

Chapter 7

608 ½ South Mission Street & Cashmere, Washington

In 1942, Daddy and Jimmy left Grand Coulee in a borrowed little car and went to the Methow Valley to look for work in the fruit orchards. They ended up in Brewster, Washington. As soon as they found work, the rest of the family was sent for. Momma and the girls packed all their belongings and made the trip to Brewster on the Greyhound bus. Here the family worked at the BB Orchards and lived in a small picker's cabin. When the apple season finished they moved on, with their belongings again packed in paper sacks and cardboard boxes. This time the bus headed south to Wenatchee, Washington.

It is an unsubstantiated rumor that Daddy came to the Wenatchee Valley for the first time in the 1920's. Other than that no one in our family had set foot in this area since the 1820's when our ancestor, Francis Ermatinger, canoed up and down the Columbia River as a clerk, and then trader, for the Hudson's Bay Company. He traded with the local Indians on the island at the mouth of the Wenatchee River (that island was covered up by Rock Island Dam in the early 1930's). Edward Ermatinger, Francis' brother camped in 1828 on Badger Mountain, on his way up to Fort Okanogan (Brewster).

The move to Wenatchee was made in 1943 and was to 608 ½ South Wenatchee Avenue. "On coming from Brewster we first stopped at the Greyhound Bus Depot with our bags and household utensils. Once we got off the bus it came apparent to all that we had no where to sleep or stay. On enquiry the people at the bus depot told us to go to Shanty Town below the tracks. There people would look after us. So Daddy and Momma took us down to Shanty Town and here we were welcomed with open arms. The women fix us a good meal and made beds up for us to spend the night. We were happy as we fell to sleep that night with full bellies and soft beds. Early the next morning Daddy went up town to a government agency and applied for housing. That's when we got the house at 608 ½ South Mission." (Sassy Jones) Rainsey remembered "We lived in that house in the back with Daddy's niece" The house at 608 ½ Mission was a two story house, and was behind the big house that had the number 608 South Mission. This little ½ house was back by the alley that ran between Wenatchee Avenue and Mission Street. Adjacent to it was an even smaller house in which lived Momma's 1st cousin, Joe Ashley and his wife, Florence, and two kids, Doris and Jerry. Also living with the Ashley's was Daddy's sister, Rebecca and her husband, Pete Jamison and their kids. Jimmy worked in the packing shed across the street from this place, Welch Apples is there now. In the front house (608) lived the Toftee family (they later moved to Spokane). From here the family moved to Cashmere.



Wenatchee Valley Museum & Cultural Center, Ellis-7106.

The first stop the Courchane's made in Wenatchee was the old Greyhound Bus Depot. There is an art supply store called McDees Art Center there now.

U. S. SOCIAL SECURITY ACT 538-20-2561
 APPLICATION FOR ACCOUNT NUMBER

1. *Wanda Ashley Courchane*
 (EMPLOYEE'S FIRST NAME) (MIDDLE NAME) (LAST NAME)

2. *Buckhorn Cabins* *Cashmere Wash.*
 (STREET AND NUMBER) (POST OFFICE)

3. *Washington Dep. Yd. Road* *Cashmere Wash.*
 (CITY OR TOWN) (COUNTY) (STATE)

4. *32* 5. *Aug 13 1910* 6. *St Ignatius Mont.*
 (AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY) (DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR) (SUBJECT TO LATER VERIFICATION)) (PLACE OF BIRTH)

7. *Charles Ashley* 8. *Welen Newman*
 (FATHER'S FULL NAME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER LIVING OR DEAD) (MOTHER'S FULL MAIDEN NAME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER LIVING OR DEAD)

9. SEX: MALE _____ FEMALE 10. COLOR: WHITE NEGRO _____ OTHER *Indian*
 (CHECK (X) WHICH) (CHECK (X) WHICH)

11. GIVE DATE YOU BECAME AN EMPLOYEE (IF YOU BEGAN EMPLOYMENT AFTER NOV. 24, 1938) *7th 12 1943*

12. HAVE YOU FILLED OUT A CARD LIKE THIS BEFORE? *No*
 (IF ANSWER IS "YES" ENTER PLACE AND DATE OF ORIGINAL FILING AND REASONS FOR FILING AGAIN)

13. *7th 12 1943* 14. *Wanda Ashley Courchane*
 (DATE (ORANGE)) (EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE, AS SMALL LETTERS, DO NOT PRINT)

DETACH ALONG THIS LINE

Momma still making herself "younger" on her S.S.N. application

For a short time in 1943 the family lived in the quaint village of Cashmere, Washington, at the Buckhorn Tourist Camp. Motels developed out of these early tourist camps. The Buckhorn cabins were arranged in a circle with an opening for a road which circled inside the cabins, so one drove in and around the inside perimeter of the cabins and then back out to the main road again. In the center of the circle of the road was the common grounds, also at the camp was Mrs. Buckhorn's office, a washroom and showers. The Buckhorn's had a grocery store where the Courchane's bought the groceries and supplies they needed. Rationing was in effect, because of the war. At that same time Joe Ashley and Peter K. Jamison and their families also lived in Cashmere. Jimmy worked at the Cashmere Growers packing shed for a Duke Graves. He ran a hand cart stacked with six boxes. Daddy was working in the fruit orchards. Sassy recalls that Daddy would read detective stories during his leisure time. Each night he would tell a different detective story to the family.

