 28 and a church in Section 29. He did not note the cemetery in Section 29 although there were at least seven burials by then.  

*Sketch by Wes Engstrom based on the official map of Township 20 North, Range 17 East published April 3, 1894.*
First Patents Granted by the United States Government. Early settlers on Swauk Prairie were dealt a surprise when they learned the Northern Pacific Railroad was granted every odd numbered section as part of their land grant for building the railroad through Kittitas County. Those who had settled on odd numbered sections now had to deal with the railroad rather than the government. They were given first rights to purchase from the railroad and found the railroad easier to deal with than the government. W. A. Kinney and Abe L. Wright bought the five acre cemetery parcel from the railroad for $13.75. Those in even numbered sections had to adjust their boundaries to match the new survey and then go through a five year process of improving the land to “prove up” on their homestead application, then the land was “free.” Sketch by Wes Engstrom based on Bureau of Land Management records.
Land Ownership on Swauk Prairie in 1934. Metsker’s Atlas of Kittitas County published in 1934 illustrates changes in land ownership up to that time. All the Northern Pacific land had been bought by individuals or timber companies and much of the land acquired by early pioneers had been resold to others. The A. J. Hanson property in Section 29 illustrates a case where the section line was modified to accommodate the fact that after the survey of 1892 the well and some of the farm buildings were on the wrong side of the section line and rather than move the farm buildings the property line was given a jog around them. Sketch by Wes Engstrom based on the 1934 Metsker’s Atlas of Kittitas County.
Schools and churches were important to the early pioneer. As soon as there were a half dozen or so families in an area a school would be started, perhaps in someone’s home before a separate building was built. The church would follow next when enough people of similar faith came together to hold services, again first in someone’s home and then in the school and finally in a dedicated building. Swauk Prairie was no different—before 1900 there were five schools and two churches built. One of the schools was in Liberty, four miles north of Swauk Prairie but still considered part of the community.
Early School And Church Locations On Swauk Prairie. School and church locations are shown with present day roads in red for reference. Only the Virden school and the Seventh Day Adventist Church buildings still exist today—the others are gone with no trace of where they once stood. The Ballard school building did survive as the Swauk-Teanaway Grange until it burned in 2004. A new building has been erected on the same spot to resemble the original. The Virden school has been converted into a residence and is still in use. The Seventh Day Adventist Church still stands as an abandoned building.  

Map by Wes Engstrom.

Early School Records Burned

Early school records between 1883, when the first settlers arrived on Swauk Prairie, and 1889 were lost in the great fire in Ellensburg on July 4, 1889. On that day a fire that started in J. S. Anthony’s grocery store was fanned by strong winds and before it could be stopped it is estimated that two hundred houses and ten brick blocks of downtown Ellensburg burned, including the county Superintendent of schools’ office with all records and papers. The county school Superintendent’s July 11, 1889 journal entry states: “All the records and papers in the office were destroyed in the fire that burned the Odd Fellows’ building and the whole business of the office has to be started from the beginning.” It is truly a shame those records were lost because in Washington state at that time each school district was required to conduct an annual census of all school age children between the ages of 5 and 21 in each district regardless of whether or not the children actually attended school. That record provided a valuable annual indication of when families moved into and out of the area.

The unknown school shown in Section 28 on the 1892 survey of Township 20 North, Range 17 East has not been identified. I could not find indications of a building at the spot shown on
the map and no one I talked to could remember a school being there. However, some did remember stories about a school that got moved around years ago and there is some written material indicating a Swauk school was built in 1885.

The Swauk Prairie school in Section 29 was not there when Moses Emerson did the township survey in 1892. So all we can say is that the school was built after 1892 and burned in 1903.

**There Was a School in 1883**

The following article indicates there was a school in the Swauk Prairie or Teanaway area in 1883. There is no indication however about where the school was or whether it was in a house or a school building.

**THE KITTITAS STANDARD**

*July 14, 1883*

**Teanaway Notes.**

On Wednesday our correspondent “O. K.” sent us down a few notes. We hope correspondents in other localities will profit by his example. “O. K.” says: “Weather very warm, and everybody is haying. The grain crop is not so good as last season. The fall sown grain looks best. For the next season we will sow our grain in the fall, and then Teanaway against the world for fine crops. Our people are all in good spirits. Our school commenced last Monday under charge of Miss Eva Kessle, and is flourishing. It is the first one ever taught in the district, and we wish Miss Eva success. New faces appear in our midst every day. We welcome them all, as our ‘lands are broad enough’ to give them ‘all a farm.’ July 8th, to the wife of W. McKinney, a son. Mr. Allen, Road Overseer, is at work upon the roads in this district. He is the boss and doing good work. McKinney and Evans are at work in good earnest in the shake business; they have a contract for 25,000 now in hand for parties in the valley. As they have plenty of timber they will take another contract for 25,000 more. Give them a call. We hear one of our old settlers will move out in the fall. That’s all. More next time.

**Swauk Prairie School**

School District 15 (Swauk) was formed in 1890 and included Swauk Prairie except for the western sections, 19, 30 and 31 which were in School District 33. Swauk was later divided into the Virden School District (15) and the Swauk Prairie School District (41). Swauk Prairie was later changed to District 38. The organization and numbering of school districts is confusing with school district numbers being reused and the boundaries continually being revised without a logical pattern being used to number the school districts.

A letter from the Washington State Archives, Central Region illustrates this complexity.

**SECRETARY OF STATE**

*June 7, 2002*

**Swauk-Teanaway Grange**

Dear Grange Members:

Records at the State Archives Central Branch indicate that the building that now serves as the Swauk-Teanaway Grange Hall was completed in 1904 as a school house in Kittitas County district no. 38 (Swauk Prairie). The very next year (1905), district 38 combined with district 37 (Huhen) to form consolidated district 9 (Swauk Prairie).
Swauk Prairie School Photograph About 1900. Back Row: Cora Cook [Cora Koch], three unknown girls, Pearl Boice (?), unknown girl, Jennie Evans [Jane Evans], Lulla Boyd or Lulla Boice [Lulla Boice], unknown boy and Elmer Pickland [Elmore Piland]. Second Row: Emma Cook [Emma Koch], Ruth Evans, Beulah Hanson, Daisy Evans, Clara Evans [Clara Evans], Ruby Hanson [Ruby Koch ?], two unknown girls and Walter Hanson. Third Row: Mammie (?) Evans [Mamie Evans], Hester Boyce (?) and Ada Evans. Front Row: Rolla Evans, Henry Evans, Alfred Hanson, Alfred Evans and Jack Boyd or Roy Boice [Roy Boice]. Note: Daisy, Jennie, Mamie and Alfred Evans are James and Martha Evans’ children. Beulah, Walter, and Alfred Hanson are John and Sarah Hanson’s children, Ruby Hanson may be their cousin. Clara Evans is Marion “Jasper” and Nancy Evans’ child. Cora and Emma Cook [Koch] are sisters. Rolla and Ruth Evans are Simeon Evans’ children. Photo and caption information from Shirley (Johnson) Phillips, great granddaughter of James and Martha Evans.

Note: The picture compares closely with the 1899 School Census of the Swauk Prairie School District #41. Names have been corrected to match the census where appropriate. The unidentified girls could be Emily Boice (age 17), Martha Hensleit (15), Clara Graves (14), Rosie Evans (13), Matilda Evans (13), Eva Kinney (11), Mary Koch (9), Lillie/Lillian Hanson (9), or Ida Benbow (8). The unidentified boy could be Ben Evans (9), Roy Benbow (11) or Ernest Piland (12). The J. A. Piland, the J. A. Kinney and the Simeon Evans families must have moved from Swauk Prairie by 1900 as none of the children of the families are included in the 1900 school census. The J. A. Piland and the James Kinney family appear in the Virden/McCallum School District #15 census and the Simeon Evans family appears in the Green Canyon/Upper Reecer School District #43 Census for 1900.
The Kittitas County Superintendent of Schools Annual Report for 1905 shows that two school houses existed in the new district 9, which was created in February of that year. Presumably, these school houses included the one from former district no. 37 and the new one from former district no. 38. The following year, the Superintendent’s Annual Report reveals that only one school house served the district. This school house is most likely the one completed in 1904, which is now Swauk-Teanaway Grange Hall.

The following records support this conclusion:

Kittitas County School District Boundary Record; (1) Former District 9 (Thorp) combined with District 46 to form District 27 on July 23, 1904. (2) New District 9 created February 27, 1905, by consolidation of Districts 37 & 38.

Kittitas County Superintendent’s Annual report; (1) New school constructed in 1904 for District 38, which consolidated with District 37 to form District 9 the following year.

Sincerely,

Brigid Clift, Research Specialist
Tony Kurtz, Archivist

Genealogy Society Compiled School Census

The Kittitas County Genealogy Society enumerated the school Census for the Swauk Prairie School District # 41 for the years 1896 through 1900 as listed below. The school Census continued until 1935 but the records only exist in raw form at the Washington State Archives in Ellensburg and haven't been enumerated for the individual school districts.

### Swauk Prairie School District # 41

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<td>1885</td>
<td>1896-1900</td>
</tr>
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<td>Daisy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1890</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>1894</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1896-1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hester</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1899-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benbrow/Banbow, Wm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1896-1900</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>1896-1900</td>
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<td>Mamie</td>
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<td>1896-1900</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Jesse</td>
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<td>1878</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora</td>
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<td>1879</td>
<td>1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1896-1899</td>
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<td>Bertha</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Evans, Simeon</td>
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<td>S. E.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1881</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolla/Rulla</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1896-1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>1897-1899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Souvenir Remembrance From School District No 38 in 1902

Verna Smith, teacher at the Swauk Prairie School, had this remembrance made up for her students. There were 15 girls and 17 boys in school that year. The Swauk Prairie School District No. 38 included the west half of Swauk Prairie. The east half of Swauk Prairie including Horse Canyon went to the Virden School at what is now Lauderdale. The Swauk Prairie school burned down in the spring of 1903 and the Ballard School was built to replace it as well as the Huhen school in District 37 (previously the Mack school district #33). Beginning in 1905 the pupils in the west half of Swauk Prairie and the lower Teanaway were combined into the consolidated Swauk Prairie District 9 school, commonly called the Ballard School.

*Remembrance courtesy Ellensburg Public Library (donated by Lila Hanson).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McDonald, James</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rollan, Mr.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmer, A. &amp; Mrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inez Carr</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross Carr</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Bagns</td>
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<td>1888</td>
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<td>Cooper, T.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bessie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1896-1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1896-1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otto</td>
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<td>1896-1897</td>
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<td>Bridgham, Jennie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callet/Cachlet, Presley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanch</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### McCallum—Virden School

I do not know the exact location of the old Virden school. There are stories that it was a
The log building located up the road from the new Virden school and on the east side of Hwy 131, which is now Burke Road. That is the location shown on the map as the old Virden school. It may be that the log building was used until 1897 when another school was built at the same site. The log building could have been the original Virden log homestead building that Chester Virden was born in in 1891 as the locations are remembered as being similar. Chester Virden remembers starting school in 1897 in a brand new community school. That school was used from 1897 until 1927. Neither the log building nor the 1897 building exist today. The new Virden school was opened in 1928 and used as a school until 1938. That building was converted to a residence and is still being used today.

The Kittitas County Genealogy Society assembled the census data for the Virden/McCallum School District #15 for the years 1895 through 1900 which is the basis for the following listing. The school census continued until 1932. However, no one has extracted the data for either the Virden/McCallum or the Swauk Prairie school district from 1900 to 1932.

The school census records show the following children between the ages 5 and 21 years as living in the Virden/McCallum School District # 15 at some time between 1896 and 1900.

### Virden/McCallum School District # 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Years In Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piland, J. A.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kern</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1896-1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lundberg, P. B.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delbert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>1895-1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1895-1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1895-1898</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lester</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1895-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1895-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1895-1900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An article in the January 11, 1975 issue of the Ellensburg newspaper provides additional information about early days in Swauk Prairie including a bit about the Virden school which is as follows:

**ELLENSBURG DAILY RECORD**

*January 11, 1975*

**Chester Virden Recalls Early Swauk Days**

*by Christine Bettas*

The true pioneers of our Lauderdale-Virden area are vanishing as the years roll by. The last member of the George D. Virden family, original
The Virden School in 1927. The Virden school class on May 27, 1927 consisted of, left to right, Ernest Dunford, Bill Snell, Ernest Betassa, Dick Bryant, Jean Hopper, Jennie Dana, Dorothy Forbes, the teacher, Miss Mary Padavich, Valdine Betassa, Joe Michelleto, Dean Dunford, Margaret Michelleto, Mary Betassa, Jennie Michelleto, and Antonette Dana. No Evans, Evens or Piland children were in the Virden school in 1927. 
*Photo from “A History of Kittitas County Washington 1989”, page 106.*

*Photo courtesy of Judy Falk.*
pioneers of the Swauk Creek area, after whose family the area has been named, is Chester Milo Virden. He was born on September 7, 1891 in the Swauk Creek area just northwest of the home now owned by the Pat Burke family.

...Chester began his education in 1897 at age 6 when he enrolled in the brand new community school. The school had been built by residents of the area “who pitched in” to help build it on land east of the Virden homestead across highway 131 [Now Burke Road]. The chief carpenter was Anius Grunden. The lumber used was hauled from a mill located on the Bruno Bonetto ranch in the Lower Teanaway. The school was torn down in the late 1940’s. In 1928 the new Virden school was built, known as School District No. 15 and it had the distinction of being the only modern, up-to-date rural school in Kittitas County for a number of years. It was consolidated with the Cle Elum School District during the consolidation boom a few years ago after which the Virden School was closed in 1938.

Chester Virden eagerly recalled memories of his teachers and interesting bits of information about them. Over the years, the teachers boarded with the George D. Virden family and later the Will Virden’s—41 years altogether from 1897-1938....

**Liberty School**

Liberty School District #44 was established in 1895 as it was too far for the Liberty children to travel to the Virden school. Classes were held in the Post Office building in old Liberty. In 1905 a new school house was built in Meaghersville, two miles east of “old Liberty” and in 1912 the post office was also moved to Meaghersville and Meaghersville slowly came to be called Liberty. The original “old Liberty” disappeared.

**Liberty School District #44**

The school census records show the following children between the ages 5 and 21 years as living in the Liberty School District #44 at some time between 1896 and 1900.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<th>Years In Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Kerstetter, B.Frank &amp; E.E G. Bert</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earl</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>1896-1899</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain, B. P. &amp; Annie John</td>
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<td>1896-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1898-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland, James &amp; Mary Minnie</td>
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<td>1897-1898</td>
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<td>Hanson, B. Bertha</td>
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1886</td>
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<td>1896-1897</td>
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<td>Wilson, John A. &amp; Jennie Bert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ora</td>
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<td>1896-1898</td>
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<td>1896</td>
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<td>1896-1897</td>
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<td>Langley, A. Agnes</td>
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<td>Cahoon, M. M. Clinton</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>1897</td>
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<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margie</td>
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<td>1897</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jones, S. B. Nelly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The First Liberty School Building. The Chic Cafe is shown in the 1920s with Mr. and Mrs. Kerstetter standing on the porch. It was located in “old Liberty” in a building built by Gus Nilson in 1892 for the first post office. In 1895 the building was used for the first school and, in 1908, the first Forest Ranger building. The school moved to Meaghersville in 1905 and the post office followed in 1912. Then “old Liberty” gradually disappeared and Meaghersville came to be called “Liberty.” The log building shown above in “old Liberty” burned in the 1950’s.  

Photo courtesy of Fred Krueger, photographer unknown.

The New Liberty School in 1914. In 1905 this new school was built in Meaghersville, two miles east of “old Liberty” and continued in use as a school until 1939 when the Liberty School District was consolidated with the Cle Elum school and children were bussed to Cle Elum. The children in the photo were not identified. After 1939 the building was used as a residence by Harry Kirwin and in 1945 was moved down the hill to replace the aging Liberty Community hall. The school building burned in the 1960s and in 2000 was replaced by a new Community/Fire hall built to resemble the old school.  

Photo courtesy of Adrian Kerstetter in the Wes Engstrom collection.
Beginning in September 1935 the Swauk Prairie, Virden and Liberty school districts were merged into the Cle Elum school district and students were bussed to Cle Elum. In 1939 when the Liberty school closed it was the end of the rural school houses in the Swauk.

**Pleasant Valley School/Free Methodist Church**

Marion Jasper Evens and James (Jim) Alfred M. Evans were brother-in-laws and lived next to each other on Swauk Prairie. Jasper was a Seventh Day Adventist and Jim was a Free Methodist. As soon as they were settled on Swauk Prairie they built a school house, the Swauk Prairie school, and then they each built a church. Not a single church building that could have been used by the two denominations but two separate churches.

Jasper Evens joined forces with his neighbor, W. A. Kinney, and built a Seventh Day Adventist Church on Kinney’s property. Jim Evans and William H. H. Knight used lumber that had been cut for Jim’s house to build a church one mile away on Knight’s farm.

Both churches were of the same size with three window on the side and one end door. However, they were much different in construction.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church was double walled with two by four studs. The outside was done with horizontal planned siding that was hauled from a mill in either Thorp or Ellensburgh. The inside was horizontal one by twelve boards covered with a heavy canvas. Overall, a high quality construction for the time. It is still standing in 2013. Either Jasper Evens or W. A. Kinney, or both, were very experienced carpenters.

The Free Methodist Church was much cruder.
Pleasant Valley (Mack) School About 1897. The school was also referred to as the “Mack” school and the Huhen District 37 school. The pupils are, from left to right in the back row: Stella Mack, Ella Gassman, Maude Knight, Maude Fielding, Jennie Mack, Mrs. Payne (school teacher), Bruce Cooper, George Mack, Eaton Fielding, and Marion Thompson. In the front row from left to right: Howard and Christina Petterson, Bessie Knight, Eddie Mack, Leslie Mack, Edith Knight, Edna Knight, Dolly Masterson, Willard Zeek, Jim Masterson, Homer Thomas (hidden behind Willard Zeek), Emil Gassman, Barton Fielding, and Otto Cooper. The photo was undated. However, Maude Knight, the third pupil from the left in the back row, was born in 1885 and appears to be about 12 years old thus dating the picture to about 1897. *Photo courtesy of Sunne Perry, niece of Dora Maude Knight.*

In construction with vertical one by twelve inch boards stood vertically with one by four inch battens over the cracks between the one by twelves. The inside may or may not have had an inside wall. Often outside walls of one by twelves were simply covered on the inside with a felt paper. In other words, it was a single wall construction, a typical pioneer-type construction at the time.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church building was used as a church until 1911 when a larger church was built in Cle Elum and the furnishings transferred to the new church. After that the building was used as a storage shed. It is still full of miscellaneous artifacts such as old washing machines, broken dressers, old stoves, etc. It was also used as a temporary school after the Swauk Prairie school burned down in the spring of 1903 and before the new school on Ballard hill was ready for use in 1905.
The Free Methodist Church was also used as a school until the Swauk Prairie school district was combined with the Huhen school district in 1905 and the pupils transferred to the new Ballard Hill school house. The building then became a store until it burned down in 1932.

The best match for the students shown in the picture of the Pleasant Valley/Mack school is School District #33 in the Kittitas County Genealogy Society book “School Census Records of Kittitas County, Washington, 1896 - 1900,” page 124. The School district must have been renumbered to district 37 sometime after 1900 and before 1905 when it became part of Consolidated School District #9.

School District #33

The school census records show the following children between the ages 5 and 21 years as living in the Mack School District #33 at some time between 1896 and 1900.

<table>
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Frank M 1881 1896
Ed M 1883 1896

Maron, Frank
Francis F 1890 1896

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Forest M 1881 1897-1898
Spray F 1885 1897-1898
May F 1888 1897-1898

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May Levy F 1888 1897-1898

White,
Lizzie F 1887 1897

Yatsnough,
Mammie F 1888 1897-1898
Joseph M 1889 1897-1898
Bert M 1892 1897-1898

Stiner,
Theodore M 1887 1897
Barbra F 1891 1897

Cook,
Flora F 1878 1898
Joe M 1882 1898

Wood, W.
Arvill F 1891 1899
Jehiel M 1893 1899

McGinniss,
Samuel M 1884 1899
Deacon M 1887 1899
Lulu F 1892 1899
Joe M 1893 1899

A Pioneer Remembers The Church
A hand written undated memory by Dora Maude (Knight) Boddy is shown below. It gives first hand insight into the early days on Swauk Prairie. See also “William H. H. Knight” on page 156 for additional Knight family information.

