

Mrs Beth Clark

2731 Valley Forge

Anchorage Alaska

99502

~~Notes~~

Reynolds Idaho

21 October 1987

Dear Mrs Clark,

Ricks College has acquired a part of Squirrel Meadows and has asked me to write a history of that area. I have interviewed many people so far, but have been unable to interview a member of the Milt Porter family. They are such a big part of the areas history, that it would not be complete without hearing of the Porter family history of the Meadows. I have been attempting to ^{contact} locate Arthur Porter inocatello, but so far have been unable to locate him.

I hope you can help me. Does your family have any written records of the years you were at the Meadows? Where could I locate Arthur Porter? Is there any other way you could help me in my research?

If you can help me in any of these ways would you please write to me.

Sincerely yours

Max Atkinson

Smith 410

Ricks College

Reynolds Idaho

Charlie Ercanbough a partner for awhile with
Dutch

Cabin on NE corner of Porter Place

Road caused friction

Everyone has pleasant memories of the meadows

Porters put up hay for many years -

Glan Sharps 1906
first saw meadow 1917

Charlie Eleanbaugh

Dutch Schultz did about 80 on trapping trips

Furdy stayed with Forest Young -
died about 1949 - following surgery

trapped 1910 to 1945

~~To Mrs Ethel Samas Arkas~~

322 No 2nd Street

~~Dighton City, Utah~~ 817302

Dear Mr & Mrs

~~Max & Samas Arkas;~~

Riches Collye has acquired part of Squared Meadows and has asked me to write a history of that area. ~~Mr Stan Sharts~~ had a visit with

~~Mr Stan Sharts~~ and he ~~mentioned~~ mentioned that you would be able to ^{recall} ~~state to~~ a lot of information about the early history of the Meadows. ~~Some~~ ^{some} information is correct, you are the ~~author~~ ^{author} of the original homestead, a ~~very~~ ^{very} ~~good~~ ^{good} job.

I am a professor of history at Riches College and have gathered a great amount of information about that very beautiful place, but I still need some information about the first people to live there.)

~~I~~ ~~hope~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~able~~ ~~to~~ ~~help~~ ~~you~~ ~~in~~ ~~some~~ ~~way~~ ~~if~~ ~~possible~~ ~~I~~ ~~would~~ ~~like~~ ~~to~~ ~~travel~~ ~~to~~ ~~Riches~~ ~~College~~ ~~to~~ ~~interview~~ ~~you~~ ~~about~~ ~~your~~ ~~early~~ ~~life~~ ~~and~~ ~~what~~ ~~you~~ ~~can~~ ~~recall~~ ~~about~~ ~~Squared~~ ~~Meadows~~ ~~and~~ ~~your~~ ~~family~~ ~~that~~ ~~lived~~ ~~there~~. I have been trying to reach you by telephoning, but I can not get an answer at your telephoning number. If you ~~can~~ could call me my home phone is 624-3245

I would appreciate all the help you can give me in this matter.

