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THE SWETT HOMESTEAD:
AN ORAL HISTORY
1909-1970

by
Eric G. Swedin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
History

Approved:

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Eric G. Swedin
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ABSTRACT

The Swett Homestead:  
An Oral History  
1909-1970  

by  

Eric G. Swedin, Master of Science  
Utah State University, 1991  

Major Professor:  F. Ross Peterson  
Department:  History  

Making extensive use of oral interviews with the surviving children, this thesis is an biography of Oscar and Emma Swett and their children, who lived on a homestead in Greendale, Utah, (near Flaming Gorge Reservoir) from 1909 to 1970. The family is representative of a group of families who moved to Greendale and engaged in small-scale cattle ranching. The introduction of new technology changed their lifestyles and homestead economics, while simultaneously Greendale evolved from a rural agricultural environment to become part of a National Recreation Area. 

(147 pages)
INTRODUCTION

This is the biography of the family of Oscar and Emma Swett, a narrative emphasizing personality and living conditions. The story is told in the words of their children as much as possible within the bounds of clarity and flow. The inclusion of so much primary information of a personal nature presents the Swetts as they saw themselves. Intermixed with the narrative are interpretation and observations on the course of the family's lives and on any conjunctions or contrasts with the trends and events in the rest of the country at the time.

The Swett homestead in Greendale is now owned by the United States National Forest Service and is recognized in both the national and state registers of historic sites. The Forest Service plans to turn the site into a museum where visitors can come and get a sense of the past. This study provides the background to create an interpretation of the site. What should this interpretation be?

The first question to be considered when creating an interpretation is why? What makes the Swett homestead significant? Nothing particularly important in a traditional historical sense happened on the Swett
homestead, nor are the buildings or site peculiar in any other way. But the Swett homestead is representative of a way of life that is now gone. People visiting the site can get a sense of this way of life only if it is presented to them correctly: a process of interpretation.

"Interpretation is an attempt to create understanding,"¹ and so understanding should be our goal. The research contained in this study creates the background necessary to make informed decisions about the homestead. As a historian, I recommend the following processes be followed during development of the site. First, interpretive objectives should be set in writing while securing a source of long-term funding. Authenticity is of primary importance, and we should settle for nothing less. The reconstructed site should have no physical artifacts that mar a sense of the past. If an artifact of that type did not actually exist on the ranch, then it should not be there. Fortunately, many of the original artifacts can be recovered, and for those that cannot be recovered, only accurate substitutions should be allowed.

The following themes should be developed during the interpretation of the site: the constant nature of historical change; the isolation of Greendale and what drew settlers to this place; the relationship of the homesteaders with their natural environment; the cattle economy and subsistence level of life; Greendale's relationship with the outside world; the coming of Flaming Gorge Dam and how it changed life for the Swetts. Two examples should suffice on how these themes can be presented.

First, a tour guide explains that the Swett homestead buildings did not have locks while the Swetts lived there. They trusted their neighbors. Later, after the dam came, the Swetts had to put a lock on their second blacksmith shop, because it was out of sight of their home and they were experiencing problems with strangers getting into and snooping around the shop. Now all the buildings need locks.

Second example: during a tour, the guide takes a group from building to building, explains who built the building, what it was used for, how its use changed over time, whether Oscar or Emma primarily worked in the building, how the work done in the building was important to the functioning of the homestead, how this is different from the way we do things today, and, most
importantly, why? What historical forces created the difference between the way the Swetts lived and the way we live? The last question should not be pushed on the visitors, but gently suggested through creative use of established techniques developed by such organizations as the American Association for State and Local History, National Park Service, and National Forest Service. Visitors will leave the site with a new knowledge of how the Swetts and homesteaders like them lived and with an appreciation of the lives of a rugged people who were heirs to Utah's pioneering traditions.

Other than providing source material for a historic site reconstruction by the Forest Service, this study stands on its own as a scholarly thesis. Three themes run through this narrative and are not explicitly pointed to during its course. First, the constancy of change: the Swetts lived through an enormous amount of change, especially as this country urbanized and the automobile changed the rural landscape into a place where people went for a weekend, not for their entire

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life. Second, how the Swetts related to their physical environment: this includes the ecology of the land and water upon which they based their livelihood. At almost seven thousand feet in elevation, Greendale is quite arid, and water is central to the economy and life. Ultimately, the United States Congress decided that the water and land resources of the Green River should be converted into a hydroelectric resource. The resulting lake, Flaming Gorge Reservoir, part of the Colorado River Project, did not provide irrigation water or flood control, but did provide electricity and recreation. A third theme concerns the interaction of the Swetts with the outside world. A previous historian who researched the Swett homestead commented that the Swetts were "quite self sufficient[sic]," and lived "a quieter, more peaceful existence."3 They provide an "unique example of man living in harmony with his physical environment."4 Instead of emphasizing the harmonic

3 Carol S. Zubrickas, Forestry Technician (Historian), Development Alternatives: Swett Ranch (Internal study, dated October 26, 1978, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Ashley National Forest, Dutch John, Utah), 1. This document utilized emotional appeal to build a case for restoring the ranch and making it into a historical attraction for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area.

existence and independence of the Swetts, this thesis shows their dependence on the outside world, though a dependence much less pervasive than for the typical, present-day, citizen of the United States.

The time periods connected with the chapters are only guides, not walls. Because of the nature of the sources, sometimes an event cannot be specifically dated, though every effort has been made to put it in the correct time period.

Oscar and Emma's lives can only be understood in the dual contexts of their physical and social environment. The first chapter discusses the geography and early history of Greendale. The second chapter presents a family history of the Swetts up to when Oscar Swett first came to Greendale. This provides a sense of continuity with the past. Unfortunately, the information on Emma's background is sparse, so the narrative relies more heavily on the forebears of Oscar Swett. The later chapters are arranged so that they each begin or end with a major event in Oscar and Emma's lives, such as the building of a house or the acquisition of an automobile.

This thesis is largely based on oral interviews. The nature of oral history brings changes to a historian's method, yet causes much of the methodology
to remain the same. Oral histories are fragmented and obscured by the imperfections of memory and the subconscious enhancements or editing of those memories. Often the events or feelings recounted are so far in the past, and thus viewed through so many subsequent experiences, that the memory is only a hollow shell, even a fiction, of what once occurred.

An advantage of oral history is the opportunity for a historian to keep on delving as deep as desired, especially when multiple informants are available. The size and scope of the source material is limited only by the selective nature of a person's memory. Of the thirteen interviews, I personally conducted seven of them; the other six were conducted previously by other individuals. These interviews are available at both the Utah State University Library Special Collections Department and the United States Forest Service office in Dutch John, Utah.

Two major problems presented themselves during the course of researching the topic: chronology and conflicting accounts. Life and subsistence at the Swett homestead operated in rhythm with the cycles of nature: the endless rotation of the seasons; the extremes of weather; the birth, nurturing, and consumption of animals; and the planting and harvesting of gardens and
fields. Memories of life there are not connected to the calendar year, so the historian must ferret out the actual sequence of events by close analysis of the interviews.

Sometimes the different accounts conflict with each other. Who is correct or even whether either is correct is a judgement call, and the historian has to use instinct tempered by his or her knowledge of the informants and by an overview of events. A good example concerns the two-room cabin on the Swett homestead. Initially built in 1919, the family later disassembled the cabin in order to build a new foundation for it. On that much the children agree; then their accounts differ. One daughter, Idabell, though not living on the homestead at the time, remembered the dismantling and reassembly. She maintains that the cabin's orientation was altered, so that the door now faced the five-room lumber house. A son, Lewis, who actually helped with the work related to this incident, says that they did not reorient the cabin, but cut in a new door and covered over the old one. Because of his involvement in the work, Lewis's version is more acceptable.

5 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish, interview by Scott Christensen, Irish home, Moab, Utah, 13 August 1989, 7.
Now we come to the timing of this incident. Lewis, when asked about the time, thinks that it occurred as late as 1968, though he is uncertain about this. Another daughter, Wilda, remembered it happening and gives a date of 1950. Wilda's version is more credible, because later in her interview, she remembered helping her mother clean the cabin before it was dismantled.

But she was scared to death of mice. It tickled me to death. [Laughter.] They never bothered me. I remember when we were getting ready to tear that old house down. We went out and it had newspapers, just layer and layer of newspapers, and cardboard over the cracks to keep the plaster and stuff up there. And we were tearing that down to get ready to take these logs down, and she reached up and she pulled a piece of cardboard off of that wall and there was a nest of mice in there. The nest came down and hit her. I mean she just almost came unglued. [Laughter.] And I laughed and laughed and laughed about that because it seemed so incredible to me. I mean snakes didn't bother her, nothing bothered her, I didn't think my mother was afraid of a thing until she had that fit about that mouse.  

Since Idabell only lived on the homestead until 1955, this incident must have taken place before that. That would make a date around 1950 more probable. This example is rather clear-cut. Most are murkier, and many times, a blending together of different accounts gives what seems to be the clearest picture.

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6 Ibid, 13.
The written sources consulted vary widely in credibility. There are three family histories, ranging from three pages to twenty pages long. These were compiled as genealogical resources, fitting into the Mormon cultural tradition of recording one's own past. As such, there is a good share of thankfulness for God's bounteous blessings, such as recovery from illnesses. Despite the formulaic nature of these narratives, they are invaluable for details that were often incidental to the main theme of the manuscript.

Another source is Dick and Vivian Dunham's *Flaming Gorge Country: The Story of Daggett County, Utah*. As part of Utah's Centennial celebration in 1947, every county in Utah published a history of their county, and this is Daggett County's book. Dick Dunham updated the book and republished it in 1977. The authors, a University of Wyoming speech professor and his concert-pianist wife, stated that "since we aren't writing for scholars, we haven't quoted chapter and verse." The book is filled with colorful anecdotes and interesting stories, some of which are of questionable reliability.

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During the construction of the Flaming Gorge Dam, the federal government contracted with the University of Utah to conduct a series of studies of the affected region. This included monographs on the history, geology, archeology, and ecology of the area, which includes Greendale. These are valuable sources for information on the physical environment.
CHAPTER I
GREENDALE

The Green River begins in the Wind River Mountain Range in western Wyoming. Winding its way down the mountain slopes, the river leaves behind the Continental Divide and meanders south through flat lands and gently-rolling hills. Other streams and rivers, such as the Black's Fork River, join and add to its water flow. Near the present-day Utah-Wyoming border, the river confronts the Uinta Mountains, a chain running 140 miles east-west, with seven peaks topping over 12,000 feet in height. At this point, the elevation of the river bed is around 5,560 feet.

Instead of going around this awesome obstacle, the Green River turns directly east, follows the mountain chain for about forty miles, then cuts through the mountains in the majestic Ladore Canyon.1 Having circumvented the mountains, it flows through the Uinta Basin and down through eastern Utah to join the Colorado

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River. The water which began in Wyoming then cuts across the American Southwest to the Gulf of California.

Back at the point where the Green River turns east, it passes through Red Canyon. In the middle of this canyon, Allen Creek empties into the river, about four miles upriver from where in the future, a dam would be built to create Flaming Gorge Reservoir. This creek, small and hardly noticeable, drains off of a small sloping plateau, which extends north from the Green River. This loosely-defined area is called Greendale. To the north of the plateau are the Uinta mountains, covered with trees and mountain meadows. 2

The average elevation of the plateau is 7,000 feet.

"Scattered ponderosa pine occur above 7,100 feet elevation. Aspen groves are scattered around ... where deeper soils and water seepage occurs." 3 Most of

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the plateau is gently rolling ground, covered with sagebrush by the time that white settlers came to the area. In light of current knowledge about overgrazing, it is probable that before cattle came to this area and overgrazed the grass the open areas were covered with grass. Sagebrush usually only takes over after the previous dominant vegetation of grasses have been so abused that they cannot ecologically compete.

A rich diversity of plants and wild flowers covers the ground everywhere, except for the occasional bare outcropping of rock. In spring, the vivid colors of wild flowers are especially impressive. A variety of wildlife abounded: deer, elk, moose, bears, mountain lions, wolves, and rabbits; almost every species of animal indigent to the Mountain West. The Green River supported fish, including several species of carp unique to its ecosystem. 4 In the days before encroaching white

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men eradicated them, buffalo were found in the lower elevations.⁵

Water is available, but not plentiful, so gardens and fields must be irrigated. The annual precipitation is about 12 inches in an average year, as compared to 15.31 inches for all of Utah. Summers are warm and dry with temperatures reaching as high as 98 degrees Fahrenheit. With autumn, the days are shorter and colder, and the aspen leaves turn bright colors, mostly various hues of yellow, and fall to the ground. Winters are cold and snowy with the temperatures in January commonly dipping below zero. In shade, snow remains for the entire winter. Out in the open meadows, the snow sometimes melts between snowstorms. Spring brings renewal.

The Swett homestead, 220 acres large, is located in the center of the Greendale locality, about a mile north of the Green river. Approximately three miles to the northeast is Flaming Gorge Dam; fifteen miles to the northwest is the small town of Manila; and thirty miles directly south is the small city of Vernal. West Allen Creek and East Allen Creek run through the property and

⁵ Kent C. Day and David S. Dibble, Archeological Survey of the Flaming Gorge Reservoir Area, Wyoming-Utah. Anthropological Papers, University of Utah. Number 65 (Upper Colorado Series, Number 9), October 1963, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Department of Anthropology, 1963), 4-5.
later join into one stream, Allen Creek, beyond the edge of the property. Most of the acreage is open meadow, with a few Aspen groves at the northern end.⁶

Greendale provides an excellent example of how humanity and its activities have changed the appearance of a landscape. As the Swett family settled and worked this land, they built a home, grazed cattle in the surrounding forests and meadows, and ripped the sagebrush out of their meadow. Using irrigation, they planted and harvested two hundred acres of hay, with two crops a year. The hay is no more than the natural grasses, since alfalfa will not grow in this location. Now the sagebrush flats look like a mountain meadow, covered with grass. "During late spring and summer the fields are irrigated and bright green in sharp contrast with surrounding sage brush."⁷ Of course, the most dramatic change came with the construction of Flaming Gorge Dam. Now, instead of just a river, there is a 91-mile long, elongated reservoir.⁸

⁶ Harmon, et al., 13, 16.
⁷ United States National Forest Service, 2.
The first human inhabitants of the Greendale area were Native Americans aborigines. Archeological surveys have found a wealth of arrowheads, flakes, campsites, and other artifacts near and north of Greendale, along the Green river. Most of these Indians lived in small hunter-gatherer family groups. In 1776, the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition passed through the Uinta Basin, near the town of Vernal.

The first known white Americans to come to the Green River, and pass near, if not through, the Greendale area were fur trappers and traders. In July of 1825, Henry Ashley organized the first trappers' rendezvous, where trappers came to trade their furs for the exorbitantly priced goods and liquor of the traders. This site, on Henry's Fork River, is approximately forty miles northwest of Greendale. The Uinta mountains were only one of the many places the trappers ranged across, emptying its streams of beaver. Yet the Uinta mountains and Green River provided some unique enticements for the mountain man.

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9 Day and Dribble, 37-41.

The Uintah Range is the only major mountain range on the continent that runs in an east-west direction. The western end of the range extends almost to the east slope of the Wasatch Range. The highest peaks in the Uintahs occur in the west, the range diminishing in elevation to the east. When discussing the phenomenon of weather in the Flaming Gorge area the significance of this geography becomes apparent. The climate along the northeast slope of the Uintah Mountains, influenced primarily by the westerly winds of this latitude and modified by the Wasatch Range and the high peaks of the western Uintahs, is extremely dry. The lack of snow in winter relieved the mountain man of one of his most pressing problems, winter pasturage for his animals. Also, and perhaps more important, all migrating quadrupeds along the north slope of the Uintah Range winter in this same area along the Green River. The mountain man not only had good feed for his stock but ample food for himself, all with little effort.

It is emphasized that this was a popular wintering ground because just the opposite was true in summer. The wild life sought the high mountain pastures in preference to the hot, dry pest infested bottom lands, and the trapper did the same. [Uintah is an alternate, older, spelling for the Uinta Mountains.]

One fur trapper, Jim Bridger, saw other opportunities as the nation pushed settlers further west. Founded in 1843, Fort Bridger served as a way station on the great highway that the Oregon Trail became. In 1847 the first Mormons pioneers passed through Fort Bridger on their way to

the founding of Salt Lake City. Every year, more Saints made the journey from the eastern states or Europe to the promised land of Utah, eventually numbering in the tens of thousands.

After the Civil War, increasing numbers of cattlemen came to the area. The same advantages which attracted the fur traders in terms of winter pasturage attracted cattlemen and sheep herders. The place nearest Greendale to attract large numbers of cattle was Brown's Hole, a valley through which the Green River flows. Located about a dozen miles to the east of Greendale, this valley became a haven for outlaws and rustlers and has much colorful history associated with it.\(^\text{12}\)

In 1868, science came to Greendale in the form of John Wesley Powell, head of the Rocky Mountain Scientific Exploring Expedition. In 1869 and 1871, Powell boated down the Green and Colorado rivers, writing extensively about his observations. He changed the name of Brown's Hole to Brown's Park because he thought it sounded more picturesque.\(^\text{13}\)


\(^{13}\) Purdy, 28.
Up to this time, the whites who had settled nearest to Greendale were located in three directions: to the south, on the other side of the mountains in the Uintah Basin was some Mormon settlements; to the east, fewer than two dozen small ranches in Brown's Park; and to the northwest, a few sheep and cattle ranches down on Henry's Fork River. In the 1890s, a speculator started to build an irrigation canal in Lucerne Valley. He named this valley Lucerne, the European term for alfalfa, because he felt the valley particularly suited to growing that crop.

