

Irrigation on the Willey Ranch, South Fork Salmon River, Valley County.

water rights claim # 77-4174

This is long, so I highlighted pertinent portions:

My name is Genevieve Joyce Lawman Lukecart, born in 1949, and my grandparents, Clarence and Reva Rebillet, bought the Willey Ranch in 1942. The Willey's homesteaded the Ranch in the early 1900's. Earnest Willey took the southern 80 acres in 1921 and his father Simon Willey took the remaining 160.72 acres in 1923.

As a child and young teenager I spent most of my time before school age and most of my summer days after that with my grandparents at the ranch.

I remember my grandparents telling about how the Willey's provided produce to the miners in the early days. There were and are various apple, cherry, pear and plum trees there and they were old trees when I was a girl. They talked about the wheat and hay crops the Willey's grew and called the pasture uphill from the old house the "wheat field." This is not the type of land that one can grow seasonal crops or start fruit trees on without irrigation. It is hot, dry, and sandy.

Our neighbor three miles downriver, George Fritzer, and my Grandpa were good friends and usually talked on the phone every evening, (there was a phone line up and down the South Fork at that time.) Most of my Grandparent's historical information about the Ranch and the Willey's came from George. The Fritzer's and the Willey's were both homesteaders and neighbors for many years and each raised a passel of children.

Other people like Red Potter, a packer from Big Creek who spent a few winters at our hot spring for his arthritis, Irene McDowell, a rancher down river, Carl Amacer, a miner at Elk Creek, and Herb Smith a miner upriver provided history. My step dad, Don Caward, was good friends with an old miner upriver who told stories of the Ranch to Dad and Mom. I cannot recall his name but I definitely remember sitting on the patchwork quilt on the bed in his cabin gazing at the fascinating wall paper made of hundreds of magazine pages, some of them slightly risqué. Dad and his brother had tried to buy the Ranch before my grandparents did and he knew all the old timers in the area and was quite a story swapper. And still later Pat Reed, eldest son of William and Bessie Reed, who homesteaded a ranch upriver in 1914, provided stories to my mother.

There is a pleasant forested flat at the source of the ditch where the water is taken from Willey Creek and Sheep Creek. My grandmother and I would occasionally accompany Grandpa to this flat on horseback. It is the far southeastern corner of the Ranch and is reached by a trail cresting a ridge and then switch backing steeply into the hole where the flat lies. This place was intriguing to me because of its remoteness, lushness, and that it is one of the few flat places on the entire Ranch. There was an old campsite there that my family and others had used throughout the years and **Grandma would tell me about how some of the Willey's camped there while building the flume and digging the conversions to form the "head of the ditch."**

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There is a flume carrying the ditch water around a cliff not far from the "head of the ditch." Over the years my grandfather and uncle, Louis Rebillet, spent many hours replacing the old timbers the Willey's used to build it. **I remember them talking about the engineering the original flume took and the resin the Willey's used for leaks and how some of the workmanship lasted well beyond expected.** My uncle used to come back to the house, frustrated and tired after working hard on the flume all day, grumbling about particular spans that were forever springing leaks and were so difficult to repair. Then he and Grandpa would marvel over others that held up year after year without ever having to be replaced.

Grandpa and Uncle Louie worked the ditch all year long and talked about what a feat it had been for the Willey's to get the irrigation ditch flow so consistent. And about how much work and time it must have taken for them to bring the ditch around the "saddle" at the crest of the ridge north of the hot spring and through the "big draw" between the "center field" and the "big field" toward the north end. Both of these areas required the removal of tons of granite.

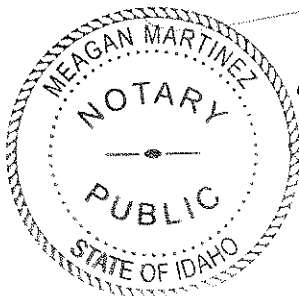
Grandpa let the ditch peter out beyond the "big field" and just used pipe to get water to the "far field. When **Grandma** and I helped with the haying she **would talk to me about and point out where the Willey's used to run the ditch out farther to farm that field.**

There is a very old Willey graveyard on the ranch and my grandparents told a story of one of the people who is buried there. It involved a father's boots, which were bitten by a rattlesnake while he was walking the irrigation ditch bank.

Pelton Wheel on the Willey Ranch

water rights claim # 77-4175

My mother, Bonnie, and her new husband, Del Davis, began living on the ranch in the late 1960's. They lived in the "new" house well up the hill from the "old" house I lived in with my grandparents. I think it was George Huddleston of Wilder who designed and built a pelton wheel for them for electrical power. It stood about 50 feet north of the house. They used a holding tank to gather water from the ditch and piped it down hill to the wheel. It was very noisy, ran day and night, and required constant maintenance. When I visited I usually slept at the north end of the house and would lay awake in the night fondly remembering. As a child in the old house I used to watch the lantern mantel slowly turn colors as it went out at bedtime. And in the quiet of the night I could hear the steady sound of the river. But then I was a child and didn't miss refrigeration and electric lights.



Meagan Martinez
Reside in McEwen Dr.
Sept. 14, 05

The United States of America,

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS, a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at **Boise, Idaho,** has been deposited in the General Land Office, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, "To Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of the Legal Representatives of Ernest N. Willey has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the east half of the northwest quarter of Section twenty-nine in Township twenty north of Range seven east of the Boise Meridian, Idaho, containing eighty acres,

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the Surveyor-General:

NOW KNOW YE, That there is, therefore, granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said claimant § the tract of Land above described; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said claimant § and to the heirs and assigns of the said claimant § forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights, as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts; and there is reserved from the lands hereby granted a right of way thereon for ditches or canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I,

Warren G. Harding,

President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, in the District of Columbia, the TWENTIETH

day of DECEMBER in the year of our Lord one thousand

nine hundred and TWENTY-ONE and of the Independence of the

United States the one hundred and FORTY-SIXTH.

By the President:

Warren G. Harding

By

Viola O. Paul

Secretary.

W. P.

1921

CERTIFIED

to be a true copy of a document on file in the Idaho State Office

Chris Catherman

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Boise 022801.

The United States of America,

On all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS, a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at **Boise, Idaho,**

has been deposited in the General Land Office, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862,

"To Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of **Simeon A. Willey**

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the **southwest quarter of the northeast quarter, the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter and the Lots four, five and eight of Section twenty in Township twenty north of Range seven east of the Boise Meridian, Idaho, containing one hundred sixty acres and seventy-two hundredths of an acre,**

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the Surveyor-General:

NOW KNOW YE, That there is, therefore, granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said claimant the tract of Land above described; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD: the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said claimant and to the heirs and assigns of the said claimant forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights, as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts; and there is reserved from the lands hereby granted a right of way thereon for ditches or canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, **Warren G. Harding,**

President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the City of Washington, the **FIRST**

day of **AUGUST**

in the year of our Lord one thousand

nine hundred and **TWENTY-THREE**

and of the Independence of the

United States the one hundred and

FORTY-EIGHTH

By the President:

Warren G. Harding

By

Viola B. Pugh Secretary.

W. P. LeRoy
Recorder of the

CERTIFIED (SEAL)

to be a true copy of a document on file in the Idaho State Office.

Chris Catheeman

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DEC 09 1923

RECORD OF PATENTS: Patent Number **913560**

1923

