

THE COBAINS/COBANES IN WASHINGTON STATE

1888 to 1995



My great grandmother, Letitia Cobane, lived only four years after she came to Ellensburg in Washington State. She died on December 28, 1894 at the age of 59. When the census was taken in June of 1900, my great grandfather, Samuel Cobane, was living with his son and daughter-in-law, Thomas and Grace Cobane, in Ellensburg. The record states that Thomas was 33 in 1900 and Grace was just 17. Thomas gave his occupation as "house carpenter." Thomas and Grace had no children at that time. The census states that Samuel was retired. He passed away that same year at the age of 77. Both Samuel and Letitia are buried at the I.O.O.F. Cemetery. The headstone pictured on the following page was erected by their children in their memory.

When my great grandfather passed away in 1900 he left behind Four grown sons and four grown daughters . Most were married with families of their own except for William the youngest son who never married. The oldest son Samuel married Margaret Le Baine of Quebec, Canada in 1889 and is the only one of this family who did not come to Washington State in 1887/90. The oldest daughter, Ellen Cobane, married Robert Scott at Christ Church in Moulinette, Canada in 1881. They lived in New York State for awhile before coming to Washington around 1890.

The second son, John Cobain, was my grandfather. He was the first one in the family to leave Canada and come to Washington State in 1887. He married my grandmother, Anna Van Alstine, in Ellensburg in 1888. (see Forward Heritage Chart following for more information on these and other members of this family). The second daughter, Mary Ann Cobain, married William Love at Christ Church in Moulinette, Canada in 1883. They lived in Chicago, Ill. For quite awhile before finally joining the rest of the family in Washington State.

The third son, Thomas Cobain, was 20 years old when he left Canada and came to Washington State in 1888. He was unmarried at that time. He is said to have traveled with two other men and that they walked most of the way following a wagon train. In Dec. 1889 he married Grace De Shazer in Ellensburg, Wa. The fourth son was William. He was only four years old when the family left Ireland and immigrated to Eastern Canada and around 18 when they came to Washington State. He never married and census records indicate he lived much of his adult life with his younger sister Letitia (Cobane) Moore and her husband, Charles C. (Cash) Moore.

The third daughter, named Letitia after her mother, was just 12 when she came with her parents to the State of Washington. She is the only child of this family who was not born in Ireland. She was born in Moulinette, Ontario, in Eastern Canada in 1878. When she was grown she married Charles C. Moore who was originally from Indiana. The 1900 census shows them living on a farm in Ellensburg. Two of Cash's brothers (George and Albert) lived with them as well as Letitia's brother, William

COBANE HEADSTONE I.O.O.F. CEMETARY

Ellensburg, Washington

We miss thee from our home dear parents.

We miss thee from thy places.

A shadow o'er our life is cast;

We miss the sunshine of thy faces.

We miss thy kind and willing hands,

Thy fond and earnest care.

Our home is dark without thee;

We miss thee everywhere.



Chronological History of Early Ellensburg

THE FIRST FAMILY OF SETTLERS came to Ellensburg in 1865, although there had been some parties of white settlers in and out of the valley for some 50 years prior to 1865. John Roselle and family came from Moxee in that year . . . their first winter was one of extreme cold and suffering . . . and they were conducted back to the Yakima Valley and settled where the town of Yakima now stands.

1867

First permanent settlement by Frederick Lodi and John Gollier who had started for Puget Sound across the Cascade Mountains . . . They were attracted by the beauty of the Kittitas Valley and decided to remain here. William Wilson, not a settler, but a wandering white man living among the Indians, was in the valley at that time . . . Wilson Creek was named after this man. Lodi and Gollier first located on Manastash Creek near where it flows into the Yakima River . . . They were discouraged by heavy snowfall and extreme cold of first winter here, so they moved across the river to the present site of Ellensburg.

1868

Charles Splawn moved his family to location on Taneum Creek above Thorp. Mrs. Splawn was the daughter of the first white family on the Moxee . . . later settled in Kittitas Valley and town of Thorp named after the Thorp family. Charles Splawn and Dulcina Thorp were first white couple married in Yakima County, the wedding was at Fort Simcoe in 1863.

1869

First birth of white child in Kittitas County . . . twins born to Mr. and Mrs. Martin Daverin who settled on the Carver place, 3 miles Southeast of Ellensburg . . . In 1870, Daverin erected the first building in Ellensburg which was a log house 14'x18'. Jack Splawn and Ben Burch bought this log house and started the first store which was given the name of "Robbert's Roost" as a joke, and this was the firm name of Ellensburg. Supplies for the first store were brought from The Dalles, Oregon by wagon and pack train. In 1871, Mr. Splawn became the sole proprietor of Robbert's Roost; then in 1872 he sold his stock of goods to John Shoudy and made a present of his squatter's rights to the 160 acres of land which comprised the site of Ellensburg. Shoudy platted the townsite and named it after his good wife, Ellen, but for many years the settlers clung to the old name of Robbert's Roost.

1887

Northern Pacific Railroad built through Ellensburg; the line to the Puget Sound area completed a year later; division point established in Ellensburg and there was a large railroad population.

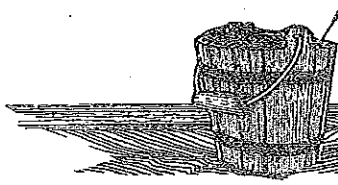
1867

The first mail service was established . . . this was to Charles Splawn's log cabin at the mouth of the Taneum Creek . . . the mail was brought over Snoqualmie Trail on horseback by an Indian named KE-NE-HO . . . In the year of 1869 Taneum became a United States Post Office . . . Ellensburg's first newspaper was printed in 1883.

