

Thomas J Orcutt and Louisa Turk Family

When the class assignment was given out for the 2009 genealogy class I received the T. J. Orcutt children in the 1920 Benton School District 27 census, taken on May 1, 1920.

Starting with the 1920 census for Benton County I worked my way back for Thomas and his wife Louisa. I will relate the family history from the oldest entry coming forward to 1930.

Thomas J Orcutt according to the 1900 census was born in 1867 but most other records put him born in 1870. His father, Ezra came from New York, his mother from Minnesota. Thomas married Louisa Turk in approximately 1890. She was born in Canada to Mary and Louis Turk.

I found Thomas and Louisa in the 1895 Minnesota census, with two children Pearl arriving in 1891 and Ruby in 1895. In 1897 the family was in Idaho for the birth of Alice and William. They then went on to the Snohomish, WA area where there was an Ezra and Mary Orcutt living. In November of 1897 Alice dies of whooping cough. In 1900 they are back in Minnesota where Louisa had family. Two weeks after the 1900 census was taken Ezra Orcutt died from an accident. The family returned to Washington State in time for Harry to be born in 1901. Ruby died in 1902 of typhoid fever.

In 1910 the family was still in Snohomish and the family had grown by four more children; Jay in 1903, Thelma in 1908, Irvin in 1910 and Francis in 1913.

Sometime between 1910 and 1920 the family moved to the Kiona area where they stayed thru the 1930 census. Thomas died before the 1930 census but I could not locate his death record. Son, William in the 1930 census is living next door to his mother who still has Jay and Francis living at home along with Thelma who married Carl Montgomery in 1925 and now has two children, Ronald born in 1928 and Ilene born in 1929. I was unable to find birth records for these children.

From the death registration for one of the girls I learned Louisa's maiden name of Turk. There were Turks in Otter Tail Minnesota. I found a Louise Turk at about the right age. Her parents were Louis and Mary. Siblings were Charles, Robert and another brother whose name is unreadable on the 1885 census. In the 1920 census she states she was born in Ontario, Canada.

I found the marriage record for Harry and his and Jay's date of death as well as William's World War 1 draft registration. There is still room for much more research on this expanding family. The last piece of information I found is a Pedigree File for Thomas. This research has proved much of the information to be accurate but not all of it. A good example of "prove it for yourself".

This family endured the hardships of the land, from failed crops in 1900 to a forest fire in 1910 that swept thru Washington, Idaho and on up into Canada. The death of several children was another hardship to endure.

In the early 1900's land became available in Eastern Washington and for the first time Thomas listed that he was a farmer not a tenant farmer or hired hand. Here in Benton County the family put down strong roots and here they stayed.