The speculator and the irrigation company he formed encouraged people to move from Salt Lake City to the valley. A score of families moved there, built homes, and set up small farms and ranches. The newcomers soon formed a town, which they named Manila, after the recent victory of the United States Navy over the Spanish Navy in Manila, Philippines, during the Spanish-American War of 1898. The town's inhabitants were overwhelmingly Mormon. Later on, a smaller town, called Linwood, grew up a couple of miles to the east of Manila.14

The area now called Greendale was initially called Lewis Allen, named after the first white settler.

[Sometime] between 1881 and 1884 Lewis Allen from Brown's Park bought the range between Park and

14 Dunham, 286-317.
Carter Creek [Greendale] from [Cleophus] Dowd for approximately $2000. This range, Allen occupied by squatter's claim until about 1893 when he abandoned his ranch and took his family to Vernal for schooling. Allen's ranch was known as the Lone Pine Ranch.\footnote{15}

The next whites to come to Greendale were William Riley Green and his sons, Sanford, John, and William (Bill). They were familiar with the area because they had "hunted and trapped" up there. A rumor of a possible railroad crossing the mountains led them to "plan a hunting and fishing resort." They enlarged two small lakes by diverting streams into them, and Greens Lakes were born.\footnote{16} This family is probably the source of Greendale's name. Apparently the area's name was changed sometime during the early part of the second decade of this century when a post office functioned there about a year, with the address of Greendale, though apparently with the initial spelling Green Dale.\footnote{17}

\footnote{15} Phil Johnson, \textit{A Brief History of the Oscar Swett Homestead: Daggett County, Utah} (Internal study, dated November 1971, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah), 1. The spelling of Lewis is sometimes found as Louis, depending on the document. The Dunhams provide some interesting and colorful stories about Cleophus Dowd, who allegedly abused his children and was consequently murdered by a hired hand.

\footnote{16} Dunham, 315.

\footnote{17} Minerva Jane Swett Tidwell, \textit{History of Minerva Swett Tidwell: People and Country}, (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1193. Vernal,
On February 22, 1897, President Grover Cleveland signed a proclamation creating the Uintah Forest Reserve out of 842,000 acres. This included the northern, southern, and western slopes of the Uinta Mountains. The Green River formed part of the northern boundary, thus including Greendale within this new entity. Over the succeeding decade, more acreage was added to this Reserve, which was renamed the Uinta National Forest on March 4, 1907 when all the Reserves in the nation were made into National Forests.

On June 11, 1906, the National Forest Homestead Act became law.

[The law provided] for the opening for settlement and classification of lands in the National Forests which are found by the Secretary of Agriculture to be chiefly valuable for agriculture and not needed for public purposes.

On July 1, 1908, 952,068 acres were transferred from the Uinta National Forest to create the Ashley National Forest. Already by that time, in 1907, Sanford Green had

Utah), 8. The pages are not numbered, so page numbers cited are counted from beginning to end, including those pages with photographs, drawings, or newspaper clippings. Hereafter, the place name of Greendale shall be used to prevent confusion.

18 In 1906, the name was changed to Uinta Forest Reserve.

staked out a homestead in Greendale, near the lakes his family had created.

This little forgotten part of the world gradually started to fill with permanent settlers. Onto the landscape of Greendale, in 1906 or 1907, appeared some brothers and friends with the last names of Green and Swett, looking for pasture for their cattle. To understand these people, we need to look into the background of the Swett family.
CHAPTER II
THE SWETT FAMILY

In many ways, the Swett family line is typical of the early Mormon pioneers in Utah. Converts to the new religion and filled with religious devotion, they trekked across the plains and experienced the harsh life of carving out a living in an unsettled land. Big families, with high infant and childhood mortality, characterized a people who saw themselves as the new chosen people of God.

Elizabeth Ellen Langston was born on April 4, 1858 in Alpine, Utah, a small town at the base of the Wasatch Mountains in the northern part of Utah Valley. Salt Lake City was thirty miles to the north, founded only eleven years earlier in 1847 when Brigham Young led members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on an exodus from persecution in Illinois to their promised land.¹

Her mother, sixteen-year old Elizabeth Ann Freestone, was the second wife to polygamist John Langston.² Born in


² The two Elizabeth's can make confusing reading. Keeping in mind the middle names will help; Ellen is the daughter of Ann.
Hunterville, Ohio in 1842, her family, converts to Mormonism, travelled overland to Utah when she was ten years old. "She was of medium size, with dark hair and eyes."\(^3\)

John Langston married Elizabeth Ann when she was fifteen years old and he was one day short of his thirty-fifth birthday. The marriage ceremony was an LDS sealing in Salt Lake City on March 7, 1857.\(^4\)

Elizabeth Ellen had a brother, George Heber, born on September 21, 1860. This was about the time that the family moved to southern Utah and helped found Rockville. This was probably part of one of the many colonizing expeditions Brigham Young sent out to settle Utah and the surrounding areas.\(^5\)

Rockville, on the Virgin River in southwest Utah, near the mouth of enchanting Zion's Canyon, was a harsh

\(^3\) Minerva Jane Swett Tidwell, History & Story of Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston Swett (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1191, Vernal, Utah), 22. The pages are not numbered, so page numbers cited are counted from beginning to end, including those pages with photographs, drawings, or photocopies. Hereafter cited as Tidwell, History & Story.

\(^4\) Ibid, 25.

\(^5\) Ibid, 5, 24. There are errors in this part of the manuscript. When writing this section, the author obviously did not know that Elizabeth Ann Freestone later divorced John Langston, so she got sidetracked into following Langston to Rockville. Further into the manuscript, on page 22, more correct information is provided.
place to live. All around was desert, only the Virgin River and its narrow valley could sustain farming.

Elizabeth Ann divorced John Langston before he moved to Rockville. She then moved back to Alpine. Her divorce was in keeping with a general trend. When she married, the LDS church in Utah was undergoing a phase called the Reformation, during which "many Saints had entered into unsatisfactory marriages." 7

On August 27, 1864, Elizabeth Ann married Lars Rove Jensen, a convert from Denmark and widower with four children. Elizabeth Ann raised two of these children; and is known about the other two children from this first marriage, though they probably died in infancy. 8

They lived on a farm in Alpine, Utah. Elizabeth Ann bore nine more children, of which three died as infants. She was very religious woman, attending church every Sunday, and reading to her children every night from the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Around 1880, the family moved to Orderville, Utah. 9 Located in southwestern Utah, this community endeavoured to live the United Order, a plan

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6 Ibid, 22.
8 Tidwell, History & Story, 22.
revealed by Joseph Smith, Mormonism's founder, whereby everyone lived in a communalistic environment of Christian loving with all earthly goods held in common.\textsuperscript{10} After five years, when the United Order in Orderville broke up, they returned to northern Utah, probably to Utah Valley.

Elizabeth Ann Freestone Jensen died on November 27, 1898 in Vineyard, Utah at the age of fifty-six. Her husband died eleven years later on November 9, 1909 in Provo, Utah. Her first husband, and Elizabeth Ellen's father, died on December 3, 1882 in Rockville, Utah.\textsuperscript{11}

Elizabeth Ellen Langston did not go with her family to Orderville. Before then, she was old enough to get married, which she did, on July 24, 1877, at the age of nineteen. She married a forty-two year old bachelor, Lyman Johnson Swett.\textsuperscript{12}

Lyman Johnson Swett was born on September 26, 1834 in New Hampshire to Luther Swett and Sarah Elmer Swett. His father died when he was three years old, possibly when the family was moving to Missouri. His mother remarried, a


\textsuperscript{11} Tidwell, \textit{History & Story}, 24.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 5, 13, 18.
Richard Williams, and the family moved to Utah in 1852.\textsuperscript{13}

The family has a story concerning this period:

Crossing the plains, Lyman herded cattle for one of the men in the company. Somewhere he got separated from the rest of the company for several days and by the time he found the others he was almost starved. The man who owned the cattle asked him why he didn't kill one of them, he answered[,] "they were not mine to kill," which was the way he was a[sic] all his life, his word was as good as his bond.\textsuperscript{14}

What happened to Richard Williams is not certain, but by the time the family was in Utah, Sarah Elmer had three surviving daughters and her son.\textsuperscript{15} Sarah Elmer then married a third time, to John Loveless, and they moved to Payson, Utah, located south of Provo, near Utah Lake. This marriage reportedly made Lyman angry, since he felt he could take care of his mother and sister and half-sisters, and so he went to California to hunt for gold.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 18.

\textsuperscript{14} Rhoda Lundy Stevens, \textit{Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston} (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1191, Vernal, Utah), 1.

\textsuperscript{15} The first daughter was Lyman's older sister, Lavina, born September 20, 1832, and dying the same year. The second was Lyman's younger sister, Mary, born 20 July 1836. With Richard Williams, Sarah Elmer bore three children: Louisa Mariah or Martha, born on the 14th or 15th of June 1839 in Adams County, Illinois; Hirum, born April 17, 1843, dying the same year; and Marriett Rosella, born September 14, 1845 in Atchison County, Missouri. Stevens, 1, and Tidwell, 18.

\textsuperscript{16} Tidwell, \textit{History & Story}, 18.
He spent at least a decade in California, and the only solid information on this phase of his life is a second-hand account.

What part of California he worked or what he did is unknown to us, other than he worked in the gold fields. Perhaps he was part owner, as he said the farmers were going to court to sue them for damages, as they claimed the silt from the mines were ruining their crops and orchards below them. He said he didn't have money enough to fight a court trail so he left and came back to Utah. 17

After returning to Utah, he married Elizabeth Ellen Langston. They lived on a farm in Payson, Utah, and raised a family. Whether he owned the farm before marrying or bought it afterwards is unknown. She could read and write and he was illiterate, though he was skilled at farming, carpentry, blacksmithing, and lumber work. He passed these skills on to his sons. 18

Elizabeth went by her middle name, Ellen. Her "hair was jet black," 19 and she was a "bearded lady," 20 forced to trim her whiskers with scissors. She told the story to her granddaughter of when:

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17 Stevens, 1.

18 Tidwell, History & Story, 19.


20 Stevens, 2.
One morning in the hurry of getting ready for school her mother said, "Ellen, your neck is dirty," but did nothing about it. When she got to school one of the boys said "Ellen, your neck is dirty," but a while later she was by the teacher who said, "Ellen your neck is dirty." Never again was she ever told her neck was dirty, she kept a special cloth and every morning she washed her neck.21

On the farm, Lyman built a large two-story house for his family, which stands to this day. He may have had a sawmill on his property, and there are stories of his lumbering skills. On the farm they probably raised a variety of crops and livestock. Sugar beets were raised, "since his son Oscar was allergic to them, but he still thinned them, using a heavy coat of mutton tallow on his hands to help keep down the blisters."22 Elizabeth labored at household chores, cooking for her family, milking the cows and making butter, and making all the clothes for her husband and children.23 When needed, she certainly pitched in to help her husband with the farm work, as was the lot of the pioneer woman. In the twenty-five years they lived in Payson, thirteen children were born. Four of the children died before reaching their second birthday, and

21 Ibid, 1.
22 Ibid, 1.
23 Tidwell, History & Story, 7.
another, Sarah Elizabeth, died a month and a day after her ninth birthday.\(^{24}\)

About six months after his marriage, Lyman was baptized into the LDS church. The timing seems to indicate that he was never a member of the church that had brought his mother, his sisters, and he across the Great Plains twenty-five years earlier. It is possible he had been excommunicated or the record of his baptism lost when he went to California. Regardless, he was now a member. His wife had been baptized a short while after her eighth birthday, as was customary. Later, the family journeyed to Manti in central Utah, where on June 28, 1893, they received their endowments and were sealed for eternity to each other

\(^{24}\) The children of Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston Swett, according to genealogical information contained on Family Group Records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Lyman</td>
<td>1 Oct 1878</td>
<td>21 Jul 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther John</td>
<td>19 Jun 1880</td>
<td>15 Feb 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen</td>
<td>14 Dec 1881</td>
<td>24 Feb 1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Heber</td>
<td>14 Feb 1883</td>
<td>3 Feb 1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>19 Nov 1884</td>
<td>14 Apr 1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursula Ann</td>
<td>29 Dec 1886</td>
<td>2 Dec 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Elizabeth</td>
<td>19 Jun 1888</td>
<td>20 Jul 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>11 Aug 1890</td>
<td>23 Sep 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alma Thomas</td>
<td>25 Aug 1892</td>
<td>25 Mar 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edra Jane</td>
<td>15 Nov 1894</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmer Isaac</td>
<td>21 Dec 1896</td>
<td>29 Dec 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyrum</td>
<td>8 Feb 1898</td>
<td>14 Feb 1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyman Wesley</td>
<td>8 Aug 1900</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(All the children were born in Payson, Utah. In total, seven lived to adulthood.)
and to their children in the Manti Temple. This is a pivotal ceremony in the LDS faith, believed necessary to inherit the highest degree of heavenly glory.  

In 1902, the Swetts decided to move. Water is the stuff of life in the arid West, more valuable than land. The Payson area was well settled by then and "they started building them reservoirs and stuff down there and they wanted to raise the water price." The family looked for other places to live, including Idaho, but finally settled on Vernal, Utah, in the Uintah basin, where Elizabeth's brother, George Langston, had a farm. They moved there in October of 1902 and bought a farm from "Johney Evens" in the northern end of the valley, at a place later called Ashley Ward. The place had "good water" and was "cheap."  

Their farm was located next to George Langston's farm, making relatives near. The farm had good, fertile soil and some fruit trees on it. The family soon planted other fruit trees and their orchard grew to include snow apple, sheep  

25 Tidwell, History & Story, 7. See also: genealogical information from Family Group Records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.  

26 Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 17.  

27 Tidwell, History & Story, 19.  

28 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 17.
nose apple, pear, and different kinds of plum trees.\textsuperscript{29} Already on the farm was a long, five-room house, built of logs with a dirt roof.\textsuperscript{30} The family dug two big cellars in the back, which they kept filled with "good things, fruit in barrels, apples and Potatos[sic] in bins, squash and other things in the corners."\textsuperscript{31}

In the next four years, the Swetts worked hard to establish a new home. Lyman built a blacksmith shop in which he shod their horses and maintained their buggies, machinery, and other tools. The sons owned saddle horses for their own use and the family owned at least two teams of work-horses.\textsuperscript{32}

The family grew and raised a variety of produce and animals. "They had nice granerys[sic] where they stored the wheat and oats for family and stock, in these the pork was cured and also cheese for family use . . . they had good milk cows for milk for Butter and Cheese. They raised hogs

\textsuperscript{29} How many of each type and what other type of fruit trees were in the orchard is not known. Tidwell, \textit{History \& Story}, 19, and Stevens, 2.

\textsuperscript{30} Stevens, 2.

\textsuperscript{31} Tidwell, \textit{History \& Story}, 21.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, 21. See also: Stevens, 2.
for meat, vegetables, bee[s,] fruit and grain." In addition, they maintained a small herd of cattle.

About six months after arriving in Vernal, Elizabeth lost her son, nineteen-year old Franklin to smallpox. Of her thirteen children, six died in infancy or before reaching full adulthood. The cycle of family and life continued when the oldest son, James, married in the spring of 1903 and began a family. He married Roseltha Green, thus creating a link between the two families that would settle in Greendale.

In 1907, Lyman began work on a new house, made out of logs and two-stories high. One summer day that year, he was found laying under a fruit tree, dead at seventy-two. He was buried in Rock Point Cemetery where his son Franklin was already interred. His sons finished construction of the house and continued to work the farm, supporting their

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33 Tidwell, History & Story, 21.
34 Stevens, 2.
35 From genealogical records in Family Group Records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. James Lyman Swett married Roseltha Green on May 6, 1903. His sister, Ursula Ann Swett, married Ralph Arthur Lundy on March 30, 1904. Their daughter is Rhoda Lundy Stevens, a key source in this chapter.
mother and siblings. 36 Along the east side of the new home ran a large porch. Furthermore:

The new house with the Big Table across the East side in front of the big window, the door in the north east end, the cupboards on the south end and a window, the sewing machine under it. A door on the west, out to the old house, the stove to cook on. In the Northeend[sic] and chairs on the north west corner. Grandma's Big bed Room on the on[sic] the North. It had cloth closets and a place to keep milk and butter. 37

But even with this nice new home, Elizabeth's sons were growing up and ready to strike out on their own. Each of them wanted to homestead and they looked to Greendale and the National Forest Homestead Act to provide the land for them.