Our Homestead
My father got it in 1880. He built a log cabin with a big stone fireplace. I was born there in 1885. It was a lovely cabin put at the foot of a hill where spring water ran down the hill near the cabin. My father put a wooden trough in the spring and let it run down hill into a wooden barrel close enough so they could carry it in cabin for cooking, washing or what ever it was needed for. Water was heated in an iron tea kettle or large iron pot to wash our clothes and bedding. Washing was done with a special washing board and wooden wash tub. Had to carry all of the water and heat it over the fire in a big kettle that hung on a crane near or over hot coals in the fire place. Although there was plenty of hard work it kept everyone happy and busy. What I liked most was going to Sunday school. I was 12 years old the first time although I had religion training at our parent’s home. Like most pioneer families we had a large Bible on a small table covered with a cover. A square table or stand as it was called in the living room. Us children wasn’t left to try and look at it until we learned to read. But my father and mother read it to us. We had family worship in the morning after breakfast and in the evening before we went to bed. My mothers’s folks (Mr. and Mrs. Noble) were Free Methodist Missionaries. They got workers to help. They held meetings in a little 1 by 12 lumber battened building made from ponderosa pine. It was built in 1892 and services were held in 1895. Everyone came to the meetings in wagons and buggies in the fall and summer and in bobsleds and cutters in the winter. Some folks came from Roslyn and Cle Elum, 10 or 15 miles away. They drove and came in any kind of weather. All wore warm wool wraps besides covered up with heavy wool blankets. My mother taught Sunday school and was Superintendent. Also for 3 years we had wonderful lecture quarters, and Sunday papers beside the quarterlies. We would have programs and signing hymns. We never had musical instruments but had some wonderful singers.

The picture of the school and the story were given to the Swauk-Teanaway Grange by Dora Maude (Knight) Boddy’s niece, Sunne Perry.

County Records Show Church Organization
County Auditor’s records show the following entry. (Miscellaneous Records Book B Page 29).

Certificate of Incorporation of the Free Methodist Church.
We the undersigned, two of the members of the Church mentioned, do hereby certify that on the fourth day of February instant the persons of full age belonging to a church in which divine worship is celebrated according to the rites of the Free Methodist Church, and
not already incorporated, met at the place of public worship heretofore occupied by said church in Pleasant Valley School house, Dist. (No. ??) of Kittitas County, for the purpose of incorporating themselves and did this and there elect by voices James Evans, Matthew Harvey, Henry Knight as trustees of the said church and that said persons did this and there also determines by the plurality of voices that the said Trustees and their successors should forever hereafter be called and be known by the name of the Trustees of the Free Methodist Church of Pleasant Valley in Township No. 20 North of Range 17 E. W. M.

Witness this our hands this 9 day of Feb 1895.

W. H. H. Knight (s.s.) J. M. Evans (s.s.)

The entry had the school district number for the Pleasant Valley school left blank. The Pleasant Valley church building was not shown as a church on the 1892 survey. One of the buildings listed as H. Knight on the 1892 survey was probably the church. Perhaps the building was a house, then a school and then a church.

An article in the Cle Elum Tribune indicates the existence of a ‘Mack” school in 1891. W. Mack and H. Knight had adjacent properties.

**CLE-ELUM TRIBUNE**

June 18, 1891

The Mack school, taught by Miss Belle Murray, will close the summer term with a picnic Friday.

**The Mack School Building Burned**

The original building burned down as illustrated in the following article from 1934 about the Ballard ranch.

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

March 23, 1934

Ranches Of Swauk Prairie.

Irrigated And Dry Farming Meet On Ballard Ranch.

Climbing the old Ballard hill, that was considered the acid test of every automobile a few years ago, one looks out upon the broad expanse of the Ballard ranch of some 1300 acres.

M. C. Ballard, present owner, purchased this ranch 28 years ago. It was then known as the Old Knight Homestead. Lying in the contour of a deep basin, this ranch was the favorite spot for the practice field of the Seattle Glider’s club three years ago. The bowl includes 200 acres of land devoted to dry farming and another 200 acres are irrigated by the Ballard ditch supplying water from the Teanaway river. On 200 acres, timothy hay is raised. Last year he cut about 300 ton which he baled and fed to his herd of 300 to 400 cattle. These hay fields have not been plowed for many years and much red and white clover has sprung up with the timothy making a fine mixed fodder for the stock.

On the Ballard ranch we see two types of farming side by side—irrigated and dry farming because the ranch lies half in the Teanaway valley and the other half in Swauk Prairie. Likewise he uses both horses and tractors for farming having a Case and four work horses. Bob Ballard, son, who runs the farm, finds that the horses are better for certain types of work while for others the tractor comes into its own. Bob also admits that they don’t farm the 200 acres very often now, just open the gates and let the stock do the harvesting.

Old timers will remember an old store building that stood on the place. That was the first church in Swauk Prairie. Jim Evans donated the lumber that he had lying around for his own new house to build the church. It was a Free Methodist.

On the Ballard acres you will find an old sawmill that once stood in So. Cle Elum and was run by Lou Taylor and Chas. Baker. M. C. moved that mill onto his ranch in 1913 and used it up until a couple years ago to saw the pine and fir trees on the land into a good grade of lumber. The mill is still in condition to run although it has been idle the past few years. Two years ago it had a narrow escape when a prairie fire burned the old church building.

Seven years ago, Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Ballard moved into Cle Elum and since then have lived in the old Gamble Place on Third Street.

The Bob Ballard family has three children, Bob, Jr., Betty and Bunny, all attending the Ballard school.

Bob Ballard was born in Seattle. When he was five months old, Mr. and Mrs. Ballard traded some Seattle property for what is now called the Moore’s ranch at the mouth of Swauk creek. The Ballards lived on that ranch until 1905.
The Seventh Day Adventist Church in 2012. The church shown above on W. A. Kinney’s land in the 1892 survey of the township still stands unmodified, but worse for wear, since it was built in 1889, probably by W. A. Kinney and Jasper Evens, both of whom were Seventh Day Adventists. Jasper Evens’ brother-in-law, James Evans, formed a Free Methodist church on Wm. Knight’s land about a mile away. The building shown was used as a church until 1911 when a new Seventh Day Adventist church was built in Cle Elum, then the building was used to store grain. Photo by Wes Engstrom.

Construction Details of The Seventh Day Adventist Church. The church was well constructed by a person with good carpenter skills. The frame is made of rough cut two by fours, the inside walls of rough cut one by twelve boards and the outside with finish boards. Square nails were used both on the inside and outside walls indicating construction before 1900. The rough cut lumber probably came from the Jasper Evens saw mill while the finish boards, in 1889, had to have been hauled from a distant mill. There is no insulation in the building; the only thing to stop the drafts was a heavy canvas that was pasted on the inside walls, some of which still hangs in place. Photo by Wes Engstrom.
Seventh Day Adventist Church

The church shown on the 1892 survey was a Seventh Day Adventist church and the building still exists today. The building has the classic look of a rural school or church of the time. The Cle Elum Tribune reports that the church was completed in 1891.

At the time of the 1892 survey it was shown as a church on W. A. Kinney’s land. Sometime later J. Evens’ son, William J. Evens, bought the Kinney quarter section including the church. The church building doesn’t appear to have been modified for another use except perhaps to store things. The tin roof was added at a later date as the building must have had wooden shingles or shakes originally.

The building is well built; it is still standing straight and square and either W. A. Kinney was an expert carpenter or else he hired one, perhaps Jesse James Evans who was a school teacher, blacksmith and carpenter and was living less than a mile away.

The church building was constructed using rough cut two by four studs with rough cut one by twelve boards for the interior walls. Braces were neatly mortised into the studs at a 45 degree angle at the corners for strength. The outside siding was unusual in that it was planed lumber that must have been hauled some distance as the local mills were only turning out rough cut lumber in the late 1880s. All the rough cut lumber was cut with a circular saw rather than the earlier reciprocating type saw. Square nails were used throughout, including on the outside finish lumber, clearly indicating the building was built before 1900 when standard round nails replaced the more expensive square nails.

The interior rough cut lumber walls were finished with a heavy canvas pasted on to the wood. The canvas stopped the draft and gave the interior a finished look. There wasn’t any insulation or even tar paper under the outside siding. This interior finish was unusual in that the more common way of finishing the interior of houses having rough cut wood interior walls was to tack a muslin cloth over the wood with hundreds of tacks, paste a heavy felt paper over the muslin and then paste wall paper over the felt to provide the final finish. The church appears to use just the canvas without wall paper or paint. The building was never wired for electricity which came to the area in the 1940s. The house has had additional rooms added at a later date using finished lumber with two by four double wall stud construction. The newer additions have collapsed from the weather and snow loads while the old single wall part of the house, being carefully constructed, still stands straight and square.

The Evens Had A Sawmill

An article in the 1891 Cle Elum newspaper would indicate that the rough lumber used in the church could have been sawed in a mill owned by Jasper Evens on the land next to Kinney’s place.

Cle-Elum Tribune
April 23, 1891
Teanaway Items

...The bridge across the river at Evens’ mill, used for hauling logs to the mill, was carried away Friday by the recent raise in the river.

Old Letters Provide Clues

There are three letters to Lila Hanson in the Ellensburg Public Library that have information about schools and churches on Swauk Prairie. The first two letters are from Lillie (Hanson) Grant, the daughter of John Hanson and Sarah Piland. Lillie was born in 1889 on Swauk Prairie and died in San Diego in 1988. A portion of the three letters reads as follows:

December 14, 1974

... I wish I could answer all of your questions, but will do the best I can. I believe the ranch house [John Hanson’s house] was built in 1898 by Mr. Sprague. It seems that Beulah [Lillie’s sister] was 2 years, and I was 8 years at the time and it was toward winter when we moved in.

I can’t remember the year that Uncle Alexander [Piland] and Aunt Jane sold to Will Virden—though I remember the transaction and seeing those stacks of gold money.
I am not sure of the year the school house was built, but if I am not mistaken Mr. Motzer was the first teacher who taught our first eight month term.

Fred’s father [Orville Grant, Lillie’s father-in-law] built the school house and I can remember my father stopping there to get the key when it was finished. I think the Grant family had recently moved there and it was the first time I had seen them.

I first went to school at the little school house near the southwest corner of my folks place—which later burned down. Mr. McClure was the last teacher there.

We went for a short time to neighboring schools, especially to the building on the Ballard place which the Knights owned before Ballards. This building was first built for a church with a parsonage near, was also used later for a store, dance hall and hay barn. The Knight children attended the school before Ballards came.

It has been so long some things seem a little hazy. But maybe some one else can remember what I can’t.

Lillie

July 4, 1975

I will try to tell you what I can remember about the little one room school that was at the corner of the ranch there. The school terms at that time were not very long and all grades from first to eighth were taught. I have forgotten the name of my first teacher who was a man.

My second teacher was Mr. Crowley, who was married to Leah Virden. I am not sure if he taught one or two terms. He was later in a hardware store in Ellensburg.

We also had a woman teacher, I believe her name was Miss Hudson. Mr. Hayden also taught there. He had a chicken ranch some where between our place and Cle Elum. William McClure was the last teacher there. His term started in 1902, the year Mamma, Beulah and I went on a trip to Missouri. He taught a six month term, so that would be 1902-1903, so it was the spring of 1903 that the school burned. I was 13 years old at that time, I had my 13th birthday in Missouri.

Among the families that I can remember that went there are the Piland, Koch, the Knights who were on the Ballard place at that time, Jim Evans and Boyce, and I can remember the Jasper Evens, Bill Kinney, Jim Kinney, and Cooper families, also Benbow who may have gone to the little one room Adventist school that was near the Jim Kinney place. But I believe they came to our school some of the time and am sure there must have been others like the Henselites and Mack families. It has been so long ago it is hard to remember all of them. There may be others who went there that would remember things I don’t....

Lillie

A third letter to Lila Hanson about early schools and churches was from Thelma Roderick. It read as follows:

July 6, 1975

...I was happy to meet you by correspondence.

I surely would love to help you on your historical project but what I know is what my Mother (Mrs. Florence Zeek) told me and that isn’t much.

I knew the Hansons very well and one summer spent a week with Buelah on the farm. I often wonder where she is now. I just loved Aunt Sarah too.

I remember the Adventist Church you referred to on Bill Evens’ place. Bill Kinney built it on what originally was his farm. It was built approximately in 1889. (Because Mother wasn’t married yet and she got married in 1891 and they came up from Oregon in 1886 to homestead.)

There was a school house on Swauk Prairie that was farther up the road than the Ballard School and built earlier. It burned down. There were different Church groups that met there & etc. Lara Wright McDaniel told me about this. Her Grandpa Wright once owned the old Ley Place.

At the time the Seventh Day Adventist Church was built in 1911 in Cle Elum, I remember Jasper Evens brought the benches from Swauk to use in the newly organized Church. He then used it (Swauk Church) for storage for grain.

I also love Swauk Prairie! My loved ones are resting in the beautiful Grave Yard on the hillside. The Meadow Larks sing more beautifully there than anywhere.

I wish I could be more help to you. I often wish I had obtained more information from Mama or remembered things she said.

Hope to come out and meet you some time when I’m in Cle Elum. Deanie Schober is my third cousin. She was a Cooper. I’d love to hear about your information you gather and the project.
Thelma Roderick

Articles in the Cle Elum Tribune provide additional information about the events mentioned by Thelma Roderick in the above letter:

**CLE-ELUM TRIBUNE**
*May 28, 1891*

The Advent church on Swauk Prairie is nearing completion and services will be held there on the coming Saturday.

**CLE-ELUM TRIBUNE**
*June 18, 1891*

**Zeek—Graves**

The marriage of Fredrick Zeek and Miss Florence Graves was celebrated at the home of the bride, near Swauk Prairie, Sunday afternoon at 2 o’clock, Rev. Mr. Ells performing the ceremony. Only intimate friends of the contracting parties were present. After the marriage service a light collation was served and the bride and groom then came to Cle Elum. Both are well known and popular young people, and their new departure is attended by the best wishes of all.

**Teanaway Items**

The Adventists have erected a very neat little church on Swauk prairie, near the home of Mr. Kinney, and services are held regularly every Saturday. There are only five families in that section who pin their faith to the hopes of the Adventists, but they are of a progressive character and will undoubtedly grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of the country surrounding.

On last Saturday Rev. Mr. Kinney delivered an address dedicating the new Advent church on Swauk Prairie, and hereafter there will be meetings every Saturday.

**Ballard School**

After the Swauk Prairie school burned in the spring of 1903 students apparently went to the Pleasant Valley School, the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Virden school while a new school house was being built on land donated by M. C. Ballard who had purchased the W. H. Knight homestead.

The school was probably completed in 1904 and in 1905 the Pleasant Valley and the Swauk Prairie school districts were consolidated into the Ballard School District (No. 9). The school building was used until 1939 when the Liberty, Virden and Ballard schools were all consolidated with the Cle Elum School District. From then on the rural students rode the school bus.

It was the end of the country school house in the Swauk although the school buildings all had a second life. The Liberty school house was sold to the Liberty townspeople for a community hall; it burned in 1963. A new community hall was built in 2000 to resemble the old school. It now serves as a fire hall. The Virden school house was sold to George Bettas and it is still in use as a residence. The Ballard school house was sold to the Swauk-Teanaway Grange and was used as grange hall until it burned on June 17, 2004. A new hall was built to resemble the old school house and it continues as a community center today.

The design of the Ballard school house appears to be right off a standard school design for the turn of the century. There were five large windows facing east for the morning light with the windows on the west side set high on the wall to make room for the chalk boards below them. The main entrance separated the boys and girls cloakrooms

**The Swauk-Teanaway Grange modified the building to suit their purposes but it always had the look of a school house on the hillside.**
The Ballard School in 1927. On May 17, 1927 the students are from the left, Alice or Judy Carollo, Isabella Carollo, Maria Lundberg, Mildred Danko, Marion Danko, Dorothy Danko, Lela Belle Evans, Agnes Evans, Evelyn Scherette, Albena Carollo, Theresa (Mus) McKnight (teacher), Bill Bonaudi, Dale Lundberg, Robert Garnero, Peter Carollo, Joseph Rozinski, Charlie Bonaudi, Tony Carollo, Quinto Carollo, Joe Emerick, Martin Emerick, George Koch and Mike Emerick. The school house was a classic design for a rural school in the early 1900’s. Note the large windows on the east side and the chimney in front of the belfry both of which match the standard school design shown on the next page. Photo courtesy of the Ellensburg Public Library, Student Names courtesy of Barbara Owen’s booklet “Therea Mus McKnight”

The Ballard School Modified—Unknown Date. The main entrance has been boarded over, a side entrance added and the chimney removed. It still has the name of “Dist. No 9” painted on the front and the concrete steps are still in place. Photo courtesy of the Ellensburg Public Library.

The Swauk Teanaway Grange in 1988. The window in the boys wardrobe room has been converted to a door, the windows on the east boarded up, the belfry removed, a room added to the back as a kitchen with its chimney, the front steps removed and a cinder block chimney added on the south end. The building had been painted and spruced up for its centennial celebration in 2004. However, it burned on June 17th before the celebration could be held. Photo by Wes Engstrom.
A Standard School Floor Plan. Above is a standard school floor plan of the 1900s. The Ballard school house follows the plan closely except the domestic science and manual training rooms were not included. From the book “America’s Country Schools”, Andrew Gulliford, The Preservation Press, Page 195.

The Swauk Teanaway Grange June 17, 2004. The building was completely destroyed by a fire starting in the kitchen. The only part of the old school to survive was the boys outhouse shown on the left. The girls outhouse was on the opposite side of the schoolyard, as far as possible away from the boys. Photo by Wes Engstrom
Mary Malinda (McDonald) Evans was buried on Sunday afternoon, June 22, 1884 at age 37. The entire family and all the neighbors were present to take one last look at Mary Malinda before the lid was nailed down on the pine coffin and her mortal remains with her unborn child laid to rest in the newly dug grave on the treeless wildflower covered hillside next to the family’s farm. The family included Mary Malinda’s husband, Simeon James Evans, her children Bartema Elizabeth, age 11, Nancy Jane, nine, Sarah Elda, six, and Robert Huston, four, plus her father-in-law, Jesse James Evans, her sister-in-law, Nancy Adeline (Evans) Evens and Nancy’s husband, Marion Jasper Evens with sons William J., age five, and Thomas, age two, also Mary Malinda’s brother-in-law, James Alfred M. Evans, and his wife, Martha Ann (Duckworth) Evans, with their children, Bartera Adeline, six, and Jessie Mansfield, four. There were few neighbors in that early pioneer day but they all came, men, women and children, to pay their respects and comfort the family. The Virdens, Wrights, Carrs, Levys, McDonalds, Kochs, Swansons, Setons and McCallums were all there, saddened by the tragedy of Mary Malinda dying from complications during childbirth. Mary Malinda’s children especially, and all who were looking forward to the blessed day when a new son or daughter would join the family. Now they would never know which it was to be because the birth was never consummated and both mother and child died.
The above description is speculation on my part about who attended Mary Malinda Evan's burial, the exact day of the burial and the ritual that took place at the grave site. My description was intended to cause one to think about how the pioneers handled burying the dead before there were undertakers and funeral homes. What were the customs of the Evans family when burying their dead on Swauk Prairie? No descriptions could be found in the family records but a little research turned up what may be the answer.

The Evans family came to Swauk Prairie from the Ozarks in Missouri, having lived there for forty years before leaving in 1882 so it is reasonable to assume they followed burial customs common in the Ozarks at the time.

Mary Malinda Evans was the first burial in the Swauk and her burial on the grassy hillside started a community graveyard. Other pioneer family burials followed: an Evens infant in 1884, Wilson Wright, age six, in 1887, Bell Levy, age 31, in 1888, infant Gracie Evans in 1889, Florie Evans, age 33, in 1889, another Evens infant in 1890 and Erastus Wright, age 57, in 1894.

There were also two other burial places in the Swauk. One was the McCallum family burial site in Horse Canyon with three graves and the other was John Hamilton Price's grave on the mountainside above Liberty. His is a lonely grave far up on the mountain that is truly mysterious. A grave that has a bizarre story to go with it that may explain why his ghost is still seen upon occasion on the mountain above Liberty.

## Early Burial Customs

Abby Burnett spent much of her life researching early burial customs in the Ozarks and on May 19, 2010, gave a presentation at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in Springdale, Arkansas, titled “Gone to the Grave: Ozark Funeral Customs, 1850-1950.” In it she describes typical home funerals in a time before there were undertakers and funeral homes, exactly the circumstances at Mary Malinda Evans burial in Swauk Prairie in 1884. Abby Burnett’s main point was that a burial in a rural pioneer community involved every person in that community: family, friends and neighbors, both adults and children. A brief review of these practices provides a framework for imagining what happened at Mary Malinda Evans’ death and burial.

Family and neighbors handled a burial and there were generally accepted ways it was done. These customs were not unique to the Ozarks but were generally followed in many early day home burials.

