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## Wenatchi and Pioneer Women

Wenatchee Valley  
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**From the Interim Director**

Darrell Dickeson

As this edition of *The Confluence* features contributions made to our Valley by women, it seems only proper that I start this article by acknowledging the strong cadre of talented and powerful women that we have on our staff here at the museum. Zach and I do our best to represent the male side of the equation, but there is little doubt that we pale in comparison to the contributions made from our female energies.



My great grandmother, Emma Gowing, came to the Northwest in a covered wagon many years ago. As a young woman she piloted the draft horse teams that hauled logs out of the forest for milling, and then cooked meals for the loggers. That was in the late 1880s in the Leavenworth area.

My father, Clifford Dickeson, was born in Leavenworth in 1918 and worked most of his career with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He served as the assistant manager of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery for over 25 years. Earlier in his career, however, our family spent several years living on the lower Columbia River. The Little White Salmon fish hatchery located there had a treaty with several Native American tribes giving them rights to receive the salmon carcasses after being spawned by the hatchery.

As a youngster, I can remember observing and interacting with young Native American children playing their traditional stick games, while their elders harvested the fish they were allotted. Reading the article about Indian Women brings this rich memory to mind. The inter-generational interactions, typically fostered by women, formed a role model that has influenced my life. My current role as interim director of the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center is bringing me full circle from my roots to helping preserve this important history for future generations.

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*Cover: Left, Wenatchi Mary Felix poses with a fleshing tool and deer hide in 1931. Right, Elizabeth Milner Rose came to Wenatchee with her husband Conrad in 1887.*

**Indian Women Provided for Families**

by Chris Rader

For many years, the semi-nomadic people who have come to be known as the Wenatchi lived in today's Wenatchee Valley. (In their Interior Salish tongue they called themselves P'squousa; their neighbors to the south, who spoke Sahaptin, referred to them as Wenatchi and that term stuck.) They moved their families seasonally, following food, between Lake Wenatchee and the Columbia River. Many wintered in Cashmere, Monitor, or at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers; others ventured up to Swakane Canyon and down to the Stemilt Creek and Malaga area, interacting with other Interior Salish bands such as the Entiat, Chelan, Methow and Columbia-Sinkiusse.

House pits and other remnants of an encampment along the headwaters of the Wenatchee River, just below Lake Wenatchee, were excavated in the 1990s and determined to be 1,000-2,000 years old. Large piles of mussel shells indicate one of the foods that nourished these native peoples, whose name we don't really know but who appear to have been ancestors of the Wenatchi, while they were staying at this location.

More information is known about the bands that roamed through the valley within the last few hundred years, including their harvesting of natural resources. Until people of European descent began settling in the area, bringing manufactured goods and establishing trading posts, the Wenatchi and other bands lived totally off the land. The men fished for salmon; hunted deer, elk, mountain goat and other mammals; chipped stone for weapons and tools; and did the heavy lifting. The women dug roots, picked berries, dried foods for winter use, cut tule reeds to make mats for tipi covers, gathered

firewood, made clothing, fashioned wool blankets woven from mountain goat hair, wove baskets, tanned hides and cared for children.

The fresh food cycle began in spring. As plants began sprouting on Badger Mountain, Camas Meadows (south of Blewett Pass), and other gentle slopes, women and children set up camps for root harvesting. The men would join them later to help haul preserved roots to winter camp.

Early in the spring, Indian women throughout the valley traveled to the root grounds on the Camas Meadows near (the later mining town of) Blewett. Wild flowers every color of the rainbow blanketed the picturesque expanse with the magnificent Cascade range looming in the background. Using a long arched limb and later steel rods with wooden handles, the women would uproot the small tender bulbs of the camas or Indian potato and place them in specially woven baskets which were made from cedar roots and fibers; their beauty reflecting the high degree of craftsmanship maintained by the Wenatchi Indians.<sup>1</sup>



*Mary Moses, of the Sinkiusse band living in today's Douglas County, displays a beautiful beaded parfleche.*



*From left, Ellen Saluskin, Isabelle Minnenock, Mary Dick and Rudy Saluskin prepare for a first-root ceremony prior to digging camas roots near Goldendale in 1937.*



Salmon dry on racks behind Native Americans at the Wenatshapam Fishery c. 1907. From left: Makteen, Monique, Solomin with baby, Homas.

Roots provided starch in the diet. The women would slip the skins off the camas roots right away before they hardened. Other roots that sustained the local peoples were wild carrot, bitterroot, kouse or bread root (which was sour but plentiful on rocky ground), sunflower, tiger lily, wapato and Indian celery. Those that weren't eaten right away were dried, baked or boiled and then pulverized and pressed into cakes for storage.

#### Women dried salmon for winter use

Salmon, of course, was the staple food for the Indians. The Wenatshapam Fishery, at the confluence of the Icicle and Wenatchee rivers near Leavenworth, was flush with spring chinook in May and June. The Wenatchi shared this fishing ground with other bands; several thousand people would gather in what must have been a merry time each year. The men would construct wooden weirs or platforms from which to net or spear the fish. The women cleaned and filleted the fish, then set them on racks to dry over wood fires. The mass fishing encampment lasted for weeks. Storytelling, horse races, gambling games and ceremonies (including marriages) augmented the serious business of preserving a year's worth of protein.