36 Stevens, 2.

CHAPTER III
HOMESTEADING: 1906 TO 1918

With the coming of statehood in 1896, Utah vaulted into the twentieth century by healing old wounds. The political, economic, and social conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons (or "Gentiles"), began to heal. The state urbanized and industrialized: in 1900, nearly 40 percent out of population of 276,749 people lived in urban places, and 35 percent of the populace were engaged in agriculture; in 1910, 46 percent of the populace lived in urban places, and only 28 percent still engaged in agriculture; in 1930, 52.5 percent of the population were urban and 24.3 percent still engaged in agriculture as their occupation; by 1950, urbanization was almost 60 percent and only 12 percent of the population were still in agriculture. This reflected nationwide trends, and today these statistics are even more extreme with Utah being the tenth most urbanized state in the nation. ¹

¹ These figures are drawn from the Statistical Tables in Richard D. Poll, general editor, Utah's History (Utah State University Press: Logan, Utah, 1989), 687, 714. Up until 1950 the United States Census defined urban places "as towns or cities of 2,500 or more inhabitants. Thereafter the Standard metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) became the Census unit for measuring urbanization." p. 687.
Another change was the transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Instead of growing a wide variety of crops, the nation's economy encouraged specialization of crops. The state's cattle industry was strong, and the "number of cattle and calves increased from 0.3 million in 1900 to 0.5 million in 1920."^2 The Swett and Green families formed a small part of this increase, though their operations were basically subsistence agriculture.

Utah changed fundamentally, and the settlement of Greendale is representative of earlier types of activity. During the last half of the nineteenth century, Mormons spread from their hub in Salt Lake City out across the intermountain West, establishing settlements and industry. By the first decade of this century, that initiative was gone, but people like the Swetts and Greens moved on, still wanting their own property.

Good land was scarce by the turn of the century, with only marginal lands left on the fringes of settlements. Lyman Swett discovered this when he moved from Payson to the Uinta Basin. His children relearned this as they established their own farms or ranches. The Greendale area offered them the hope of land of their own.

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The Green family was familiar with the Greendale area from their activities during the creation of Greens Lakes. They thought the area was good for grazing cattle and built a cabin. Elizabeth Swett's sons joined them in grazing cattle up there. They built "five large collection corrals" for a place "to hold them" and "to brand them." The rails of the hexagon-shaped corrals were made out of sturdy trees about a foot thick. They also built a small stable.

But this area was not open to homesteading yet. With the 1906 National Forest Homestead Act and the designation of the area for homesteading, the Greens and Swetts began to move in. At this time, Utah was undergoing a trend where "new lands were being opened in areas that proved marginal or submarginal." The Greendale area was suitable only for

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3 Phil Johnson, *A Brief History of the Oscar Swett Homestead: Daggett County, Utah* (Study prepared in November 1971, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah), 1. At least one of these corrals still stand, the horse corral on the Oscar Swett ranch. This information is contained on the first page of a document with the title of Description (contained a typewritten condensed description of the contents and structures on the ranch), located in the Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah.

4 Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Phil Johnson, Swett Family Ranch, Greendale, Utah, 14 June 1971, 3. Hereafter cited as the 1971 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.

5 Alexander, 430.
raising hay and gardens, and engaging in small-scale cattle ranching.

On July 4, 1907, Sanford Green's entry for 160 acres was approved. In 1909, James (Jim) Swett filed to homestead 160 acres of land. In early June, he moved his wife and three children up there. His daughter recalled the hardships of homesteading.

[The] tent was our shelter until about fall. The next day after arriving, Dad plowed a garden spot. They planted potatoes, beans, peas, onions and other things. Then they plowed ditches to water with. Thru the summer they built on the house; they put on a roof and windows and doors, but it still had a dirt floor.

6 Johnson, 1.

7 Minerva Jane Swett Tidwell, History of Minerva Swett Tidwell: People and Country (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1193, Vernal, Utah), 5. Minerva Swett Tidwell, the author of two of the manuscripts used in this paper, is the eldest child of James Swett, and "was coming on five years old" (p. 5) when they moved to Greendale. See also: Rhoda Lundy Stevens, Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1191, Vernal, Utah) 2, and Minerva Jane Swett Tidwell, History & Story of Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston Swett (Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1191, Vernal, Utah), 7. Hereafter the two Tidwell sources will be cited as Tidwell, History of Minerva, and Tidwell, History & Story.

8 Tidwell, History of Minerva, 5.
Also in 1909, on July 10, Elizabeth Ellen Swett filed on 151½ acres in Greendale.⁹ On November 3, 1915, she filed on an additional eight and a half acres, bringing her total homestead to 160 acres. Her homestead was located about four miles east of her son's homestead.¹⁰ Nearby was a log cabin, the Green River Ranger Station, headquarters for the Manila Ranger District of the Ashley National Forest. William (Bill) Green, a bachelor and one of the Green brothers, "was the ranger from December, 1910 until he drowned in the Green River April 20, 1915."¹¹ He ran an unofficial post office out of the station.

Elizabeth homesteaded this land on the behalf of her son Oscar, even though she still owned her own small ranch in Vernal. Several years earlier, when Oscar was sixteen, his parents lent him one hundred dollars to begin his own cattle herd.¹² He wanted to have his own homestead up at

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¹⁰ Throughout this work, I will use the terms ranch and homestead interchangeably. Technically, the Swetts never owned enough cattle to be more than the smallest of ranches, but the children consistently refer to their home as the "ranch."

¹¹ Johnson, 3.

¹² 1971 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 2-3.
Greendale, but was only eighteen years old, and a person had to be twenty-one to homestead. So Elizabeth filed on the land for him. He built her a small one-room log cabin on the homestead, and she stayed there during the summers, grubbing sagebrush and beginning to improve upon the land. He stayed down in Vernal and took care of her ranch there.

Oscar Swett was born in Payson on August 11, 1890, the eighth of Elizabeth Ellen's thirteen children. A family photo from about the time he was seven years old shows him picking at his thumb with his other thumbnail, a lifelong habit. He was twelve when the family moved to Vernal, and his father died shortly before his seventeenth birthday.

As with all the children, he helped his mother support his younger brothers and sisters. The urge to work in ranching was a family inclination. The rest of his family and his wife's family were also small-scale ranchers for at least part of their lives.

Oscar obtained eight years of formal education, a fairly average amount for that time and place, but he knew the skills he needed to run a ranch. His father taught him farming, working cattle, lumber work, blacksmithing, and other skills. His children attest that Oscar knew a lot about the plants and animals around the ranch. He was entirely self-taught in this, learning from friends and experience, not books or schooling.
On November 20, 1912, Oscar married Emma Eliza Osiek in Vernal, Utah. Mary, his oldest daughter, relates that her father once told her he met Emma in Fruitland, and that:

He said her and another woman was headed off up through the sagebrush like they were lost. He says, we were out here herding cattle. So I guess that's the way they met.\textsuperscript{13}

Emma Eliza Osiek was born on December 10, 1893 in Park City, Utah.\textsuperscript{14} Little is known about her early life. She had eight years of education and eventually moved to Vernal. There, only twenty days shy of her nineteenth birthday, she married Oscar Swett. Coming from a family of physically-large people, she was also solidly built.\textsuperscript{15} Curiously, their children remember that Oscar consistently referring to

\textsuperscript{13} Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Arrowsmith home, Vernal, Utah, 23 September 1989, 3. Hereafter cited as the 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview.

\textsuperscript{14} Incomplete genealogical records confuse Emma's past. Some records show Emma as born in Heber City, others as Park City. Her parents are Louis August Osiek, born on July 31, 1854 in Baltimore, Maryland, died on November 15, 1916 in Vernal, Utah, and Eliza Jane Betherds, born on October 28, 1865 at Council Bluff, Iowa, died on October 5, 1949 in Green River, Wyoming. They were married on February 12, 1890 in Salt Lake City, Utah and had six children. Genealogical records available on Family Group Records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

\textsuperscript{15} Myrle Augusta Swett Moore, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Moore home, Vernal, Utah, 30 March 1990, 55. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview.
her as "they," probably a phrase he picked up from his upbringing.

A month after their marriage, on the first day of 1913, Oscar Swett filed his own homestead claim on seventy-seven acres east of and adjacent his mother's homestead. Emma soon bore a daughter, on May 25, 1913, the first of nine children: seven daughters and two sons. Emma named the child, Mary Elizabeth. Emma chose the names of all her children, and her husband gave them all nicknames by which he called them. When their daughter was only three weeks old, the small family moved up to Greendale.

Oscar Swett chose a prime location for their new home. Located at the north end of his homestead, next to an aspen

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16 Johnson, 2. His first entry application (#62) was approved January 1, 1913, and he filed another (#105) on December 16, 1916. Both entries were patented on February 9, 1922.

17 The children of Oscar Swett and Emma Eliza Osiek, according to genealogical records on Family Group Records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Elizabeth</td>
<td>24 May 1913</td>
<td>Vernal, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Thomas (Tom)</td>
<td>24 Dec. 1914</td>
<td>Vernal, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma Eliza</td>
<td>22 May 1917</td>
<td>Greendale, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrle Augusta</td>
<td>27 May 1919</td>
<td>Greendale, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verla Farnsworth</td>
<td>12 June 1921</td>
<td>Vernal, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idabell</td>
<td>12 June 1921</td>
<td>Vernal, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Lyman</td>
<td>8 Oct. 1929</td>
<td>Vernal, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merne</td>
<td>4 Aug. 1932</td>
<td>Greendale, Utah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilda Beverly</td>
<td>9 Aug. 1936</td>
<td>Greendale, Utah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(All the children are still living except for Tom, who died shortly after his father.)
grove in the east. East Allen Creek ran through the grove of trees, only a couple dozen of yards from the house. Hillsides to the south were covered with Ponderosa pine. Looking north and west, Oscar had a commanding view of the meadow which made up most of his homestead. Beyond, in the distance, one could see all the way to Wyoming. The original homestead survey entry included a description of the claim.

The balance of the western portion of the claim is covered with sagebrush, from which grass is out for hay, around this part are rocky hills covered with scattering yellow pine and aspen. The soil is a gravelly, sandy loam. Water for irrigation is obtained from a small spring to the south. No timber of commercial values on the claim, but a stand of scattering yellow pine adjoins it on the south and east. No mineral or indications of mineral appear with the boundaries of this survey. No other claims or patented land conflicting.18

Their first home was an abandoned one-room log cabin, located in McKee Draw: "nobody knows who built it nor when. . . . it was just sitting there." Oscar disassembled it, hauled the logs to the ranch, and put it back together. It

18 U. S. Government, Homestead Records. From the Description section of the Field Notes on Homestead Entry Survey No. 62. A copy of this document is located in the Swett Ranch file at the Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah.
originally had a dirt roof, so Oscar put on a wood roof which he shingled.\footnote{Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 12. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.}

At first the new family lived on their homestead only during the summers. Elizabeth Ellen Swett also lived up there and she taught her new daughter-in-law how to cook the dishes that her husband liked.\footnote{Wilda Beverly Swett Irish, interview by Scott Christensen, Irish home, Moab, Utah, 13 August 1989, 14. Hereafter cited as 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview.} A daughter described the meals: "We ate good meals--we had potatoes, gravy and meat, bread and butter, and fruit and vegetables."\footnote{Irma Eliza Swett Toone, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Toone home, Vernal, Utah, 15 September 1989, 4. Hereafter cited as 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview.} Elizabeth also gave Emma a small black kettle as a present that is still owned by the family.

Those first years were rough as they labored to build up their herd, clear the sagebrush from the meadows to create hay fields, maintain a garden, and build the
buildings that the ranch needed. They did not have a lot of money, but there were nearby neighbors and relatives helped.

When the Swetts first arrived, the fields were mountain meadows filled with sagebrush. It took them about twenty years to finally clear all the fields on their homestead and Elizabeth's homestead. This was done by "grubbing the sagebrush," pulling it out by hand and burning it in great stacks. Emma did much of the work, pulling up sagebrush while her young children followed her and made a game out of piling up the sagebrush into a stack and burning it. Oscar attempted to plant alfalfa when he first arrived, but the plant could not survive in that area, so he relied on the natural grasses which grew there. The grass seeded itself; all he had to do was irrigate.  

Irrigation is the key to farming in arid areas such as Greendale. Even though the mountain meadows had grass, a rancher wanted long, lush grass for his hay and that required extra water. Every significant farming community in Utah needed an irrigation system in order to survive. These works were beyond the financial or physical capacity of a single family to create. In Greendale, the settlers cooperated and built the Greendale canal.

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22 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 5.
The canal, nothing more than a "long ditch," drew water from mountain streams and creeks and passed each of the homesteads. This is was not a one year project. In the spring of every year, the men of Greendale went out, cleaned the canal, and sometimes expanded its length. Eventually, the canal reached all the way up to Leona Spring, about a dozen miles to the southwest. As the canal passed each homestead, ditches branched off to run the water through the fields. The canal and ditches were dug by shovel and horse team.

The annual crop of hay from the fields was piled into hay stacks. In later years, after all the meadows were cleared, the stacks numbered between three and five. This hay was used to feed the cattle during the late winter and early spring. During the rest of the year, the cattle grazed on the surrounding National Forest or across the river on unclaimed government land. During the latter part of winter, when it got difficult for the cattle to forage, they were brought back to the ranch and fed the hay.

Most of the year the cattle fended for themselves on the National Forest and unallocated government land north of the Green River. During the autumn roundup, cattle were gathered to be taken to market. One time, some cattle was

23 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 13.
even found all the way over in Lonetree, across the Wyoming border.\textsuperscript{24} During calving season, Oscar went out and helped his cows with the process.

Besides the hay fields, Emma always maintained a garden which substantially contributed to their diet. A son, Lewis, recalled:

She always raised a garden . . . we all helped [take care of it], all the kids and dad would help . . . it was a family project . . . he [Dad] always plowed it, helped weed it, helped plant it and, there was a year or two when us kids and mother planted it alone. He always, most generally always plowed it . . . we would raise potatoes and carrots and peas and beans. Had about everything but tomatoes. Well tomatoes and, well, sweet corn would make it most of the years. But tomatoes never did produce hardly anything . . . it was a lot better groceries than you buy out of the store.\textsuperscript{25}

Potatoes, carrots, cabbages, and other cooler weather vegetables grew well up on the mountain. There were no fruit trees since a late freeze usually came and would kill all the buds. All fruit was obtained outside of Greendale.

In addition to the garden, wheat and oats were grown. This grain was used by the family and as animal feed: "a little wheat for the chickens and a few oats for the horses."\textsuperscript{26} The family never sold the grain. The family

\textsuperscript{24} 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 38.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 14.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, 5.
usually bought their flour in large sacks during a trip to Vernal, but at least once during the years a load of wheat was taken down to Vernal and exchanged for flour. The flour sacks also came in handy for another use. The family was so impoverished at the time that Emma used the sacks as cloth to make clothes for her children.

Meat was also scarce. Lewis remembered that: "when Dad first started up there, they did a lot of hunting because they didn't have the stock to do it with . . . I heard that Dad said they packed a gun with them every place they went and killed everything they could see. But then there was no deer nor elk then." ²⁷ Oscar owned a rifle and Emma owned a shotgun which she used to shot chicken hawks. The chickens ran free near the houses, and the hawks killed "a lot of them, especially when they were little." ²⁸

As the homestead grew, the family brought sheep, hogs, and chickens to their small ranch. By raising their own meat, they did not have to rely on the sparse hunting. Apparently two reasons accounted for the scarcity of deer and elk: unregulated hunting had depleted what herds would naturally exist, and wildlife management techniques were not yet creating the large game herds that exist today.

²⁷ Ibid, 9.
²⁸ 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 47.
Besides their farm animals, the family owned pets such as cats and dogs. The family's attitude towards these pets was practical. For instance, "we always had a few cats around to help keep the mice down and keep them out of your house and out of your grain." Mary remembered:

We didn't have any dogs on the place until after I was around about 12 years old [circa 1925] ... There was a sheepherder's son who came through there, we got acquainted with pretty well. They had a sheep camp and they had an old dog that had some little pups. And they gave us one of them. That's the first dog we had. After that we always had a dog.30

The youngest daughter, Wilda, remembered a later dog, and maintains:

We didn't have pets as such, we had a dog, but it was a work dog. That dog went out and herded cows and chased the horses in the coral and he was treated as a work dog. And we had horses, and we were free to ride them whenever, but they were not treated as pets. Dad didn't believe in treating them as pets, they were work animals, they were to do a job and that's what you used them for, that's what you taught them to do is work. I realized that horses have a shorter life span than we. And it wasn't until I talked to my sisters that I realized that one of the horses that they had used as teenagers I rode when I was growing up. He was called Spindly Legs, cause he had rather small legs and they had ridden that horse when they were in high school. And I didn't realize that that horse was also the one I learned to ride on, coming along a lot later. And I can remember when Spindly Legs jumped the fence and broke his legs and Dad had to go shoot him. And I think that's

29 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 5.

about the only time that I have seen my Dad close to tears. He wasn't going to cry, we knew that, but he was close. He started there to shoot that horse about four times before he could finally take that gun and go get it over with. It was a real hard thing for him to do. We had other horses that we destroyed, or other animals, he didn't like to have to do it. But he did it in a matter of fact, this is what you got to do. That one particular horse had gotten to him. He had been around a long time.\textsuperscript{31}

Some of the pigs were like pets, and Mary remembered one in particular.

