

AN HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY
THE DESCENDANTS OF
THOMAS F. BERRY
1819 - 1866
and
THE DESCENDANTS OF
IRA WARD BERRY
1855 - 1923
By Lawrence W. Berry
October 20, 1960

The following are excerpts from this study.

There is evidence that the Thomas F. Berry family lived in at least four counties in the State of Indiana. These were: Clark, Crawford, Morgan and Shelby.

The ancestral home in Clark County was on the bank of the Ohio River, not too far from Bethlehem, Indiana, at a spot known in the early days as "Berry's Landing". (Martha Jane Berry relates that captains of river boats were known to sing out in the night over a megaphone "Yo Ho, Berry", and when Grandfather Berry replied to this call, he would be asked for needed information for directions, or where to leave supplies at the various river landings.

Two or possibly three of the Berry children were born down river in Crawford County. Louis Philip Berry stated that he was born at Leavonworth, and George T. Berry, in a brief sketch of his life, states, "(he) was born near the city of Indianapolis, on July 17, 1844".

The struggle for survival was hard, and there was never more than just enough food for a bare subsistence. With the restless hope that the soil would be more fertile and living conditions easier, the family moved north to Morgan County.

The farm in Morgan County was approximately 33 miles southwest of the capitol of Indiana, while the farm in Shelby County, where the family next lived, was between 15 and 20 miles southeast of Indianapolis. An I.O.U., dated Nov. 2, 1848, made out to Thomas Berry, gives the post office as Pleasant View, Indiana. This place and date offers a definite time for his being in Shelby County.

Finally comes the first evidence of a settled community life. The entire family joined the Methodist Church in Shelbyville, and there were box suppers and school house debates. (One of the subjects up for debate was: "Resolved, that there is more pleasure in the pursuit of romance than in its attainment.")

The two main reasons for the decision to cross the plains to the Pacific Northwest were economic and religious. Both of these motives entered into the family's prolonged discussions. Always there was the hope for betterment. Seven children had been born, of whom one had died. A complaint known as Ague was enervating some members of the family. (This could more

properly be interpreted as malaria, since the father felt that his children would be better off away from the unhealthy soils and marshes.)

As an added incentive, copies of The Christian Advocate were telling of the need for settlers in the Oregon Territory. The thrilling story of Dr. Marcus Whitman taking wagons all the way to Fort Boise, was repeated from many pulpits. The element of adventure was irresistible and possibly Thomas F. Berry thought in his heart, ". . . I want to live where Marcus Whitman lives . . . I will go where he is."

Two wagons with six children and extra oxen for relief, driven by T.F. Berry and Mr. Dilts, left Shelbyville, Indiana, in April, 1853, and reached Tumwater on Puget Sound, on September 20th of that year.

FINDING A RECORD OF THE JOURNEY

(Perhaps the high point in the preparation of this genealogy was the discovery of the name T.F. Berry in "The Journal of Patterson F. Luark". Until this discovery was made, it was not known whether or not a written record existed of the trip across the plains made by T.F. Berry and his family. All of the quotes taken from this journal are copies from Herndon Smith's book, "Centralia - - The First Fifty Years", published by the Daily Chronicle and F.H. Cole Printing Company, Centralia, Washington.

Much indebtedness is owed to Herndon Smith, the former teacher in the high school at Centralia, Washington, for enlightenment on the statistics of the number of persons traveling over the Oregon Trail, during the season of 1853. Miss Herndon quotes, for instance, from Volume One of the "Luark Journal", dated Thursday, May 19th: "There had already passed on the southern side of the Plat this season (besides what had passed on the north side) and before us, 1360 wagons, 450 head of cattle, 1754 horses, 742 families, 3344 men, 905 women, and 1207 children". This was at Fort Kearney. At north Platte, on June 13, 1853, was written, "Here I learned that 905 wagons had already crossed this season".

Granting that the larger proportion of these wagons turned southwest at Fort Bridger, it would seem that there was almost a steady caravan of wagons and teams on the Oregon Trail throughout the summer of '53.

Following are excerpts from Patterson Luark's journal:

"Tuesday, August 9 - got in company of T.F. Berry and Mrs Dilts today.

"Thursday, August 11 - Eighteen miles today brought us four miles into the Grande Ronde Valley. This is a beautiful valley, partly surrounded by mountains covered with yellow and other pine and fir, and etc.

"Saturday, August 13 - Ten miles today in the mountains and camped on a ridge guarding stock in the valley to the left. There is water and lots of wolves.

