

## THE RECORDS FAMILY

### THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT IN THE FREEWATER-UMAPINE LOCALITY IN 1902

This material furnished by Ken Records

Milton-Freewater, Oregon

*Written about 1992*

My family were Minnesota farmers, (actually Pennsylvania Dutch), who picked up their families and personal belongings, their horses and cattle, gave up their long held friendships and personal attachments, and left fertile Vermillion County to settle here in the Freewater-Vincent (Umapine) area in 1902. Ninety years hence it is impossible to comprehend what motivated their migration to our 'Valley' other than to say they, like all the previous Pioneers, were adventurers - "*they came to see the Elephant*".

This brief look into the past of my families early centurial migration to this valley would not have been possible without the lifelong pursuit of my Aunt Gladys Records Rominger, who prior to her death in 1980 published quite a lengthy '*Genealogy of the Records Family*'.

It appears the Records family immigrated into this country (Virginia, in fact) between 1627 and 1647. Undoubtedly they were Huguenots or Calvinists, who were escaping the oppressions of European Catholicism of the times. The family name itself is obviously not the original but a Americanized derivative, or the result of an English interpretation of the German name taken upon their entry.

Little can be genealogically authenticated of the families activities in those earlier years until Phillip Records marriage appears in York County, Pennsylvania in 1775. Phillip is actually the fifth generation of Records in America but only the first generation to be authenticated for genealogical purposes. Phillip was born in 1751 and slowly migrated westward, in Pennsylvania, to Crawford County.

It was from Crawford County, PA that Phillip's Great Grandson (and my Great Grandfather), John Chambers Records began, at age 3 in 1836, his young journey westward. With his parents and three other children and a man name Hoover, they built a river boat and with all their household goods, etc., they floated the Ohio River by day and tied up at night. They settled on a farm southeast of Columbus, Indiana. In 1861, with grown sons and families (John Chambers was then married to Emily Roberts and had three children), the entire family moved again to Vermillion County, Minnesota. John Chambers, (Chame), was mustered from there into the Civil War in August 1862, discharged (disability) in January 1878 to Kirkhoven, Minnesota. Following the death of his wife in 1899, he again encouraged his family to look westward - which they did.

Historians could undoubtedly give reasons for their exodus from Kirkhoven, MN, but be it for economical, political, religious, health reasons, or simply wanderlust, they never-the-less came. In doing so, the local population was increased by twenty four, upon their arrival.

According to my Aunt Mildred Records Benner, my Great Grandfather Chame came to the Walla Walla Valley in 1901, accompanied by four of his married sons. This initial family scouting party was looking for farming opportunities as well as homestead land available. Obviously, they were impressed by the 'Valley' as once returning to Kirkhoven, they were making arrangements for the family migration the following year.

Though considered Pioneers to our Valley, They came not by customary perilous, tedious and lengthy trek of the Oregon Trial. They came by train, (*the Iron Horse*); the men riding in the cattle cars to protect their valuable livestock, (and undoubtedly saving considerable passenger fare).

This 1902 arrival of the 'Family', included:

John Chambers Records	Age 68
Sarah Anne Records Royce	daughter age 45
Ruby Jeanette Royce	daughter age 8
Pearl Emily Royce	daughter age 5
John Alexander (Eck) Records	son age 43
William McCandless Records	son age 38
Myrtle Ida Carlton Records	wife age 28
Waldo Merrill Records	son age 9
Warren Willis Records	son age 6
Lois Ida Records	daughter age 4
Lucille Mary Records	daughter age 2
Charles Winford Records	son age 33
Susie Gilkey Pool Records	wife age 25
Charles Raymond Records	son age 3
John Joseph Records	son age 1
Melissa (Lissa) Records	daughter age 30
Roy Edwin Records	son age 30 - <i>my father</i>
Edna Viola Pool Records	wife age 23 - <i>my mother</i>
Gladys Emily Records	daughter age 6 weeks - <i>my sister</i>
Joseph Pool	age 52 - father of Susie and Edna Pool Records
Emma Huffman Pool	wife age 46
Carry E. (Queen) Pool	daughter age ?
Eva Margaret Pool	daughter age ?

Frank Pool	son age ?
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The boys, (John Chambers sons), immediately purchased farms in the Freewater-Vincent (now Umapine) area. Alexander was a fine carpenter and built most of the homes in the area.

William Records farm was approximately one mile east of Vincent, on what is now a nursery on Grabner Road. The home, a large two story frame, was torn down in the 70's, I believe. (In my youth it was referred to as the Morrison Farm.)

The Alexander Records farm was located just north of what is now the Pleasant View School and part of the buildings may still be standing. Eck, never married but both of his sisters, Sarah Ann and Melissa, lived with him at different times.

The Charles Records farm was located east of Vincent approximately two miles on what is now Hodgen Road. The Alden family now lives there (?), but the original home burned years ago. Joseph and Emma Pool lived on a small farm adjoining, and the house still stands. (An interesting point here, in researching my genealogy from my maternal side, I have little knowledge of my maternal Great Grandfather George Johnson; where he lived, etc. My maternal Grandmother, Nevada Irene Johnson Hoon, married Joseph Edgar Hoon, who were also very early settlers to the area.)

