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Thank you

**Nellie Gray Gaines and Don Conley
are 1st cousins, 2 times removed**

Nellie, Esten & Wilma Gaines

Diary Of Nellie Gray Gaines

The following is a diary accounting of the family of Nellie Gray Gaines. Some details may be incorrect, as some are hard to decipher. We hope you will follow along as she tells the story of her family's early history in the Bickleton area. Nellie was an aunt of our current local citizen, Tom Gray. She was the daughter of Thomas Peter (below) and Nettie Gray.

Amanda Elizabeth Barnes daughter of a southern plantation farmer and Peter Thomas Gray—he was a saddle maker—were married in Alabama, living there until they had 4 children. Thomas Peter, born March 29, 1844, three girls-Rebecca, Sarah, and Alice. After the death of her husband, she and her children moved out to Nebraska to be near an Un-

cle Barnes. After coming to Nebraska, Papa helped to support his mother and sisters.

Then his mother married Joseph (Charles) P. Taylor. He was a widower with 2 boys (named Wray Taylor and Miner Taylor) and one girl.

When the Civil War broke out, Papa wanted to join the Union Army. His mother refused. He then left Nebraska and went with a group of people that were going by oxen to leave to Colorado. And there he enlisted. He was discharged on or about July 16, 1865. He served 3 years and 9 months, 6 months of which was the war with the Indians.

I am not sure if his mother and Taylor were married before he enlisted in the Union Army or while he was in the service. His sisters also. His sisters married: Sarah-Bob Roundtree; Rebecca-Edward Carrell; Alice-Bob Chandler. And on Sept. 12, 1866 Charles Henry Taylor was born—a half brother to the Gray children. I remember papa saying, never turn a hungry person away. Give them some food of what you have. For at one time before supplies arrived, they had one fat bacon and brown sugar left to eat.

After his discharge from the Army when he was not working, he made his home at Uncle Johnny Carrell. He and the Carrell's boy were close friends.

For a year or more he and Lash Carrell were with a circus and Papa played his banjo and sang songs like Yellow Rose of Texas and I Left Alabama with a Banjo on my Knee and several more. There is a picture of a little man standing by. There is also a Tin Tite picture of Papa and Uncle Frank Carrell taken in Nebraska City where they had gone to have some machinery repaired. When Ralph Carrell was here from his home in Canada, he came to visit me. He reminded me of the long years of friendship between our families. Later Papa went to work in the machine shop in Plattsmouth Nebraska. There he met Frank Badgley, a cabinet maker and they became friends. (Frank was the son of Lorenzo and Elmara Burhart Badgley. The children born were Ida, Dora, Nelson, Alfred, Nettie and Mina. George married a woman named Minnie, and Nettie married Thomas Peter Gray. They all came from Michigan or New Jersey, as recalled by Nellie.)

After the death of his wife Minnie, George left his baby girl (also named Minnie) with her family, and he and Frank and Nora Badgley came out to

Aleance Nebraska to make their home. They built sod houses as the other early settlers did. Then he married Minnie, a local girl. Aunt Nora soon tired of living in a sod house. So they moved to Plattsmouth and Uncle Frank went to work in a Cabinet shop. In 1882 Mamma came out to Nebraska to visit her brothers and their families—living at Aleance—who were still living in their sod house and Frank at Plattsmouth. Frank had two children, Ethel and Clyde. They both married local girls there and later came to WA also Uncle Frank, Nora, Ethel and Clyde, before 1909. Mamma did dress making and lived for a time with Mr. and Mrs. Deane. She was active in church work. They gave her the Caster that I have. I have these pictures in the old family album.

After his step-father's death, he again supported his Mother and Charley working in a machine shop in Plattsmouth. Here he met Frank Badgley, and they became friends, and here was where he met Mamma. After she returned to her home, there were many letters written and in 1884 she again came to Nebraska. I have the book of Gems of Poetry published in 1883, she purchased to read on the train. My parents were married Apr. 8, 1884 at Plattsmouth in Case County Nebraska. They lived there about 5 ½ years, Grandma Taylor and Charley living with them most of the time. Papa bought a small farm. There was some timber on the place, some farm land. He raised a few hogs, corn and sorghum, made sorghum meal, also cut some wood to sell. Our place was on the main highway from Omaha to Nebraska City. The Bob Michels lived just across the road. How I loved to go over there. I have the clipping from the paper announcing their marriage Mamma had saved. I was born Oct. 25, 1891 near Plattsmouth Nebraska. My parents were Thomas and Nettie Gray.

