

Buracker & Buroker

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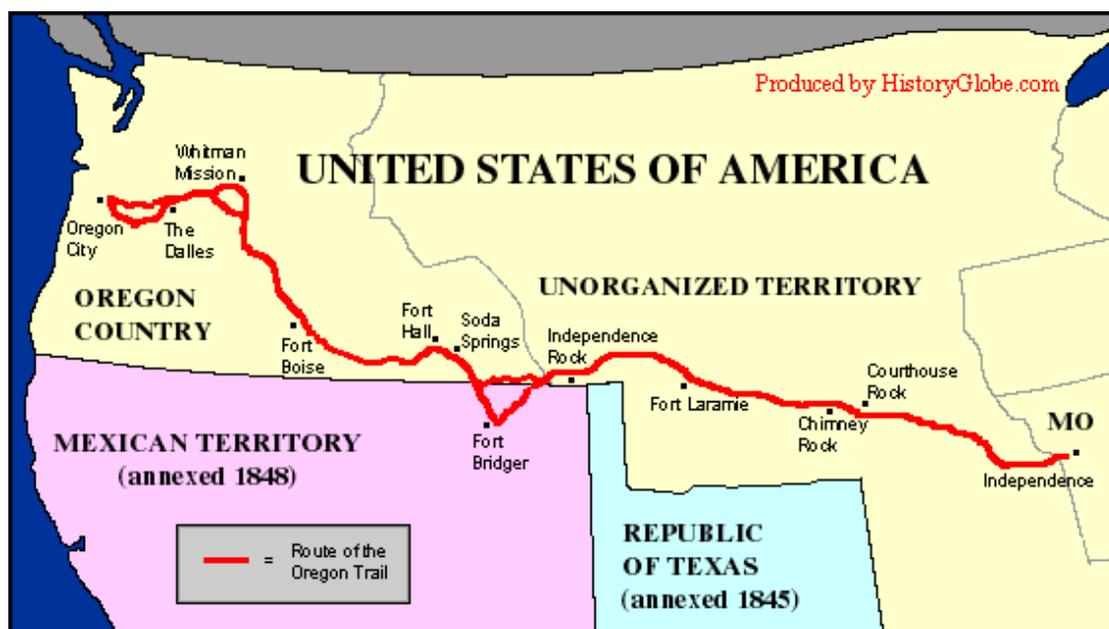
The Migration West to Washington

BETWEEN 1841 and 1860, about 54,000 people had traveled the 2,000 mile trail from Missouri to the Willamette Valley in Oregon. By the time the railroads were built in the 1880s, an estimated minimum of 200,000 had made that journey by wagon train and horseback on the historic Oregon Trail. See the route below.

What would it be like to travel from Indiana to Oregon on horseback or by wagon train? Joseph Williams was a 63-year-old preacher who made the trip in 1841. His diary is on the internet entitled, *A Tour to the Oregon Territory*. Countless films have sought to portray the perils encountered on that journey over the Oregon Trail. A recent TV series in Britain was entitled, "Into the West." Burokers were among those early pioneers.

Some Burokers Go Further West

The Burokers who migrated from Indiana and Iowa to Washington Territory and Oregon are recorded in *Some Northwest Pioneer Families and Various Related Families* by Larry H. Henry, published in 1969; Portland, OR. The family of **David and Sarah (Jenkins) Buroker** appear to be the first Burokers to go west on the Oregon Trail. Henry gives the following information about that family (added information is given within brackets):



R. C. Boraker, 14 Reynards Way, Bricket Wood, ST. ALBANS, Herts. AL2 3SF, England

“**David Buroker** was born in Shenandoah Valley, Page County, Virginia in 1818 [as the son of **Martin and Eleanor (Griffith) Buracker**]. He lived there until 1834 when he at the age of sixteen and his father [Martin], with possibly several other of the Buroker family, moved to Champaign County, Ohio. Of his schooling little more can be said other than that it was occurred as best as could be, and was in fact more or less the normal amount for a farm boy of that era. They went whenever there was no work to be attended to on the farm.

“There in Ohio he met and soon married Miss **Sarah Jinkins** [as spelled in early records] some time in the late 1830’s or early 1840’s [actually on October 14, 1843]. Seven children were born to this union [Ellen, Jonas, Mary Ann, Louisa, William H., Noah and Sarah]. Two years after his father’s death in 1854, he moved to Montgomery County, Missouri [should be Indiana] farming there for three years and finally moving north in 1859 to Davis County, Iowa where they settled for five years [when Noah was born in 1860].

