

Sheehy Family Newsletter

December 2021 ♦ Volume 1, Issue 3

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third edition of the Sheehy Family Newsletter. And a special edition it is! To enjoy this publication to its fullest effect, the stories should be consumed with a slice of Katy Bloom's Chocolate Cream pie and fork in hand (page 38), and a cup of hot coffee to wash it all down!

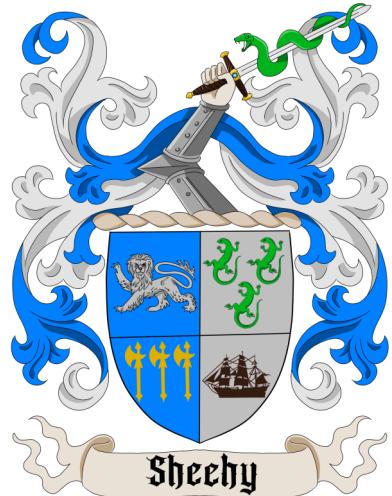
With this edition, we are pleased to introduce the Hugh and Helen Sheehy descendants (hereafter referred to as the Oregon Sheehys) to some of the Lawrence and Blanche Sheehy descendants (hereafter known as the Montana Sheehys). For those who don't already know, Hugh and Lawrence were brothers and children of Thomas James and Rose Anna Gillogly Sheehy. Hugh and Helen moved from Montana to Oregon in 1917 and settled on Swayze Creek near Durkee. Lawrence and Blanche stayed in Big Sandy, Montana on the ranch originally purchased by Thomas James and Rose in 1900. Lawrence and Blanche had two children, John Morton Sheehy and Margaret Sheehy Norris. This edition of the Sheehy Family Newsletter includes several articles about the Big Sandy ranch and the descendants of John Morton Sheehy including some reprints from local Montana sources, an article authored by Jessica Sheehy, great granddaughter of Lawrence and Blanche, and an article authored by Hugh Sheehy, grandson of Hugh and Helen Sheehy. Perhaps an introduction to the other part of the Montana Sheehys (the descendants of Margaret Sheehy and Cliff Norris) can be accomplished in a future edition of this newsletter.

The newsletter is again divided into three sections, the first being about family history, the second about the current generation of Sheehy descendants, and the third about recent family events.

We have several returning authors with articles in this edition who have turned out to be faithful contributors, namely Robert Sheehy, Jeannette Benton, Matt Nelson, Dennis Sheehy and Jim Sheehy. We are equally pleased with the articles of our newest contributors: Erin Kaiser, Jessica Sheehy, Steve Sheehy, and Hugh Sheehy. I would like to point out the foreshadowing in the 1958 picture of our authors, Robert Sheehy and Hugh Sheehy as young boys, one to grow up to be an international economist (yes, I believe that is a white shirt and tie he is wearing) and the other, after a successful military career, to lead a quiet life raising his family, hunting, fishing, backpacking and running a few head of cows (notice the cowboy boots and serene smile).

This edition could perhaps best be summed up by the word "legacy." That is, the legacy of a family; of a high school sports program; of a ranch in Big Sandy; of a nation oppressing its minority citizens; of the impact of exploitation of migrant workers on a family. Also, this edition demonstrates the power of our collective family's commitment to principle, to endurance, to work ethic, and to making a positive impact in the world.

~ Jim Sheehy, Son of Robert Sheehy and Dona (Storie) Sheehy



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FAMILY HISTORY

THE CALL OF THE WEST

By the mid-1850s, the family of our great grandfather, Thomas James Sheehy, which had emigrated from County Limerick in Ireland to Buffalo, New York, a decade earlier, was living in the town of Monroe in southern Wisconsin. The initial attraction of Monroe was likely employment in the numerous nearby lead and zinc mines, but the area was also rich in agriculture and related activities. By 1860, most of the brothers had become farmers. Thomas was an apprentice to a saddler and only one brother (Daniel) was still working in the mines. The family subsequently moved to nearby Shullsburg, Wisconsin, and were increasingly well established, acquiring land and becoming naturalized US citizens. The patriarch of the family, Patrick Sr., died in Monroe in 1856, shortly after the family moved there, and is buried in the local cemetery. His wife, Mary Collins Sheehy, died in Shullsburg in 1870.

The discovery of gold in western Montana in 1862 promised opportunities that were hard to resist, and many farmers answered the call and went west to seek their fortune. Four of the Sheehy brothers (Patrick Jr., Daniel, Dennis, and Thomas) joined the large influx of miners to the territory. Dennis and Daniel were apparently the first to go west; neither were still residents in Wisconsin at the time of registration for the Civil War draft in early 1863, and Dennis filed a mining claim in the Boise Basin in July 1864. Patrick and Thomas followed in mid-1865. The remaining members of the family stayed in Wisconsin until moving to Kansas in the late-1870s.

THE BROTHERS WHO WENT WEST

Patrick Sheehy Jr. (1829-1866)

Patrick is the third of the eight children (seven brothers and one sister) of Patrick and Mary Collins Sheehy of which we are aware. No record of his birth or christening has been found, but his age difference from siblings for which we have information (1860 census) implies a birthdate of about 1829. He may have been born in Knockaderry in County Limerick like his older brother Michael; we believe that Mary Collins Sheehy was from there but the local church records for that period have been lost.

Patrick married Bridget Ormond, an Irish immigrant from County Waterford, in January 1865. Their first and only child, Mary Anne, was born in December of that year, after the departure of Patrick for the west. Patrick never returned; he was killed in 1866 while mining in Placerville, Idaho, in the Boise Basin. After his death, Bridget stayed for a time with her parents and worked as a housekeeper in Shullsburg. She later lived with her daughter until her death in 1901. She is buried in the Our Lady of Hope Catholic cemetery in Seymour, Wisconsin.



Placerville, Idaho, Middle 1800's

Mary Anne married William McWilliams in 1890 and they had three sons and five daughters. The sons and one of the daughters had no children, but the other daughters provided them with a total of eight grandchildren and at least twenty-five great grandchildren. Although most of their children and grandchildren remained in Wisconsin, one grandson moved to New Jersey, another to Minnesota, and another to New Mexico. The great grandchildren now live in different states all over the country.

We have DNA matches to three of the McWilliams descendants who are our third and fourth cousins and currently live in Ohio, Maryland and New Mexico. The New Mexico cousin (Thomas Lea) has provided us with some of the information that we have about Patrick Sheehy.

Daniel Sheehy (1832-1902)

Daniel is the fourth of the Sheehy children. He was born in Newcastle West in County Limerick, and was baptized there on May 23, 1832. He began working as a day laborer shortly after the family arrived in the US (probably around 1845) and then was a miner, first in Wisconsin and later in Montana. He and his brothers Dennis and Thomas (our great grandfather) all joined the Cedar Creek Gold Rush after the mineral was discovered south of Missoula in 1869. He later moved to Helena and worked in nearby mines and also as a day laborer. Daniel never married or learned to read and write. He died of organic heart disease at the age of 69 on March 16, 1902, and was buried in the old St. Mary's Catholic cemetery in Helena.

Dennis C. Sheehy (1834-1907)

Dennis is the fifth child in the Sheehy family, also born in Newcastle West in County Limerick, where he was baptized on September 15, 1834. He attended school while the family lived in New York and began farming when they moved to Wisconsin. He was successful as a miner after moving to Montana, but also engaged in other businesses. During the Cedar Creek Gold Rush, he mined and also owned a saloon. He later operated a successful placer mine on the Boulder River near Basin Gulch (about 40 miles from Helena), reportedly earning \$3,300 during the single year of 1881 (equivalent to about \$85,000 today). He invested the money in farmland and additional mining claims and built a new house for his family that is still standing in Helena.



House built by Dennis Sheehy, Helena, Montana

Dennis married Rosanna McManus in 1874 in Helena. She was the daughter of Irish immigrants from County Longford and was born in Pennsylvania. The couple had four sons and five daughters. One son (John) died while a young boy and another (Dennis Jr.), who worked as a timekeeper for the railroad, died while still single from blood poisoning caused by a broken elbow. Another son (William) worked for a time as a laborer in a steel mill in Pennsylvania and never married. The remaining son (Frank) inherited his father's ranch and had two daughters; one died in infancy and the other had no children. Frank also operated a saloon for five years in partnership with his cousin, Jack Easterly, the son of Dennis's oldest daughter Mary Catherine, known as Mamie.

Mamie married Allen Easterly, a local miner, and they had only one son (Jack) and one grandson. There were no other descendants. Two of Dennis's other daughters (Rose and Elizabeth) were employed as waitresses and secretaries. Both moved to Seattle, Washington, after Dennis's death to work as retail salesclerks and neither ever married. Rose spent several years in Portland, Oregon, as a buyer for the Meier and Frank department

store, before returning to work again in Seattle, where both sisters died in 1959. Another of Dennis's daughters (Sadie) married a local Helena merchant who later became the Cascade County assessor; they had no children. The youngest daughter, Ellen Alice, known as Nellie, married George Graham, a railroad worker (stationed at the time in La Grande, Oregon!) who later worked as a forest contractor and farmer. They had four sons, at least one of whom had children, but we have been unable to identify any living descendants.

Dennis was an active member of the Montana pioneer community. He participated in local politics and was the sergeant-at-arms for the 1879 session of the territorial legislature. Oral family history reports that he was a scout for General Nelson Miles during his campaigns in the region. Though we have not been able to verify this information, it is true that General Miles led forces against both the Sioux and Nez Percé (Chief Joseph) in that part of Montana during 1876 and 1877. Dennis passed away from a heart attack in Helena at the age of 72 on June 3, 1907 and is buried in the Resurrection cemetery.

After his death, Rosanna went back to Pennsylvania and lived with a sister for several years, before returning to the west. She stayed for a time with her daughter Mamie in Montana and then moved to Seattle to be with her daughters Rose and Elizabeth. She died there in 1940, and her remains were returned to Helena, where she is buried in the Resurrection cemetery next to her husband.

Thomas James Sheehy (1843-1934)

Thomas (our great grandfather) is the youngest of the Sheehy family. He was born in Newcastle West in County Limerick on August 5, 1843 and baptized six days later. According to oral family history, the Sheehy family emigrated to the US when he was 18 months old (i.e., around early 1845). Thomas began his education in New York and then spent four years as a saddler's apprentice after the family moved to Wisconsin.

Thomas left Shullsburg, Wisconsin, in mid-April 1865 and joined a wagon train for Montana departing from Independence, Missouri. He was likely accompanied by his older brother Patrick who left for the west at around that time. The route went north to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and then west via South Platte, Nebraska, arriving in Virginia City, Montana, in mid-July three months after departure. The total distance covered was more than 1300 miles.

Thomas tried his hand at mining near Virginia City and elsewhere for several years, even travelling to the Boise Basin at one point. It is not clear whether he travelled to Idaho with his brother Patrick, who was killed there, or was on his own. He was mining in Cedar Creek, Montana, at the time of the 1870 census. Success as a miner eluded him, and by the mid-1870s, he had given up mining and returned to his trade as a saddler. He later owned and operated a hack (a horse drawn carriage used as a taxi) in Great Falls, Montana; his hack stand was in front of the Mint Saloon, the favorite hang-out of the famous cowboy artist, Charles M. Russell. Family lore says that he was frequently charged with making sure that Charlie made it home after a heavy evening. He also worked for a time as a policeman in Great Falls.



Patrick Sheehy, circa 1829-1866



Thomas and Rose Sheehy on their Wedding Day



Thomas married Rose Anna Gillogly, the daughter of Irish immigrants from County Fermanagh, in Helena in September 1879. Their first child, a daughter named Mabel (after Rose Anna's mother), was born a year later but died of measles at the age of only four months. Three other children also died shortly after birth. The couple had three sons who survived beyond infancy. The oldest was our grandfather, Hugh Francis, born in 1883. Thomas Lawrence followed in 1884 and the youngest, John Raymond, was born in 1892. John Raymond died in 1916 from hepatitis; the cause of death reported by the attending physician was acute uremic poisoning due to liver and gall bladder failure.



Thomas and Rose Sheehy, with sons Hugh, Lawrence and John

Thomas homesteaded 160 acres about 25 miles west of Great Falls (near the present town of Cascade) and acquired title in 1884. However, in 1900, Thomas and Rose Anna sold that land (for \$250!) and bought a homestead relinquishment east of Big Sandy (in Rose's name, as Thomas had already used his homestead eligibility). They purchased the land from a woman named Emma Connine, who had to sell because her sons were sent to prison for horse theft and cattle rustling. The three Sheehy boys homesteaded adjoining or nearby land, and numerous additional properties were acquired in subsequent years by Thomas and his heirs to create a larger total ranch.

Mrs. Connine of Big Sandy is in the city, circulating a petition for the pardon of her two sons, cattle thieves, who were, in 1902, committed to the penitentiary from Chouteau county for six years. The Chouteau county authorities are vigorously opposing the application for pardon, maintaining that there was no question as to the convicts' guilt and that they were most troublesome prisoners.