The first custom was that a person should never die alone. It reflected badly on the family if he or she did. When death could be anticipated the entire family and as many neighbors as possible would say their good-byes. When the death was a lingering one all would take turns “sitting up” with the dying person. They would attend to the person’s needs, be it administering medicine or just comforting the person. They would notify the family when death was eminent or had occurred. In Mary Malinda Evans’ case the death was not anticipated of course and probably happened rather quickly so only family members and possibly a person from the community who acted as a midwife were present.

Immediately after death the body was “laid out” on boards or on a door that had been taken off its hinges. The body was washed, the eyelids were closed and weighted down with coins, the jaw was tied closed with a cloth, the face was massaged to relax it and the arms folded across the chest, all done before rigor mortis set in. The person was also dressed in their finest clothes, new if possible. Often new outfits would be made for women and children while men would be buried in their best clothes be that their newest overalls or a suit if they owned one. The coins and the cloth around the jaw were removed after rigor mortis set in and the body was taken on the board to the largest room in the house for viewing and the wake.

Once the body was properly “laid out” near a wall in the largest room in the house the wake would start. The body would never be left alone even at night. Friends and neighbors would take
turns sitting with the body throughout the day and night. Some say this was necessary to keep the spirit from wanting to leave the body, others say it was to prevent any cats, rodents or bugs from disfiguring the body. At night cloths dampened with baking soda and water and perhaps other substances would be applied to the face and hands to keep the body looking fresh.

Everyone in the community, family, friends, neighbors, including all the children, would be expected to come and pay their respects. The wake was usually a solemn affair and provided relatives, friends and neighbors an opportunity to visit and share remembrances of the departed. Food was provided to those who came and often whisky as well. The solemnity of the affair sometimes disappeared and a good time was had by all.

Neighbors came to help. They cleaned the house, brought food and took care of the chores, even to the extent of planting crops or harvesting at appropriate seasons, so the bereaved family would be able to deal with their grief without worrying about feeding or hosting the many people who came to call.

Upon in the event of death, a person experienced in woodworking would immediately start building a coffin. In Mary Malinda Evans’ case that would probably be her father-in-law who was an expert carpenter. Building a coffin was not started until after the person had died because it was believed that if built before the death, some other member of the family would die. The exception was if the dying person requested a coffin be built so that he or she could approve it. The finest wood available would be used and the coffin would have the traditional six sides, the unmistakable shape of a container for burying a dead person. The four sided casket of today was not used until later when undertakers and funeral homes came into vogue. Coffin building may have gone on all night long. When the coffin was finished it was time for women to provide the final touches on the inside and sometimes on the outside.

The inside was padded and lined with cloth tacked in place with lace covering the tacks. Paint was usually not available so the outside would be stained dark with lamp black mixed with coal oil or covered with cloth to give it color, a dark color for adults and white for children. If available, the coffin could be decorated with “coffin screws” to hold the lid during transport to the grave. Nails were used for the final closing of the coffin at the grave site. In Mary Malinda Evans’ case the coffin was probably made with rough sawn lumber with little decoration as no saw mills or hardware stores were close by. Shoudy’s trading post in Ellensburgh was twenty miles away, a two day trip by horse and wagon.

According to Abby Burnett the spot chosen for a family or rural cemetery was a hill or high ground that was not farmable and had a pleasant...
view. At the time of Mary Malinda Evans’ death no spot had been chosen for a burial and three people were appointed to find a spot. The spot they chose fit the criteria perfectly. It was a short distance north of the Evans’ farm on a grassy knoll with a fine view of the Teanaway Valley and the Cascade Mountains. There were no trees at the time although the view is now blocked by the many Ponderosa pines that have grown up since.

The grave would be dug by neighbors and would not be started until the day of the burial. It was believed that another family member would die if the grave was dug early. Also, the clocks in the house would be stopped and the mirrors covered lest another family member die. Children were not shielded from the trauma of death and participated in all aspects of early funerals. Dying was just a natural part of living.

There might have been a funeral service at the home or at the grave site if a preacher was available, but usually in the early days a preacher was not available and a close relative would read a scripture and perhaps the attendees would sing a song at the grave. A formal funeral might have been held later when a traveling preacher was available.

On the day of the burial the coffin would be taken to the grave on a farm wagon. At the grave site the lid of the coffin would be opened and a designated person would tidy up the body that may have become disarrayed from the rough ride. Then all present, including the children, would take a final look before the lid was nailed shut and the coffin lowered into the grave. All would participate in covering the grave before leaving the grave site, again, lest another family member were to die. A mound of dirt would indicate the place until a rock or head stone was placed as a permanent marker.

Rural cemeteries were maintained once a year when the community would have a “decoration day” and everyone would come to clean up and celebrate. It was usually the biggest celebration of the year for the community. The practice predated our national memorial day and each cemetery would have its own day for the occasion. Decoration day amounted to a huge community picnic with tables set up for large amounts of “company food.” The cemetery was cleaned up, flowers were brought for every grave and everyone had a great time.

Local Customs Are Similar

There is a letter to Lila Hanson in the Ellensburg Public Library that describes one burial that took place on Swauk Prairie. The letter is from Lillie (Hanson) Grant, the daughter of John Hanson and Sarah Piland. Lillie was born in 1889 on Swauk Prairie and died in San Diego in 1988. A portion of the letter reads as follows:
February 11, 1975

... I remember well when Uncle Alexander’s house was built. When it was about finished and they were about ready to move in a dance had been planned as a house warming, but one of Kern’s and Ester’s babies died and the funeral services were held in the living room—parlor area. Everyone was sitting around looking solemn when Earl, Kern’s and Ester’s oldest boy who was then about 3 or 4 years old, walked out to the center of the floor and said “well, lets have a dance” so of course every one smiled....

Lillie

There was an article in the local Cle Elum Tribune that indicates local Cle Elum burial customs were much like those that may have been followed on Swauk Prairie by the people from the Ozarks. In the article the editor laments that the burial of a transient was not done properly by the local authorities. The editor’s idea of a proper burial was similar to the ideas of the people from the Ozarks.

**CLE-ELUM TRIBUNE**  
**November 5, 1891**  
**A Ghastly Find**  
**John Burns Found Dead Near the Railroad Track.**

The death of John Burns, who was found near the railroad track about one mile east of this place last week, was sad in many respects. He was first discovered by a school boy about 8:30 o’clock in the morning and from his general appearance he had lain there most all the night in a hard rain. His head was gashed and mashed, presenting a sickening sight. He was lying face downward and remained in that position until about one o’clock, awaiting the arrival of the coroner from Roslyn, who by the way, failed to put in an appearance for some reason.

There was no inquest, no coffin, save a crude box, no relatives, friends or funeral rites. Clad in the rough working clothes in which he died, with blood and dirt still clinging to his person, unwashed, he was placed in a rough box and hidden forever from mortal view. There should have been an inquest held over the body of this man and he should have been given a halfway decent burial. Our boasted civilization was very poorly represented in the final disposition of the dead body of the unfortunate John Burns.

Swauk Cemetery

**Swauk Cemetery Sign.** Swauk Cemetery began in 1884 with the burial of Mary Malinda (McDonald) Evans.  
*Photo by Wes Engstrom.*

**A Grassy Hillside Was Chosen**

When Mary Malinda died unexpectedly during childbirth a committee of three men, George Virden, Jesse Evans and Ed Allen, were chosen to select a site for a cemetery. The site chosen was on a treeless knoll on unsurveyed public domain land in Section 29 overlooking the Teanaway Valley.

It seems odd that early descriptions of the cemetery referred to a grassy hillside when now the cemetery is on a forested hillside. However Jim Trainer, a certified arborist specializing in finding and dating old trees in Washington State, surveyed the entire cemetery and did not find a tree over one hundred years old with most being sixty to seventy years. Clearly the small trees were not kept in check in the cemetery and a forest has grown where once a grassy hillside existed.

Before the early settlers came it was the Indian’s custom to burn their hunting and berry picking grounds each year to improve berry production and grazing for animals. The low intensity fires did not harm mature pine trees and kept new young trees from crowding out the larger trees. The result was the open park-like Ponderosa pine forest the early settler found. It is only in
the last hundred years that the forest has become overgrown and prone to devastating wildfires.

The spot chosen for the grave was not on land Simeon Evans, Mary Malinda’s husband, had selected for a homestead but instead was on neighboring land selected for a homestead by W. A. Carr. In 1884 the land on Swauk Prairie was still unallocated land of the federal government and because it had not been surveyed no one could file on the land. They could only select it, farm it, improve it and “squat” on it until it was surveyed and then they could file on homesteads to make their claim official.

The story goes that when the neighbors were digging Mary Malinda Evans’ grave that Mr. Carr told them they could not put it there because he was squatting on that land. The diggers did not take kindly to that and informed him that if he didn't leave they would dig a second grave and he would be in it.

The survey of the township was published in 1894 and land in the township was finally opened for entry but every odd numbered section, including Section 29 which contained the cemetery, was reserved for the Northern Pacific railroad.

There were at least ten burials in the cemetery by 1896 when title to Section 29 was granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad as a land grant in return for building a railroad through Kittitas County. An early settler attempted to buy the land from the railroad and threatened to prevent further burials in the cemetery. A formal cemetery organization may have been formed at that time but the papers have not been found.

The deed from the railroad has been found and it indicates that the land was sold in 1902 to two of the early settlers, W. A. Kinney and Abe L. Wright, TRUSTEES, who bought the five acre cemetery from the Northern Pacific Railroad for $13.75.

Newspaper Reports A Problem
There were problems with the ownership of the land after the railroad was given title in 1896. The following newspaper article explains the situation:

**THE ELLENSBURG CAPITAL**  
December 19, 1896.  
Cemetery Threatened.

J. A. Piland and John Hanson of Swauk Prairie were in town Thursday, says the Roslyn Miner. Mr. Piland said they were having some trouble down there with their cemetery. It was located fourteen years ago on unsurveyed land and they had used it ever since for the burial of the dead. The party that located the land afterwards, agreed to give them a deed to the same when he got one, but to make themselves secure they got from the man whose land adjoined the cemetery, five acres of good tillable land and traded it for the cemetery ground all of which they can prove. He says the land now proves to be railroad land, the party claiming he has contracted with the railroad company for the same, and now forbids them burying anyone there. They say the ground is no good for cultivation and is very little good for anything else except what they are using it for. The citizens of the prairie are going to have a meeting to see if they can come to an understanding with the party and make a settlement that will be satisfactory all around.

We do not known what transpired between 1896 and 1902 except that there were at least eight more burials in the cemetery before the land was purchased from the Northern Pacific Railroad as evidenced by the following deed.

**Northern Pacific Railway Company**

THIS DEED, Made the twenty-ninth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and two, by the NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, a corporation duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, party of the first part, and W. A. KINNEY and ABE L. WRIGHT, TRUSTEES, of the post office of Cle Elum in the County of Kittitas and State of Washington, parties of the second part, Witnesseth: WHEREAS, The party of the first part has contracted to sell and convey to the parties of the second part, the parcel of the lands hereinafter described, free from encumbrances, for the price hereinafter specified. THEREFORE, In compliance with said contract, the party of the first part, in consideration of the sum of thirteen and 75/100 (13.75) Dollars, unto it paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, does grant, bargain
and convey unto the said parties of the second part their successors and assigns, the following described tract of land, situate in the County of Kittitas, in the State of Washington, that is to say: Commencing at point forty-two (42) rods south of the northeast corner of the Northwest quarter (NW1/4) of Section twenty-nine (29) in Township Twenty (20) North, of Range seventeen (17) East, of the Willamette Principal Meridian, thence running west forty-four (44) rods thence running south at right angles thereto eighteen (18) rods, thence running west at right angles thereto forty-four (44) rods to the east boundary line of said Northwest quarter (NW1/4) of said section twenty-nine (29), thence north and along said east boundary line of said Northwest quarter (NW1/4) of said section twenty-nine (29), a distance of eighteen (18) rods to the place of beginning, said described tract of land being situate in the Northwest quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty-nine (29) in Township Twenty (20) North, of Range seventeen (17) East of the Willamette Principal Meridian, containing, according to Survey five (5) acres, more or less, reserving and excepting from said lands such as are now known, or shall hereafter be ascertained, to contain coal or iron or other minerals, and also the use of such surface ground as may be necessary for mining operations: and the right of access to such reserved and excepted coal and iron or mineral lands, for the purpose of exploring, developing and working the same. Together with the hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, with the reservation and exceptions before stated. TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, The said lands and appurtenances unto the said parties of the second part, their successors and assigns, forever, free and clear of all liens, charges and encumbrances, except taxes and assessment, if any, upon the conditions and subject to the reservations aforesaid. The said part of the first part, for itself and its successors, covenants and agrees to and with the said parties of the second part, their successors and assigns, that it will WARRANT AND DEFEND the title to the said premises, forever, except as against the taxes and assessments afore-said, which, if any, the said party of the second part hereby assumes to pay. In Witness Whereof, The said party of the first part has caused these presents to be sealed with its corporate seal, and signed by its President.

Filed for the record May 27, 1902, at 9:00 AM at the request of Abe Wright.

It is not stated what W. A. Kinney and Abe L. Wright were trustees of as there is no record found for any formal organization of the cemetery at that time. Burials continued to be made in the cemetery and in 1933 local landowners contributed money and time for a new fence as reported in the local newspaper.
Swauk Prairie Notes.

The men of the community made a new woven wire fence around the Swauk Prairie Cemetery. Funds were donated by the following:

- M. C. Ballard, $5.00
- Wayne Ballard, $3.00
- George J. Bettas, 50 cents
- Frank Blankenship, $5.00
- Mrs. Jennie Bugni, $2.50
- Jerome Contratto, $1.50
- M. G. Cox, $5.00
- Cooper Bros., Fence Posts, William Crank, $1.00
- Danko Bros., $2.00
- Melvin Dunford, $5.00
- W. J. Evans, $2.00
- Mrs. Laura E. Fielding, $1.00
- Daniel Farmer, $2.00
- Mrs. Laura Farlow, $1.00
- John Garnero, 75 cents
- Bert Graves, $1.00
- August Hartman, $5.00
- Fred W. Hartman, $1.00
- A. J. Hanson, $1.50
- H. D. Harkness, $5.00
- Mrs. Gene Hoxie, $5.00
- William Krueger, $3.00
- Julius Laudensky, $2.50
- J. M. Ley, $1.00
- Herbert Lundberg, $3.00
- John Micheletto, $1.00
- P. J. Michela, $1.00
- Fred Musser, 50 cents
- Harry Masterson, $1.00
- Mrs. Katherine Ozanich, $1.00
- Mrs. Ole Olson, $1.00
- John Olsen and Julia O. Grunden, $5.00
- Lyle Piland, $2.00
- Mrs. John Rue, $1.00
- John Rue, $1.00
- John Scott, $4.00
- William Smallwood, $1.00
- W. L. Virden, $5.00
- N. W. Virden, $1.00
- C. M. Virden, $1.00

The Community Cared For Swauk Cemetery

The above article in 1933 suggests that the Swauk Prairie community took care of the Swauk Cemetery as it appears that just about every neighbor contributed to the fund for a new fence. What is not indicated is who organized the community effort. Was there an organized group to care for the cemetery? The fact that the deed for the cemetery from the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1902 was made out to W. A. Kinney and Abe L. Wright as TRUSTEES implies an organization although no reference to such an organization has been found in County records nor any mention of it in local newspapers. In addition early records of burials in Swauk Cemetery, if any were kept, have not been found.

The Swauk Cemetery is not associated with any church or masonic group. Membership in the Swauk-Teanaway Grange, organized in 1931, includes many of the families living on Swauk Prairie. The grange gradually became involved in cemetery affairs. A search of their records show the cemetery first mentioned in meeting minutes for January 9, 1942 when it is recorded that: “Letter received from Seattle National Bank regarding the cemetery fund of $23.00. Motion made and approved that the $23.00 be moved from cemetery fund to general fund.”

The May 28, 1954 minutes state: “Brother Hanson reported that at one time the grange had a cemetery fund which still had around $25.00 in it. He asked the Grange’s opinion on using this fund, in addition to donations, to place markers on unmarked graves in the Swauk Cemetery and also to make improvements. A motion was made and seconded that a committee be appointed to investigate the extent of the fund and try to draw up a map of the locations of the graves and also find out what the markers will cost. The committee consists of Brothers Hanson, Penkert, Micheletto and Hartman.”

In the 1960’s with both Grangers and non-Grangers involved, the Grange spearheaded major improvements; the road was newly gravelled and extended, a cattle guard installed at the entrance and a new woven wire fence with steel posts sunk in concrete replaced the old fence. The Grange had a cleanup day annually followed by a potluck dinner much like the “decoration day” of old burial customs. Others, like a local Boy Scout group and some Cle Elum school student doing community service, also scheduled clean-ups. People wanting to donate to the cemetery upkeep often did so to the Grange. The Grange kept a separate “Cemetery fund.” In 2002 the Grange paid the I. O. O. F Cemetery in Ellensburg $120 to make 25 cement “unknown” markers which were used to mark known graves without a record of who was buried.

Not everyone in the community agreed with the way the Grange was managing the cemetery. The May 20, 1977 Grange minutes read: “Harold Giaudrone said cemetery cleanup is scheduled for next week and a new sign will be installed.” The July 1977 minutes state: “The new sign was stolen and Bob Ballard will replace it with the old sign he had made in 1960.” Either someone really liked the new sign or else someone really
disliked the new sign and wanted to keep the old one. Most likely the latter. The old sign is still in place today.

In 1984 there was an attempt by the Grange to form a committee to set burial guidelines for the Swauk Cemetery. That did not go over well with everyone in the community and guidelines were never adopted. The Grange continued to sponsor cleanups, accept donations for upkeep and pay taxes on the cemetery. Then on June 17, 2004, the Swauk-Teanaway Grange building, the old Ballard School, burned completely to the ground and the Grange turned over the Grange Cemetery fund to the Swauk Cemetery Association that had been formed to handle Cemetery affairs.

Thanks to Violet Burke for sharing Swauk-Teanaway Grange records of the above cemetery history.

**Cemetery Corporation Formed in 2005**

In 2005 a non-profit corporation, the Swauk Cemetery Association, was formed to handle the affairs of the cemetery and give it legal status: it is now recognized by the State of Washington as the cemetery authority for the Swauk Cemetery. Jan Plesha was the incorporator and first president. In 2012, Swauk Cemetery Association officers are: James A. Hanson, President; Robin Knox Little, Vice President and Lila A. Hanson, Secretary. Charles Ballard and John Hanson are Supervisors. The cemetery is still a non-endowed cemetery with no burial charges and no funds, except donations, for the long term maintenance of the cemetery. Family members of those buried in the cemetery are responsible for the upkeep of the individual graves.

Bob Ballard had come to Swauk Prairie with his parents in 1905, at age twelve, after living at the mouth of Swauk Creek, where it joins the Yakima River, from the time he was an infant. Thus he had a lifetime of knowledge about the Swauk to draw upon and he used that knowledge to contact as many of the pioneer families as possible to construct a map of the burial locations in the cemetery. After his death Charles Ballard, Bob Ballard’s son, and Lila Hanson assumed the task of keeping the records. The records are now kept by the Swauk Cemetery Association.

Despite the concerted efforts of Bob Ballard and others over the last sixty years to document each burial, there are still known graves with unknown people as well as known people in unknown graves. For instance, see the newspaper articles about “Goldie Powers” on page 158 and “Alfred Powers” on page 158. The newspaper clearly indicates they were buried in the Swauk Cemetery but the map does not show where and the records do not include them.

The quest for additional information about Swauk Cemetery burials continues, but the fact remains that there are souls buried in the cemetery whose identities or locations are known only to their maker.

**Swauk Cemetery Records Still A Challenge**

Swauk Cemetery records became a passion of Robert O. Ballard who, at sixty years of age, started assembling Swauk Cemetery data in 1953, seventy years after the cemetery itself began. By 1963 he had created a map of the cemetery which he continued updating until his own burial in Swauk Cemetery in 1979.
McCallum Family Graves

McCallum Family Graveyard in 2012. The McCallum family graveyard is on a pleasant sunny slope at the north end of Horse Canyon with a nice view of the canyon and Hayward hill in the distance. Photo by Wes Engstrom.

On a grassy south-facing slope at the north end of Horse Canyon is a small one-acre graveyard with at least three graves of McCallum Family members; Peter McCallum, his wife Sarah and daughter Sadie. There are three additional markers for other descendents but it is not clear if they are merely memorials or if ashes have been buried beneath them. There is a bronze marker for Peter Martin McCallum, F1 US Navy, World War II, May 16, 1927 - Feb 5, 1998, a wooden marker for Jessie Fern Huff, Feb 9, 1921 to April 17, 2002, and a concrete marker for My Beloved, Bob McCallum, Dec 27, 1928 to June 11, 2002.