Sincerely yours

Max Atkinson

Smith Building 410

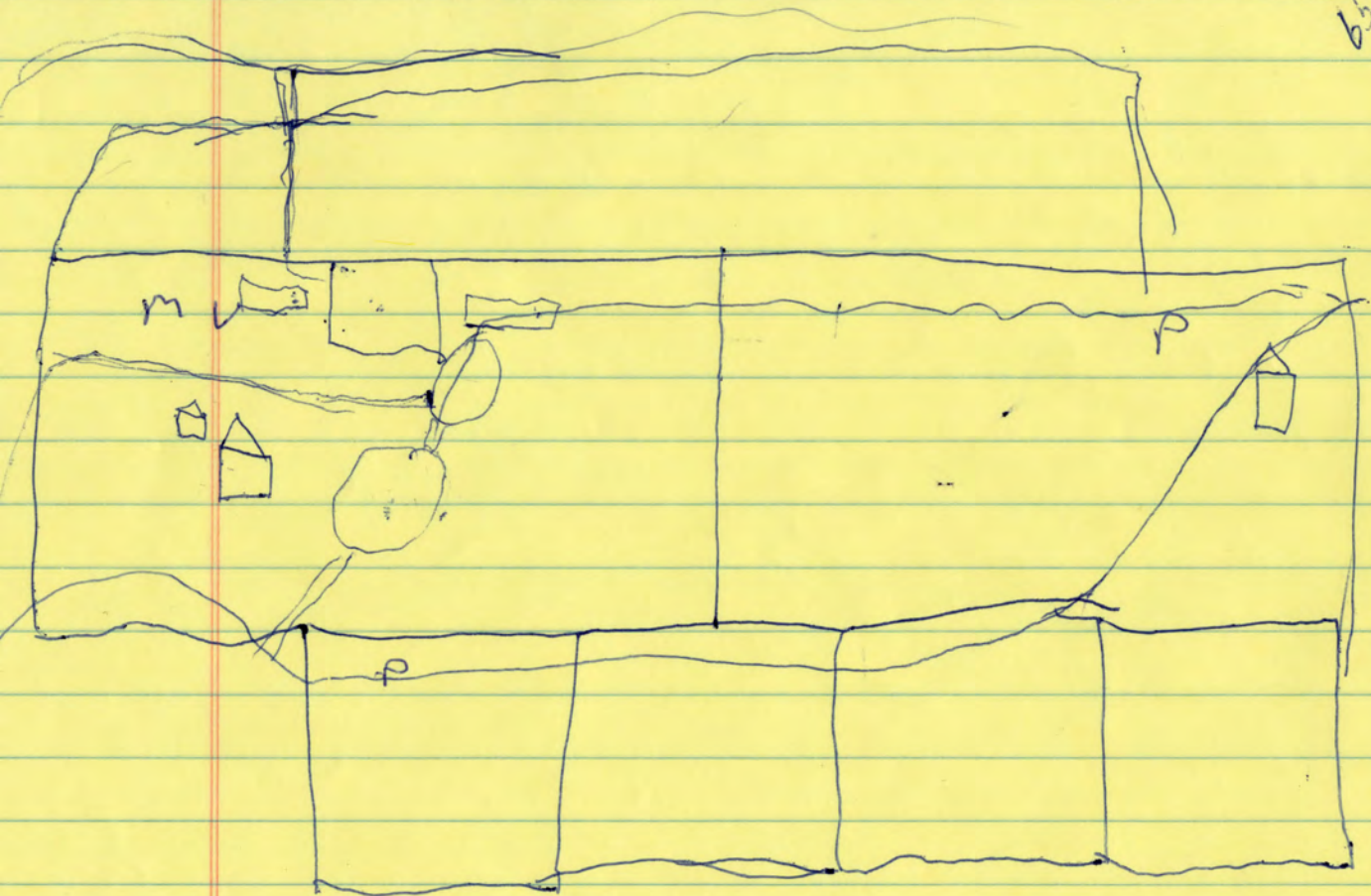
Riches College - Riches, Utah

49 to 83

1948
1949
1950

1968
69
1972

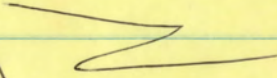
65 each
4900
1-3



1964
63

Osborne

elks
coyotes



Everyone remembers, as they go over Indian
Lake, "how beautiful were the meadows."

Anchorage, Alaska
Nov 19, 1987

Dear Mrs. Severson,

Please excuse the delay in answering your nice letter. Circumstances have prevented me from settling down long enough to write but I am happy to be able to give you most of the information you asked for. Squirrel Meadows is dear to my heart and my family and it isn't going to be easy to give you a brief history because so much has happened since the fall of 1914 when my father, Melburn Wyatt Porter and his brother Rawlston (Ross) John Porter acquired the home-stead rights from two elderly gentlemen whose names neither I, nor my brother Arthur M. Porter, can recall. Each brother homesteaded 160 acres. The remaining 160 acres was homesteaded by a man named Cook Johnston. I suggest you contact Mrs. Herman Marotz about the Johnston family. It was her grand-parents who had the other 160 acres. Her maiden name was Ida Atchley and her address is: Rt. 1, Box 15, Ashton, Idaho - telephone # 208-652-3383. My brother Art's address is - Arthur M. Porter - 72 Cedar Hill Dr. Postello, Idaho

125
Telephone #208-233-6749.

I called him this a.m. and learned that a Mr. Max Atkinson, Smith Bldg. #410, Reick College, Rexburg, Idaho 83440, has written him asking for information because Reick College has acquired a portion of Squirrel Meadows and he, too, is doing research - so you might like to contact him for information I'm not able to give you. As near as I can recall Mark Sherven acquired the ~~Johnston~~^{Johnston} homestead approximately 1930 and had a fox farm there. My brother, Art, can tell the exact year that that my father and Uncle Ross's homestead was sold to him. I think it was in the early 60's. My husband Don H. Clark and I moved to Alaska in 1950 and I can't recall all the exact dates. The Johnston homestead was 160 acres - the balance of the 480 acres of Squirrel Meadows.

My father, Mick Porter, as he was known, and my mother, Blanche Middleton Porter, and Uncle Ross were almost life-long residents of Rexburg, Idaho at the time Mick and Ross acquired their homestead. Uncle Ross was a Bachelor and lived with us all our lives. My parents moved to Portland, Oregon in 1942 where my father was a crane-operator in the Oregon Ship-Yard until 1962 ~~when~~ he passed

in 1970. ~~away~~. My mother passed away there in 1979. Uncle Ross remained at Squirrel Meadows until 1950 when he passed away at Ashton.

