

History of Emida, Idaho

Written by
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Edited by
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Excerpt is from a letter written by the Assistant Editor of the St. Maries Gazette Record, regarding the author of the following article, published in the Gazette Record 1978, and placed on this website with her most appreciated permission.

"For several years in the 1970's Louise Ells Hodge wrote the weekly news of three small communities for publication in the St. Maries Gazette Record.

Mrs. Hodge's contributions also involved writing features about the early-day history of these communities, including items about the first settlers, early-day logging, the first schools and mining. Her research for these articles was done with accuracy, and her writing was effective in detail, yet done with warmth, making each feature interesting to our readers."

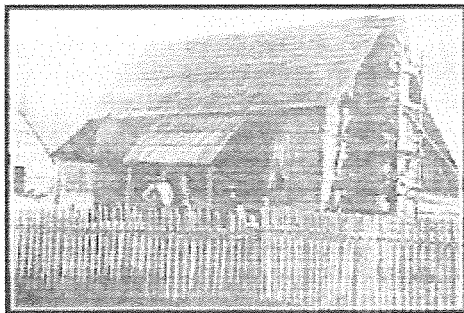


Photo Left: The Old Dawson House. William and Martha Dawson came here to live in 1890 after trading a wagon and horse for the house and land near Emida. The house, built with hand-hewed logs, is still standing.

EMIDA - Emida got its name from three families that settled in the valley in the late 1800's.

The E is for East, MI for Miller and DA for Dawson.

By 1879 they started across the plains with their six children and made their camp for some time where Garfield is now located. While Mr. East was on a prospecting tour in 1881 he came to this valley. He brought his family and homesteaded on what is now Santa creek about four miles west of Emida. It was later to become the **McGoldrick ranch** and is now owned by the **Dipple brothers**. In 1900 East engaged in the general merchandising business in Emida.



Photo Left: East's Store. One of the first stores in Emida was sold to Levi Crow in 1902 and later became the Dawson and English Store. Ollie Dawson and Allen English, owners are talking with Ollie's brother, Corry Dawson, here.

Thomas East, son of Hughes East, on October 16, 1905, donated seven blocks to the public. This land with designated streets and alleys was to be called Emida. The street running north and south was to be Main, and streets running east and west were to be called Pine, Grover, and Mineral. All the original seven blocks are located between highway 95 and Santa creek. In 1902 he sold his place of business to Levi Crow and retired. His store was located on the present site of **Bob Short's** machine shop.

East and his wife had nine children, Annie, wife of **Joseph Gill** of Kootenai county, Lela, wife of Edward Dawson of Emida, Louisa, wife of Guy Davis of Harrison, Mary, wife of John Tyson of Tyson, Thomas, married to Bessie Sherman of Emida, Luther, Katie, Jennie and Grover.

Bob Miller lived near the present Bob Creek road [the creek was named for him] just on the north edge of Emida during the late 1800's. After **Renfros** took the Santa creek post office from the **Griffith** place to Santa, Miller opened the first Emida post office at his place across from the present **Robert Dawson** home.

Photo Left: Big Valley. William Dawson could see this big valley with Santa creek winding through it as he sat on land he homesteaded near Emida in 1890.



William Dawson was born in Missouri in 1866. He and his parents came to Walla Walla by team in 1879. On January 19, 1888 he married **Dora Griffith** of Rosalia. They came to Emida in 1890 and traded a wagon and a horse to a negro man [his name is unknown] for land and the original house. It has been built on to - and is still standing. He established a butcher shop on Main street in Emida and made weekly trips to logging camps with meat. The Dawsons had five children, Corry, Ollie, Bertha and Lillie May. **Corry Dawson** married **Mary Lowe** who came from Gifford and was one of the teachers in the fourth Emida school.

Old Dawson house owned by Martha Ells. Daughter of David Ells. another place near Emida.

children, William, Rosa and Myron. His wife died in 1900 and he married **Mrs. Eugenia [Gorton] Norton** in 1902. They had one child, Orla Norton. Two of the Crows' sons visited in Emida in 1976.

On June 8, 1907 **Crow and Paul Kiesling** donated nine more blocks to Emida.

Levi Crow's store building was later owned by **Ollie Larsen** and the stock was owned by **Ollie Dawson** [son of William] and his brother in law **Allen English** [married **Lillie May Dawson**]. For many years the store was known as the Dawson and English Store.

The **English family** came to Emida from Pennsylvania when Allen was about 12.

Other pioneers who helped establish the town included **Pink Mashburn** who was born in Cherokee county, N.C. in 1849. He married **Allie Whiten** in 1887 and in 1893 they came to Indian creek near the Sanders store. He took squatter's rights and improved his land until 1900 then sold his property and bought land at the mouth of Santa creek [Mashburn siding]. He was at one time the postmaster at Sanders. They had seven children, Charlie, Florence, Benjamin, Luther, Jessie, Quincy and Olive. The property is now owned by PFI.

Photo Right: Modern. This, the fourth school built for Emida, was said to be one of the most modern schools in Benewah county in 1909. The bell in the bell tower rang for both school and church as the school served as the town's place of worship on Sundays.



