

John Hedden Tells of Whisky, Real Men and Indian Fights; He Was Second White Child Born in Scottsburg in 1856

Rise and Fall of Social Center of Empire Marked by Humorous and Thrilling Incidents—Remember the Politician Who Really Found Himself on the Inside of a Hot Stove?—And Then There was the Daring Expedition That Was Ambushed by Indians.

"Pioneers? Say, they were all angels. You don't see men like them nowadays. They had to be angels. All the bad ones died on the road."

John N. Hedden's eyes twinkled as he leaned back in an easy chair in his home in Scottsburg and recalled happy and thrilling incidents of the rise and fall of that town—once the social center of a pioneer empire, the home of the second postoffice in Oregon, and the second or third early-day settlement in the state. He was the second white child born there, May 1, 1856.

In those days you could drive all over the state and every home you came to welcomed you," continued the 70-year young native of the lower Umpqua's comparatively recently named wilds. He is young because—well, his daughter will confide the secret in a few brief moments. Here again Mr. Hedden:

"The pioneers were insulted if you didn't call and stay overnight. What they was young."

"Those were the days of pack trains with gold dust going south to Yreka, Calif., and north to Eugene. All the mail was brought on steamers, en route from San Francisco to the Columbia. They all stopped at lower Scottsburg, two miles below here. There were then nine stores in lower Scottsburg and nine in upper, and all vessels called here."

Early Scottsburg Recalled.

"From 1853 to 1856 there were about 600 men and a half dozen women in the town, then in its prime. Whisky was 50 cents a gallon and every one had to pay dust. But the men never forgot that they were gentlemen. Many the time they rolled a barrel of whisky out of the store, knocked out the head and passed the tin dipper to the crowd. They were a lively bunch, but all good—every last one of 'em. There never was a word said. They were all gentlemen—every last one of 'em. Those that weren't, weren't considered fit for a hog to look at."

Here Mr. Hedden paused, shifted his cigar and reached over and patted his little granddaughter.

"Father found out three years ago that he was young," volunteered Emma Hedden. "We were standing behind our car. The car slid back and mother slid into the river in 22 feet of water. The car poised on the edge of the ferry. No one seemed to know what to do. The ferry boy stood as if he were glued. But dad was there. He hadn't been swimming for 25

years, but he hopped right in and he went right down, but when he came up he had mother by the neck and his hat still on his head. He swam all the way to shore with mother before she knew it was he."

Mr. Hedden Still Young.

"Well, the doctor said that the shock would be bad for both of them because of their age, but do you know that it really did do good, for he found out that he was still young."

Mr. Hedden is still young and he attends to his duties at his Scottsburg mercantile establishment, which he boasts is the oldest in the state of Oregon under one head. He has operated it for 50 years and he came after his father, Cyrus Hedden, an entrepreneur of old Oregon.

But Mr. Hedden likes nothing better than reminiscences of those old days, of his father's part in the Indian fight at Battle Rock at Port Orford and of his father's valiant rescue of a companion who had been pierced with redskins' arrows while on an expedition to the interior.

"Father came across the plains in a six-horse wagon. The day his train left Independence, Mo., 500 men with wheelbarrows started out. Well, they beat the wagons," continued Mr. Hedden.

"Father was licked by the Indians at Port Orford. He was licked again by the Indians, but this time it was while he was with the ill-fated expedition that was organized in 1851 to explore the interior of Oregon for gold-dust pack trails. Father and L. E. Williams, who was later elected county clerk and county treasurer on several occasions, were two of the five members who escaped with their lives in a deadly hand-to-hand fight with treacherous Indians at the mouth of the Coquille river after the party had been forced to turn back from its expedition because of hardships and the scarcity of food."

Indian Arrows Riddle Williams. "In that fight, Williams was almost riddled with Indian arrows, but after he managed to escape in a desperate running fight he and father met. Father had escaped from the ambush unharmed by making a dash through the center of the circle which the Indians formed about the little group of weakened men who had been enticed to land with promises of much-needed food. He looked back and saw Williams fight his way bleeding profusely, dropped to the ground."

"Good-bye, old man," father whispered. He immediately began preparing a rude grave for the body of his brave companion and was just about to roll him in when Williams revived from his faint. He begged father to leave him and make his own escape, but father wouldn't."

"I'll either stay with you until you die and give you a decent burial or take you with me," he answered. He then started to pack Williams out of the wilds and back to the settlement. It took him eight days to get Williams from Coquille here. He packed him on his back to the south shore of Coos bay. There he found an Indian camp. He approached it carefully and learned that only squaws were in the cabin. He entered and, by signs, found that the braves were on a hunt for meat. He carried Williams to the cabin and then himself hid behind a log, waiting for the Indians to return."