"Monday, August 15 - Eight miles again and we emerged again into the open country (Emigrant Hill). Eight miles more and camped on the Umatilla River, here where the road to Walla Walla leads off.

"Tuesday, August 18 - Twenty miles today. Left the river (Umatilla) at the Indian Agency and passed fifteen miles of sandy road to Butler Creek. Good Camp. About sixty wagons on creek tonight.

"Monday, August 29 - Passed the famous Barlows Gate and commenced to ascend the mountains. Here I came very near losing my wagons and mules and myself over a precipice.

"Saturday, September 3 - Traveled one and one-half miles to foot of Black Bone, in climbing of which we left another ox. Working the wheel mules, hitching on two yoke of oxen at hills; and at steep ones, doubling teams. Twelve (miles) thence to brow of Soap Hill, a dangerous place when wet. Took our wagons down by hand. Hundreds of logs lay around towards the foot of this hill, that have been hitched behind wheels of wagons descending. This hill was so slick that the teams could not walk down in the track.

"Wednesday, September 7 - Two miles east of Portland. Here we fed wild hay at 75 cents per hundred until the 12th (Sept.). Glad to rest a little.

Friday, September 9 - Today Berry and Dilts went to Portland with William Cock, Esq., to make arrangement for going to Monticello in a barge of Henry Windsor's. I went to Oregon City on business.

"Monday, September 12 - I sold my ox wagon for 89 dollars. The freight and storage on the same was 30 dollars. After putting our things aboard, the families in care of Dilts, I and Berry returned to stock.

"Tuesday, September 13 - Took our stock out of pasture at Sangs. Cost me 2 dollars. Drove to Switslers, Berry going ahead to make contact for ferriage.

"Friday, September 16 - Traveled twenty miles, swimming stock over Vancouver slough, and stayed in a house on the banks of the Lewis River, leaving stock on opposite side.

"Monday, September 19 - In the afternoon we swam and ferried the cows, and camped opposite Monticello (Longview) and went over and stayed with our families all night.

"Tuesday, September 20 - Started up the Cowlitz River and camped nearly opposite the boat with our families in it.

"Thursday, September 22 - Drove out to Cowlitz Prairie and united our families.

"Sathurday, September 24 - About nine o'clock our goods landed and I found myself in debt for the passage (shipment costs) \$65.

The constant scarcity of money during the trip made it necessary to establish credit. When T.F. Berry ran out of money near the city of Portland, he took his Masonic Apron, which he carried in a metal tube, and looked up certain Brother Masons in that city. From them he received a loan of two hundred dollars. T.F. Berry remained in good standing with the Masons, for there is in extend, paid-up receipts of his membership in the Olympia Lodge of A.F. and A.M..

According to the Luark Journal, that party consisted of the father, Patterson F. Luark, a brother Michael F., a teenage son, Marcellus, and three younger children. Since this party started on the Oregon Trail from St. Joe, Missouri, as did that of Thomas. F. Berry, attention should be called to their approximate time of starting and the huge number of wagons counted on the way west.

The Luark's were in St Joe on April 25, 1853. From that city, they traveled up the left bank of the Missouri River approximately 26 miles, to a crossing called "Wolf River". Here reference is made by Mr. Luark to his use of "Walter's Guide", which emigrants in that day used to refer them to conditions on the road and various watering and feeding stops.

The Oregon Trail was essentially a wagon route paralleling a series of rivers and streams. When the relationship of these various rivers is studied on a topographical map, it will become apparent how dependant the emigrants were on the sources of water supply which the following rivers afforded: the Missouri, Big Blue, Platte, Sweetwater, Big Sandy, Green, Bear, Snake, Boise, Grande Ronde, Umatilla, Columbia, Cowlitz and Des Chutes. These fourteen rivers designated the route of the Oregon Trail.

THE DONATION CLAIM

The granting of land to settlers was based upon an act of Congress, approved September 27, 1850, entitled: "An Act to Create the Office of Surveyor General of the Public Lands in Oregon, and to Make Donations to Settlers of the Said Public Lands".

Study of the records of the former General Land Office, now in the National Archives, reveals that Washington Donation Certificate 178, was issued to Thomas F. Berry, ". . . all in Township 18 north, range 2 west". Thomas F. Berry moved onto his claim on May 1, 1854, and remained until 1864.

