MIMA PRAIRIE

Pioneer
Cemetery

Thurston County, Washington

Researched and Written by
Linda Howerton
Thurston County Historic Commission Member

Presented on the Occasion of the Rededication
of the
Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery

May 19, 1990
MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY
THURSTON COUNTY WASHINGTON

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1990
Cemeteries are not only for the dead but ironically for the living. Cemeteries remind us of those who have come before. Those who settled the land, built communities and hoped to leave a more secure future for their descendants. As one strolls through a cemetery reading grave marker inscriptions, human history unfolds. Family groups, migrations, religious and fraternal associations, epidemics, disasters and loving tributes can all be seen carved into a tombstone.

The grave marker itself can tell a story. Is it marble, sandstone, granite, cement, zinc, wood? Or none at all. Place your hands on the gravestone. Trace the name and dates with your fingers. Rub moss away from a long forgotten epitaph. Remember your heritage.

L. Howerton
INTRODUCTION

When John Laws and his wife Mary Goen (familiarily known as Polly) came to the Mima Prairie area in the 1850's they took out a Donation Land Claim and described the property thus:

A stake 80 rods West and 10 rods North of the S.E. corner of sect 16, T16, WR 3N thence West 342 rods, thence N. 150 rods, Thence East 342 rods, Thence South 150 rods to place of beginning.

This survey is dated March 20, 1855 and signed by John and Polly. John was born in North Carolina but had resided in Lawrence County, Illinois and was married to Polly there July, 1822.

It wasn't until 1869 that John and Polly deeded the piece of land that is now Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery. We can only guess why this particular piece of land came to serve Mima as a cemetery. It is surmised that this was the original fruit orchard of the Laws. Two ancient pear trees and several equally aged apple trees still dot the cemetery. Although the first burial was Lucelia E. Marcy, it is presumed that one or two Laws children may have been buried in the area with possible wooden markers that have since disintegrated.

This Indenture made the Tenth day of February in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and Sixty nine between John Laws and Polly his wife of the County of Thurston in the Territory of Washington the party of the first part and James Dunlap, J.M. Shotwell, and H.W. Cairnes, County Commissioners, in and for the County of Thurston aforesaid, the parties of the second, hast witnesses: That the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar, lawful money of the United States of America, to them in hand paid by the said parties of the second part, at or before the insealing and delivery of these present; The receipt where of is hereby acknowledged, and for the further consideration and the grant is made in the express condition that the piece herein after described is to be used solely and exclusively for a Cemetery......
There are 45 numbers but John and Mary Law and Mary and Julius Dodge share a grave site making the count 47. The burial site of Estella Trydier is unknown at this time (1990).

KEY: Fenced area □
Concrete curb □
KNOWN INTERMENTS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
AT
MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

NOTE: An asterisk denotes an obituary or pertinent information is available.

BURGER, GLENNY C.          Son of E. & N. Burger,
                             April 24, 1902 - April 25, 1909
BURGER, NORMAN G.          Son of E. & Nora Burger
d. June 17, 1889
BURGER, OCIAI              Daughter of E. & N. Burger
                             Sept. 5, 1896 - May 5, 1909
CLARK, E.S.               Mother, 1876 - 1912
*CLARK, EBER NORMAN      1876 - July 12, 1940
*CROLL, GEORGE W.        Nov. 7, 1868 - Oct 17, 1909
*CROLL, JACOB            Dec. 3, 1828 - June 23, 1886
*CROLL, SAMANTHA PACKWOOD June 10, 1836 - June 22, 1920
*DOANE, MABEL            May 30, 1880 - June 19, 1906
*DODGE, ALAGE            d. Dec. 21, 1866, aged 9 ms.,
                             24 ds.
*DODGE, B.R.             d. March 21, 1871, aged 11 ms.
DODGE, JULIUS            Baby buried with Mary Dodge
*DODGE, MARY E. SHASER   Wife of R.B. Dodge
                             Died Dec. 2, 1876
DURHAM, SARAH E.          No dates
FARQUHAR, WILLIAM A.     1916 - 1979
                             TSGT US ARMY
                             World War II
*GIBSON, NINA WATSON     Born Jul 28, 1896
                             Died Dec 7, 1929
INFANT

KERBER, JOHN W.

KERBER, VERLAND

*LAWS, JOHN
d. Oct. 16, 1871, aged 71 years

*LAWS, MARY GOEN (POLLY)
d. May 25, 1886, aged 93 years.

LAWS, SARAH CATHERINE

LOVING, THAD B.

LOZIER, CORNELIUS W.

MARCY, LUCELIA E.

"MckAY, ANDREW J.

1849 - April 8, 1913

MCKAY, EGBERT H.

1881 - 1902

MCKAY, MARY E.

Wife of A.J. McKay, 1859 - 1893

McPHERSON, HAZEL M.

Born Aug. 7, 1894
Died Jan. 1, 1901
Aged 6 y, 4 m, 5 ds

*PACKWOOD, RHODA B. PROTHERO

Wife of William Packwood
Born May 20, 1818
Died Sept. 9, 1899

*PACKWOOD, WILLIAM

Born Feb. 12, 1313
Died Dec. 11, 1397

*PORTER, IDA C.