Uncle Lash Carrell came out to Washington to visit his half-sister and husband, Charley and Mary Jordan. The Government had just opened up land in Eastern Klickitat County to be homesteaded. When he returned home, he and my father decided to sell this home and to come out to Washington. If I remember, the Carrells had a larger place than we had. I remember this and others homes there. There were many things to be done—carpet rags to be woven into carpet. Papa traded his sorghum press for a winchester Rifle. I think Tom now has the

gun, The last time I visited with Shelvie, just before his death—how he had gone with Papa that day. The lady wanting him to eat some soup—only thing he could remember being in it was trout—could not eat it.

I remember our last night in Nebraska, we stayed with the Pattersons in Plattsmouth. There is a picture of her in the old album. We took the train the next morning. Mr. Patterson carried Mildred, Mamma, and Pete to the train. When Papa went to check the luggage, and people started getting on the train, I cried, afraid the train was going to leave without him. Aunt Ollie and her mother, Grandma Hubbard, the children Ralph, Ella, Harry, Grace and Joy, her step-children Oris, Edna and Johnny who had only one leg, and our family Papa, Mamma, Daisy, Shelvie, Mildred, Pete, and myself. Pete was only 17 months old. They had chartered a car to bring what machinery they thought they would need, the household furniture and 8 mules, Uncle Lash, Grandpa Hubbard, Zale Woods, and Frank Carrell—they had to water and feed the mules and other things in the car. They paid no fair.

Aunt Ollie and Mamma each had a large clothes basket filled with food. Aunt Ollie had more mouths to feed so Mamma shared some food with her, Papa and Oris got off at train stops and got hot coffee and other things we need. We were on the train 3 days and 2 nights and arrived in Arlington Oregon the 3rd night and went to the hotel. The next morning Papa looked around and all he could see were the hills and the swift waters of the Columbia River, that we would have to cross, and then to travel up the narrow road up the hill. Afterward he traveled this road many times. He felt like taking the next train back home, but he had no money for a return trip back home. That morning Aunt Mary and Uncle Charley Jordan came to take us all up to their farm a few miles south of Bickleton. Papa soon met Ira Carter, who worked for George McCredy—where Keith Jensen now lives. Then Papa met George McCredy and he said we could live in the old Forbes house until he could find a house. It was east and across the road from the McCredy home. I think it was that fall the McCredys moved to Cleveland. He then bought a lot in Bickleton and built the largest and nicest house in town in 1898 or 1899. He was a retired sheepman. He lived (there) until his death. It was the first

house I remember being built in Bickleton. Uncle Lash and Aunt Ollie bought the Jim Sigler place where the Sigler's had a hotel. They soon took down the hotel sign but there were always 1 or 2 people besides their family most of the time. Roy and Florence (Van Nostern) now own the home—it was built a few years before.

Grandpa Hubbard built a small house just north of the grade school house. We spent many happy hours at Aunt Ollie, sliding down the banister and the swing that was (there). I have a picture taken soon after we came of Aunt Ollie's new home. In 2 or 3 weeks we moved over to the Steve Matsen place, where Tex Brown now lives. Mr. Matsen had purchased the Clark place just east of town and planned to make that their home. But when spring, he decided to move back. The Matsens moved back to their place, and we to the Clark place (in Alder Creek). There was a large tree in the yard that Mrs. Clark had brought in her trunk from Illinois, their former home many years before. I believe he was a retired minister, Papa rented the place on crop shares and Papa took care of any stock he had in the pasture. Mr. Matsen gave us a milk cow named Nellie and old Nellie gave us milk and butter for several years. We kept her until she died.

The earlier settlers built their homes in covies or draws, protecting them from the wind, who lived near the mountains and near Bickleton and Cleveland. And there was sage brush everywhere, and here and there a Juniper tree, only where other earlier settlers had cleared off the sage brush and built

homes as far away as the Columbia River. John Andrews was road supervisor, Mark Crider was road Boss and he and his crew camped at the Clark place. Many Indians came and camped there too. His (Mark Crider) wife had died a couple of years before and left him with 7 boys—Willie 19 the oldest, Calvin the youngest was about my age. He had lived in Pine Creek before homesteading in Crider Valley named for him. The old house is still there. The barn has been torn down.

My parents were planning on buying the Burney place north of what was later Blue Light. My first teacher was Earnest Spoon. Daisy and Shelvie had attended school in Nebraska. It was the last term of school in the little one room school house. (some sentences lost here) They had trouble moving the school house, and some one suggested to ask Tom Gray to bring his mules, They did and they soon had the school house down to where the Grange Hall now is. The building was used as a dwelling for many years, and later for a telephone office for Reader Tel. Co. Several years earlier, the Comstock had an office in Lettie Exline's home and just west of the Brockman home.