In order to properly qualify for two quarter sections of land, he addressed a letter to the Registrar of the Land Office, Olympia, W.T., under the date of February 3, 1861, making the following request:

"Sirs . . . you are requested to divide our donation land claim as follows: give the north half to Martha J. Berry and the south half to Thomas F. Berry. (Signed) Thomas F. Berry". Then an interesting detail is acted in the next signature. Thomas Berry signed his wife's name "Martha J.

Berry", with a "X" under the words, "Her Mark". (This was the first time the author knew that Grandmother Berry could not sign her own name, however, she is remembered to have possessed an ability that far out-shown her inability to write, namely, to quote from the Bible. Louisa Jane Pierce often repeated words which her mother had taught her: "To God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect". Hebrews 12:23.)

Mima Prairie in Thurston County did not have good soil. It was characteristic of these clearing to be practically devoid of trees and generally rippled in a series of hummocks. Even the grass dried out earlier on these prairies than in the nearby woods.

George Waunach, who later settled north of Centralia, has offered a feasible explanation for the early settlers choosing to settle on the poorer prairie land instead of clearing away the forests where the richer soil lay. Mr. Waunach said, "The settlers chose this open land so that they might (more quickly) build log cabins, plow their land and pasture their cattle with the least amount of effort".

Washington's great historian, Edmond Meany, points out that there were so many up and downs in the economy of Washington Territory that business crises were like waves beating upon the seashore. He wrote, "The year 1855, saw the Territory of Washington enshrouded in gloom . . . food was growing scarce, ordinary business was out of the question; starvation, flight or the tomahawk seemed the only alternatives".

INDIAN HOSTILITIES

For ten months, beginning during the fall of 1855 and lasting through the summer if 1856, most of the settlers left their farm homes and moved into the townspeople's homes. The family who befriended the Berry's was that of Mr. Ira Ward of Tumwater. This family literally stretched their small home to take in the eight extra people. Moreover, Mrs. Jane Ward presided as mid-wife during the birth of Ira Ward Berry on October 20, 1855. It was out of gratitude that the baby was named Ira Ward, in honor of his generous "protector".

By trade, Mr. Ward was a tanner. It is probably that he made the harness for many of the settlers' teams of horses and oxen. Mr. Ward is better remembered, however, for building the blockhouse at Tumwater, located near the old Ward Mill, on the site of the present city hall.

There were numerous Indian scares. (Mrs. Jane Ward later recalled taking a lantern whenever there was some fresh alarm that Indians were near and climbing up the path to the safety of the blockhouse.) Basically, the settlers' worries and fears stemmed from the overwhelming superiority of number. There were not over three hundred and fifty white families in the scattered communities west of the Cascades and north of the Columbia, as against five thousand Indians occupying the shores of Puget Sound at that time.

As an indirect result of these Indian hostilities of 1855-1856, both Fort Walla Walla and Fort Boise were temporarily abandoned. This created a vacuum, so to speak, into which more settlers were to pour, both as adventurers and home seekers. Ultimately, it was this balance of population which tipped the scales in favor of U.S. control of these territories.

HON. T.F. BERRY REPRESENTATIVE 1860

Excerpt:

In the above census, Thomas listed himself as a surveyor. Probably the first surveying which was done in Thurston County was the "viewing of roads", or making preliminary surveys along already established trails. Such trails led from Cowlitz Landing to Budd's Inlet on Puget Sound, from Grand Mound to Gray's Harbor, and later, from Steilacum north to Puyallup.

Governor Isaac Stevens, being himself a surveyor, developed a company of 243 men in various surveying parties. T.F. Berry was one of these men, doing considerable work in Lewis County.

The only specific mention of Thomas Berry is the signature of the surveyor, given simply as "Berry". For years there was in the family, an ivory scale transposing feet to tenths - or the meter system. This scale was lost in a fire in 1935, at Lind, Wash.)

Thomas F. Berry served as Representative in the eighth Legislative Assembly of Washington Territory in 1860. The legislature, which met in 1860, was the first to take an interest in settling up county organizations east of the Cascade Mountains. The eastern boundary of Washington Territory was not clearly established, and due the short-sightedness on the part of the Legislatures, northern Idaho was taken from Spokane County two years later.

TO WALLA WALLA COUNTY 1864

In 1864, Thomas F. Berry moved his large family from the Donation Claim on Mima Prairie, Thurston County, to Walla Walla County. This farm was located one-half mile west, and three and one-half miles south of the Whitman Mission site. At that time, the land was being farmed by Rev. Cushing Eels.