[That pig] followed mother no matter where she went. We went over to Greens one time and she followed clear over there, it was about a mile. Oh, the sun was hot, and Tom was just little. I wasn't very big, Irma was a baby then. Tom got tired and started to cry and mother picked him up, held the baby in one arm and held him on the pig with the other hand. He rode the pig for quite a ways and got rested, so then he went on.\textsuperscript{32}

Rarely did the family have trouble with wild animals, though once Emma heard a "timber wolf," in the distance, howl several times. She was home alone with two little kids. Finally she couldn't handle it, she just couldn't handle it anymore. She jumped on a horse with two little kids with her and started over to Green's, which is the neighbor just over the hill. Mr. Green, Bill Green, he met her on top of the hill. And he said: "I knew that's what you would do, I heard that wolf too, and I knew you would take off to come over here. And I decided I better meet you half way." She stayed

\textsuperscript{31} 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 11-12.
\textsuperscript{32} 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 5.
over there that night and he went back and did the chores for her.\textsuperscript{33}

And once a black bear was killing cattle in the area so Oscar went out and trapped it. He kept the hide for years, then traded it to a dentist for a pair of false teeth for his wife. By then it was old and moldering. One year Oscar also trapped for bobcats. There was no bounty on the bobcats, only the profit from selling the hides, but they needed any money they could get.\textsuperscript{34}

Emma needed the false teeth because she had lost most of her teeth to pyorrhea, a gum disease, shortly after her marriage. The false teeth did not fit well and were painful to wear, so she carried them around in her pocket most of the time. Her daughter, Idabell, remembered:

She wore them once in a while. One time [during the late thirties or early forties] we went to town to the county fair, and Lewis and I and my one younger sister was down there and she said to us, You can go look in the stores, and don't touch anything, just look at what they have in the stores. I'm going to go get my hair cut, she had her hair clear down to her hips, and she said, I'm going to go get my hair cut. And I will meet you here in front of the bank under the clock. And we said Okay. She said, Be careful crossing the street, so we were real careful and we went to all the stores and she was gone about 45 minutes, maybe an hour, and we come back and she said, I'll meet you here at one o'clock. So we came back and looked at the clock and we said it's one o'clock and Mother isn't here yet. She say, Yes, I am,

\textsuperscript{33} 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 13.

\textsuperscript{34} 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 9-10.
I'm right here. She had her hair cut, a permanent and her false teeth in and we didn't know her.Emma finally lost the false teeth, but did not seem to be bothered by it. She ate without them and could chew meat just fine, perhaps because she served lots of mincemeat. Over the years, Oscar lost a few of his teeth, but kept most of them.

During those early years, the family was generally in good health, but one winter Oscar did come down with an incapacitating case of rheumatic fever. Mary recalled:

It was about Thanksgiving time when him and Sanford [Green] went over across the creek to see if they could get a deer. Over across Cart Creek. And they were gone all day and when they come back Dad rode in he was coming down off the hill by the side of the house. He was hollering at mother. She went outdoors, course all us kids were right behind her. We were little. He said help me off my horse. Mother thought sure he had got shot or something. He went on up to the chicken coop, where the fence went around the grain stack, leaning fence, leaned toward the grain stack. He rode up there to get off the horse and put his foot on on the fence and said to Mother: "Push my other foot over the back of the saddle." He couldn't move his foot. She helped him off the horse that way, then she had to help him off the fence and help him to the house. And he just kept getting worse and worse. It was nearly Christmas time and Uncle Jim [James Swett] came down to Vernal on horseback to get some medicine for him. Didn't know what to get or anything, but he went to the doctor and ask the doctor about it. He said "I will go up and see him." So the doctor

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rode clear up there on horseback with Uncle Jim. He told him that all that was the matter with him was that he wasn't eating enough fruit. And he said you eat fruit, you get a bunch of fruit here, you eat fruit, raw fruit, lots of fruit, everyday you eat a lot of fruit: oranges and lemons. After the doctor left, Dad sent Uncle Jim over to Manila after some oranges and lemons and things like that. He got a case of each, put them on the pack horse and brought them on home. He said while he was eating them, I don't know what is the matter with this fruit, there is no taste to it. They ain't sour, it ain't sweet. There ain't nothing to it. Before he got that case of oranges and lemons down him, why he started to get taste to it. And after that we always had plenty of fruit. We always had a box or two of oranges every winter, and a whole wagon load of apples.36

Because she needed to care for her small children, tend to her household duties, take care of Oscar, and do the work Oscar normally did, Emma required help. A neighbor and Oscar's best friend, Orson Burton,

come over and helped with quite a bit of feeding and such stuff in the winter. He come over and took care of Dad's cows and did stuff like that for him and stayed with him a little at nights while Mother slept . . . Yeah, he would get them pains sometimes, and then he would need some help to even get from the chair to the bed when that set in. He had it awful bad.37

Emma enjoyed consistently excellent health, especially considering she bore nine children without mishap. She came from pioneer stock, in the best sense of that image, and life on the ranch in Greendale was very similar to that of


37 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 27.
pioneers, especially in the early years. Her oldest daughter feels that she "should be given a great deal of credit for what was done on the [homestead]."

Emma's days were filled with work. "She took care of the milk cow, pigs, chickens and other chores as well as washed clothes, cooked, kept house, canned, gardened and sewed. The children helped as they became big enough."  

Emma also helped her husband with his work whenever he needed it (she was said to be worth any three men on a haying crew). Often her husband would be gone and so she would have to do his work. During the summer, the fields had to be irrigated, so "even while nursing a baby, she would walk to the far fields to change the water, walk home to feed a baby, then head for the fields again."  

She also repaired her children's shoes, as well as making their clothes. On top of all this, she bottled incessantly, both fruit and meat, putting up somewhere between 500 and 1,000 quart bottles a year.  

For the first few years of homesteading, Oscar and Emma spent the winters in Vernal. There, Oscar helped his younger brothers take care of his mother's ranch. Their

38 Johnson, 7.
39 Ibid, 6.
40 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 20.
second child was born on Christmas Eve, 1914, in Vernal. The son was named Alma Thomas, shortened in usage to Tom. He has the same name as Elizabeth Swett's ninth child, who died in 1893 before reaching a year old. Alma is a name from the Book of Mormon, and it was common for early Utah pioneers to use these Mormon names.\(^{41}\) Oscar and Emma were not particularly religious people, though Elizabeth was very much so.\(^{42}\)

By around 1916, Oscar and Emma and their family were living on their ranch year-round. Oscar made several trips to Vernal a year on his own, and about twice a year, in the spring and the autumn, Oscar took his family by wagon down to Vernal. They visited relatives, bought supplies, picked fruit to take back, and went to the rodeo if it was the right time of the year.

The trip took two days. They camped "out someplace along the road and stay overnight and then go on in the morning." Where the family camped depended on:

\(^{41}\) Similar to the practice of using Biblical names, or the names of saints.

\(^{42}\) During the oral interviews I conducted, whenever the conversation touched on the topic of religion, the children usually reacted with awkwardness. They emphasized that their parents were good, honest people who believed in God. Oscar and Emma were just not the types to go to church. Of the children, about half actively returned to the Mormon religion, and the other half did not.
the time that we left home and how far we would get, and where the water was before our evening meal. Dad would know if we could make it to the next water place. No matter where the water was, we knew it was good.

The family referred to where they lived as "up on the mountain"; when they went down to Vernal, they were "coming down off the mountain."  

The supplies were bought in bulk. Oscar would have to make a separate trip to buy flour, since he bought it by the ton. Idabell remembered:

Mother used to get 100 or 200 pounds of sugar and a five gallon can of honey and she canned all of her fruit. And Dad used to think nothing of getting forty bushels of apples for fall. All different kinds, we had: yellow, the Jonathan, and the yellow delicious, and the red delicious, and Roman beauty and a variety. But he would always get about forty bushels and then store them in the cellar. And besides, mother would can peaches and pears and whatever she could get before it got cold and they couldn't go to town. So we had plenty of fruit. She would pick wild berries, wild chokecherries, and elderberries and serviceberries and make jams and jellies out of them.

In the winter of 1916-17, Elizabeth Swett apparently stayed up in her cabin in Greendale. By that time, the families were concerned about education for their children. Elizabeth set up her own school and taught four children:

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43 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 2.

44 Multiple interviews refer to this, for instance: 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 34.

three grandchildren and her daughter-in-law's nephew. 46
When the weather was "fit" the children went to school. When they graduated from Elizabeth's class, one student remembered, "she gave us bows of ribbon, girls pink, and the boys blue. We thought that deal great." 47

But Elizabeth's teaching was only a temporary measure, and the need for schooling of the children became more pressing. Sanford Green and George Walkup, the Forest Service ranger stationed in Greendale, pushed the county to provide schooling. The county authorized three hundred dollars for building a school if the residents did the work. They built a one-room school on Sanford's homestead, near the ranger station and not far from Oscar Swett's homestead. 48

One student remembered this new school was "about 12 by 16 feet big and the Dads[sic] made us desks." 49 In 1920, Sarah Lucille Smith came to Greendale and taught school. She instructed eleven students during her first year, and

46 Tidwell, History of Minerva, 7. The children were Minerva Swett, Alice Swett, Bud Swett, and Earnast[sic] Green.


48 Johnson, 3, and Tidwell, History of Minerva, 10. See also: Donald Weir Baxter, The History of Public Education In Daggett County, Utah and Adjacent Areas (Brigham Young University Thesis, July 14, 1959), 110.

49 Tidwell, History of Minerva, 10.
thirteen the second year. Then she married Elmer Swett, one of Elizabeth's children, and they moved away to McKinnon, Wyoming.

During this time, most of the families in Greendale were related by marriage. The family of Greens had married into Elizabeth Swett's. The ranger, George Walkup, and his family were not related, and neither was a local hermit, Amos Hill. For the most part, Greendale was a large extended family, most of whom were still bearing children.

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50 The three Swett families or households were: James Swett and his family, Oscar Swett and his family, and Elizabeth Ellen Swett and the unmarried children remaining with her.

51 There are several interesting stories associated with Amos Hill, including one in Dick and Vivian Dunham, Flaming Gorge Country: The Story of Daggett County, Utah (First Edition: entitled Our Strip of Land, 1947. Second Edition: Denver, Colorado: Eastwood Printing and Publishing Co., 1977), 361-2. A picture of his shelter, looking like a wickiup made of dead branches, is in the photograph collection at the Uintah County Historical Society, Vernal, Utah. Minerva Swett Tidwell remembers him as on the older side. He wanted to live alone, he didn't trust many people . . . He lived in the country for a long time. He had fought in the war and knew gangs. As a younger man he lost all his family with a disease, he didn't want any more trouble with people, as a whole, he wanted peace. He came and went whenever he wanted, he didn't bother no one . . . raised a garden . . . panned for gold and worked a sluice box. His gold he would send to Vernal with Dad, to pay for supplies that he hauled back for him . . . he died . . . about 1930. (Tidwell, History of Minerva, 9).
On May 22, 1917, Emma bore another daughter, Irma Eliza. A neighbor, Elvira Green, delivered her in the one-room log cabin on the ranch.\(^{52}\) Whenever his wife gave birth at the ranch, Oscar took the other children with him and stayed outdoors during the process.

This was certainly not the first child born in the ruggedness of Greendale. We know of at least one other. On the morning of July 28, 1911, James Swett, his pregnant wife, and their three children left their ranch, bound for Vernal in a wagon. Only a couple of hours later, Roseltha Swett gave birth "by the side of the road under a large pine tree . . . just before noon." The child first name was Forest, since he was born in the Ashley National Forest.\(^{53}\)

Global and political events did occasionally intrude on the isolation of Greendale. On April 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I. Neither Oscar or Emma were particularly enthusiastic about the war. The war ended just in time for them, since their son remembered that Oscar was about to be drafted; he "was all ready to go and the war

\(^{52}\) 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 1.

\(^{53}\) Tidwell, History of Minerva, 8, which is a photocopy of a newspaper article from a Vernal newspaper, probably dated July 28, 1944.
quit, so if it had lasted another month, he would have been in the service."\(^{54}\)

On January 7, 1918, Greendale became part of a new county. Over the years, that corner of the state had been part of three counties: Green River, Summit, and then Uintah county, with the county seat in Vernal. But the people of Manila, Linwood, Greendale, and Brown's Hole were far from the county seat, and felt neglected, mainly with respect to the allocation of money for maintenance of roads. In 1917, an election determined that a new county would break away. The county was named Daggett, after "the only surviving member of the Lucerne company," which had founded Manila. Manila became the new county seat.\(^{55}\)

Soon after the county was formed, on February 6, 1918, Elizabeth Ellen Swett gained full title to her homestead, as recorded in the first entry on a pristine page in the new county records.\(^{56}\) In order to obtain full title to the homesteaded land, the homestead entries needed to be

\(^{54}\) 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 22.

\(^{55}\) Dunham, 318-19.

\(^{56}\) Johnson, 2. The first entry was Homestead Entry No. 61, and the second was Homestead Entry No. 104. See also: Daggett County, Utah, Abstracts, the records for Section 23, 24, & 25, Township 2N North, Range 21 East, Salt Lake Meridian. Located in the Recorder's Office, Daggett County Courthouse, Vernal, Utah.
patented, which required that the following conditions be meet.

A homestead entryman is required to establish residence upon the land with six months after date of entry . . . and is required to maintain residence there for a period of three years . . . Cultivation of the land for a period of three years is required . . . During the second year not less than one-sixteenth of the area entered must be actually cultivated, and during the third year and until final proof of cultivation of not less than one-eighth is required . . . The homestead entryman must have a habitable house upon the land entered at the time of submitting proof. Other improvements should be of such character and amount as are sufficient to show good faith.57

On May 24 of the same year, Oscar paid one hundred dollars to his mother for her 160 acres. This was far below the land's value, but her purpose in homesteading had been to give Oscar a ranch to live on.

In 1906, Greendale possessed no permanent inhabitants; by 1919, there were at least six families, maybe as many as eight, in the area. The presence of a school lent viability to this new community. Their primary source of income was cattle and their level of income increased as they grew more prosperous. The surrounding National Forest was vital to their survival, since from it they drew their timber, water, and grazing for livestock.

CHAPTER IV
EXPANDING FAMILY: 1919 TO 1929

During this period, across the nation, commercial agriculture mechanized. Tractors, threshers, and trucking made serious inroads into an industry formerly powered by horse. A decent road into Greendale did not yet exist, so mechanical improvements trickled slowly into the isolation of Greendale. Though, in many ways, these new improvements were not economical for such an isolated region that existed on subsistence ranching.

The nearest town was Linwood, a good four-hour ride by horseback away. Whenever someone was going over there, they would usually pick up everyone's mail. Linwood was also the source for small items needed from the outside world that a pack horse could bring back. This was not the type of situation that would encourage eagerness over an innovation like the mechanical tractor, not that any of the Greendale families had anywhere near the money to buy such a luxury.

Oscar and Emma and three children lived in the cramped quarters of their one-room cabin. All five slept together in the only bed, a large box in the corner filled with straw
and covered with blankets.1 On May 27, 1919, another daughter, Myrle Augusta, was born in the cabin, adding to the overcrowding. With the help of family and neighbors, Oscar built another cabin to alleviate this situation.

Located about 60 feet east of the first cabin, the new cabin was much larger, with two rooms: a kitchen and bedroom. The oldest child, Mary, remembered moving into the new cabin late in the fall of 1919.

The mud used for the chinking was still wet and thick cakes of frost formed on the chinking inside the house. The kitchen stove warmed the entire house and Mary recalls her reluctance to leave the kitchen on cold winter nights to sleep in the unheated bedroom.2

The family used the old cabin as a bedroom for the son, Tom, and his uncle, Lyman. Called Ly or Lym by the family, he stayed with the family most of the time, except when he took his mother, Elizabeth Swett, to Arizona for her health. Lyman left in 1929, when he bought the parcel of land that his oldest brother, Jim, originally homesteaded.

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2 Phil Johnson, A Brief History of the Oscar Swett Homestead: Daggett County, Utah (Study prepared in November 1971, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah), 3.
Even in this new, larger cabin, privacy was difficult to come by. One daughter says, "we hardly knew what privacy was until we got older."³

On June 12, 1921, another daughter, named Verla, was born in Vernal, so Emma must have either gone down to Vernal to have the baby or been there by chance.⁴ The family now had four daughters and one son, and even though young, they were an asset. As they grew older, the work they could contribute to the ranch would become even more important.

The children each had assigned chores, such as "cows to milk, and pigs to feed, and sheep to feed and eggs to gather, and wood for the stove," and "carried water from the spring" into the house for drinking, cooking, and bathing.⁵ The children "knew what they were supposed to do and what time it was supposed to be done."⁶ In addition, they


⁴ There is a middle name of Farnsworth on genealogical records, but Mrs. Bursen does not claim it as her own.


⁶ 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 8-9.
helped with other work that "needed to be done." In the summer, they "worked in the garden," and "worked in the hay fields." If they did not do their chores, they "just had to pay the penalty, one way or another." Their son, Lewis, recalled, that "whenever Dad spoke, it was law," though "Mother did most of the correction" when that step needed to be taken.

