

Beck, Orlando

Union Gap

Presenting Orlando Beck, goin' on 81 years, the grand old man of Union Gap and a real Yakima valley pioneer. Beck found only sagebrush and Indians in the Yakima valley when he came here in 1869 at the age of 10. He has been here ever since and in fact homesteaded on the ground now occupied by the Bright Spot service station in the 200 block on North First street.

Born in Sullivan county, Missouri, Beck came across the plains and over the Rocky mountains by wagon train with his parents,

The pioneers experienced considerable trouble, Beck admitted. While passing through Nebraska they were set upon by hostile Indians but soon fought them off.

In the central part of the state they came upon a smaller train of perhaps 30 wagons, which had left Missouri before theirs. Attacked by the Indians, the entire party had been massacred and their wagons burned. It was one of the saddest sights he has ever witnessed Beck related.

With extreme difficulty the travelers crossed the Platte river, the men wading ahead of the wagons to test the depth and footing. In order to keep the wagons from plunging to destruction down the steep slopes on the western side of the Rockies large trees were felled and lashed to the wagons. Thus they were eased to the lower levels and finally to the Grand Round valley.

Here the train split up, one group going to Oregon, another to the Puget Sound and the remainder of the party, Beck among them, continuing the journey under Dr. L.H. Goodwin, captain of the train. It was in mid-October, 1865 that the Goodwin train, which had departed from Ocala in 100 wagons strong and May 1 of the same year, arrived in Walla Walla.

The Beck family settled in the Yakima valley and went through

the early turbulent period of Indian troubles. Beck's daughter, now Mrs. Edna Pierce, was born on February 8, 1885--the first white child to be born in Yakima .

Complimented by his interviewer on being one of the youngest oldsters he had met, 80-year old Orlando Beck chuckled.

"Why I'd dance a jig for you if I hadn 't got my leg bun ed up in an automobile accident a while back."

Undated clip with fine 3 col pix in scrapbook of Mrs. Edna Mae Beck Pierce.

Orlando Beck , 82, dies at his home at Union Gap.(Undated Clip in scrapbook of Mrs. Edna Mae Beck Pierce..."

resident of the community 72 years and of state, 73, boen in Sullivan County, Mo. , Nov. 4, 1857. First stop was made at Old Town, the elder Beck soon after homesteading on land in the vicinity of First and C streets which is now near the center of Yakima's business district. Beck helped to build the first irrigation ditch in the valley, he was the first to serve as fruit inspector when the fruit industry got under way and his daughter, Mrs. Edna Pierce of Union Gap was one of the first white babies born in Yakima.---

Downtown Yakima city land now is estimated to be worth more than \$5,000,000 was sold to the Northern Pacific railroad a little more than 50 years ago for \$5,750. The pioneer who made the deal with the railroad and considered himself fortunate is 77 year old Orlando Beck, who now lives in a modest home in Union Gap.

Beck recalls that he homesteaded 160 acres of land where Yakima now stands and took 80 more as a desert claim. He was only 21 then and had lived on his father's farm, a little north of where Union Gap now is since he was 10 years old.

Only 10 acres of the farm, now in this city, was in cultivation and there was little more to it than a cheap house and a little fencing but the railway's agent found Beck a shrewd bargainer. The land lay in a Z formation, the quarter section including the area where the Northern Pacific passenger depot now stands and the present courthouse area.

Beck offered to sell the 100 acres of land he had at the time to a neighbor for \$3,000. The railway agent offered money to clinch the deal at this figure but Beck held back. Beck said he wanted to consult his father and to sleep on the matter. The next day he said the price was \$4,000.

The agent refused but said he would come back the next day. By that time Beck's price was \$5,000. Again the agent refused but returned the next day. Beck asked \$5,750.

"This sleep is too expensive" the agent snorted. "Here is \$500 for an option at the figure. We are giving Charles Schanno, owner of the Yakima City townsite (now Union Gap) 60 days to decide whether he will take \$60,000 for his property. If he refuses we will buy your property and some other and start a new city."

A daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Beck on February 8, 1884 (marked over in pencil 1885) was the first white child born in North Yakima,

now Yakima. This daughter, Edna May Beck is now Mrs. Edna Pierce of Union Gap. Another daughter was born on the Beck ranch before North Yakima was incorporated. She is Mrs. Eva Snodgrass and lives at 109 South Seventh street in Yakima. The mother is the former Miss Corrina Southern.

"Those were busy days in the winter of 1884-85 when the railroad started the town of North Yakima. The company sent to Portland for expert house movers and offered free lots to all who would move from Yakima City to North Yakima. The council in the old town passed an ordinance forbidding moving out any more buildings but those movers were too smooth for them.

"The movers would jack up the houses during the day and then haul them beyond the city limits during the night. The next day it was too late for those in the old town to do anything about it."

