



Latah/Hangman - Days of Yore

The Hangman or, more properly named, Latah Valley was formed primarily during the Quaternary period by periods of glaciating and a series of Great Lake Missoula floods that carved out the existing alluvial landscape. This left the valley with a naturally beautiful setting of sheer basalt outcroppings, sandy bluffs, cliffs, rich, deep valley soils which are among the region's most fertile, and Latah Creek itself. The creek flows northwest from the Rocky Mountains to Spokane, where it meanders through Latah Valley before emptying into the Spokane River. The mouth of the creek at the Spokane River is located just beyond the neighborhood's northern border.



In the late 1880s, immigrants were drawn to the area for the fertile soils and the plentiful wildlife. By the early 1900s, numerous small farms thrived. But, as the nation grew, so did the Latah Valley. Roads and railroads were laid down through the center of the valley. Portions of Latah Creek were straightened or re-routed for construction ease without consideration of the impacts to the ecosystem (such as increased erosion and flooding) and to downstream property owners.



Latah Valley is a large neighborhood, stretching from the Riverside Avenue bridge over Latah Creek to the north to the extreme southern boundary of the City of Spokane. The neighborhood is divided into two distinct areas: the older Vinegar Flats, located on the valley floor in the northern portion, and the more recent developments of Qualchan and Eagle Ridge, located to the south on the western hillsides. U.S. Route 195, railroad lines, and Latah Creek all bisect the neighborhood, creating areas of small, isolated clusters of homes.

Vinegar Flats

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, local apple farmers delivered their product to a plant in southwest Spokane to be processed into vinegar. As workers built homes and cottages near the plant, one of Spokane's earliest "creek" neighborhoods was born. The new community that blossomed around the vinegar plant became known as Vinegar Flats.



The vinegar plant is long gone, but the houses and history remain. With its location at the foot of a steep, sandy bluff, along with the construction of railroad and freeway bridges, Vinegar Flats was effectively severed from the bustling downtown only a mile away. As stately homes filled the South Hill ridge above, Vinegar Flats sank into a quiet existence. As





the years passed, small businesses appeared then disappeared, homes were built along muddy roads, Wentel Grant Park was laid out, and Vinegar Flats crept up the winding Latah Creek until it was pinched off where Inland Empire Highway meets the U.S. Highway 195.



After World War II, many Japanese produce farmers relocated around the valley. As more and more people discovered the natural beauty of the area, more homes were built. Property taxes began to rise and many nuisance lawsuits over dust, noise, and pollution were filed against the area farmers. In the late 1980s, city water and sewer was extended through the valley. Large housing developments appeared in areas that were once single family farms. As farmers saw their property values and taxes increasing and their profits declining, they sold out to large developers. Today, only a handful of working farms exist.



Today, Inland Empire Way, which connects the area with the rest of the city, is the main arterial in Vinegar Flats. This area is a patchwork of small homes, empty lots, greenhouses, riparian areas along the creek and city parks. Immediately to the north of the neighborhood are the high bridges over the creek of I-90, Sunset Boulevard, and the BNSF railroad. Located beneath and around those bridges is the aptly named High Bridge Park. The park is mostly undeveloped along the hillside and creek but has a picnic shelter, maintained grass area, and a disc golf course.

Life in Latah/Hangman - Today

Qualchan/Eagle Ridge is the newest addition to the neighborhood and is composed of two separate but adjacent suburban style developments located along the hills in the southwestern portion of Latah Valley. This is the most modern part of the neighborhood as these two developments are still expanding. The boundaries of these developments are roughly the intersection of Cheney-Spokane Road and U.S. 195 to the north, the city limits on the south and west, and U.S. 195 on the east. At the northern end is the commercial center of Latah Valley with a new grocery store, a gas station, restaurants and other small shops.

Residents love the character of the neighborhood including its housing stock and tree-lined streets. The neighborhood is safe, clean, friendly, and is in close proximity to Downtown. Neighbors enjoy the community oriented feel of the neighborhood and participate in annual block parties and holiday events put on the by Eagle Ridge Homeowner's Association. The neighborhood is lined with craftsman style homes that are connected by quality streets that offer bike routes. Accessibility to trails, parks and natural features such as rock walls, bluffs, and the river creates a perfect urban/rural blend.

Latah/Hangman - Treasures

- Qualchan Golf Course
- South Hill Bluff area Trails

Latah/Hangman - Natural & Built Identity

The neighborhood has a terrain with hills and bluffs. Residents enjoy wildlife activity in the natural areas of the neighborhood.

Latah/Hangman - Annual Events or Activities

Barbecue, movies, and holiday events sponsored by Eagle Ridge Homeowner's Association.

Latah/Hangman Neighborhood