Born July 27, 1358
Died April 20, 1917

*SARE, JOHN LUCIAN

Born May 20, 1852
Died Nov. 8, 1901

SCHRIVER, DAISEY J.

Wife of George Schriver
Died Dec. 13, 1901

*SMITH, JAMES L.

Born May 2, 1857
Died Dec. 14, 1914

NO DATES
(Between John and Verland Kerber)

Husband of Ella Kerber
Oct. 18, 1864 - Dec. 14, 1907

aged 5 months

Wife of T.W. Laws
Dec. 3, 1843 - Oct. 23, 1873

June 14, 1894 - Oct. 24, 1973
Washington
S2 US Navy
World War I
SHOTWELL, EMMA DELL  Daughter of  
Mr. and Mrs. George Shotwell  
Sept. 4, 1874 - Nov. 3, 1874

*STOLTENBERG, MATHILDA  Wife of Fred Stoltenberg  
June 29, 1849 - Apr. 30, 1909

*STUBBS, JAMES  
Sept. 8 - 18, 1924

*TAYLOR, BERTHA  
Born Oct. 2, 1875  
Died Dec. 22, 1915

*TRYSLER, ESTELLA M.  
Born Feb. 4, 1871  
Died Feb. 17, 1943

WATSON, DAVID  
Born April 1, 1902  
Died April 21, 1909

WATSON, EZRA J.  
Died August 9, 1901,  
aged 5 years and 4 days

WATSON, IRA  
Born May 5, 1884  
Died May 6, 1905

*WATSON, JEFFERSON B.  
Born Jan. 15, 1855  
Died Apr. 21, 1930

*WATSON, RHODA  
Born Oct. 17, 1864  
Died Jan. 6, 1944

*WILLETT, ALONZO  
Born Jan. 25, 1858  
Died Nov. 17, 1932

WILLETT, BERTHA AUGUST  Daughter of  
Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Willet  
Born July 22, 1895  
Died June 16, 1906

WILLETT, JOSEPH  
Born Oct. 29, 1833  
Died Aug. 20, 1923
KNOWN INTERMENTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
AT
MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY

MARCH, LUCIELIA E. 1864
DODGE, ALAGE 1866
DODGE, B.R. 1871 Mar
LAWS, JOHN 1871 Oct
LAWS, SARA C. 1873
SHOTWELL, EMMA 1874
DODGE, MARY & JULIUS 1876
LAWS, MARY (Polly) 1886 May
CROLL, JACOB 1886 Dec
BURGER, NORMAN 1889
MCKAY, MARY 1893
PACKWOOD, WILLIAM 1897
PACKWOOD, RHODA 1899
McPHerson, Hazel 1901 Jan
WATSON, EZRA 1901 Aug
SARE, JOHN 1901 Nov
SCHRIVER, DAISEY 1901 Dec
MCKAY, EUGEBERT 1902
WATSON, IRA 1906 May
WILLET, BERTHA 1906 Jun 16
DOANE, MABEL 1906 Jun 19
LOZIER, CORNELIUS 1906 Nov
KERBER, JOHN 1907
WATSON, DAVID 1909 Apr 21
BURGER, GLENNY 1909 Apr 25
STOLTENBERG, MATHILDA 1909 Apr 30
BURGER, OCIAI 1909 May 5
CROLL, GEORGE 1909 Oct
CLARK, E.S. 1912
MCKAY, ANDREW 1913
SMITH, JAMES 1914
TAYLOR, BERTHA 1915
PORTER, IDA 1917
CROLL, SAMANTHA 1920
WILLET, JOSEPH 1923
STUBBS, JAMES 1924
GIBSON, NINA 1929
WATSON, JEFFERSON 1930
WILLET, ALONZO 1932
CLARK, EBER 1940
TRYSLER, ESTELLA 1943
WATSON, RHODA 1944
LOVING, THAD 1973
FARQUHAR, WILLIAM 1979

UNKNOWN DATES
INFANT (KERBER)
KERBER, VERLAND
DURHAM, SARAH
WHO'S WHO IN THE MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY

Through research in local newspapers and historical biographies and talking to family members information on most of the interments at Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery was obtained. The obituaries were copied and printed verbatim but it is to be taken in consideration that obituaries printed in newspapers are not always accurate. Beginning alphabetically...

The three Burger children of E. & N. Burger are a sad testament to child mortality at the turn of the century. Obituaries were unobtainable for any of them but Health Officer Kincaid of Thurston County and Dr. Livingstone of Lewis County were quoted in the April 1909 county newspapers that scarlet fever was causing many deaths at this time. This could account for Ociai and Glenny.

It is assumed that E.S. Clark is the first wife of Eber Norman Clark. The following is Mr. Clark's obituary:

Eber Norman Clark, 72, Olympia resident, died in a Tacoma hospital Friday morning. Surviving are his widow, Susan Ann Clark of Olympia; nine children, Mrs. Estella Porter of Timber, Ore., Mrs. Juanita Jacobs of Tacoma, Mrs. Hope Church of Little Rock, Harry of Yakima, Howard of Tumwater, George, Charles and Elford all of Olympia; two brothers Harry of Crosby, Minn., and Lennie of Superior, Wis., and 18 grandchildren. Funeral services were held in the Warnica and Warnica Funeral Home Saturday with burial in a local cemetery. The Rev. Claude Lorimer officiated.