/// Beck relates that he came to this region 66 years ago. He and his brothers, James, R.M. and W.D. and his father and mother lunched their way across the plains in covered wagons drawn by oxen and horses. The Beck team at the time of arrival here consisted of an ox and a horse that somehow managed to pull together.

Only a dozen settlers attended the first Christmas party in this part of the Yakima valley and the country for miles around was combed to find that many. The party was held in a tiny log cabin so small that there was room for only one quadrille of eight persons to dance at a time.

Beck went to school several terms in a 10 by 12 lumber shack near his father's farm. J.O. Clark was one of the first teachers. The school year lasted only three months. Reading, writing arithmetic and grammar were the only subjects taught.

The pioneer also attended two terms of school under George Parish at the mouth of the Naches river. Beck trudged five miles to

stand from the log cabin school each day with nothin but sagebrush to view along the way.

Quite a romance developed near the mouth of the Naches river one spring Beck recalls. Thirteen bachelors from the country around about came to court two girls who were eligible for marriage. He thinks the girls were Miss Emma Maybry and Miss Josephine Stolcup. Tom Nelson won Miss Maybry says Beck and the other girl moved out of the country. Noone paid attention to what happened to the rest of the bachelors.

Beck had been doing freighting between The Dalles, Yakima and Ellensburg before the railway bought his land. When he became "wealthy" he planted five acres of orchard on the northern outskirts of Yakima and five acres more in Fruitvale. The pioneer maintains his father was the first man in this region to plant a real orchard although other settlers had a few clumps of fruit trees. The elder Beck planted 10 acres of peaches, pears, apricots and prunes on the original homestead north of where Union Gap now stands-- Clipping from Edna Mae Beck Pierce scrapbook. Undated. Published with photo by Abrams. Orlando Beck, now justice of the peace at Union Gap, homesteaded 160 acres of land where Yakima now stands. Though now 77 he continues active in his home community. (Beck died in 1940) Date of clipping would therefore be by 1935.

Union Gap Cemetery

A project the Daughters of Pioneers has been campaigning for for some time got under way this week when a WPA crew began improving the pioneer graveyard at Union Gap where the founders of many Yakima leading families rest.

Above is a view of the cemetery where the shaft erected to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Aronzo Perkins, slain by Indians, is a focal point and where many of the graves are surrounded by picket fences, relics of early days when roving bands of animals were feared.

Below J.B. Mullen of Union Gap, foreman of the WPA crew and Tony Germata of Union Gap are levelling off a fill between the graves.

Completion of the project will require several months. The work will include leveling of the cemetery and seeding it to grass, repairing fences around graves, laying a 3 foot 8 inch rock wall around the cemetery and placing rock revetment work on the east side adjoining Spring creek. Twenty workers are in the present crew which is to be increased soon to thirty--Four col picture of cemetery with inset 2 col, Undated clip. in scrapbook of Edna Mae Beck Pierce.

Historical

Interesting details pertaining to the pioneers who rest in the old burial grounds in Union Gap were disclosed by Orlando Beck who came to Yakima valley in 1865. He crossed the plains with his parents, ~~w~~ John W. and ~~O~~ Martha Beck who were members of the train led by his uncle, Dr. L. Goodwin.

Dr. Goodwin made two trips to Walla Walla before he regarded the venture of bringing his family as safe. He assembled a large train of 100 wagons because experience had shown that a small group was likely to fall an easy prey to Indians.

Evidence of that was seen when the train reached Clear creek in Nebraska. A train of 30 wagons had been attacked and the persons in it massacred. The Indians had removed the bodies but the fires started to burn the wagons were still burning.

The Goodwins were from Peoria, Ill while the Becks were from Indiana. In the train were Martin V. Roselle, a single man who joined the group in Iowa. He was buried in the cemetery.

A widow, Mrs. Elisah Grant and her two children, Walter and Margaret, 6 and 5 years old were in the train. Walter was dragged to death by a horse in the Moxee when 18 and was buried in Union Gap. Margaret married Melford Thorpe, a distant relative of Mortimer Thorpe who was the first settler in the Yakima valley. Milford Thorpe lived in the Kittitas valley.

For a widow with two small children to undertake the long and hazardous trip took nerve, but Beck explained that three brothers, William, John and Ed Lindsey were in the train. Mrs. Grant later married Andrew McDaniel.

The train led by Dr. Goodwin was intact until it reached the Grande Ronde valley in Oregon where it scattered, one contingent going to Walla Walla and some of the members continuing later on to the Yakima valley.

Dr. Goodwin took u a homestead at Union Gap but practiced medicine in Walla Walla. He came to the place at stated in000 intervals to make the tenure of the homestead legal.

Dr. Goodwin died in Walla Walla and was given ne of the largest funerals known in early days. George W. G_odwin who started a store in the old town was a full brother as was also Flavius Goodwin. Thomas and Benton Goodwin were half brothers. They settled in Kittitas valley.