Newsclipper Clipping, Butte Miner, 17 March 1904

Thomas spent most of his time at the ranch, generally with his sons, while Rose Anna preferred to live at their house in Great Falls (which is still standing) or to visit friends at St. Peter's Mission near Cascade. Rose Anna died in 1923 and was buried in the Calvary cemetery in Gibson Flats near Great Falls, next to their son John Raymond. After her death, Thomas spent summers on the ranch, which had been taken over by his son, Thomas Lawrence, and winters with his oldest son, Hugh

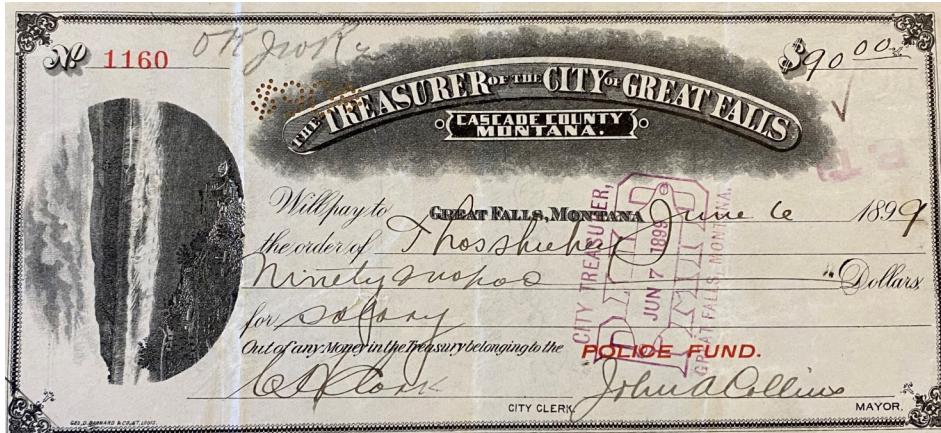
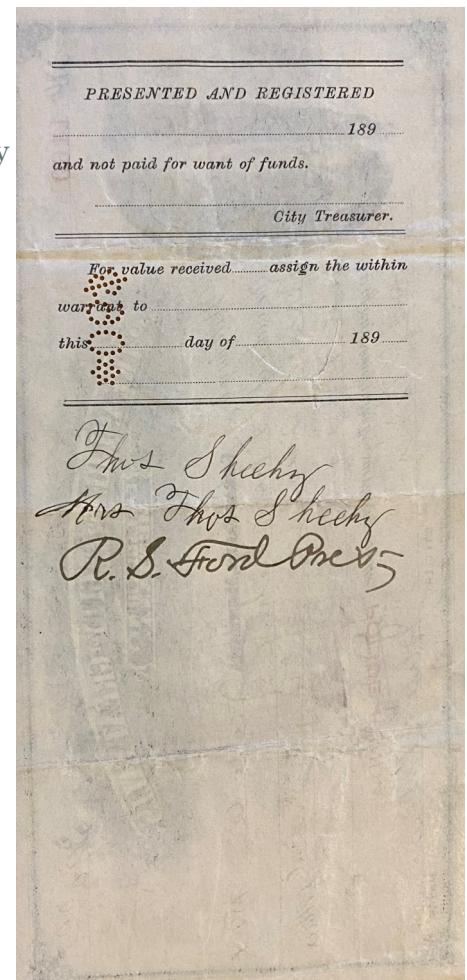
Francis, who by then had moved to Oregon. He died in Durkee, Oregon, in 1934 at the age of 91 and his remains were returned to Montana, where he is buried in the Calvary cemetery next to Rose Anna.

Hugh Francis and Thomas Lawrence Sheehy both had children and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. More stories about them will be included in this and future newsletters.

~ Robert Sheehy, Son of Robert Sheehy and Dona (Storie) Sheehy



House of Thomas Sheehy, Great Falls, Montana



Thomas James' paycheck as a police officer in Great Falls, endorsed by his wife

BIG SANDY RANCH

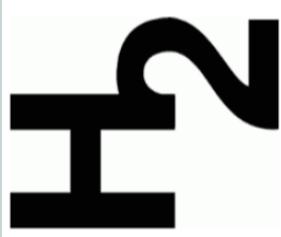
The ‘ranch at Big Sandy’ has always been a part of my Sheehy family history. Grandmother Sheehy lived with us during my high school years, and I listened to my dad and Grandmother talk about Montana and the time

before the family’s move to Durkee, Oregon. As a result, I have always had an interest in the early days of the ranch. When visiting at the ranch, I often talked with John Sheehy about the homesteads and the ranch development. On my first visit to the ranch, he showed us the debris from the shack at our grandparent’s homestead site on Peel Creek. After hearing Grandmother tell of finding a rattlesnake when getting water out of the creek and Grandfather shooting at wolves who had run the horses in, it was interesting to see the actual site. Much of the information in this article is from those discussions with John and with his son, Tom.

The original ranch parcel was purchased in the fall of 1900 from Emma Connine who had homesteaded approximately 160 acres where the ranch headquarters is located on Big Sandy Creek. Her sons had been arrested for cattle rustling and were subsequently given prison sentences. Tom thought they had a little shack in the brush across the creek from the house and were stealing cattle, butchering them, and selling the meat. After their arrest and not being available to help operate the ranch, Emma sold the property in October 1900 to our great grandparents – Thomas and Rose. Lawrence, then 16 years old, spent the winter of 1900/1901 on the ranch living in a small log structure near where the present house is situated. The Sheehys had brought their 13-15 cows and 1-2 horses to the ranch, and Lawrence spent the winter there to look after them.

The patent (government issued deed for homesteaded land) for the Connine’s 167 acres lists a date of 10/1/1903, a date later than when we believe the parcels were purchased – i.e., fall of 1900. Her homestead entitlement had already been formally assigned to Rose Sheehy on 8/18/1902 prior to the issue of the patent in Connine’s name in 1903. Because both the assignment date and the patent date are later than the purchase, they must have had some agreement for taking over the ‘proving up’ of the homestead claim. There are two deeds from Connine to Rose Sheehy, both dated 8/18/1902 – one for \$300 and another for \$800. One of these may have been part of their agreement. There is also an assignment from Connine to Rose, dated 4/5/1907, for a further 160 acres. This 1907 date matches the patent date for the parcels on the map showing Rose as the owner. This parcel may have been originally homesteaded by Connine and transferred to Rose. We do not know exactly how or when Connine agreed to transfer the 1907 parcel, but it obviously occurred prior to the issuance of the patent in Rose’s name.

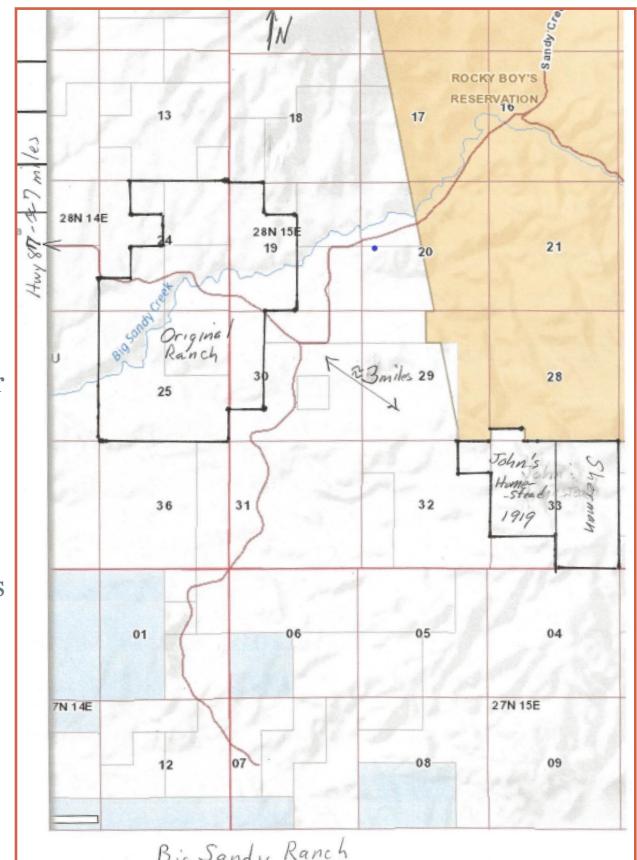
Sheehy Brand #1



Sheehy Brand #2

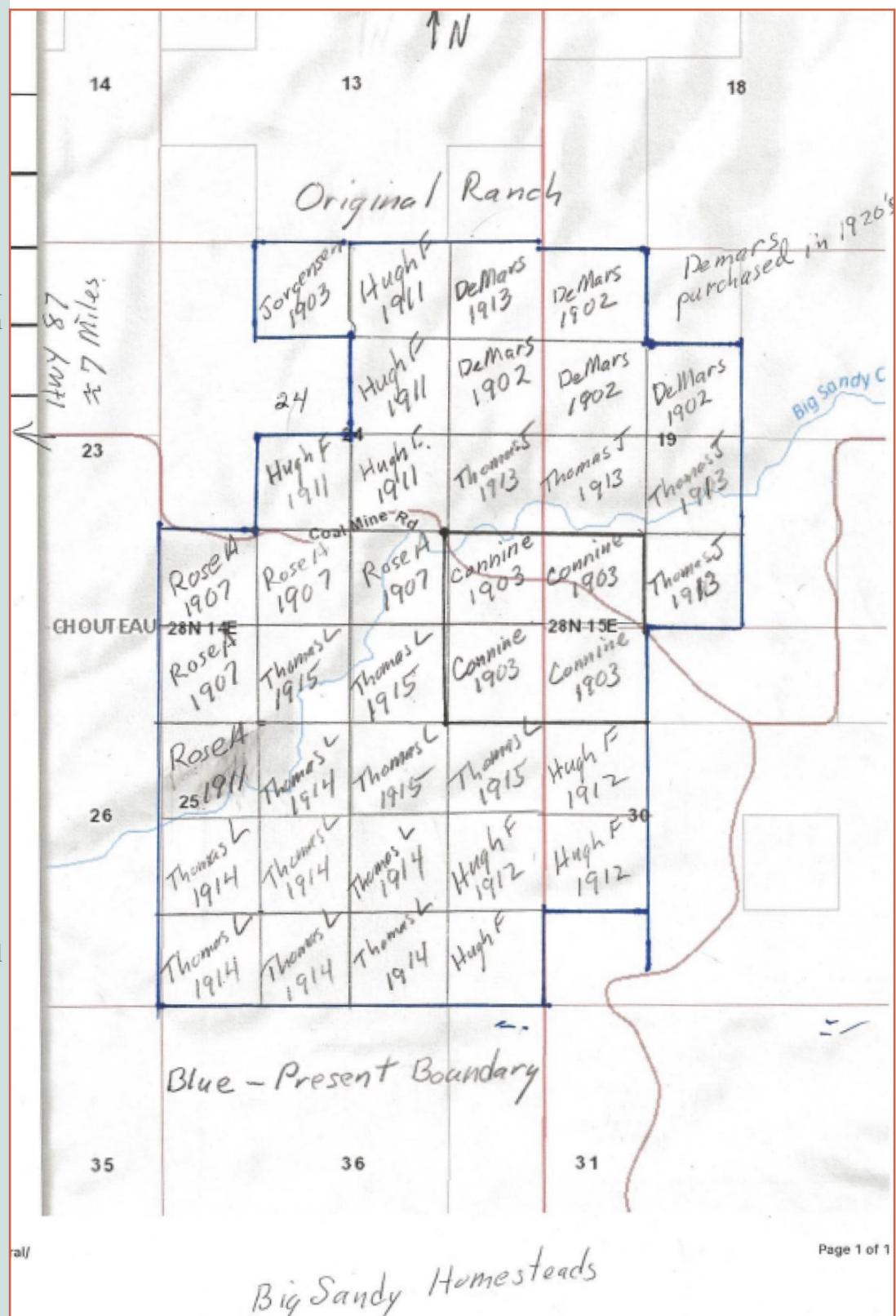


Sheehy Brand #3



From the original purchase in 1900 through 1919, Thomas J. and his sons Hugh, Lawrence (Thomas L.), and John all homesteaded land to increase the ranch size. John's parcel was the last to be patented in 1919 and occurred after his death in 1916; he was nearly 24 years old when he died. The story I have heard is that my Grandfather Hugh was taking him to Big Sandy, and he was alive when they reached the railroad track where Coal Mine Road meets Highway 87 – but he passed away by the time they reached Big Sandy – two miles away. With the exception of John's homestead, the home-stead parcels adjoined the Connine land and increased the size of the home ranch. John's parcel was approximately 3 miles SE from the ranch and adjoined a 320-acre parcel patented by Sherman that was purchased by Lawrence in 1927.

Included with this article is a map of the original ranch showing the 40-acre parcels with the patent name and year. The parcels listed as DeMars are now part of the ranch



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

General Land Office Records



but were purchased after Hugh had already moved to Oregon. The listed dates are the official date when filing requirements were completed with the land office and would be at least five years after the homestead was established.

Exactly when Grandfather's (Hugh) parcels were transferred to Lawrence or Thomas would take further legal research but probably occurred as a part of the move to Oregon in 1917.

Lawrence purchased the John Sheehy parcel from 'his heirs' in 1919.

After our great grandparents purchased the original parcels, they ran their livestock on what is now the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. In 1900, the land was the Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation. They

Patents

Note: An *Italic* entry denotes data that has not been indexed against the land patent document, and has no image.