Summer chinook, sockeye and coho salmon as well as steelhead trout were also an important part of the diet. These anadromous fish had different life cycles, ascending through the Wenatchee river drainage at different times to spawn, so fishing was not confined to the Wenatshapam Fishery. Wherever a group of families

camped to fish, the women would make short side trips to gather pine nuts, edible roots, cedar roots for weaving, and other natural resources – in addition to drying the fish.

In summer and early fall, women and children turned their attention to berry picking. Many varieties were/are native to the Wenatchee watershed. Wild strawberries began to ripen in mid-July. There were black raspberries in the Peshastin and Icicle drainages, huckleberries at upper elevations such as along the White and Little Wenatchee rivers and Stevens Pass area, and blackberries virtually everywhere. Elderberries, serviceberries, currants, chokecherries and Oregon grapes were not as sweet for fresh eating, but were useful for pemmican (a cake made from dried fish or meat, berries, and animal fat that

provided year-round sustenance). The women, often carrying babies in cradleboards on their backs, picked into tightly woven baskets. If a bush was heavily laden, they would place a mat or cloth underneath it and then beat the branches with sticks to knock off the berries. The berries were dried in the sun, or on a canvas placed near a slowly burning fallen log.

As fall edged toward winter and snow began to fall in the high country, Wenatchi families returned to their home villages to complete the nomadic cycle. Some had to construct new houses; men and women worked together on this, setting up poles and wrapping them with tule or cattail mats the women had stitched together with strips of fiber. Early 20th-century anthropologist Verne Ray noted that, for the Wenatchi,

Winter was not an idle time. Women carried water in wooden pails or



A woman gathers tule reeds to stitch into a mat.

tightly woven baskets. They kept the fires burning, cared for children, cooked, sewed leather garments and wove cedar-root baskets. Men, besides hunting and fishing through the ice, spent long, tedious hours making stone mortars and pestles, adzes, hammers, wedges and mauls. They also flaked flint, obsidian or other stones (to use as knives).<sup>3</sup>

As more and more Caucasians infiltrated the Indians' home territory, the latter had no choice but to move to the Colville or Yakama reservation or to adapt to new ways. (An 1855 federal treaty had acknowledged tribal rights to land in North Central Washington, but it was not honored; that's a long story.) At the turn of the 20th century there were still a number of Wenatchi individuals and families living between Leavenworth and Wenatchee. One of the best known was Old Mollie (Misheetwie or Nishatun).

#### Old Mollie was well liked

Mollie lived in a tipi about two miles up Olalla Canyon, north of Cashmere. Her sister Clotilde (Teesahkt), who was the mother of Louie Judge, lived nearby in Jude Canyon, and their brother Kari Sam lived up Mission Creek. Mollie never married. She had a small Indian strawberry cayuse pony that she rode to town or to visit Clotilde. She earned money doing housework, including working for many years for Leavenworth funeral director Amanda Town Wilson. Mollie was friendly and sociable. Pansy Henry Sorenson, who lived in Olalla Canyon and would herd her father's horses pastured near Mollie's home, often spent time with the old woman. "Old Mollie would insist that I get off my horse and come into her tipi and visit," she said. "I still have some of her baskets."<sup>4</sup>

Historian Eva Anderson noted that Mollie made annual trips to pick hops in Yakima, stopping along the way at the home of sawmill owner Charlie Wright on Peshastin Creek.

Suddenly she would appear, just from nowhere, and there she would be, gaping in at the windows. Later, she would explore the interior. Emma Wright's meals appealed to her, too. On such occasions, Mrs. Wright never failed to bake a mammoth stack of hot cakes for Old Mollie. All of the "spares" Mollie stored away in her basket for future reference. But the Indian woman would not sleep inside.



At left, Mollie sits in front of her tipi in Olalla Canyon. Right, Mollie (on left) and her sister Clotilde were familiar sights in the Wenatchee Valley a century ago.

"Claustrophobia" kept her outside with her pony in the calf pen.<sup>5</sup>

As Mollie reached her 80s, several men from Olalla Canyon built her a one-room cabin to replace the tipi. While it was being built, in 1923, Mollie fell ill and was admitted to the Leavenworth hospital where she died. She, Clotilde and Sam are buried in the Indian cemetery that was established in Cashmere in 1867.

#### ENDNOTES

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## Women Helped Settle Badger Mountain's 'Southside'

by Chris Rader

"...There were bad times and there were good times. Families started to move into this beautiful land. Wives began to make homes of the shacks and cabins. Curtains appeared at some of the windows.... At each farm site a yellow rose bush or purple iris was cherished and watered into blooming." – Marjorie Pattie McGrath, Badger Mountain

Histories of pioneers moving west often seem to center around the men who make their mark in fledgling towns. Some of these pioneers were bachelors; others were husbands who scouted out the area before bringing their wives and children to settle there. In some cases, entire families rode in covered wagons along the Oregon Trail to seek their fortunes in the unknown lands of Washington Territory. The pioneer women who helped settle the barren countryside of Douglas County deserve some attention – and have received it, in the fascinating 400-page book *Pioneer Dreams: Histories of Washington Territorial Pioneers*, compiled by L. Darlene Spargo and Judy Artley Sandbloom and published in 2004. The book is available in the Wenatchee Valley Museum's gift shop. Let's take a look at some of these intrepid women around the turn of the last century.