The Sunday Olympian

Jacob and Samantha Packwood Croll were early Thurston County Pioneers. Obituaries were not found for either one but the following biographical sketch from *History of Washington* by Hines, (1893) gives a clear picture of their substantial contribution to the settlement of Thurston county.

Mrs. Samantha Croll, née Packwood is the daughter of William and Rhoda (Prothero) Packwood, well known pioneers of Thurston
county, Washington. Mrs. Croll was born in Monroe county, Missouri, June 10, 1836, and crossed the plains with her parents in 1844, experiencing all of the hardships and some of the greatest suffering incidental to frontier life. In 1854, at the age of eighteen, she was first married to S.N. Woodruff, also a pioneer of Washington. They had three children, all of whom are now living and married, viz.: W.H. Woodruff, Mary E. McKenzie and Ella J. Olson. Mrs. Woodruff obtained a divorce from her first husband, and then conducted her farm in a most able manner, her energy and determination, which were supplemented by an intelligent comprehension of her work. She continued the management of the farm herself until her marriage to Jacob Croll, in 1868, when he began to assist her in its care. Jacob Croll, also a pioneer of Washington, was born in Pennsylvania, December 3, 1828, and was a son of H. and Elizabeth (Schull) Croll, also natives of the Keystone State. In an early day Jacob Croll left the State of his birth and went to the State of Wisconsin, where he followed the lumber business until 1852, when he crossed the plains to Olympia, Washington. Here also he followed lumbering, being employed in a sawmill. In 1853 he took a donation claim of 640 acres, at the same time pursuing his work in the mill at Tumwater. He continued to be thus occupied until the outbreak of the Indian war, when he was a volunteer in the service of his country, most of his service in the war being in eastern Washington, although he participated in one skirmish at Mound Prairie, in the western part of the Territory, doing efficient work in the protection of his adopted home. The remainder of his life was passed in agricultural pursuits, his death occurring in 1886, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. He left a family and many friends to mourn his loss. He was a man of integrity, energy and ability, a good husband, indulgent father and public spirited citizen.

He left a widow and three children: Lena E., now Mrs. Johnson; Lucy B. Croll, who is attending the art school in San Francisco, and gives fair promise of becoming a celebrated artist, as her first work is far beyond some of our popular artists; George Croll is married and lives with his mother, the subject of this sketch. He has one daughter, Dorothy Croll, and thus may we find in this home five generations: Rhoda Lackwood, the great grandmother; Samantha Croll, the grandmother; Mrs. George Croll, the mother;
and the little child, Dorothy Croll, - a circumstance of unusual occurrence.

Mrs. Samantha Croll has a large and finely cultivated farm, which is well stocked, and substantial barns, -the whole breathing an air of thrift and contentment, the typical home of an intelligent and refined woman.

On October 18, 1909 on the front page of the Tacoma Daily News appeared:

Within about three hours after being brought to St. Joseph's hospital yesterday afternoon George W. Croll of Summit, on the Tacoma and Puyallup electric line, expired. He was ill for several days. The storekeeper at Summit said he came into the store frequently to take a drink of water and bathe his head. He became unconscious Saturday evening and was in that condition when a physician was called and ordered him sent to a hospital. He is survived by a widow and five children, two of whom were by a former husband. Croll was 39 years of age and had followed the occupation of a rancher and a logger. It is probable an autopsy will be held to determine the cause of death.

On October 22, page 8, it was stated that George W. Croll died of meningitis.

Miss Mabel Doane of Little Rock, died at that place Tuesday afternoon, after a protracted illness at the age of 27 years. Interment was made yesterday in Mima cemetery.

22 June 1906
Washington Standard, p. 3 (City in Brief)
Mary E. Shaser Dodge was the first wife of Robert Bruce Dodge and the daughter of early Washington pioneers George and Margaret Packwood Shaser. Her white marble gravestone is carved with the symbolic clasped hands showing a feminine nightgown cuff on the left and a more masculine cuff on the right. When brush was cut away from the base of the stone, a small inscription was discovered...Also our son Julius. It is presumed that Mary died from childbirth complications. To the right and left of her are the smaller marble gravestones of two more children, Alage and B.R. Dodge. A small hand holding a rosebud is etched in each marker.

Nothing is known of Sarah E. Durham. Only her name is carved in a wooden marker that has been embedded in cement and she lies with the Clarks.

William A. Farquhar has a grave marker that is provided to service veterans and it is fairly certain that this is an ash burial and the last interment in the cemetery. His marker is located within the fenced plot of the Kerbers.

Nina Gibson is an unmarked grave except for the fact that if one feels carefully along the cement curbing you can trace her name that was drawn in the wet cement with a stick or similar sharp instrument. From family sources (Estella Krussel) Nina was born July 28, 1896 to Rhoda and Jefferson Watson. She was the wife of Charles Gibson and died at Gibson Creek between Oakville and Porter, Grays Harbor County December 7, 1929.
No obituaries were found on John and Mary Goen Laws. The gravemarker tells the story to some extent. This zinc cast marker with a double arch motif was erected in 1905 by a grandson, Edgar Bryan. On the front (East side) it reads:

John Laws  
Born in No. Carolina,  
Died  
Oct. 16, 1871  
Aged 71 years  
Mary Goen  
Wife of John Laws  
Died  
May 25, 1886  
Aged 93 years

One notices right away that John was born in 1800 but it takes awhile to realize that Mary (better known as Polly) was born in 1793. On the back of the marker:

Their Combined ages - over four score years,  
Ended in Peace and without any fears.  
Of the occult hereafter - for good or bad,  
Although their career was sometimes sad.  
They’re resting from toils, pains and strife,  
After a long and useful life.