Image	Accession	Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
	<i>MTMIAA 058009</i>	SCHIRMER, GEORGE; SHEEHY, DANIEL; GALLICK, EMANUEL; GENZBERGHAL, MEYER; ROBERTS, THOMAS	2/6/1892	19534	MT	Montana PM	007N - 013W		30	Granite
	<i>337360</i>	SHEEHY, CATHERINE F.	5/26/1913	0687	MT	Montana PM	002S - 026E	SW1SW1/4	15	Yellowstone
							002S - 026E	SW1SE1/4	15	Yellowstone
							002S - 026E	NW1NW1/4	22	Yellowstone
							002S - 026E	NW1SW1/4	22	Yellowstone
							002S - 026E	SE1NW1/4	22	Yellowstone
	<i>174481</i>	SHEEHY, HUGH F.	3/1/1911	02637	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	W1SW1/4	24	Chouteau
	<i>245542</i>	SHEEHY, HUGH F.	2/23/1912	0311	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	NW1SE1/4	24	Chouteau
	<i>492157</i>	SHEEHY, HUGH F.	10/2/1915	0311	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	NE1SW1/4	24	Chouteau
	<i>MTHVR 00000311_01</i>	SHEEHY, HUGH F.	2/23/1912	0311	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	E1SE1/4	25	Chouteau
	<i>665604</i>	SHEEHY, JOHN R.	3/12/1919	023770	MT	Montana PM	028N - 015E	NW1/4	33	Chouteau
	<i>203244</i>	SHEEHY, JOHN R.	8/27/1919	023770	MT	Montana PM	028N - 015E	NE1SW1/4	33	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	NE1NE1/4	32	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	NW1/4	33	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	NW1SW1/4	33	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	Lot/Tctr 1	28	Chouteau
	<i>302962</i>	SHEEHY, JULIA W.; KRODEL, JOHN	6/8/1921	021429	MT	Montana PM	004N - 008W		35	Silver Bow
	<i>531496</i>	SHEEHY, MARGARET E.	5/31/1916	07693	MT	Montana PM	032N - 035E	SE1/4	35	Valley
	<i>492767</i>	SHEEHY, MARY A.	10/5/1915	015243	MT	Montana PM	032N - 035E	W1SE1/4	15	Valley
							032N - 035E	SE1SW1/4	10	Valley
							032N - 035E	SW1SE1/4	10	Valley
	<i>180950</i>	SHEEHY, ROSE A.	3/1/1911	1669	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	SW1NW1/4	25	Chouteau
	<i>MTHVR 012312</i>	SHEEHY, ROSE A.	4/5/1907	654	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	SW1SW1/4	24	Chouteau
							028N - 014E	SW1SE1/4	24	Chouteau
							028N - 014E	NW1NW1/4	25	Chouteau
	<i>320316</i>	SHEEHY, THOMAS J.	3/22/1913	0672	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E	NE1SE1/4	24	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	EW1SW1/4	19	Chouteau
							028N - 015E	Lot/Tctr 3	19	Chouteau
	<i>MTHVR 042408</i>	SHEEHY, THOMAS J.	6/20/1894	1149	MT	Montana PM	018N - 001W	SW1NE1/4	26	Cascade
	<i>MTHVR 049075</i>	SHEEHY, THOMAS J.	8/20/1892	1942	MT	Montana PM	018N - 001W	SE1NW1/4	26	Cascade
							018N - 001W	NE1SW1/4	26	Cascade
							018N - 001W	NW1SE1/4	26	Cascade
							018N - 002W	W1SW1/4	4	Cascade
							018N - 002W	E1SE1/4	5	Cascade
	<i>426714</i>	SHEEHY, THOMAS L.	8/21/1914	0458	MT	Montana PM	028N - 014E			

Rose
Thomas J.
Lawrence
↓
Cascade

Patents. p 1/e

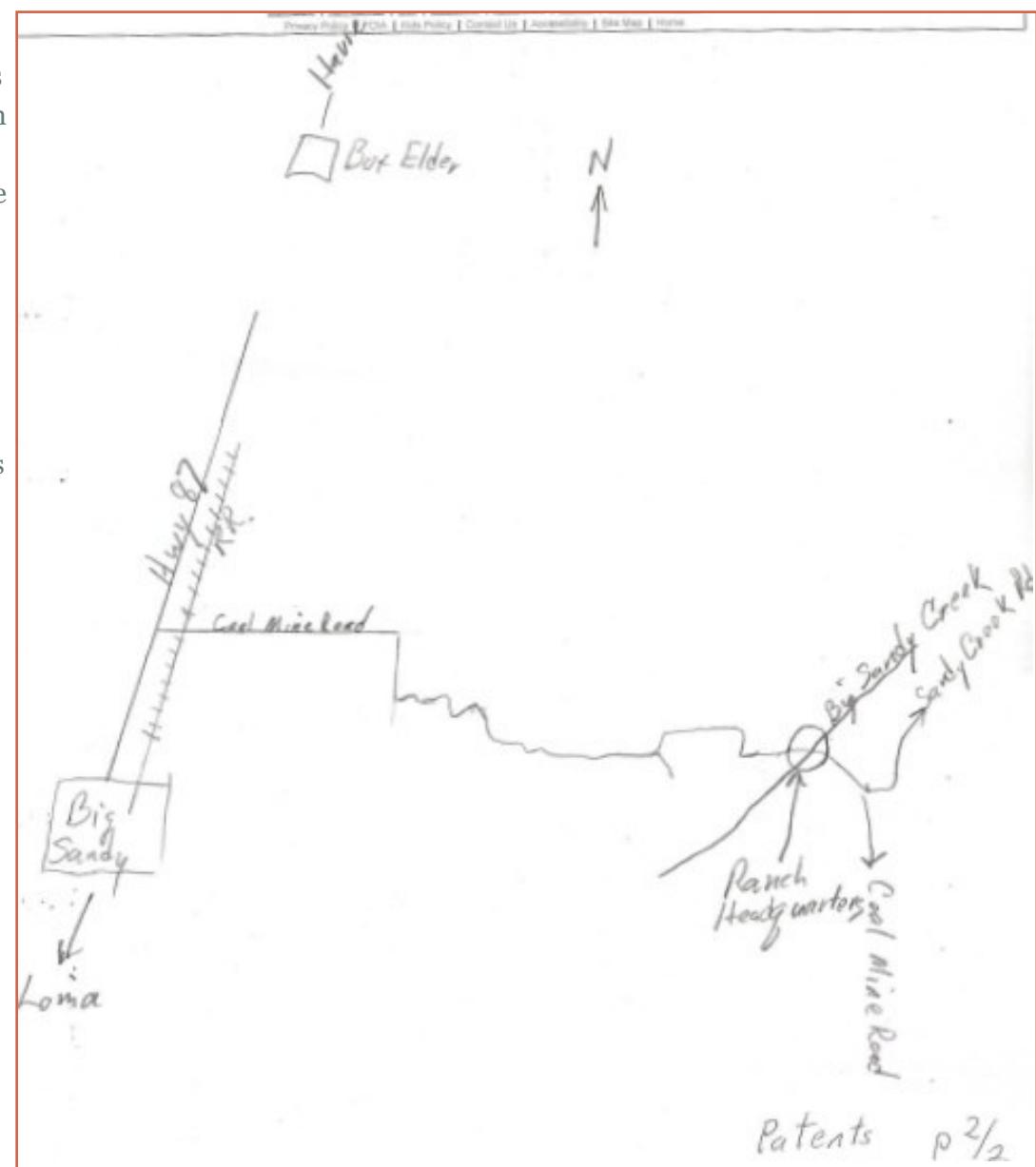
operated by grazing and wintering their livestock on the reservation. When the Military Reservation was converted to Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation in 1916, they lost the ability to run livestock there, and its conversion was a primary reason for our grandparents move to Oregon. They selected Oregon because of its lower elevation. Grandmother's health was 'not good,' and they thought the lower elevation would be beneficial for her health. It must have been, because she eventually lived to be 100 years old.

The Swayzy Creek Ranch came to our grandfather's attention when he saw an advertisement in a publication. It sounded like a good place but because it was in Oregon, he couldn't get there to look at it himself. He asked Grandmother Holbrook, who lived in Milton Freewater, Oregon, to go and see if it was a suitable place. She went to look at the place with the real estate agent, Floyd Vaughan Sr. (the father of Elizabeth, wife of our cousin John Heriza). It was a good spring and the place was in good shape. She put down money to purchase and our grandfather did not see the ranch until he arrived to move in later in the year. It is my understanding that he wasn't very impressed when he arrived but it was a 'done deal' at that point. My Dad said his father 'just set to work making the place pay.' He had brought some cows from Montana and my Dad remembers one cow whose face was badly scarred where a wolf had bitten her face.

The included Big Sandy ranch map shows the size of the ranch when our grandparents moved to Oregon. The acreage was approximately 1240 acres at the home place with another 320 acres at John's homestead in the hills. When livestock could no longer run on the reservation, the deeded land may have been able to carry about 60 head.

The ranch grew some in the 1920's with Lawrence's purchase of 320 acres from Sherman in 1927 and another 320 acres from the estate of Elizabeth Moore in 1928. During the Depression, they sold all the cattle except for a milk cow, and everyone had outside jobs to keep the ranch together. Lawrence's son John went to Arizona and trained as a saddle maker, his daughter Margaret taught school / worked at a bank, and Lawrence worked as an appraiser for a bank evaluating repossessed farms.

The main growth of the ranch occurred after John returned from the war in 1945. He purchased major adjoining parcels as they became available in the 1950 and 1960s, building the ranch to the north of



the home parcel. In 1976, he purchased the Conley/Goin place – the land patented by Tom Goin whom my father remembered visiting as a child. He was a good friend to the Sheehy family and neighbored with Lawrence over the years. He was a bachelor and lived with his mother at the site where John's daughter Marjory now lives – his log cabin is still there. One other interesting acquisition is the parcel with Centennial Peak. It is a steep parcel and is north of the home buildings. During World War I, servicemen could choose a government parcel for homesteading, and if they died in the war, then their families received a patent for the land. The peak parcel passed to private ownership apparently due to a serviceman's death in the war and was obtained as a portion of John's purchases in the 1960s. The ranch was approximately 7500 acres after John's purchases and has continued to grow and evolve since then.

After John expanded the ranch following WWII, it is an excellent cattle ranch. The ranch depends on dry land hay ground and does not have irrigation rights from Big Sandy Creek. The ranch is 'old buffalo range' with excellent and resilient grass. It is well watered with numerous brushy coulees that provide shelter. The ranch elevation is about 3620 ft at the headquarters but often has green grass by middle to late April. In the late fall/early winter, they are sometimes able to keep the cows on grass until the first of the year. How long the cattle can delay being fed hay depends upon the severity of the snow. Winters at the ranch can be much more severe than we experience in Eastern Oregon. They sometimes get deep snow – making the movement of cattle difficult. They are also subject to very cold temperature spells, i.e., minus 40 degrees. There is no topography to stop a storm from dropping down out of Alberta. The pictures I have seen of them breaking trail with horses in deep snow and cold do not look like it is an enjoyable task. While the grass can be truly wonderful many years, central Montana is also subject to periodic drought that impacts both pasture and hay. In those years, they often have to purchase hay from outside.

The ranch is a beautiful location, and you can understand why the Oregon Sheehys recalled it fondly.

~ By Hugh Sheehy, Son of Thomas W. and Mary Margaret (Black) Sheehy



Jessica Sheehy driving the baler with the John Deere tractor at the Ranch at Big Sandy

The following article is reproduced by permission of The Big Sandy Mountaineer, the local paper of Big Sandy, Montana. It originally appeared in the paper on February 17, 2010.

THE SHEEHY RANCH—WELL OVER 100 YEARS AND STILL GOING

By Robert Lucke

From time to time "The Mountaineer" reports on area farms and ranches that are one hundred years old or almost there to celebrate "The Mountaineer's" one-hundredth year anniversary in 2010.

The Sheehy Ranch on Big Sandy Creek is not a hundred year ranch. It passed that milestone a decade ago. That ranch and the Sheehy family celebrate one hundred ten years on the land this year!

Not only that, but along with being good stewards of the land they own, they delight in sharing it with others.

Since John Sheehy acquired ownership of the south peak of Centennial Mountain many years ago, it has been climbed, photographed and enjoyed by local citizens and visitors alike.

And, on a hot summer day, who from this area has not gone out and picnicked or camped at Sheehy Park, developed and maintained by the Big Sandy Rotary, thanks to the Sheehy family?

How about some history?

It all started when around 1851 Thomas James Sheehy left Ireland bound for the United States.

Thomas James Sheehy was not so much a cowboy as an adventurer who had been bitten hard by the lure of gold. Tom Sheehy says that he heard that all of his life, each time Thomas James Sheehy turned over a clump of dirt, he looked for gold.

Thomas James Sheehy ended up in Great Falls, Montana after marrying Rose Gillogly in Helena. Sheehy was a policeman in Great Falls and ran a hack stand in front of Charlie Russell's favourite watering hole, the Mint Saloon. Sheehy knew Russell well and might have stayed in Great Falls but for the Alaska gold rush. Sheehy was ready to venture north when Rose said no and instead they bought a homestead relinquishment on Big Sandy Creek. That was in 1900.



Land that ended up comprising the original ranch was squatted on by the Goin family who had moved to Montana after the Civil War. In 1885 they moved to the Bear Paws. Later Emma Connine homesteaded the place and after her sons went to prison for cattle rustling, she sold her rights to the homestead to Thomas and Rose Sheehy.

By that time the Sheehy's had three sons, Hugh, Lawrence and John. Their oldest son Hugh wanted to stay in Great Falls and play football that first year so the family sent their second son, Lawrence, who was 16 at the time, to live on the ranch over the winter and take care of the livestock which numbered around 15 head of cattle and some horses.

The rest of the family came that next spring after school was over.

"All three boys filed for homesteads and more land was acquired through desert land claims," said Sheehy. And, the ranch was on the way.

Think of this. From the days of horse travel only to today, there has been a Sheehy on Big Sandy Creek seeing it all.

