

Yockey family organizes tearless grave-side service for Levi Yockey – 101 years later

Red Feather Lakes, July 1996

On a perfect July day in the foothills, the greatly expanded family of Levi Yockey gathered for lunch in Red Feather Lakes and then placed a marker on his grave. But unlike most grave-side services there were no tears. In fact, not one of his relatives had ever met him. Levi Yockey died in 1895.

The only information the family had about his grave was that it was located “in a meadow near a fence-line and trail” leading to Westlake School, about a mile southeast of what is now named Red Feather Lakes. Last year family members came from California and Arizona to try to locate their great-grandfather’s grave with only that bit of information.

In their search, someone mentioned there was a “grave dowser” in LaPorte (*North Forty News*, May 1995). That was how Bill Schneider came to their aid with his divining rods. The first grave Schneider came across was that of a woman – “unlikely to be your grandfather” he slyly told the Yockey descendants. But then he located another grave, more in line with the description they had, and they concluded it must be Levi Yockey’s grave.

The Yockey family came to Larimer County around 1880 from Ottawa County, Kansas. Levi and his wife Elizabeth came with their son Jacob and his family. The two men built a two-story log house northwest of Red Feather Lakes near Black Mountain and operated a saw mill there. Jacob and his wife eventually had 11 children and helped found the Yockey School in 1894. It was the first school in District No. 56, later known as the Westlake District. S. C. Case and his brother, Booker, both taught at this school.

In 1913 the Yockey family sold their holdings to Sam Clammer and most of them left the Red Feather Lakes area. Jacob, his wife and his mother went to Arizona. The eldest son, Eli, was the only one to stay in Larimer Country.

Nearly 50 Yockey descendants gathered in Red Feather Lakes on July 24 to find their history and honor Levi. They came from Oregon, Nevada, California, Arizona, Wyoming, Kansas, and Colorado. Fred Foster, of Red Feather Lakes and a member of the local Historical Society helped organize the local coordination. Monfort Holdings, present owners of the old Hardin Ranch, gave permission for the headstone to be placed on their land.

Cut Lines (Explanation of Pictures)

- 1) Fifty people and five large horses gather on the old Hardin Ranch to lay a headstone on what is thought to be Levi Yockey’s grave.
- 2) Bill Schneider demonstrates his divining rods. Fred Foster (right) carries a basket of wildflowers to lay near the headstone.

- 3) Pastor Brian Wechsler of Morning Star Community Church leads a short service on behalf of the Yockey family.
- 4) A pair of Levis mark the spot where the grave site is located.
- 5) Levi Yockey's small headstone is put in place.