Left Ill. for Vancouver, 1852,  
later located at Olympia, Wash., and then on the Donation Claim, where their remains now lie.

Nothing is known of Sarah Catherine Laws except what is carved on her obelisk gravestone.

Thad Loving is a probable ash burial and is in the Kerber enclosure as is Mr. Farquhar. He too has a bronze veterans service marker.

The gravestone for Cornelius Lozier is a large single leaf motif with the statistics etched within the leaf borders. No information on this young man. His marker stands alone at the southwest corner of the Kerber enclosure.
Lucelia E. Marcy was the first known burial in the southeast corner of the cemetery. She was the daughter of W.C. and H.E. Marcy. The Marcy’s lived a distance down the Black River toward Mud Bay. It is suspected that the Laws may have had a child or two buried in this old orchard area and when Lucelia died John Laws may have conceived the idea of setting aside this parcel of land to be used as a cemetery. Alage Dodge was the second child to be buried here in 1866 and John and Mary Laws formerly deeded the property to Thurston County in 1869 for the expressed purpose of a cemetery.

The McKay's look like a father, mother, son group judging by the dates. Egbert is 21 years old at death and Mary has wife of A.J. McKay inscribed on her gravestone. Andrew McKay’s obituary is as follows:

Andrew J. McKay, a trapper, died at St. Peter’s hospital yesterday morning after a two week’s confinement there. His home was at Little Rock, to which place his body will be taken for interment in Mima cemetery, with arrangements in charge of Coroner H.N. Sticklin.
9 April 1913, Front Page
Morning Olympian

Nothing is known of six year old Hazel McPherson.

William "Uncle Billie" Packwood almost became a legend in his own time. He was a true "Mountainman" as we envision Daniel Boone and Jim Bridger. The Packwoods were residing in Platte county, Missouri when they decided to head for Oregon in April of 1844. They arrived in Yamhill county, Oregon in the fall of that year and resided there for two years before coming to a donation land claim on the Nisqually Flats in 1847. The George Shasers and James McAllisters were their nearest neighbors.

Packwood joined the "Forty-niners" in the race for California gold. He may have taken his family - no one knows for sure. But by 1851 he had returned from the gold fields and according to family legend he had a cigar box full of gold. In 1852 he petitioned the Thurston County Commissioners for the right to operate a ferry across the Nisqually River. His petition was granted and beside the ferry he established a small store. Also in that same year he petitioned the Commissioners to establish a school district between Olympia and Steilacoom and in September Miss Elizabeth White began the first school in Thurston county in a bedroom of the Packwood home.

Uncle Billie spent the last 28 years of his life prospecting for minerals and coal. Rhoda, his wife, kept the home fires burning while he wandered the Cascade Mountains and it wasn’t until later in her life that she resided with her daughter Samantha Croll while Billie worked his coal mine located near Tenino. It was on one of his visits to his daughter’s home that he died.
The following is the obituary of William Packwood:

DEATH OF A PIONEER.

Information was received in this city Tuesday, of the sudden death of the pioneer and pathfinder, Wm. Packwood. He died at his daughter’s home on Mima Prairie, at the age of 84 years. Mr. Packwood crossed the plains in 1844, and settled in this county three years afterward, rounding out a complete half century of continuous residence in Thurston county, with the exception of a short residence in California, during the gold excitement of ’49 and in Snohomish county a couple of years later on. The deceased has been a prominent factor in our local history. He took an active part in the Indian war of 1855-56, serving as a Captain in the volunteer service. Most of his time has been devoted to prospecting, and probably nobody knew the topography of the mountain ranges better than he. One of the principal names of the Cascade Range* bears his name. His death leaves another wide gap in the rapidly thinning ranks of the early pioneers.

Mr. Packwood was born in Indiana, where he married in 1834 Esther Brothers, lately deceased.** His family homestead for many years consisted of 320 acres on Nisqually flats. In the fall of 1871 Mr. Packwood located on the farm two and a half miles from Centralia on the Skookumchuck where he lived eight years. He finally located on a coal claim near Tenino, to the development of which he devoted the later years of his life.

Mr. Packwood enjoyed the esteem of all who knew him. The funeral rites took place at home of his daughter, where he died on Mima prairie, Wednesday afternoon.

17 Dec 1897
Washington Standard, p. 3

*Geographical names are Packwood Pass, Packwood Saddle, Packwood Glacier, Packwood Coal Field, Packwood Lake, Packwood Creek and last but not least the eastern Lewis County town of Packwood.

**Packwood was born in Virginia. At six years old his father moved the family to Indiana and later in 1834 to Missouri. This marriage to a Esther Brothers is information that has never been noted in any historical account of Packwood. He was married to Rhoda Bell Prothero and she accompanied him with four children to the Oregon Territory in 1844 and outlived him by two years. She is buried beside him at Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery.
The gravestone of **Ida C. Porter** was completely tipped into the dirt and covered by blackberry briars. When a 1970 survey was done on the cemetery this single gravestone was missed. Obituary is as follows:

The funeral of I.A. [sic] Porter was held at the church Sunday afternoon, Rev. A. Self officiating. Mrs. Porter was a pioneer of this county and state, and was well beloved by all. The family has the heartfelt sympathy of their many friends.

