

<http://lonepinecemetery.com/index.htm>

Friends of Lone Pine Cemetery

Whitman County, Washington

A Washington State Historic Site

Winter 2012-2013

Merry Christmas from

"Friends of Lone Pine Cemetery"



**And A Very
Happy New Year**

The photo on the cover is of the evergreen trees that were damaged in the recent stubble fire next to the cemetery. As you can see there is still some green on the limbs and we are hopeful that the large trees will be spared from becoming firewood.

Monica Peters of the Whitman County Genealogical Society, along with her husband Jim, were guests at our meeting in Tekoa in October. Through her we were able to discover a treasure trove of historical information in the book "The Tekoa Story - From Bunch Grass to Grain". The book is mostly about the town of Tekoa but it has much history about the community of Lone Pine and the settlers that lived and died there and are buried in the Lone Pine Cemetery. The original book was published in 1962 and reprinted in 2003 in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Slippery Gulch.

I have already used a couple small excerpts from the book and my plan is to use stories of Lone Pine families from the book, along with my own research, in future newsletters but first it seems appropriate to start at the beginning with some history from the book. Jim Irwin

The Beginning of a Community

The open prairies of the Pacific Northwest for centuries had over their rolling surface only a deep, rich mantle of green. This was not sown by the hand of man, nor was it ever harvested, nor marketed. The consumers of this splendid natural crop of bunch grass were deer, elk and other wild game animals. The only men seen on these rolling hills were Indians, and from these, the animals fled for refuge to the forested foothills rising in the east. Such was the picture of the rolling prairie land on which Tekoa, Washington now stands.

Long before the white man came to the region known as the Palouse Country of which Tekoa is on the eastern edge, the territory was a part of the "Great Oregon Country", discovered by Captain Robert Gray, explored by Lewis and Clark, David Thompson, Father DeSmet and Ross Cox. Perhaps the two that probably came through here were Father DeSmet and Ross Cox. Father DeSmet established the Sacred Heart Mission on the Coeur D'Alene River at what is now Cataldo in 1847, and in 1877 the mission removed from its home on the banks of the Coeur d'Alene River to the fertile Hangman Creek Valley at what is now DeSmet, Idaho. Ross Cox in "His Adventurers on the Columbia River", Volume I, tells of wandering for 13 days over the rolling bunch grass hills, when he became lost from his party while traveling from Wallula (Old Fort Walla Walla) on the Columbia river to Spokane House near Spokane. He was found by friendly Spokane Indians and cared for until he could join his party at Spokane House.

Oregon Territory was created in 1849, at the time the people from the East were rushing to the California goldfields. The people were aroused and frightened by the massacre of Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman and others at the Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu near Walla Walla in 1847. They realized they needed the protection of the United States Government in their dealings with the Indians.

Washington Territory was created out of part of the Oregon Territory in 1853, and Isaac Ingalls Stevens became the first Governor. He secured the establishment of a land office in the new territory, and an appropriation of \$100,000 for the Mullan Road. This road was constructed from Old Fort Walla Walla near Wallula to Fort Benton, Montana it was to be a Military Road. Lieutenant John Mullan was placed in charge of the survey; he had just reached Five Mile Creek out of Fort Walla Walla when he received word of Steptoe's defeat at the battle of Rosalia, May 16, 1858. Mullan received word to disband his men that were building the road until further notice. Lieutenant Mullan's maps and surveys were invaluable to Colonel George Wright in his campaign against the Indians in the fall of 1858. (Ed. note; This may have been the first federal funded highway, road, or trail in the west.)

The first pioneers to examine this district found a picturesque background, at the foot of Mt. Tekoa, for making their settlements. But many of them were doubtful that such land could be of much value for homesteading. Others having the vision and faith of the true pioneer builders, saw great possibilities in this soil, and staked their fortunes on the future of what has proven to be an important part of the finest wheat producing country on the continent.

Mystery of the Palouse Soil

The mystery of the Palouse soil has long puzzled geologists, and has caused many debates. The soil is rich and deep. The soil is a dark clay loam, formed by the decomposition of basaltic rock, with a remarkable capacity for retaining moisture. Kirk Bryan in a review of the Federal Investigation of the Columbia Basin Project sums up the results of his study in the statement that the Palouse soil "is wind-borne dust or loess, though other material is included in its mass, that this loess is definitely of Pleistocene Age." Some of the best crops of grain on record in the state have been raised in this vicinity and there has never been a crop failure on the account of drought. The character of the climate, with the rainfall occurring largely in the fall, winter and spring, with comparatively dry summers, together with the remarkable clay loam soil make an ideal combination for the production of grain. The mystery of the soil still remains unsolved.

Whitman County

Tekoa was a part of the 40,000 square miles Stevens County until Whitman County was organized in 1871, with the County seat at Colfax. To this newly organized country, came the first settlers to homestead in and near Tekoa in 1875. Whitman County at the beginning had about 200 people and embraced what is now Franklin and Adams County. These last two named counties were separated from Whitman County in 1883.

The settlement of Whitman County started from Walla Walla Valley, and from here the people gradually moved north and began to settle in the Union Flat country. Mr. James Allen Perkins built his log cabin in 1870 at the junction of North and South branch of the Palouse River and founded Colfax. In 1877 the population of the County had grown to 2,250 people. It was in this year that Chief Joseph's band of Nez Perce's went on the war-path in Idaho and started an Indian scare that was without foundation, but nevertheless did a great deal of harm and slowed immigration for awhile.

**The Lone Pine Cemetery Meeting & Work Day
for The Spring of 2013 has not yet been set.**

The Date & Agenda will be announced in the next newsletter.

We received the following letter from our **first grant application**. We were not selected this time but we will continue to look for other organizations to apply for preservation funds and will learn more about the process as we proceed.

Thank you for submitting a grant application to the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's 2013 Valerie Sivinski Washington Preserves Fund. While the grant committee was supportive of your project, unfortunately we are unable to award a grant as you requested. Grants from our Valerie Sivinski Washington Preserves Fund are normally very competitive, and this funding round was no exception – we received 18 grant applications requesting in excess of triple the funding available in this year's grant cycle. As a result, priority was given to funding those projects requesting direct assistance with historic bricks and mortar rehabilitation - projects the committee felt possessed the highest degree of urgency this funding cycle.

We are sorry that we are unable to fund your proposal, but wish you continued good progress with efforts to restore the Lone Pine Cemetery. While it is understood that keeping the land clear and protected from the surrounding agricultural lands and equipment, the cemetery work was not able to compete against projects that preserved a building. We understand that historic cemeteries are a difficult property to maintain, and we hope that your community will step forward to help with the work that needs to happen. If the Washington Trust can assist you in other ways, please do not hesitate to contact us as we would be happy to provide assistance.

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