George Johnson and his wife were divorced when my grandmother was probably still in her teens. (She was born in 1868.) I never knew where the original Johnson farm was located. The farm Charles Records purchased in 1902 was from George Johnson, thus I now know where my grandmother and family were raised.

The Roy Records farm (my grandparents) was located on the now Hodgen Road north of the Umapine Highway. This home still stands, where five of the six children were born, including my father Dean in 1904.

In addition to their farms in Vincent, some of the Records boys homesteaded on Government Mountain where, for \$2.50 an acre, they eventually 'proved up' and acquired over 160 acres of fine virgin timberland approximately 20 miles from their farms. Many may recall the old 'Records' cabin a little beyond Big Meadows. Each year in late summer they took their families, horses and cattle, as well as chickens, up to the mountains to cut wood for their homes. They would stay there for weeks while the men cut, split and hauled the wood home to their farms by wagon. My uncle, Leavett (Lev) Records, still remembers the trip well, when as a young boy he was part of the crew to hitch up the wagons around 3:00 am and not getting to the mountains until after lunch, assuming everything went well. Otherwise it would be a two day trip. He once recalls having to stay the night at the old Jepson farm on the mountains, and as a young boy was frightened by the following events. The Jepson farm is not standing now, although I believe there is still an old orchard there. *Rumor had it that Jepson ran afoul of bootleggers, but in any event was murdered and dumped in his well shoeless, where he was finally found.* My uncle tells that it was frightening as a young boy to spend the night there, knowing the history of the place, with coyotes howling and all other normal sounds of the dark mountainous evening. The logs (Tamarack) were cut into four foot lengths, split, and hauled home, where it was later cut into

shorter lengths. In the early days they had no cabin, but lived in 'tent platforms' until the cabin was built in later years (the thirties).

Migrating from Minnesota and settling into a strange new country with their families, and the immediate need for self sufficient farms, led to a rigorous way of life at the turn of the century. My grandparents, Roy and Edna Records, kept a diary of sorts, written in a small plain paperback notebook. The diary commences in January 1913, stopping in March of that year, and sporadically returns until its last entry of April 2, 1923. The daily entries are brief, usually just a couple of lines, but poignant, and certainly paints pictures of the daily life, its hardships, labors, pleasures and humor of the times. Following are some excerpts taken from this diary, but for a better understanding, my grandparents, Roy and Edna had six children they being:

Gladys Emily Records	Born November 29, 1902
Dean Allen Records	Born August 7, 1904
Leavett James Records	Born May 29, 1906
Mildred Gilkey Records	Born April 2, 1909
Amy Melissa Records	Born March 8, 1912
Ruth Miriam Records	Born April 29, 1914

### The Diary begins in 1913

Jan 12. First snow; snowed all day. Frank came over in PM. Papa is improving. (Joseph Pool)

Jan 17. Wash. Roy shot rabbit; pot pie for supper. Sit up with F. Kirk. (Fred)

Jan 28. Charlie Upcraft working for me again. Edna and kids went to Vincent to plat(?) "Turn of Tide".

Jan 30. Roy helped Papa butcher 4 hogs. Cut out four aprons for Gladys. Dig in well in PM. Children walk to school (Fruitvale) all week. Sell last load of loose hay on our own place.

Feb 7. Coldest night of winter; zero at seven this morning. Take children to school. Roy fixes rocking chair. Charlie saws logs. Roy and Milly go over home. I churn, bake bread, and iron, Roy goes to Vincent with Frank and Del. Sleighing parties going by.

Feb 12. Cold. Roy goes to Milton. Make fried cakes, bake beans, stew apples, go home with Roy. Leave children home alone for the first time. Buy four gallons of lard from Mamma. Bring home today. Roy goes to lodge. Gladys and I make Valentines. Lennie and Velma (probably the Weathers) spend afternoon here.

Feb 13. Roy loads car of hay at Stateline for Thompkins of Pleasant View, WA. Waldo, Robert W. and Roy Grimes help haul hay. I wash and cut dress out for Milly. Milly builds fire in coal pail. Amy learning to creep fast.

Feb 15. Snow all gone. Roy and boys go to Walla Walla. Get boy's new shoes at Fair Store. Dean's \$1.75, Leavett's \$1.25. Ed Morill collects tickets for scale book. Roy goes to Vincent.

Feb 16. Sunny, warm. Went for ride over new road past Smiley's to Sunnyside to see Mr. Irons about digging well. Stop at Annie's a little bit. Company there. Drive up to Upcraft's and on home. Agnes comes over to spend afternoon but we were not home; visited Lennie. Came over a little while after we came home.

Mar 3. Rainy. I am 34 today; bake chocolate birthday cake.