My parents had seven children in order of birth - Robert M (Bob) who passed away Sept 3, 1987. Beth, Phelma, who passed away in 1941, Arthur M. (Art), Jack Wyatt, ~~James~~ Ross (Ross) and Patricia Anne (Patti).

In the early years at Squirrel Meadows, my father and Uncle Ross lived at the home-stead year around while the family spent summers there, leaving in the fall to attend school. The family moved to Ashton, Idaho in 1924 from Rexburg. My father and Uncle Ross staying on at Squirrel Meadows, trapping and feeding live-stock with the tomato hay they cut and stacked during summer months. They would take turns during the winter months to ski & snow-shoe to Ashton for brief visits. As near as I can recall they purchased a herd of sheep in the late 20's and their summer range was east of Squirrel Meadows near Survey Mountain.

(4)

I was only 6 months old when my father and Uncle Ross acquired the home-stead and spent every summer of my life there until my marriage in 1935 to Don V. Clark and those years there are filled with happy memories. We always dreaded the time each year that we had to leave to come back to Ashtan to attend school. Uncle Ross always stayed at Squirrel Meadows practically year round until his death - leaving only to help out with spring lambing etc. He trapped in the winter months after they bought the sheep while my father took the sheep to the winter range near Menan, Idaho.

The early years at Squirrel Meadows were the horse and buggy and wagon era. I can recall the freighters with their wagon loads of supplies they were hauling to Moran, Wyoming over the Reclamation Road ^{to the dam there} just west of Squirrel Meadows and they always stopped over night at our ranch and my parents ^{hospitality} and especially my mother (delicious meals) ~~extended~~ were appreciated by the freighters. We had many visitors during the summer months. I recall the interesting and colorful trappers & miners who come there and of course friends and relatives who come to enjoy Squirrel Meadows.

You may use any or all of this information as you wish - I'm sure you may have to edit some of it because I really get 'carried away' as I recall those happy care-free child hood days at Squirrel Meadows, that I have hardly touched upon here. It was an entirely different era then lacking in all the modern conveniences we all take for granted now but as I look back I am grateful I was ^{privileged} ~~privileged~~ to be a part of this era when life was much less complicated and serene than our present day existence in our modern society.

If I can be of any further assistance please feel free to write me.

Sincerely yours
Beth P. Clark

P.S. I am wondering what prompted you to want the history of Squirrel Meadows. Have you been there often? I would also like to know the name of the people who have purchased Squirrel Meadows and who own it now. Thank you
Beth

St. Anthony Public Library

FIRST PRINTING

*Desperate Scenery
Elliot Paul
Random House
New York*

For Doris and Reese Halsey

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Steep Grades and Tall Timber

Before twilight that day, after Scotty and I had been relaxing at Squirrel Meadows a couple of hours, Larry O'Brien drove in, with Oscar, now rested, relieved and refreshed, a heavy clamshell bucket and about eight bums. The "Meadows" considered as scenery, had some qualities that remained intact in the mind, composed like a Corot landscape, but the atmosphere was strictly Idaho-Wyoming. There were broad fields of grass where, by some freak of nature, the woods had been cleared without the aid of man, so no trace of fallen trunks or uprooted stumps was visible.

Squirrel grass dominated the other grasses in those wide open fields, a foamlike grass of the genus *Hordeum*, related to barley and having long awns, the books would have us believe. The effect of a patch of squirrel grass, in terms of color, is buff with mist and it is not tall enough to sway much in the wind or short enough for lawns. It is a decorative grass. Horses will eat it, sparingly, but, when other grasses are at hand, prefer others. The evergreen trees behind the road house were straight, with bare trunks reaching upward for the sun because they were so close together that the branches could not spread. The carpet of needles was several inches thick, of a cinnamon shade related to barley and buff. Some of the evergreens were cedars, others were Douglas fir, and a few were larches, and one or two the black hemlock known to Socrates.

Steep Grades and Tall Timber

None was much taller than 100 feet. On the fringe of the meadows were bushes of mountain juniper over which deer could jump and frequently did. The course of Squirrel Creek, of course, was marked by cottonwoods, as yellow as the robes of an empress, with pale taffy shades and a *soupsçon* of attenuated blood orange. With dark Veronese green of the conifers, cottonwood yellow was in the best of landscape taste, and restrainedly effective. Spinoza would not have permitted his surroundings to be so flashily colored as to suggest abandon or vulgarity.

In sunlight, the vistas, whichever way one turned, were radiant; before twilight they were evocative of blank contemplation; at sunset they got out of hand, and one did not look at them too long. Then there was dusk, and would be starlight. In the bunkhouse mingled scholars off the reservation, founders, gold bricks, Bohunks and bums. Some cared for views, some did not. All cared enormously for food, as prepared by Spinoza and served by the flunkies he had chosen according to some principle of his that worked, but the nature of which was hidden from me. One flunky was so deaf that if a six-shooter had been fired six inches from his ear, he would not have heard it. The other had St. Vitus dance and, when not otherwise occupied, went into a kind of rigadon. Still, the deaf boy interpreted signals and the twitcher dropped no cups, saucers or tin dishes.