"When they came he grabbed one of their canoes and forced them to carry Williams to the canoe. He made the Indians set him and Williams on the north strait of Coos bay. He then packed Williams on his back the 30 miles to Umpqua and he made the trip in two days. Although he had to rest every 50 or 100 yards, he wouldn't quit. Williams begged him to leave so that he might save his exhausted self, but he wouldn't."

"At the mouth of the Umpqua they came across the wreck of an old schooner and father hid Williams in the cabin. They were badly in need of some food, and he set out to find some Indians to make a trade. All he had was a beaded knife and all he wore was a pair of buckskin pants. But, luckily, he met a boat from Gardiner (across the bay from the present site of Reedsport). There was a young fellow in the boat who had on two shirts. No sooner did he see father than, taking hold of the bottom of one of his shirts, he took it off, turned it inside out and onto father's back, all with one motion. That was the spirit of those days. The crowd then went back after Williams and packed him here. (The name of the young man who gave father his shirt was S. Schofield and it was for him that the Schofield river which empties into the Umpqua at Reedsport, was named.)"

"Williams was three years on his back here, recovering from his wounds. But all that time he studied. He learned to write one of the finest hands in the country and his records of some of the early days of Umpqua county are still preserved. For many years he was county clerk and also county treasurer."

"The British just about cleaned up all the Heddens in the revolution. Some were killed in the war and some were killed off as prisoners."

"In '55 and '56 there was trouble with the Indians south of Roseburg and a company was organized here. Father went with them. He and another one of the company got into a heavy fight and the only battle of that war was between them. Lots of the men who enlisted never left their ranches and they had no trouble in getting pensions. Besides that they drew pay for the time they were in the service."

Politics Has Funny Side. Political campaigns of Umpqua district had their amusing as well as their interesting sides, Mr. Hedden recalls.

"Remember Jesse Applegate?" he mused. "He was a great fellow. One night he and a man named Hatfield began drinking at the hotel here which also served as a court house and town hall. One drink led to another and finally, just for the fun of the thing, they leaped onto the bar and kicked all the bottles off the shelves. The next day they each got a bill for \$275 and they had to pay it. But they had their fun."

"Applegate was a great fellow. By jingo, he was a great fellow. He used to come over here from Yoncalla. When he started he would put his arm through his horse's bridle and would come all the way down here, but he never once would get on his horse."

"Great politician, too, that fellow. One day in lower Scottsburg he attended some sort of a meeting. They had a nice flat-top stove in the hall. Well, the meeting got warmer and warmer and so did the stove. Jesse warmed up, too, and got into action. One leap and he was on top of the stove—but he went through into the fire. They grabbed Jesse before he was hurt. Great politician that fellow—great politician."

"Now General Joe Lee was another fine fellow, but the Charleston convention ended him. Lane was the nicest young fellow you ever talked to in your life. By jingo he was—the nicest man."

Beans Enter into Story. "One spring day he called at a home near here. The lady was preparing to plant some beans. Joe admired the beans and asked for some to take to his own garden. The lady was pleased and she got some of the beans together, but all that she had to wrap them in was

a piece left from a calico dress. (Those were the days when 16 or 18 yards of gingham, whichever you got for a dollar, made a dress instead of the two yards or less they use nowadays.) Joe took the beans and the calico, thanked her and went his way. A little further on Joe stopped at another home. That lady, too, was planting beans. Joe said that he had some fine beans and had a sample of them in his pocket. The lady admired those beans, so Joe left them, but he left the calico, too."

"It wasn't more than a day or so before the first lady called on the second. They talked about Joe. They talked about beans. And then they talked about calico. Great politician that fellow—but he did not go far enough."

The days of gold dust were among the most picturesque of the little settlement on the Umpqua.

"I have been running the store here for 50 years," continued Mr. Hedden. "And I used to go to San Francisco to buy my goods. The store is the oldest in the state under one head. We now are in our third building. When we moved out of our second, we knocked down the old counter and there in the seams between the boards were ridges of gold dust, a reminder of the days when they handled the dust like we do beans now."

The pioneers used the side of a knife to dish out the stuff. Everything was paid in that way. They'd keep taking it out on the knife until the other fellow said he had enough. I'll bet if a fellow would pan up these streets today he would get a lot of gold dust."

Scottsburg Gets Setback.

"The first blow to Scottsburg was the building of the Crescent City-Jacksonville road. Then the old Umpqua county lost what are now Jacksonville and Josephine counties. When the railroads came along in '72 that left us only Elkton and the territory from it to the mouth of the Umpqua. Scottsburg never again will be like it was. The old days will never come back."

"Scottsburg at one time shipped wheat a year to San Francisco. The district cannot raise it now. Then the rate was only \$4.50 a ton. Look at it now."

"I went to school in Portland back in '76 and '77. There were about 15,000 people in the city then. The streets were muddy—gosh they were muddy. When a fellow went into a mudhole you wouldn't know where he was until he came out on the other side. They were terrible. Keeping up gravel on them every spring."

Flower bulbs can be successfully grown in this county, thus adding another paying industry to the long list we have now.