First come Thomas and Rose. Then it was Lawrence and Blanche. After that it was John and Laura and now Tom and Kimberly run the ranch.

Specifically, today the ranch is a partnership operated by John's widow Laura Sheehy along with Tom and Kimberly.

There were World Wars, droughts, depressions, fires, bad years and good during that time, but still the Sheehys kept plugging away and kept the ranch running and running successfully.

Tom Sheehy attributes much of the ranch success to his father John. That and some good luck along the way.

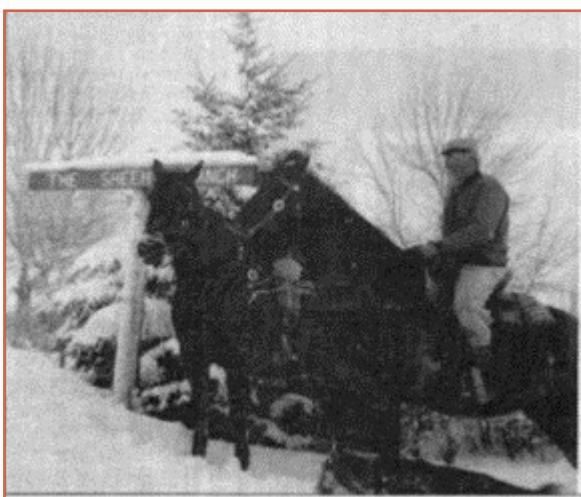
"By the time my grandfather died in 1950 the ranch was comprised of about 2000 acres," continued Sheehy. "My dad added the rest of it. He purchased land in the 1940's and 1950's until the ranch was around 6000 acres. In the 1970s he added another 1600 acres."

Sheehy described some of the changes through the years on the ranch for a story in The Montana Stockgrower's Association book honoring one hundred year ranches.

"As times have changed, the ranch and the cattle run upon it have changed as well. In the early years, the ranch ran mostly Shorthorn cattle. That changed to horned Herefords in the 1950s and to Hereford Angus cross cattle in the 1980s. The work of moving cattle around the ranch is still accomplished on horseback, although after John passed away, a four-wheeler was purchased—mostly to check fences and for odd jobs, although on occasion it might be used to check on a cow or two!"

What a history! What a ranch for North Central Montana! Seemed like the only question left to ask Tom is if he thinks some Sheehy will be celebrating 200 years on the same land some day?

"Ranching is always difficult. While some aspects are the same, it has always been a struggle to make a farm or ranch profitable enough to support a family," said Sheehy. "I don't know about a hundred more years yet. I can tell you that we will make it to 125. We only have 15 years to make that one!"



John Sheehy on horseback at the family ranch.

The following article is reproduced by permission of the Big Sandy Historical Society.

It was written by John Morton Sheehy, a grandson of Thomas James Sheehy, and originally appeared in "A Gathering of Memories: A History of the Big Sandy Community, Chouteau County, Montana," Big Sandy Historical Society, 1990, pp. 457-459.

SHEEHY FAMILY

By John Morton Sheehy (grandson of Thomas James Sheehy)

My grandfather, Thomas James Sheehy, was born in Ireland and at the age of six weeks his family immigrated to America. He had three brothers and one sister. They settled in Wisconsin. Two of Thomas James' brothers, Dennis and Bob, being a few years older caught gold fever and headed west. Both came to Montana in the early 1860's. Not much is known about Bob, but Dennis, although a self-proclaimed gold miner, spent time as a scout for General Miles' troops in the late 1860's and early 1870's. He is believed to have settled in Martinsdale.

In 1864 Thomas James decided to follow his brothers in being a gold miner. He hooked up with a wagon train in St. Louis, Missouri, and followed the gold trail through Virginia City, Mission Bend, and other gold boom towns. Never making a large enough strike, he finally settled in Helena, where he managed a saddle shop. My grandfather, Thomas James, told of a time when the soldiers from Fort McCloud (Canada) came into the saddle shop to have the troops' horses outfitted with saddles. Because my grandfather had done such a good job, the Major wanted him to go along with them as "post saddler." Grandpa, being an Irishman through and through, told the Major, "He would rather shoot at a red coat than serve it."

While in Helena, he met and married Rose Galogoly (sic). Rose had two sisters and one brother; they were all born in Bangor, Maine. As young children their parents died. An aunt, Mrs. Galen, sent for them to come and live with her and her husband in what is now known as Galen, Montana. Eventually Rose and Thomas moved to Great Falls. They had three sons, Hugh, Thomas Laurence and John.

The Sheehy family first came to Big Sandy in 1900. My father, Thomas Laurence, came here from Great Falls where he and his father, Thomas James, had run a taxicab drawn by horses, it was known as a "hack." His hack was parked in front of the well known watering hole, "The Mint." "The Mint" was a cowpunchers' saloon. One of their more well-known clients was Charlie Russell. Charlie, according to my father, was a friendly man who knew all the cowboys by name and would as soon shake their hands, call them friend, as he would a politician. My grandfather gave him rides home to his shack which was located a short distance away. At the time that Thomas Laurence came to Big Sandy he was 16 years old. He wintered here on the ranch that my grandparents had purchased from Emma Connine the previous summer.



Laurence Sheehy - 1912

He lived in a one room log cabin in which the bread froze at night. He kept the potatoes in a little annex on the north side where they would stay frozen. To cook them, he put them in boiling water with the jackets on. My grandparents came down to live here the following summer in the year of 1901. They always wintered in Great Falls. They built two log cabins about 10 feet apart and then boarded up between them, to make a third room. It had a dirt roof and was banked with dirt.

My father worked on the roundup in the summer time for McNamara and Marlow as a cowpuncher where he earned \$40 per month. Cowpunchers were expected to have their own saddles and bed rolls. He told of one roundup in the summer in the early 1900's when a prairie fire burned the ranch southeast of Big Sandy and burned most of McNamara's range land. Nine men gathered about 5,000 cattle and moved them to Hays. They only made five miles per day. Many calves and several bulls died on the way. They (*ed. note, the Sheehys*) also did a little farming, cut native grasses for hay, and depended mostly on grass to winter cattle. The country was mostly open and being next to the Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation, that was where they ran cattle.

My father homesteaded in 1905, at the age of 21. His older brother, Hugh, homesteaded in 1903, also when he reached the age of 21. My father recalled a spring in 1906 in which it had rained hard for a few days, and to get to his cabin he had to cross the creek. The creek was so high the horse had to swim across. When he got across he could see all the pigs swimming around in their pen; he kicked out the top slat and the pigs floated over and out of the pen.

At a time before 1910, my father became a Deputy Assessor to Chouteau County Assessor Phil Buckley of Harlem. At that time Chouteau County ran from the Canadian line to just north of Cascade County to Nashua. In the spring of each year, the assessors would travel from ranch to ranch to do a visual assessment. They would bed and board with the ranchers. In 1910 this came to an end with the coming of the dry land farmers. The farmers wouldn't put the assessors up so they began traveling by spring wagon so that they could carry a sleeping bag, pots, and feed for their horses. My father fondly remembered an incident with a farmer named Finke. He had stopped at dusk at the Finke farm, and he asked the elderly Mr. Finke if he might stay there the night. My father thought he understood Mr. Finke to say he could, but Mr. Finke's English wasn't very good. So my father began to unload his wagon. First off was a bale of hay for his horse. Mr. Finke said something to his son and the boy went over to the wagon and threw the bale back into the wagon. My father, sure that he'd misunderstood, went to get back in his wagon. The elder Mr. Finke grabbed his arm and said, "no, no, you must come inside with me and have something to eat and sleep. Let my boys take care of your horse and wagon." From then on whenever my father was in the neighbourhood of the Finke farm he stayed with them.

My mother, Blanche Elizabeth Morton, came here in 1909 at the age of 26 from Ohio to teach school in Big Sandy. At that time it was a two room school house and had two teachers. My mother taught at various schools around the area. She taught at Dog Creek, and at the mountain school that was near our present ranch. As well as teaching there, she taught one year in Kalispell. Her sister Louise joined her as a teacher in Big Sandy. She later decided to marry and returned to Ohio. The Morton family can be traced to pre-revolutionary days. My mother and father were married in January of 1914 at Deer Lodge. They met because she was the school teacher and he was on the school board. My sister, Margaret Mary, was born in 1914, and I, John Morton, was born in 1917. My parents built a house over on the Peel Creek which is a mile south of where we live now; they lived at that location until 1927, when they moved to our present location which is a part of our present day home.

During the years between 1905 and 1917, they ran their cattle on the reservation which at that time was the Fort Assinniboine Reserve. In 1917 it became the Campground for the Rocky Boy Chippewa-Cree Remnants. Little Bear was the Chief of the Crees and Rocky Boy was the Chief of the Chippewa. From that time on, that was the end of the open range in this area. My father had another brother John, who homesteaded up in the hills, east of the Peel place. He died in 1917 of hepatitis and about that time my Uncle Hugh moved on to Oregon. Hugh's wife Helen Holbrook was thought to be sickly and the warmer climate of Oregon might be beneficial. I guess it was; she lived to be over 100 years of age. My father acquired what was both of my uncles' homesteads, plus he bought out my grandparents and that was the start of his ranch.

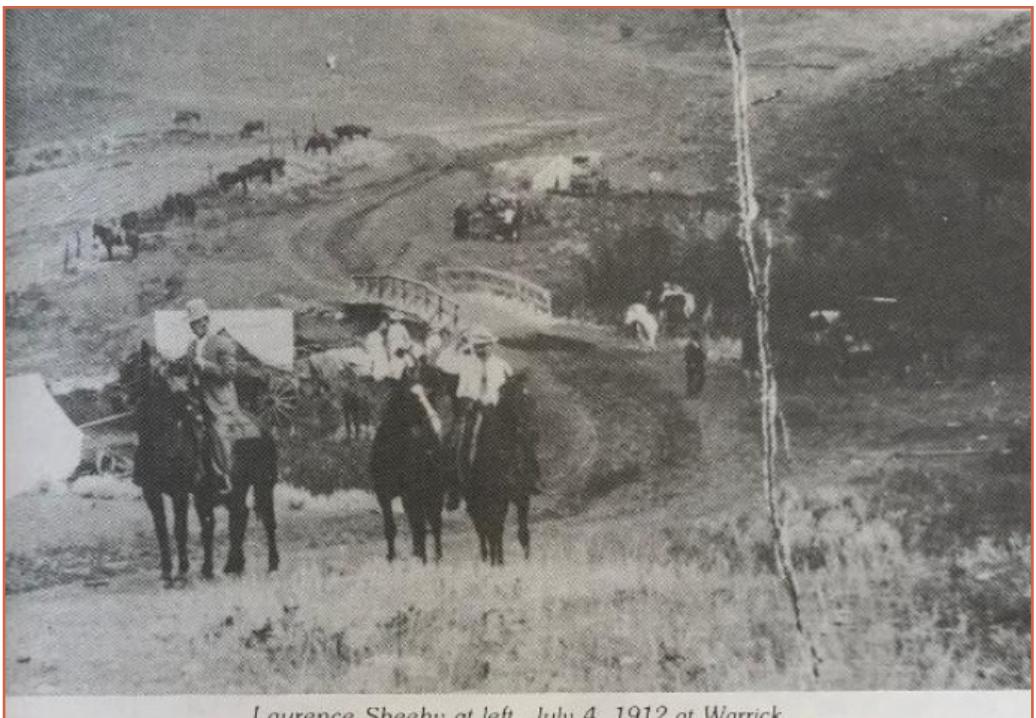
Over the years we acquired varied and assorted other pieces of land. In 1935, we purchased the Frank Moore place. There were two Moores in this area, Frank and Jim. Frank ended up in an asylum and so the ranch was sold. Some time prior to that my father had bought the John Sherman place, which joined my Uncle John's place up in the hills.

On June 4, 1941, I joined the 2nd Marine Division of the Marine Corps. I was stationed in the Pacific. When I got back from the service in 1945, I rented the Anderson place, which belonged to Hilda and Hans. Hans had died in 1922, and Hilda lived in Kremlin at that time. The next acquisition was in 1950 when I bought out Harry Tow. In April of 1951, I married Laura Rose Chagnon of Havre. My son, Thomas John, was born in June of 1952, a daughter, Janet Kay, in January of 1954, and another daughter, Marjory Louise, in November of 1958.

In 1953, I bought out the Jacobson place. Jacobson, in the meantime had bought part of Martin Jergenson's. So I acquired the Jergensen Homestead also. In 1959, I bought the Anderson place, which added a considerable amount to our operation.

In 1971, I bought the Kessel place down in the Milk River Valley. That gave us grazing land north of Chinook and some in Hill County. In 1976, we bought was Tom Goin's place plus the Riedel field, which was homesteaded around 1887. Our original homestead was first homesteaded by Ben Goin. Ben passed away

before he could prove up on the place and his wife sold the relinquishment to the homestead to Emma Connine. Tom Goin lived on that place, which is now known as the Connelly place, from the time that they came here until 1939 when he passed away. He left his place to Byron Connelly who was his nephew. Connelly left it to his wife, who in turn sold it to the McConkeys and McConkey sold it to Eatings and Hayward and then Keller and I split it up.