In the words of Mrs. Louisa J. Pierce, daughter of T.F. Berry, "No one had better friends than they (Cushing Eels) were to us."

In 1929, Marion S. Berry wrote to the President of Whitman College, Walla Walla, offering a book given to Mrs. Thomas F. Berry in 1867, by Rev. Cushing Eels. The book had been given to him (Cushing Eels) by Dr. Marcus Whitman, and was believed to be the only book possessed by Dr. Whitman. This book had been rescued after the massacre of 1847. The college issued a letter of appreciation to the Berry family for the gift of this historic book.

During their stay at this farm, tragedy struck suddenly. Heman S. Berry, a boy of fourteen, was starting to hitch up a team of horses when his arm became entangled in a halter and the team started to run. The mother looked out the window in time to see her son being thrown in the air and forcibly slapped to the ground as the team ran away. Heman died on March 19, 1865.

One year later, typhoid fever was the cause of the death of Thomas F. Berry. He was forty-seven years old at the time of his passing. No other circumstances are known. He was originally buried in a small cemetery located somewhere near the Whitman Mission; however, twenty years after his interment, his coffin was exhumed by his son Ira and other men, and moved to the cemetery at Milton, Oregon.

THE DESCENDANTS OF IRA WARD BERRY

From this point on, the author wishes to confine himself to a biographical consideration of his own parents, Mr. And Mrs. Ira Ward Berry. The dates and places of their residences, the circumstances influencing their decisions, and their contracting qualities of character are defined for a better understanding of their lives.

"DOC" BAKER'S RAILROAD

During his early twenties, Ira Berry lived in Walla Walla, and worked for "Doc" Baker on his famous railroad, "The Walla Walla and Columbia R.R.". When asked what his duties were, Ira replied, "I did everything from walking the tracks to acting as yard master." He also told of the time he took a 2x2 stick to use as leverage on the hand brakes and climbed on top of a loaded freight care from where he released the brakes and let the freight car roll downhill all the way to College Place without benefit of a switch engine. He walked back.

MARRIAGE TO JENNIE LAURA WRIGHT

The marriage certificate bound in the family Bible has in it a notation in the handwriting of Jennie L. Berry which reads: "Ira Ward Berry of Milton, Oregon and Jennie Laura Wright were united in Holy Matrimony at her parents' home, in Milton, on the sixteenth day of October, 1883, in the presence of 50 friends and relatives. Rev. William Pruett, Minister. George Young and Nathan Pierce, witnesses."

(In 1956, at the age of 89, Jennie L. Berry was able to name almost forty of those who were present that night. But the one thing which she remembered best was the roast turkey and the dining room table stacked high with large quantities of home-made food.)

THE WRIGHT FAMILY JOURNEYED BY COVERED WAGON

Jennie Laura Wright, with her family, crossed the country from Carthage, Missouri, to Weston, Oregon, in a covered wagon during 1879. This journey was recorded in a journal kept by Jennie's mother, and which is now in the University of Washington Library, listed under Northwest Americana. (The original map which supplemented the Wright Journal is now in the possession of the author's son, Lawrence, who lives in Phoenix, Arizona.)

THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM T. WRIGHT

In telling about their journey West, Mrs. Wright relates some of the hardships faced by the pioneers. On one occasion, Mr. Wright and a companion were caught out in a blizzard. Since he felt his companion needed a coat worse than he did, he gave the other man his coat. Mrs. Wright then tied a piece of carpet over her husband's head and shoulders so that hail stones would not bruise him.

When occasion demanded, while crossing the plains, the pioneers accomplished prodigious feats of endurance. Very few of them, however, looked upon themselves as heroes. They met emergencies without complaint or later regret.

These men, with determination and will-power, went about their duties not realizing that people in succeeding generations would attribute to them, virtues of courage and fortitude. Blind to their own greatness, they simply went ahead and did what was expected, without self-adulation or self-glory.

LIFE IN MILTON, OREGON - 1883

Some interesting sidelights on what life was like in Milton, Oregon, in 1883, are seen in some excerpts taken from a letter from Congressman Walter M. Pierce. In this letter, dated July 24, 1941, the former Governor of Oregon and senior Congressman, wrote: "...When I went to Milton, it was a little village with three saloons, two blacksmith shops, and two stores. It had two regular preachers and two teachers.."