The children remember with fondness the festivities that the Greendale families engaged in with each other, creating a community social life. Sometimes at night and on holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Greendale families gathered to enjoy each other's company and talk while the children played. Sometimes dances were held in the Greendale schoolhouse, accompanied by the music from Sanford Green's hand-cranked phonograph machine. The children have vivid and fond memories of visiting neighbors by horse-drawn sled during the winter and staying late into the night.

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7 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 2.
8 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 3.
9 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 9.
Christmas was a big event in the Swett children's lives, because "we all had fresh fruit and nuts and candy." Idabell recalled:

[We] had big dinners, all the families up there would go to one house or the other and then have big dinners. We would go to the Burton's place one Christmas and our place the next, and then the people who lived around us come to those big dinners. We always done our share of the cooking. Me and mother used to make pies, and cakes, roast a chicken or two or fix a ham or whatever for dinner and everyone would come to one another's houses to eat for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

There is disagreement on how often there was a Christmas tree. Some remember, "we always had a Christmas tree." Idabell remembered differently:

Once in awhile, I only remember two Christmas trees that we ever had up there. One year [around 1934] Dad went out and got a Christmas tree and we strung popcorn, I can't remember what we done it for, it was special reason that we done all that, extra work for Christmas but. And we made colored paper and we made bells and different things and hung on the tree. And that was the time my brother got a truck and I got a doll.

The doll was "a porcelain doll." It "was a pretty fine doll. It had hair and its eyes opened and shut, and that's

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11 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 53.
13 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 53.
14 1989 Idabell Swett Robinson interview, 30.
about the only Christmas I remember."\textsuperscript{15} The family strung
the tree with "homemade" decorations. They "would take
color paper and paste them together in a big chain" and
"string popcorn and make popcorn balls."\textsuperscript{16}

Besides enjoying each other's company, cooperation
among the families of Greendale was economically important,
especially in those early, lean years.

[Oscar] helped his youngest brothers out a lot
when they was trying to get started. Of course,
everybody up in that country if anybody needed any
help they was right there. It didn't matter what
you was doing, they was there to help. It was all
a community time.\textsuperscript{17}

When hay harvest season came around, the men helped each
other bring in the hay because it was at least a three-man
job with horse-drawn mowers and stackers. During branding
time "the whole neighborhood come [together] and branded
calves."\textsuperscript{18}

In addition to this general cooperation among the
families, Oscar also became a business partner with a
neighbor and friend, Orson Burton. Orson, married to Theo
Green, had moved into Greendale sometime in the late teens

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 53.
\textsuperscript{17} 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 26.
\textsuperscript{18} 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 8.
or earlier. 19 On October, 29, 1928, Oscar and Orson bought the old Stanford Green homestead, which was then owned by a family named Merriwether. County records show that they paid $2,000.00 for the 160 acres, though there is no legal requirement that the reported amount be correct.

Oscar and Orson worked together closely on their cattle. Though they maintained separate herds, they did their branding, rounding up, driving, and selling of their cattle together. Every autumn, in "October, mostly generally," 20 Oscar and Orson gathered the cattle they wanted to take to market. Others in Greendale joined them if they had cattle or sometimes just sent their own cattle with Oscar and Orson.

The two men drove the cattle up to Green River, Wyoming, where the railroad passed through. Sometimes, they could sell the cattle there, but "a lot of times" Oscar and Orson "took them back east . . . to Omaha or Denver or someplace with them," 21 so that they could find a buyer.

19 Daggett County, Utah, Abstract records show that on January 5, 1923, Orson Burton's homestead entry number 124 was patented. Since the homestead rules stipulated at least a three year period, that would put his arrival before 1920.

20 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 18.

21 Ibid, 18.
Especially in the early years, with young children to feed and nurture, Oscar needed to earn more money than he could get from his growing cattle herd. Occasionally Oscar sold a wagon load of potatoes in Vernal or leased out himself and his team of horses for work on county roads. The main source of supplemental money came from lumbering.

On October 17, 1921, Oscar and Emma obtained a $1,500.00 mortgage on their property from Richard and John J. Slaugh. This money was probably used to buy a steam-powered sawmill during that autumn. An elderly man from Manila, Ole Nelson, had experience running a steam-powered sawmill:

And he told Dad if you get you a boiler, I will come down and show you how to run it. And they ran it two days and blew it up. Killed him. Dad says that that big boiler was as big as this room, pretty near as high as the ceiling. And that thing went over the top of Dad's head and hit on the carriage for carrying the logs. Hit the corner of that, hit the end and broke the end of the carriage off. Dad says you couldn't see nothing for steam and smoke and soot.22

Irma was only "about four," and the earliest memory she has is of "the fellow that was killed. Him laying on Mom's and Dad's bed."23

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22 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 18.

23 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 2.

George Walkup, the Forest Ranger in Greendale at that time, also tells a story about the sawmill blowing up. The account is confused and rather melodramatic. George
The death "bothered him [Oscar] for quite a while," but he did not give up his ambition and "decided next he was going to use cold water."²⁴ The next spring he took two wagons to Price, Utah, purchased a water wheel, and carried it back to Greendale. He located this new water-powered sawmill north of his home, towards the Green River. During the spring runoff, before anyone needed irrigation water, Oscar diverted the Greendale Canal down to his sawmill and cut logs with it.

Running the mill required at least two people: one or more to cut the logs and another to control the flow of water into the water wheel. Different people performed this second task:

Mother run the water wheel for about four years, while us kids were growing up. I never will forget one time, Dad said to Tom, do you think you can harrow that patch of hay out from the barn there in the field. He said I will show you how to do it. Tom said he could do it. He was only a little better than nine. And he said he could do it. So mother sent me with him. We had a couple of Clydesdale horses, great big old horses, their feet were a foot across. And he showed Tom how to harrow that field of alfalfa. Three days, three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. That will pull that harrow up and down through the field, boy, dusty. After that, I think we harrowed that two different years. Then


²⁴ 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 18.
he went to the sawmill, running the water wheel. Turned the water off and on.\textsuperscript{25}

The logs for cutting came from trees tagged by the Forest Service ranger on the surrounding National Forest. Oscar cut and stockpiled them during the winter when he had time and they were easy to drag over the snow. After he cut them during the spring he made several trips a year down to Vernal with a wagon load of lumber. Oscar "wore out several . . . wagons hauling lumber." And "if everything worked good he could get down there with a load of 2,000 foot, and it'd sell for about $35. The high school there in Vernal gave him $40 for his choice lumber and he [Oscar] says that was a gift . . . But he had to pick some of his best lumber. It couldn't have big knots and stuff in it." The high school used the lumber in their shop classes.\textsuperscript{26}

Besides selling the lumber, Oscar also used the lumber to build more buildings on his land. These buildings served a variety of purposes, and unfortunately it is difficult to determine when the buildings were built. They were built over a period of time, from the early twenties up through the forties.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{26} Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Phil Johnson, Swett Family Ranch, Greendale, Utah, 14 June 1971, 25-26. Hereafter cited as the 1971 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.
One building was the root cellar, which was used to store fruit and vegetables in their original form and as bottled goods. Lewis recalled:

Well, we had several of them [root cellars], but most of them was in use at the same time. Then we cut down and put just that one great big one in. My brother dug one and put potatoes in it just in back of that one for a few years. And then we had one just kind of north and west of the house, and it was a potato cellar but it wasn't real good, it would get water in it in the spring. But the very first one was straight north of the house, but it wasn't good. And then Dad went back up on the hill where it was drier and dug that one . . . you have to decide where the water is coming through the country, that is when you are starting and where the driest place is. A little experience though and that kind of stuff helps a lot.27

In the remaining cellar, bottles of fruit were stored along with bins full of potatoes and apples. Often, when Oscar took a load of lumber down to Vernal, he returned with a wagon load of apples or other fruit for the winter. Emma and her daughters spent countless hours bottling the fruit: "peaches, apricots, and pears and apples."28 The potatoes grown by the family were stored for use during the long winters.

Another important building for storing food items was the spring house, located near the two-room cabin. In the absence of refrigeration, milk and cream had to be kept cool

28 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 4.
or it would soon spoil. The solution to that was this building; on the floor were two troughs, through which cold water from Allen Creek ran. The dairy products, placed in this running water, could be kept cool for a long time.

Located southwest of the cabins was the blacksmith shop, where Oscar repaired his farm equipment. Isolated in Greendale, a homesteader needed to be an accomplished jack-of-all-trades, including being a blacksmith. His son, Lewis, responded to the question of whether Oscar built his own farm equipment or bought it:

Well, I can't say he built it, but he rebuilt it after he got it. Course mowing machines and such stuff like that was made out of cast iron, we couldn't. But all our sleds we built them every two or three years, all the woods and stuff in them. And put tongues and all that kind of stuff, cut poles and put them in all of our machinery. . . . I guess my granddad knew a little bit about blacksmithing and then Dad done it mostly from experience. He worked down here on the ranch, took some old mowing machine axles, they're an inch and a quarter through, and pounded them out until they were flat and made him some shoes for his sled. Done it all by hand.\textsuperscript{29}

There was at least one stable for the horses. The family normally owned two teams of workhorses, sometimes three, and two or three saddle horses. All of his workhorses, Oscar bought, then broke into teams on his own. Normally his saddle horses were already broken, but he did

\textsuperscript{29} 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 24.
allow his son, Lewis, to break one and Lewis ended up with a broken arm.

Besides taking logs from the surrounding National Forest to cut into lumber, Oscar and the homesteaders also took logs to make fences. No barbed wire fences ever touched the Swett ranch, and only a few of the conventional post and bar type. The predominant fence was a zigzag pattern, made of horizontal interlocking poles.

Such a fence surrounded the Swett log cabins. Out in the fields were long lines of fences, until eventually the ranch was "enclosed and divided by approximately seven miles" of fence.\textsuperscript{30} Over the years the poles rotted away and during the lifetime of the ranch, some of the fences had to be replaced three times. Lewis remembered with excitement collecting logs for the fences.

That was quite an experience. You go up this mountain [north of the homestead] and get you a load of logs on there and start off and there was no stop 'til you hit the bottom. Just as hard as the team would run. There was places where it would slack a little. But you could never stop. I used to load as high as a hundred of these fence logs on a single team and come down off there. We always tried to get it so we wouldn't run too awful far--maybe a mile--but when those roads got slick, there was no chance of a team ever stopping, all was they could do to outrun them.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} Johnson, 6.

\textsuperscript{31} 1971 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 12.
To protect the driver from the cold, the wagon had a sheepskin on the front seat.

[Though] the best seat that you could get if you were going to log all winter was a deerskin. They won't hold snow. It won't get wet. If it snows on it, or anything like that, you can just shake it and it'll get dry. Or you can just toss it out in the snow and go pick it up and shake it and it'd be dry again. It just won't absorb moisture. But a sheepskin is nice and if it's dry weather. But anything to keep you off them cold, frozen logs.  

The homesteaders in Greendale were fortunate to get free logs for their fences, since they could barely stay afloat economically. Nationwide, the agricultural sector suffered a depression brought on by low farm prices. Many farmers failed to pay their taxes and even lost their farms to foreclosures. The county record is filled with Greendale settlers who had difficulty paying their property taxes. Though the family could subsist off what they raised and grew on their land, actual money was hard to come by for all. Back in 1912, to earn money, James Swett and his wife "picked pine cones for the government. They were used for seed to plant other places."  

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32 Ibid, 12.

On December 30, 1922, Oscar failed to pay his property taxes to Daggett county for the fifth year in a row, so the country impounded his land. The tax bill was $41.63. The law allowed Oscar several more years to pay his bill, plus interest, and thus get his land released. During the time, he could live on the land and earn a livelihood for his family off it. A little less than a year later, on November 27, 1923, he paid his taxes and his land was released. This was not the last time that Oscar failed to pay his taxes. This continued to be a problem for the next decade as he built up his economic resources.\textsuperscript{34}

Property taxes traditionally pay for local schools, yet even with the problems that many Greendale families had in paying these taxes on time, Greendale got a new school in 1926. The new one-room school was still made of logs, but larger than the old school. The people of Greendale furnished the building materials, "while the district paid for the work."\textsuperscript{35} Grades one through eight were taught here, warmed by a wood stove. The school year lasted "for five months in 1924, seven months in 1936, and ... 

\textsuperscript{34} Daggett County, Utah, Abstracts. The records for Section 23, 24, & 25, Township 2N North, Range 21 East, Salt Lake Meridian. Located in the Recorder's Office, Daggett County Courthouse, Vernal, Utah.

\textsuperscript{35} Donald Weir Baxter, The History of Public Education In Daggett County, Utah and Adjacent Areas (Brigham Young University Thesis, July 14, 1959), 110.
remained at seven months until the school closed in 1942." 36

Teachers were difficult to find, many staying just one year. "Salaries ranged from $80.00 per month in 1922 to $60.00 per month in 1933, to $70.00 in 1939." 37 The teachers either stayed with one of the Greendale families or in the ranger station after it was abandoned in 1929. One teacher, a woman, "was going across the country horseback and stopped there that winter and taught school, just to have a place to stay for that winter." 38 Most of the teachers were single, with only one who brought her daughter up to Greendale. Oscar served as a school board member with Daggett County for five years, from 1926 to 1931. Once a month he had to travel to Manila for a board meeting, which, depending on the season, could be a serious inconvenience and hinderance to his ranch work.

Another daughter, Idabell, was born June 12, 1926 in Vernal, Utah, five years after the previous child. She was the first of what in many ways constituted a second family for Oscar and Emma Swett. The first five children were a group, and then a five-year gap, then the last four children

36 Ibid, 110-111.
37 Ibid, 111-112.
38 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 11.
came. The children were so spread out that the oldest daughter had married and moved away two years before the last child was born.

Later in 1926, Elizabeth Swett, Oscar's mother, died. A granddaughter dramatically relates the last years of Elizabeth Ellen's life:

We all had a good time at Grandma's for Christmas that day in 1916, but that night she took sick. Grandmother had a large goiter on her neck and she thought that was what was bothering her and choking her, but when the doctor arrived, he told her she was through building fences and digging canals, as her heart was the trouble. With care she could live twenty years, or she could go in twenty minutes. When she received this verdict, she had all her cattle rounded up and counted, every thing appraised, then she divided her property, as she saw fit, and prepared to live as long as the Lord would permit.

Her sons helped her outfit a real covered wagon, one she could live in, and she, with her son Elmer, started for Dixie, in southern Utah, around Manti and St. George, where she had relatives, her half brothers and sisters lived in that part of the state. While she was there, the bank she had deposited her money in, went broke and she lost a good deal. I think she received about 10¢ on the dollar, any way they returned to Vernal.

About 1920, Grandmother again left for a lower climate, this time with her son Lyman. Her daughter, Edna Williams, was moving to Arizona and they went with them. Lyman worked in the cotton gin at Phoenix. After about two years, Edna and family moved to California, and Grandma went with them, while Lyman returned to Vernal. Grandma didn't like California and the noise and confusion and after a few months returned to Vernal, as her health didn't seem to improve there.

Luther, her second son, had married Alene Ellsworth, and was living in the old home [in Vernal], so she moved in with his family for a time. Then Luther bought the Jim Winn place and
moved his family there. But this time Elmer had married Lucille Smith, and they had a daughter, Wilma, and they moved into the home and cared for her until she died, 11 December 1926. 39

Elizabeth Ellen Langston Swett left behind a prosperous family and made a significant impact on the Greendale area. Sadly, none of her children or grandchildren in Greendale could attend her funeral because of the heavier winter snow. 40 Travel during the winter was limited to horse-drawn sled to neighboring ranches or horseback to Linwood and Manila. Travel to Vernal would have been an arduous trip by horseback.

The isolation from the world outside Greendale was severe by the standards of today's mobile society. The family saw a newspaper "five or six times during a year." But they "read a lot of books. That is Mother read a lot. She used to, in the wintertime, sit by the stove and read, and the rest of us would sit there and listen to her." The books were mostly hardback, borrowed from friends and relatives in Vernal and neighbors, covering a wide variety of subjects. 41 The family also subscribed to a few

39 Rhoda Lundy Stevens, Lyman Johnson Swett and Elizabeth Ellen Langston (Manuscript available in Uintah County Library Regional Room: File Folder No. 1191, Vernal, Utah), 3. Typing and spelling errors were corrected to prevent a plethora of [sic]'s.

40 Tidwell, History of Minerva, 19.

41 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 6-7.
magazines, especially in later years when the mail was
easier to get and they had the money. Lewis remembered with
particular clarity one book:

Yeah, she [Emma Swett] had what they called a
White House Cookbook. And there are very few
people today that have even seen one, but it was
about sixteen inches square and about four inches
thick, and it had all kinds of cooking in it and
then in the back was an index of medicine and she
used that a lot. And we always had quite a lot of
medicine in case of a fever or anything like that,
sprains, or bruises or anything like that, we
could stir up, make something out of that.\(^{42}\)

In a slow and steady process, the isolation of
Greendale lessened. The coming of a road in 1926 is an
important indication of this. The road went from Manila to
Vernal, passing near the Swett ranch. At first the road was
ungraded and rough, closed during the winter, and "in spring
or after a storm you took your chances on getting mired down
in McKee Draw."\(^{43}\) The cattle drives disappeared by the

\(^{42}\) 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 55.