Laurence Sheehy at left, July 4, 1912 at Warrick

CURRENT GENERATION

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF THE SHEEHY RANCH

By Jessica Sheehy (granddaughter of John and Laura (Chagnon) Sheehy and great granddaughter of Thomas Lawrence and Blanche (Morton) Sheehy)

This is a story about growing up as a kid on the Sheehy Ranch in Big Sandy, Montana. My story starts not with me, but with my parents, Thomas and Kimberly (Robinson) Sheehy. When asked how my parents met, the first thing I always start with is that sisters from Detroit ended up marrying guys who were raised a mile apart from each other in the middle of Montana. My aunt Janet (Robinson) Runnion and uncle Roy Runnion were attending school at Michigan State University in the mid-1970s. They were both in the ROTC program, and on one occasion Janet was climbing over the wall, and Roy was at the bottom of the wall to catch her. Supposedly it was love at first sight. They continued at college, but then unfortunately, Roy's father John (Slim) Runnion passed away and therefore Roy had to return home to run the family ranch. Janet and Roy got married and moved to Montana. Janet finished her nursing degree at Montana State University Northern, and worked in Havre as a nurse.

Flash forward several years to 1979, when Janet's sister Kimberly (Kim) graduated from Michigan State University with a criminal justice degree, and was unable to find a job in Michigan. Janet convinced her to come to Montana in 1980, and stay with her and Roy. By this point in time, Tom Sheehy had graduated from University of Montana Law School, but was back helping his parents, John and Laura, run the ranch. The first time Tom saw Kim was when she went for walks up and down the county road right past the ranch. Tom and Kim were married in September of 1983. I was born in May of 1985, and my brother Jonathan was born in April of 1988.

We lived on the Runnion ranch from 1990 until 1997. We spent many days playing outside with our cousins: Ross, Brett, and Luke Runnion. There were days where we took the long, arduous hike to Candy Rock, which we thought would require a large

packed lunch in order to get us there and back. In all reality, the walk there probably took us about 25 minutes, but to us, it was quite the excursion.

We spent many muddy springs digging trenches along the side of the gravel road with our rubber boots, forcing the water onto the road and away from the ditch to make dams along various points down the hill, just to have Dad come along later and divert the water at the top, so it wouldn't create ruts down the road.

We had snowball fights at the bottom of that same hill across the road and had many great sledding hills to go down, either in toboggan boat sleds or rail sleds.



Jessica in front of Centennial Peak. Probably around 1993-1994.

We also spent many days hiking down to the “new house”, which is the house we live in now on the Sheehy Ranch. We had a pretty good cow trail to follow down through the brush and trees, then had to get boards set up over the creek so we could cross and not get our feet wet. There were also many hours spent holding the surveying stick for Dad while we were building the new house, and had to adjust it just a little to the left, or right, much to our dismay, as it was more fun to play on the house site than to work on it.

In August of 1997 we moved into our current house, just before the start of the new school year. At that time, I was just starting the 7th grade, and as we got older, more of our time on the weekends was spent helping on the ranch, when we weren’t at sporting events. There were many summers that were spent driving haying equipment as well. We all started out driving the swather, then as our driving capabilities improved, we graduated to baler, then to stacking hay with the tractor, and lastly to the balewagon. I didn’t earn the right to drive the balewagon until I was 26 years old!

I do remember one summer when I was about 13, and I was the oldest grandchild on the Sheehy side. Our cousins from Miles City were in town visiting, and because there was hay that needed to be cut, I had to go out and run the swather. Everyone else was able to go swimming at the waterfalls at Sheehy Park on that hot summer day. I was haying in the Frankmoore and plugged the swather up to the point where I was unable to get the hay out from the condenser. After I tried to unplug it for about a half hour and got nowhere, I walked down the hill into my grandparents’ house, and my grandpa John was sitting at his usual spot at the kitchen table. I told him what happened, and he smiled and told me to not worry about it. He sent the hired man up to unplug the swather and told me that I should join the others in the park and go swimming. It was quite the treat to get to go swimming in the hot sun instead of sitting in the cab where the AC only partially worked.

There were several summers growing up when Kristin Sheehy, middle daughter of Hugh and Barby Sheehy, would come and work at the ranch as well. Twenty years or so ago, the plant that was the new noxious weed that everyone was concerned about in Montana was leafy spurge. It had started to spread on various parts of the ranch, including on the mountain. Unfortunately, the roots are quite deep, and only very strong chemical weed spray or a specific beetle can kill it. One summer day, Tom, Kristin, Jon, Luke and I hiked up the mountain with backpack sprayers to spray the spurge with chemical. Most of the trip was uneventful, except for the brief moment that I thought I saw a snake. I’m pretty sure both Kristin and I ran about halfway back down the mountain, as we are both terribly frightened of snakes.



Tom with our old pet cow o28, who lived to be 17

We did get to hike up to the top of the mountain later that day as well and put our names in the jars that are kept in the rocks on the very top of the mountain, which is always a fun tradition when visiting the ranch. There are some names in the jars that go back at least 50 years up there still, and many were published in the local newspaper a number of years back.

One of the summers that Kristin was here, there was also a significant flood. It was pretty hard on many of the fences and buildings, but it did make it so that the water level in the creek was much higher, and high enough that we could take our small aluminum boat out on the water. Jon, Kristin, Tom and I started up by our house, and rode down to the footbridge at the ranch. There is a video recording that Kim took of parts of it as well, and from what I can remember, it was quite entertaining. The part that wasn't captured on camera, but would have been humorous if it had been, was when we got to the footbridge at the end of the trip. Tom jumped out on the shore to try to pull the boat up onto land before we hit the footbridge. However, he didn't get out soon enough, and we hit the bridge side on, and the upstream side tipped down to let water in. Kristin had the fastest reflexes and jumped up onto the bridge and only got her feet wet. Jon got wet up to his knees. I had the slowest reflexes and was wet up to my waist. No one was hurt, but it made for a good story.

After graduating from high school, I came back to work on the ranch part of the summer after my freshman year of college. I also worked on the ranch for about 10 months after graduating from Physician Assistant school in 2011, before moving to Minnesota and starting my current career as an Infectious Disease PA at the Mayo Clinic Health System. I try to make it back a few times a year to the ranch, and I know that when I come home that there are always things to help out with. When I was interviewing for my current job, one of the interviewers told me that she didn't need to ask about my work ethic, because she saw that I grew up on a ranch, and therefore she knew that I had a strong work ethic.

There were a lot of days growing up on the ranch that weren't always the most fun, especially when it was below zero outside and you thought your toes might freeze off, but there were a lot of good memories as well. It has certainly made me appreciate the value of hard work, and staying until the job is done.



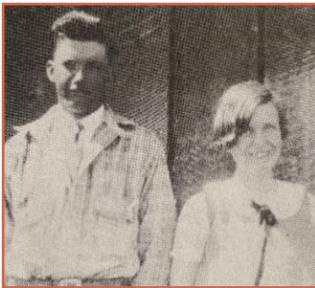
Jessica riding Grimmer



Jonathan with his oldest son Connor

FROM DURKEE TO SACRAMENTO

My grandmother, Beth Mae Critchlow, originally lived with her family near Durkee on Lookout Mountain. They ran a lumber mill at that location. Unfortunately, they lost the mill, then moved to Falls City, Oregon near Salem sometime between 1926 and 1928. The reason I know this is that Hugh Jr., my grandfather, and Beth met each other at a barn dance in Durkee when my grandmother was 14 years old (1926), so her family was still living in the area. Since my grandmother was so young, Hugh Jr. was given permission to write to her, but they weren't allowed to date. I also know that my grandmother graduated from Falls City High School near Salem, Oregon in 1929, so the family mill must have been lost between 1926 and 1928.



Fortunately, the letter writing worked between my grandparents. Hugh Sheehy Jr. and Beth Mae Critchlow were married on July 21, 1929. I don't know if this was on their wedding day, but it is one of the few family pictures with both of them together.

According to Aunt Helen Langley, Hugh Sr. gave my grandparents six or eight milk cows; the couple settled into the old home on Swayze Creek outside of Durkee, Oregon. Hugh Jr. was building up a better string of milkers by getting calves from the Bill Christianson Jersey herd. However, their ranch life was a struggle because a drought had arrived in northeastern Oregon in 1928 and remained until 1940. The family didn't have water rights to Swayze Creek, so they had to ranch using well water. To add to their struggles, just one month and eight days after their wedding, the Great Depression hit the nation.

Everyone pitched in to make the ranch a success. Hugh is described by his sister, Helen Langley, as "a buckaroo and broke most of the horses he rode. He seldom was bucked off." He was hardworking and "eager to help with about anything that needed to be done, even around the house. He would always be there to help with the washing or canning of the fruit and began getting breakfast for the family when he was nine years old."

On August 16, 1932, my mother, Faye, was born. Her happiest childhood memories were centered around the Durkee ranch with her parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. In 1934, my grandmother was expecting her second child, Aunt Katy (Kathleen), so she was in Baker City, Oregon awaiting her arrival. I don't know if my mom was at the ranch or in Baker City. I believe that my grandmother was staying with Aunt Mary Heriza because they were best friends.



Fall City High School Class of 1929. Beth Critchlow is in the front row, second from the right.



In this picture are my grandfather, Hugh Sheehy Jr. who is on the right; his brother, Tom, is in the middle; and his brother-in-law, David Critchlow, is on the left. My grandfather was the eldest of eight, so his younger siblings were still helping to work the ranch. My Uncle David must have been there for the summer to lend a hand.

During this same time, Hugh Jr. was still at the ranch. He was helping his mother, Grandma Sheehy, pull vegetables from the garden when he had another grand mal seizure. He had suffered with these seizures since a turkey fell from the barn rafters onto his head. The hospital was on dirt roads that extended beyond 24 miles between the Durkee Ranch and Baker City. Grandpa Sheehy drove as quickly as possible over those dirt roads to the hospital. While Hugh Jr. was hospitalized, Aunt Katy (Kathleen) was born on February 12, 1934. Grandma hadn't been told that Hugh Jr. was in the hospital, so she wondered why he hadn't come to see his daughter. It must have been so difficult for her to have given birth to her second child and found out that her husband was in the hospital. I don't know how often she was able to visit Hugh Jr. or if he ever regained sufficient consciousness to see his daughter, Katy, but after three months in and out of consciousness, Hugh Jr. passed away on April 2, 1934 at the age of 26.

My grandmother, Beth, now had a newborn and my mother, who was two years old, to raise on her own. It was 1934, the middle of the Great Depression. Grandma tried to continue to help run the family ranch at Swayze Creek but found it too difficult. She moved my mother and Aunt Katy to Baker City where, according to Aunt Helen Langley, she secured a job working in the office at Jones McCord Hardware Store.



The picture on the left is a photo of my Aunt Katy on the left and my mother on the right on July 25, 1935. This was around 15 months after their father's death.

While my grandmother continued to struggle after Hugh Jr.'s death, she also had support from her family.



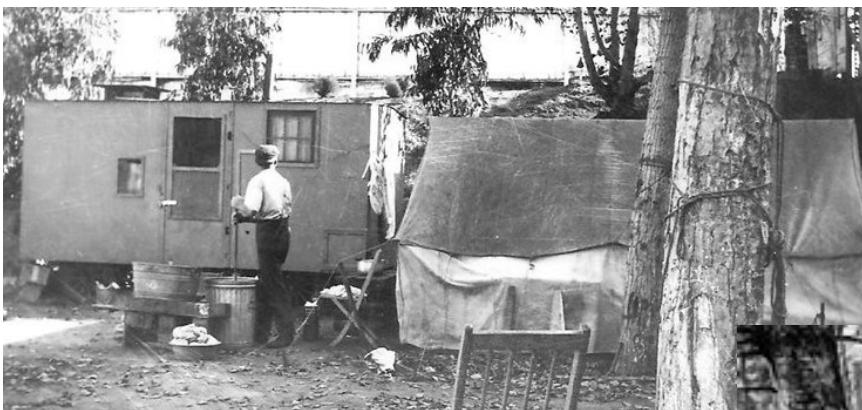
The picture on the right doesn't have a date, but it looks to be around 1935. From left to right are my grandmother, Beth; my mother, Faye; my Aunt Katy; and my great grandfather, Ralph Critchlow (Beth's father).

While I don't have a continuous timeline of my grandmother's work at the ranch or the hardware store, I do know that she also travelled around as a migrant worker with her father. By August 1939, they were in Marion County, Oregon at a private bean picking field. My mother and aunt were told that they were going camping. They didn't realize the financial struggles that had led my grandmother and great grandfather to a field to pick vegetables.

It appears that my great grandfather was handy with tools. He built a trailer for them to live in while earning income as migrant workers during and after the Great Depression.

Here is a picture of my great grandfather Ralph Critchlow's car towing the trailer he had built himself.





Here is their “campsite” that is set up with the mobile home, a tent, and two chairs. It looks like my great grandfather is doing laundry with a metal tub, aluminum garbage can, and a wooden rod. In order to help with this task, water had to be fetched. My mom and Aunt Katy were given this assignment.

In the picture on the right, Aunt Katy is in the foreground with her hand on the pump; my mom, Faye, is in the background in the coveralls. They were photographed by Dorothea Lange. She was “a photographer whose portraits of displaced farmers during the Great Depression greatly influenced later documentary photography.”

Neither child understood the significance of being in a migrant camp. To them, it was an adventure in the wilderness. They were told by my grandmother and great grandfather that they were camping. While grandma picked string beans from sunup to sundown, supplies had to be purchased at the company store because the migrant camps were isolated. These stores were operated by the employers who charged exorbitant prices for basic needs, such as flour, sugar, oil, etc. The cost was placed in a ledger which was set against the worker’s wages. At the end of the season, the account was settled. Unfortunately, like so many other migrant workers, my grandmother didn’t make any money after working for the entire season because of what she owed the company store. She came away penniless. Aunt Katy said it was one of the only times she saw her mother cry.