"In September of '83, I commenced teaching school at Milton. I lived with your grandmother (Martha J. Berry). She was a widow lady, not keeping boarders, but she took me in as an accommodation. In the home were Charles and Lee Berry."

Congressman Pierce then made this unsolicited observation: "Your grandmother was a deeply religious woman, one of those fine pioneer women, and your uncles were the best of men."

FOUR CHILDREN BORN IN MILTON

At the time of their marriage, there was eleven years difference between the ages of Ira W. Berry and his youthful wife, Jennie. He was 28, lacking four days, and she was 17.

Jennie L. Berry had passed her nineteenth birthday by one month when her first child was born on Christmas morning, 1885. This child was named for his paternal and maternal grandfathers, Thomas William Berry. This baby's temperament grew to be affable, gracious and subdued. A capable man both in his work and as a leader, Thomas Berry had many natural abilities untried in the communities where he lived. Given the opportunity to develop these abilities, Thomas Berry would have been an honored man.

The second child, Harry Wright Berry, was born January 4, 1888. He inherited some of the fire and aggressiveness of the Wright ancestors. Along with his independent quality, Harry Berry possessed a brilliant memory. In his early twenties, he memorized all of Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake", and would repeat it verbatim whenever invited to do so. (This son devoted the last ten years of his life towards waiting upon his mother.)

On Sunday morning, November 9, 1902, Jennie Berry gave birth to a set of twins. The girl was named Laura for Laura Lattin, a name which goes back four generations. She became very popular not only with her father and brothers, but was probably the most sociable of all the Berry's. The boy was named Lawrence, to match the twin name, Laura. However, he was known by several nicknames, including "Dick", so it could be said of the I.W. Berry's that they raised "Tom, Dick and Harry."

As was his nature towards his family, Ira Berry was indulgent toward the twins, perhaps too much so. Although he is remembered as a temperate father, there were at least two instances when Ira Berry resorted to a switch. Once, when he caught his son, Lawrence, swinging on the large front gate, after being told not to, and another switching took place when Lawrence was observed sticking a pitchfork in the hind end of a bull. Loud cries by the boy, pleading self-defense from the bull, did not alter the punishment. (On retrospect, there were other times when a hard application of the paternal right had would have been in order.)

HILL'S CAMP IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

During the two decades of life in Oregon, the Berry's spent considerable time at a place called Hill's Camp, in the Blue Mountains.

Gratuitous permission was granted by John M. Hill, brother-in-law of I.W Berry to build a log cabin on his land. Hill's Camp became widely known as a center for social gatherings. (Evenings spent around the bonfire watching the sunset and lively repartee as to whether or not there was a bear in the neighborhood.)

.Three different sources recall the Sunday night "mush" at Hill's camp. Jasper Olinger, of Milton, related the story this way: "Ira Berry would invite various nephews of his and their friends over for Sunday night supper. The favorite dish would be corn meal mush with fresh whole milk, and man, was it good!" The details as to what the mush consisted of vary, but it was agreed that Ira Berry was the best cook . . .for a man, on whom they could brag.

One of these nephews, Elmer P. Berry, son of Lee Berry, explained the reasons why the Berry's spent so much time and did so much work up at Hill's Camp. There was a yearly need to cut firewood for a winter's supply, and a constant need for fence post, besides a desire to supplement the annual income from the farm in the Walla Walla River Valley, by working at the sawmills.

THE EXTENSIVE SEARCH FOR A LARGER FARM

Although Jennie Berry was proud of her twenty acre strawberry patch, which netted her two thousand dollars in two successive years, Ira Berry was looking for a larger farm.

Ira spent nearly four years in his quest before he found the ideal property. During this time he made notations on various contacts with land agents. and subsequent trips he made to investigate properties.

From these notations it was learned he was in Connell, Washington, on January 3, 1903, where he talked to Mr. B.S. Wadsworth. On this trip he mentions hiring a rig from the livery stable and driving to Kalotus, Washington.

According to Jennie Berry, a Mr. Childers had once farmed near that town and was the man who originally suggested that Adams County would be a good place in which to look further.

The first mention of Lind, Washington, is in the following notation made by Ira Berry: "1/2 sec. ten miles from Lind, sec. 21, 18th range with 206 acres winter wheat, 77 acres spring wheat, good barn; 16 horses. Price \$12.50 per acre." The name given was C.W. Krebill.