Peter McCallum was the first to have a commercial business at the Lauderdale Junction. The traveler of the day used horses and horses require a “stage stop.” Peter McCallum’s descendents have described his pioneering effort in the book A History of Kittitas County Washington, 1989, page 638. A portion of the description is as follows:

In the spring of 1882, Peter (McCallum) and two friends hiked across Snoqualmie Pass via a narrow Indian trail, leading a horse packed with equipment to sell to miners in the Swauk camps, and to search for land. Peter homesteaded 160 acres in Horse Canyon in August, 1882. He built a log cellar where Sarah and his three children joined him in October, 1883. He purchased 320 acres of railroad land that joined the homestead, 160 acres of it in 1891. He sold vegetables, beef, chicken, eggs, milk, cream, butter, cheese, pigs, cured hams and bacon to the camp of miners on the Swauk. He opened McCallum post office and store in his home, which was also used as a land office. He freighted goods from The Dalles, Oregon, to Liberty, and hauled much gold from the mines to Ellensburg, which he sent to the U.S. Mint. He opened a larger store and post office on the Swauk Creek. He gave land above the road from where Virden School now stands for McCallum School (District 15).

The McCallum Post Office


Peter McCallum and his wife Sarah (Harrison) were among the first farmers to homestead just south of the Swauk Mining District. In August 1882 they filed a homestead on 160 acres and immediately began to develop a farm. Other settlers followed suit, and McCallum saw an opportunity to serve both farmers and miners with a grocery and post
office. His post office, established in 1884, was the first post office in the Kittitas Valley proper west of Ellensburgh and north of the Yakima River. In 1892 Postmaster McCallum was elected County Commissioner on the Democratic ticket. He served in that capacity for two terms. In that same year the Liberty post office was established just four miles to the north and soon Liberty became a thriving town. Cle Elum and Teanaway had been established to the southwest. As a result the McCallum office was no longer needed to serve the area. Peter McCallum opened a grocery business in Seattle in 1897 and soon afterwards his post office was discontinued. He retained ownership of his farm lands, however, and in 1902 he returned to Cle Elum.

Newspapers Announce Deaths

The deaths of Mrs. Peter McCallum and Peter McCallum were announced in local newspapers as follows:

**ELLENSBURGH LOCALIZER**

March 9, 1895

*Local News*

Mrs. Peter McCallum died Tuesday morning. She leaves a husband and five or six children to mourn her demise.

**CLE ELUM ECHO**

April 29, 1911

*Peter McCallum.*

Peter McCallum, who died at Ellensburg last week was born in Scotland January 12, 1849 and the following year his parents removed to Canada. In 1867 he located in Iowa where he resided until 1881. In 1875 he was married to Sadie B. Harrison at Pumroy. In 1881 he became a resident of Kittitas County, Wash., where he engaged in the mercantile business in the Swauk district during a number of the years he resided in that section. His first wife died in 1894, and in 1895 he was married to Julia Bryan at Ellensburg. His death occurred at Ellensburg April 19, 1911.

Mr. McCallum was for several years a resident of Cle Elum. Whilst living here he filled the position of town marshal, and was at one time a member of board of county commissioners. He is survived by five children, Mrs. Jessie Dunsworth, Louis McCallum of Cle Elum, Peter and William McCallum of Sunnyside and Edward McCallum of North Yakima.

A Mysterious Grave

Anna B. Price died alone in her bed in a rented room with no friends or relatives to offer support or comfort. Her body was discovered three days before Christmas in 1943. She had thirty dollars in cash and a pension check for forty dollars, endorsed but not cashed. Welfare records used to prepare her death certificate indicated she was 87 years old, born in Norway September 7, 1856, and had been in the United States 40 years. She did housework for a living and died at her residence at 315 ½ W. Yakima Ave, Yakima, Washington. The doctor, Stanley R. Benner M.D., Health Officer, who signed the death certificate, certified Anna died of la grippe (influenza) but said he had never treated her before and did not know how long she had been ill. Anna was buried five days after Christmas on December 30, 1943, in Tahoma Cemetery, Yakima, Washington. With her died the facts concerning the burial of her husband, John Hamilton Price, thirty-three years earlier on a mountainside near Liberty, Washington.

Anna (Buan) Price came to the United States in 1880, at age 24, and six years later on June 2, 1886, married John Hamilton Price in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Four years later on June 8, 1892 they were in Washington State where they filed on a gold mining claim in the Swauk Mining District which they called the Wall Street.

By 1902 they had filed on eleven more claims: the Missouri, the Intermediate, the Brooklin, and the Anna Buan in 1892; the Park Flat, the North Yakima, and the Intermediate #2 in 1893; the St. James in 1896; the Arena in 1900; and the Minneapolis and the X-Ray in 1902. Each claim was for 20 acres and all were grouped together on Williams Creek three miles above the Meaghersville gold camp, which is now called Liberty.

John and Anna worked their mining claims diligently. On April 6, 1893 the Ellensburg Capital newspaper reported:
John Hamilton Price's Grave Site in 2007. John Price and his wife, Anna, had a remote claim above Liberty. They lived in Yakima in the winter and on the claim in the summer. In the winter of 1910 John died under bizarre circumstances. Anna buried him on a beautiful little knoll on the mountainside. The grave is the only lone grave known in the Swauk mines. *Photo by Wes Engstrom.*

I had been told about John Hamilton Price being buried on the mountainside three miles above the town when I first came to Liberty in 1971, but I had never thought at the time to ask why he was buried there and not in the Swauk Cemetery where so many other miners were laid to rest.

Then in 2009 Vern Jordin told me the story of John and Anna Price. Vern, the son of Clarence Jordin Sr. and brother of Junior Jordin, both long time Liberty residents, came to Liberty in 1930 at age eight. He was raised in the camp and went to the Liberty School until 1939 when it closed, after which he went to high school in Ellensburg. In March of 2009 Vern visited Liberty to show some of his father’s gold specimens and the subject of Anna and John Price came up.

Vern Jordin remembered Anna Price as a wrinkled old lady who appeared to be at least a hundred years old but who was a spry, lovely and sharp witted person who teased the boys and threatened to kiss them if they didn’t mind their manners. When asked how old she was she would reply “I’m sweet sixteen and never been kissed.” Vern said Anna often walked the three miles from her homestead to Liberty to sell eggs and vegetables and when Vern could, he gave her a ride back to her home in an old truck.

Vern also remembered the story he was told about John Hamilton Price. He had never met him of course as Vern first came to the camp twenty years after John died. The story Vern was told paints a strange picture about what happened to John, a picture that is hard to believe.

The story goes that besides being a miner, John Hamilton Price was a doctor, a doctor who in the end had cancer and who, in a desperate attempt to save his own life during the winter of 1909-1910, instructed Anna how to operate on him to remove the cancer. She operated on John while on their mining claim. Vern did not know when the operation took place or how long John lived afterward, but when he died on February 5, 1910, so the story goes, Anna placed his body on a large pile of brush and was preparing to cremate him when the townspeople convinced her she should bury him instead.

It does seem strange that Anna didn’t walk the three miles down to Liberty to seek help when John died. However, John died in February, the middle of the winter and in the middle of winter it may have been difficult to walk down to Liberty to seek help. Even at that it does not seem reasonable that the County Sheriff or the County Coroner was not notified and the death was not reported in the local papers.

Perhaps Anna wanted it that way. It may be that Anna or John or both ascribed to the Rosicrucian belief, as did others in the mining camp. In the Rosicrucian belief there was a strict procedure to
be followed when a person died. The body must
lie undisturbed in a quiet, dark place for three and
one half days, without postmortem operations or
embalming taking place. This was to allow the
three main parts of one’s spirit to leave the body
in an orderly and peaceful way. After three and
one-half days the body was to be cremated to free
the last part of the spirit. After that the ashes are
just ashes, the spirit has gone to another place.

Of course, it is simply speculation on my part
that Anna or John followed the Rosicrucian
philosophy but it does fit the story and if true
would explain why the locals did not call the
authorities to report a death even though three
years before, in 1907, Washington State had
passed a law that required all deaths to be recorded
by a city or county and for burial places to be
approved. It may be the local people thought it
better that Anna did as her beliefs dictated rather
than follow the new law, except for the part
calling for cremating the body.

Maybe that is why the remains of John
Hamilton Price are in a shallow grave on a little
knoll overlooking a pleasant, quiet meadow, a
resting place fit for a king.

The details of John Hamilton Price’s life
and death may never be known because of the
circumstances of Anna’s death. Whatever family
records she had were probably lost when her house
burned to the ground in 1941. If she did have
family records with her when she died in 1943, a
welfare person or landlord must have gathered up
her belongings and, when no relatives or friends
came forward to claim them, thrown them away.
No family or friends came forward to bury Anna
and she was buried as a pauper by the welfare
department.

Consequently, little is known of John Hamilton
Price’s life except for the brief mention in
newspapers during his time in Liberty and what
Anna said in her application for the homestead
entry—that he was born in Missouri, she married
him in Vancouver B. C. on June 2, 1886, and
that he died in Liberty on February 5, 1910.

I have not been able to find any listing for John
in any Federal or Territorial census or any other
official records. His birth date is unknown, his
death unrecorded and his grave unmarked, truly
a lost soul.

The present owners of Anna Price’s homestead
watch carefully over the grave and report that
they have seen a ghostly figure walking along
the road near their place. Perhaps it is the fourth
spirit of John Hamilton Price looking to visit the
other ghosts in the old Liberty mining camp.

Chuck Shelton now owns part of Anna Price’s
homestead. He related a story he had been told
by an old timer who, when he was eight years
old, was taken to the grave by his father and was
told that John Hamilton Price had been buried
with his beautiful and expensive gold watch, and
if you put your ear to the ground on his grave,
you could still hear it ticking! A pretty scary story
for an eight year old.

The search for pieces of this mystery will
continue but perhaps this is all that will be
known about two people who died without
anyone, children, relatives or friends, to preserve
their story.
The Swauk Cemetery in the 1970s. Steve Hill and Ralph Hammersburg made a sketch of the Swauk Cemetery in the 1970s as part of a paper they titled “A Historical and Genealogical Sketch of the Families of Swauk Cemetery.” The portion of the cemetery of interest to the Evans family is the southwest corner where Mary Malinda Evans was buried in 1884. Most of the Evans’ family burials are in this section of the cemetery.

The southwest corner of the Swauk cemetery contains mostly the remains of the Evans, Evens and Wright pioneer families and their descendants. It is the Evans and Evens families whose stories we are telling so it is only this portion of the cemetery we have described in this book. To begin investigations, the position of every rock and marker was measured and the inscription on each marker that had one was noted. The graves were then compared to the existing burial records and the family information that was available. What information was known about each burial was arranged in a table in chronological order. The stories, primarily obituaries, were then connected to the individual graves in the list and the stories were grouped into families with a family tree drawn for the three main families buried in the southwest corner of the cemetery. Even after all that was done there are still mysteries. There are known graves with unknown occupants and known burials with unknown locations as well as burials in the southwest corner with an unknown relationship to the three pioneer families.
Sketch of a Portion of the Swauk Cemetery in 2011. The above sketch was made of the Evans family portion of the cemetery and each apparent burial given an arbitrary number to facilitate correlating family history with actual grave markers on the ground. Mary Malinda Evans is number 51. Numbers 86, 88, 89, 90 and 91 are graves shown in cemetery records but without any sign of a grave on the ground. Numbers 94 through 99 are Evans family members buried in other parts of the cemetery and 100 and 101 are people having connections to the Evans who are known to be buried in the cemetery but with unknown locations. Sketch by Wes Engstrom from measurements made in the cemetery.
Burials, corresponding to the graves shown on the previous page, are listed in the table below in chronological order. The “Ref. Num.” refers to the sketch on the previous page. The “Marker Type” and “Marker Inscription” columns are what can be seen on the ground in the cemetery. The “Burial Num.” is from cemetery records when available and the “Last Name,” “First Name,” “Middle Name,” “Age” and “Burial Year” columns of information are from whatever source provided the best information—be it family records, cemetery records, newspaper articles or the grave marker itself. The number after the decimal point in the “Burial Year” is the month of burial when known.

Those burials that have a marker but do not have a name have been colored green in the table, and those places that may be a burial because there is a rock or concrete block that could possibly be a grave marker are colored yellow. The two people known to have been buried in Swauk Cemetery but who do not have a burial number in the records or a marker on the ground are colored pink. They could be in one of the graves marked “unknown.”

### Burials Listed in Chronological Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref Num.</th>
<th>Marker Type</th>
<th>Marker Inscription</th>
<th>Burial Num.</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Burial Year</th>
<th>Relationship To Jesse James Evans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>051</td>
<td>Rock &amp; Concrete</td>
<td>Mary Malinda Evans Apr 15, 1850 – Jun 26, 1884</td>
<td>001</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Malinda</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1884.06</td>
<td>Daughter-in-Law See Simeon Evans page 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>032</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>014</td>
<td>Evens</td>
<td>Infant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1884.09</td>
<td>Grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Wilson Wright 1881 – 1887 Son of Sarah &amp; Erastus</td>
<td>026</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>See “Erastus L. Wright” on page 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>047</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>003</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Gracie</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1889.03</td>
<td>Granddaughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>086</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>063</td>
<td>Kinney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1889.06</td>
<td>See “Kinney Family” on page 157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>046</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>005</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Infant</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>073</td>
<td>Marble &amp; Concrete</td>
<td>M. J. E. (On Marble) Margaret Jane Evens 1834–1888 (On Concrete)</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>Evens</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>See “William W. Evens” on page 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>085</td>
<td>Rock &amp; Granite</td>
<td>Kinney Eliza J. 1814-1894</td>
<td>062</td>
<td>Kinney</td>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>J. (McCombs)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>See “Kinney Family” on page 157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Erastus L. Wright Co. D, 26 ia. Inf.</td>
<td>028</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>Erastus</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1894.09</td>
<td>See “Erastus L. Wright” on page 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>090</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>066</td>
<td>Blankenship</td>
<td>Perneia</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>See “Francis Blankenship” on page 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>052</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>004</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>Mansfield.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1896.12</td>
<td>Grandson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>034</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>Jessie J. Evans Jul 22, 1815 – Nov 14, 1897</td>
<td>015</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1897.11</td>
<td>See “Jesse J. Evans” on page 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>082</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>059</td>
<td>Elexon</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>R.</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>See note with “Kinney Family” on page 157</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>084</td>
<td>Rock &amp; Granite</td>
<td>Kinney Aaron 1814 - 1898</td>
<td>061</td>
<td>Kinney</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>A. (Dr.)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>See “Kinney Family” on page 157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>075</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Francis Everett Aug 9, 1876 – Oct 26, 1899</td>
<td>054</td>
<td>Evens</td>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1899.10</td>
<td>See “William W. Evens” on page 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Netta Wright-Powers 1876 – 1900</td>
<td>029</td>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>Netta</td>
<td>(Wright)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>See “Wright Family Tree” on page 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>092</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>Vesta Z. Knight 1893 - 1900</td>
<td>067</td>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>Vesta</td>
<td>Z.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>See “William H. H. Knight” on page 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref Num.</td>
<td>Marker Type</td>
<td>Marker Inscription</td>
<td>Burial Num.</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Middle Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Burial Year</td>
<td>Relationship To Jesse James Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>031</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Nancy A. Evens Wife of Jasper Evens</td>
<td>013</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Adeline</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1900.04</td>
<td>Daughter See “Marion J. Evens” on page 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>068</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Mary S. wife of F. M. Cox 1834 – 1904</td>
<td>047</td>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>See “Mrs. Francis M. Cox” on page 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>094</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Infant Son of R. H. &amp; Emily Evans 2 Feb 1905 – 6 Feb 1905</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1905.02</td>
<td>Great Grandson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>023</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>Sarah E. McDonald Jul 14, 1851 – Dec 10, 1910</td>
<td>039</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1910.12</td>
<td>See “Sarah E. McDonald” on page 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>076</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Enos E. George Oct 20, 1866 – Jan 7, 1915</td>
<td>055</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>Enos</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1915.01</td>
<td>See “Ellis B. George” on page 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Dora Isabell Currie Wife of William J. Evans Sept 13, 1891 – Feb 16, 1915</td>
<td>021</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Dora</td>
<td>Isabell (Mable)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1915.02</td>
<td>Wife of Grandson See “William J. Evans” on page 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>062</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Rolla E. Evans Mar 22, 1890 – Nov 1, 1916</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Rolland</td>
<td>Bennona</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1916.11</td>
<td>Grandson See “Rolland Evans” on page 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>J. (Goldie)</td>
<td>A.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1917.05 See “Goldie Powers” on page 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>077</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Deborah George 1833 – 1917 Grandmother</td>
<td>056</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>Debora</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1917.06</td>
<td>See “Deborah George” on page 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>Ora D. Taylor 1879-1917</td>
<td>025</td>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Ora</td>
<td>D.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1917.10</td>
<td>Husband of Granddaughter See “Ora D. Taylor” on page 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>Bartema A. Taylor 1878-1917</td>
<td>024</td>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Bartema</td>
<td>Adeline</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1917.10</td>
<td>Granddaughter See “Bartema A. Taylor” on page 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>069</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Francis M. Cox 1832-1918</td>
<td>048</td>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>M.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>See “Francis M. Cox” on page 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>Alfred</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1918.07</td>
<td>See “Alfred Powers” on page 158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>099</td>
<td>Granite</td>
<td>C. Calvin Hamerly 1878 – 1918</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>Hamerly</td>
<td>C.</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>010</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>058</td>
<td>McGhee</td>
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<td>Florence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1919</td>
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<td>B.</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
<td>H.</td>
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<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Matilda</td>
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<td>N.</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>194</td>
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<td>Jasper</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>Son-in-Law See “Marion J. Evens” on page 145</td>
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<td>Edna</td>
<td>(Evans)</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>Joseph</td>
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<td>Belle</td>
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<td>????</td>
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<td>Henry</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>See “Kinney Family” on page 157</td>
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<td>022</td>
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<td>Jesse</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>Vance</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>See “Henry Gibson” on page 141</td>
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<td>203</td>
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<td>1964.11</td>
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<td>212</td>
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<td>1967.06</td>
<td>Grandson See “Marion J. Evans” on page 145</td>
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<td>Granite</td>
<td>Mother - Elizabeth Rowlands</td>
<td>042</td>
<td>Rowlands</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Granite</td>
<td>Aerie Hope Wright Whitmore Nov 14, 1904 – Jan 28, 1982</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Whitmore</td>
<td>Aerie</td>
<td>Hope (Wright)</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>See “Wright Family Tree” on page 150</td>
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<td>202</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Gertrude</td>
<td>B.</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>Middle Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Burial Year</td>
<td>Relationship To Jesse James Evans</td>
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<td>245</td>
<td>McDaniel</td>
<td>Lora</td>
<td>C. (Wright)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1984.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>061</td>
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<td>Leroy</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>See “Julia R. May” on page 140</td>
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<td>Jolley/Zabac</td>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>Scott</td>
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<td>See “Brandon Jolley” on page 140</td>
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<td>???</td>
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<td>Lorna</td>
<td>G.</td>
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<td>See “LaDonna Businello” on page 154</td>
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<td>McDowell</td>
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<td>Naomi</td>
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<td>See “Claudyne McDowell” on page 154</td>
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<td>Simeon</td>
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<td>Norman</td>
<td>E. (Pete)</td>
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<td>A.</td>
<td>Vance</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>R.</td>
<td>83</td>
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**Known Burials With Unknown Burial Dates**

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<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Burial Year</th>
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<td>None</td>
<td>043</td>
<td>Witter</td>
<td>Hinman</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>See “Witter Family” on page 157</td>
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<td>Witter</td>
<td>Carrie</td>
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<td>Witter</td>
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<td>Olsson</td>
<td>Ole</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>See “William W. Evans” on page 143</td>
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<td>Jackson</td>
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<td>Kern</td>
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**Known Graves but Unknown Occupants**

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**Possible Grave Markers—but May Not Be Graves**

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<td>048</td>
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The First Seven Burials in Swauk Cemetery. Mary Malinda Evans, at age 34, in June of 1884 was the first burial (51). Her nephew, Infant Evens, was the second in September of 1884 (32). Her neighbor’s son, Wilson Wright, age six, was buried in 1887 (12). Her neighbor, Bell F. Levy, age 31, was buried in 1888 (67). Gracie Evans, age one, was buried in March of 1889 (47), her neighbor’s child, Kinney, age one, in June of 1889 (86) and Infant Evans in 1890 (46). It would appear that the original plan for the cemetery, if there was one, was for each family to have their own row of burials. That plan seems to be followed by the Wright family (12 thru 24), but not so much for the other families. Sketch by Wes Engstrom
Names From the Graves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blankenship</th>
<th>Businello</th>
<th>Cahoon</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Comb</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cox</td>
<td>Elexon</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Evens</td>
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<td>George</td>
<td>Gibson</td>
<td>Jolley</td>
<td>Hamerly</td>
<td>Kinney</td>
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<td>Knight</td>
<td>Levy</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>McDaniel</td>
<td>McDowell</td>
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<td>McGhee</td>
<td>Mehlhorn</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Powers</td>
<td>Rowlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Whitmore</td>
<td>Witter</td>
<td>Wright</td>
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</table>

What started as an Evans’ family grave grew and eventually became a graveyard containing many different pioneer family names. Three families dominated the early burials in the cemetery: the Jesse James Evans, The William Wesley Evens and the Elias W. Wright families. As time went by the families intermarried with others who came to Swauk Prairie and the number of family names in the cemetery grew. Yet most were related to the original three families. After all, in the age of the horse and buggy most courtships took place within five miles of home. Only a few of the occupants of the southwest corner are not related, or at least their relationships to each other haven’t been discovered as of yet.