After six years of struggling, some relief came in 1940. The oral family history states that my grandmother was the first widow in Baker County to receive Social Security benefits. Grandma was a hardworking woman, so it must have been difficult for her to accept this “handout,” but she needed the funds to take care of her two children.

My mother, Faye, describes my grandmother, as “a widow at 22- was traditional but the circumstances of her life made her independent in a way that was non-traditional. She taught me to stand on my own two feet and make my own decisions earlier than my peers.” This was the grandmother that I knew as well. Stoic and encouraging.

My mom told me that they lived in a one room house with a basement in Baker City at the time. Grandma slept in the basement, and mom and her sister slept in the kitchen. During the hot summer months, the two girls slept outside under a tree. The place had an outhouse but was very basic. Mom remembers coming home from school and snacking on dried fish hanging in the kitchen.



Grandmother also continued to be involved with the Catholic church which is where a drastic change in her life occurred. While I do not know how many brothels were operating in Baker City in the 1940s, “Old-timers know that prostitution in Baker City continued well into the twentieth century, especially in the second-stories of Main Street business houses.”

No, my grandmother didn’t become a prostitute, but rather, was acquainted with the wife of a brothel owner. This woman attended the Catholic church where my grandmother was also a parishioner. The family story goes that this woman paid for my grandmother to go to secretary school which gave her additional employment skills.

In 1942, an opportunity opened for my grandmother. Now she had secretary skills, and her parents and siblings had moved to Sacramento, California. When my mother was 10 years old, grandmother moved her and my aunt to California. Grandmother secured a job at McClellan Air Force Base as a secretary. They lived in an urban housing development for families with limited means in an area called New Helvetia. The Catholic education continued with parochial school for both their grammar school and high school educations. My grandmother continued to volunteer her time with the altar society and other Catholic projects.

Mom can remember living in New Helvetia. When my mother lived there it was a decent, lower-income neighborhood that was close enough to walk to school, church, and other social needs. The housing they lived in still stands. These two-story apartments are made of brick with ten units in each row. There are grassy areas between each row with clothes lines for easy drying. Currently, this area is full of specialty shops, restaurants, and beautiful parks; it is an historical part of Sacramento.

After my mom and Aunt Katy were married, my grandmother married Forrest Fisher, a widower. She helped raise his three children: Derry, Dick, and Jane. On April 10, 1966, my mother was late for work at the hospital downtown because of protestors. My grandmother had joined 8,000 farmworkers and other supporters on that day when they crossed the Tower Bridge in Sacramento, California which was the last leg of a 340-mile march from Delano, California to the capitol. The protest was led by Cesar Chavez, the leader of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). They wanted fair wages for migrant workers. Grandmother had experienced the migrant worker’s plight and felt compelled to support their cause. The NFWA was successful in winning their union contract. Grandmother had turned a negative experience in her life into a positive one for others who were struggling. She was remarkable.

~ By Jeannette Benton, Granddaughter of Hugh Francis and Beth (Critchlow) Sheehy

Sources for this essay came from *The Sheehy Family: From Erin to Oregon* by Helen Langley; *The Oregon History Project*; “The World Rushed In: Northeastern Oregon/Boom or Bust;” *Identity Essay* by Faye Helen Sheehy Hannah; and an Oral History provided by my mother to me. With the exception of the Dorothea Lange photograph, my cousin, Pamela Gassett Brown provided all the other pictures. My Aunt Katy provided information about the migrant camp and her mother’s tears.



Faye and Aunt Katy in front of the housing project

NIGHT AND DAY IN THE XINJIANG UYGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

In early September, 2001, I was in the Kazakh minority district of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. I was the rangeland ecologist/livestock specialist on a feasibility study for a World Bank supported irrigation/cropland project. The project entailed damming the Irtysh River to provide hydropower and irrigation water to convert the winter range of Kazakh herders into alfalfa fields. In return for giving up their winter range, the herders would gain access to alfalfa for winter livestock feed. I personally thought it was a very poor trade, especially because the herders would have to settle into houses and change from grazing to confined livestock feeding. However, neither the herders or myself had had much say in the matter.

At that time, I was traveling with three project personnel from the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture. My three companions were all young and were not ethnically Han or the same minority. Although I have forgotten the names of the Kazakh and Uyghur, the Hui Chinese was Mr. Hu. He worked for the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture. He had a Master of Agriculture Degree and had done most of the preparation for the irrigation project himself. He spoke excellent English and prepared the Chinese-English translation of project documents as well as interpreting at meetings. My two other companions worked for the Autonomous Region's Dept. of Animal Husbandry. All three were young, educated, and Muslim.



Kazakh herder; photo credit dailymail.col.uk

After we finished looking at the proposed dam site and alfalfa test fields, and visited several "selected" herder families who appeared to be delighted with losing their winter range, we had a meeting with the local Dept. of Animal Husbandry in Altai City. After the meeting, we had the customary banquet where everybody praised everybody for their hard work over "baijiu" toasts. When the over-eating and drinking were finished, I staggered off to my "5-star" hotel-flophouse to get some sleep before starting the return trip through the desert to Urumqi. I had just drifted off to sleep when the ringing of the room phone woke me up. It was the desk clerk wanting to know if I needed female companionship for the night. I assured him that I was fine, hung up, and went back to sleep. Approximately 30 minutes later, someone knocking on my hotel room door woke me up. After putting on my trousers, I opened the door to find a young lady standing there. She inquired if I needed help sleeping. I again reaffirmed that I was sleeping fine without female company, shut the door, and went back to bed.

I had just gotten back to sleep when again there was someone knocking on the hotel door. Again, I got up, put on the trousers, and opened the door. It was the same young lady, but this time, she was a little bit more forceful in her inquiry about my need for companionship. When I opened the door, she stuck one leg through

the crack in the door and tried to force her way in. In return, I somewhat forcefully shoved her leg back out and slammed the door shut. I had the feeling that this time I had made clear my lack of need for a sleeping companion. I took my trousers off and went back to bed. Again, for the third time, I had just gotten to sleep when there was a loud knocking on the door. By now, I was really pissed because I wasn't getting any sleep at all. Instead of getting up and putting my trousers on, I just yelled that I didn't want company, and go away and leave me alone. However, the knocking continued, and I could hear a male voice calling me by my Chinese name to let them in. After putting on my trousers, I opened the door to find my three traveling companions standing there. They all came into the room talking excitedly about New York and Washington D.C. and turned the TV on. Together, in shock, we watched the airliners fly into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, and the towers collapse. We watched in silence as the Chinese TV newsreel ran the 9/11 events several times across the screen, trying to comprehend the magnitude of what we were seeing. At that time, I didn't fully understand what had happened or why, especially why three planes were involved in accidental crashes at the same time. After viewing the newsreel several times without seeing anything new, we decided to try to get some sleep until we met for breakfast. My companions left, and I went back to bed. Although I was totally sleep deprived, I was unable to sleep as I tried to puzzle through what I had seen on the TV.

I met my companions at the scheduled time for breakfast. By this time, they had listened to more news and had found out that Al Qaida terrorists had commandeered the aircraft, then flew them into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. They also told me that a fourth plane had crashed into a field somewhere else, killing everyone aboard. On this somber note, we finished our breakfast and departed on our daylong journey to Urumqi.

During the long trip, we discussed what had happened the night before, and how it was for them being Muslim in China. They all agreed that, even though they were educated and working for a prestigious Chinese institution, upward mobility for them was limited not only because of their minority status, but especially because they were Muslim. All three also agreed that, while the attack was a tragedy for the American people, it was a tragedy for Muslim minorities in China. When I asked why, they told me that the Chinese now had the excuse they needed to really crack down on them without eliciting a negative response from the rest of the world.

Footnote: I worked with Mr. Hu several times more on subsequent follow-up trips to develop the alfalfa project but didn't have any further contact with the Kazakh or Uyghur Muslims. Mr. Hu told me that he was trying to obtain employment with a foreign NGO, so he could quit his job with the Ministry of Agriculture. I also agreed to write him a letter of recommendation if he ever made an NGO short list.

About a year later, I received an e-mail from Mr. Hu asking me to write the letter. He had made the interview list for OXFAM, a British NGO based in Hong Kong. I did write him the letter, and, after several months, he wrote back that he had gotten the job and was moving his family to Hong Kong. I never crossed paths again with Mr. Hu although we kept in contact for awhile via e-mail.

My three companions were right when they predicted that 9/11 was a tragedy for Muslim minorities in China. Most religious denominations have been, or are being, silenced. The Uyghur minority is being persecuted with an estimated one million people in the Chinese Gulag. China now holds a seat on the UN committee for Human Rights. Probably most unfortunate is Mr. Hu in Hong Kong where human rights and civil freedoms are now in the process of being obliterated by the Chinese.

~ By Dennis Sheehy, Son of Thomas Wellman and Mary Margaret (Black) Sheehy

UNION CROSS COUNTRY AND THE SHEEHY FAMILY

Union cross country has won 22 Oregon state team championships since the program started in 1976. The first was in 1978, and the most recent was in November of 2021. The Sheehy family has been involved since the very beginning. Steve Sheehy has been the coach of the team since 2002.

Prior to 1976, the Sheehys were a family of football players. I remember many touch football games in the backyard at High Valley when I was growing up. My father, Robert Clinton Sheehy, was a star football player for Baker High School, and was briefly a football player at Oregon State. My brothers Robert, Dan, John, Jim, Tim and Kevin all played football. Dan was a Shrine team quarterback. Several cousins were also star football players, including Richard Sheehy, my uncle Dick's son, who played for Oregon State, and Dennis Sheehy, my uncle Tom's son, who played for Portland State.

It is really no surprise that my brothers were football players. Cross country wasn't even an option in Union until 1975 when a former University of Oregon sprinter named Larry Sweek arrived in Union and started the cross country team. He was a very charismatic recruiter and convinced many of the best athletes in the school, including my sister Eileen and my brothers Jim and Tim, to come out for the team. Mr. Sweek was much more advanced in his training methods than most coaches of the time. The stories I have heard about workouts such as 16x400 meters still amaze me. He had immediate success with his new team.

In 1976, the Union girls team qualified for the Oregon state championships, with my sister Eileen being one of the best runners on the team. In 1977, the boys team placed second at the Oregon state cross country meet. They won the first team title in 1978. That champion 1978 team had my brother Jim as the all-important 5th man, and my brother Tim as the 7th man. (Note that in cross country, you add up the places of the first 5 runners from each team, and the team with the lowest point total wins, so you have to have a high placing 5th man in order for the team to do well.)

For me as a 10 year old, those late 1970s teams were royalty. I never got to see them race, but I was around for many of the training runs they would go on together as a team. I really admired and looked up to them. They made running look easy, and there was always an air of excitement around those teams, partly due to the outgoing and charismatic Coach Sweek. For years, there was a banner draped across the local main street that said "Welcome to Union, home of the 1978 state champion boys cross country team." It was really a big deal in our town. I remember being very disappointed when the 1980 team came home from the state meet having gotten their butts kicked finishing in 7th place, well off the podium. At the time, I didn't understand how unusual a state championship was.

Unfortunately for Union, Mr. Sweek moved on to other things and left Union in 1979. By the fall of 1982, the cross country program in Union was dwindling. There were only two or three boys and one girl on the team. The sport had lost its popularity in the school. This is really



The announcement of the Winners of the 1978 Oregon State Meet

where the story starts for me, because I was one of those two or three boys on the team in my freshman year of high school. Luckily for Union, in the fall of 1982 a new coach named Dave Thomas took over the program. He was a crass, grouchy, crotchety old English teacher, but he knew how to train distance runners. By late season, I had really improved, placed 5th as an individual at the district meet, and therefore, qualified for the state cross country meet as an individual. I didn't do very well the next week at the state meet, placing well back in 45th place. I had no understanding of what it was to go to the state meet, and my coach didn't either. We just didn't know how to be successful there.

The next year, in the fall of 1983, a few of my friends and classmates joined the team, partly because we all liked Mr. Thomas, despite his grouchiness. We now had more than 5 runners on the team, which allowed us to compete as a team, rather than just as individuals. We rapidly improved and qualified as a team for the state cross country meet. While we were a good team locally, we only finished 6th out of 8 teams at the state meet. This could be because, inexplicably, Coach Thomas let us play pick-up basketball for a couple of hours in the motel parking lot the night before the race. We still didn't know how to be successful at the state level.

In 1985, Union High School hired their former football coach, Tom Hayes, to be the coach of the cross country team. Mr. Hayes was an overweight smoker who didn't know much about running (yet). However, Mr. Hayes was a very good recruiter and got lots of kids to come out for the team. He was a master of motivation and dealing with high school kids. He was very successful immediately, guiding a talented group of girl runners to Union's first girls state championship in his very first year. In 1986, the same group of girls placed second. I graduated in 1986, never having any real success as an individual or as a team, with my team's best finish being 3rd in 1984. After graduation, I immediately retired from running and didn't run a step for the next 15 months.

Tom Hayes would continue to coach the team until 2001. He became a runner himself, stopped smoking, attended running camps, and studied the craft of coaching. He found his winning formula in the 1990s, when Union went on a rampage at the state meet, placing first or second as a team 14 times. Mr. Hayes' last year coaching was in 2001. He went out with a bang with his girls team once again winning the state title.