One story Sassy remembers as a "Close Call". While living in Cashmere the times were very bad. Snow was on the ground while Daddy, Jimmy and Sassy were still picking apples. The weather was extremely cold and to keep warm while in the orchard the pickers built fires in 55 gallon drums. Many times during the day Daddy and his shivering children would run over to the drums and stand over them until they warmed up a bit. A man named Jack Meredith had contracted to pick the orchard. He took a liking to Daddy and his family, and as a gesture, he brought them a big box of groceries, candy, toys and, for Daddy, cigarettes. Cigarettes were hard to get during the war rationing and one smoked any brand available. When they had finished picking the apples, Meredith gave Daddy their checks and told him to have Momma go into Cashmere and cash them immediately. Momma did just that. Afterwards it was discovered that this man had drawn out all of his money from the bank. He then fled to parts unknown! Daddy and his family were the only pickers to get their money. A few months later Daddy was reading his detective magazine and ran across an article with a picture of a con man. It was the apple-picking contractor. The same one who had befriended the Courchane's! That night Daddy told a story to his family about a crook they all knew.

Jimmy agrees with the above story, but has a little different version. He says that Meredith was contracting picking up cull apples dumped into Hay Canyon near Cashmere for Smuckers, in Wenatchee. Jim said that they worked there for two or three weeks. A large crew with trucks was employed to move the cull apples to the Wenatchee plant. Everything was all right until Meredith got his last big check from Smuckers. Then he ducked out of town without depositing money into the bank to cover the crew's checks. Jimmy says that his check was one of those that bounced.

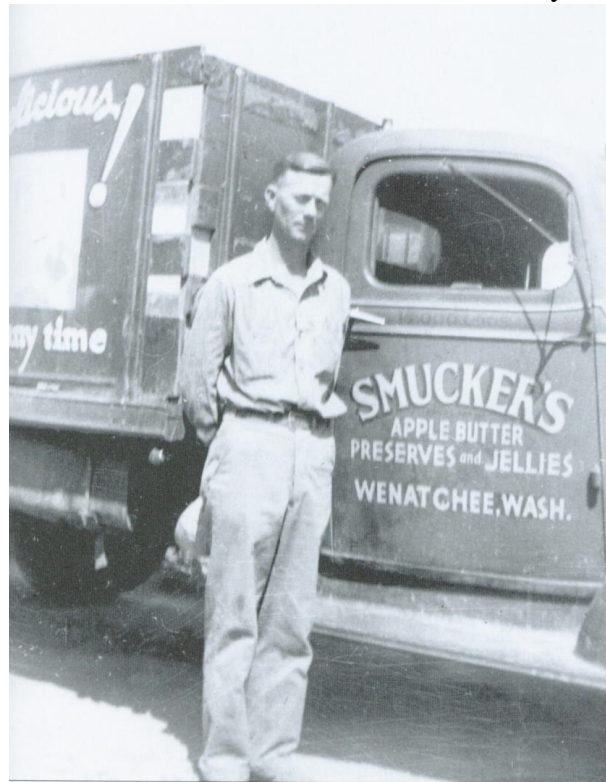
According to Rainsey (Courchane) Zaste, while living in Cashmere at the Buckhorn Tourist Camp, the family experienced a sad event. A baby (possibly a girl) was brought to the Courchane cabin by a baby sitter. The baby was dead and the babysitter was at a loss of what to do. Rainsey remembers that the babysitter had put spinach juice in the baby bottle. Because the baby's parents were not expected home that evening, Daddy immediately called the Chelan County Sheriff and told them about the dead baby. The parents blamed neither the babysitter nor the Courchane's. Rainsey believes that Daddy and Momma put the baby between them in their bed until the authorities came. Daddy always blamed the spinach juice as the cause of the baby's death, saying it was spoiled. They didn't consider that the death was probably caused by Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Daddy, Momma, Sassy, and Jimmy were picking pears in Wenatchee Valley when V-J Day ended the fighting against Japan in 1945. Sassy remembers that the orchardist's wife rushed out of the house and called to the pear pickers that the war was over. Everyone quit picking for that day in celebration. There were scenes of parading and crowds of happy people swarming down Wenatchee Avenue. Sassy said that, people hung on to each other in a long snake-like file and danced in and out of the stores down the main street happily singing. It was a great day for all. Victory in Japan – V-J. Germany had surrendered earlier in the year.

Nothing was wasted during the war. Ration stamps were used to buy most essentials. The Courchane girls saved bacon grease by straining it into cans. They sold the grease to the Carmody Brothers Store on Wenatchee Avenue. Toothpaste tubes were rung through the old wringer washer to get all the paste from the package. No waste could be afforded. Meat, sugar, and gas were things to be dreamed of. No automobiles were made between 1942 and 1944. After the war the Courchane family never owned a car, although Daddy did buy one years afterward but never drove it but a couple times.



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Euwin H. Pearl standing by the Smucker's truck he drove from 1939-1942. "Apples were brought to the site on North Wenatchee Avenue and dumped into huge bins. They were sorted, sliced, dried and boxed before being shipped to Smucker's plants in the Southeast, where they were made into apple butter." From "Wenatchee Valley Vol. 2", p-91, The Wenatchee World, 2004

TOM MIX "AND HIS RALSTON STRAIGHT SHOOTERS"

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1941



Cashmere in the 1950s and it looked very similar until it was remodeled as a Colonial Heritage town. The streets and buildings are still in the same locations just the names and businesses have changed.