An obituary, written in a local newspaper, or an account written in a local history book often was the only writing that preserved the story of the lives of many of the people buried in the cemetery. Local history books still exist in the libraries but the old newspapers do not. Fortunately, these old newspapers have been preserved on microfilm so the stories still do exist, one just has to find them to hear whispers about the people who died so long ago no living person has a memory of them. Others did not leave a written trace and only their descendants may know their story. In a few sad cases there does not seem to be even a descendant to remember them. We have found what we could and assembled it in this section of the book for future generations to find—when they start wondering about where they came from.

Even after searching through all the family information, the cemetery information, the local newspapers and the local history books there are still graves with unknown occupants and known burials with unknown locations. Some mysteries are just destined to remain mysteries forever. Only those lying molding in their graves know their stories and their whispers may never be heard. Such is the way of the world.
Evans Family Tree

- Jesse James Evans
  - Bartera Welch
  - Simeon Evans
    - Mary M. McDonald
      - Simeon Evans
        - Florence Ellison
          - Simeon Evans
            - Sarah Staunchfield
          - Rolland Evans
            - Ruth Elva Evans
            - Dolly Mae Evans
            - Henry W. Evans
            - Mary E. Evans
            - Leona Vita Evans
            - Verna Leola Evans
            - Charles J. Evans
          - James L. Evans
        - Bartera E. Evans
          - Nancy J. Evans
          - Sarah E. Evans
          - Robert H. Evans
        - Simeon Evans
          - Margaret E. McDonald
            - James A. Evans
              - Martha Duckworth
                - Nancy A Evans
                  - Marion J. Evens
                    - William J. Evens
                      - Thomas Evans
                        - Infant Evens
                          - Matilda J. Evens
                            - Clara B. Evans
                              - Benjamin H. Evans
                                - Mamie B. Evans
        - James Evans
          - Rose Belle Evans
            - Gracie A. Evans
            - Daisy W. Evans
            - Alfred J. Evans
            - Ada P. Evans
            - Vica Mae Evans
          - Mary Jane Evans
            - James Evans
            - Mary Jane Evans
            - James Evans

Red Indicates Burial In Swauk Cemetery

W.C.E. 16 May 2012
Jesse J. Evans

At age 67 Jesse James Evans decided he had had enough of Missouri and on April 22, 1882 he sold his farm to J. H. E. Osburn and moved west. He had received a patent for his homestead in 1850, 32 years before. A lifetime had been spent developing that farm. He took half his family with him on the move west and left half in Missouri. The story of his trip to Washington Territory was told in Chapter one. What was not told and only speculated on is why he did it sixteen years after the war was over. Family records do not say what why Jesse James Evans left. However, it is easy to speculate why he did.

The Civil War of 1861-1865 had a lasting effect on those living in Missouri. Missouri was about equally divided between supporters of the Union cause and the Confederate cause. The state has been described as 25 percent supporting the Union cause, 25 percent supporting the Confederate cause and 50 percent just wanting the war to go away and doing what they needed to to stay alive.

Ozark County, where the Evans family lived, was on the southern border of Missouri with Arkansas only 30 miles from where the battle of Wilsons Creek, the second battle of the Civil War, took place. The state almost became a Confederate state. At times Confederate forces controlled much of it and at other times during the war Union forces were in control. Neighbor turned against neighbor, family against family, and even brother against brother.

The following excerpts from Wikipedia. com illustrate the conflict people in the state of Missouri endured.

Civil War Battlefields in Missouri. Missouri had supporters of both the Union and the Confederacy and Ozark county, Jesse James Evans’ home (in blue), was in the middle of much of the conflict, both during the war and afterward.

Map from AmericaCivilWar.com.
war had ended everywhere else, until at least 1889; and finally Sterling Price’s attempt to retake the state in 1864.

The biggest battle in the campaign to evict Jackson was the Battle of Wilson’s Creek near Springfield, Missouri, on August 10, 1861. The battle marked the first time that the Missourians had sought formal help from the Confederate States of America. A combined force of over 12,000 Confederate soldiers, Arkansas State Troops, and Missouri State Guardsmen under Confederate Brigadier Ben McCulloch fought approximately 5,400 Federals in a punishing six hour battle. Union forces suffered over 1,300 casualties, including Lyon, who was fatally shot. The Confederates lost 1,200 men. The exhausted Confederates did not closely pursue the retreating Federals. In the aftermath of the battle, the southern commanders disagreed as to the proper next step. Price argued for an invasion of Missouri. McCulloch, concerned about security of Arkansas and Indian Territory, and skeptical about the possibility of subsisting his army in central Missouri, refused. The Confederate and Arkansas troops fell back to the border, while Price lead his Guardsmen into northwestern Missouri to recapture the state.

In October 1861, the remnants of the elected state government that favored the South (including Jackson and Price) met in Neosho, and voted to formally secede from the Union. The measure gave them votes in the Confederate Congress, but otherwise was symbolic since they did not control any part of the state. The capital was to eventually move to Marshall, Texas. When Jackson died in office in 1862, his lieutenant governor, Thomas Caute Reynolds, succeeded him.

Although guerrilla warfare occurred throughout much of the state, most of the incidents occurred in northern Missouri and were characterized by ambushes of individuals or families in rural areas. These incidents were particularly nefarious because their vigilante nature was outside the command and control of either side and often pitted neighbor against neighbor. Civilians on all sides faced looting, violence and other depredations.

With the Confederacy clearly losing the war in 1864, Sterling Price reassembled his Missouri Guard and launched a last gasp offensive to take Missouri. However, Price was unable to repeat his 1861 victorious campaigns in the state. Striking in the southeastern portion of the state, Price moved north, and attempted to capture Fort Davidson but failed. Next, Price sought to attack St. Louis but found it too heavily fortified and thus broke west in a parallel course with the Missouri River. This

Jesse James Evans And The Civil War

Family history stories, provided by Mary Lou Dills, hints at who the man, Jesse James Evans, really was.

One of Jesse’s sons describes him as being a little man who was wiry, quick, even tempered, and good with horses. Besides being a good farmer Jesse J. Evans was a school teacher. He also served in the military. Captain Stone’s Calvary Co. A, of the Ozark County Missouri Home Guards from July 16, 1861 to October 18, 1861.

While Jesse Evans was away from home during the war, the soldiers or bushwhackers came to his house and found his wife Bartema hiding a man who had been wounded in battle. They ransacked the house and set it on fire, these men told Bartema she could leave but she could not take anything with her. Bartema picked up her Bible as she was leaving and was told to go back and throw the Bible in the fire. Bartema, the children, and Synthia Welch all spent the night in the black smith shop with only their night clothes on and no shoes. It was a very cold night. The men then took the wounded soldier and tied him behind their horses and drug him up the road. No one knows what happened to him. The bushwhackers not only burned their house down they also stole their chickens.

Jesse and Bartema’s home seemed to have been full of love. They always seemed to find room for one more person. Besides having ten children of their own (seven living) they reared...
Synthia and Edd Welch. Later on they took in Bartema’s father William in his later years.

The animosities and hatreds of the war did not stop when the war ended as reflected by the following family history.

One day Nancy’s brother, Eliher Embry, came to the spring where she was washing clothes and asked her about Bob. Eliher told her he was going to kill Bob because he was fighting for the Union and he, Eliher, was a Confederate. Bob Evans was captured by the Confederate soldiers but he managed to escape. Nancy never saw her brother Eliher again after the Civil War. It is not known if Bob’s capture was at this same time.

In 1879 Jesse’s wife Bartema died. That must have been the final event that triggered his decision to move west. He moved west in 1882 and spent the next fifteen years helping his two sons and one daughter establish new lives on Swauk Prairie. He died on November 14, 1897 and was buried in the cemetery on Swauk Prairie. Family history does not specify who built his coffin and a search of the local papers did not turn up an obituary for him. A shame. He could have been given credit for being the principle reason Swauk Prairie developed as it did. His decision to move west and to settle on Swauk Prairie triggered many other families from Ozark County, Missouri, to do the same.

Alfred J. Evans

Alfred J. Evans was the son of James Alfred M. Evans, who came west with James’ father, Jesse James Evans, in 1882. Alfred was born on Swauk Prairie. His obituary follows:

CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO
February 7, 1936
Obituary.
Alfred J. Evans.

Alfred J. Evans, Upper County rancher, was laid to rest in the Swauk Prairie cemetery yesterday following services held from the Honeycutt chapel at Ellensburg. He had passed away at the Ellensburg General hospital following a brief illness.

Alfred Evans was born in Swauk Prairie, where he has lived for 43 years on the homestead of James Evans, his father, who was one of the original settlers of that section.

Survivors are his wife, Mary, two daughters, Julia Maria and Agnes; his mother, Mrs. Martha Evans, and five sisters, Mrs. William Nicholson, Kelso, Wash., Mrs. Jess Humbird, Portland, Mrs. Walter Hanson, Seattle, Mrs. Herman Eyman, Yakima, and Mrs. Paul Melhorn, Olympia.

James M. Evans

James Alfred M. Evans came west with his father, Jesse James Evans, in 1882. He homesteaded on Swauk Prairie and lived there the rest of his life. His obituary in the local newspaper reads:

CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO
February 17, 1933
Swauk Prairie Rancher Succumbs To Pneumonia.

James Evans, pioneer farmer of Swauk Prairie since 1885 died of a weeks’ illness from pneumonia in the Cle Elum hospital yesterday.

Mr. Evans came west from Missouri in 1883, settling in Kittitas county two years later. Since that time he has devoted his time to farming on his Swauk Prairie ranch.

He is survived by his widow, Martha N. Evans, five daughters and one son: Mrs. W. Nicholson, Columbia River; Mrs. Rose Melhorn, Arizona; Mrs. Jess Humbird, Portland; Mrs. Herman Eyman, Yakima; Mrs. W. Hansen, Seattle; Alfred Evans, Swauk Prairie. A brother, Simeon of Wapato also survives.

Funeral services were held in the Cle Elum Baptist church Thursday afternoon at 1:30 o’clock with interment in the Swauk cemetery.

Rolland Evans

Rolland Evans was the son of Simeon Evans and his second wife, Florence Jean Ellison. Simeon's first wife, Mary M. McDonald, was the first burial in Swauk Cemetery. Florence (Ellison) Evans is buried in Swauk Cemetery. Simeon then married his third wife Sarah Staunchfield, and moved to Parker Washington. He is buried in the Sunnyside Cemetery.

There are many pages of newspaper reports of the shooting of Rolland Evans and the trial of Walter Hanson in local newspapers that have not been reproduced here. Only three articles
are included here. The microfilm of the local newspapers of that time are available at local libraries if you wish the entire story.

**CLE ELUM ECHO**  
**November 3, 1916**  
**Rowley Evans Meets Death by Shooting.**

This community was shocked Wednesday morning to learn that Walter Hanson, one of the most esteemed young men in Northern Kittitas, has shot and killed Rowley Evans, a young man twenty-five years of age, who is a first cousin of Hansen’s wife.

The same evening at a preliminary hearing before Justice Haltern, prosecuting Attorney Kern being present for the state, Hanson was bound over to the next term of district court at Ellensburg, with bail fixed at $2,000. E. E. Wager, of Ellensburg, appeared for the defendant, who did not take the stand. The charge was murder in the first degree under the statute, but it was bailable because Hanson did not seek out Evans when the latter was killed but on the contrary the latter was coming upon the premises of Hanson. Also it may be added that Hanson himself called the officers to the scene of the murder and gave himself up willingly, pleading self defense. He is a young married man, who with his brother, has been running the old farm on Swauk Prairie and those in a position to know state that he has been a hard worker and that his character has entitled him to the respect of all. He kept to his own business and his shooting of Evans came like a bolt out of a clear sky.

Hanson’s wife and young Avery were the only witnesses to the tragedy. According to Mrs. Hanson, the two were seated at breakfast when Evans and Avery appeared on the road. Evans turned in to the gate, and Hanson jumped up from the table, running into a bedroom where he picked up a 32-special rifle.

That Hanson fired through the glass of the front door without warning and Avery testified that it was doubtful if Evans even saw him. He alleges that when he started to go to Evans after the shooting, Hanson pointed the gun at him and told him to keep away.

According to Hanson’s statement when arrested the trouble between the two men arose over a year ago, when because of a family dispute, he ordered Evans to keep away from his home. Evans went away shortly afterwards, returning a few weeks ago. The two men met again at a community fair Saturday evening and Hanson claims that Evans showed a disposition to fight.

Tuesday Evans approached him on the road, he says, and accused him of making threats against him, shortly afterwards finding an excuse to climb on a load of hay and start a fight in which Hanson was beaten. After the fight the men shook hands, but Hanson alleges that later he heard Evans threatened to shoot him full of holes on sight, and that he shot him in self defense when he saw him approaching his door.

According to Avery, Evans had expressed regret over the fight of the day before, and did not seem angry. He told Avery that he was going to ask Hanson to go with him to the man who had told him that the latter was making threats, and have the matter cleared up. He declares that Evans had no intention of doing bodily harm to Hanson.

As Evans turned in at the gate Wednesday morning, still being outside the yard, Hanson shot, his victim falling outside the fence. Dr. Kearby was immediately called by Hanson and he hastened to the scene but could do nothing to save the life of the young man.

Evans worked on a nearby place and has relatives in the neighborhood. He was a husky young fellow, physically more powerful than Hanson, and all circumstances indicate that Hanson was afraid of him in an open encounter.

Deputy Sheriff Minton and Chief of Police Byars went to the Hanson ranch and arrested him upon being notified of the crime.

**ELLENSBURG EVENING RECORD**  
**January 12, 1917**  
**Hansen Not Guilty of Murder Charge Is Jury’s Verdict.**  
**Defendant Cleared After Three-Day Trial.—Hansen Now a Free Man.**

“Not guilty” was the verdict brought in shortly before six o’clock last night by a jury in the case of the state against Walter C. Hansen, charged with murder in the first degree in connection with the shooting on November 1, 1916, of Rauliegh C. Evans. The jury was out a little over half an hour. Hansen and his wife, attorneys, relatives and J. Hansen were in the court room at the time the verdict was read, most of the people that packed the court room during the afternoon having left when the case was given to the jury at 5 o’clock.

When court convened at 1:30 Thursday for the final arguments by attorneys in the case every foot of available space in the court room was packed with people and numbers stood in
the hallway outside, unable to force their way in. The trial has attracted more attention than any other that has been tried in Kittitas county for some years.

Prosecuting Attorney McGuire provided the argument on the part of the state, taking up first the instructions of Judge Davidson as regard first and second degree murder, and manslaughter, and told the jury to consider the case in the light of the fact that a man had been killed, and that in proving the killing the state had produced prima facie case of murder in the second degree. If the state had further proved that there was a premeditated design in the killing, he said, then a verdict of first degree murder must be returned. On the other hand, if the defense has shown justification for the act, then the burden, he said, lay upon the defense to prove the justification and then a verdict of manslaughter or not guilty must be rendered.

He declared that the events that led up to the shooting had not been of such a character that would lead Hansen to believe that he was in danger of a felonious assault upon his own person or upon the person of some member of his household when Rauleigh Evans walked up to the gate of his home on November 1.

A careful review of the evidence, he told the jury, would not show that Evans had one bit of the “dangerous man” in his make-up, and he pointed out that no testimony had been introduced to show that Evans had ever carried fire arms or been in the habit of using them.

**Wager for Defense.**

E. E. Wager, counsel for Hansen, provided the argument for the defense. He dwelt on the good reputation and clean record of the defendant and contrasted the lives of the two men as brought out by witnesses for Hansen.

“You must put yourselves in the position of the defendant, in his own state of mind at the time of the shooting.” he told the jury.

Mr. Wager declared that “there was a broader sense of human justice” which he wished the jury to consider in connection with Evans’ alleged insult to Hansen’s wife, and justified the firing of the shot by declaring that Evans has attempted to break into Hansen’s home relations, and that the latter had reason to believe that he would do so again. He declared that Hansen had waited much longer, and exercised more forbearance than other men in the same position would have done. In regard to the testimony of George Adrian, he referred to the judge’s instructions that where a man will tell a falsehood in one important detail then his testimony is not credible unless corroborated by the testimony. Adrian’s testimony as to what Evans said when he approached the house had been impeached, he said, and the other testimony was then useless because uncorroborated.

**Graves Addresses Jury.**

Carroll B. Graves, counsel with E. E. Wager, in his address to the jury, pleaded for either an acquittal or a verdict of first degree murder. “There can be no half-way verdict.” he said. “Walter Hansen is either guilty of murder or he should be set free. He has attempted no ‘story’; he chose to tell the simple truth, and that truth shows conclusively that he is not guilty.”

Mr. Graves referred to the maxim of the old common law which holds that a “man’s house is his castle,” and declared that Hansen was clearly within his right as a man and a husband in repelling by violence, when it became necessary, any attack on the sanctity of his home.

In his reference to the testimony of witnesses for the state, he declared that Adrian had impeached himself when he had told on the stand that he had not heard the alleged threat of Evans the night before the tragedy, when he said that Evans had gone towards the home with forgiveness in his heart and when he had declared that he called to Hansen as he stood at the gate of his home.

Mr. Graves branded as false the story of Mrs. Martha Evans to the effect her daughter had told her Hansen was insanely jealous, and dwelt on testimony that had been brought out in the trial that Mrs. Evans and another daughter had tried to intimidate Mrs. Hansen the night after the trial opened.

During every moment of Mr. Graves’ address, the audience hung breathless and seemed profoundly impressed with his argument. He closed with an impressive plea for Hansen’s acquittal.

**Closes For Prosecution.**

C. R. Hovey, associated with Mr. McGuire in the prosecution, closed the argument for the state. He declared that the state had no other wish than to see justice done, but that a man had been killed and the state must punish the slayer. He said that Evans might have been at fault, that perhaps he had been the aggressor in the fight of the night before, but declared that fact did not make his life forfeit.

In an analysis of the testimony he declared that the attempt to impeach Adrian as one merely to get the only witness who had a first hand knowledge of the facts of the shooting out of the way, and asked what possible interest
Adrian, who knew Hansen only casually, could have in twisting the truth.

“This appears to be the ‘old case’ said Mr. Hovey in closing “where a man has gone too far even to the taking of human life, in the gaining of revenge for a real or fancied wrong, and grasps at any straw that will palliate his offense and appear to justify it.”

Simeon Evans

Simeon Evans and his first wife, Mary Malinda McDonald, came to Swauk Prairie with Simeon’s father, Jesse James Evans, from Missouri in 1882. He settled on Swauk Prairie and his wife died in childbirth in 1884. Mary Malinda and her unborn child were the first burial in the Swauk Cemetery.

In 1889 Simeon married Florence Jean Ellison and in 1899 moved to a farm in Green Canyon, just east of Swauk Prairie. Florence died in 1905 and is buried in Swauk Cemetery.

Simeon, in 1906, then married Sarah (Wright) Staunchfield and lived in Green Canyon until after the death of Rolland Evans in 1916 when they moved to Parker Flats, south of Yakima. Simeon died in 1938 and Sarah in 1939; both are buried in the Sunnyside Cemetery.

Simeon did not have an obituary published in a local newspaper but he did have his story published in a history book published in 1904. The story is as follows:

HISTORY OF Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas Counties, Washington, 1904, Pg. 864

SIMEON EVANS. Originally from Ozark county, Missouri, born March 9, 1853, Simeon Evans is now a prosperous farmer residing twelve miles north, and four west, of Ellensburg. His parents are Jesse and Bertema (Welch) Evans, the former a farmer, born in Indiana, 1815, coming from one of the early pioneer families of that state. Simeon received his early education in the common schools of his native state, and at the age of nineteen launched out upon an independent career to make his own way in the world. His father, as a result of the Civil war, met with financial disaster, and this made it extremely difficult for the son to acquire an education. He persevered, however, and succeeded in becoming proficient in the branches taught in the grammar schools of his day. After leaving home young Evans farmed in the state of his birth until 1882, and then departed for the state of Washington. He bought a farm soon after his arrival, but later sold it and purchased the property where he makes his present home. He has forty acres of his land in timothy and clover meadow. His two brothers and one sister were born in Missouri, and are named: Robert, living in Missouri; Jane Piland, born in 1851, now living in Yakima county, and James, born 1855, now of Kittitas county.