On the spur of the moment in late September of my sophomore year of college, I called the Eastern Oregon State College cross country coach, Gary Feasel, to ask if I could run with the team. I didn't really have any intention of actually being a college athlete...I just wanted to get into shape. But as it turns out, Eastern Oregon had only 4 runners on the team. Coach Feasel told me to be there the next morning for practice because I was going to be their 5th man; that would allow them to have a complete team.

For the next four years, I was part of a resurgence of EOU cross country, culminating with my team qualifying for the national cross country meet in Kenosha, Wisconsin my senior year. I'm proud to say that I was a big part of this resurgence, helping to recruit new athletes to the team and to create a better team atmosphere.

Unfortunately for me, I was never very motivated to train hard during my time as an EOU runner, and this came back to bite me. I was usually the team's 7th runner, and only 7 people got to make the trip to Kenosha. Who got to go was to be decided by which runners placed in the top 7 at the regional meet at Bush Park in Salem, Oregon. I ran the best race that I have ever run before or since. I surged at all the right times. I was engaged from start to finish. I poured everything I had into that race. Even though I ran my life-time best race, I was beaten out for the 7th spot on the team by a freshman kid who had more talent than me. As I finished the race, I knew that my running career was over. As the EOU 8th runner, I didn't make it to nationals. Furthermore, I could see my time on the clock as I finished the race in 27:00, just missing my

lifetime goal of 26:59. I ran right through the finish chute and kept going until I found a quiet place in the park, where I sobbed like a baby, alone, for the next 15 minutes. I knew that my association with the sport of competitive running, which had started clear back in 1977, was over.

At the time, I never expected that I would one day be a high school coach and get back into the sport. I also had no idea that my failures as a runner, both as an individual and as part of a team, would be the most influential experience that has made me the coach that I am today.

Like most of us, I loved my high school coach, Mr. Hayes. He was a great coach, an inspirational leader, and a master motivator. I'm very proud that I got to be on one of Mr. Hayes' first teams. I feel that of all the people associated with Bobcat cross country, I provide a unique thread that goes from present day, back through Mr. Hayes to Mr. Sweek.



That's me
(Steve Sheehy)
sitting directly
next to
Mr. Hayes'
left in the
above photo
in 1985

Row 1: Jay Reagan, James Moe, Pat Duff, Jerome Bowles, Scott Lindsay, Steve Schlegel. Row 2: Coach Hayes, Steve Sheehy, Bill Emily, Matt Bray, Brian Lowery, Craig Kohler, Eric Griffiths. Row 3: Kim Richards, Traci Reagan, Metta Ringer, April Wellington, Diane Duncan, Karen Jacobs, Jessica Lackaff, Dolly Hightower, Lora Vroman, Judy Jacobs. Row 4: Molly Lackaff, Kurt Rehfuss, Rhonda Bracken, Kelly Reagan, Jeremy Wilson, Julie Zaugg, Jennifer Goodman, Becky Bowen.

In 2000, as a member of the Union school board, I knew that Tom Hayes was going to retire at the end of the 2001 season. By this time, Union cross country was already legendary in Oregon sports history, with Tom Hayes' teams winning the state team title on 7 different occasions. At that time, only one other coach in Oregon XC history had that many championships. Knowing how important the program was, I was concerned about finding a suitable replacement. I mentioned to the Union High School athletic director that if they couldn't find anyone qualified, that I would be interested. At age 33, I had never worked with high school kids or coached any sport at any level. I hadn't even coached a youth soccer or T-ball team. Of course, it turned out that the Union AD couldn't find anyone qualified, or even anyone that wanted to take over the

team. After all, why would anyone want to step into the huge shoes of Tom Hayes, one of the most popular Union teachers ever, and an Oregon legend coach? I don't remember applying, but I took over the high school team, with my older brother John as assistant coach. John had also run cross country in college at EOU and helped me out for the first two years.



Coach Tom Hayes and Steve Sheehy, circa 2015.

established ways of doing things. I learned a bunch from that first team. We won the district title and moved on to the state meet. Without me really knowing anything about how to prepare the team for the state meet, the team fell into those long-established routines and traditions they learned from Mr. Hayes.

Cross country is kind of a funny sport in that there isn't really any scoreboard during the meet. The race is run, and then the team scores are calculated afterwards. This often takes 30 minutes to an hour, so everybody kind of stands around wondering who won. It is something very unique to the sport and creates a lot of suspense with the announcement of the team champions often being very dramatic. That year, Dan Moody, the Enterprise coach, told me that we had won before the scores were announced. I was kinda like "We did? Wow," having no idea and being completely clueless! The next year, 2003, our girls team won the state title again, this time with my brother John's daughter Larne on the team.

At that point in my life, I hadn't run a step since I was about age 26. I was really out of shape. I couldn't even run a mile without stopping. Knowing that I was going to start coaching the team in the fall of 2002, I started running in March of that year, trying to get into shape so that I could run with the team. I also started doing research on training plans and on coaching methodologies. I read lots of books trying to get ready. I also sat down with Tom Hayes on a number of occasions and asked as many questions as I could.

Luckily for me, Tom Hayes had retired at a point when he still had a bunch of young talent on the team. He left the program in good shape. In fact, at that point, the girls team had qualified for the state meet for 14 straight years. The stable was full of good runners with a lot of traditions and



The announcement of the 2003 State Champions. Larne Sheehy 2nd from right.

Also that year, our boys team started to improve. Once again, a Sheehy was partly responsible for the improvement. That was my nephew Brennan (John's son). Brennan ran a very good race at the district meet, and my top 3 boys placed 2nd, 3rd, and 6th (Bren), all qualifying as individuals for the state meet. But the real question was whether the team would qualify? We also had a solid 4th runner, but our 5th runner was way back in the race. We had made a plan before the race about how we could beat the strong Umatilla team, which we needed to do in order to qualify. We thought that if we could each do our jobs by having all 5 runners beat the people that we needed to, that we could squeak through and maybe defeat Umatilla by a point or two. When they announced that we had beat Umatilla and easily qualified for the state meet, our boys were ecstatic. It was one of the best feelings I have had as a coach. As we were getting ready to leave the park, my boys and girls teams were on the bus celebrating both teams qualifying. It was a party atmosphere...lots of singing, laughing, dancing, and smiling.

Unfortunately, I was about to have one of the worst feelings I have ever had as a coach. One of the meet officials had made a scoring error, counting one of the Umatilla kids as a Union runner. Right before I boarded the bus, we discovered the scoring error. When the scores were finally sorted out, Umatilla had actually tied with us point wise, but had beaten us on the tie breaker of having the best 6th runner. We lost, and I had to go into that party atmosphere on the bus and tell the boys team that they, in fact, didn't qualify for state. The boys didn't believe me at first. They thought I was joking with them. It took me several minutes to convince them that they weren't going to state. When we stopped in Pendleton for dinner, the boys team wouldn't get off the bus to go eat. They were devastated, and so was I.

That was the last time my boys team didn't qualify for the state meet. In 2004, with Brennan Sheehy as one of our best runners, we won the district title and qualified for state, starting a still-going string of 18 straight years of the boys team making it to state. Even better, the last time the boys team wasn't on the podium (meaning a top 4 team finish) was 2006.

In 2005, one of the parents on the team, Phillip O'Reilly, started helping out. Phillip and his wife Laura have 10 kids, all of whom have been Union cross country runners. Coach O'Reilly has been with the team ever since. In 2006, my brother Kevin helped arrange for an old college teammate of mine named Tim Vandervlugt to help out as well. "Coach V" has been part of our coaching staff ever since! Much of our success can be attributed to both of these coaches.

One interesting thing about Union cross country is that over the 22 state championships that we have won, 12 of them had a Sheehy family member on the state varsity team. Fifteen of them have had a Sheehy team

member or coach. Furthermore, one of the following family names on the team (Sheehy, Baxter, O'Reilly) appears on all but the 1985 girls, 1993 girls, 1995 girls, and 1996 girls teams. I tell many coaches that all you need for success is to have 3 good families that have lots of kids!

In 2007, we won Union's first boys team championship in my tenure as coach. One of the leaders on this team was Tom Sheehy (my brother Jim's son), who placed 11th overall. This same core group of guys won state again in 2008 with Tom placing third.



The 2007 Boys team arriving in Union after winning the state meet.
(Photo: Tim Sheehy)

In 2009, Union and Cove formed a cooperative sponsorship for the sport, which means that students from both schools could combine to form one team. This is a common thing to do in small schools because it allows schools like Cove, which only had 3 or 4 runners at the time, to offer the sport. Without this cooperative sponsorship, offering the sport would be cost prohibitive for Cove, and Cove didn't have the required number of runners (5) to have a complete team.

In 2012, lightning struck and **both** the boys and girls teams won the state team championship. The girls were led by Katriel O'Reilly, who became Union's first girl individual state champion. That was a good day! The boys team won the title by a single point over heavily favored East Linn Christian. One of the key runners on that team was my son, Riley.



The announcement of the 2012 team winners. Riley Sheehy is pictured mid air.

point, giving us our 4th girls team title in a row, which is an Oregon state meet record. We are the only small school program to have accomplished this feat.

In 2018, the boys team won the championship, winning Union's 20th team state championship, 40 years after the first one. The 5th man on that team was my son, Matthew, who placed 25th. An interesting set of coincidences is that almost exactly 40 years to the day after Union's first state championship (with my brother Jim as the 5th man, placing 22nd overall), my son, Matthew, was also the 5th man, placing 25th overall. Both teams scored 44 points.

In 2013, my girls team won with one of the lowest scores in state championship history. Jim's daughter, Kathryn, was one of the varsity runners on that team. The 2013 Union/Cove girls' team is ranked by Who's Who in Oregon Track to be the best small-school girls' team in state history. We put 4 girls in the top 10 individuals, including girls placing 1st, 2nd, 6th, and 8th. Also in 2013, a very talented former volleyball player named McKenzie Evans ran her way to an individual state meet record (18:42) and the state individual championship. This girl would later be married to Tom Sheehy and is now McKenzie Evans Sheehy! In one of the great honors of my life, I was asked by Tom and McKenzie to officiate their wedding. McKenzie is also a cross country coach at Elgin High School where she is a first-year English teacher.

In 2014, my girls team pulled another upset, beating favored St. Mary's of Medford. After the race, (and remember cross country doesn't have a scoreboard, and you often don't know who has won until after the race) I congratulated the St. Mary's coach, because I was certain we had lost. However, once the scores were posted, we learned that we had pulled the upset again to win by a single

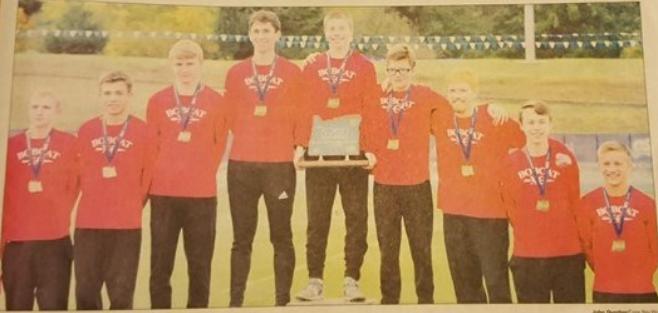


McKenzie (92) and the 2013 top 10 state meet individuals. Note the 4 Union runners in red and white!

Sports

Monday, November 5, 2018
The Observer

No. 20 for the Bobcats



The Union/Cove boys cross country team stands on the podium with the first-place trophy Saturday at Lane Community College in Eugene. It's the second straight year the Bobcats have won the boys championship, and is the 20th state title between the boys and girls in program history.

By Ronald Bond
The Observer
EUGENE — Winning a state championship is always memorable. But Saturday's Class 2A/3A title was especially meaningful for Union/Cove cross country Head Coach Steve Sheehy.

The championship was the 20th in program history — boys and girls combined — since the Bobcats' first state title 40 years ago.

That number is tied with the Union/Cove and 14 power schools, both of which entered the day with 19 titles, the most in the

state, regardless of classification, according to Sheehy.

There are also deep connections for the Sheehy family. His brother, Matt, ran the 1970 championship squad, placing fifth on the team.

Saturday, Steve's son, Matthew Sheehy, ran for a dominant win. "This isn't pretty special," said Steve Sheehy, who guided the

No. 20 and — you guessed it — placed fifth on the team.

And to tie it all together, the '78 state champion is the coach for a dominant team. The 2018 team scored — 44 points for a dominant win.

"I don't know what else you can

See Champs / Page

The La Grande Observer article on the 20th championship in 2018. Matthew Sheehy is 3rd from the right.

In 2017, Union's Alex Graffunder won the state meet individual title, running a state meet record time of 15:33. In 2018 Union/Cove's Tim Stevens won the individual title in a state meet record tying time of 15:33.

My 20 years of coaching have given me many highs. However, they have also given me a few lows. Coaching hasn't always been fun. There have been a few times when being the coach has caused me all kinds of pain, such as when some of my team egged another teammate's house. There was another time when some kids got carried away with orange spray paint while marking our home meet course in Catherine Creek State Park, emptying several cans of spray paint on the trees and rocks of the park. Another time my runners made too much noise in the hotel after the state meet, and I was yelled at by a stranger in the hotel hallway. She told me that I should never, ever, be allowed to work with

young people, and that she would be calling our school in the morning to tell them so.

Many times, the high and lows happened at the same time. One of my runners, whose father had abandoned him and his family when he was young, once told me through his tears, "I'm NOT going to be like my father." I'm happy to say that he isn't, and he won't be. Another of my runners was forcibly removed from his parents' custody by Child Protective Services when he was young. He later became a state champion. Being around these kinds of people, and seeing their successes, not in running, but in life, is perhaps the most rewarding thing about coaching.