Douglas County's Waterville incorporated in 1889, three years before Wenatchee. It was larger than Wenatchee, too, with several hundred in-town residents and additional rural farmers living on the outlying shrub steppe plateau. Between Waterville and the Columbia River is a long ridge with a 4,000-foot peak called Badger Mountain. The south side of that ridge, with elevations between 2,000 and 2,600 feet above sea level, was an attractive place for homesteaders hoping to raise cattle

and wheat – and came to be known as Southside.

The first white settlers to Southside came in the early 1880s. They mostly approached from the east, as there were no bridges across the Columbia at that time. They found the soil fertile and the climate pleasant with reasonable rainfall and four distinct seasons. Some were bachelors, but others brought wives – and soon there was a distinct community of neighbors, friends and families. Southside even had a post office. (There were very few people living in present-day East Wenatchee, which wasn't incorporated until 1935. One early settler was Harry Patterson, who by the late 1880s was operating a ferry across the Columbia to Orondo Street.)

### Mabel Witte Bowen

Mabel Witte was born on Badger Mountain in 1900. Her mother, Maude Johnson, who had come to Southside in 1888 with her parents and siblings, had a great thirst for knowledge and claimed to read everything she could get her hands on, including a book about the French Revolution when she was ten years old. Maude married John Witte, a Southside resident since 1891. They bought a place on Beaver Creek where John raised wheat which he hauled to the Wenatchee train depot by way of Patterson's ferry.

"In the fall, my father would leave home early with his load of wheat so as not to have to wait too long at the ferry," Mabel recalled. "We were eleven miles from Wenatchee. Sometimes when the ferry broke down, a rowboat had to be used. My mother remembered, with a shiver, how one time when I was a baby they brought their fall supply of groceries, along with me, across the Columbia in this way. The top of the boat was at water

Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center #008-59-30



Children head home from the Pine Grove School in Southside c. 1908.

level, but she was not afraid then."

Maude and her siblings rode horseback five miles a day to attend the Beaver Creek School (about five miles northeast of the Wenatchee-Columbia confluence). After eight grades there she crossed to Wenatchee on the 1908 bridge to attend Wenatchee High School, then graduated from Ellensburg Normal School. She then taught at Southside's Beaver Creek and Dry Flat schools, earning \$125 a month.

Cleaning the school and preparing the soup, which the children and I ate for lunch, were my other responsibilities. The parents provided the ingredients. The classroom contained desks, an organ, and a wood stove. I used to play with the children at recess and at noon. In the winter we went coasting. When Clark Bromily was scheduled to take the eighth grade examinations, he had the chicken pox. I asked permission to dismiss school and go to his home to give the examinations. Permission was granted and he passed the tests.

Mabel married Henry Bowen in 1938 and died in 1998.

### Anna Estes Van Dyke

Anna Estes Van Dyke recalls attending the one-room Dry Flat School in the early 1900s. It had been built on land donated by John Doneen in 1899. On the first day, Anna said, "My little dog followed me to school and sat right under my desk. I was always stepping on him and he would set up a yowl. Finally the teacher told me to take him home. I was glad 'cause I didn't want to go to school anyway."

Like most rural schools at that time, Dry Flat had no running water. At first, drinking water was hauled to the school in cream cans, but finally a cistern was built

and filled every fall. All the students and teacher drank from a dipper that hung on a hook. The local grade schools provided the social life for Southside/Badger Mountain families. "There were box socials and dances, and at Christmas, a special program, gift exchange and a dance!" Anna said. "I played the pump organ for the Christmas dance. Dad had sleigh bells for the team, and it was always a big affair."

Anna Estes married Peter Van Dyke in 1921. She played piano and organ in the Wenatchee Valley for 52 years, and died in 1984.

### Amy Estes Trout

Amy Estes, Anna's cousin, lived on a Southside wheat ranch. She and her siblings and cousins made up

games and used sunflowers to make dolls and cradles.

### Southside as Described by L.M. Hull in 1929

"Lying several miles due east from Wenatchee, and distant from the Columbia River 12 to 18 miles, may be found what is known as Southside. While within the bounds of the so-called Big Bend country, it is separated from that great section by Badger Mountain, and has a well defined territory of its own. In elevation it is about 2600 feet above sea level. In size it may be estimated as an average of six miles in width, and eight to ten miles in length....

"The soil is of good depth and exceedingly fertile, and under favoring climatic conditions, it is one of the most productive sections of Eastern Washington. By favorable climate, is meant reasonable moisture which must come from abundant snowfall, and at least moderate rainfall. These ideal conditions are not always obtained, and the season of 1926 made the eighth year of dry weather. But its people are a sturdy class and look forward with confidence to better conditions.

"Very early in the history of the Southside country its people established a local telephone service, and soon after the creation of the Farmers Telephone Company it became part and parcel of that system. Those people of Wenatchee who have not included Southside in the circuit of automobile rides, should by all means do so, for they would be favored with a close up view of a well ordered community as well as a scenic outlook upon the Cascades lying to the west, that for grandeur and beauty are unsurpassed in the Northwest."

Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center #008-64-4



Badger Mountain appears in the background in this panoramic photo of Wenatchee in the 1920s.

Her father, William Estes, planted a large field of potatoes and hired Indians from upriver to dig them.