“In April **1864** after much care and preparation, he set out with his young family by ox cart and team for the great wide Pacific Northwest, arriving six months later in Walla Walla County, Washington Territory. There soon finding the land much to his liking he settled down temporarily on rented land, farming for one season. However, hearing of the lush green land of the famous Willamette Valley in Oregon he moved in September, 1865 to Linn County [where Sarah Etta was born in 1866 at Albaney], again renting land and farming there for three years before returning once again

to the vicinity of Walla Walla where he purchased 160 acres on Mill Creek.

“This he soon sold and bought 240 acres, later selling again until through a series of real estate transactions he was able to buy some 500 acres of excellent farm land about seven miles north-east of Walla Walla. In addition, he also acquired 120 acres near Walla Walla, itself. His property was so advantageously situated that at one time four county roads and two railroads passed through it, of course greatly enhancing its value” (page 110).

Another biography of David Buroker is found in H.K. Hines’ *History of Washington* published in 1894. An excerpt on page 414 says, “In politics Mr. Buroker is a staunch Republican steadfastly upholding the principles of his party. Although a very poor man when he started to earn his livelihood, our subject has grown to be one of the wealthiest farmers of Walla Walla County.... Throughout the entire County Mr. Buroker is esteemed and respected, and parents urge their young sons to emulate his example in fighting the world and its temptations. In spite of the many misfortunes that attended his earlier efforts, Mr. Buroker never allowed himself to be discouraged, but patiently labored on, and now reaps the results of his labors” (quoted by Henry, pp.110-111).

David Buroker lived to the ripe old age of 84 and died in Walla Walla in 1902. He was buried in Kees Cemetery. His son **Jonas Buroker** had a farm of 375 acres of very fine land about five and a half miles east of Walla Walla (Henry, p.113).

“**William H. Buroker** was born in 1856 in Champaign County, Ohio. He was only eight years old when he and

his family arrived in Walla Walla County, Washington [in 1864]. Most of his education in public schools was completed in that County. After his father [David Buroker] moved back to Walla Walla County from Linn County, Oregon, William took over the operation of his father's farm for a number of years. Eventually, however, he removed to Umatilla County, Oregon, filed on a homestead and pre-emption and farmed there for seven years. He then returned to Walla Walla County, purchasing a farm some six miles north-east of Walla Walla" (Hemry, p.114).

"Our subject's marriage was solemnized at a place three miles east of his present residence on May 14, 1882, the lady being Miss [Ida] May Gallaher, who was born on the site of the present Dayton, now in Columbia County" (*A History of Walla Walla County, Washington* by W. D. Lyman, p.487).

Joseph Buroker was born in Virginia and married **Courtina (Coatney or Cotena) Ann Nunn** about 1832.

"Joseph was a cabinet maker and a skilled carpenter. He was well known as an expert fashioner of caskets. Came west 1882." His son **Isaac** "lived a short ways south of Walla Walla, near Freewater, Oregon. He was a farmer. Came west 1882." (106)

Isaac's daughter **Cora S. Buroker** was born in Grant County, Indiana and married **Frederick Ernest Kralman** in 1901. Both the Buroker and Kralman families went west in 1882. The Burokers settled near Waitsburg and the Kralmans near Fruitvale, Washington. They had four sons (Glenn Adolph, Dale E., Frederick Gilbert and Roger Verne) and two daughters (Rita Naomi and Evelyn Imogene). For more details of this line

see "Descendants of William Frederick Kralman" researched by Sarah Olsen and is available on the internet.

By Train to Washington

By 1876, a railroad from Omaha, Nebraska to San Francisco, California had been completed. Rather than traveling for six months on the arduous Oregon Trail, early pioneers opted for this easier mode of travel. A Buroker family was one.

"**Jacob Pence Buroker**, son of **Joseph and Courtina Ann (Nunn) Buroker**, was born in Indiana in 1855. In 1879 he married a daughter of Dr. Major John S. Summers, **Indiana Summers** at Kokamo, Indiana, whose family is given space in the following pages. In 1882 having heard from uncle and cousins [David, William H. and Jonas] in the west, about the wide open spaces and rich opportunities of the new land, he set out for Washington Territory. However, having a wife and two small children, their ages one and two, he avoided the tedious trek of the famous Oregon Trail in preference to a new route quickly becoming very popular with the emigrants. They traveled by train from Indiana to San Francisco, thence by ship to Portland and finally over the old narrow-gauge railroad up the Columbia River Canyon to Walla Walla, arriving in the summer of 1882.

"After their arrival amidst the bustle and clutter of settling down, moving in and making all the necessary adjustments, the young family often wondered whether they would be able to stick it out. It was soon after those hectic months at Coppei when they were just about ready more than once to call it quits, that **Indiana Buroker**, in a poetic flair inherited from her mother, wrote an interesting ballad of several verses which in later life she

loved to sing to her offspring and which many years later was printed in *The Waitsburg Times* of Friday, August 23, 1946 (Hemry, pp.115-116).