27 Apr 1917, p. 3 (Gate)
Washington Standard

In regard to **John Lucian Sare**, a small item appeared in the Centralia News- Examiner in "Little Rock Items" on November 15, 1901, page 2 - Mr. Sares of this place passed away last Saturday. Interment took place in the Mima cemetery on Monday.

Mr. Sare has one of the largest pieces of granite to mark his last resting spot.

All that is known about **Daisey J. Schriver** is what is written on her stone - wife of George Schriver.

**James L. Smith**'s gravestone is located with the Clarks but outside their curbing. His obituary reads:

Bright's disease caused the death Monday night of James L. Smith, 67 years old, at the family home at Little Rock, funeral services being held Wednesday afternoon at the Methodist Church of that city, Rev. Mr. Steele of Centralia officiating. Mr. Smith was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and was a member of the Tenino A.O.U.W. He is survived by the widow and six children, Walter F., Lloyd, Hazel and Ora Smith and Mrs. Avis B. Dooley of Little Rock, and Alex Eugene Smith of Hoquiam.

18 Dec 1914, p. 4
Washington Standard

**Emma Dell Shotwell** was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Shotwell, early pioneers of this area. She lived two months and her little gravestone is north of the Marcy stone in the front row of the cemetery. She was the fifth known burial but due to some depressions between Emma and Lucelia it is suspected that one or two interments go unmarked.
Mathilda Stoltenberg was the wife of Fred Stoltenberg. Her obituary:

Mrs. Stattenberg [sic], of Gate, died yesterday of neuralgia of the heart. She was born in Germany sixty years ago. She was an unusual faithful wife and mother and leaves beside her husband and son, Henry Birkholdz by a former marriage and a step-son, Peter Stattenberg[sic], eleven years old, a large circle of friends in and around Gate, friends secured in the five years of her residence there by her genial, pleasant manner and friendliness. The funeral will be held at the Union Chapel in Gate tomorrow at one o’clock, Pastor Black officiating.

1 May 1909, front page
Centralia Chronicle

James Stubbs is a 10 day old baby that lies within the Watson/Willett fenced area. The Washington Death Index indicates that he was a Junior and died in Grays Harbor county.

Bertha Taylor’s grave lies within the Watson/Willett fenced area and her obituary is as follows:

Mrs. Bertha Taylor, aged 40 years, died yesterday at St. Peters hospital. She had been a resident of Gate City for the last four years, where the funeral services will be held tomorrow at 2 o’clock in charge of McClintin. Surviving are the husband, C.L. Taylor, and four sisters, Mrs. Ida Irskine, Gate; Mrs. Della Hodge, Gate; Mrs. Mary Newton, Little Rock, and Mrs. Ira Bates, Little Rock.

24 Dec 1915
Morning Olympia, p. 4

Estella M. Trysler is a mystery. In the 1970 survey of Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery she was listed but as of this date she is not to be found. From a family source (Estella Krussel) it is known that Mrs. Trysler was not moved from this cemetery. She had a mortuary metal marker on her interment site and this has since been lost. Her husband, John (Jack) Trysler, is buried in the Masonic Cemetery, Tumwater. Her obituary:
Funeral services for Mrs. Estella M. Trysler, who died in the family home in Gate Wednesday morning, will be held in the Gate Community church, Monday, starting at 1 o'clock. Burial will take place at Mima Cemetery. Mrs. Trysler was 72 years of age. She had lived in Gate for the last 17 years. She was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Survivors are the widower, John; three sons by a former marriage, John, George and LaVerne Hodges, all of Hoquiam, four daughters, Mrs. Mary Scott of Olympia; Mrs. Emily Sibley, Mrs. Iva Gates and Mrs. Esther Johnson, all living in Wisconsin. Mills and Mills are in charge of the services.

19 Feb 1943
The Daily Olympian, p. 8

David, Ezra and Ira Watson are all buried in the Watson/Willett fenced area.

Small cement slabs with the statistics for Jeff and Rhoda Watson were found buried in the dirt of their individually curbed graves.

Jefferson B. Watson's obituary:

Jefferson B. Watson, aged 75, a resident of Thurston county for 30 years, died late yesterday at his home on Route 1, Oakville, following a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, Rhoda; two sons, A.J. and M.C. Watson, both of Oakville, and three daughters, Mrs. Ida Erskine, Rochester; Mrs. Ina Bates, Olympia, and Mrs. Inez Brown, Rochester. A sister, Mrs. Carrie Willett, resides at Gate, and a brother in Minnesota. There are also 20 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Mr. Watson's body was brought here and is at the Fissel and Reynolds funeral home.

22 Apr 1930, Front Page
The Centralia Chronicle
On April 24, 1930, page five, The Morning Olympian had this to say about Mr. Watson: J.R. Watson died Monday. Jeff had lived in this vicinity for a long time. Was not a man of letters, but a good, kind father, a splendid neighbor and as honest as they make 'em. He will be missed by not only his family but everyone.