Before supper a bum and I went fishing in the creek, with bamboo poles and tackle borrowed from Spinoza, who, like the Chinese philosopher, was said to use "straight hooks" so that the fish could either be caught or not, according to their wishes. The hooks he loaned us, however, were crooked, curved and sharply barbed. The trout we hooked were either mended against their wills or the best trout showmen on earth. The bum ate his on the creek bank, and mine, too, because I did not want to catch enough for all my friends, or be served trout when they were eating stew, with roughlocks on the side.

Desperate Scenery

that Sacajawea might have woven into baskets. I recognized choke cherries, wild gooseberries and some roots like saffras, but not exactly. Meanwhile our horses stepped softly. We were walking them again. Squirrel Meadows could wait, our talk could wait. Reclamation, government and such could wait. We liked to take our time. We dismounted and drank from hands icily dripping and cupped for the purpose.

As Scotty and I got nearer Squirrel Meadows, the landscape adapted itself to our perspective, and became intimate rather personal, as if each cluster of trees; rocks with ferns, moss and lichens; each small wild animal; the birds, alone, in pairs, in platoons and flocks; each natural clearing; trickling spring; or flower-studded plot of wild grasses was either being shy and apprehensive, or inviting us in barely perceptible ways, like hopeful slave girls whose eyes for an instant let themselves become individualized among massed eyes, breasts, hips and shoulders in a market. Staid and slow as he was, Scotty was sensitive, too, and did not hold our horses to the trail but let them wander this way and that, maintaining only general direction, so that they could dislodge the choice leaves from a bush or stoop to snatch a wisp of grass. Scotty had a way with horses, a little stricter than mine but probably as effective. Already his horse named Prince had learned when Scotty was aboard, to turn his head back and inquire with his ears before halting in order to lower his head and reach a morsel that seemed to have grown itself expressly for him. Jack, my mare, on the other hand, would halt first, then turn and inquire, and reach down before I had had much time to consent. What I would not give to know what a horse mind registers and a horse personality feels on a trail like that, from rising plateau to foothills and mountains, on a clear September day. Sometimes, when a grouse or pheasant rose, whirring, our horses would shy, and almost step sideways from under us. Again they would simply flip up their ears as if to show they were deep in reverie. As a matter of fact,

Over the Trail to Jackson's Hole

acted unevenly, too. Sometimes I was startled and felt a shock or tingle all along my nerves. Again, I heard and saw, surprised but not physically affected.

As we continued, Scotty told me more about the Dilly, Spinoza and those nice reform-school girls.

"He's a card, that Spinoza," Scotty said, with the tolerant smile that made him look like a mischievous owl, without eyeglasses. "There's not much he can't do."

This was apropos Spinoza's suggestion, while the girls and the Dilly were under his protection, that the trio be disguised, not in an obvious way, but to make it more probable that the word would not get back from Wyoming to St. Anthony that Miss Hat and the flagellated pair who were "wanted" had passed that way, and were somewhere "in The Hole," Jackson Hole being fifty miles square. In Idaho, as in all new states, the frontier tendency toward anarchy and self-expression among sworn officers of the law and citizens-at-large had by no means subsided, and if busybodies in St. Anthony, egged on by a female politician named Miss Chamberlain, who was a trustee of the school and had, on the public platform, defended flogging, should form a posse and stray into Wyoming, those officers and citizens would probably ignore state boundaries and drag the girls back westward, for more whaling and confinement.

"Wil cut Bobbie's hair" (Bobbie meaning Roberta) "and fitted some loose pants, a shirt and leather vest for her, so she looked more like a man, when she was dressed," Scotty said. "She could have passed for a powder monkey or a flunky anywhere, the way Spinoza fixed her."

"That other one couldn't," I said.

"Do you know what Wil did? He rigged up Dot to look fifty years older, by fixing her hair and eyebrows, and blacking out a couple of front teeth. The clothes helped, too. Dot looked like an old bag. 'Pretend you're lazy, and sag,' that's

visited by telephone with Mrs Young
on Oct 17, 1988

m.a. SQUIRREL MEADOWS, WYOMING
by
Barbara Weaver Young

Squirrel Meadows, Wyoming, was formerly owned by my uncle, Mark L. Weaver. All property deeds concerning that ground should be on file in, I presume, Jackson, Wyoming, as that is where Uncle Mark always went to vote and to take care of legal matters concerning "the ranch." I believe the purchase of part of the property took place in the late 1920's or early 1930's.

I was born in the summer of 1934, and my father and mother, Wright and Eileen Thornley Weaver, took me as an infant to that Wyoming frontier along with my brother, DL Wright Weaver, when I was just three weeks old. We lived in a tent, and Dad and Uncle Mark and his sons erected a sawmill and got out the logs to build two cabins--one for each family.