1889

Ellensburg's business district and 200 homes were destroyed by fire on July 4, but re-building began immediately . . . assistance was received from neighboring communities.

HISTORY OF ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON



Taken from 1912 Edition of Sunset magazine: "Where the beautiful Valley of Content is pierced by the Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound Railway . . . "Ellensburg, the metropolis of the Kittitas is a delightful City to live in. Its population is about 6,000. All of the latest types of city improvements have been installed.

The Ellensburg Rodeo was begun in 1922 as an additional attraction to the Kittitas County Fair and has now developed to one of the leading shows in the entire United States. Besides its contest events, one of its main features is the grand entry in which Indians and cowboys play a prominent part. The grand entry recalls the days when the Kittitas Valley was the "no man's land" and the tribes of the Wenatchee, Nez Perce and Yakimas descended into the "Peaceful Valley and Land of Plenty" to hunt, fish and play games before returning to their warfare with each other.

Interesting Facts About the Kittitas Area

"KITITAS" is an Indian word meaning "plenty of food." YAKIMA came from "Eyakima" and meant "well fed people who lived in Kittitas, the land of plenty food."

Washington history was created March 2, 1853 . . . and first legislative assembly met in Olympia in 1854.

The Kittitas Valley has always been a cattle country since the first settlers came . . . from those early days when the herds ran on open range, to the present day when the emphasis is on irrigated pastures, the Kittitas Valley has been one of the Northwest's top cattle producing areas.

JOHN JAMES AND ANNA M. COBAIN

and their children:

1. John James Arthur Cobain
2. Charles Chalmer Cobain
3. Mary Elizabeth Cobain - O'Donahue
4. Florence Edna Cobain - Henderson
5. Bertha Ann Cobain - Wilson
6. Elmer Charles Cobain
7. Francis Violet Cobain - Davis

and their families



ANNA MINERVA VAN ALSTINE - COBAIN

Taken while she was still living in Canada. Picture was made in Cornwall shortly before she moved to the United States.

She was about 21 years old when the picture was taken.

JOHN JAMES COBAIN

Taken in Ellensburg, Washington shortly after his arrival from Canada.

He was approximately 26 at the time the picture was taken

THE COBAINS / COBANES IN WASHINGTON STATE

JOHN AND ANNA COBAIN

My grandparents, John and Anna Cobain, were married in Ellensburg, Washington on June 17, 1888, both having immigrated from Ontario, Canada in the late 1800's. John was the second son of Samuel and Letitia Cobain and was born in Northern Ireland in 1863. Anna was the only daughter of Abraham and Sarah Van Alstine. She was born in Eastern Canada in 1866.

The Cobain's original home was located on the north corner of Capital Avenue and Pfenning Road in Ellensburg, a large two-story farmhouse with a covered porch across the front. Following this chapter is a picture of the house taken around 1910. It was less than a quarter mile from Anna's parents' farm, which was also on Pfenning Road.

My grandfather was a shoemaker by trade and worked at the H.A. Gotzain shoe store in Ellensburg for more than 30 years. The Cobain farm was several miles from the town, but he never owned a car. He rode a bicycle to and from work six days a week. He also raised fruit and vegetables on the farm and kept a few farm animals for milk, eggs and meat.

John and Anna raised seven children: three boys – Arthur, Chalmer and Elmer and four girls – Mary, Florence, Bertha and Francis. My mother was the second daughter, Florence. The family portrait on the preceding page was taken in the early 1920's.

The Cobain family had a camping spot in the Nanum Canyon where they camped every summer. In some of the older forestry maps it is listed as Cobain Flats. There was an ice cave located near the camp where the family stored their food. My grandfather took vacations during the summer to camp with his family. Following this chapter, there is a picture of the campsite and some of the Cobain family. Two large fir trees still standing along the front of the Cobain farm were brought down from the Nanum Canyon as seedlings.

In November of 1922, my grandfather had gone to Portland, Oregon to visit his brother, William, and Sister, Letitia. He had not been in the best of health for some time. On Monday, November 27, word was received from the family in Oregon that he had passed away during the night about midnight. He was brought back to Ellensburg for burial.

I don't know how long grandma lived in the house on Capital Avenue after my grandfather died. I visited there several times during the mid thirties at which time John and Anna's son, Chalmer, and his family were living there. My grandmother was remarried in 1928 to William Beers and they lived in a house on the corner of Capital Avenue and Willow Road in Ellensburg. This house is now owned grandson of Francis Davis, the Cobain's youngest daughter.

William Beers always went by the name "Billy." He and my grandmother had a cabin in an area called the "Swauk" in the Blewett Pass in the Wenatchee National Forest. It was a beautiful wooded area practically untouched by civilization in those days.

There was another large wooden building near grandma's cabin that all called the bunk-house. It was where my mother's sister, Bertha Wilson, and her family sometimes stayed when the family all got together in the mountains. I could not have been more than five years old, but I recall clearly that my parents, my sister, Ermel, and I stayed sometimes in another cabin farther up the hill.

William Beers died in 1940 and sometime later my grandmother went to live with her daughter, Mary O' Donahue, and her family in Ellensburg. Grandma lived with Aunt Mary until she died in 1958 at the age of 92.

The Cobains / Cobanes are one of the pioneer families that came to the Kittitas Valley when Washington was still a Territory. My grandfather signed the Petition for Statehood in 1889. Many of their descendents still live in the Kittitas Valley and the surrounding areas.

Shown below on the right is Anna Cobain / Beers with great-granddaughter, Sandra Lee Swinney taken at the O' Donahue home on 12th Ave., Ellensburg in 1951. The photo on the left below is probably the last picture taken of my grandmother in 1958.