Mar 4. Foggy. Mamma and Papa here for dinner. Roy and Charlie U. haul stone away from well. I go visiting at Lennie's in PM; meet Mrs. Richmond. Get short letter from Queen (her sister Carrie Pool) with birthday handkerchief. Great celebrating at Freewater tonight in honor of Wilson entering the White House.

Mar 8. Amy one year old today.

Mar 11. Amy learns to walk. Roy plows garden. I call on Mrs. R. Weathers. Dean and Charlie Upcraft go to oyster supper at Fruitvale Hall. Mable starts working for me.

Mar 20. The time has slipped by and little has been written. We bailed some hay on Lissa's; butchered today. Go to Mrs. Upcraft's funeral; cold. Snowed all day but we washed. Set four hens today.

The Diary stops here, and doesn't begin until 1917.

Oct 20. Go to Freewater this morning. New shoes for Mildred. Roy and Wynans go to Walla Walla in PM. Take children to American to the Road Show. Roy buys Liberty Bonds.

Oct 23. Cut our first arm full of mountain wood this morning. Cold and fog. Went to Eva's and spent the day. Papa and Mamma rode home with us. Sell load of 4th cutting hay to Stanfield \$16.

Oct 24. Windy, dusty. Roy takes children to school and milk to creamery. Roy helps Frank make cider out of their own apples. I sew on gingham dress for Gladys. George Hodgen takes the school census. Velma Weathers is 8 years old today. Mildred gives her a little vase.

Oct 29. Dean stays with Ruth and Amy. Roy and I go to Walla Walla. Roy pays mortgage to T. C. Elliott; \$1,000. Buy caps and sweaters, underclothes for children. Get pattern at gingham shop for Gladys. Shoes for myself. Eat dinner at Home Restaurant. Home a little after 2. Roy gets new saw. He and Dean try it out as soon as we get home.

Nov 6. Baker buys Kiser (horse) \$45. Roy goes to town. Go to to Chautauqua in evening. Gladys and Mildred go in the afternoon.

Nov 7. Roy makes garage door. I press goods for dress. Take down to Mrs Stark to make for me. Go to Chautauqua in the evening. *Carson of the North Woods*; good. Gladys trades rooster to Lissa for pullets.

Nov 16. Roy, Wisenor, Wynans and Messenger go goose hunting.

Nov 20. Return of the goos hunters - Gooseless.

Dec 3. Butcher hogs; Mr. Foster and Will help. Mrs. Foster down in afternoon. Charles and Susie come over. Bring pail of Kraut. Roy takes hog to town; 367 lbs.; brings \$66.06 at Van Slykes. I finish Mildred's little blue serge dress.

Dec 11. Our anniversary. Been married 16 years. Patch wallpaper, bake bread, clean cellar, take dress to Mrs. Stark. Made apple pies.

The Diary stops again and begins, briefly, in 1921.

Jul 26. Roy and Leavitt deliver load of hay to Mr. Lamb; \$12. Dean goes back to Prescott to work for Tull, after rain.

The Diary stops again, not to begin until 1923.

Mar 28. Very late spring. Warm today. Lots of wind all month. Have a new hall at Umapine, just completed, first lodge meeting tonight. Weighed hay for Markmans; \$18 a ton. Wisenor is asking \$20. Lots of potatoes to sell. Only 50 cent a hundred. Eggs 15 cents a doz. Have 5 hens setting. A letter from Eva, their first spring in La Grande. Roy and Rouse prune young prune orchard. Roy goes to Pendleton on Grand Jury.

Apr 2. Dean and I are running the ranch. Roy on Grand Jury. Sent box of eats to Gladys to Easter. Della came home for Spring Vacation with Myrtle Menderhall.

Here the Diary Ends.

Reading through this diary you may find some interesting facts. Like, we now know when the Umapine Hall was built; unfortunately it is no longer standing. When they refer to a lodge meeting, however, I don't know what lodge. It would be interesting to know what they called it.

You will notice that although my grandfather purchased the farm in 1902, in 1913 they were still digging a well. There was no well. I have since been told that many of these farms used spring branches for their water source; there were many of them in the area at the time.

I have no idea what the game '*Turn of Tide*' was. I am impressed that Freewater held a Chautauqua in 1917, however I don't know what it was all about. (Webster defines it as an assembly for educational purposes, combining lectures, entertainment, and out-of-door life.)

The main Umapine Highway east of Hodgen Road must have been completed in 1913, according to this diary. The Smiley home still stands. In the earliest period, their trips to Walla Walla, Freewater and other places were taken by horse and buggy making the trips more difficult.

Wilson entered the white house in late February or early March of 1913, whereas our modern day presidents enter in January.

In December of 1917 the local Van Slykes store in Freewater paid 18 cents a pound for pork.

The Fruitvale community held an oyster feed in 1913, (probably a fund raiser for the school) whereas nowadays it would probably be a crab feed.

Over the past 90 years, since their arrival to this valley, the Records family has grown considerably. The mobility inherent in our modern society has scattered hither and yon, but their roots are deep in the Milton-Freewater, Umapine history. The progeny of these early settlers was recorded in a family reunion in 1982.