The newcomer soon feels at home in Douglas county.

Early History of Scottsburg

Daughter of Pioneer Tells of Early Days in Lower Umpqua Country—General Lane Visits Scottsburg.



Upper—Street of Scottsburg, historic town and early trading center.

Lower—Umpqua River by Scottsburg, where the riffles tarry as they playfully tumble over flattened shoals.



Photos Courtesy Portland Telegram

If you will get out your old geography—the one you studied in the days before the Civil war—you will find that Umpqua county, Oregon, was one of the important geographical divisions of Western Oregon. Today it is but a memory. In vain will you search a modern geography for Umpqua county.

In your old geography you will see Scottsburg marked as the commercial metropolis of Southern Oregon, and the head of navigation on the Umpqua river. Today a hotel, a store and postoffice is all that is left of what once promised to be a great city.

Mrs. George Blanchard, a native daughter of Scottsburg, told the following interesting story of her early life in that section:

"My father, Dr. J. Lyons, was born in Ireland. In 1826 when he was 12 years old, he came to Amer-

ica. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky.

"While a boy in school, one of his schoolmates threw a piece of broken slate at him and put out one of his eyes. Through sympathy, the other eye became affected and he became totally blind. He took up music and became proficient upon the violin and piano."

"He was married in 1849 and in 1853 came to Oregon. My mother's brother, Charles Putnam, had come to Oregon and had settled near Drain, marrying Roselle, the oldest daughter of Jesse Applegate. My father took up a donation claim near Drain."

"Next year he traded his 640-acre farm to Levi Scott, the founder of Scottsburg, for a hotel in that city. The hotel had been originally built for a fort, but in 1850 Levi Scott bought it and converted it into a hotel."

"In those days the county seat of Umpqua county was at Underwood's ranch in Green valley, near the present town of Oakland, but Scottsburg had aspirations of becoming the county seat."

"Scottsburg was the head of navigation on the Umpqua, and was the outfitting point for all southern Oregon and northern California. Between Scottsburg and the mines in southern Oregon. Sometimes several hundred mules would arrive during the day, so times were lively."

"The year after my father moved there David Lian, one of the enterprising citizens of Jacksonville, brought a sawmill around the Horn to San Francisco, and from there it was reshipped to Scottsburg. From Scottsburg it was taken by

ox teams to Jacksonville, 150 miles away."

"Here are a number of copies of the Umpqua Weekly Gazette. Notice the date line: 'Scottsburg, T. June 16, 1854. Office: corner of Main and Yoncalla streets.' The subscription rate was \$5 per year and the advertising rates were \$5 per inch. My father was editor and William Beggs was publisher."

"Here is the advertisement of Samuel S. Mann, of Lower Scottsburg. My mother told me about standing by our western window and watching the big flood that occurred during the winter of '71, creeping higher and higher over Lower Scottsburg till it took one store after another and carried them away. When the flood had subsided there was no longer any Lower Scottsburg."

"Here is the announcement of Hinsdale and Co., to packers and traders and here is the ad of Geo. Haynes and Co., offering Chaff flour, Java coffee, China sugar, linen covered hams and other wares. Allen, McKinley and Co., George Hinsdale, Brand and Hillman, Flanagan Bros., later of Marshfield, and Cameron Bros.—while in Upper Scottsburg were Lord and Peters, Oppenheimer and Co., McTavish and T. P. Sheridan, usually called 'Tin Pot' Sheridan, on account of his initials, and the fact that he kept a hardware store."

"I was born in the 'Scottsburg House' as the hotel was called. The first court ever held in Southern Oregon was held in our hotel, and was presided over by Judge Deady. A man was tried for murder—a man, by the way, who has since become prominent in Portland. He was left off on the plea of the unwritten law."

"To read the old registers of the Scottsburg House would be like calling the roll of all the important men of Oregon's early days. I remember Governor Lane came to Scottsburg campaigning. Broderick and Lane were running for president and vice-president of the United States. Governor Lane handed my sister a quarter and said, 'Keep that, little girl, and some day you can hand it down to your children and tell them that it was given you by the president of the United States, for that is what I intend to be some day.'"

"In 1852 Douglas county was created and part of Umpqua county was given to Douglas county, and in 1862 the legislature gave the rest of Umpqua county to Douglas, wiping the county entirely off the map."

"The flood of '61-'62 made the bar at the mouth of the river very shoal. That hurt us as a seaport. A road was opened from Jacksonville to Crescent City, Calif., in 1858, which also hurt Scottsburg. (Continued on page 17, col. 5.)"

MARSTER'S DRUG STORE

Roseburg, Oregon

You Need No Other Guarantee



46 Years
The Same Location

CASS STREET MARKET

107 Cass Street

Wishing Our Many Patrons
A Happy, Prosperous
New Year

QUALITY MEATS!

Every Day—in Every Way

That's why we've been in
business so long