

Brewery owner had start at Prairie Diggings mine

Blue Mountain Eagle

The F.C. Sels Brewery building stands as a reminder of the early days in Canyon City.

Francis Clemens "F.C." Sels, the owner of the establishment, had his career start in mining.

He was born in 1837 in Meschede, Westphalia, Germany.

He left Germany at age 17, arriving in California in 1854.

Sels made his way to Canyon City in July 1, 1862, joining the Prairie Diggings camp.

The 18 members of that party were from California and mostly of German descent.

They prospected in Canyon City in 1862 while en route to Florence, Idaho. However, they were informed of discouraging reports in Florence and returned to Canyon City.

They soon found fair prospects, locating 18 claims, and later had six adjoining claims.

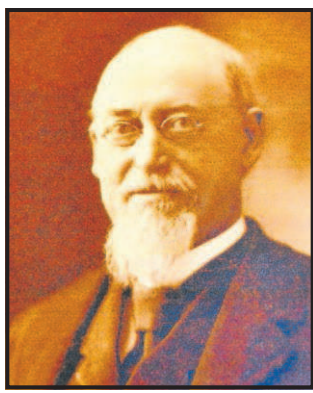
The original owners of the Prairie Diggings cleared \$10,000 each during the first year of their operations, and many hundreds of thousands more were garnered by companies which followed.

It is assumed that Sels had his career start from this mining success.

Sels had several occu-



Contributed photo/Grant County Historical Museum
Men gather at the Canyon City saloon and brewery owned by F.C. Sels in 1913.



Contributed photo/Grant County Historical Museum

F.C. Sels owned a brewery in Canyon City in the early 1900s.

pations prior to owning the brewery, including general merchandise store owner, justice of the peace (1864-1866) and postmaster for less than a



Eagle file photo

From June 6, 1985: Members of the Whiskey Gulch Gang are perched atop their "staff car" beside the new rock wall they have constructed along the beer garden adjacent to the F.C. Sels Brewery in Canyon City.

He ran for state senator in



Contributed photo/Grant County Historical Museum

Canyon City Commercial Co., Canyon City, circa 1910, once stood near where the Whiskey Gulch Gang later built its rock wall around the beer garden of the F.C. Sels Brewery.

1868 and won the election, but lost the seat due to a technicality.

He was the Grant County judge from 1870 to 1874.

Sels bought the brewery on July 28, 1870, from John H. Stahl. Though it is known today as the F.C. Sels Brewery, Sels called it the City Brewery.

Two weeks later, the town burned down in the first of three disastrous fires the town suffered over the years. The brewery was not spared.

Sels listed his loss at \$7,000 with no insurance.

It was said: "F.C. Sels, our present county judge, came near losing his life through

over exertion and copious inhalation of heat and smoke. He is still confined to his bed and in a rather critical condition."

In 1898, a second fire destroyed the brewery, and Sels listed the financial loss at \$30,000.

Although his brewery was small, Sels had a reputation for his beer, which won a medal at the St. Louis World's Fair.

Sels died at his Canyon City home on Jan. 29, 1914, at age 77.

At the time of his death, he was president of the First National Bank of Canyon City.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Vella, who died in 1913 at the age of 43. Both are buried in the Canyon City Cemetery.

His children were Julia Sels Kuhl (born 1859), Lizzie (1861), Clara (1863), Frank (1865), Eddy (1868) and Elta (1870).

Information was provided to the Grant County Historical Museum by Dennis Smith.



The Eagle/Ryan Boggs

Joaquin Miller's desk sits in his cabin preserved by the Grant County Historical Museum. Taken Wednesday, Sept. 21.

MILLER

Continued from Page C1

and high-heeled boots. This garb made him popular with the local women, and the publishing of his book of poetry, "Pacific Poems," added greatly to his sense of self-importance. Literary Traveler reports the British seemed to enjoy Miller's character more than his poetry, while American critics were not nearly so kind and questioned his overall literacy, according to.

Miller returned to California and settled in Oakland. He engaged in a number of affairs

with married and unmarried women, worked a brief stint as a newspaper correspondent during the Klondike gold rush and worked in conservation towards the end of his life. He bought up a large area of land above Oakland and took to calling it the Hights, insisting on his own spelling. He lived here until his death in 1913.

His funeral was officiated by a unitarian priest who called him "the last of America's great poets." Before its completion, Literary Traveler reports, the event devolved into a riot, with attendees ransacking his home and police having to rescue his corpse.

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