Rhoda Watson's obituary:

Mrs. Rhoda Watson, 79, passed away Wednesday in a Centralia nursing home. Born in New York state Oct. 17, 1864, she resided at Gate 37 years before coming to Centralia 18 months ago. She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Inez Brown, route 1, Rochester; son, Ashton, route 3, Centralia; two stepdaughters, Mrs. Ida Erskine, route 1, Rochester, and Mrs. Iva Bates, Olympia; 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Graveside funeral services under direction of the Sticklin mortuary will be held Friday at 10:30 a.m. at the Mima cemetery near Little Rock. The Rev. Erle Howell will officiate.
6 Jan 1944, Front Page
The Centralia Chronicle

Alonzo Willett's obituary.

Nathan Alonzo Willett, 84, a resident of Gate City, more than 32 years, died at the family home Thursday noon. Mr. Willett was born in the state of New York, Jan. 25, 1848.* At the age of 32 he was married to Miss Carrie Watson. Shortly after their marriage they moved to Wisconsin and from there they came to Gate City, 32 years ago.

From a family of 11 children there are surviving besides the widow two sons, John of Alaska, and Forest of Gate; three daughters, Mrs. May Nelson of Oregon; Mrs. Nora Swigart, Olympia, and Mrs. Clara Hodges, Gate City; a sister Mrs. James Cram also of Gate City. There are 23 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

The body is at the Mills parlors and funeral services will be held at 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Community church at Gate City with interment in the Mima cemetery.

19 Nov 1932
Morning Olympia, p. 3

Note: Year of birth should be 1858 per family source Estella Krussel.

Bertha August Willett we know is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Willett because it states the fact on her gravemarker.

Joseph Willett is the father of Alonzo Willett. No obituary was found.
The information that follows was gathered in 1970 and a copy was obtained from the Olympia Public Library, Genealogy section. It was very helpful in starting the research for this 1990 publication. This is being included in this publication on the premise that all information should be available on a project of this nature.

Carolyn Prichard found evidence of 45 burials but only listed 39 that could be counted in the following list. The 1990 survey lists six new names. The general concensus is that there are 47 known burials and three to four suspected unmarked interments.

TOMBSTONES OF THE PAST

MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY, THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

To locate this well hidden cemetery, drive to Little Rock (apprx 8 miles SSW of Tumwater), where at this time (1970) one will find a major intersection with roads leading to Tumwater (N), Maytown (E), Rochester (S) and Gate (W). Take the road to Gate and from the point in Little Rock where one will find a large green multiple-listing state highway directional sign, RR tracks a few yards to the west, drive 3.4 miles. At this point on the left (south) there is currently a sign announcing the Flying W Ranch and to the right is the beginning of the Weyerhaeuser Tree Farm. There is a dirt road (actually two tire tracks with grass growing between them) which goes north and runs parallel to the tree farm boundary. Turn down this lane and drive about .2 of a mile to what appears from the road to be an "oasis" of trees and underbrush. Within this tangle of trees, moss, briars and assorted wildflowers will be found the burials listed below. Not until one gets into this grove will the burials be visible so do not expect to see them from the roadway, or trail.

I found evidence of 45 burials and only 6 of them completely unreadable. Strangely enough, there was no evidence of wooden markers which were used frequently in the era of this burial ground. The earliest burial was in 1864 and the most recent seems to have been 1943, with the majority of the burials in the 1800's and the first decade of the 1900's.

Copied April 15, 1970, by
Mrs. Paul D. Prichard
203 W. Chenault Ave.
Hoquiam, Washington 98550

MARCY: Lucelia E., daughter of W.C. & H.E. Marcy, died May 8, 1864, aged 10 years, 6 months and 4 days
PACKWOOD - PROTHERO: Rhoda B. Prothero, wife of Wm. Packwood, born May 20, 1818 -- died September 9, 1899
PACKWOOD: William, born Feb. 12, 1813 -- died Dec. 11, 1897
CROLL: Jacob, born Dec. 3, 1828 -- died June 23, 1886, age 57 y,
6 m, 20 d
Samantha, born June 10, 1836 -- died June 22, 1920
George W., born Nov. 7, 1868 -- died Oct 17, 1909

McKay: Egbert H., 1881 -- 1902
Mary E., wife of A.J. McKay, 1859 -- 1893
Andrew J., 1849 -- 1923

Shotwell: Emma Dell, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. George Shotwell
Sept 4, 1874 -- Nov. 3, 1874

Doane: Mabel, born May 30, 1880 -- died June 19, 1906
Sare: John Lucian, born May 20, 1852 -- died Nov. 8, 1901
Dodge: Mary E., wife of (R.B.) Dodge, d. Dec. 2, 1876, aged 28 years
(B.R.), d. March 21, 1871, aged 11 ms.
Alage (Alace), d. Dec. 21, 1866, aged 9 ms., 24 ds.

Same marker -- front side

Laws - Goen: Mary Goen, wife of John Laws, died May 25, 1886, aged
93 years. "Crossed the Western Plains to Oregon in
1852, from Lawrence Co. Ill."

Laws: John, born in No. Carolina, died in Washington, Oct. 16,
1871, aged 71 years. "Crossed the Western Plains to Oregon
in 1852, from Lawrence County, Illinois."