I do not recall the year when Uncle Mark secured all of the property from the Porter Family, but it is my impression that he did hold title to all of that ground not too many years ago.

It seems strange to me that, upon my correspondence with President Joe J. Christensen about the Ricks College procurement of a portion of the ground, that the individuals assigned to research that area did not contact those persons mentioned concerning their memories, early photos, old movies, etc., and data concerning the use and development of the ranch and the surrounding areas.

I have a tape recording of my Uncle and my dad telling of some of the early trapping experiences in that area. That tape recording, though distorted due to the circumstances under which it was prepared, and because of the quality of production, is invaluable data concerning Squirrel Meadows. My own memories are really very shallow, as I was the youngest child involved, and was usually being tended by my older cousins. My memories, though few, are delightful.

My cousins have movies and pictures of snowshoeing and skiing into the ranch to remove the several feet of snow from the cabins. We all have memories of swimming in adjacent Loon Lake. I remember begging Dad to stop to let us walk over to see Indian Lake...I just knew there had to be Indians there...I remember the elegant water lilies, even though I was a youngster.

Picnics were unique and traditional--as was the fishing--at Lake of the Woods. My parents contracted to cook for the laborers who built the Reclamation Road over which supplies were carried to construct the Jackson Lake Dam.

And I remember the elevated pens which were built by Dad and Uncle Mark...for the silver foxes raised at the ranch. I also remember the early beaver pens--and the latter ones--where Uncle Mark and his family were successful in raising beaver on a domestic basis--the first known time such a feat occurred in the world.

Now my Uncle and Aunt have passed on, and so have my father, and two of my cousins whose work was so vital there. But there are a very few people living who could give Ricks College invaluable assistance with the history and development of this near sacred ground--near sacred, at least, to those Weaver family members whose

Alyn (Andrus) et al

I'm in trouble!!

Sister Young in
Salmon says that
no contact has been
made w/ her Weaver
relatives (If so, it does
seem like a real omission)

Let me know.

THANKS, JOE C.

memories are so cherished. Thoughts from Echo Hill to the overnight camp trips the young children were allowed to take alone--long before the boy scouts were doing such things.

My mother is 86 years old, and her mind is still excellent. She was just in Salmon today, and told us that she still has pictures of some of the workers she cooked for...along with other early photos of those past days. My two living cousins have all of the family pictures, including early movies, of that area...and though much of this history is family related, there is much information therein.

It will be a grave mistake if the researchers at Ricks do not capitalize on the memories and material items still in the hands of the few living people who knew Squirrel Meadows better than anyone else.

I submit the following names:

Mrs. Wright (Eileen Thornley) Weaver, 1527 South Holmes Ave., Idaho Falls, 83401...telephone 522-6074.

the Mrs. Jerry (Bette Weaver) A. Milligan and her husband who joined operation following their marriage in the 1940's...address, S.W. 199 Westside Rd., Hamilton, Mt. 59840...(406) 363-3384. Mrs. Milligan works for the U. S. Forest Service and is only available by phone in the evenings.

Van R. Weaver, St. Anthony, Idaho (phone available in Rexburg directory. Van is self-employed in the timber industry, is the father of 9 sons and 3 daughters. He is approaching the age that timber work is getting beyond his ability. He attended BYU and did not complete that schooling as he became one of the general animal husbandry partners in the development and propagation of the domestic beaver. He loves Squirrel Meadows. I do not know any of the plans of Ricks College, but this man to be hired as a consultant and a caretaker, would be of great value to the program.

DL Wright Weaver, my brother, who teaches in Seattle, Washington. Address: 16215 N. E. 19th Street, Bellevue, Wash., 98004. Evening telephone (206) 747-9867. DL spends four to six weeks in Idaho and Utah each summer with our mother, his married children, and his wife's mother. He is an excellent writer, and would also be an invaluable aid to further this developmental study.

Hopefully, these people will be contacted soon. My own feeling is that funding might be more readily acquired should these people be brought into the study. They do not have the dollars, but they have the romance on which much could be built in order to secure more contributions for this great cause.

If this project is handled properly, completely, and wisely, I can think of nothing which would be a grander legacy to the Porter and Weaver pioneers than the development of "the Meadows" for use of the college.

Ray Osborne born 1902 - Ashton
farmers made extra dollars freighting
first over 1915

- its always been beautiful -

Ed Sheffield had an eating place

- last trip 1927 -

dozen or so outfits headed from Ashton to Moran
a long day to S.M. - biggest day

just a bed roll
elk hunting - coyotes

sometimes stayed at Porters -

Jim Hedron - eating place - dam

- Porters raised a lot of hay.

many people in 20's (more)
stills

sawmill

freighting

road work

- some nights several wagons camped out
first road across meadows

Hodges first saw SM 1910
houses on SM to supply freighters
cafes.

