

THE CONCRETE HERALD

Formerly the Hamilton Herald Established Nov. 23, 1901. Oldest Paper in the Upper Skagit.

November 16, 1961



RANCHER JIM OVENELL TELLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY DAYS ON THE SKAGIT FLATS

A good crowd turned out on Tuesday evening for the Skagit Historical meeting to hear Jim Ovenell tell of the early days as he remembered them. He spoke briefly of his grandparents and of the trip his grandmother's family made from Connecticut around the Horn to the west coast which took six months and ten days.

His grandfather came to Whidbey Island in 1858 from England. Nelson Ovenell, Jim's father, was born in 1861 on Whidbey and came with the family to Skagit County in 1866, settling on what was later known as the Downey farm.

The high point of interest was the diary which Nelson kept, many entries, beginning as far back as 1882 were read to the group, some very amusing others tragic. He mentioned the names of many steamboats which passed by the farm, one the Libby "stopped and let J. O. Rudene off with a cow".

Many familiar names were mentioned as recalling the Gashes, Turners, D'Arcys etc. He made mention of the fact that LaConner

became known as the town where folks paid their bills only once a year.

Nelson Ovenell and Hattie Callahan were married June 2, 1890 and lived in the Avon community. Jim was born at what is known as the Stewart farm. He told of the difficulties of harvesting with the cumbersome machines, and other events of early times.

A large display of Indian artifacts, loaned by Wm. Moore of Mount Vernon, contains over a thousand pieces, some of which were collected as a boy by this father, Allan Moore, in White Deer Valley, Pennsylvania.

Plans for a permanent museum were discussed during the business meeting. A committee headed up by Herman Anderson, will meet with the School Board in regard to the matter. Martin Sampson told how Skagit County got its name by early settlers calling it after the large and powerful Indian tribe, Skagit.