Indiana's full maiden name was **Olive Indiana Clarabelle Summers**. She commonly used Indiana or "Indy" as her first name. On the occasion of her 83rd birthday on May 2, 1945, the city newspaper of Walla Walla published an article about her life and experiences. Here are excerpts:

"Sixty-three years ago she came to Walla Walla County, settling with her family at the forks of the Coppei. There at Huntsville, she lived from 1882 to 1927 when she moved to Walla Walla, following her husband's death the year before. She was born in Kokoma, [Grant County] Indiana, May 2, 1862. Her father was engaged in the Civil War, coming out a major. He was **John S. Summers**, a doctor by profession. **J. P. [Jacob Pence] Buroker**, of the Virginia Burokers from which stem all the families by that name in Southeastern Washington....

"She was twenty when her husband decided to move West. They started by train, went to San Francisco, came up the coast by steamer, up the Columbia by steam and steel. With them were Buroker's father, Joseph, and his family, and Mrs. Cravens, a sister, who settled in Spokane. They were 17 days on the tiresome journey.

"The senior Buroker insisted that the new location should be where wood and water was plentiful, and that's what made the Coppei appeal to them. They procured the property known as the Braden brothers' place....

"Ten children were born to Mr. And Mrs. Buroker, and two died the victims

of diphtheria. The remaining eight include two daughters and six sons. Taking after their father, all the sons are mechanically minded, and two sons and a daughter-in-law [Gladys] are skilled pilots, who take Mrs. Buroker for a spin in the air at every opportunity. 'How I do love to fly – and I do a lot of it,' is the way the family matriarch appraises that mode of travel.

"**Mrs. [Walter] Waggoner** is the oldest of the eight children. It is with her that Mrs. Buroker lives. F. J. **[Freedas John "Teed"]** lives in Portland, where he was engaged in shipbuilding in recent years. L. J. **[Lerton Joseph]** comes nearest to staying with the family, but at his Nepavine farm he specializes in poultry production.

"**Chet [Chester]** is caretaker at the Lewis and Clark Trail state park near Huntsville. **Virgil** Buroker lives in Portland, where he is an inspector of airplanes, and tinkers with the mechanics of airplanes in his off hours. It is the mechanical end that pleases him most, perhaps, but he is also a pilot. He has his own field and planes.

"Son **Herbert** is currently headquartered in Coeur d'Alene where he and his wife **[Gladys Evelyn]** serve as pilot instructors. [See Newsletter 28, "Gladys E. Buroker 1914-2002] They have several private air fields that keep them fully occupied. Mrs. Buroker praises her daughter-in-law's skill as a pilot no end. She makes periodical visitations to these air-minded sons, partly to get her momentary fill in air travel.

"Her other daughter is **Neva (Mrs. Carl) Geyer** of Portland. They are engaged in lumber retailing. In son **Harold**, who lives in Bonners Ferry,

Idaho, Mrs. Buroker has a member of the family that goes in for radio. As a boy in Waitsburg High School he rigged up a receiving set long before radios were common. He had a radio room, in his home and his wife declares she is not a golf widow, but a radio widow. His home-made sets have reached to all countries of the world. He is an electrician by profession....

“**Jacob Buroker** died in 1926 at Huntsville, Washington. The next year Mrs. Buroker moved into Walla Walla where she lived with her daughter, **Ethel Waggoner** until 1955 when she moved into Portland where she lived with her other daughter, Neva Geyer for two years until her death in 1957 at the age of 95. She is buried in the Waitsburg, Washington city cemetery” (Hemry, pp.116-119).

Lorri (Buroker) Elkington remembers Ethel as a very elegant lady. According to her mother Patsy, wife of Arlen L. Buroker, “Aunt Ethel told me that her life was hard. She was the primary caretaker of the children and she said it always seemed to her that she carried one and drug the others with her all the time. Her mother [Indiana Buroker] was always so busy cooking and doing all the chores required of a mother with a large family with lots of farm hands to feed. We think the farm was on the Coppei in Waitsburg. They lost the farm during the depression.”

Hemry goes on to say that the earliest ancestor of the Summers family was **Lewis Summers** who was the great-grandfather of Indiana Summers. His son, **Seth Summers**, was born in 1800 and it was Seth’s son John who distinguished himself for his Civil War participation. He married **Sarah C. Morris** in 1855 (Hemry, p.119).

From *The Marysville Globe*, Thursday, October 21, 1937: “**Seth Burton Summers** died at his home Sunday after a lingering illness. He had been a resident of Washington since 1890, and had his home on the Tulalip Reservation at the time of his death. He was born in Converse, Indiana sixty three years ago” (Hemry, p.122).