Mr. Evans was married to Miss Malinda McDonald, in September, 1872, in his native state. She died in June, 1884, and six years later he married Miss Florence J. Ellison, the daughter of William and Mrs. (Fleek) Ellison, the former a farmer. Mrs. Evans was born in Kansas, 1870, and educated in the grammar schools of her native state. She came to Washington with her father in 1889, and was married the following year. To this union have been born fourteen children, as follows: Born in Kansas and now living in Kittitas county, Charles Ellison, Eugene, Lewis, Minnie Baugh and Roy; Elizabeth Fletcher, born in Missouri, March 9, 1870, living in Yakima; Robert, born in Missouri, April 24, 1882, now in Kittitas; Sarah S. Cahoon, born in Missouri, now in Kittitas; Rolla, born in this state; Ruth, Henry and May, all born in Kittitas county; Leonora and Verna, also natives of Washington. The last six named children live with their parents in the Kittitas valley.

Mr. Evans is a Republican in politics. He owns 160 acres of land, thirty head of cattle and three horses, besides farm equipage. He is rated a well-to-do farmer and a peaceful, law-abiding citizen. He is liberal and enterprising whenever called upon for cooperation in any undertaking for the betterment of surrounding conditions, and, as a consequence, stands high in the estimation of his fellows.

Roy Ellison

Roy Ellison was a brother of Simeon Evans’ second wife Florence Jean Ellison. Mary S. Ellison, also buried in the Swauk Cemetery, was the mother of Roy and Florence Jean Ellison.

Roy Ellison’s obituary was published in the local Cle Elum newspaper on November 22, 1918 as follows:
**CLE ELUM ECHO**

November 22, 1918

Roy Ellison Passes Away.

Died Very Suddenly at the Tacoma Hospital Yesterday Morning—Had Just Completed a Marine Engineering Course and Made His Maiden Trip for a Commission.

The sad news was received in this city today that Roy Ellison had passed away at the Tacoma hospital yesterday morning after a very short illness. Death is said to have been caused by intestinal trouble. He had just completed a course in marine engineering and had made his maiden trip, signing up for a commission on one of the boats on the Sound. Sunday night he took ill and was at once removed to the hospital where he sank rapidly. The body will reach here tomorrow on No. 4 and interment will be made in the Swauk Prairie cemetery.

Mr. Ellison was a young man between 30 and 35 years of age, well known here where he was raised, his father being W. T. Ellison of Lookout Mountain. He commenced railroading here in Cle Elum, then went to Ellensburg and finally over to Tacoma. Besides his parents he leaves two brothers, Louis F. of Seattle and Charlie living at Lake Cle Elum. Influenza recently carried off two members of the latter’s family at the lake.

**Edna Camp**

Edna (M. Eaden) was first married to Alfred J. Evans, son of James Alfred M. “Jim” Evans. Edna then married Lem Camp in 1934. She is buried beside Alfred J. Evans her first husband.

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

November 24, 1939

Mrs. Edna Camp Dies of Poison Self Inflicted.

Husband, Boarder Unaware Of Tragedy Until Early Morning.

Funeral Services were held Wednesday afternoon at Jones chapel for Mrs. Lem Camp, followed by interment in Swauk Prairie cemetery.

A few minutes after she had threatened suicide and had asked a boarder where he kept his shaving razor, she swallowed the contents of a vial containing strychnine shortly after midnight last Friday as she reclined on the davenport in her South Cle Elum home.

Her husband lying in bed and Frank Jude, a boarder, occupying a nearby room, paid no attention when she cried out, as she had often made suicidal threats without carrying them out. Shortly before falling off to sleep, Mr. Camp heard her call for her daughter, saying, “I want Agnes.”

Guests of the evening had been Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Henry of Cle Elum who left shortly before midnight. Mrs. Henry had placed no significance upon the incident when Mrs. Camp had asked as she left if she would kiss her good night and goodbye.

A stepson coming into the living room at 5:25 a.m. after a dance found her lifeless form on the davenport. She had not undressed.

An autopsy performed later revealed the strychnine in the stomach contents, but a check of local drug stores showed none purchased.

Edna Eaden was born in Roslyn, Dec. 21, 1897, and is the former Mrs. Alfred Evans of Swauk Prairie. She married Lem Camp, mail carrier on the star route No. 2, January 29, 1934, and they recently bought a home in South Cle Elum.

Other survivors are a daughter, Agnes Evans, Kelso; six step children, and three brothers, Will Eaden, Orting; Neal Eaden, Spokane; and Ernest Eaden, Castle Rock.

**Ora D. Taylor**

and

**Bartema A. Taylor**

Bartema Adeline Taylor was the daughter of James Alfred M. “Jim” Evans. Her first husband, William (Billy) S. Turner, was Bert Fletcher’s business partner in a saloon in Liberty in 1897. They then moved the fixtures from the saloon to Yakima in 1899. Bert Fletcher was married to Bartema Adeline Evans’ cousin Bartema Elizabeth Evans. Bartema Adeline married Ora D. Taylor in 1916.

Ora D. Taylor and Bartema Adeline were both killed in a train wreck in 1917. Ora worked for the railroad company and they lived in a boxcar on the railroad tracks. One night while they were asleep a train ran into their car and killed both of them. Then the car burned and their bodies were so badly burned they could not open the caskets.
for services. A short article appeared in the local newspaper as follows:

**CLE ELUM ECHO**  
*October 12, 1917*

News reached here Monday of the accident at Hildgard, Ore., Saturday evening which claimed the lives of Orie D. W. Taylor and wife. Mrs. Taylor was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Evans of Swauk Prairie. She was well known in this vicinity and her sudden death was a sad blow to her many friends. The bodies were shipped to Cle Elum and buried in the Swauk cemetery.

**Francis Blankenship**

Frank Blankenship's wife, Pernesa Piland was a neighbor and friend of the Evans in Missouri which may explain how they came to buried near the Evans in the Swauk. Frank's obituary is as follows:

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**  
*July 27, 1934*

**Francis Blankenship.**

Francis Blankenship, 77, passed away Friday, July 20, 1934, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Lester Connell. The cause of death was chronic uremia.

Funeral services were held from Jones chapel, Monday, July 23. Rev. M. A. Sharp officiated. Interment was in the Swauk Prairie cemetery, beside his wife who preceded him in death a number of years ago.

Francis Asbury Blankenship was born in Benton, Polk county, Tennessee, February 17, 1857. In 1885 he was married to Pernesa Piland at Thornfield, Missouri. They came to Kittitas county in 1893, settling on the Jim Ross ranch seven miles east of what is now Cle Elum. Later they purchased the Tubbs ranch, living there until 15 years ago. He was in the employ of the Cascade Lumber Co., for a number of years.

Nine years ago he moved to Cle Elum and since has made his home at Pine street and Roslyn Place.

Survivors are a daughter, Mrs. Lester Connell; son Joseph Blankenship, Los Angeles; two brothers, Hiram in Tukwila, Washington and Isaac in Carters, Georgia; and a sister, Elizabeth Taylor, Greenville, Texas.

**Alva Cahoon**

The grave markers for “Alva Cahoon” and “Baby Boy Cahoon” are mysteries. Who they are for and why they are next to Mary Malinda McDonald Evans is unknown. Mary Malinda’s daughter, Sarah Elda Evans, first married Clinton McCulley Cahoon and they had eight children, five boys and three girls. One son, William Arthur Cahoon, married an “Eva” Taylor and Eva could have been nicknamed “Alva.” However, Eva Taylor Cahoon is buried in the I.O.O.F. cemetery in Ellensburg as is Sarah Elda Evans, whose nickname could also have been “Alva.”

There is an Andrew Carruth Cahoon who was married to a woman named “Alva” who may have died as he remarried a Margaret Robbins. I have not been able to connect him to Clinton McCulley Cahoon however.

It could also be that the two markers “Alva Cahoon” and Baby Boy Cahoon” are duplicates for the same burial. Whose burial, however, remains a mystery. Any one of Sarah Elda Evans Cahoon’s sons could have buried a child next to their great grandmother, Mary Malinda Evans, and time may clear up the mystery.

**Julia R. May**

Julia Nellie Robinson first married Charles Joseph Evans, son of Simeon James Evans and Florence Jean Ellison, in 1927 and they had five children, two boys and three girls. Charles Joseph died in 1941 and in 1950 Julie married Otis Waldo May, which explains why a “May” is buried in the Evans’ part of the cemetery. Passing away at age 83 Julia had a long and fruitful life worthy of a celebration.

**Brandon Jolley**

It appears that Brandon Jolley is a three day old baby buried beside his great grandmother, Julia (Robinson) (Evans) May. Another short lived life like so many others in this pioneer cemetery.

The family record is incomplete in this instance. Simeon James Evans and his second wife, Florence Jean Ellison, had a son, Charles
Joseph Evans who married Julia Nellie Robinson and they in turn had a daughter, Vivian Marie Evans who married Dean Jolly. In turn they must have had a son who was the father of Brandon Jolley. It is a guess but it makes sense to have the infant buried beside his great grandmother, Julia N. May, who had died just a year earlier.

**Henry Gibson**

Henry Vance Gibson married Mary Ellen Evans, daughter of Simeon James Evans and Florence Jean Ellison. They had three daughters, Marjorie Leola, Leona Verna and Ottalee, and one son, William Henry. Leona Verna married Willard Roy Robinson, Sr. and Ottalee married A. Vance Gage.

**A. Vance Gage**

A. Vance Gage was the husband of Ottalee Gibson, the daughter of Henry Vance Gibson and Mary Ellen Evans. Mary Ellen was the daughter of Simeon James Evans and Florence Jean Ellison.

**William Henry Gibson**

The grave marker for William Henry Gibson reads “In Memory of” and he may not actually be buried in the Swauk Cemetery. The following newspaper article explain the situation.

**ELLENSBURG DAILY RECORD**

*Date Unknown*

**Bill Gibson is Listed Missing**

**Ellensburg Youth Believed Serving On Destroyer In Pacific.**

William Henry (Bill) Gibson, ships cook first class in the United States Navy, has been reported to his father, Henry Gibson of Ellensburg as missing in action. The message came yesterday from the secretary of the Navy and Mr. Gibson left early today for Sunnyside, to spend a few days with relatives of the boy's mother, who died some six years ago.

The Navy’s telegram did not give the date he is listed missing nor any other details.

Gibson formerly was on a submarine in the south Pacific but is believed to have been serving on a destroyer of late. He was home last winter, on completion of a tour of duty that took him close to Tokyo bay. He had served on many underwater missions against the Japanese and was proud of the record of his submarine. After visiting his father and other relatives here he was married in Portland, where his wife, Lois, resides.

Bill was born in this valley and lived here all his life until he joined the Navy shortly after Pearl Harbor. He had been stationed under Admiral Halsey in the South Pacific practically all through his sea service, and had been on several submarine cruises against Japanese shipping.

He has two sisters, Mrs. Ottalee Gage, of Route 3, Ellensburg, and Mrs. Verna Robinson of Alderwood Manor. The father will spend Christmas with Mrs. Robinson, before returning here.
Evens Family Tree

William W. Evens
Margaret Gray

Marion Jasper Evens
Nancy A. Evans

Levi Evens
William J. Evens
+Jessie Hamerly
+Dora Currie
Thomas Evens
+Hattie Main
Infant Evens
Matilda Jane Evens
+Charles Bray
Clara B. Evans
+G. A. Boice
Benjamin H. Evans
+Gertrude Duckworth
Mamie B. Evans
+George Jude
Marion A. Evans
+Ethel ?

Cynthia Evens
James Scott

John D. Scott
+Florine ?
Electa Scott
+Nels Peterson
Arbie Scott
+Thomas Livingston
+Leonard Mathews
Clara Scott
+Albert Tainer
Mae Scott
+Thomas Quicksall
+William Grier

Cynthia Evens
William Hall

Cynthia Evens
Ole Olson

Matilda Evens
Enos George

Gladys D. George
Raymond E. George
Royal M. George
Julia M. George
Mary E. George

Edward Evens

Matilda Evens

John McGhee

Ellis L. McGhee
+Marie Pulsifer
Elizabeth A. McGhee
+Connelly Barnett
Kathryn C. M. McGhee
+Theodore Bollinger
Grace I. McGhee
+Dee Walker

Red Indicates Burial in Swauk Cemetery

W.C.E. 6 March 2014
Evens Family Stories

William W. Evens

William Wesley Evens, like Jesse James Evans, suffered from the Civil War. He also had his home overrun by the Confederate forces and his family displaced just as Jesse James Evans did. The following excerpt, taken from his application for a pension, was provided by his great granddaughter, Jami Barnett, and illustrates the hardships of living in a battlefield of the Civil War.

PENSION APPLICATION

State of Washington
County of Kittitas

William Wesley Evens being first duly sworn, says that some time in the month of February 1863 he was on account of his Union principals obliged to leave his house and family in Marion Arkansas and took refuge inside of the Federal lines and enlisted in the Services under Col. Kent of the 1st Iowa Regt. and remained in said Service for a period of from four to six weeks until my family - my wife and five children, three boys and two girls, the oldest child about eleven years old - came to me in camp, the enemy having robbed them of everything they had and driven them out. I then asked Col. Kent to give me a transfer so I could take my family to some place where they could stop and get something to live on and be safe from the enemy. The Col. gave me a transfer anywhere within the federal lines. I then took them to Polk County, Mo. and got them a safe place to live. I then reported to Col. Lunsford of the 26th Regt. Mo., United States Militia, Company F., Capt. Thomas Price, and served there until discharge at the close of the War.

I am not certain that Col. Kent’s Regt. was the 1st Iowa, but as he was stationed at Forsythe, Taney County, Mo. at that time, Feb 1863, perhaps you can find it from that.

Wm Wesley Evens

It is interesting to note that James T. Piland and Frank Blankenship, both of Teanaway, were William’s personal witnesses for the application. They had known him for 22 years and 15 years respectively indicating they were neighbors in Missouri.

After his son, Marion Jasper Evens, went with the Jesse James Evans family to Washington Territory to settle, William too, in about 1888, brought his family west. They settled on Swauk Prairie. However, he didn’t stay long. After burying his wife, Margaret Jane Gray, in the Swauk cemetery in 1891 he left his family behind and went back to Missouri where he married Nancy J. Mefford in 1895 and died sometime just before 1910.

William Wesley Evens’ son, Everette Francis, was buried beside his mother in 1899 and another son, Jackson (Joby), buried sometime before 1904. A daughter, Matilda, who first married Enos George and then John Franklin McGhee, stayed behind in the Swauk area. Matilda’s first husband, Enos George, died in 1915 and is buried in the Swauk. Matilda then married John McGhee who had seven children from a previous marriage. Three of the children, Mary, Henry and May, are buried in the Swauk.

Cynthia Evens

A second daughter of William Wesley Evens, Cynthia, had married James Scott in 1886 while still in Missouri and she did not come west with her father in 1888, but instead came later. Cynthia’s husband, James, died in 1902 and then she and her six children, John age 12, Electa age 10, Arbie age 7, Clara age 6, Mae age 4 and Josie age 1, moved west to be by her brother, Marian Jasper Evens, in Swauk Prairie. In 1904, Cynthia, age 38, married William K. Hall, age 60, from Missouri and the family moved to Cle Elum. William Hall died in 1907 and then Cynthia and her children moved back to the Swauk area and homesteaded on 29 acres of land on the Swauk a mile and a half above Liberty (Old Liberty). Cynthia, in 1911, married Ole Olson, a miner in the Swauk Mining District and continued living in Liberty until 1920 when they moved to Cle Elum.
All of Cynthia’s children married while in the Liberty area, many to miners. In 1927 tragedy struck the family when three of Cynthia’s grandchildren died while visiting her and Ole Olson. The tragedy is described in the following two articles published in the local paper.

**MINER-ECHO**  
*July 7, 1927*  
**Family Sorrows In Double Loss.**

Jimmie and Eugene Scott, age six and two and one half, and only sons of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott, passed away at the home of their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. O. Oleson, last week.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott came to Cle Elum from Bremerton three weeks ago to make a short visit at the home of Mr. Scott’s mother, Mrs. Ole Oleson. On June 29, Jimmie Scott, age 6, took down with chicken pox which developed into pneumonia and at 12:00 o’clock Thursday he passed away.

The funeral services were held Saturday at 3:00 o’clock at the Swauk Prairie Cemetery.

On Friday, July 1, Eugene Scott age 2 ½, was stricken with the same malady as his older brother and at 9:00 o’clock Tuesday morning he was called to join his brother.

The funeral services were held Thursday at 2:00 o’clock at the Swauk Prairie Cemetery.

Besides their parents, Jimmie and Eugene are survived by their sister May, age 4, their grand-parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Oleson and several other near relatives in Cle Elum and other cities.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott have the sincere sympathy of the entire community in their recent bereavement.

**MINER-ECHO**  
*July 21, 1927*  
**Couple Loses Last of Three Children.**

One of those deaths that stir a community was that of little Alta May Scott, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Scott of South Cle Elum, which occurred last Saturday. Her death was caused by measles followed by pneumonia.

Alta May was the last of a family of three children. Her death occurred less than a month after that of her two brothers, James, age 6, who died June 31, and Eugene, 2, who passed away five days later. All the deaths were caused by measles, followed by complications.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott but recently had moved here from Bremerton. They had been visiting with the latter’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Olson. Shortly after the death of James and Eugene, Mrs. Scott was taken to the Ellensburg Hospital after being taken ill with measles also. She was last reported to be improving.

Alta May was buried Tuesday afternoon, at the Ballard Hill Cemetery, with the funeral services being conducted at the grave.

The three little Scott children were not buried in the southwest corner with the Evens family, but instead in the other part of the cemetery under a single grave marker beside Jacob Livingston who could be their great grand uncle.

Cynthia died in 1934 and is buried in Swauk Cemetery beside other Evens family members. Her obituary follows:

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**  
*June 22, 1934*  
**Obituary: Mrs. Cynthia Olson.**

Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at the Honeycutt chapel, Ellensburg, for Mrs. Ole Olson, who was stricken with a heart attack last Thursday while motoring to Ellensburg with her husband and brother. Rev. Ollin Graham of the Ellensburg Methodist church officiated at the services.

Mrs. Cynthia Evens was born in Polk county, Missouri, February 8, 1866, but the family moved shortly after to Ozark county. Following the death of her husband, James Scott, she came west to Cle Elum with her six children in 1904. Three years later she was married to William K. Hall. Following his death three years later, she took up a homestead in the Wenatchee National Forest on Swauk creek one and a half miles above old Liberty post office and lived there for ten years.

On June 19, 1911, she was united in marriage to Ole Olson and in 1920 they moved into their home in Steiner’s addition, Cle Elum where they have lived since.

Her passing is mourned by six children all of whom were present at the funeral, the children are, John Scott, Bremerton; Mrs. Nels Peterson, Pasco; Mrs. Thomas Livingston, Seattle; Mrs. A. L. Tainer, Cle Elum; Mrs. T. S. Quickall, Ellensburg; and Mrs. S. A. Blankenship, Liberty.

She is also survived by three brothers, Jasper Evens, Ellensburg, E. L. Evens, Bend, Oregon; Silas Evens, Cle Elum; and two sisters, Mrs. Ed Mefford, Isabella, Missouri and Mrs. Frank McGee, Potlatch, Washington.
Ole Olson had a grave marker placed on Cynthia's grave with his name on it with his death date left blank. Clearly intending that he should be buried beside her. It did not happen. Ole died twenty years later in Redding, California, and was buried at that place. His obituary was as follows:

**NEWSPAPER NAME UNKNOWN**

**Newspaper Date Unknown**

**Obituaries: Ole Olson**

Funeral services for Ole Olson, 94, of Pasco, were held at Redding, Calif, April 13, 1954, where he had gone to visit a brother, Nels O. Felsted. He died at the home of a Niece, Mrs. S. L. Wixson. Burial was at Redding cemetery.

Ole Olson was born in Sweden in 1860 and came to the United States in 1884. The family moved to Washington in 1887 and settled in the Swauk area and for many years lived in Cle Elum. Olson was a miner most of his life. He lived for 16 years with Mrs. Electa Peterson, a step-daughter, in Pasco.

In addition to his brother and niece, Mrs. Wixson, he is survived by Mrs. Peterson, Pasco; a nephew, Emil Felsted of Redding; another niece, Beredine Zollars, Redding; a stepson, John Scott, Cle Elum; four other step daughters, Mrs. Clara Tainer, Cle Elum; Mrs. Josie Grier, Wenatchee; Mrs. Mae Quicksall, Ellensburg; and Mrs. Arba Roberts of Bucoda.