\(^{43}\) Dick and Vivian Dunham, Flaming Gorge Country:
The Story of Daggett County, Utah (First Edition:
entitled Our Strip of Land, 1947. Second Edition:
Denver, Colorado: Eastwood Printing and Publishing Co.,
1977), 321. The family had a interesting conception of
the relation between Linwood and Manila, which were
quite close to each other. Before the road, the family
went to Linwood because it was closer to the trail,
which followed the Green River. The route of the road
went through Manila, then branched off into Linwood.
Even so, "Linwood and Manila was about the same thing.
We would visit both places while we were there." Linwood no longer exists, since the waters of Flaming
Gorge Reservoir turned the town's location into Linwood
Bay.
mid-1930s, when the road was graded and trucks could make it to Greendale to pick up the cattle.

Even with the road, the journey to town was still long because of the slowness of wagon or horseback. Besides, Manila was a very small town with no more than a few stores, and Vernal was also a small rural town. The Sears catalog and other such catalogs were "everything" to the family. In it they could look at the "beautiful clothing" and order goods not found in Manila or Vernal. These catalogs provided a tangible and constant link to the nation and its culture.

Emma made the clothes for the family. When Oscar went to town, he bought "a bolt of cloth. Something he liked. He always picked the colors, print and everything, and bring it home." Using a treadle-powered sewing machine, Emma made the clothes from that same bolt, which meant that they "would all have dresses alike." Her first sewing machine was an Edgemore that Elizabeth Swett originally owned. Mary remembered:

Grandma Swett got to where she didn't do much sewing and she let mother have her machine. And then she had it around for 8 or 10 years and it

44 Merne Swett Moore, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Moore home, Randlett, Utah, 17 September 1989, 12.

45 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith, interview by April Heyn, Greendale, Utah, 16 June 1976, 7.
finally quit her and Dad got her a new Singer . . . they were treadle machines. 46

Though their shoes were store-bought, Emma owned her "own blasting stand and everything to nail them together with," and repaired them. 47

In 1929, Emma was pregnant with another child. Clearly the family needed more room, so Oscar built their third and final house on the homestead, a five-room home made of lumber he cut himself at his sawmill. Because tending the cattle kept him so busy, Oscar hired a carpenter from Manila, who came up for the summer and stayed with the family while helping build the house. Oscar also worked on the house, helped by his younger brother, Lyman, and his fifteen year old son, Tom.

In the new home were a kitchen, living room, and three bedrooms. The daughters shared one room, and often slept two or three to a bed; the sons used another room; and Oscar and Emma occupied the third bedroom. The house remained unpainted until the 1950s, when some of Oscar's nephews painted it white. After the family moved into the new home, the two-room log cabin joined the original log cabin in being used for storage and as extra bedrooms for guests.

46 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 15.

About the time that they completed the new home, Lewis Lyman, their second son, was born. He was born on October 8, 1929 in Vernal, Utah at the home of his uncle, Leo Lewis Osiek, his mother's brother. His mother named him after his uncle, and his middle name came from his grandfather on his father's side.

In addition to a new house, the family also adopted new a new technology. Using a washer board to clean the family clothes was only one of the many burdens that homesteading women such as Emma had to endure. In 1929, the family bought a washing machine, a hand-cranked wringer model. Later, in her old age, when electricity came to Greendale, Oscar bought an electric washing machine for her.

In 1919, Oscar and Emma built the two-room cabin and in 1929, built the five-room lumber house. These two events bracketed an eventful decade for them. They grew more prosperous, as evidenced by the fact that they could hire a carpenter to help with the five-room house, and now had seven children in their home, ranging from sixteen years old to a newborn baby. Economically, their cattle business was growing and they had the sawmill to supplement it. But on the horizon, foreshadowed by the stock market crash on Black Monday, loomed the Depression.
As the thirties began, the nation's economic health floundered and began to sink. At the depth of the Depression, unemployment in Utah reached "35.8 percent of Utah's work force . . . while comparable thousands on farms and ranches faced foreclosures and market prices that did not recover production costs."¹ This economic turmoil affected the Swetts little compared to the average person in this nation.

The Swetts had always been poor, especially compared to the people in Vernal, where many of their relatives lived. But compared to the others in Greendale, the Swetts were relatively prosperous. The 1930s saw the decline of Greendale. The original homesteaders had already started to move away during the twenties, discouraged by the economics of ranching and the harsh isolation, and this trend accelerated. New people moved in, but more often than not they moved away after a few years.

The children have varied memories with respect to their poverty. When asked the question: "Did you ever feel your family was poor?" Merne answered: "No, we had all the food we wanted to eat and all the clothes we wanted to wear, so what else is there to worry about." Most of the other children felt their poverty more keenly, especially after they went to high school, where there were children from the more affluent families in town to compare themselves to.

In June of 1931, the Swetts and Burtons obtained a $5,000.00 mortgage from Uintah State Bank in Vernal, probably to help with their cattle. Oscar had "about a hundred and twenty-five cows." He later acquired "about a hundred and fifty sheep." The sheep were kept "in the pastures right there on the ranch," and rotated between different pastures. Hay for winter feed for these animals was essential, and on his original parcel of 220 acres, Oscar could raise "a minimum of 200 tons of hay a year without fertilization." This hay, combined with his share

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3 Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 2. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.

of the hay from the 160 acres that he and Orson Burton jointly owned, was sufficient to feed his cattle during the winter.

When gathering the cattle during the winter, Oscar and Orson drove them along the Green River. At one point, near the mouth of Carter Creek, they "had to go out on the ice [on the river] to get around this rock point."\(^5\) One year, the ice was not thick enough.

\[\text{[Oscar and] Orson was driving them up from the spring to bring them home and had a bunch on the ice and went through. Orson stood at the air hole and roped them and Dad pulled them out. And they didn't get home till midnight or later. Lost a few, lost a lot of them.}\]\(^6\)

They lost "thirty head or so."\(^7\) This was by far the most substantial loss in cattle the partnership ever sustained.

Besides his cattle, Oscar also owned milk cows, numbering "anywhere from three or four to eight or nine depends on how many kids was home and how much milk they needed."\(^8\) When they were old enough, his children milked

\(^5\) Myrle Augusta Swett Moore, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Moore home, Vernal, Utah, 30 March 1990, 40. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview. This quote comes from Myrle's husband, Earl.

\(^6\) Ibid, 39.

\(^7\) Ibid, 39. This quote comes from Myrle's husband, Earl.

\(^8\) 1989 Merne Swett Moore interview, 14.
the cows. Lewis remembered that "I milked cows ever since I was big enough to know what a cow was." 9

The Depression intruded even in this isolated location, affecting the family cattle business. Idabell remembered:

During the Depression I was about five or six years old, maybe a little older . . . The government come in and told my dad he had to get rid of so many cattle because they couldn't afford to feed them on the Forest [Ashley National Forest]. So he went out and picked out so many head from his herd, his ranch cattle, and then he came to the house and got one of our old milk cows that we milked that we used to ride to the pasture and ride back from the pasture. She was just a good old cow to milk and she gave a lot of milk and he had to take her. And that's what I remember about the Depression is that old cow. That dad had to get rid of her. 10

Another federal government move also affected the family. On February 18, 1933, the area north of the Green River was added to the Ashley National Forest, further enclosing in Greendale. The few homesteads of Greendale were islands of private land in a vast sea of national forest. And like islanders, the Swetts and their neighbors took much from the forest.

Even during the Depression, the ranch and family grew. After building his five-room house, Oscar became worried

9 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 18.

that the sparks from his smithy fire in his blacksmith building would catch his new home on fire, so he built another blacksmith shop. This shop is on the other side of Allen Creek from the homes. In the field near this new shop, Oscar put the metal he used to work with. Whenever Oscar saw a piece of metal on the side of the road or elsewhere he picked it up and took it home. This collection was scattered around the field so that when Oscar needed a particular shape of metal he could just walk around and find it, not root through an entire stack.

Each day had a regular rhythm, dictated by the necessities of farming life. In the morning, Idabell recalled:

We would go milk the cows and bring the milk to the house, and Dad after he got the milk separated he would feed the pigs and mother would take care of the chickens. And we would see that the water and the wood were brought in the house before we went to school and after we had come back from school.\[11\]

Work in the fields "would start about nine and work until noon. And then we would go in and have lunch, then we would work from about one-thirty, two o'clock in the afternoon, till five." The break was also necessary because "the horses are tired" and needed to rest and eat. After that there were "cows to milk, and pigs to feed, and sheep

\[11\] 1989 Idabell Swett Robinson interview, 29.
to feed and eggs to gather." There were never bored, because they "always had something to do."¹² Lunch served as the main meal of the day, with meat and potatoes being the standard fare.

A firm rhythm of life in response to the cycle of the seasons dominated the family routine. Spring was time of planting the garden and grains, the birth of calves and ewes, and working the sawmill. Summer was filled with caring for the garden and then the harvest of the hay, grains, and garden vegetables. In autumn the cattle was sold, at least one trip made to Vernal to stock up on supplies and buy fruit to be bottled. During winter, logs were stockpiled and the cattle cared for.

Of course, each season felt different, with rain, snow, or sun, and warm or cold temperatures. Verla reminisced about the cold winters:

We would take the big flat irons into the beds with us, or something like that to kind of warm up the beds. Kind of too hard to heat, time you got wood and stuff to heat that house. It took a lot of wood and that was a big project. It took a lot of wood, and so it was cold, and I know my mother had house plants and she would move them away from the window and put them in the middle of the room on a table and cover them over with a blanket so

they wouldn't freeze. And so when it's freezing inside, it's pretty cold. 13

During the winter, the heavy accumulation of snow on the ground prevented wagons from moving in or out of Greendale, so travel was restricted to horseback and horse-drawn sleighs. Lewis said: "Twenty below is the coldest I ever seen it." 14 Several of the children felt that it was colder in Vernal than in Greendale. Oscar grew "a beard in the winter" to protect himself from the cold, since he still worked outdoors every day, and shaved "it off in the summer." Oscar and his sons "never got a haircut a lot of times until spring." 15

The children naturally engaged in snowball fights, and Mary remembered:

[We would] roll us up a bunch of big snowballs and get behind a rolled up snowball, set them up like a fence, and get in behind there and play Bunker Hill. 16


14 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 31.

15 Ibid, 28.

16 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 21.
Oscar occasionally joined the children, and "throw a few snowballs," but "he made too hard of snowballs." The children also owned skis, which they made themselves with help from their father. They engaged in cross-country skiing and night skiing "every once in a while, there by the house, with the moon shining bright so we could see." 

Lewis recalled skiing down to the Greendale school and carrying them home at the end of the day.

Verla had a particularly vivid memory related to skiing.

I remember my neighbor [Sanford Green] caught these two fawns, one was a male and one was a female. The female died when it was I don't know how old, but the buck grew up. And when they were small, without warning or anything, they would rear up on the hind feet and strike at you with their paws. Then this buck grew up, within a year, a year and a half, he had two point horns. I thought it was longer than that for two points. But he got really mean, kind of vicious, he chased the dogs and the dogs would chase him and he would take after people. They put a bell on him so that they would know where he was at least . . . it would chase people around. You had to watch it, you know. I mean it usually didn't really horn them. I mean, I'm the only person that he ever really horned. But then he would put his head down, his eyes would get white up here, and you would see that thing coming at you, you didn't want to be in his way . . . I know he cornered our teacher in the outhouse, she had to stay there a long time before she could get back to the schoolhouse. But we had some homemade skis and I was going to go skiing up on the hill by the

17 Ibid.

18 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 54.
house. And here came that deer and I had a ski pole and I hit him with the ski pole and he reared up on his hind feet again and struck at it you know and knocked the pole out of my hand. Then he came at me with his horns, and though I tried to run and I wasn't on my skis and he horned me in the back and every time I would move he would come back and horn me, pushed me into a big pine tree. My dad was in the shop below the house a ways making a noise, of course it was wintertime and the doors were closed. I was yelling, I guess, but finally somebody, my sister opened the door and here she came with the broom. And my mother then found out what was going on and she went in and got the shotgun and came up there and then my dad came. Everybody heard, I guess, after that. But I could walk, I wasn't really hurt that bad. I had lots of scars and bruises, for a long time I had scars on my back because it had broke the skin, through the coats and clothes I had on. 

Verla remembered the end of her ordeal.

Finally my dad took the gun from my mother and shot at the deer. He said that he would scare it away. Well, shooting with a shotgun, you don't kill deer with a shotgun, but it did kill it. So he got killed. Our neighbors wasn't very happy because their pet deer got shot.

Most of the Greendale social events occurred during the winter, since in "the summer they was busy enough and tired enough, they didn't need no social events." Mary recalled:

They never quit their parties. They had birthday parties, surprise parties, and one time when I was

19 1989 Verla Swett Bursen interview, 10-11.

20 Ibid, 11.

21 Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Phil Johnson, Swett Family Ranch, Greendale, Utah, 14 June 1971, 29. Hereafter cited as the 1971 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.
quite small, they had a surprise party on, I believe it was on Orson Burton. He lived way up above Green Lake about four miles from the closest ranch. We took off in three sleighs, Uncle Jim had his sleigh and horses, and Sanford had his sleigh and horses, and Dad had his sleigh and horses; and we when up there and had a surprise party. Took lunch and stuff up there, had a big party up there and stayed most of the night. The sun came up just before we got home. Them old horses standing out there in that cold, it was quite late. They were ready to leave. Dad was breaking a colt. He just turned those horses loose. Them old pine trees would just whistle when we went past them. It was so cold anyway. We went clear through Green's place and up on the hill on the other side, before Green showed up coming down the hill to their place. We thought Dad's horses were running away with him. 22

Also during the winter, Emma made quilts. "That's how she passed her time. She always had a quilt on the frame in the wintertime." This frame hung from "the ceiling. She had hooks on the ceiling. She would lift it up and you could get underneath it. Roll it down and work on it in the day when Dad had gone cutting polls or posts or whatever and at night she would pull it back up to the ceiling." 23

During the summer, the children worked, helping either parent whenever needed. Still, they "had lots of time to play." 24

22 1989 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith interview, 20.
Mother used to play ball with us and she used to jump rope with us, and play hide-and-seek with us and about anything we would do, if she had time, she would play with us. Dad never would play too much with us, he would just stand back and grin and laugh at us and make fun of us if we made a mistake. He wouldn't get in on any of the games or anything, but mother always played with us. 25

Also during the summertime, at night, "a bunch of us would get together in the community and go out and build a fire and play games by the fire: hide and seek, run sheep run, after a while, things like that." 26 Most of the children's toys were homemade. Oscar made some, such a sleds for them, and they made their own, such as "flipper" guns. 27 There were only a few manufactured toys, such a rubber doll that Merne had.

During the autumn, winter, and spring, the children went to school. The Swett children walked to school, since "it was about a half a mile away, that wasn't too far." Some of the other children "lived further away and they usually rode horses. Had to bring hay over and feed the


horse while he was standing there waiting there all day."²⁸

The Greendale school only taught the first eight grades, so to get a high school education, the children had to go away to and live in either Manila or Vernal. They stayed with relatives or friends of the family, and worked around the house to help defray their costs. Oscar and Emma felt that their children's education was very important, and "they always made sure we had clothes and money to go to school on."²⁹ All but one of the children finished high school and two went to college for a couple of years. The only child who did not finish school was Lewis, who recalled: "I had got that rheumatic fever and then I got a nervousness, and I had to lay out of school for two years. That kind of discouraged me in school. Lay out for two years and you kinda forget about school."³⁰

Having the children away at high school was a strain on the family resources. The loss of their labor on the homestead and the financial drain were apparently never question by Oscar.

²⁸ 1989 Verla Swett Bursen interview, 6.
³⁰ 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview, 8.
Around 1935, Oscar sold his sawmill, even though it provided an important source of income for the family. Various reasons given as to why, and all are probably correct: the older children had moved away and the younger children were too small to help; Oscar had plenty to do on the ranch; and, there was a drought and not enough water to run the water wheel.  

Two children were born to Oscar and Emma during this decade. Oscar went to Manila to bring Dr. Tinker back to the ranch for the birth, but Merne was born on April 4, 1932, before they got back. This daughter did not get a birth certificate until she was twenty-five years old and hired a lawyer to get one for her. Wilda Beverly was born August 9, 1936 in the five-room house on the ranch. Her mother was forty-two years old at the time and was soon transferred to a hospital in Vernal. She was last of the nine children: born over a period of twenty-three years with no miscarriages. Though Emma named all her children, Oscar gave each of them his own pet nicknames, which he consistently used instead of their given names. Wilda's

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32 1989 Merne Swett Moore interview, 2.
nickname was "Wilameana." Two years earlier, Mary, the oldest child married and moved away, began her own family and Emma and Oscar became grandparents.

In the summer of 1937, Hyrum C. Toone came to Greendale to teach school. He lived with the Swetts in the one-room log cabin. Irma tells about his arrival:

Well, my two sisters younger than I were teasing me because there was a young sheepherder in the area, quite a nice fellow. And they were teasing me because I didn't get him. You should have got him while he was here, he left. Well, I said I didn't want him, and that the next tall, blond fellow that comes in the country, I'll get him. Then he comes walking him. I couldn't believe it. Never thought any more about it when the kids were teasing me, of course. Finally I decided that he was what I wanted.

