

PIONEERS ANTICIPATE JOLLY REUNION JULY 3

LA GRANDE WELCOMES OLD SETTLERS TO RIVERSIDE

Mr. S. L. Brooks, of Imbler, president of the Union County Pioneer society; and Mr. E. B. Morelock, of Elgin, secretary; called a meeting in La Grande the latter part of May to consider the matter of the meeting and annual reunion of the society for this year.

The place of meeting will be at Riverside Park and the date is on Monday, July 3rd. This is the day following the closing of the annual Chautauqua meeting at the park.

It is the announced intention of La Grande as a community to give the pioneers all the attention and courtesies that can be commanded.

There are details yet to be worked out but the general outline is to give the guests of honor the first consideration. There will be conveyances provided to the park grounds and every needed attention will be provided throughout the entire day.

For the purpose of carrying out this intention the following committees have been appointed:

General Arrangements—Mrs. Turner Oliver, Mrs. W. H. Bohnenkamp and J. G. Snodgrass.

On Grounds—Mrs. E. Polack, Mrs. R. W. Laughlin and F. B. Currey.

Finance—Mrs. Ella Russell, Mrs. J. D. Slater and Mrs. John Shaw.

Transportation—Turner Oliver, Mrs. Wayne Wade, P. A. McDonald and J. D. Slater.

Program—Mrs. Turner Oliver, Mrs. E. P. Mossman, Mrs. R. W. Laughlin and Mrs. Nellie Neill.

Refreshments—Miss Olive Slater, Mrs. C. R. Hibbard and Miss Mary Warnick.

Decorations—Mrs. A. B. Cherry, Mrs. E. L. Eckley and Mrs. George Gekeler.

Committee on Reception—Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. William Miller, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Henry, Mr. and Mrs. Mac Wood, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bohnenkamp, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Hill, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Grandy, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Turner Oliver, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan McDonald.

The program committee has not yet completed the order of exercises for Pioneer Day in detail, by reason of the fact that a number who have been invited to take part have not yet been heard from. But an outline includes:

Assembling at Riverside Park of pioneers, friends and visitors at

S. L. BROOKS



President Pioneer Association

10:30 o'clock, preceded by music.

Invocation.

Music.

Address of welcome.

Responses—By speakers from various county localities.

Music.

Annual Address—By pioneer resident of Union County to be selected.

Dinner Hour

The time from 12 o'clock, noon until 2 p. m. will be taken up with the pioneer dinner. This will include principally a basket dinner in family groups or as may most suitably be arranged; also a general table supply for those not otherwise provided. Coffee, tea, cream and other similar dinner accessories will be supplied by the refreshment committee.

2:00 p. m.—Social reunion and short speeches and general "experience" meeting.

3:30 p. m.—Election of officers and reports covering past year.

Evening

8 p. m.—Lantern slides and views with accompanying lecture by Prof. J. B. Horner, of Oregon Agricultural College.

NECROLOGICAL RECORD

The moving hand of time has stricken from the rolls a very large number of the Union county pioneers within the past year. In almost every instance those who have been called to the mysteries of the beyond had reached more than the allotted three score and ten—several were octogenarians—and all had experienced the rugged battle of hardships and shared in the victory of modern comforts for those for whom they labored and loved. The list of those who have passed away in the past year includes:

John Von Blockland
M. B. Rees
Joseph Woodell
S. O. Swackhamer
J. S. Mitchell
Mrs. E. E. Slater
R. McKenzie
G. W. Bartmess
Mrs. Joshua Hopper
Wm. T. Currey
Amanda Bryant (more generally known as "Aunt Mandy" Childers)
O. P. Goodall (at Corvallis)
Thos. Baker
B. W. Grandy
Albert Good

ing the murky Missouri and its straggling civilization behind. The most of those who survive to this day were merely children when their trains headed for the Willamette valley passed through Grande Ronde. But they all bear witness to the fact that this valley was fair to look upon. Luxuriant grass, almost hiding a horse, covered all the valley. There was a reasonably fair supply of game and camping sites containing the main requisites of "wood, water and grass," were to be found everywhere. Grande Ronde was the best camping place they had struck—but they didn't stay. They all went on, but they remembered Grande Ronde. There was no reason for them to stay here. It was at least 300 miles to any settlement of consequence on the west and only a bone-straw stretch of 2000 miles from whence they came. There was no base of supplies and no protection from Indians. With all its virgin attractiveness there was small inducement to carve out homes, rear families or spread religion in Grande Ronde at that time and they passed it up.