Cynthia Olson, Margaret Evens, Joby Evens, Everett Evens, Enos George, Debora George, Ellis George, May McGhee, Mary McGhee and Henry McGhee are all buried in a single row in the Swauk Cemetery (Reference numbers 72 through 81) A family story from Jami Barnett, William Wesley Evens’ great granddaughter, illustrates the difficulty of following the burial custom of not digging the grave until the day of the funeral when it is winter time.

Uncle Les (Ellis Leslie McGhee) recalls that when he was only 12 years old he helped bury his half brother, Henry McGhee (1901-1930). Henry was 29 years old when he died. He always led a rough sort of life, in and out of jail, drinking a lot. He died of a heart attack. It was in February or March. The ground was so frozen Uncle Les and three other men had had to build a fire to thaw the ground before digging the hole. Just as they finished they looked up and saw the funeral procession coming. They finished just in time!

**Marion J. Evens**

Marion J. Evens, who came west with his father-in-law in 1882, has two stories that have been preserved. One is from a local history book published in 1904 and the other is his obituary in the local newspaper in 1936. The two stories are as follows:

**HISTORY OF KLICKITAT, YAKIMA AND KITTITAS COUNTIES, WASHINGTON, 1904, PG.914**

MARION J. EVENS is a farmer residing ten miles east of Cle-Elum, Washington. He was born in Arkansas, April 9, 1857, the son of William and Jane (Gray) Evans. His father is of English extraction, born in Tennessee, July 24, 1827. He is a farmer, now living in Ozark County, Missouri, and is a veteran of the Civil war. Jane (Gray) Evans was likewise born in Tennessee, 1834, and was married at the age of seventeen. Mr. and Mrs. Evans moved to Missouri in 1852, and there Marion was born and received his education in the common schools. He worked on his father’s farm until he became twenty-two years of age; then commenced farming on his own account. He followed agriculture in his native state for three years; in 1882 came to Washington and settled in Kittitas county, taking a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres, which farm is still his home. He now has the entire homestead under cultivation, and well improved. Besides his home place, Mr. Evans has six hundred and forty acres of grazing land, stocked with 800 head of sheep. He also has a sufficient number of horses to carry on the work about the farm. Mr. Evans has brothers and sisters as follows: Levi (deceased); William J., Martha Stone, Janima, Mifford, Cynthia Scott, Wayne, Joby (deceased), Nancy E. Prim, and Everette (deceased), all living in Missouri; Edward and Silas, of Seattle, and Matilda George, living on Lookout mountain. The four first named were born in Arkansas; the others in Missouri.

Mr. Evans was married in Ozark county, Missouri, February 2, 1879, to Miss Nancy A. Evans, daughter of Jesse, a farmer of English extraction, born in North Carolina, 1815, and died in Washington; and Bartema (Welch) Evans, a native of Indiana, who was married when quite young and died in Missouri. Mrs. M. J. Evans was born in Ozark County, where she grew to womanhood, receiving her education in the common schools. Mrs. Evans had four brothers and one sister, all born in the state of Missouri. Their names and present residences are: Robert, Missouri; Peter (deceased); Jane Pi landlords, Washington; Simeon and James M., Washington. Mr. and Mrs. Evans have brought
up seven children, all of whom are living at home. Their names, with state and date of birth in each instance, are: William J., Missouri, December 30, 1879; Thomas, Washington, October 3, 1882; Matilda J., Washington, September 9, 1885; Clara, Washington, August 8, 1887; Benjamin H., Washington, September 11, 1890; Mamie B., Washington, May 15, 1894, and Marion A., Washington, February 2, 1896. Politically, Mr. Evens is a Roosevelt Republican, and in religion he is a member of the Seventh Day Adventist denomination. He is regarded as being a man of sound financial standing, liberal hearted and of sterling integrity.

**THE MINER-ECHO**  
November 6, 1936

**Pioneer of ‘82 Finishes Last Trek To Swauk**

Marion Jasper Evens, one of the few remaining covered wagon pioneers of this section, was laid to rest in the Swauk Prairie cemetery Wednesday afternoon.

He died at a Yakima hospital at ten o’clock last Saturday morning at the age of 79 years. Services were held at the Honeycutt Chapel in Ellensburg.

Born in the Ozark region of Arkansas, Mr. Evens came with his family to Swauk Prairie in 1882, making the trip overland in a covered wagon pulled by a team of mules. One of the mementos of that journey is still kept at the home of his son, W. J. Evens, Swauk Prairie rancher.

Homesteading a ranch near the foothills of Lookout mountain, Jasper Evens lived there until a few years ago when he moved to a farm near Woldale.

Surviving are his widow, four sons, William J. Evens, of Swauk Prairie; Thomas and Benjamin Evens of Ellensburg and Marion Evens of Arizona; and two daughters, Mrs. Clara Boice of Ellensburg and Mrs. Matilda Bray of Cle Elum.

**William J. Evens**

William J. Evens, the son of Marion Jasper Evens, continued to farm his father's homestead. His story was told in an article in the Cle Elum Miner-Echo newspaper in 1955 as follows:

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**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**  
May 12, 1955

**Stories of Upper County Ranchers: W. J. (Bill) Evens**

This week meet the last living covered wagon pioneer of the settlers of Swauk Prairie, who trekked across the plains in the eighties from the Midwest to find new homes in Washington territory.

He is W. J. (Bill) Evens and now lives alone at his ranch home close to where his father, Jasper Evens homesteaded in 1882.

Back in the spring of 1882, Jasper Evens and two of his wife’s brothers, Jim and Sim Evans, joined up with a wagon train and left Ozark, Missouri. There were 13 Evans-Evans pioneers in three separate wagons drawn by mule teams in that convoy.

Although only 3 years old, Bill still recalls incidents of that long journey. One was sleeping one night in a school house when he fell against a desk and broke his teeth, and another that Lookout mountain looked awful big to him then.

When they reached the Packwood ranch near Thorp, Jasper Evans dropped out of the caravan, because his wife was expecting a baby and they did not dare to attempt crossing over the pass. In October, 1882, a son, Tom, was born.

A few weeks later Jasper loaded up the wagon again, but when he reached the foot hills of Lookout Mt. he made his decision and planted his “straddle bug” on the best looking piece of land and built his log cabin. The spot was across the road from where the L. A. Penkert home now stands. But when the U. S. survey was made, he had to build again, as the cabin was on the wrong side of the road.

The next year the Jim and Sim Evans families, dissatisfied with the Coast climate, came back and they, too, became squatters on Swauk Prairie.

In a reminiscent mood, Bill tells much of the hardships of those early settlers. All were broke, he says. His father Jasper and another squatter Peter McKinney, however, found there was a market for roof shakes in the lower valley and with a crosscut saw and a cleaving tool called a froe, they began making them from the big yellow pines. Even then they couldn’t sell them for cash, but could barter them for provisions. (This McKinney had first swatted on the Jess Petersen ranch but later sold out to Lee Caster).

By 1885 the settlers decided they had enough children to have a school, and by all volunteer
labor they completed a log schoolhouse (on what is now the A. J. Hanson ranch) in time to have two months school that winter. The first teacher was John Parks, also a homesteader.

The next winter they had three months school and Bill was on of the first pupils. Later a school was built on the Ed Koch ranch (now the Ley homestead).

Roads were also built by volunteer labor, as was the old Teanaway ridge near the Jess Petersen corner, built in 1885. Jasper with his mule team hauled the stringers for that bridge.

Road building by volunteer labor came to an end in the late eighties when Alexander Piland, another Missouri homesteader, became the first paid public road supervisor, and one of his first achievements was the grading to Horse Canyon road.

Jasper Evens left the homestead in 1916 and spent his retiring years at Woldale. The acreage was doubled by the purchase of the adjoining McKinney ranch in 1905 and here 20 years ago we found Bill Evens wheat farming on a large scale with an eight horse team and a header. I’m a “has been” he says now, as he lives alone since the death of his wife in 1947 in the original McKinney home on the 36 acres he reserved after selling 124 acres of the McKinney place to A. J. Hanson. The Jasper Evens homestead was sold later to Julius Laudensky.

The Evens’ had no children of their own but raised a niece and a nephew, Marjorie (Mrs. George Lessy) living in Yakima; and Lieut. Roy Jude stationed with the U.S. Army troops in France.

Ellis B. George

Ellis B. George was the father of Enos George, the first husband of Matilda Evens. His obituary follows:

CLE ELUM ECHO
July 18, 1919
Pioneer Resident Crosses Great Divide.

Another of Cle Elum’s highly respected pioneer citizens who passed away this week is Ellis B. George, who has made hi home at Lookout mountain for the past twenty-seven years until a short time ago. The funeral services were held from the Jones chapel Tuesday afternoon and interment was made in the Swauk Prairie cemetery, where the deceased was laid to rest by the side of his wife, who was buried there on June 8, 1917.

Mr. George was born in Indiana and spent his early life in that state and in Iowa, coming to Cle Elum in 1897. He leaves to mourn his loss five children, one son and four daughters, who are Mrs. Sam Craig of Lookout Mountain, Mrs. Barton from the lower Yakima valley, Mrs. Chas Bridgham and Mrs. Early of Seattle.

Deborah George

Deborah George was the mother of Enos George, the first husband of Matilda Evens. Her obituary is as follows.

CLE ELUM ECHO
June 15, 1917
Mrs. George is Buried.

Well Known Pioneer Resident of Lookout Mountain is Called by Death at the Ripe Age of 83—is Shock to the Community.

Yesterday the relatives and friends of Mrs. Deborah George gathered at the Jones undertaking parlors to look upon her face for the last time. Intense grief was evident, for the deceased was well known and greatly beloved in the community where for the last 33 years she has made her home, and her death came as a distinct shock. After the funeral services all that was mortal of her was removed to Swauk Prairie, where she now sleeps in peace.

Mrs. George was born in Indiana, August 20, 1833. There she spent her girlhood and there in 1853, she was married to Ellis B. George. Eight children were born to this union, five of whom are still living. John George, of Canada, Mrs. Eva Early of Seattle, Mrs. Emma Giles of Methow, Mrs. Lucy Bridgham of Seattle, Mrs. Katie Craig of Lookout Mountain. Besides these survivors, she leaves her husband, Ellis B. George, 85 years of age, 34 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Mary McGhee

Mary McGhee’s father, John Franklyn McGhee, first married Mary’s mother, Mildred, a Sioux Indian. John and Mildred had seven children. Three of the children, Mary, Henry and May, are buried in the Swauk Cemetery. John Franklyn McGhee then married Matilda Evens George, William Wesley Evens’ daughter, who had previously been married to Enos George. Enos and his parents, Ellis B. George and Deborah George, also buried in the Swauk Cemetery beside the three McGhee children. The diagram shown below of the Evens-George-McGhee
family connections shows the relationships.

The obituary for Mary McGhee (McGee) is as follows:

**CLE ELUM ECHO**

**May 20, 1921**

**Well Known Swauk Girl is no More.**

**Miss Mary McGee Succumbs to Tuberculosis at Yakima Sanitarium After a Vain Struggle for Life.**

Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon from the family home for Miss Mary McGee, who died from tuberculosis at the sanitarium in Yakima on May 15. Interment was made in Swauk cemetery in a grave marked with many beautiful floral offerings.

The young woman, who was born in an eastern state in 1898, was the daughter of Frank McGee, a pioneer resident of Mt. Lookout. She had spent the greater part of her life here and was dearly loved by a host of friends, who gathered to pay their last tribute of respect.

The deceased was sent to the sanitarium last July, on the advice of the clinic here in the spring, with what have proved to be vain hopes for recovery, as she grew steadily worse. She leaves to mourn her loss a father, five brothers, one sister, her step-mother, three half sisters and two half brothers. Her own mother and one sister died previously from the same disease.

**Dora Mabel Evens**

Dora Mabel Evens was the second wife of William J. Evens, son of Marion Jasper Evens. Her obituary was as follows:

**CLE ELUM ECHO**

**February 19, 1915**

**Death of Mrs. Evens.**

Mrs. W. J. Evens, of Swauk Prairie, died at her home Tuesday, February 16, after an illness of one year. The funeral was conducted from the home Thursday and the remains deposited in Swauk cemetery, the ceremony having been conducted by Elder Kine of Nahkets.

Besides her husband, W. J. Evens, Mrs. Evens is survived by her sister Miss Inez Curry, who has been residing with her, and by father, mother, two brothers and two sisters residing at Lansing, Mich.

Mrs. Evens was twenty-four years of age. She was born at London, Ont., in 1892, and came to the valley in 1912.

(Note: Dora Mabel Currie was the first wife of William J. Evens.)

**Mamie Evens Jude**

Mamie Evens Jude was the daughter of Marion Jasper Evens. She was married to George Jude and her obituary from the local newspaper follows:

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

**March 22, 1928**

**Mamie Evens Jude.**

Mrs. Mamie Evens Jude suddenly passed away at her home in Liberty at 11:30 a.m., March 8. She was loved by all who knew her. She was a patient, kind and loving wife and mother, while kind friends were around her bedside doing what they could to relieve her of the terrible pain she was suffering. She gently, but earnestly told them she couldn’t stand it any longer and sweetly fell asleep to await the call of her Savior.

Her husband, George Jude, two children, Marjorie, age 7, and Roy, age 3; her father,
Jasper Evens, and step-mother, Mrs. Jasper Evens of Mabton; two sisters, Mrs. Chas. Bray of Cle Elum and Mrs. George Boice of Ellensburg; four brothers, W. J. Evens and Ben Evens of Swauk Prairie, Tom Evens of Ellensburg and Marion Evens of California, with other relative and many friends, are left to mourn their loss, but not without hope of meeting her again.

Mamie Evens Jude was born May 15, 1894, on Swauk Prairie, being almost 34 years of age at the time of her death. Funeral services were conducted by Elder S. Kime of the Seventh Day Adventist church, College Place, Wash. Interment was made in the Swauk Prairie cemetery.

Nancy A. Hamerly

Nancy A. Hamerly was the mother of Jessie Hamerly, the first wife of William J. Evens. Her obituary follows:

CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO
October 17, 1930
Teanaway Pioneer Passes Last Sunday.

Mrs. Nancy A. Hamerly, a pioneer of the northern county, died Sunday morning at the home of her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Evens of Swauk Prairie after a 12-day illness with pneumonia.

Mrs. Hamerly was born in Mexico, Mo., September 3, 1853. In 1899 she and her husband moved to Seattle and in June, 1904, they moved to the Teanaway.

She is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Evens and Mrs. A. H. Bird of Oklahoma, and a step-son, Roy Hamerly of Oregon. Her husband, Charles Hamerly, died several years ago while they were living on the Jens Peterson ranch.

Funeral services were held Tuesday from the Jones chapel with Rev. Rees in charge and interment was in the Swauk Prairie cemetery.

During her illness Mrs. Hamerly was attended by Dr. J. P. Mooney and Mrs. Webb was her private nurse.

Elizabeth Rowlands

Elizabeth Rowlands (Ann Elizabeth Whittalk) was the mother of Harriet (Hattie) Emma Ellen Rowlands who first married George W. Main and then married Thomas Evans, son of Marion Jasper Evens and Nancy Adeline Evans.
Erastus L. Wright

Information about the Wright family, who are buried beside the Evans’ in the Swauk Cemetery, did not come from a family member. All information came from public records, primarily Ancestry.com and the efforts of Mary Lou Dills to find a link between the Evans family and the Wright family. Although there were clues, such as Erastus L. Wright and his wife, Sarah M. Carr, coming by wagon from Nebraska in 1882 and Carl C. Wright marrying a Mary Jessie McDonald, thought to be related to Mary Malinda McDonald (Simeon Evans’ first wife), but all the connections failed to materialise. The only connection between the two families, other than being neighbors, occurred after the families came to Swauk Prairie, when Robert Evans, the son of Simeon Evans married Mary E. Boice, the daughter of Dicey J. Wright.

Erastus L. Wright was born in Iowa on May 1, 1837. He married Sarah Matilda Carr on July 25, 1860 in Nebraska. Erastus was also a Civil War veteran. He first joined Company F, 1st Cavalry Regiment of Missouri on August 11, 1862 at the age of 25. He then enlisted in Company D, 26th Infantry Regiment, Iowa on September 11, 1862. He was mustered out of Company F 1st Cavalry Regiment, Missouri on January 13, 1865 at Little Rock, Arkansas.

Erastus and Sarah had six children, Abraham

Evans — Boice — Carr — Wright Family Connections. The Wright, Carr and Boice families intermarried while still in Missouri and the Evans connection was added while on Swauk Prairie. Sketch by Wes Engstrom.
Carl Wright

Carl Wright was the son of Erastus L. Wright and Sarah M. Carr.

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

February 16, 1934

Obituary

**Carl Wright**

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. today for Carl Wright, 67, who was killed Monday evening while crossing the Sunset highway in front of the Travelers hotel.

Carl Wright was born in Iowa in 1866. He came west with his father Rastus Wright in a covered wagon in 1884 stopping for a time at The Dalles before coming to Kittitas county where the father took up a claim in the Swauk Prairie. Carl Wright became a construction contractor and graded the first streets of the city of Cle Elum, excavated the first reservoir south of the city to give Cle Elum its first water supply and later built the eight mile city pipe line to the intake in the Cle Elum river below the old Cle Elum dam, which he also helped build. He took the contract to build three miles of the first road to be built around Lake Keechelus in 1909. In 1908 he graded three miles of the Milwaukee right of way. In later years he ran a livery stable in Cle Elum for many years.

Survivors are two daughters, Mrs. Lu McDaniels, Seattle and Mrs. Pete Amoss, Cle Elum, one son, George Wright, Seattle.

**Abe Wright**

Abraham Wright was the son of Erastus L. Wright and Sarah M. Carr. His obituary follows:

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

September 23, 1932

Earliest Pioneer Rancher Of Swauk Prairie Passes.

Abe Wright, one of the earliest pioneer ranchers of Swauk Prairie, died at Ellensburg, Saturday, Sept. 17th, at the age of 71 ½ years.

He was born in Richardson county, Nebraska, March 1, 1861 and came out west in a covered wagon in 1882 with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Rastus Logan Wright. Two brothers Carl and Burrel and two sisters rode in that covered wagon. One sister was buried on the plains. Ross Carr was also in that wagon train.

The family moved to the Swauk Prairie in 1884 where the father took up a claim. Two years later Abe filed on a land claim which he proved up and following the death of his father (1861), Carl C. (1866), Hannah (1869), Burrel B. (1873), Nettie (1876) and Wilson (1881), before they decided to go west by wagon in 1882 or 1883. Their daughter, Hannah, died on the trip. They settled on Swauk Prairie in 1885. Erastus died in 1894 and is buried in Swauk Cemetery.

Their son, Carl C. Wright, married Mary Jessie McDonald, the daughter of James M. McDonald and Sarah Davis. James M. McDonald was born in Missouri in 1843 and came west with his parents in 1852, settling in Oregon. James came to Swauk Prairie in 1882. Sarah (Davis) McDonald passed away in 1910 and is buried with the Wright family in the Swauk Cemetery. Sarah's husband, James M. McDonald, passed away in 1939 in Oregon where he must be buried.

Sarah M. Wright

Sarah M. (Carr) Wright was the wife of Erastus L. Wright. Her obituary was published in the local newspaper as follows:

**CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO**

December 1, 1922

Old Pioneer Passes Away.

Mrs. Sarah Wright, Resident Since 1885, Joins the Great Majority After a Long and Useful Life.

At the ripe old age of 82, following a life of usefulness and devotion to her family through the hardships of early pioneering in the upper Kittitas valley, Mrs. Sarah M. Wright was called by her Maker last Saturday, November 25th. Death occurred at the home of her son Abraham H. Wright, on Swauk prairie, east of Cle Elum, her other sons Carl C. Wright of Cle Elum and Burrel B. Wright of Snohomish being at the bedside also. Monday, simple funeral services were held at the Wright home and all that was mortal of this hardy, beloved pioneer woman was laid tenderly to eternal rest in the little prairie cemetery amid the scenes so familiar to her in life.

Mrs. Wright and her husband, E. L. Wright, who died in 1894, crossed the plains to the Pacific coast in 1883. They settled in the upper Kittitas valley in 1885 and became active in its development. Seven children were born to the union, of whom as stated but three survive. For many years past Mrs. Wright had made her home with her son Abe.
lived on the old homestead for 30 years, raising large wheat crops there for many years. He cut ties from the standing timber on his farm to furnish ties for the building of the Northern Pacific railway from Ellensburg west.

He never married.

Funeral services were held in Jones Chapel, at 2 p. m. Tuesday. T. M. Jones who had known Wright for over 40 years speaking the parting tribute to the pioneer rancher.