4 head on 2 wagons
freighters always stopped on SM. for the
night - both ways
you can still see the wagon ruts

fall early storms caught freighters

dam finished in '17

all kinds of animals
coyotes

houses on the lower end.

Hazen & Judges 1903
started freighting about 1910

hauled a lot of freight cement - whiskey everywhere

farmers made extra money -
wagon trail cuts across meadows.

14 50 gal bbls of whiskey

- 18 freight outfits -

Dear Brother Atkinson.

I'm referring to the writings of Elliot Paul.

Perhaps you did not notice, but his description of the trees around Squirrel meadows is ridiculous to anyone who has been there. It throws serious doubt on the credibility of all his writings. He may be a colorful author, but he is a no naturalist unless everything at Squirrel Meadows has completely changed since 1910. Of course, you can't be responsible for what he wrote, but quoting him may even cloud your credibility.

Maybe you did notice these discrepancies and dismissed them as insignificant. They are not insignificant, but glaring errors.

For instance:

He describes the trees behind the roadhouse ... "Some of the evergreens were cedars, others were douglas fir, and a few were larches, and one or two of the black hemlock known to Socrates. "

In my lifetime I have never seen any Junipers or cedars within five miles of squirrel Meadows. No Douglas fir bordering the meadow, although there are many in the foothills. No stumps either - which remain for years after logging operations. No Larches South of Deerlodge, Montana. (The larch is very distinctive in that it sheds its needles in the winter time. No hemlock to my knowledge in any of the targhee forest. He may have mistaken some alpine fir as hemlock, but the differences are great and even so, no fir are in sight of the meadow.

He describes squirrel creek as being marked by cottonwoods " of course." and spends some colorful sentences describing that. I've fished the entire length of squirrel creek well below the lower meadow and have never seen a cottonwood. Could 1910 be that much different. Maybe he meant quaking aspen. There are some of these along the creek. On Boone Creek, farther up against the foothills there are many cottonwoods.

He depicts the very existence of the meadow as quite puzzling without the aid of man. Every naturalist knows that lodgepole pine will not survive in swampy places and knows that in a setting like Squirrel Meadows over the past hundreds of years the beaver are bound to have inundated every part of it at one time or another. Even today there are more lodgepole being killed off around the perimeters where ^{the beaver} ~~their~~ ponds are not torn out by men. It is indeed a large Beaver Meadow, and could more correctly have been named that. I must admit however, that Paul's writings are beautifully descriptive.

(over)

In view of Mr. Pauls errors, it may be worthwhile to check out his "Squirrel grass" lest the reader erroneously assumes

it to be the origin of the name squirrel meadows.

(over)

110 Ford note

~~Pay ~~~
~~water / time + 5~~

~~water~~ water ✓

No ~~advised~~

Who are (stay) - (3)

~~Names showing ? 8.~~

(one name)

~~"Boat" Johnson~~

10 - ~~James Ellyah~~

~~without material~~

11 - line 6 they
Paragraph 2

who is Mrs. Kozanushis

12 - lost paragraph - Askew

13 - The meadows (wax) was
, who never moved,

72 Cedar Hills Drive

Park St Exit To Center So Arthur

Barnack Highway

cross golf course

Cedar Hills low right

Patti Haslett

503-646-9060

Beaverton Ore.

1919 bad winter
came out on crest Joe

How long when did Porter acquire Homesteads
Road of the meadow?

Homesteads from Toller + ?

Burgendorf?

Schultz?

Weaver's purchase

1959

what did you do in the summer months?

People who visited the meadows?

freighters

Schultz + Toller

Ernan Daugh

Remember the towers?

— Calliman —

milk cows?