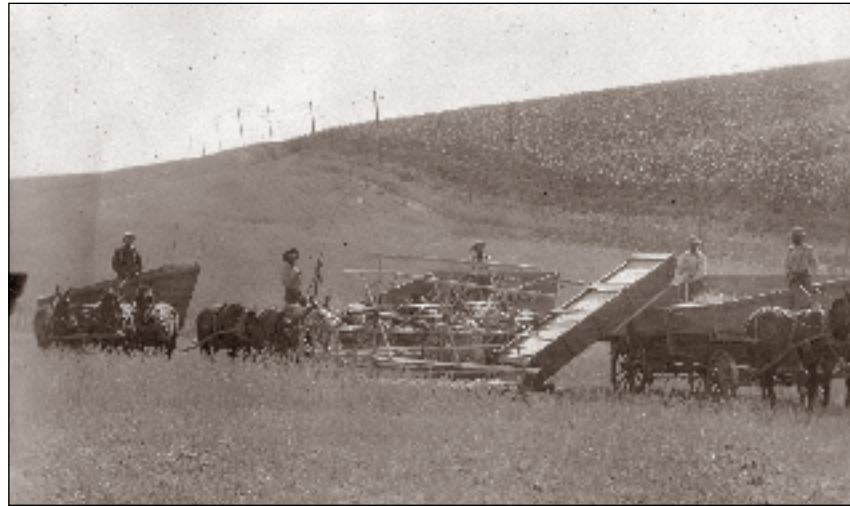
They came, the teenage boys driving their extra ponies – Appaloosas, paints and spotted horses. Lottie and I had never seen such colored horses! The chief, his wife and two children arrived in a two-seated buggy, or hack, as it was called. There were three more hacks, each with four or more people. Then the younger girls were next, riding ponies pulling travois on which were loaded tents, cooking utensils and food. It sure was an event!

Amy and her siblings made friends with the chief's son and daughter, Dan and Lottie. Dan helped Amy's brother milk cows, and Lottie would wash dishes after dinner; she thought they were very pretty. "We found out they were such nice people," Amy said.

#### **Esta Tetherow Braunwalt**

Solomon and Nancy Jane Tetherow homesteaded near Waterville in 1886. Their daughter Esta says she knew they were poor, but didn't realize how many hardships her parents endured until she was older. "The first year they lived on the homestead, they killed 150 rattlesnakes on the place," she said. "No one ever went outdoors without carrying a stick and looking at every step." Her father dug several wells but never struck water, so the family had to haul water in barrels from the Columbia River. In winter they melted snow.

Just imagine melting snow and washing (on the washboard) for from 10 to 14 people. All the white clothes had to be



*Threshing operations in Douglas County around the turn of the last century depended on horses and mules.*

Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center #86-24-169

boiled in the wash boiler, then dipped out with a stick. And Mother made all of her own soap. I have seen Mother start to wash before daylight, and still be at it after dark. Of course, in the meantime, she had to stop and cook three meals a day for hired men and kids. In the wintertime, as always, the clothes were hung outdoors, where they froze as stiff as boards. They were brought in, a few at a time, and dried out in front of the oven.

Esta's mother saved the wash water and dish water, laboriously carrying it out to the garden and berry patch. "We did not have a bathroom and Saturday night was bath night, in the washtub. We had clean clothes for Sunday and we wore them the rest of the week. Anyone who had more than two changes of clothing was considered rich."

Esta, born in 1895, was the 12th child born to the Tetherows over 30 years. Most of her siblings had left home by the time she was old enough to help with housework.

My mother hated to cook, so I took over the cooking and, in another year, I was doing the washing and ironing. I ironed for my piano lessons and that was in the days of ruffles, and my teacher had two girls. (Oh, me!) We had to iron with flat irons heated on the stove and, if one wasn't careful, one could get a dress almost ironed and get a smudge on it. That meant washing and ironing it all over again.



*Unidentified Pine Grove schoolkids and teacher enjoy an outing in the snow in 1922.*

Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center #008-59-27

The Tetherows had plenty of meat, since Solomon raised many hogs and Nancy Jane raised chickens. They also had cows, which Esta and her sisters milked. Esta helped her mother can all the vegetables and fruit she could get hold of, saving the fruit parings to make vinegar. She rode horseback to school or, when the snow was deep enough, went on skis which her father had made. "There was a hill about a mile long from the top



Wenatchee Valley Museum #012-51-2664

*The Coonans lived in a cabin on Beaver Creek, in Southside (Badger Mountain).*

that ran right into our barnyard," she recalled. "Once, Edna was skiing down the hill and she didn't realize the snow had melted and the barb wire was exposed. She hit the wire and upended head first in the snow with her skis attached. We all laughed because she looked pretty funny."

Esta married Bob Braunwalt in 1915. She died in 1992 at age 97.

#### **Leitha Overturf Coonan**

Leitha Overturf was born at Southside in 1897. Her parents, George and Jessie, had settled at Southside in 1888. Her father raised wheat and potatoes and operated a small dairy. Leitha was mindful of the laborious role and the wardrobe of the pioneer wife.

With care of the children, besides three large meals to prepare each day on the wood range, all the baking, washing on the wash board, ironing with stove irons, raising chickens, planting and caring for the garden, canning fruit and jelly and jam making, sewing for the family, either by hand or on a treadle machine, which some did have, general housework, especially mopping bare

[wood] floors until linoleum came into existence....