Back side of marker...
On the left are words of eulogy and on the right, "Left Ill.
for Vancouver, 1852; later located at Olympia, Wash., and
then on the Donation Claim, where their remains now lie.
This monument erected by their grand-son, Edgar Bryan, in
1905." (note: Edgar Bryan is undoubtedly the son of Eli and
Nancy (Laws) Bryan)

Laws: Sarah Catherine, wife of T.W. Laws, Mother,
born Dec. 3, 1843 -- died Oct. 23, 1873

Trysler: Estella M., born Feb. 4, 1871 -- died Feb. 17, 1943
Stoltenberg: Mathilda, wife of Fred Stoltenberg, June 29, 1849 --
Apr. 30, 1909

Clark: E.S., Mother, 1876 -- 1912
Next is a very unclear and torn temporary mortuary marker)
(Clark): EberN (or Eber N.), died July ____, 19(40), ae 72 y, 11 m,
1 d (the last two letters are not clear - it could be Clark)

Smith: James L., born May 2, 1857 -- died Dec. 14, 1914
Schriver: Daisey J., wife of George Schrifer, died Dec. 13, 1901 (no
age shown)

McPherson: Hazel M., born Aug. 7, 1894 -- died Jan. 1, 1901, aged
6 y, 4 m, 5 ds

Lozier: Cornelius W., born May 26, 188(3) -- died Nov. 8, 1906

Kerber: Verland, aged 5 months
Infant (no name or date, is between two Kerber burials)

Kerber: John W., husband of Ella Kerber, Oct. 18, 1864 -- Dec. 14,
1907

Burger: Glenny C., son of E.&N. Burger, Sept. 5, 1896 -- Apr. 25,
1909
Ociai, daughter of E.&N. Burger, Sept. 5, 1896 -- May 5,
1909

(toppled stone with inscription portion missing - near
other Burgers)

The remaining burials are all within a fenced plot and all, except
one, seem to have the surnames WILLET or WATSON. There are two
upright, well constructed markers and the remainder are flat,
rectangular markers of very rough cement with the information
apparently scratched on by hand with a stick or similar instrument.
These later markers are worn, chipped, broken and extremely unclear.

STU_S: Baby Stubs (Studs) Sept. 8 - 18, 1924
____: (2 temporary mortuary markers with the insert missing)
WILLET: Bertha August, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alonzo Willett
born July 22, 1895 -- died June 16, 1906
Joseph (Willett), Oct. 29, 1(833) -- Aug. 20, 192_
WATSON: David (Watson) ____,(1902) -- Nov. (27), 193_
Ezra J. ____ died August 9, 1901, aged 5 years and 4 days
WILLET: Alonzo, Jan. 24, ____ -- Nov. (17), 19(4)
(3 burials, one completely unmarked and two with unreadable
markers)
WATSON: Rhoda, ____186 -- Jan. __, 19(4)
WATSON: Jefferson B., Jan 15, 1855 -- Apr. 21, 1933 (fairly clear)
aged 75y, em, ?d
THE CLEANUP OF MIMA PRAIRIE PIONEER CEMETERY

APRIL 1989 - APRIL 1990

It had come to the attention of the Thurston County Commissioners that the Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery was a piece of historical land that needed attention. For years the surrounding communities would attempt to clean the cemetery but the effort in this western Washington country can sometimes be daunting. The Commissioners mandated the Thurston County Historic Commission to ascertain if a complete restoration could be accomplished.

Linda Howerton was appointed chairman of this project and immediately invited the remaining Historic Commission members to view this site and give recommendations. In June of 1988 the Historic Commission met at Maytown and car caravanned to the cemetery. The northeast end of the cemetery was open to entrance but beyond a few hundred feet the trail between the hidden stones were in some cases impassable. This 2.28 acre of land had become so intangled with vegetation and fallen trees that a major undertaking far bigger than a Scout Group could handle would have to be organized.

On March 29, 1989 Linda Howerton met with Jim Bryan the Production Manager for Weyerhaeuser. Weyerhaeuser agreed to maintain the cemetery after the cleanup and this agreement was signed by the Thurston County Commissioners. If the task of maintaining the cemetery proves to be too much for Weyerhaeuser, they will give the county a one year notice and the county will place the cemetery in either County Parks or a cemetery district.

At this time Tom Stevens from Weyerhaeuser and Linda Howerton spent a rainy morning crawling through blackberry briars and ferns and snowberry bushes flagging as many hidden gravemarkers that could be found.

On April 17, 1989 a meeting was held with members of the surrounding communities of Rochester, Gate and Littlerock. Ten people showed interest in this project at this first meeting held in the Littlerock Fire Station. They were Daren Johnson, Wes Newby, Violet Newby, Betty Hedges, Andrew Partridge, Noelle Nordstrom, Morris Dodge, Susan Goff, Ilone McDuff and Linda Howerton.

Under an overcast sky on April 22, the volunteers met at Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery and began the removal of briars, vines, snowberry and miscellaneous vegetation that contributed to the overgrown state of this cemetery. A patch of blackberry briars measuring approximately 20 feet by 100
feet was the largest obstacle to overcome. This was located at the southeast corner. Daren Johnson attacked this area with a heavy duty brushcutter. It was at this point that Ida C. Porter’s gravemarker was discovered buried under the blackberries with the top of the marker off from its base and lying in the dirt.