On July 18, 1938, Irma married the school teacher. He continued to teach in Greendale until the end of the 1939-40 school year, then they moved away. Later in 1938, on the first day of November, Tom married Vena May Moore. Two years later, his sister Myrle married one of Vena's brothers, Earl Moore. And fifteen years later, his sister, Merne, married Clifford Moore, another brother of Vena's. The Moore's lived in Randlett, Utah, near Fort Duchesne, many miles away.

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34 1989 Irma Eliza Swett Toone interview, 26.
Oscar and Emma's family was complete with nine children, with grandchildren already being born. The cycle of family life was continuing anew. Around the Swetts, Greendale withered away as families moved away. Even as the original settlers left the area, the isolation of Greendale was breaking. The Swett family obtained a battery-powered radio sometime during this decade, and Wilda remembered listening "to the 'Grand Ol' Opera' on Saturday night and once in a while Mother would turn it on to catch the news."35 No longer was the homestead so isolated, and on the horizon loomed even more changes.

35 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 11.
CHAPTER VI
WAR AND PROSPERITY: 1941 TO 1955

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the United States into World War II. Wilda remembered:

We was sitting around the dinner table and we had just eaten and had just cleaned up. We had the kerosine lamp sitting on the table which is what we used for lighting. And my Dad loved to make puppets, shadow puppets, and he was making shadow puppets for me. I can remember sitting on the wood box watching the shadow puppets. The school teacher that was teaching at that time burst in through the door with the news of Pearl Harbor, because she had a radio. We had one but we didn't use it often . . . And I can remember being so disappointed because my Dad got interested into talking to her about something that I didn't know anything about and here I am sitting on the wood box wanting him to come back and play finger puppets with me.¹

World War II wrenched the American economy out of the doldrums of the Depression and into an economic boom that lasted more than two decades. The Swett family, apprehensive about war, prospered from these coming good times. The government needed cattle to feed its troops, and consequently cattle prices went up. The acquisition in

¹ Wilda Beverly Swett Irish, interview by Scott Christensen, Irish home, Moab, Utah, 13 August 1989, 4. Hereafter cited as the 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview.
early 1942 of a Dodge pick-up truck is the greatest physical symbol representing the newfound Swett prosperity. Two decades earlier, Oscar and Emma could not of even dreamed of making such a purchase, especially with cash.

Acquiring an automobile is a potent symbol, a sign of joining the mainstream of America. "Orson Burton had a car," and Oscar went with "him down to Vernal to take care of some business." While there, Oscar paid cash for 1942 Dodge pick-up. Oscar regularly made his own decisions, without consulting others, and did the same with this decision. When he drove up in the pick-up, it was the first his family knew about his plan to buy it. Orson probably taught Oscar to drive, though Emma did not learn to drive. His daughter Wilda remembered:

[Dad] let me drive it a little bit, but I didn't get my drivers license until I was a senior in high school. And I got my drivers license in Rawlins, Wyoming. I had to take drivers ed. and I got my driver license and I came home. And Mother thought this was great, she has a daughter now that can drive and I'm home and we can go do some things, so she suggested that we go to Green Lakes. So I took the pickup and went to Green Lakes and I was very inexperienced driver, but we made it up there and everything was fine. And we started home and there was a car and he stopped and I was going to go by him, being inexperienced, I just barely caught the fender but I ripped the fender, I tore the fender out of this pickup. The

hardest thing I've ever done in my life was to go
tell my dad I was sorry. I didn't have to tell
him what happened to the pickup, he saw that as
soon as he walked in, but I had to go tell him I
was sorry I had wrecked his pickup. Oh! it was
awful, I had to go do it, I knew I had to go do
it. The worst thing I ever did. And when I
finally got there he says, "Well, it's just a
pickup, it ain't going to hurt anything, nobody
was hurt, don't worry about it." Oh, that was
awful, I never will forget that. I can remember
to this day how awful that was. 3

The new truck was basically used in place of a wagon to
going to Vernal or Manila. Horse teams still provided the
bulk of the power for operating the homestead. Orson
Burton, who liked to tinker around with mechanical
equipment, had a tractor during the fifties, which he used
for haying. But he "couldn't use it in the wintertime, and
a lot of the ground was too swampy, they couldn't get on it
in the summertime to mow up the hay even so. They had to do
part of it with horses, anyhow." 4

Even with the easier transportation made possible by
the truck, going down to Vernal was still a big event,
requiring a full day excursion. A ritual grew up around the
trip as the youngest daughter remembered:

A lot of times, he [Oscar] would never say
anything about going to town. We didn't know it,


4 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore, interview by Eric G.
Swedin, Moore home, Vernal, Utah, 30 March 1990, 15.
Hereafter cited as the 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore
interview.
you know, he would walk in in the afternoon and he would reach up above the cupboard, he had a box, a Prince Albert box, that he had his razor in. He would get it down and used the straight blade razor and start shaving. Suddenly it would dawn on us, Dad was going to town tomorrow and so then we would scurry around. What do we need from town? We would make our list and who's going to go and is anybody going to stay home. He never came in and said I'm going to town tomorrow. He just came in and started shaving and that's the only way you knew. Very male dominated household, very male dominated. And so we would get ready then and Mother would start scurrying around and was she going to go? Or was she not? She nearly always went but it was a pretty rare opportunity anyway for her to go. In Manila they had a rodeo for the 24th of July and we'd always go to the rodeo. Everybody gathered around, a lot of old friends come, people to see. That was one time of the year I got to see my brother [Tom] who lived up in Manila. Never got to see him except on the 24th of July and we would see him and see the rodeo. And then the next day we started haying, always started haying the day after the 24th of July, I don't care if it was Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or what, but the day after the 24th we started out in the field to cut the hay unless it was pouring rain, the only thing that would stop that tradition.5

The ritual of going into town usually provided an occasion for the family to bathe. The family "had a big round number 3 tub, that's it. Not very convenient."6

As they grew older, both Emma and Oscar's health remained excellent, though Oscar's back grew stooped, the result an old injury when his riding horse rolled over him. As the years advanced, his back deteriorated and curved even

6 Ibid, 20.
more, though he did not let it get in the way of putting in a good day's work. Both Emma and Oscar needed glasses. Their older daughters already had glasses. With age, Oscar grew increasingly far-sighted, but used his glasses only when he drove, since his drivers licence required him to. Emma got her glasses when her daughter Myrle and son-in-law, Earl, drove her to Salt Lake City to get glasses. Myrle remembered:

We took her out to Dr. Leonard . . . He looked in her eyes and said how many kids have you got and mother told him and all of them wears glasses. She said, "no, not all of them," and he said "well, they need them." He said you have got a inheritance eye and before they died they all wore glasses and almost all of her grandkids wear glasses.  

Every one of the Swett children attended at least one year at the Greendale school, but its days of education ended. The school was closed after the 1941-42 school year because of the outbreak of American involvement in World War II, so the last three children needed to go to either Vernal or Manila to complete their schooling. This meant moving away for the winter, even at their young age. The youngest daughter, Wilda, spent so much time away from home living with her older sisters that her sisters "are all big mothers to me and they all took care of me."  

Oscar and Emma

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7 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 45.

8 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 6.
considered their children's education very important, and helped Merne and Wilda go on to college.\textsuperscript{9}

After eight years at the Greendale school, Lewis went to one year of high school in Vernal, then another year of high school in Manila. Then he "got that rheumatic fever and then I got a nervousness, and I had to lay out of school for two years. That kind of discouraged me in school. Lay out for two years and you kinda forget about school."\textsuperscript{10}

After the Greendale school's closure, the Forest Service decided that the building was a fire hazard. They had good reason to believe this since the abandoned ranger station near the school was burned down by hunters in 1940. The Daggett County school district gave the schoolhouse to Oscar on the condition that he would remove it from Forest Service land. He did so, taking the building apart, cutting its length from thirty to twenty-two feet, and adding it to one end of his stable, thus creating a workshop for himself.

As they reached adulthood, the children moved away from the homestead, though a few did stay for a time after marriage. Myrle and her husband, Earl, periodically lived


\textsuperscript{10} Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 8. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.
on the homestead, even going so far as to build a home for themselves. As Earl remembered:

I was working for him. I went up in the mountains and got the logs, took them to the sawmill and had them sawed, or squared. And he decided if I wanted the house that bad, he would cut and make it. So he was actually the one who made the house. As far as any money was concerned, he paid me to help him make it and all that. Of course, I had the logs already out, and all that.11

Because their plans changed, Myrle and Earl moved away.

The children returned for visits, though usually not for organized family reunions. The family actually got together only twice for reunions where all the children attended. The first time was 1944, when they went over the Greens Lakes resort and everyone attended. The second time was on Oscar's death in 1968, though Tom was also dead by this time.

Greens Lakes was about "seven miles" west of the Swett homestead. It was a small resort, basically "a dining room with cabins around it," next to the two small lakes that William Green and his sons had created a half-century before. People from Vernal, Salt Lake City, California, and other urban areas came up there for vacations. Most of the

younger children worked there, as cooks or maids.\textsuperscript{12} Greens Lakes was an indicator of how the use of the outdoors and national forests was changing: from functional, economic-based utilization, to recreation.

Around 1950,\textsuperscript{13} Oscar and Lewis took apart the two-room cabin because its foundation had rotted. They carefully numbered the logs so that they could put it back together correctly. The only changes were a new, better foundation, replacing the rotted bottom logs, and blocking off the south door. They cut a new door into the west side so that it would be shorter trip from the five-room house into this cabin. At the time, the cabin was filled with the groceries the family bought in bulk, a veritable pantry or grocery store in miniature. The youngest daughter, Wilda, recalled making numerous trips to that cabin every day to bring back small items of food for her mother.

\textsuperscript{12} 1989 Merne Swett Moore interview, 18. Greens Lakes resort was founded sometime after the road past Greendale was graded.

\textsuperscript{13} See the Introduction for a discussion over the dating of this event.
The homestead did not have electricity "until 1953 or 54 when Oscar bought a Delco generator."\textsuperscript{14} The generator was run only at night to power light bulbs.

\[\text{Oscar} \text{ wanted better lights because they were getting older and they couldn't see at night too well. I think he was wanting to get some better lights so they had better lights to see with. His eyesight wasn't.}\textsuperscript{15}\]

Oscar and Emma were extremely generous and hospitable people. Wilda remembered her mother telling about a time:

\text{that this family came, quite a few little children, and they were kind of ragged and she felt sorry for them, so she let them camp out in the yard, and she fixed the meals and they stayed there a couple of days resting up and then they went onto wherever they were headed for.}\textsuperscript{16}

After the indigent family left, Emma suspected that they had brought bedbugs with them, which she positively "hated." So when they left, "she had to tear the house apart," cleaning it to "get rid of the bedbugs."\textsuperscript{17}

Several daughters remember that it was common for people to drop by for dinner, and "there's been times when

\textsuperscript{14} Phil Johnson, \textit{A Brief History of the Oscar Swett Homestead: Daggett County, Utah} (Study prepared in November 1971, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah), 4.

\textsuperscript{15} 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 49.

\textsuperscript{16} 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 12.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 12.
there have been 32 people for lunch."\textsuperscript{18} Oscar and Emma were always happy to feed people. In later years, after the roads were paved, more people travelled by, but they were of a different type.

It upset [them] more when cars started driving down into the yard and turning around and leaving, didn't come in. They would have felt better if they had came in. And it would be just people who had got on the wrong road or was just tottling around. And it really bugged them, it really upset them a lot. Because they didn't just want people just driving in. If they came to the house and said they were lost and talked to them a minute and left, they wouldn't have been nearly as upset as drive down and turn around and leave. It got to be a problem. Then there got to be the problem of them locking the cellar because it was so far from the house, and you can't see it is. They ended up having to put a padlock on the cellar, because they had some people get in there. And that was so uncharacteristic. I mean the house never had a lock on it. You couldn't lock it. They wouldn't possibly lock the house until they sold it.\textsuperscript{19}

Emma and Oscar were obviously comfortable with each other, but they had a different way about showing emotion between themselves, much more reticent than the norm for nowadays. Their youngest daughter, Wilda, described Emma:

She wasn't really emotional. I've seen my Dad put his hand out and hold my mother's arm when they was trying to get past or she was having difficulty walking or something. But as far as hugging her or any kind of show of emotion, they were very reserved about that kind of thing. He

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 3.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 34.
was good to mother, but that physical contact was very rare.\textsuperscript{20}

Oscar and Emma were also quiet people. Wilda recalled:

We were there in the summer and our days were real full because you worked pretty long days. After dinner was over, we would go out on the big porch that's on that house there, and just rest, talk a little. People would probably be terribly bored to do what we did, because we just sat there. Somebody would make a comment here or somebody say something there. But a lot of the time it was very quiet, we were all just sitting there enjoying the evening, not really talking at all. But over the years it seemed like a lot, my Dad taught us about the stars, and the Milky Way. And I learned a lot about the weather from him, because he would tell us there was a rain storm coming. Oh, we would say we don't believe that, but we picked up a lot of pointers about weather, because he was observing it all the time. And he was quite knowledgeable about what happened in that area and what things to look for. He was very knowledgeable about plants. He knew every plant that grew on that mountain and I learned to know all of them, because if I didn't know what it was I went home and asked Dad and I found out what it was. And I was interested enough I guess cause I could identify every plant that was up there and all of it is from Dad, not from learning out of a book. And a lot of our evenings were spent sitting there. And then pretty soon Dad would get up and pull his pocket watch out and he'd say "Well, the old Waterbury says it's time to go to bed" then he would wind it and everybody went to bed.\textsuperscript{21}

Oscar was very protective of his wife, as evidenced by Wilda's memory:

\begin{quote}
I can remember him telling my brother [Tom] off one time because he sassed my mother. I was
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 22-23.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 8.
scared that time. My brother was a big fellow, he and his wife and children were living in the little log cabin. We were living in the house, of course, and they had came over and eaten dinner with us. Now I don't even know what the argument was about, I have no idea except that Tom sassd my mother or told her to shut up, or whatever it was he said. And my Dad jumped up from the table, and as big as this guy was and he was no midget and he was going to "trim his plow" as Dad said and "take a block of wood and knock some knots on your head!" I thought they were going to do it. I was scared to death. My brother and his wife moved out after that and moved over, where he was working on the sawmill.22

Oscar cared for and put out a lot of extra effort for his children. He enjoyed rough-housing with them when they were younger, both indoors and outdoors.23 Myrle remembered:

We would scuffle with him. Four or five of us would pile on him and scuffle with him, but he could handle all of us. Get us to holler and we would quit, and he would let us go.24

He also displayed tenderness and compassion. Mary remembered:

One time when we were coming back from town. I had gotten a kitten from one of our relatives. We put her in one of our boxes in the wagon. On the trip home it started raining. We pulled the canvas over us to stay dry. All of a sudden I remembered the kitty. I looked back, and not only was she gone, but so was the box. I started to cry. Dad stopped the wagon and started walking back the way we came. He was gone a long time--

22 Ibid, 23.


24 1990 Myrle Augusta Swett Moore interview, 54.
half an hour to forty-five minutes—but when he came back, he had the kitty. That's the kind of person he was. 25

His youngest daughter, Wilda, recalled:

Trying to tell him thank you, you couldn't. It was like, like I say, I went out to school and they lived on the mountain up there. A lot of times when there still was very wet, snow on the ground sometimes in the higher area when school was out the end of May. And of all the years, 12 years I went, or 11 years because there was that one year, but 11 years, when I got out of school, the last day of school, I could guarantee my dad was in town with the pickup to pick me up. I was really excited because I got to go home. Wondering where the pickup was. We got out of school about noon and my first thing was to go see where the pickup was parked. I would walk around town and find him usually and then he would come and pick up my clothes and things and then we would go home. I remember one year he came down, my sister was going to high school, too. He came down to get us and we got in the pickup and started up the mountain. We got to McKee Draw and that is such a bog hole. It was mud and there my brother was with a team of horses and he pulled us across that. Then I found out what they had done. They found out that was real bad up there, Dad had drove up and looked at it and said it was real bad. He had gone back to the ranch, got my brother and the team of horses, they had come up and Lewis had pulled that pickup across this bog hole, over to where it was dryer. Dad had come to town and got us girls and gone back up there, Lewis hooked the team of horses back on the pickup, back across the bog hole, just because that was the last day of school and we had to be home. Lewis had waited there all day. And then I tried to go thank him for it. You can't thank my dad for things, he just wouldn't let you. He would manage to walk away from you or turn his back or do something so he didn't have to accept thanks for it. Probably never told that man that

25 Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith, interview by April Heyn, Greendale, Utah, 16 June 1976, 7.
I loved him, because he wouldn't have accepted it. You know, he just was the type you just couldn't do that. But he was always there, I could guarantee it. The last day of school, he would be in town.\textsuperscript{26}

Starting with World War II, the nation enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and growth. The Swetts participated in this prosperity as they acquired more technology in the form of a pick-up truck and electrical generators. As change came, the Swett children moved away, except for Lewis, and Greendale finished its slide into decline as a community of homesteaders. The Swetts and Burtons were the only families of original settlers left. A most serious change, for both Greendale and the Swetts, was coming: the construction of Flaming Gorge Dam.