Settling of Grande Ronde

When there were finally settlements in this valley the pioneers were about equally divided between those who came from what is now the central west with this as their destination and those who had passed through before and had "come back". These latter people were almost wholly those who had gone through here in the early fifties. Undoubtedly the Civil war and its consequences had a great deal to do with the settling of Grande Ronde, but that was not the only contributing cause. Gold was discovered, mostly by prospectors branching out from California and one of the camps was named "Auburn" by those who had become familiar with the handling of sluices and rockers in a locality of the same name in the Sierra Nevada. Gold was found all around this country and it brought many people. Auburn had at one time upwards of 10,000 people. The miners needed supplies and provisions and lumber and other necessities and settlements began to grow and agriculture naturally followed.

The First Settler

Ben Brown, who has gone to his reward and who was as loyal a pioneer as any country ever claimed, is entitled to the credit of being the first settler. He crossed the Blue Mountains from Umatilla with a party of four or five others in the fall of 1861. He stayed and the others went away. He did not come on account of the war or on account of gold. His intent, like that of a bone fide homesteader, was that of "residence and cultivation." Ben Brown built the first house on what afterward became the Daniel Chaplin homestead.

How La Grande Happened

The very early immigrants had no prepared roadway ahead of them. They came down Ladd Hill and on account of the bluff of rock along the bank of the river just above Oro Dell the only way they had of making the

La Grande Picture 53 Years Old



The old picture herewith given was taken in 1863 and purports to be the first photograph of the kind to be taken in Grande Ronde valley. The original picture is now in possession of Mrs. Rosebaum, of La Grande, and its exact history is not easily traced, the scene depicted and the people shown not being fully recognizable to many who have seen it. Mr. A. C. Huntington, was absent from La Grande from March to October, 1863, although he remembers the photographer but does not now recall his name. Mr. John Baker considered that the location was probably on B avenue, near Mill creek and which was the first business thoroughfare in La Grande. There is to this day an old building that was once a mercantile establishment, and one of the stores on that street was for a time used as the meeting place for the first Sunday school held in La Grande.

The very first buildings were of

logs, but a saw mill was established at Oro Dell in 1862 and then board houses became the rule.

With the discovery of gold and the rapid increase in immigration La Grande approached a boom stage. It was especially the headquarters for freighters who were kept busy supplying the up-country mining camps as far south as Boise. On account of the snow in the mountains it was a practice to haul supplies over the hills from Umatilla in the summer season and store the goods at La Grande and then during a large portion of the winter season and particularly while the mountain traveling was bad the freight that had been stored could be taken to the mining camps. La Grande became a re-distributing center and its streets frequently became the center of such scenes as are shown in the picture taken in 1863.

ascend over the Blue Mountains was by climbing the hill a couple of miles south of where the river comes into the valley. That was at Mill creek. This being at the base of the mountainous route it was a convenient place to camp and make preparations. Commercialism again asserted itself. A trader came up from the Willamette—from Portland—and established a trading post in a small way at this camping place and his principal stock of trade was flour, bacon and beans and the like, and his patrons were principally the immigrants. That man was Stephen Coffin and the place on which he located became the nucleus of La Grande. Afterward this locality was the winter quarters for many of the freighting and pack team outfits. It was also a half-way place for those going to and from the mines of the up-country districts.

First Colony Settlement

The first considerable settlement of people in this valley was in the winter of 1862-3 and they did not congregate at the site of La Grande. They bunched together for mutual help and companionship near the foot of Mt. Emily and near a place which was afterward called the "Old Fort." The fort was a stockade built of logs stood up on end and to be in readiness for use in case of hostility from Indians. Nearly all the present residents of the county who came here in the fall of '62 passed their first winter near the old fort.