Survivors are his brother, Carl Wright, 1206 Howell St., Seattle, and a niece, Mrs. Peter Amosso, Parker, Wash., and nephew Geo. Wright, Seattle.

James M. McDonald

James M. McDonald was the father of Mary J. McDonald who married Carl C. Wright. James M. McDonald was an early settler on Swauk Prairie as were the Evans, Evens and Wright families. His wife, Sarah E. McDonald, is buried alongside the Wright family in the Swauk Cemetery although he is not. He apparently was buried in Oregon. His story in a local history book as well as the obituary of his wife and his obituary are as follows:

**HISTORY OF KLICKITAT, YAKIMA AND KITITAS COUNTIES, WASHINGTON, 1904**

JAMES M. McDONALD, who is farming five miles east of Cle-Elum, Washington, was born in Missouri, Franklin county, December 31, 1843. His father, William McDonald, was a farmer in Missouri and started across the Plains in 1852 and died on the trip. The family came on and located in Willamette valley, Oregon. His mother, Jane (Calwell) McDonald, died at the age of eighty-four years. Mr. McDonald was nine years old when the family reached Oregon. He went to school there and worked on his mother’s farm until he was twenty-two years old. In June, 1874, he moved to Washington and engaged in farming. In 1882 he spent some time in the mines and then took up a homestead on Swauk prairie, where he lived seventeen years. He sold out and in 1890 bought the Seaton place, on the Teanaway river, where he now lives. His brothers and sister are: Jess W., of Ellensburg; F. S. McDonald, of California; O. R. McDonald, of Spokane; Fenton R. McDonald, of Spokane Indian reservation, and Mary Hanna, of Ellensburg. Mr. McDonald was married in Oregon in 1870 to Sarah Davis, who was born in Silverton, Oregon, July 14, 1851. She was the daughter of Leander and Mary (Cox) Davis, who had the following other children: Albert, Emma Montgomery, Clinton, Lucinda McClure, Clorinda Ames, Forrest, Grant, Lincoln, Valina and Albin Davis, all living in Oregon, and Armilda Philbrick, who is dead. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald have two children, Jessie Wright, born October 26, 1872, and Lavilla Hoxie, born January 18, 1881. Mr. McDonald is a Democrat. He has a fine ranch of one hundred and sixty acres under a high state of cultivation, much of which is devoted to grass. He is a prominent and prosperous farmer, well liked and highly respected.

Sarah E. McDonald

*CLE ELUM ECHO*

December 17, 1910

Passed Away.

Last Saturday evening, after a lingering illness of several months, Mrs. Sarah E. McDonald passed away at her home in this city.

Mrs. McDonald was born in Marion Co., Oregon, July 14, 1851, died Dec. 10, 1910, being 59 years, 4 months and 26 days, at the time of her death.

On October 24, 1869, she was married to J. M. McDonald. Three children were born to this union, Mrs. Jessie Wright, Mrs. Villa Hoxsie, and Lura McDonald, who died in infancy.

June 30, 1876, the family moved to this state. In the fall of ’82 they settled on Swauk Prairie, being the first settlers in that section of the county.

In 1893 she united with the Roslyn Baptist church and was a devout member up to the time of her demise. Rev. Kinneman, of the Baptist church, officiated at the funeral Monday and interment was made in the Swauk Prairie cemetery, near her old home.

Besides her husband, she leaves two daughters and six grandchildren to mourn her loss. Always ready to help all who were in sickness or trouble, she will be sorely missed by a wide circle of friends and neighbors.

Jim McDonald

*(James M. McDonald)*

*CLE ELUM MINER-ECHO*

January 6, 1939

Jim McDonald Swauk’s First Settler Dies.

J. M. McDonald, one of Swauk Prairie’s first settlers was fatally injured at Ashland, Ore., when he fell on the sidewalk shortly after...
enjoying a Christmas dinner at the home of his son-in-law, J. E. Hoxie.

Jim McDonald, who lacked only a few days of being 95 years old, crossed the plains in a wagon train from Missouri in 1853. His father died enroute.

The mother and children settled in Salem, Ore., where Jim married in 1869.

He freighted for a number of years from The Dalles to Yakima Valley and in 1882 settled down on a homestead west of what is now the Hartman ranch.

Later he bought the Seaton homestead in the lower Teanaway valley, which land he held until he sold it a year ago to Tony Bonetto. He lived on this ranch until his wife died in 1910.

He went to Ashland eight years ago to live with his daughter, Mrs. Jessie Wright, who survives him. Other survivors are his grand daughter, Mrs. Peter Amosso, Cle Elum. Also seven other grand children and 12 great grand children.

LaDonna Businello

LaDonna's grave marker, which is beside Wright family markers in the Swauk cemetery, is a memorial marker as LaDonna Businello is buried in the Greenwood Memorial Park in Renton. The marker for her mother, Lorna G. Businello, who died in 1993, may also be a memorial marker only. The connection between the Businello family and the Wright family is not known. LaDonna's obituary is as follows:

FIND A GRAVE MEMORIAL
May 22, 2007

LaDonna Maria Businello

Born December 8, 1953 in Renton died December 22, 2002 in Seattle. LaDonna grew up in the Renton area and graduated from Hazen High School in 1972. She worked for The Boeing Company for a short time as a Key Punch Operator also as a Veterinary Assistant in the Renton area. In high school she participated in Track and was a member of the 4-H Club. She loved animals, going horseback riding, going to horse shows and traveling to Eastern Washington for the rodeo round up LaDonna was preceded in death by her father Azure Businello November 10, 1964 and her mother Lorna Businello November 30, 1993. Survived by her brother Fred Businello of Renton Memorial services will be held 12PM Saturday January 4, 2003 at Faull-Stokes Mortuary in Renton, with Inurnment at Greenwood Memorial Park at a later date. Arrangements under the direction of Faull-Stokes Mortuary in Renton, Washington, 425.255.8281.

Obituary, Faull-Stokes Mortuary.

Burial: Greenwood Memorial Park, Renton, King County, Washington, USA

Claudyne McDowell

Claudyne McDaniel McDowell is the daughter of Lora Carol Wright and Claude George McDaniel. The grave marker in the Swauk cemetery is a memorial marker only. Claudyne's ashes are buried in the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon. Her veteran status is PHM 3 U. S. Navy.
Francis M. Cox

Francis M. Cox and his wife, Mary Susan Headrick, and daughter, Mrs. L. B. Levy, are buried together at the north end of a row of graves west of the William Wesley Evens row of graves. Francis M. Cox was an early pioneer in the area and had no relationship to the Evan or Evens families. The obituary for Francis M. and wife were as follows:

CLE ELUM ECHO
November 15, 1918
Francis M. Cox Passes Onward at a Ripe Age.
Death Came Thursday Morning at the Family Residence Here After a Life Time of 86 Years.
Was Civil War Veteran.
Born of One of Virginia’s Oldest Families He Followed the Frontier Westward Finally Settling in Teanaway in 1887—Beloved by All Who Knew Him for His Fine Character—Funeral to be Sunday Morning at Eleven o’clock—Interment at Swauk Prairie Cemetery.

In the fullness of his years leaving the honorable record of a lifetime well lived as a priceless heritage to his children and grandchildren, Francis Marion Cox passed peacefully away at eleven o’clock Thursday morning at the family residence, 112 East Third street. Nearly everybody in this section knew “Grandpa Cox,” and he was beloved by all who knew him. He was one of the last of the Civil War veterans still living in this region and took great pride in having served in the 44th Indiana Volunteers.

Funeral services will be held Sunday morning at eleven o’clock at the Methodist church, Rev. James K. Stewart officiating. If the weather permits a great number will gather to pay their final respects to their old friend. It is expected that two sons and four grandsons will be the pallbearers. Interment will be at the Swauk Prairie cemetery beside his wife and daughter, Mrs. L. B. Levy. Relatives expected here from outside the city to attend the funeral are: his son M. M. Cox, of Deer Lodge, Montana; F. P. Cox, Harold Cox and R. F. Cedarholm of Seattle, all grandsons; and Mrs. F. P. Cox.

Born May 19, 1832, the life of Francis M. Cox covered a span of eighty-six years, or the greater part of a century and was filled with those interesting events that come to a man who was a frontiersman, a soldier and a community builder. His family was of well known southern stock, among the oldest in Virginia. His own father lived to the age of 96 and his grandfather celebrated his 100th birthday by splitting an even 100 rails. Francis M. Cox died of no particular ailment, his life simply running out as the result of general debility due to old age.

After living in several different states, gradually drifting westward with the tide of settlement, he reached the state of Washington and established his home in the upper Kittitas valley at the spot where the town of Teanaway was once located. It is said that he came there on the first Northern Pacific passenger train to come through the valley in 1887, but be that as it may, he was certainly a passenger on one of the first trains. Later he came to the village of Cle Elum and engaged in the general merchandise business here for several years, also working at his trade as a tailor both here and at Roslyn until failing health due to old age would not permit him to be active any longer. His later years were spent almost entirely at the home of his oldest son, M. G. Cox, where he died.

Although southern born he was a firm believer in the Union cause and when the Civil War broke in 1861 he enlisted in the 44th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and served throughout the struggle.

Mrs. Cox passed away here several years ago. He leaves two sons, M. G. Cox of this city and M. M. Cox of Deer Lodge, Montana, and one daughter, Mrs. Mary Williams, together with nine grandchildren, several great grandchildren and numerous other relative in Illinois and Virginia.

He was a man of estimable character and broad ideas, devoted to his family and unselfishly loyal to his friends, endearing himself to all with whom he came in contact, and will be keenly missed. With his death passes another Kittitas pioneer who came here when virgin forest covered the valley and
out of it hewed a home and led the march of civilization into the Cascade mountains.

Mrs. Francis M. Cox
THE CLE ELUM ECHO
May 21, 1904
Passed Beyond.

Last Sunday afternoon, while surrounded by all of her living children, Mrs. Francis M. Cox passed to the great unknown. Her death was not unexpected as for some time she has been afflicted with heart trouble.

Funeral services were held Wednesday in the Free Methodist church at Swauk prairie, Rev. M. S. Anderson officiating, and the remains were laid to rest in the Swauk graveyard, accompanied by a large concourse of relatives and friends of the dear departed.

The life of deceased has been that of a pioneer, and how well she improved all opportunities to better her surroundings and friends all who knew her can testify “The world is made better by such lives as was her’s.

The entire community extends heartfelt sympathy to all her relatives, husband, daughters and sons.

Mary Susan Headrick was born in Virginia in 1834. She became acquainted with F. M. Cox while attending school in Delaware, Ohio, and was married in Iowa, in 1856. Mr. and Mrs. Cox came to Cle Elum in the early days of the town to administer comfort and care to an invalid daughter, Mrs. L. B. Levy. After Mrs. Levy’s death Mr. Cox engaged in business in Cle Elum and continued it until 1894, when they settled on the ranch six mile east of Cle Elum, where they have since resided. The husband, Mrs. Mary Cedarholm, M. M. Cox, M. G. Cox, and nine grandchildren remain to mourn her passing away.

William H. H. Knight

William H. H. Knight was an early pioneer on Swauk Prairie. William is not buried in the Swauk Cemetery, but his daughter, Vesta Z. Knight, was. She is buried by herself east of the William Wesley Evens row of graves. There are no graves on either side of hers. The story for William H. H. Knight was published in a local history book as follows:

HISTORY OF Klickitat, YAKIMA AND KITITAS COUNTIES, WASHINGTON, 1904, PG. 912

WILLIAM H. H. KNIGHT, born in Harrison County, Ohio, March 8, 1841, is now a farmer residing nine miles east of Cle-Elum. His father, Immur L. Knight, born in Virginia in 1815, was by trade a farmer and miller. He was a pioneer in the state of Ohio, and from there removed to Missouri. From the latter named state he removed to Nebraska, where he was a frontiersman. In 1857 he made his home in Kansas, where he later died. He was of French descent, and his wife, Rachel (Ross) Knight, was also a native of Virginia, born in 1820, and married at the age of sixteen. Mr. Knight removed to Nebraska with his father while in his fourteenth year, and there received his education in the common schools. Until arriving at the age of twenty he worked on the parental farm, and then enlisted November 20, 1861, in Company G, Kansas volunteer cavalry, under Captain A. W. Mathews. He fought with this company all through the Civil war, and was mustered out of service in Fort Leavenworth, January 13, 1866. He then returned to his Nebraska home and again followed farming until 1877, when he emigrated to Washington. After a year in the Evergreen state, he removed to Umatilla County, Oregon, where he took up land and remained four years. After selling his interests there, he came to Kittitas County, August 5, 1880, and located on the farm he now owns. He has his ranch in a high state of cultivation, has one hundred and twenty acres in grass, and his land is watered by six miles of irrigation ditch. In all, he has three hundred and twenty acres in one body. Mr. Knight has three brothers and one sister: Thomas P., of Kansas, born in Ohio, 1843; James, of Nebraska, born in Missouri; George, now of Oregon, born in Nebraska, 1851, and Milisa A., now living in Kansas, born in Nebraska. Besides these named, he had five brothers and two sisters who are now deceased. They were: Albert, born in Ohio, 1839; John, also in Ohio; Amos I., in Missouri; Amos, Martha J., Mary K., and Benjamin F., all born in Nebraska.

He was married in Nebraska, 1867, to Miss Mary B. Skeen, and to this union four children were born: Dora, March 24, 1868; Nellie J., June 2, 1870; Alexander L., January 5, 1873, and Lulu E. Vanwinkle, born in 1876, and now living in California. They were born in Nebraska, and only the latter two are now living. On Swauk Prairie, September 18, 1884, Mr. Knight was again married, his bride being Miss E. E. Kessler, daughter of William and Diantha (Sharp) Kessler. Her father was an architect, native of Virginia, and died in 1870. Her mother
was born in Indiana and died in Tacoma, Washington. Mrs. Knight was born in Wabash County, Indiana, May 17, 1867, and received her education in various localities, owing to the roving nature of her step-father, by whom she was raised. Her parents came to Washington in 1883, and settled on Swauk Prairie, where she taught the first school to be held on the prairie. She was married at the age of seventeen. Mrs. Knight had one sister, Luella, born in Indiana, now deceased. The children born to Mr. and Mrs. Knight, with dates of birth, are: Dora M., July 13, 1885; Edna, August 19, 1887; Edith, May 17, 1889; Bessie, February 22, 1891; Vesta Z., May 27, 1893; Glenn, July 25, 1895; Nellie K., January 3, 1898; Gertie, July 21, 1900, and Rachel D., February 27, 1903. All were born on Swauk Prairie, and are now living at home, with the exception of Vesta Z., who passed away January 6, 1900, of typhoid fever. The family are members of the Christian church, and Mr. Knight belongs to the Republican party. He is a prosperous farmer, and universally respected for his many sterling qualities.

**Kinney Family**

W. A. Kinney homesteaded on Swauk Prairie next to Marion Jasper Evens. Later Marion's son, William J. Evens, bought the property. Jasper Evens joined forces with W. A. Kinney in building the Seventh Day Adventist church on Swauk Prairie. Information on the Kinney burials is sketchy.

W. A. Kinney is not buried in the Swauk Cemetery. It may be that his father and mother, Dr. Aaron A. Kinney (Burial Number 061) and Eliza J. McCombs Kinney (Burial Number 062) are buried there. There are four Kinney graves, two with stone markers and two with wooden markers (Grave Reference Numbers 84, 85, 86 and 87). The wooden markers were there in 2005 but are now missing.

Burial record 063 indicates that a Kinney infant was buried in 1889. A notice in the Ellensburg indicates another Kinney child died in 1899 which could be Burial record 64 that does not have a date listed. The notice is as follows:

**The Ellensburg Dawn**

*June 6, 1899.*

**Died.**

June 12, the ten months old daughter of James Kinney, of Swauk Prairie.

A grave marker indicates Eliza Kinney died in 1894 and Aaron Kinney in 1898. It should be noted that the grave marker for Aaron and Eliza Kinney has been placed in front of the graves of E. R. Elexon (Grave Reference Number 82) and William Comb (Grave Reference Number 83) instead of in front of the Kinney graves (Grave Reference Numbers 84 & 85).

**Witter Family**

The three Witter graves are only marked with white painted rocks. The graves appear to be old, as a sixty year old Ponderosa pine is growing on one. The only information comes from cemetery records indicating that one grave is Hinman Witter, one is Carrie Witter and the third is Fay Witter. No burial date. No age. No family information.

There wasn’t any reference in the Evans family information about who the Witters were or why they are buried in the Evans part of the cemetery. However, an exhaustive search of Ancestry.com did reveal enough information from Federal and Washington Territorial census data to paint a faint picture of the lives and travels of the Witter family and allow speculation about the three graves in the pioneer section of the Swauk Cemetery.

In 1850 Lapsley Witter, who was born in 1827, was married to Mary E. Witter, born in 1832, and they had a daughter, Sarah F., born in 1850. They were living in Kentucky.

In 1860 Lapsley was living in Arkansas with daughters Sarah F. and Nancy, born in 1855. His wife Mary E. was not with them.

In 1870 Lapsley was living in Texas with a new wife also named Mary, but born in 1845. Sarah F. was not with them. She could have been married by age 20 in 1870. Nancy was still with them as well as Ida, born in 1863, Hinman, born in 1865.
and Carrie Born in 1869.

In 1880 Lapsley was living in East Kittitas precinct, Washington Territory, with wife Mary and children, Hinman C., Carrie, Tylander, born in 1872, Dana E., born in 1874 and Mary F. born in 1877. Nancy who would have been 25, and Ida, who would have been 17, were not with them.

In the 1887 Washington Territorial census Lapsley, wife Mary and children, Hinman, Carrie, Tylander, Dana and Mary F. were all still listed.

In the 1889 Washington Territorial Census Lapsley, wife Mary, children Hinman, Tylander, Dana, Mary F. and Sylvester, born in 1888, were listed. Carrie was not listed and thus died between her 18th and 20th birthday and was buried in the Swauk Cemetery.

In the 1900 Federal Census Lapsley, wife Mary and children, Tylander and Sylvester were living in Arizona. Hinman must have died sometime after his 23rd birthday and Mary F., who was probably the “Fay” listed in the burial records, very likely died between her 12th and 23rd birthdays. Dana, who would have been 26 in 1900, probably moved away from home before that date.

In the 1880 Federal census Lapsley was listed as a shingle maker and I speculate that he was working for Jasper Evens and W. A. Kinney in their shingle mill and that is why the Witter children are in the Evans part of Swauk Cemetery.

Unknown Grave Location

There are two known burials in the Swauk Cemetery, Goldie Powers and Alfred Powers, that do not have known locations and are probably buried among the Wright family in the southwest corner of the cemetery. Their daughter, Netta Wright-Powers, is buried there and there are vacant spaces, without grave markers, within the row of Wright burials.)

Their obituaries are as follows:

Goldie Powers
CLE ELUM ECHO
May 11, 1917
Mrs. Powers Passed Away.

Mrs. Goldie Powers, wife of Bert Powers, employed at Mine No. 5, died Sunday afternoon last of heart trouble. She left besides her husband, three children. The Powers came here last summer to reside, though they formerly lived in this section. Mrs. Powers was a woman of only thirty-eight years, well respected and numbering many friends who grieve her departure. The funeral was held at the house yesterday, Rev. J. S. LaRue officiating, and the interment took place on Swauk prairie where other members of her family are buried.

Alfred Powers
CLE ELUM ECHO
August 2, 1918
Alfred Powers Victim of Lightning Bolt.

Killed Instantly Near Ephrata Last Tuesday, Also Drivers of Two Other Hay Wagons—Brought Home for Burial Here.

(CASCADE MINER)

The funeral of Alfred Powers, 16-year-old son of Mr. Powers of this city, who was struck and instantly killed by lightning last Tuesday near Ephrata, Wash., was held Sunday. The body was shipped here last Friday for burial and services were held at 9:30 a. m. Sunday at the home of Mrs. John Fenolgio, who is a sister of the deceased. Interment was made in the Swauk Prairie cemetery.

Alfred, at the time the lightning struck, was driving a wagon, two other men on wagons ahead of him were killed at the same time. Another man who was with him had just got down from the seat and went to one of the other wagons for a whip and upon returning was about to mount the seat when the bolt of lightning struck him to the ground, rendering him unconscious, killing young Powers and striking the four horses attached to the wagon to the ground, killing one of them.

Deceased is survived by his father, one sister and a brother. Rev. W. A. Sharp had charge of the funeral services.

Final Thoughts

In spite of the extensive research done on the graves in the southwest corner of the Swauk
Cemetery, there remains stories untold for many of the early settlers on Swauk Prairie. We make no apologies for that as we gave it our best effort. With the increased interest at present in finding one's roots, perhaps someone will pick up where we left off and find more "Whispers From the Grave" for others in the Swauk Cemetery.
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