A new 2 room school house was built where the grade school now is—later 2 more rooms were added with 4 teachers, and the 9th grade Mr. T. Clyde Anderson was Principal.

Grover Cleveland is the first President I can remember and Papa saying if a Republican could be elected President, times would be better. I do not remember if times got better or not. We attended Sunday School in the Methodist Church which was built about the year 1886-1887. The church was still unfinished when funeral services was held in it for Mr. Brown, grandfather of Tex Brown. Mrs. Matsen had told Mamma her first husband Mr. Clark, and George Mouhead were ministers at one time. There was a Presbyterian Church at Cleveland. Rev. Douglas preached there and his son Wm. Douglas attended the Cleveland School and became a Justice of the Supreme Court and held that office longer than any other Justice. He resigned because of poor health.

In 1903, a Presbyterian Church was built in Bickleton. A few of the early ministers were Rev. Longbottom, Nutting, Forbes. Ford and Rev. Wolf. Rev. Ford was the minister when Sunday classes planted the trees. Later the Methodist held services at Jer-

sey, later called Enterprise; Crider Valley, called Pleasant Ridge; and later to Dot in the school house. Rev. Johnson Anderson and Rev. Sterns were the last ministers in the Methodist Church.

Before we left Nebraska, Papa had applied for a pension. He had lost his discharge certificate. They were checking the records. He made two or more trips to The Dalles Oregon before he received his pension. We were living on the homestead. When it was granted Wm. Faulkner was United State Land Commissioner. He lived at Cleveland. To file on a homestead, you had to go before him--also when you proved up. You then received your deed to the land.

While we were living in the Clark place, the Roger's baby was the first one to be buried in the Oddfellow Cemetery. Many died from Depth—mostly children and were buried in the cemetery (Clark) east of Bickleton—not far from where we lived.

Mark Crider located many families on homesteads, among them our homestead which was then called Stegeman Ridge. It was a part of the grazing land for his sheep. (That) fall Papa, with the help of Frank Carrell, he homesteaded just north of our place and Grandpa Hubbard built our house. The (Frennes) brothers had bought the place so we had to move. The house was not finished—windows boarded up and the doors were not hung just held in place with 2x4—that night I'll never forget. Papa, Daisy, and Shelvie had gone back to get the chickens, Old Nellie the cow and an orphan Dot that had been given to Shelvie. After they left with doors braced shut I felt safe. But Mamma was worried when the coyotes started howling. I stayed awake with Mamma until they came back. The next morning I was the one to get into the wagon and catch the chickens. The bed was about 2 feet high with boards over the bed. Daisy and Shelvie took the chickens and put them under the house until we could get the chicken house built and a little pen around it—could not turn them out for there were so many coyotes. They got many of the chickens that fall and winter.

Papa had all he needed to start farming—a walking plow, a spring tooth harrow, some tools, and the Democrat (or spring wagon) wagon. The bed was about 18-24 in high with a spring seat. How thankful he was that he had brought the machinery

with us. We have a few pieces of furniture and dishes to be handed down to our families brought from Nebraska.

And before winter arrived a barn was built. Setting poles in the ground and nailing on poles, leaving a space to be filled with sage brush grass and dirt. With a board roof of 1x12 in. lumber, Papa with Shelvie help had cut the poles out in the timber that summer. They cut trees and sawed them into 2 stove lengths and rolled them up into the wagon. This he did each year until his death. We never burned sage brush in the stove as many pioneers did.

There was room in the barn for the 4 mules, Dot and old Nellie the cow.

That winter we cleared off some sage brush -Papa plowing the ground. Daisy, Shelvie and I pulling out the brush and pulling it—then it was burned. We got 15 acres or more to plant. Frank Carrell broadcasted the wheat seed. Ground was cleared around the house for a garden and the orchard—fruit trees, rhubarb and gooseberries, currents. The trees were bought in The Dalles Oregon. There was always a big garden planted and when fall came, the cellar under the house was well filled. The large potato bin was filled and plenty left over in the spring to be sprouted and sacked. We all helped and Papa would take relatives to Arlington to sell (crops). And each year after harvest, he would take wheat to the flour mill at Prosser and trade for flour.