Sometimes I wonder about the sacrifices I have made to be a coach and how they affect my own kids and family. I got to be Riley's, Matthew's, and now Patrick's coach. I got to have my daughter Emma involved in the team as the photographer for 4 years. However, as you might guess, coaching this team in the manner I do takes a lot of time and energy. At times, it has been an obsession. Over the past 20 years, I spent a lot of time and energy working with other people's kids. Would I have been a better parent or husband if I hadn't been a coach? There is a cost to coaching, and I really appreciate my wife, Susan, and my kids for supporting me all of these years. This fall, my youngest son, Patrick, is on my high school team. He is learning to be a runner and it is great to see.

In the spring of this year, after a delayed season due to Covid, we won another state championship, with my boys team beating Bandon by 2 points. Last month, my boys team won our program's 22nd state championship, upsetting #1 ranked Bandon by 4 points with my son Patrick as the 8th man on the team. No other program in Oregon, of any school size, has that many team titles. Oregon sports power, Jesuit of Beaverton, is second with 20. Union cross country is one of the marquee high school sports programs in Oregon. I'm really proud of the Sheehy family's involvement in the program.

~ Steve Sheehy, Son of Robert Sheehy and Dona (Storie) Sheehy

RECENT EVENTS

DESTINATION IRELAND...FINALLY!

The Plan: a trip to Ireland leaving March 17, 2020.

As a wave of uncertainty descended like a dark shadow over the world, we realized a few days before we were scheduled to leave that our trip was most likely not going to happen. We rescheduled for the Fall of 2020, hoping that things would be better by then. As the pandemic raged through communities throughout the world, we quickly understood that rebooking flights and Airbnbs was going to be something that my sister Marni became quite adept at! After three reschedules and a ton of perseverance on Marni's part, we took a chance and rebooked a trip for September of 2021 with fingers and toes crossed. As the date approached, I wasn't positive it was a go until I was sitting on the Aer Lingus flight with my seatbelt strapped!

This ended up being a mother/daughter trip that would prove to be good food for the soul. We arrived in Dublin in the early morning on September 17th, grabbed our rental car, and with a boatload of caffeine, adrenaline, and a prayer on board, we headed west to the Limerick area. We stayed in Kildimo, which is located near Newcastle West. While we were there, we met with some wonderful folks at the Seven Sisters Pub - Connie Sheehy, his wife Helen, and their son John. Connie had reached out to our cousin, Carrie Sheehy, wondering if we might be related. A meeting was set up, so we could meet them while we were there. We aren't yet sure if we are related to them as the DNA test is still pending, but at the very least, we made a great connection with some wonderful new friends. We lifted some pints together, laughed until our sides hurt, and are now friends on Facebook with them—ah the wonders of the modern world! We were also able to meet up with Liam Sheehy and his beautiful family while we were in the area.



Jane (Sheehy) Eidson and daughters Erin and Marni, Slea Head Drive, County Kerry



Standing Stones, Blarney Castle, County Cork

From Kildimo, we headed up North to the Cliffs of Moher to my favorite coffee shop, Moher Cottage, to meet up with the owner, Caitronia, who has become a dear friend and long-distance walking partner of mine (I hope to hike across Ireland someday!). I highly recommend trying their flat white and dreamy fudge if you are ever in the area! We then drove on to the Galway area, then down to Dingle, next to the Wicklows, and finally to Julianstown. We had the great pleasure of visiting friends at every stop along the way!



Craughwell Castle, County Galway

This trip was long in coming, especially since we had to reschedule so many times. Honestly, it was one of the most magical trips to Ireland for me personally. It was about time spent with my mom and sister, meeting new friends, and seeing dear old friends that we've met on our trips over the years. It was about reconnecting with a place and her people that we've missed dearly. It gave us hope that despite the darkness of the past 18 or so months, the world is still a bright, positive, and wonderful place. This experience taught us about patience, perseverance, and a world that is still full of kind and good people despite this collective trauma we've all experienced. This trip truly brought home for me that we are all in this together. The Irish are still as welcoming as ever and seemed happy to have visitors again. I feel beyond grateful that we were able to visit such a special place to the Sheehy family. As my Granddad Tom would always say, Erin go Bragh!

~ By Erin Kaiser (granddaughter of Thomas W. and Mary Margaret (Black) Sheehy)



Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry



IN MEMORIAM

Robert Kent (Kent) Nelson

January 10, 1944 ~ June 4, 2021

Robert Kent Nelson (Kent), 77, formerly of Baker City, passed away Friday, June 4, 2021, at Polidori Hospice Care House in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

Kent was born to Robert and Katherine Nelson on January 10, 1944, in Baker (now Baker City), Oregon. He was raised on the family ranch near Hereford. As the fourth generation to raise cattle on the Nelson C-C Ranch, he held a deep love for his heritage, the beautiful land, ranch life, the horses and cattle, his family, and God who provided for them all. He told people that ranching was the only thing he ever wanted to do.

After graduation from Hereford High School, he went on to study Rangeland Management and Agribusiness at Yakima Valley Community College in Yakima, Washington.

On September 11, 1965, Kent married Anita Marie Langley of Huntington, Oregon. The couple raised two sons, Mark Kent and Robert Matthew. A special joy was to add Suski Lehtisalo, an exchange student from Finland, to the family in 1988.

Kent's dedication to his family, his ranch, and his heritage flowed naturally into the community where he served a total of ninety-seven years on various committees and boards. These included the Burnt River Soil Conservation District, Burnt River School District, Oregon and Baker County Cattlemen's Associations, Burnt River Weed District, Farmers Home Administration Loan Committee, Western States Junior Rodeo, and Baker City Church of the Nazarene board.

Kent's faith in God was demonstrated in Bible study, involvement in the church, and outreach beyond local communities with three Work and Witness trips to Central America and Eastern Europe.

(Continued next page)

Kent's gift of hospitality shone brightest during hunting season when family and friends were welcomed to the ranch for deer and elk hunting. But for fifty-four years in a row, hunting took a back seat to the Pendleton Round-Up Rodeo in mid-September.

Saddles, bits, spurs, knives, and big game trophy mounts were collected with zeal. Kent's all-time favorite, however, was the collecting and trading of hunting rifles and pistols. Few calibers and makes escaped his collection over the years.

After years of calving season blizzards, relentless labor, and narrow escapes from ornery cows, Kent retired from ranching and moved to Baker City. Much to the surprise of his family, he took up golf and bought an 18-wheeler. For the next ten years, he hauled hay and farm equipment from Canada to Mexico, listening to hymns by Christy Lane and Tennessee Ernie Ford to keep himself awake.

Kent and Anita began spending winters in the warmer climate of Lake Havasu City, Arizona. It was there on December 26, 2019, where Kent suffered severe head trauma in an accident. The resulting care he required was provided by Havasu Nursing Center until God took him home.

With celebration of his life and in loving memory, Kent is survived by his wife, Anita, of Lake Havasu City, Arizona; his twin sister Karen and husband Bill Greeley of Wilsonville, Oregon; his son Mark and wife Billie Jo, with grandchildren Kathryn and Robert of Kuna, Idaho; and his son Matthew and wife Anusha, with grandchildren Emilie and Edouard of London, England.

~By Matt Nelson, son of Kent and Anita (Langley) Nelson,
and grandson of Harland and Helen (Sheehy) Langley



FAMILY NEWS

New Arrivals

Koa Kazuo Matsuda was born on October 31, 2021 to proud parents Michael and Brooke (Sheehy) Matsuda. Koa Kazuo is the grandson of Richard Jr. and Terri (Hawkins) Sheehy and the great grandson of Richard Sr. and Darlene (Bunch) Sheehy.

Academic Milestones

Margaret (Maggie) Sheehy, daughter of Jim and Sally (Thomas) Sheehy and granddaughter of Robert and Dona (Storie) Sheehy, has begun studies for a Master of Social Work at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Career Events

Jay Howland (son of Joy (Langley) Walker and grandson of Harland and Helen (Sheehy) Langley) is a professor in the College of Technical Sciences at Montana State University Northern in Havre, Montana. He and his family are friends of the Montana Sheehy family, who are the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Thomas Lawrence Sheehy, the brother of our grandfather Hugh Francis Sheehy.

Matt Nelson, son of Kent and Anita (Langley) Nelson and grandson of Harland and Helen (Sheehy) Langley, is the founder and CEO of RISC Vision Ltd., a London-based knowledge engineering platform to model and monitor third-party business risk. RISC Vision and its partner RSM UK have just been selected for the Sustainability Cohort of the Digital Sandbox, a project launched by the UK Government to support innovation in financial services.

Ira Rigger III, husband of Marni Holloway (granddaughter of Thomas W. and Mary Margaret (Black) Sheehy) has been promoted to gunnery sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. He is stationed in North Carolina.

Jessica Sheehy, daughter of Thomas and Kimberly (Robinson) Sheehy and great granddaughter of Thomas Lawrence and Blanche (Morton) Sheehy, is an Infectious Disease Physician Assistant at the Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato, Minnesota.

Other

Jesse and Alexa (Servid) Jones provided an updated photo of their family, including the new arrivals (Isabella Carol and Elizabeth Dona) that were reported in previous family newsletters. Alexa is the daughter of Mark and Dona (Sheehy) Servid and the granddaughter of Robert and Dona Sheehy.

Matthew Sheehy, son of Steve and Susan (Tamblyn) Sheehy and grandson of Robert and Dona Sheehy, completed walking the Camino de Santiago from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, France, to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and on to Finisterre, Spain, a total distance of more than 500 miles. He is currently volunteering at a Workaway project in Ballinalack, Co. Westmeath, Ireland.



Jesse holding Elizabeth Dona and Alexa holding Isabella Carol

MISCELLANEOUS

CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

I remember making Chocolate Cream Pie with my grandmother, Lettie Storie, and also with my mom, Dona Sheehy.

Grandma's delicious Chocolate Cream Pie filling was made in a heavy pan with a wooden spoon and cooked on the stove. She added some chocolate chips rather than all the cocoa and butter. Mom also made hers on the stove which was a hot job on a summer day and modified it by excluding the chocolate chips.

I have adapted Mom's recipe to be made in the microwave. It is easier because you don't need to worry about it sticking and scorching or need to stay with it all the time it is cooking. It also seems creamier.

List of ingredients:

1-1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons Crisco (or other shortening)
2 cups sugar
2/3 cup Hershey's cocoa
6 tablespoons cornstarch
1 quart of milk, fresh or dried (see below*)
4 teaspoons butter
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 egg yolks
Salt



Prepare the crust for a deep dish 9-inch pie. Measure into a bowl and mix well: 1-1/4 cup all-purpose flour and 5/8 teaspoon salt. Cut in 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons Crisco (shortening) until the size of peas. Add 1/4 cup water and mix until dough begins to clean sides of bowl and can be rounded into a ball.

Roll and fit into the pie pan, then crimp the edges. Prick the bottom and sides with a fork to allow steam to escape. Place a piece of foil slightly larger than the bottom of the pan in the crust and pour 1/2 cup beans or rice on top. This will help keep a bubble from forming in the bottom of the pan.

Bake at 475 F degrees for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the foil and weights and make a few fresh holes with a fork for the last few minutes of baking. Continue baking until lightly browned. Let the crust cool.

To prepare filling, In a glass bowl, measure the following ingredients and stir well with a wire whisk: 2 cups sugar, 2/3 cup Hershey's cocoa , 6 tablespoons cornstarch, 1 teaspoon salt. Set aside.

*Prepare 1 quart of milk. In Alaska, I always used dried milk which was easily available and less expensive. To do this measure 1-2/3 cup (a little more than directed on the box) milk powder into a measuring cup and add warm water to make one quart. An alternative is to use fresh milk, warming it in the microwave to shorten cooking time.

Pour approximately 1/2 cup of the milk into the sugar mixture and stir well. Add 4 egg yolks and stir again until well mixed. Add the rest of the milk and whisk well.

Heat in the microwave for 5 minutes. Stir with wire whisk until smooth. Return to the microwave and heat in two minutes intervals, stirring well with a wire whisk before continuing to heat. Heat and stir in intervals until the center of the bowl has come to a boil and boiled for 2 minutes to ensure the egg is well cooked.

Stir in: 4 teaspoons butter and 2 teaspoons vanilla

Pour the mixture into the baked shell and cover the top of the filling with plastic wrap, leaving it loose around the crust to allow moisture to escape as the pie cools. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Garnish with whipped cream and chocolate shavings. Serves 8.

~ Katy (Sheehy) Bloom, Daughter of Robert Sheehy and Dona (Storie) Sheehy



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The next edition of the Sheehy Family Newsletter will be published at the time of the next family reunion, which is tentatively scheduled for Friday and Saturday, June 24-25, 2022, at the Sheehy Barn in High Valley, Union, Oregon (Please mark your calendars, and also cross your fingers that the pandemic will not require yet another cancellation).

Family members who may be interested in making a contribution to the next edition or a future newsletter should contact Jim Sheehy (email: <sheehyjs@eoni.com>) or Robert Sheehy (email: <robert.sheehy@yahoo.com>) as soon as possible to discuss the proposed topic(s). We have already received several contributions for the next edition, but are looking for more. Please sharpen your pens and start writing! The target date for drafts for the next edition is May 2022.

The newsletter is being sent to all family members for which we have contact information. We would appreciate it very much if recipients could forward it to other family members not on our list. Please also let us know the email addresses of anyone to which the newsletter has been forwarded (with their permission, of course) so that we can include them in the distribution of the next edition.

