

## THE STEEN FAMILY

In 1868, William Milton and Narvesta Steen, with the help of a hired boy, drove 500 sheep from Salem Oregon across the Cascade Mountains to Walla Walla in search of a home and fortune. They selected a location on Dry Creek where there was summer water for livestock, and a promising strip of land between the creek and the hills that appeared to be suitable for farming. The property with a log cabin on it was purchased in 1867 from "Billie" Winn, and the start of the Steen ranches was made. The sheep were winter-pastured on the bunch grass hills between Dry Creek and Pine Creek and taken to Mountain Meadows in the summer. This operation continued until someone found that wheat could be raised on the dry hills. Then the sheep were sold and wheat raising became the major farm enterprise. A spur line railroad was built to Blue Mountain Station from Walla Walla in 1880. A stage station was set up at the end of the rails, and much wheat was delivered by team and wagon to be loaded and shipped.

Will Steen recalls seeing one 16-mule and 4-wagon outfit coming from beyond Weston.

William M. and Narvesta were the parents of seven children: Frank B., Claude W., William H., Jessie May (Adam Rothrock), Ralph C., and twins Grant G. and Grace G. (Hugh Murray). To the Murray's six children were born: Howard, Mildred, Martha, Donald and Marion and Bob . William H. Steen married Beryl Barnes. Their two children were Eva Steen Shannon and Lowell Steen.

*(Dec. 22, 2006 - Thanks for the information on your site. There is one error regarding the offspring of William M. and Narvesta Steen: Grant and Grace were their twins. The children of Hugh Murray and Grace Steen were all single births. Paula Barak Peek (daughter of Martha Murray Barak.)*

*Thank you for the correction. Webmaster.*

**Early History of the Milton-Freewater Area**

Published by the Valley Herald, Inc.

Milton-Freewater, Oregon

1962