sawmills

when ^{was} were you home on meadow

cutting hay - cattle there all winter

72 Cedar St. 1000 Building

Plans of 1st floor to center 20 Oct 1911

Removal of chimney

cross of chimney

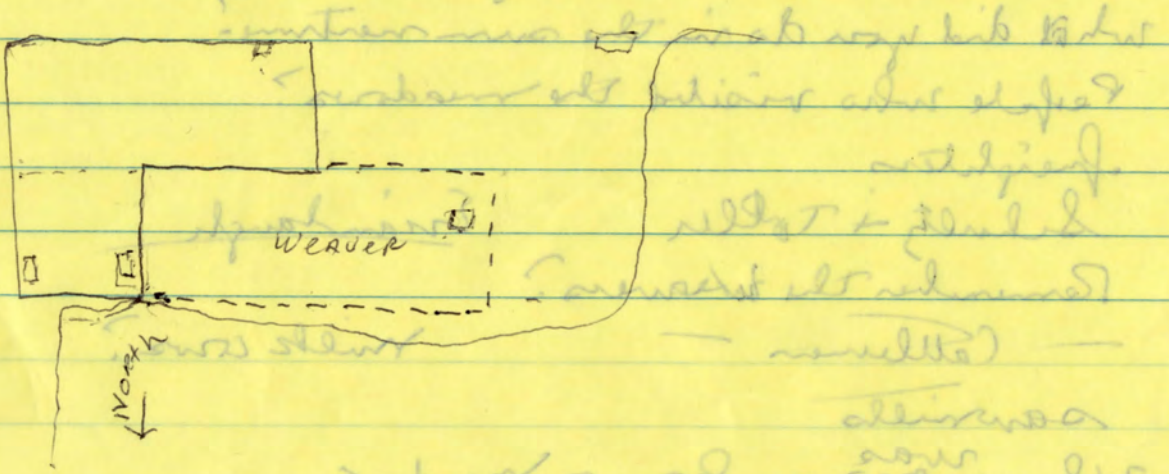
Cedar St. 1000 Building

72 Cedar St. 1000 Building
Removal of chimney

Removal of chimney
cross of chimney

Removal of chimney
cross of chimney

Removal of chimney
cross of chimney



Removal of chimney
cross of chimney

In the neck of the meadows North of the cabins - just a few hundred yards East of Echo Hill is a little secluded place in the trees where we always killed and butchered the horses for fox feed. After we'd skinned the hide off and cut all the useable meat from the bones, we left everything else on the spot. We called this place "The Bone Pile." I'm sure the sweet aroma from The Bone Pile drifted easily over to Boone Creek and most likely on over the ridge to Dog Creek and on to Winegar's Hole. At any rate, it quite effectively attracted any bears in the area.

One night we heard the dogs barking and knew there must be a bear over at The Bone Pile. Well, that was just fine with me because I wanted a bear rug. We'd just finished building the new bunk-house and that rough wooden floor was cold and ~~splintery~~^{slivery} on the feet in the mornings getting dressed. How sweet it would be to slip out of bed onto a nice soft bear rug.

I wanted to be prepared for the next night, so I had my 300 Savage propped up in the corner and made sure it had the usual five shells in the chamber magazine and one in the barrel (a rite usually done only when game is in sight.) I also put my boots, socks, and trousers nearby with a flashlight in one boot. I made sure the flashlight was in working order.

One reason I was very careful about these details is that Dad had gone chasing a bear in the middle of the night about two weeks before - without his boots and with a bum flashlight. After several hundred yards of pursuit he gave up and started home - then discovered the flashlight didn't work. It was a dark night and he lost his sense of direction in the timber, wandering clear over to "Big Rock" before he knew where he was. Then he took the trail back to the cabins, but he was gone over an hour and Mom was getting pretty worried. Well he was kind of foot sore for the next couple of days, but to top it all off, on checking the 32 he discovered there were no shells in it. Of course Dad was the brunt of a few jokes after that and I didn't want to repeat his performance.

So I was prepared and "loaded for bear." About midnight the dogs started barking and Don said "Sounds like he's here Van. Youd better get going." Well I laid there for a minute partly to work up some nerve



M. L. Weaver

Founder

Weavers' Beaver

"Dedicated to Conservation"



WEAVER

One night we heard the dogs barking and knew there must be a bear
out of the house. Well, that was just like with me because I wanted
a bear. I just finished building the new bunk-house and the
rough wooden floor was cold and ~~hard~~ on the feet in the morning
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soft bear rug.

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started barking and Dad said "Sounds like he's here. You'd better
get going." Well I left there for a minute partly to work up some nerve

and partly to plan what to do. I thought I'd best sneak out through the timber, cross wind of the Bone Pile so he wouldn't smell me and go high-tailing it. As I laid there, the dogs barking seemed to be getting closer.

I bounced out and slipped my trousers on and socks and boots. I even took the time to tie my boot laces around the ankles, figuring I might have to do some running. I slipped the flashlight into my back pocket, and thought at the time "Now why am I taking this?" because it was a bright moonlit night. But the flashlight was part of the plan.

Beautiful

The strange beauty of that meadow in the moonlight made me catch my breath for 4 or 5 seconds. Then
 As I slipped out the bunkhouse door into the brightness I spotted him ~~right off~~. He was a big black one - about a two year old and was out by the big gate headed toward the corrals, which were about 50 yards South through the trees. His unexpected location and direction of travel added a new twist to things. It forced me to quickly change my plans and added some urgency to the whole thing. Rendel's mare had just dropped a new colt a few days ago and they were probably out by the corrals. "That danged bear is after the horses!"

He was getting pretty close to the trees, so I chose a course West by South in hopes of heading him off. I knew there were occasional big rocks around and didn't dare run fast for fear of tripping with a loaded rifle, but I trotted as fast as I dared through the high grass and lumpy ground. After about 30 seconds the bear heard or ~~saw~~ ^{saw} me and stopped dead still in his tracks - testing the air with his nose and deciding what to do. This standing target was too good for me to miss out on, so I decided to take a shot - even though it was a long one for moonlight. We were about 50 yards apart then. I flipped the safety off and tried to draw a bead on him, but the moon was in the wrong position for my sights so I sighted down the barrel as best I could and squeezed one off. I plumb missed I guess, but he hesitated just a few seconds and I had time for one more ^{quick} shot. That decided him and he wheeled around and headed back toward the Bone Pile at a high lope. I wanted that bear rug pretty bad, so I started loping after him.