\textsuperscript{26} 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 21-22.
CHAPTER VII
FLAMING GORGE DAM: 1956 ONWARD

On April 11, 1956, Congress authorized the construction of the Flaming Gorge Dam, part of the Colorado River Storage Project. Part the continuing reclamation movement in the American West, the dam and its reservoir were designed to provide electricity generation and water storage. Though reclamation has been controversial due to political and environmental conflicts, the national politicians from Utah, such as Senator Arthur V. Watkins, were strong supporters of reclamation. Now, the effects of this distant controversy were felt directly by Greendale.¹

In 1957, hard-topped roads began to snake through Daggett County, following the contours of the rugged mountains. The road going through Greendale was paved, becoming U.S. Highway 191. Across the Green River in Dutch John meadow, construction workers built a town to house themselves, about 3500 men and women. After the dam's completion, the town became the headquarters of the Flaming

Gorge Ranger District of Ashley National Forest, and provided residences for some 75 families.

Dutch John meadow was one of the places Oscar Swett used to winter his cattle. Besides this meadow, other parts of the National Forest were closed to grazing. A National Recreation Area was created, surrounding the new lake. As part of this effort to provide an outdoor playground, campgrounds were built near Greendale, mostly around prominent springs. Cattle could no longer use the springs, and the loss of use of these public resources created problems for the Swett homestead. Rather than use the national forest land to winter his cattle on, Oscar now had to bring them in early and feed them the hay grown the previous summer. This changed the ranching economics of the homestead, foreshadowing an eventual decline.

Formerly so isolated, Greendale and the Swetts needed to deal with closer contact with the outside world. The dam dramatically changed their lifestyle and livelihood, and Greendale continued to decline. In November, 29 1957, Orson Burton sold his share of their cattle business to Oscar. This was part of a process of selling his homestead and moving to Vernal. His departure was apparently prompted after "his wife and daughter were killed in tragic
accidents." Oscar and Emma were now the original settlers left in Greendale. The only other ranch in the vicinity was a part-time operation owned by Mary and her husband, Sylvan Arrowsmith. He worked for the National Forest Service.

These were the twilight years of Oscar and Emma. All their old friends were gone and their children were grown up and raising their own families elsewhere, with the exception of Lewis. Lewis married and raised his own family in the house that Myrle and Earl had built. The visits of grandchildren and relatives were welcome events for Oscar and Emma, and Oscar enjoyed telling outrageous tall-tales to the young children. Both Oscar and Emma loved small children; it seemed they could relate better to them than older children.

Several of Oscar's nephews liked to visit the homestead, where they stayed in the log cabins. They helped with haying and other chores around the place. There help was welcome, especially since operating the homestead was a labor-intensive operation. The nephews were also capable handymen. They painted the five-room house white, the first coat of paint to ever cover its lumber walls.

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One day in the mid-fifties, one of the nephews, who "spent a lot of time up there," persuaded Oscar to put in running water to the house. He said that "it wouldn't take too much to put it in if he had the pipe." So Oscar "said to get the pipe and they put it in." They didn't bury the pipe very deep, which, during the winter, forced them to leave "the water running so that it wouldn't freeze." Now Emma didn't have to haul in water from the spring, but had it coming out of her sink tap. Because their homestead is the only homestead in the area whose water source, a natural spring, is located higher in elevation than the house, constructing a water pipe system is much easier. The Swetts were the first in Greendale to have running water and indoor plumbing.

More technology of modern American life made inroads into the Swett homestead. Since they now possessed running water, the family added on a bathroom in the late fifties. Myrle and her husband, Earl, drove up and helped build it. Wilda remembered:

Dad decided not to move the bathroom into the house. That was not right, he said, you're not

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supposed to have a bathroom in the house. He finally conceded to let them build the bathroom, but he wouldn't let them open the door into the house you had to go out on the porch and then go into it, but at least it was nicer for mother, she didn't have to go outside. And they did have the running water and the hot water that was after the electricity was up there. They had to put a little electric heater in to keep it from freezing.\(^5\)

In January 27, 1960, the Delco generator was replaced by electricity from the Moon Lake Electric Company, a benefit of Flaming Gorge Dam.\(^6\) With a steady supply of electricity, the family soon purchased some electrical appliances, such as a refrigerator, a black and white television, and a electric clothes washer.

These appliances eased Emma duties in her old age. "All the kids had gone and Mother could have a fridge so she didn't have to go to the spring so many trips as she was getting older."\(^7\) Even with all the new technology in his home, Oscar still used his horse teams to work his


\(^6\) Phil Johnson, A Brief History of the Oscar Swett Homestead: Daggett County, Utah (Study prepared in November 1971, available in Swett Ranch file at Flaming Gorge Ranger District, Dutch John, Utah), 4.

\(^7\) Myrle Augusta Swett Moore, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Moore home, Vernal, Utah, 30 March 1990, 49. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Myrle Swett Moore interview.
homestead. To many this may seem somewhat ridiculous, but
Oscar told a forest ranger that "he couldn't afford to
[convert to motorized equipment] and still operate." 8

Oscar did not care for the television, but Emma liked
it, probably because it helped fill the loneliness of those
later years. After a lifetime when her house crowded with
children, to have an empty nest with her children far away
was hard on Emma. Her youngest daughter Wilda recalled:

She [Emma] always hugged you when you come home,
and she would hug you good-bye. But one thing we
found was when we would go visit after I was
married and all these little kids running around.
We would always eat a meal just before we left, be
it breakfast or lunch. And she would say: "Leave
the dishes and go." And I always felt guilty to
get up and pick up and leave this mess for her to
clean up. And one time I said "Oh, Mom, I can't
do that, let me get the dishes done up and then
we'll go." She said, "No, let me do the dishes
then I won't miss you so much while you are
driving away." And like I said, that's her way.
Get to work, it's the answer to every problem.
And so she would clean up the mess, that was her
way of getting out of saying good-bye to us. 9

Oscar, though a sociable person, liked the isolation,
but his cattle business was in decline. Because of Flaming
Gorge Reservoir and the creation of the National Recreation
Area, the use of the surrounding Ashley National Forest was
reoriented by the Forest Service. Recreation was the new
priority as the Forest Service began to develop visitor

8 Johnson, 5.

9 1989 Wilda Beverly Swett Irish interview, 22.
centers, campgrounds, and marinas. The springs Oscar had once used to water his cattle were now campgrounds. Oscar's grazing permit was steadily reduced until it was down to only 33 cattle being allowed on the national forest. No longer was cattle ranching economically viable, even on the small-scale that Oscar and Lewis practiced. The family did own a small flock of about one hundred and fifty sheep, from which they sold the lambs and wool. The sheep were kept entirely on the property Oscar owned, and so a Forest Service permit was not needed for them.

In these latter years of the homestead, the amount of the wildlife in the area changed. Thanks to game management practices, plentiful deer and elk herds now existed. These herds did bring problems. During the winter, the elk came onto Oscar's land and ate the hay stacks. Oscar continually tried to chase them away, but the elk did not want to leave and he never did really solve the problem.

Oscar accepted the inevitability of change and tried to cope with it, though it was hard for him to see his livelihood whittled away. Lewis wanted to take over the homestead from his father and run it, but grazing permit was too small for ranching to be economically viable. Lewis looked for another place that he might buy for himself, but "I never could find the kind of place I could make it on. I
couldn't find a place that I could even make interest on the money."\(^{10}\)

Oscar decided to sell his homestead and find another ranch, possibly in Vernal, where he could work a little in his retirement. He did not find another place, but did sell the homestead to Mark and Wanda Eggertsen. For the 397 acres he owned, he got "about five hundred" an acre.\(^{11}\)

The Eggertssens envisioned combining the homestead with other land they owned in the area to create a condominium community, complete with an equestrian area, golf course, and lodge complex.

In those final days of the Swett homestead, it is not a stretch of the imagination to see the homestead as Oscar and Emma saw it. Standing on the porch of the house they had built with help of family and friends, Oscar and Emma would have looked over a familiar vista. Around their trio of houses stood other farm buildings, all built by them by hand. Two hundred acres of grassland stretching away toward the north, the result of their labors. A few haystacks and small sheds dot the fields among the distant dark spots of cattle. They had come to a land little touched by

\(^{10}\) Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 6. Hereafter cited as the 1990 Lewis Lyman Swett interview.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 43.
settlement, carved out a life for themselves, and raised a large family. Oscar Swett had lived his dream of being a rancher.

Oscar died September 23, 1968, having worked his homestead up until the very day he died. His daughter, Mary, who was living with on a nearby ranch with her husband, Sylvan Arrowsmith, described his death quite movingly.

He stayed right on the job. Mother said that the day he died. I lived up there. When he died, she called me on the phone. We had a phone then. And she called me on the phone and told me that something had happened to Dad, so when I went over there, Lewis was there with him. It was kind of funny, when he died, he said I feel tired, he said, I think I will go to bed. I'm going to be in bed in a few minutes too as soon as I finish these dishes. She finished up her dishes and went to throw the dish water out, or pour it out. I heard something out on the porch, I guess it was. And she opened the door to see what was out on the porch, and it was a porcupine sitting on the porch post. And she said to Dad there's a porcupine out here chewing on the porch post. Well, he got up and got his gun and he shot the darn porcupine around about nine o'clock at night. Lewis just lived up on the hill and he heard that shot, and he said what in the world is dad shooting this time of night for. So he come running down to see what he was shooting at. Dad said, "Well, there's a porcupine trying to eat my house up and I couldn't stand for that, so I shot him." Well he sat there and talked for a few minutes to Lewis, and Lewis said I guess I better get home and get to bed. Dad said "Yeah, I think I better go to bed too." And he went in and got in bed, and mother followed him in there just after Lewis had left. And she started getting undress, and she said he made a funny noise. And she said "Turn
over, Dad, you're choking." And he was dead. That's an easy way to go after a hard life.\textsuperscript{12}

Oscar's son, Tom, died six months after his father. For the two years following her husband's death, Emma continued to live on the homestead with her son, Lewis. They took care of the homestead for the Eggertsens, who were embroiled with the Forest Service in a lawsuit. On August 25, 1972, the Forest Service, feeling that the development would detract from the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, had the property condemned and offered a compensation of $229,500.00. The Eggertsens objected to the amount and the case went before a jury trial. The jury awarded a total of $595,425.00 for the property.

In the fall of 1970, Emma moved to a small house in Vernal. She cared for herself and nearby children kept an eye on her. She did not like city life. "She was homesick for the ranch where she had given so much of her life."\textsuperscript{13}

She passed away in May of 1971, on the same night that a


\textsuperscript{13} Johnson, 7. Genealogical records on Family Group sheets from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, show her year of birth as 1893, which would make her 77 years old at her death.
couple of her grandchildren graduated from Vernal High School.
CONCLUSION

The Oscar Swett homestead was placed on the State of Utah Register of Historic Places in 1972 and on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Today, the Greendale area is composed of campgrounds, the Flaming Gorge Acres recreation business (formerly Sylvan Arrowsmith's small ranch), and summer resort homes. The Oscar and Emma Swett homesite is the sole remaining vestige of the people who came and first settled this area. Various efforts have been made over the years by the Forest Service to turn the homestead into a living history museum. These efforts have foundered on the lack of money, though there is a new effort currently underway with possible goals less ambitious than a fully functioning living history museum.¹

Because the homestead lacked indoor running water and electricity for most of its existence, and used horse power instead of tractors, many people might characterize it as being a mere anachronism. But as this thesis shows, the members of the Swett family were just like their neighbors

¹ Part of this new effort was a cooperative agreement between the Forest Service and the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies at Utah State University, whereby a graduate student would do historical research on the homestead. I was that student during 1989-90.
when it came to adopting new technology. They lived on the frontier, self-sufficient in many ways, yet close enough to outside society to receive its benefits, such as education for their children and manufactured products. Their isolation was both a barrier and a buffer. They were shielded from many of the disadvantages of urban or suburban society, yet could take what they wanted from the products of an industrialized society.

Yet a person could emphasize the homestead's self-sufficiency too much. For instance, the homestead was dependent on selling its cattle every year to eastern markets. Combined with the sawmill, the cattle business was the Swetts' only source of hard cash. Another good example of this partial dependence on the outside world was in the area of clothing. Some clothes were bought through the Sears catalog, but most were homemade. Producing their own cloth would have been very difficult for the family.

The children grew up under circumstances that have all but disappeared in the United States today, and most of them viewed their childhood with fondness. Lewis said, "It was a nice place to live at that time . . . You have to grow up on your own two feet there. You don't depend on the other person giving it to you." This is an attitude that his
parents would have agreed with.\textsuperscript{2} The oldest daughter, Mary, feels that Oscar and Emma "were happy people" and that Oscar "enjoyed every bit" of his life.\textsuperscript{3} Mary also thinks that "if the kids had to do the things I did when I . . . was their age, they would just drop dead. They wouldn't know how to do it."\textsuperscript{4} And finally, the youngest daughter sees a fundamental difference in the attitude towards entertainment.

We really didn't have what you would call entertainment. Our entertainment was what we were doing, and you didn't miss it, you enjoyed what you were doing, so you didn't think you needed to be entertained.\textsuperscript{5}

What can we as historians, and people, learn from the Swetts? The Swetts lived through an enormous amount of change, especially as this country urbanized and the small subsistence farmer or rancher became an endangered species. As homesteaders and small-scale ranchers, everything the Swetts did was connected to the natural environment and ecology around them. That environment changed with the

\textsuperscript{2} Lewis Lyman Swett, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Lewis Swett home, Vernal, Utah, 19 May 1990, 52.

\textsuperscript{3} Mary Elizabeth Swett Arrowsmith, interview by Eric G. Swedin, Arrowsmith home, Vernal, Utah, 23 September 1989, 28.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{5} Wilda Beverly Swett Irish, interview by Scott Christensen, Irish home, Moab, Utah, 13 August 1989, 11.
construction of Flaming Gorge Dam, wrecking their subsistence economy. The Swetts did not live their lives as hermits, but were part of growing nation, though on the fringe. The Swetts are representative of the caliber of people who homesteaded on the fringe agricultural lands in Utah in the early part of this century, and because of that, their experiences and a record of them are valuable. Through them, we see the lives of a family that was not influential in any sort of traditional way.

This brings us back to the subject of how to interpret the Swett homestead for visitors of the site. As discussed in the Introduction, this site possesses considerable potential as a representation of a way of life now vanished. True, the Greendale homesteads were all founded in this century, and as such do not necessarily have an aura of oldness around them. The site's historical value is poorly appreciated, forming a major psychological stumbling block to encouraging its development. The end of the century approaches though, and in the decades after the year 2000; I predict that appreciation of this site as a true relic of the past will grow; its value will increase with each passing year. But the time to reconstruct the site is not after the passage of another decade, but now, while the ability to accurately recreate the site still exists. Eight of the nine Swett children are still alive to serve as a
resource. This will probably not be the case in ten years. The Forest Service has evaluated various options and started different initiatives over the past two decades, and now is the time for all these studies (including this one) to bear fruit.

This thesis forms the foundation for the site's interpretation, but there is other research to be performed, and more source material to be gathered. An example of further source material is a one-hour documentary, "Back At The Ranch," produced by the Nebraska ETV Network. This video includes a segment on the Swett homestead, with Lewis and Myrle being interviewed on camera. In addition, earlier in the video is footage of the actual workings of the type of horse-drawn haying machinery that the Swetts used. Displaying still photographs of the haying machinery at work would add immeasurably to visitors' understanding.

It is my hope that the Swett homestead will become a place enjoyed by visitors who come away with an added measure of understanding of the past, and an appreciation for a way of life that the Swett children treasured.
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Other Sources (continued)


Figure 1: Map of Tri-state Area
Figure 2: Map of Green River Country
Figure 3: Map of Greendale

The above numbers represent Homestead Entry Surveys (H.E.S.) numbers. The following is an incomplete list of property owners and the time period they owned the property:

H.E.S. #61  Elizabeth Swett 1909-1918
            Oscar Swett 1918-1968
H.E.S. #62  Oscar Swett 1913-1968
H.E.S. #65  William Green 1910 (Approx.) - 1917 (Died)
            Heirs of William Green 1917-1926
            T. H. Merriwether 1926-1928
            Orson Burton and Oscar Swett 1928-1957
H.E.S. #66  Sanford Green 1907-1926
            T. H. Merriwether 1926-1928
            Orson Burton and Oscar Swett 1928-1957
            Oscar Swett 1957-1968
H.E.S. #104 Elizabeth Swett 1915-1918
             Oscar Swett 1918-1968
H.E.S. #105 Oscar Swett 1916-1968
H.E.S. #124 Orson Burton 1919 (Approx.)-1926
H.E.S. #129  Flaming Gorge Lodge 1973 (Approx.)–present
H.E.S. #217  Forest Service 1973–present
Figure 4: Map of Swett Homestead

This map represents the core of the Swett homestead, with the houses and nearby buildings. Aspen trees grew along Allen Creek, and to the south, just beyond the houses, the ground slopes up sharply and is covered with stands of Ponderosa Pine. To the northwest, out in the hay fields, stood other buildings, such as lambing and dehorning sheds.