There were sage hens, prairie chickens and cotton-tail rabbits that the earlier settlers could kill for meat—and lots of Jack rabbits, but not very good to eat. They had rabbit drives to kill them off—they ate so much of the growing grain and garden. They had to trap the sage rat and the coyotes if you lived in the sage brush.

Many families went over to Parker Bottom in the Yakima Valley to pick hops and work in the fruit harvest. We never did for there were the cows, pigs and chickens to care for.

In those days to be eligible to vote you had to pay a poll tax. Papa worked ½ day on the road with his team to pay tax.

Our first school was in the George Andrew house. Delbert Gunning was the teacher—had to hold 3 months of school to establish a school district. We had to walk across Juniper Canyon about (3) miles. A school house was built about 1901. Ralph Baker was the brother of Mrs. Wm. Mitty. I have a picture of the old school house. There were 25 pupils the year Jessie (Forker) taught. The next year she taught at Bickleton. The teacher was also the janitor. She built the fires-swept the floors and took the towels home to wash. And each day she sent 2 pupils over to the George Andrew place to get a bucket of water. The water bucket with a dipper, which we all drank water from, was put in the corner on the floor near the teachers desk. Shelvie saw Fred Huit put his foot in the water bucket. Next year the room was divided making an entrance hall where we hung up our coat and hat and our lunch bucket. There was a shelf for the water bucket, dipper, wash basin and towel. I think that our school-house not different than any other. When the weather was foggy we would shake the frost off the sage brush each day so we would have no trouble finding our way (home). And when the Chinook wind started melting the snow, the creek would soon rise and the water swift. We often had to walk down the canyon nearly a mile—there we would walk across on an old tree that had fallen across (the) creek. Often Papa would be there with Dot and he would ride her over and get a place where the stream (was) widest.

We all had to learn to ride on Old Jenny, a mule, and then Old Jack. Then we were ready to ride Dot—then Dexter.

The first wheat was cut with a reaper, shocked and then hauled in the wagon where it was stacked. The next (year or two) we had cleared the sage brush of 20 acres and put in wheat. The grain was cut with a header with a crew of men to cook the meals for. Each year the thrashing machine came and thrashed. It was one of those years that the thrashing machine had finished. The road then went

down the ridge and between our barn and house. Looking out, Mama saw the barn was on fire. No fire in the stove and Papa did not smoke. There were only two mules in the barn. One Maggie, had broken loose and ran out—the other, when it got loose, was so badly burned it soon died. A barn was then built with a place for hay and room for several horses and cows,

About that time Mamma received 2 or 3 hundred dollars from her parent's estate. She bought Daisy and Storm, paid the header bill, and bought a young milk cow named Bessie and a bull.

Not long after we'd come to Washington, others from Nebraska came to make their homes here. Among the first were the Clarence Crovalt, Doves, Fergusons, Nyes, Cal and Les Grave and George Churchills. He (George) homesteaded next to our place. His son Frank and daughter Myrtle—their land joined their fathers. Many more came a few years later and settled in Sixprong—the J. Churchill, Allbrittans, Huit, Glasco, Archer and others to Sandridge—Doves, Crovoltz, Ferguson, Ario, Carrell and Uncle Charlie Taylor. New school districts were established—Crider Valley, Sixprong, Sandridge, and others.

Some of the earlier pioneers in Bickleton were the Matsens, Grahams and Wattenbargers. Then they came in 1886, Bromleys, Rodgers, Flowers, Storys, Martinett, and Sanders. (Others were) Faulkner, Beck, Hosfelt, Chambers, Gaines, Weer, and Jordan. Near the Columbia River—Cahills, Kuhn, and Peters. Their (Peters) home was where Les Kelly now own. (There was also) London, Smiths, and McCredy.

Nellie now tells about the Gaines family. Anderson Gaines born 1851, and Alice Weir born 1874 were married in Land Co. Kansas. Three of their children were born there—William Bert, James Leland and Julia May. The family came to Washington in 1886 and lived on the Smyth place near the Columbia River, when Washington was still a territory. John Esten was born there. He (Anderson) worked for Smyth a year or more and then he homesteaded in what was then known as Jersey. Olin, Charley and baby sister were born there. Baby only lived a few months. He built a house there and I think it still stands. I have a picture of the old home taken a few years ago. In those days,

the boys did a lot of hunting and fishing over in Woodgulch or Pine Creek. School year was short but when Olin and Charley went, (it was) a 9 month school. When the spring work and harvest was over, Monday morning he would walk up to the saw mill west of Cleveland and then Saturday after work walk home. Wm. Bert married Carrie Hanson—children Hazel, Eunice, and Ivan; Julia married Henry Thane—children Fred, Jessie, Roy and Delma; John Esten married Nellie Gray (our author) child Wilma (Leevers); Charley married Vera White—child Maxine. I think Wm. and Mary Weer and his brother Alec. came to WA and homesteaded about the time as Esten's father. Their places were only a few miles from each other. Alice and John were (their) children.