The women wore long underwear and long black stockings in the winter. They were either cotton or wool, and at all times [wore] a corset, and corset cover (similar to the brassieres of today only longer and full), two or three petticoats, panties, besides their dresses and high button shoes. Children about the same, minus corsets and corset covers. In summer, much lighter underwear was worn, but still the corsets, panties and petticoats.

But along with hard times, the settlers had plenty of fun, especially in winter when there was less farm work to do. "They went to dances in the various homes on skis or snowshoes, took along a pot of beans, and danced until the next morning at daybreak," Leitha said. She also describes picnics and horse races in summer, highlighted by a big Fourth of July celebration held at a farm that had plenty of shade trees.

Three or four of the men would get together, haul lumber, and build a dance platform and concession stand where ice cream and lemonade would be sold. The women would fix the big picnic lunches, which were spread out on the platforms and everyone helped themselves both noon and evening. There would be children's races, men and women's also. The old sack races, tug-of-war, etc. in the PM and about eight or nine in the evening, dancing would begin and last all night. The music would be furnished by someone who could play the violin, banjo, etc. Different families would get together and buy their kegs of beer, which were hidden somewhere in the grove. This was never sold and most everyone seemed to stay sober and enjoyed it all.



*Leitha Coonan sews wheat sacks at harvest time. This was a job usually done by a man.*

Pioneer Dreams



Lewis and Cora Titchenal

They drove onto a ferry that afternoon which was run by steam and when they get out near the middle of the stream the stern wheel broke, but with a cool head, self-confidence, and a hard struggle to keep it from floating down the river, the ferry man managed to pull it back to shore and the landing from where they had started from. That night, Mr. Coonan put in a new wheel and was paid three dollars for his labor, which was certainly welcome, as they didn't have a cent to their names.

Leitha loved Badger Mountain and its people. Late in life she was writing a history of the area until a heart attack robbed her of her excellent memory. An excerpt:

The early pioneers first came looking for good cattle country, which they thought they had found until the winter of 1889-90 took them by surprise. Snow came the seventh of November and stayed on until the middle of May, getting to a depth of five or six feet and at times the weather was extremely cold.... It was open range and the bunch grass came to the horses' knees. Some of this was cut with a scythe or sickle for winter storage but that soon was gone when the winter of 1889-90 came. Most of the stock either froze or starved to death. The horses practically ate up the stables and each other's manes and tails. The cattle died by the thousands and, by spring, their bones covered the hillsides everywhere. One woman baked bread to feed their cattle and everyone who had straw tick mattresses emptied theirs for feed. These were the only kind of mattresses most of the pioneers had – ticking filled with straw, which was changed occasionally. During this winter, several of the men went on snowshoes or skis to Ellensburg and

Leitha married a Southside boy, William Coonan, whose parents had crossed Colockum Pass in a covered wagon in 1888. On the way to their Badger Mountain homestead they boarded the ferry. Leitha describes their passage across the Columbia as her mother-in-law had told it to her:

carried home on their backs flour for their families. After this heartbreaking winter, their minds turned to raising wheat and thoroughbred horses, and hogs, which proved to be very successful.

Leitha said there were still many Indians roaming around the hills when her parents first settled on Badger Mountain. One young man came by the Overturf home and told her father he had been born under the big pine tree in their back yard. Leitha observed many native women coming in May from Chelan, Yakima, Nespelem and elsewhere to dig camas roots. She enjoyed visiting a nearby Indian camp to watch horse races and observe the women's beautiful beaded bags, moccasins and gloves.

Leitha Overturf Coonan died in 1980.

### Margaret Titchenal Hansen

The Titchenal family has deep roots in North Central Washington. Mr. and Mrs. David Titchenal, who left Missouri for Washington Territory in April 1882 with their four sons and two daughters, arrived in Spokane in December. The following year he filed a homestead claim on Badger Mountain. Sons Lewis and Norman filed their own claims, too, though Lewis remained in Spokane until 1887. He married Cora Johnson and they headed to Badger Mountain with a wagon and four-horse team, living with his parents through the winter of 1887-88 and then moving to their own homestead. Lewis and Norman owned and operated the first threshing machine in the Southside area.

Norman Titchenal went on to become pastor of the Church of God of the Faith of Abraham, which had been founded in 1898 by Southside pioneer Richard Corbaley. Lewis and Cora later moved to Cashmere, and Lewis was elected president of the Highline Ditch. Their son Ray Titchenal, a noted horseman, married Vera Alexander in 1912; their daughter Margaret was born in Cashmere the following year.



Coasting was a popular winter pastime for young Southside people.



From left: Bernice, Glen, Margaret and Eula sit on a horse led by their father, Ray Titchenal.

Cora Titchenal's diary described life on Badger Mountain in the early days.

Our means were rather limited at this time, so we had but little to go to house-keeping with – though as much as most of the people in this country had to begin with. We had a new cook-stove which we paid \$28 for in Spokane, a lounge that cost \$10 and three chairs, one being a rocking chair. Lewis made a lounge, a table and a bedstead which I stained with burnt umber and made them quite respectable. The old cabin was 12 by 14 feet and the other room was 14 feet square, ceiled overhead and the walls were papered. I had an old rag carpet and Lewis' mother gave us a new one. My sister gave us a heating stove. I had an organ, a stand-table, some pictures, etc. which helped us out and thus we set out to house-keeping and contented with our lot.

