

## **SNOHOMISH COUNTY IN THE 1860 FEDERAL CENSUS? (by Betty Lou Gaeng) - from the May 2011 issue of The Beacon**

To err is human. Sure does cause difficulties for genealogists though. A few years ago, Sno-Isle Genealogical Society published a short article in our quarterly publication *The Sounder*, regarding errors made in the indexing and reporting of the 1860 U.S. Federal Census. Now that Snohomish County is celebrating its 150th birthday, I thought it was a good time to once again bring to light those errors. It may help the people searching for ancestors in the 1860 census for Washington Territory.

Suppose you are looking for your gr-gr-grandfather Edmund Pendleton in the 1860 census. You heard he left Missouri and went way out west to Washington Territory. Great, you found him! There he is, the first one listed in the 1860 census for Snohomish County, Washington Territory - living near a place called Arkada - Edmund P. Pendleton, age 28, and he's working as a lumberman.

Now, wait a minute! I attended the party in Everett celebrating the 150th birthday of Snohomish County, and I learned it didn't become a separate county from Island County until January 14, 1861. So, how did Snohomish County get included in the 1860 census? Those names don't even look familiar. And, where is Arkada? I never heard of a place called Arkada in Snohomish County.

Of course, the answer is, there never was a town by that name in Snohomish County and there never was a census for Snohomish County in 1860. It was still part of Island County at that time!

The error probably arose because of our unfamiliar names with their America Indian influence. Forget the indexing and go directly to the actual record. Now we know, Gr-Gr-Grandfather Edmund Pendleton lived and worked as a lumberman near a place called Arkada in Sawamish County, Washington Territory, not Snohomish County.

Sawamish—now where is that county? According to Everton Publishers' *The Handy Book for Genealogists*, Tenth Edition, Washington Territory's Sawamish County was created from Thurston County on March 15, 1854. On January 8, 1864, Sawamish County was renamed Mason County.

So, even though Sawamish County was in existence at the time of the 1860 federal census, and the people living there were included in the enumeration, you won't find a listing for Sawamish County in the National Archives' publication *Federal Population Censuses 1790-1890*, or on their website. Neither will you find an index listing for the county of Sawamish for the 1860 census from Ancestry.com, nor Heritage Quest. In place of it you will find Snohomish County. The poor lost souls of the short-lived county of Sawamish must have been as confused as the rest of us.

Congratulations to the hardworking people who volunteer with the USGenWeb Census Project—they got it right.

Wait, there is more! To add more insult, plus trouble for genealogists, the people who lived on the mainland portion of Island County (the section that did become Snohomish County the following year), they were completely left out of the 1860 census. Perhaps they were hiding behind all those big trees. More likely though, some political infighting helped cause the oversight, or possibly it was the fact that Island County was split in two by water and travel was not that easy, so no one bothered.