Some memories of the town. The old Clanton and Mitty Hall—upstairs were (where) dances were held, school graduations, and traveling shows, There were two halls up—another where I joined the Royal Neighborhood of America 50 years ago. R.G. Jackson sold to the Farmers Mer. Store. Mildred worked there a few years before it burned. Flowers had a store near where gas station now is. Later fires burned the Jensen store, the bank building and the Pete Meat Market and the building where the Telephone office had been for a number of years. John Lodge the photographer has pictures of the Main Street.

(There was) Dr. A.F. Brockman Bldg. and his house and drug store—and in a back room he also had a funeral supply and the Harshburger grocery store as well as the W.G. Faulkner store—all were destroyed by fire (in) 1909. They were all rebuilt. Then there was the New York Racket Store where I bought most of the old dishes that I now have.

There were 2 stores my parents bought their groceries where Shelvie and I traded eggs for. Only a few houses left now that were here when we first came to Bickleton. The bottleneck house—that Wesley Rasmussen tore down—the house on the corner Main and Middle Rd, I believe it belongs to Mrs. H.O. Wilson, the Carl Seely house, Dr. Brockman Drug, Pool Hall, Livery Stable, Jim Sighler house, now owned by Roy and Florence VanNostern. The Ed Flower home—not sure if it was built before or soon after we came—the Methodist Church and Parsonage were here. Stores that (I remember in) Bickleton at one time were Black-

smith shop, Meat Market, John Lodge Photo Shop, Spoon and Heise Flour Mill and Brockmans Drug Store. (There was also the)Livery Stable, The New York Racket Store owned by Molly and Ernest Whitmore, There were other fires before the fire of 1909 or 1910. This fire burned Harshbergers Grocery and the W.G. Faulkner Hardware. In 1902, the first issue of the Bickleton News was received and most found it newsy and a credit to Publisher S.G. Dorrie. Mrs. M.A. Baker was the last owner and Publisher of the Bickleton News. She discontinued the paper and moved to Mt. Vernon WA. The Bank of Bickleton in 1902 (was owned by) S.A. Rossier.

I attended Bickleton High School. June 15, 1914 Esten Gaines and I were married at North Yakima WA. and our daughter Wilma was born. (Esten) worked for the County Road crew and later was the County Road Supervisor, and also with farming and cattle until the army in 2nd World War took our ranch in their firing range. I worked many years in the Telephone office at Bickleton and 2 years Bickleton Postmaster before I resigned due to poor health. (I then) joined Esten who was employed in a Yakima Meat Market. We later lived near Shelton and at Gig Harbor, and at Ellensburg where we purchased a ranch. Esten's health failed, moving back to Yakima in 1954. Dec. 6, 1967 he passed away, and laid to rest in IOOF Cemetery in Bickleton. I live alone in our home in Yakima.

Note: We do not have the date that this diary was written—Nellie Faye Gray Gaines was born October 25, 1890, in Platsmouth, Cass Co., Nebraska; she died January 28, 1983 at Yakima, Washington. She is buried in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery in Bickleton, WA. We appreciate all the wonderful memories of her life she has shared with us.

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**The pictures on the next page are
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**Nellie Faye Gray and husband
John Esten Gaines and daughter
Wilma Mildred Gaines abt 1918**



**L to R Sisters
Nellie Faye Gray Gaines
Mildred May Gray Everett**



**Brothers and sisters L-R
Shelvie Gray, Nellie Faye Gray
Mildred May Gray, Thomas Chesley
Gray, Children of Thomas Peter Gray
Nettie Badqley Gray**



Nellie Faye Gray Gaines



**Nettie Elizabeth
Badgley Gray**

B: 15 Aug 1855

D: 2 Feb 1935

**Mother of
Nellie Faye
Gray Gaines**



Nettie Elizabeth Badgley Gray

1855-1935



Anderson Talbert Gaines

Born 23 Feb 1851

Died 6 Nov 1912

Alice Augusta Gaines

Born 20 Mar 1859

Died 13 Jun 1905

Father and Mother of John Esten Gaines



L to R

Thomas Peter Gray
Father of Nellie Faye Gray

Frank Carrell

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