The Titchenals, too, lost their horses and cattle in the severe winter of 1889-90. They later moved to Warner's Flat, two miles east of Mission (Cashmere). Margaret married "Colockum Bill" Hansen in 1938 and had two children, Frosty and Vera Rae.

*Pioneer Dreams* contains many, many other anecdotes of early life in Douglas and Chelan counties:

- Having no coffee, so fashioning a drink of ground, boiled and roasted barley with molasses
- Being hounded by coyotes while walking to and from school
- Washing out the sooted chimneys of kerosene lamps every day
- Cooking for the railroad crew on a heavily laden table which buckled and fell to the floor. The kerosene lamp broke and spread flames along the entire length of the table. Mary Reed calmly grabbed a freshly opened sack of flour and smothered the flames.

- Children making little boats out of scraps left over from wooden apple box construction and sailing them down the irrigation canal

- Shopping at the store run by Chinese miners, near today's Beebe Bridge. It was a roughly covered dugout that carried rice, tea and hats woven from split reeds and shaped like tortoise shells; when dipped in water it provided air conditioning on hot summer days.

- The 1903 invasion of Mormon crickets which ate trees, flowers, grass, shrubs and entire crops

- A grandmother treated by a traveling dentist who "sat her in a kitchen chair, gave her a shot of whiskey for an anesthetic, and pulled out 17 of her teeth"

In the words of Cora Titchenal, "Our children and grandchildren who are living in this present age, having the advantages of schools, telephones, electricity, automobiles and all modern conveniences, will never realize what we pioneers experienced and the hardships we endured." But they accomplished much, lived their lives with pride, and left behind plenty of great stories!

### SOURCES

Lindley M. Hull, *A History of the Wenatchee, Chelan and Entiat Valleys*, 1929.

L. Darlene Spargo and Judy Artley Sandbloom, *Pioneer Dreams: Histories of Washington Territorial Pioneers*, 2004.

[www.watervillewashington.org](http://www.watervillewashington.org)



Every early Southside homestead depended on horses.

## Elizabeth Rose Adapted to Wenatchee

by Chris Rader

*Editor's note:* Tom and Emily Riedinger, descendants of Conrad and Elizabeth Rose, recently gave the Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center some family photos and history. *The Confluence* has written about Conrad Rose in the past (Spring 2012), but we are taking this opportunity to focus more on his wife and children.

A building at 21 South Chelan Avenue has long been known as the Conrad Rose Mansion. It functioned as a funeral home for many years after the Rose family sold it – and now, changing hands again, it is being remodeled for use by two technology companies. A few months ago the Wenatchee Valley Museum conducted several public tours of the historic building, renewing interest in the Rose family. Conrad Rose, founder of the Wenatchee Produce Company in 1899 and one of the first Chelan County commissioners, was a community leader for decades. But what about the rest of his family?

Conrad first met Elizabeth Milner in Sprague, Wash. in 1885. She had been born in Liverpool, England, on Feb. 6, 1864 to Lord and Lady Milner. She resided in that seaport city for 18 years before crossing the ocean to come live with an aunt in Iowa. From there she went to the railroad and cattle town of Sprague to live with another relative. The small town, southwest of Spokane, was situated along the Northern Pacific Railway line, and it was inevitable that Elizabeth would meet railroad workers.

Conrad Rose had started as an engine wiper, then advanced to oiler and fireman. He was promoted to engineer on the Spokane-to-Sprague run at the time he met Elizabeth. They married December 8, 1885. (It's interesting that they shared a birthday, February 6; he was two years older.) Soon after the wedding, Conrad was transferred to the Tacoma-to-Ellensburg run and the couple set up housekeeping in Ellensburg. Elizabeth constantly worried about train wrecks, especially on the

mountain passes, so she was happy when Conrad quit the job.

Having heard good reports about the potential of the Wenatchee area, Conrad and his brother George rode their horses over Colockum Pass in 1886 to investigate. Conrad purchased a 160-acre farm from John Canfor (most of it was rocks, sagebrush and sand) east of Miller Street, in today's Grandview Addition. He returned to Ellensburg and told Elizabeth the good news. Elizabeth was pregnant with the couple's second child, so they decided to wait till the following summer to move to Wenatchee. Though neither of them knew anything about farming, Elizabeth looked forward to the prospect of a country home with a garden.

### *Pioneer life was challenging for a noblewoman*

In early July 1887 they packed their household goods, cat and two sons into a lumber wagon and headed up Colockum Pass.

For miles the rutty, rocky wagon road twisted up the side of the mountain. Mrs. Rose and two children, Tom, 2, and George, six months old, were jolted and bounced. Even the family cat, which had been loaded into a cracker box, gave up in disgust. It was found several days later, back in Ellensburg. "I don't blame the cat," Mrs. Rose said. "When we started down this side of the mountain I got out, too. I never imagined there could be such a road. It was the first time I had had anything to do with mountains. I put the baby in the cracker box and walked down the hill."

When they finally reached the tiny settlement of Wenatchee, Conrad proudly showed his wife their new home.