Ira Berry's attention was also called to the McLoughlin farm, located six miles southeast of Lind. This farm was listed for sale with a Mr. Day Imus and was the quarter-section of land where the buildings are located on the original Bert Rous homestead. Needless to say there were seven homestead residences on this farm when Ira Berry took it over on March 1, 1906.

The finances of the purchase price and the carrying of the first mortgage was arranged through the McMasters' Lumber interests of Portland, Oregon. Government financing to the farmers did not exist at that time.

THE SEVEN LEAN YEARS

The years from 1906 through 1913 were the seven lean years at Lind. In 1906, Ira Berry lost fourteen of his best horses from an ailment known as compaction. In 1907, there was a bank crises, seriously influencing farm crop prices. In 1908, there were new payments to be met on a combine harvester. And so it went. In 1913, an electric storm in June literally cooked the wheat in its critical state of growth. The average yield that year was between two and three bushels per acre.

Throughout all of these hardships, Ira Berry remained steadfast. Even through sickness in his family, but when a telegram arrived from a Portland hospital stating an operation on Jennie Berry was successful, the harassed husband sat down in a rocking chair by the phone, held his head in his hands and shed copious tears.

THE HAPPY YEAR - 1919

The Berry's spent the winter months in Seattle from 1912 to 1921. and lest the preceding years of struggle appear to be all drab, the year of 1919 had been selected, out of many, to reflect a period of color and the coming of modest affluence.

It was with the eagerness of a youth just discharged from the military service, that Ira Berry planned his years of retirement.

On one occasion, he is remembered taking vast enjoyment in the selection of a tent and some camping equipment.

Two of the happiest days of the summer of 1919 were the family reunion, held at the I.W. Berry home in University District, Seattle, and a trip to Paradise Valley on Mount Rainier, in order to pick huckleberries.

A group picture taken by Mr. Elmer P. Berry, of the Berry reunion in 1919, shows three of the first generation born in Washington Territory, and fifty other nephews, nieces and cousins. Prominent among this group was Mr. Dorsey Hill, future mayor of Walla Walla , and Mr. Nate Buck, future mayor of Yakima.

In 1919, the road above Nisqually River in Rainier National Park was restricted to one-way traffic; however, after negotiating the steep grade, the camping facilities were ideal. On this trek, Ira Berry is remembered bringing up the rear carrying a red flag. Ira Berry took great delight in these outings, and the magnificent taste of steaming huckleberries with fluffy dumplings eaten around the campfire.

EZRA MEEKER

Ezra Meeker arrived in Seattle after a covered wagon trip over the Oregon Trail, and was met by Ira Berry on Second Avenue in front of the old Bon Marche Building.

In describing his trip, Mr. Meeker remarked, "graveled roads were hard on the oxen's feet and the thrill of the old pioneer days was gone."

Ezra Meeker's words epitomized the end of the pioneer era.

"DYING WITH HIS BOOTS ON"

The health of Ira Berry began to decline gradually around the age of sixty-four. This may not have been too obvious to the casual observer, but a little knowledge of the history of hardening of the arteries in the Berry family will prove it an accurate conclusion.

Investigation from similar medical histories shows that not infrequently the sufferer from hardening of the arteries had infinitesimally small lesions in the blood vessels before the final hemorrhage strikes the victim down.

Ira Berry would not admit to anyone his weakening condition. One day during 1920, when loading hop, Ira stuck his pitchfork in the ground, leaned up against it and appeared "done in". When he was asked how he felt, Ira replied, "Oh, I'm alright." I.W. Berry had always said, half seriously, that he wanted to die "with his boots on." This very nearly came true.

As far as is known, Ira Berry began the morning of September 26, 1923, as a normal day. He went about his morning chores like any other morning until his first complaint at about 9:45 A.M. It was his intention on that morning to take a apple box of cooked food to the crew of hired men working in the field, starting at 10:30 A.M. However, before that hour he broke out in a cold sweat, whereupon he undressed and went to bed.

There were the characteristic symptoms of severe vomiting and increased pulse, plus the recognition on his part that something was wrong.

Dr. Clarence Henderson was called from Lind, arriving just before noon. The usual banter between patient and doctor took place, including the remark by Ira, "The old lady is getting excited." During the doctor's examination the patient's eyes dilated and the light began to fade from them.

As the meridian sun passed the zenith of Heaven, that memorable Fall day, the eyes of Ira Ward Berry closed in earthly sleep.

The editor of The Lind Leader said all that could be said when he wrote, "Divine Providence, in its infinite wisdom, had taken from the Berry home its husband and father."