After a three or four hour work session with chain saws, weed whackers and plain muscle power, the outline of burials could be seen. There are five definite rows of interspersed interments. There are three fenced enclosures and one cement curbed area as shown on the plot map.

Every Saturday from April 29 to May 20 small work parties met at the cemetery and more clearing would be accomplished. In particular evidence utilizing their chain saws were Morris Dodge and Jack Howerton. Don DuBois (a Packwood descendant) from Vancouver lent his muscle power to the endeavor also. Ancient apple and pear trees were freed from snowberry. Lilacs, roses, and daffodils were discovered. Periwinkle was cut away from lowlying baby gravestones. Four pine trees, that had been planted about twelve years ago by a Boy Scout group, were freed from wild cucumber. A giant ant hill was discovered in an area that was completely covered by vegetation. Serviceberry, cascara and Indian plum were cut down. The largest serviceberries were kept in and around the cemetery for natural land-scaping purposes. A very large stand of wild cherry (Prunus emarginata) dominated the center of the cemetery and with the help of Tim Crockett of Weyerhaeuser, these were flagged and thinned for a better mowing pattern. These trees are on the average of ten inches in diameter and sixty feet tall. There are two very large and old Douglas fir trees in the northwest quadrant of the cemetery. One has a "hanging" limb on the south side of its trunk.

As volunteer labor slowly disappeared, the idea of using Cedar Creek inmates for the final brushing out was conceived. Linda Howerton met with Larry Scott from Cedar Creek Correctional Center, Department of Natural Resources and Jim Bryan, Tom Stevens and Tim Crockett, Weyerhaeuser on May 21st in the Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery. After an hour of stumping around and making observations regarding the feasibility of Cedar Creek inmates coming to this site with the intent of pulling brush to the front for burning and other cleanup maneuvers, it was agreed that the matter would be taken under consideration by DNR.

Not until July 12th did a nine man Cedar Creek crew come to the cemetery with their equipment but once this team started and gave it about a seven hour day things started happening. At one point eight-teen men were in the cemetery with their chainsaws and adzes to hoe out the snowberry
roots. Winches were used to pull out stumps and again muscle power was used to pile all at the front of the cemetery and burned. At this time the giant ant hill was destroyed.

Linda Howerton met with Bruce and Bill Craig of Centralia Monument Company and got a quick lesson on the use of epoxy to reset the gravestones. On the last day that the Cedar Creek crew worked in the cemetery, two men helped with the resetting and leveling of stones. It was a nice warm day and even though it took about six hours the endeavor paid off and the stones are now secure and straight.

Jack Charter, a professional faller, with the help of Jack Howerton took down four rotten cherry trees that were leaning toward the house located to the south of the cemetery. Mr. Charter's charge: One rhubarb pie. Paid in full.

The next major task was leveling the open spaces of the cemetery and the Thurston County Historic Commission allowed the monies to hire a bulldozer. This was done and Dan Beedle did a fine job without disturbing the gravestones.

The cemetery rested during the winter of 1989-90 and in April of 1990 Thurston County Parks placed a sign at the southeast corner and Olympic Precast worked three hours with three men to place a cement picnic table donated by Alma and Bill Greenwood. This is located at the northeast corner.

A rededication of the Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery was held

May 19, 1990.
ADDENDUM

At the rededication ceremony on May 19, 1990, someone remembered that a person had been buried in the extreme southwest corner beyond the grave of Sarah Catherine Laws. Indeed, after pulling away brush, a metal mortuary marker could be seen but the name was faded and could not be read. Jack Howerton noticed an edge of cement poking through debris and dirt and as he scraped this away, a homemade marker appeared with the name Estella Trysler and her birth and death dates. This was a fitting discovery for a well attended event at the Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery.
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ARTICLES


NEWSPAPERS

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The Daily Olympian
The Morning Olympian
The Washington Standard (Olympia)

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Morris Dodge
Estella Krussel
Dan McCaughan
Carolyn Prichard
Harlan Smith

FUNERAL HOMES

Mills & Mills, Olympia, WA
Sticklin Funeral Chapel, Centralia, WA
Thanks is extended to the many people that made the restoration of Mima Prairie Pioneer Cemetery possible:

Thurston County Commissioners
Les Eldridge
Diane Oberquelle
George Barner

Historic Commission Staff
Shanra Stevenson
Kathy McCormick

Cedar Creek/DNR
Larry Scott
Ken Wilson
And Inmates

Weyerhaeuser
Jim Bryan
Tom Stevens
Tim Crockett

Olympic Precast
Alma Greenwood
Bill Greenwood, Sr.
Bill Greenwood, Jr.
Don Detzler

Centralia Monument Company
Bruce Craig
Bill Craig

Thurston County Parks
Michael Welter
Curtis McHendry

VOLUNTEERS
Jack Charter
Morris Dodge
Don DuBois
Daren Johnson
Fayetta Johnson
Susan Goff

Violet Newby
Wesley Newby
Noelle Nordstrom
Andrew Partridge
Leslie Schilt

And last but not least

Jack Howerton
Their combined feet
over four score years
Lived in peace and without
any years
of the good old days.

This monument stands
for them and their
grand-son
Edgar Bryan
in 1905.