"It was the hottest day I ever experienced," she says. "There was no shade. Nothing but sand and hot wind, and sagebrush. I kept looking for the town. Conrad said there wasn't any town. Then I saw the house. Two rooms. A



Courtesy of Tom and Emily Riedinger

*The pioneer Rose family of Wenatchee poses in the early 1900s. Front row, from left: Philip, Mary, Edward. Middle: Tom, George. Back: Conrad, Moss, Elizabeth, Maud.*

kitchen and a bedroom. And the farm! I couldn't believe it. I don't know now why I didn't walk back to Ellensburg."<sup>1</sup>

Conrad ordered some lumber from Ellensburg and built an addition to the small shack. However, the lumber was green and, as it dried over the next months, it twisted out of shape and left cracks for the wind to get through. The couple planted their first small garden but didn't have much water to keep it alive. Nothing survived except some small volunteer potatoes that John Canfor had planted the year before.

Like other pioneer women, Elizabeth endured many hardships but kept a brave face. She had seven children, including twin girls, in six years. Her nearest neighbor was miles away.

She got up at 5 in the morning, cooked, washed, and knitted. She not only made the family's clothes, but contrived the patterns, brought the water in barrels from the river. The mountains had her trapped, but she had her children. They must be bathed, fed, trained, and brought up. She loved every day of it. The mountains, pine and snow covered, angry upheavals of nature's rage or torture, gradually became her protective sentinels.<sup>2</sup>

The Rose children were Tom (who died at age 26), George (who died at 20), Philip (said to be the first white child born in Wenatchee, in February 1890), Mary (who died young), Edward, and twins Moss and Maud.

There were more Native Americans living in the

Wenatchee Valley than whites, in the 1880s and '90s. They were friendly and sometimes inquisitive. "Unless drunk, the Indians were harmless," Elizabeth Rose told an interviewer in 1936. She liked them and they liked her.

For groceries and general household goods, the Roses shopped at the Sam Miller-Freer brothers' trading post at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers. A 50-pound sack of flour sold for \$2.50 and brown sugar was six pounds for a dollar. Goods sold at the trading post were hauled from Ellensburg over Colockum Pass. Conrad must have done most of the shopping, for a 1935 article by Karl Stoffel in *The Wenatchee Daily World* notes that Elizabeth once asked her husband to buy her a new pair of shoes.

The girl from Liverpool was used to soft shoes. Those her husband brought home were stiff and heavily seamed. The buttons up the side were fastened on with wire. They wore blisters on her feet. Mrs. Rose cried. Her husband said, "Shall I go back to railroading?" She dried her tears.<sup>3</sup>

A friend gave the city-bred Elizabeth a few chickens, including a hen that was sitting on some eggs. The friend advised her to put some lard and kerosene on the setting hen if she got lice. Sure enough, Elizabeth observed lice on the hen so she doused the hen and her eggs in kerosene – but she forgot about the lard. The poor hen sat patiently on the eggs, but they never hatched; the kerosene had destroyed them.<sup>3</sup>

Years later, Elizabeth recalled a yearning for one of her favorite foods that she'd had during those early Wenatchee days.



Courtesy of Tom and Emily Riedinger

*Twins Maud, left, and Moss Rose*



Courtesy of Tom and Emily Riedinger

*Conrad Rose built this mansion on South Chelan Avenue in 1906. The family lived there until 1924.*

Bacon just was not. Sam Miller had none; the Roses' supply had been exhausted for months. Mrs. Rose just hankered for bacon. It was as futile a desire as a wish to necklace the little stars about her throat.

Her neighbors, four miles away, had bacon, properly smoked but salted for a year's endurance test. She had bacon but had never possessed a silk dress. Mrs. Rose still had left a frock of Spittlefield silk of honest British worth. It was an ordinary part of her wardrobe in England. She could not wear it and jump from sage brush to boulder, nor wade knee deep in sand. It was a trade. Mrs. Rose soaked the salt out of the bacon. It was horrible, but never yet has Mrs. Rose tasted bacon to equal that for fragrance, crispness, crunchiness, and general satisfaction. That was a real bargain for Mrs. Rose.<sup>4</sup>

With the coming of the Great Northern Railway in 1892, real estate in Wenatchee became much more valuable. A developer offered the Roses 50 acres in the Millerdale area (near today's Wenatchee High School) in exchange for most of their original 160 acres. On his new land Conrad planted some peach trees, hauling his crop to Ellensburg to sell. One night when he was gone, Elizabeth was frightened by the sound of her door knob twisting.

There was a gun on the wall, but she had never shot a gun. However, she took the weapon down noisily and pointed it. "I would have shot right through the door if that knob had twisted again," she said. But the night prowler heard her moving inside and did not try again. "I decided I wouldn't stay alone in that house another night," Mrs. Rose relates. "I had a neighbor come to stay with me. She had five children. They were half wild.



Wenatchee Valley Museum #85-0-194

*Elizabeth and Conrad Rose*

That was worse than the scare, so I told her she could go home. That night I made a bed for myself and the children on top of a hay stack near the house. We slept there two nights."<sup>5</sup>

### *Roses find financial success*

Conrad soon determined that he was a better seller than grower of fruit. He started a freight company and a wholesale produce business that became one of Wenatchee's most lucrative commercial enterprises. The Wenatchee Produce Company, established in 1899 in a small office on lower Orondo Street, moved to Wenatchee Avenue in 1901 and soon covered an entire city block. Rose shipped the valley's produce via Great Northern rail cars westward to Seattle and eastward to Midwestern markets. Eventually the business expanded to include farm and orchard supplies, seed, animal feed, machinery, fuel, and Studebaker cars and trucks. He established numerous branch warehouses along the Columbia, Okanogan and Methow rivers. Conrad Rose was a straight-talking, honest man of great integrity and generosity who was well respected by virtually all growers in North Central Washington.