Lum Goodwin was the youn est son of Dr. Goodwin and it was he who donated the land for the burial ground. He later settled in the Wenas valley and there were thr e sons in the family, W_illiam J. Goodwin who was buried in the cemetery was af another family which settled in Parker bottom. He was a blacksmith in the old town. He had a brother, John Goodwin.

Mrs. Sarah A. Perkins who was buried in the cemetery was the mother of Lorenzo Perkins who was killed by Indians. She lived in the Wenas valley and was a widow as long as Beck knew her. Lorenzo Perkins was between 30 and 35 years old when murdered while his wife, whose maiden name was Blanche Bunting, was much younger.

Beck knew Blanche B_untin well and took her to dances. Beck was a member of the party which went to th00 hunt for the bodies of the Perkinses. That was in December when the weather was cold and snow was on the ground.

Abijah O'Neal, who was buried in the old cemetery, was one of four brothers. He farmed in the Cowiche district and was mixed up in the fight following a horse race at the old time when one of the Splawns was killed. The other brothers were Chaley, W_illie and John O'Neal. Charley O'Neal operated a sawmill.

Mrs. Hannah M. Chappell, whose grave is in the burial grounds, was the wife of Sam Chappell, who later was a member of the firm of Chappel & Cox, merchants in the new town. The Chappells first lived in Parker Bottom.

J.D. Edwards and John Edwards, whose graves are also in the burial grounds were brothers, sons of John Edwards whose name was also John, was a schoolmate of Beck. And both as young men were with the party which took Chief Moses prisoner on Crab creek.

Beck recalled that he hauled wood for the elder John Edwards and later when he wanted money so he could go to a dance and went to the Edwards home to get his pay. Edwards was cutting wood and when Beck importuned him for the money he became angry, threw down the ax and got the money and handed it to him.

Vivian and Inez C. Gervais whose graves are in the cemetery were children of Andrew Gervais.. From clip in scrapbook of Edna Mae Beck Pierce. By Elias Nelson, Herald Staff writer (about 1936)

Union Gap Cemetery.

Historical

Woodgown and dusty, the Yakima valley's historic cemetery at Union Gap had scant attention on Memorial day with but few of the graves decorated.

Oldest grave there is that of Priscilla Goodwin, wife of L.H. Goodwin who brought the first wagon train which settled at Union Gap. Hardships of the westward journey proved too great for her and she died, December 18, 1865, 72 years ago.

And in the fasion of the day on her headstone is carved "Happine s is the Reward for Virtue."

A marble spire marks the final r ting place of the valley's first martyrs, Lorenzo and Blanch Pe kins, pioneers of the first period of Yakima's development date all events to the Pe kins murder." The tale is told on the stone:"Killed by I_ndians at Rattlesnake springs, Yakima county, Washington Territory, July 10, 1878."

There is nothing to tell of the high hopes with which the young couple set off on th4ir fatal ride of bein surrounded by a band of hostile I_ndians , of Lorenzo's attempt th help his bride escape ane of their wild dash across the sagebrush. Pi neers says the Indians piled stones on Mrs. Perkins while she was yet alive and that the tortured shape in which her body was found iddicates her desperate efforts to escape from the crushing rocks but at the Union Gap cemeter y there is hardly a sound to disturb her final rest.

I_n that spot, saved from utter desolation only by a few shade trees are others who aided in the pursuit of the murders, who finally paid with their lives on the gallows , with almost all of the inhabitants of the little village at Union Gap looking on. There is the body of J.D. Edwards, who aided in the pursuit and who is the first soldier to be

buried in the valley. On this Memorial Day there is no flag

at his grave, which lists his greatest distinction, that of being

a member of Co. O., Oregon mounted volunteers. He died

in 1887. There too rests Martin V. Rozelle who died in 1902 at the

age of 62, and who was one of the Rozelle family which figured so

prominently in the early---(continued on page 3, col 4) undated clip

from scrapbook of Edna Mae Beck Pierce.)

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In accordance with her last wishes, funeral services for Mrs. Eliese S. Jenkins, 78, who died yesterday, will be held in the Salvation Army hall, the center of her 35 years of activity in Yakima.

It will be at 2 o'clock Monday afternoon.

Mrs. Jenkins was War Cry sergeant and held a record for sales of the Army's weekly magazine. She was a familiar figure in the business district here ~~SD~~ where she sold her magazines. Her husband, Caleb Jenkins, died about 15 years ago. He was at one time in charge of the local Army group.

Mrs. Jenkins had no known relatives except a brother-in-law, Col. L. Jenkins, retired Salvation Army officer living in New York. Mrs. Jenkins died in her home, 1308 1-2 McLaren street, where she had been confined about a month and bedfast the last week- 2 col picture and unidentified and undated clipping in scrapbook of Mrs. Edna Mae Beck Pierce (about 1940)