Now I didn't know just how fast a bear could lope or if he was really running, but I was a pretty long-legged kid and always did a lot of running around the ranch. I found to my surprise that I was gaining on him. His course gave me an advantage because I knew the lay of the land pretty well. He went right past the sawmill and out into the trees by the old fox cellar. As we entered the woods, we lost the full benefit of the moon and it quickly became much darker. We both slowed down to avoid fallen trees and other obstacles. But this began giving me even more advantage. As the bear altered course here and there to find the best way through it slowed him down a little and at the same time pointed me to the easiest way to go. I was making good time and was sure glad I'd taken the trouble to tie my boots on.

For a while I was getting pretty cocky and proud of myself. Here I was actually outrunning a bear. I began to wonder how much it would cost me to get a bear hide tanned and where I would take it to get the job done. I wanted to get closer where I could get a sure ~~thought~~ shot. Then I got to thinking. "Why is this bear slowing down? He can't be that tired. I'm not even tired. Maybe he's not all that scared of me."

Ordinarily a black or brown bear will avoid men if possible, but sometimes they will turn on a man, even if there are no cubs around. What should I do if this old bear decided to go South instead of North? Could I shoot quick enough and sure enough in the dark? I remembered the experience Rendel had a few years ago.

Rendel was the hired man. He was Mother's nephew, the son of Moroni Daines. He got to stay at the ranch all winter (the lucky dog.) Four or five months of the winter the snow was too deep for horses. This was before we had dogs and sleds, so the only way in and out was on skis or webs. Packing supplies in was tough - a good 15 miles from the nearest dry farm, which ~~the~~ was the Lenz family. It was uphill all the way and took a real man to make the trip. Rendel was a real man - though barely 18 years old. He was six foot two inches tall and lean but very strong. I've seen him throw a hind quarter of elk on his shoulder and walk away with it grinning. He grinned most of the time. He was my boyhood hero - was always kind to us kids and didn't often cuss in our presence. Actually I really loved that guy, but love was not a word to be used by men talking of other men. Sometimes kids could get away with talking about loving their dogs,

but the men only used the word love when talking about their horses or their guns.

Rendel always carried a pearl-handled six shooter on these winter trips alone. It was a 44 caliber colt. During one trip into the meadows near Indian Lake he was real glad he had the old "Colt 44." A black bear came at him and Rendel put four slugs into him before he finally went down. By that time the bear was practically on top of him. After that episode, Rendel did quite a lot of target practicing and wore his ~~wore his~~ six-shooter about everyplace on the ranch instead of just on winter trips.

These pictures flashed through my mind as I got closer and closer to the bear. Then I got to calculating. "A 44 caliber slug is a big piece of lead - bigger than any rifle bullet I've ever seen. If it takes four 44 slugs to drop a bear, how many 30 calibers would it take. I had four shells left. Could I place all four in the dark?" Soon I became much less impressed with my fast running and more impressed with the dark. The exact mathematics of 44 caliber vs. 30 caliber escaped me, but I have seen a bear running full steam for 200 yards after receiving a 30 caliber mushroom slug in his rib-cage, and I've seen what a bear's claws can do. I began wishing I was six foot two, like Rendel.

By this time I was getting pretty close to the bear. We were about abreast of the cellar. I could hear his feet scuffing on the ground. I'd never been this close to a bear before except at the zoo. I felt sure I could get at least two shots into him if he turned back on me, but would that stop him soon enough? I decided I didn't really want to find that out. This wasn't very close for a shot in the dark, but it was close enough for me. So I dropped to one knee and tried one more time. I missed, no doubt, cause he put on a full head of steam and was clean out of sight through ^{the} trees in about 10 seconds.

As I plodded back to the cabins I was pretty sad that I wasn't going to get my bear rug, but pretty glad that he didn't chose to reverse direction and make a rug out of me.

Rendel came in the cabin the next morning while we were eating breakfast, and wanted to know what the shooting was all about. As nonchalantly as I could I said, "Oh, I took a couple of shots at a bear out by the big gate. Missed him though."

Rendel's face turned a little pail just for a ~~mi~~ couple of seconds then his grin returned and as he headed to the door, he said, "Damn you Van. If you've shot my new black colt I'll"
I didn't hear the rest. He was going for the corral just to make sure.

P.S. I did finally get my rug.

The next summer at "The Bone Pile."

One shot, through the lungs.

Fred Wellman, the ranger's son was with me.

He can vouch for it.