“**Freedas John Buroker [John F. Buroker** in census records] was born in Converse, Indiana in 1881 and at the time of writing he and his wife live in Portland, Oregon, with his daughter, **Leora Koltach**. ... He grew up around Coppei and Buroker Station, attending public schools and learning the farm business with his father [**Jacob Pence Buroker**], as a young man.... Since [his marriage to **Ada May White**, a daughter of Richard D. White] he pursued the farm career most of his life, sometimes meeting with ill fortune, and bad luck, but always meeting life with determination and resolve. He farmed first at Waitsburg, then Clyde, Huntsville and again at Waitsburg, and various other places.

In later years he worked in shipbuilding in Portland until his retirement. Since retiring he has become quite active in restaurant management, still devoting many hours to Flanagan’s Restaurant in Portland which is owned by his daughter, **Leora Koltach** (Hemry, pp. 127-128). Freedas John Buroker’s family is included in “Ancestors of Peter Robert Kahl,” available on the internet.

See Ken Gissy’s website at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~kgissy/photos-b/photos-b.htm> for photos of David and Sarah Buroker, Jacob Pence and Indiana (Summers) Buroker’s family and others. Just click on the address above. A photo of

Indiana Buroker's family taken about 1905 can be sent on request.

Buroker Migrations after 1882

John Buroker, born 1811 VA, married **Malinda Kite** born 1822 OH. He later married **Mary Elizabeth Beaty** in 1867. They "went West in 1884 and settled at Buroker Station, about five miles west of Dixie in Walla Walla County, Washington. Many of his descendants still live in the West" (Henry, p.98).

The hamlet of Buroker is still on maps today and was a train station. It is northeast of Walla Walla Airport. There is also a "Buroker Road" in that area that goes through the wheat fields from Mill Creek Road to US Highway 12.

One descendant through John's son **Martin B. Buroker** was "**Edward M. Buroker**" (or **Edgar Morgan Buroker** in some records) who was born in Columbus, OH. He married Minnie Lewis. One son was **Walter W. Buroker**, born on December 24, 1899 in Waitsburg, WA. Walter's brother was **Elmer Lewis Buroker**. His daughter Darlene Johanne married Robert McCullough. **Darlene McCullough** has been very active in researching the Buroker and Buracker ancestors.

Edward M. Buroker appears as **Edgar M Buroker** in the 1900 census for Walla Walla County, Washington. His sister, **Lucy May Buroker**, was born 1882 in Urbana, OH and married **Charles Franklin Actor** in 1900. He was born 1867 in Dixie, WA. Their children were born in Waitsburg and Starbuck, WA. (Henry, p.104).

Due south of Walla Walla County in Washington is Umatilla County in

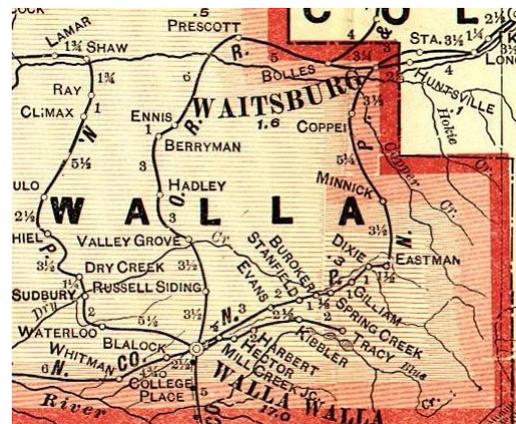
Oregon. Some Burokers moved there. When the *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* published a series of articles about the "Horse Era" it mentioned the Buroker family. Lois Fletcher wrote to the editor to say, "The article on the Buroker family was most interesting and I remember the family name as there were Burokers attending school in Milton-Freewater [Oregon] where I was reared... As the Burokers, I too can remember my father selling his 22 head of mules for a Caterpillar" (February 24, 1974).

Northwest of Milton-Freewater is "Buroker Road" that leads to the Dry Creek Ranch operated by Mike and Lorri (Buroker) Elkington. See their interesting website at:

www.drycreekranch.freehomepage.com/

A section is devoted to the life and work of "Grandpa Merrill Buroker." He was the son of **Lerton Joseph Buroker** and grandson of **Jacob Pence Buroker**.

By 1930 Burokers were living throughout Oregon and eastern Washington. One **Boraker** family migrated to western Washington. More about that will be covered later. Since the Burokers were so prolific in Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Washington and Oregon, that surname will survive for a long time to come.



Source: US GenWeb Archives, 1909 Walla Walla County map. Notice Buroker station.