

By Earl Benham
April 1938

Earl Benham

Earl Benham was born in Wichita, Kansas, September 14, 1885. He came to Montana in 1886. He filed on the Benham place January 15, 1917.

Burt Corwin had filed on this place June, 1915 but sold his relinquishment for \$100 to Joe Phillips in October of same year. Phillips kept this place until the fall of 1916 when they took the stage coaches out of the Yellowstone Park.

Earl Benham built Captain Stivers cabin on the Trail place in 1916. This cabin was burned down by the Forest Service in 1927.

Earl also built the Karata hunting camp on the Trail Place in 1916.

Frank Benham, the father of Earl, homesteaded the Sheep Rock ranch (Rock Haven, today) in 1911. He was born February 12, 1857, died December 25, 1915.

Nels Murray

Nels Murray was in this country in the 60's and 70's, a trapper and prospector. He was a very quiet fellow. He built some of the first pack trails up the Gallatin River.

While coming across the plains with his brother, when Murray was just a young man, they were advance guards for a wagon train, his brother was killed by Indians. From then on he killed every Indian that came his way, and even went out of his way to get an extra Indian. To old timers he was known as the man who killed more Indians than any other man.

While camped on the present Jack Smith Ranch, trapping beaver with three other trappers, they ran short of "grub" and all decided to go on down the valley to replenish their needs when they discovered two Indians camped on the present Blanchard Ranch. The boys talked it over and decided one of them must stay and protect what they were going to leave in camp. Without a word Murray went out and came back with the tidings, "Now we can all go, those Indians can't steal anything." These Indians had packed from the Madison over Jack Creek and down West Fork.

Murray was in an Indian fight at 16 Mile canyon and Spring Hill and killed several Indians.

Jim Loeper who latter lived about a mile from Absarokee was with Murray at times.

? if the Loeper cabin in Upper Seepel was
built by him

Note: In the above sketch, we speak of Callatin Gateway, this town was formally named Salesville for Zacharie Sales and until late years when the Milwaukee railway came into this town was known as such.

Levenski:

When Levenski killed Miller and Stevens, they had already jumped his claim, having posted notice when Levenski was absent from his cabin.

Frank Blanchard:

Blanchard was born at DeCorah Iowa April 8, 1874. He was in Wyoming and Nebraska in the early eighties, ran a photograph gallery in Omaha, Nebraska. He came into Montana in 1889 and homesteaded the present place in the spring of 1899. At one time there was a saw mill on West Fork owned by Ira DeLong. Blanchard came into this country in a covered wagon.

Ebenezer Sprague:

Ebenezer Sprague was born in Maine about 1876 and died in 1916. His brother took the body back to Middletown, New York for burial. He homesteaded the ranch above Grails on the West Fork and sold out to Crail in 1911. Sprague never married.

Tom Dudley:

Tom Dudley squatted on the present Blanchard but did not prove up. He married Eva Williams, December 1892. He operated a copper claim with Walter Sales on West Fork. In 1897 he moved to Fromberg, Montana, where he died in 1937. When he was first married he worked for Charles Ancency Sr. running cattle, Ancency was located out of Manhattan at this time. Dudley left the canyon in the early ninties. Mrs. Dudley was a sister of Mrs. Stanley Davis and after Dudley's death she married Mr. Oliver.

Stanley Davis:

Stanley Davis was born in Oregon, January 1, 1882. His father Joe Davis came to Belgrade about 1863 but later left and went to Oregon and there he married. Later returned to Callatin county. He ran cattle in the canyon and was in partnership with his son Stanley. Stanley with his family camped during the summer of 1907 on the Ebb Sprague place and ran cattle. He moved to Oregon in 1912 and lived there until 1915. Worked for the country on roads for three or four years then for the bureau of public roads and has been with the State Highway since 1926.

Vard Cockeral built the first road from Squaw Creek up the canyon to take cattle up for summer pasture. Jack Smith herded these cattle during the summer for Ancency and Cockeral. Cockeral owned the ranch at Central Park, now owned by Dr. Smith. His brother was a lawyer, ranched near Axtell birdge.

Vardaman Cockrell spelled also Cockrill in Montana
Hibbles