In 1906 the Roses purchased a downtown lot and constructed the beautiful mansion on South Chelan Street. The three-story brick building was built in the Georgian Revival style with a hipped roof sheathed in fish-scale shingles, five gabled dormers and three brick chimneys. The style is exhibited through six Corinthian columns on the porch, fluted Corinthian pilasters, and a projecting cornice with a dentil course and modillions. The main, west-facing entrance features a wood-frame double door with an upper glass



Courtesy of Tom and Emily Riedinger

*The Riedinger family with Rose grandparents. Front row from left: Charlie, Moss, Tom, Chuck, George, Elizabeth. Back: Jim, Mary E, Conrad.*

pane framed by a broken-pediment door surround.<sup>6</sup> There were plenty of bedrooms to accommodate the large Rose family.

Five of Elizabeth and Conrad's children lived to at least their mid-20s. Each was given 10 of the 50 Millerdale acres, for his or her own orchard. (Tom's widow, Ada Rose, ended up with 10 acres on Walla Walla Street; Conrad and Elizabeth retained their own 10 acres on Miller Street.) In 1924, with the children gone, Elizabeth decided to sell the mansion because its upkeep was too much for her and Conrad. It was purchased by David Jones, who converted it to a funeral home. The elder Roses moved to a smaller home on Delaware Street, on a remnant of their original 160 acres.

Moss Rose married Charles Riedinger, who had served as Gen. Pershing's driver in France during World War I. They raised four sons on their 10 acres at the corner of Russell and Miller streets. "I loved growing up in Wenatchee; it was a wonderful place!" said Tom Riedinger, now 86 and living in the Seattle area after a career in public relations and advertising at Boeing. He and his cousins called their grandmother Mema. Tom remembers Elizabeth as a very nice lady, always cheerful.

"She wasn't a socialite, but was an interesting lady," he said. "She wasn't worried about what organization she belonged to, or going to teas or parties; I never heard her talk that way, and no one in my family pushed her in that direction." He doesn't remember Conrad, who died in 1938. Tom recalls that Mema learned to swim when she was in her 50s – and then was "down in that pool every day" (the Natatorium on Fifth and Wenatchee Avenue), often with grandchildren.

He also remembers that Elizabeth was obsessed with learning the piano. Conrad had purchased one for her that was brought to Wenatchee on the Great Northern Railway for free, in recognition of Conrad's status as the railroad's largest shipper. She wasn't a particularly talented musician but worked hard at her craft. She took lessons from a Mr. Cohn in Wenatchee for years. When he moved to Everett in 1939, the widowed Elizabeth moved nearby to keep taking lessons from him. She lived at the Monte Cristo hotel and played the piano in their ballroom practically every day. Tom, in middle school, would often visit and have breakfast with her at the hotel. "Shredded wheat with butter and honey, no milk" was her perennial order. Nearly every day she would have lunch and/or dinner at Manning's restaurant in Everett. "She lived a regulated life with not a lot of variety, a very simple life" in her older years, Tom said.

Moss Riedinger's twin sister Maud married Charles' brother, Martin Riedinger, and lived next to Moss on Miller Street in Wenatchee (until Moss moved to Seattle). Philip and Madonna Rose were on Miller,

just south of the Riedingers; Eddie and his wife Celia lived on Russell. At age 89, Mema Elizabeth became ill and her family moved her back to Wenatchee to a rest home. She died there on July 8, 1953, survived by two sons, two daughters, 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. By now, those offspring have married and produced children of their own, resulting in a large, extended Rose family appreciative of Conrad's and Elizabeth's legacy.

### ENDNOTES

1. *Wenatchee Daily World*, April 25, 1938.
2. Nora Guiland, "Unpublished Interviews," 1936.
3. Karl Stoffel, "The True Story of One Man and His Wife," *Wenatchee Daily World*, day unknown, 1935.
4. Guiland, op. cit.
5. *World*, April 25, 1938.
6. M J Neal and Associates, architect Mark Seman.

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- "Conrad Rose," cassette audio tape from Heritage Society of the Mid-Columbia, WVMCC collection, 1976.  
Tom Riedinger interview with Chris Rader, April 5, 2018.  
*Wenatchee Daily World*, July 8, 1953.



Courtesy of Tom and Emily Riedinger

*Elizabeth Rose, age 70, emerges with her grandson George Rose from the first United Airlines plane to make a scheduled stop at the Wenatchee airport in 1934. They made the flight from Seattle in 50 minutes.*





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## Coming Up at the Wenatchee Valley Museum



- Members-only Reception for NCW Juried Art Show,**  
Thursday, May 31
- First Friday Reception:** NCW Juried Art Show, Friday, June 1
- Bare Bones Tour of Rose Mansion Renovation:** Saturday,  
June 2
- Methow Native Heritage Tour:** Saturday, June 9
- Super Summer Adventures:** Nine sessions for children,  
Monday-Thursday, June 18-Aug. 23
- First Friday Reception:** Friday, July 6
- Lake Wenatchee Geology Tour:** Saturday, July 14
- First Friday Reception:** Friday, August 3
- Wenatchee to Roslyn Geology Tour:** Saturday, August 11
- Pipe Organ Concert:** Saturday, August 25

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