Emida's first school was built in 1889. It was made of logs and was located where the Emida cemetery is now. The second school was east of **Margaret Phillips'** home in Emida. [**Ivan Foster** and family now own the Phillips home.] The third school was located across the highway from the present **Allen Quincy** home and it's believed that the land belonged to **Fred Scott**. The fourth school was part of that structure and it was moved across the field and more rooms were added. It was said to be one of the most modern schools in Benewah county for its time [1909]. The present building [now the Emida Community Center] was built in 1938 and the gym was added in the 1960's.

The **Fred Scott** family lived at the present **Allen Quincy** home on the south end of Emida. The Scotts had ten children.

Tom Laws of Farmington, Wash., and **Anna Jane Winn** made a down payment on the Emida hotel in 1910, one year before they married. They finished paying for it after their marriage in 1911. During the time they had the building, it was used as a store, hotel, post office and cafe. In 1971, their granddaughter, **Mrs. Francis Petrie** and her husband opened it for business as a bar and cafe and called it the "Stage House".

Tom and Anna Jane Laws had three children: Carrie [wife of George O. Ells] of Emida, Rich Laws of Smelterville and Pat Laws of Seattle.

Herbert O. and Priscilla Ells came West from North Dakota with a team of oxen and covered wagon. Their experiences on the trail west included one never forgotten. The big wagon tipped throwing Mrs. Ells and two of their children into a river. Ells rescued the children. Fearing his wife might drown because she couldn't swim, he found her treading water, her hoop skirt keeping her afloat. They first made their home in Waverly, Wash., and then homesteaded east of the present site of Emida on Ells creek, about 1896.

Lou Middleton built the Middleton house in the 1920's. He was married to **Edith Harkness**. They came from New Jersey about 1920. They had no children. The house is built with the living quarters on the top floor. Usually this style of house had a barn under it, but the Middleton house was never used for animals. Mr. Middleton raised a large 20-acre garden and made weekly trips to all the camps from Emida to Clarkia by horse and wagon with fresh vegetables. He died in Emida and is buried in the Emida cemetery. Mrs. Middleton lived her remaining years with the Englishes.

Ivan and Byrl Wilks live on the old **Ed Dawson** place, two miles north of Emida.

In 1903 the population of Emida was about 50.

Oscar Davis operated a barber shop on main street in the early days. **Oliver Nielson** of Pierce built the store that later became Derrys' store. Nielson hired **Bill Clute** to operate it until it went out of business during the depression. Later **Frank Derry** owned it.

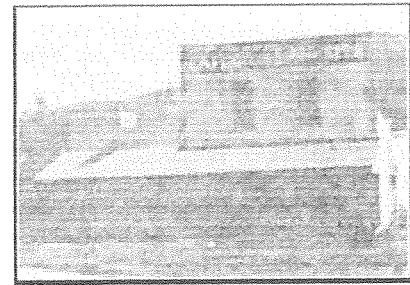


Photo Left: The Green Bubble Cafe. This was built on Main street in Emida about 1900 but was rebuilt. It was operated by **Al Vanderpoel** in 1938, then changed hands several times before it was torn down a few years ago.

The Green Bubble Bar and Cafe sat on Main street. It was built by a man named Clute. In 1911 it burned to the ground but was rebuilt. In 1938 it was operated by **Al Vanderpoel** and then changed owners several times. The business was closed in 1956 and torn down a few years ago. The site is now a parking lot owned by **Robert Short**.

Near the center of Emida you will find a new shop built by **Bob Kibbee**. At one time home base was where part of the shop sits. The rest of the baseball diamond was where the highway is now.

Photo Right: Crew Members. **Lee Swofford** of St. Maries and **John Olson** were among these crew members who worked with this large donkey engine for Blackwell Lumber Co. in the early logging days of Emida.



As you look across Santa creek from Emida you can see a trace of the old railroad grade used in the heyday of

There are many more who came and left Emida leaving their mark: C. Russell, Frederick Pers, W.W. Likeley, P. Goldsmith, M. Smith, Francis Scott, W.W. Lance, John Ekhoft, S. Shirley, John Hanson, Dave Holzman, the Griffith family, A. English, the Browns, Blondie and Belle Smith, the Thomas family, the Alfred Quineys, the Hill family, Russell Dial and so many I can't start to name them. Three old timers who have lived most of their lives here are Mark and Myrtle [Brown] Derry and George O. Ellis. Pete Pratt is a later old timer. He came here in 1937. Carrie [Laws] Ellis also lived most of her life here.



Photo Left: CCC Camp. Located on Willow creek at the foot of Harvard Mountain near Emida in the depression days, this CCC camp looked this way to Co. 229 in 1938.

Edna Dawson helped me with information from journals of the Dawson family and loaned me pictures and the use of her book, "History of North Idaho" published in 1903 by West History Publishers. Also helping with information were Lillian English, Carrie and George Ellis and Yvonne Parnell of Emida and Charles Erhart of New York. He spent a summer here in 1938 working at CCC camp at the foot of Harvard mountain. He loaned me the pictures that were taken in 1938.

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