"Iowa" and "Sawbuck"

One of the prominent families from which has sprung a numerous progeny was the Baker family, the patriarch head of which, James Baker, died thirty-five years ago at a very advanced age. For many years the Baker family was the most prominent and numerous of any among the pioneers of Grande Ronde. There are now but two surviving sons who were the immediate descendants of James Baker. They are John Baker, for several years circuit court bailiff and his brother, William Baker, a farmer of Summerville. The Thomas family, of whom Park-keeper "Tap" Thomas is a member, were also quartered with the other settlers at the foot of Mt. Emily the first winter.

From the fact that so many of the first arrivals had come from the state of Iowa the country surrounding became known as the "Iowa" settlement and the school district in that vicinity is to this day known as "Iowa district."

A community which somewhat overlapped the Iowa district was settled by arrivals from the east who had been reared under frontier conditions before they started for Oregon and had had limited opportunities for education. Very many of the family heads were unable to write their own names and in making their signatures were compelled to mark a cross as a means of legal attestation. Some wag of the early days noting the resemblance of

THE GRANDE RONDE VALLEY

(BY ELLA HIGGINSON)

Ah, me! I know how like a golden flower
The Grande Ronde Valley lies this August night,
Locked in by dimpled hills where purple light
Lies wavering. There at the sunset hour
Sink downward, like a rainbow tinted shower
A million colored rays, soft, changeable, bright.
Later the moon rises, round and white,
And three Blue Mountain Pines against it tower,
Lonely and dark. A coyote's mournful cry
Sinks from the canyon—when the river leaps,
A blade of silver underneath the moon,
Like restless seas the yellow wheat fields lie,
Dreamless and still. And while the valley sleeps,
O, hear! the lullabies that low winds croon.

Editor's Note—Mrs. Ella Higginson, was formerly Miss Ella Rhodes, and she spent her early childhood in Grande Ronde, the family occupying a farm just north of La Grande. Mrs. Higginson has long occupied a high place among the literary notables of the Northwest. Her poem "The Four Leaf Clover," long since passed into the honorary niche of classic literature. She has been awarded many prizes in short story contests and is a contributor to the leading periodicals of the east. At all stages of her career Mrs. Higginson retains a spot in her heart for Grande Ronde, the home of her childhood.

PROF. HORNER WILL LECTURE FOR REUNION

One of the very interesting parts of the Pioneer day program will be the views and slides presented by Prof. J. B. Horner and his lectures relating to the subjects pictorially presented.

There can be no doubt that this part of the program will be interesting and entertaining and instructive as well. There is perhaps no man in the state who could do this sort of a thing as capably as Prof. Horner can. While he has been a resident of western Oregon for many years, the principal part of which time he has held a prominent place with the O. A. C., he is essentially a home product. As a fatherless youth Johnnie Horner braved his bare feet on the stones of these mountainsides. Here was developed the inspiration for a higher aim and a broader light that has made Prof. Horner one of Oregon's leading men.

No one but Prof. Horner would have had the patience to assemble the old photographs, the historical data and the other innumerable details for the preparation of this treat for the benefit of the pioneers. He has undertaken this work solely because Union county was his early home and many of its citizens who have answered the call he considered his benefactors.

He entrusted the work of gathering the principal part of the photographs and views to Senator Turner Oliver and the latter named gentleman has done the best he could, but in many instances there have been no pictures obtainable of those who helped make this part of Oregon. Prof. Horner had already a considerable collection and these were augmented by the reproduction of photographs from local histories and other publications of the kind. In it all Prof. Horner has data that will be interesting and so will his accompanying lecture from the fact that a great deal of the biographical and sideline suggestion regarding the "old timers" will be, not from second-hand information, but from what Prof. Horner personally knows of the subject in hand.

Is Highly Endorsed.

The Observer is in receipt of a letter from Mrs. Kittie Goodall Turner, a resident of Corvallis, but a native of Union county. Mrs. Turner speaks in the highest terms of Prof. Horner's work. The letter says:

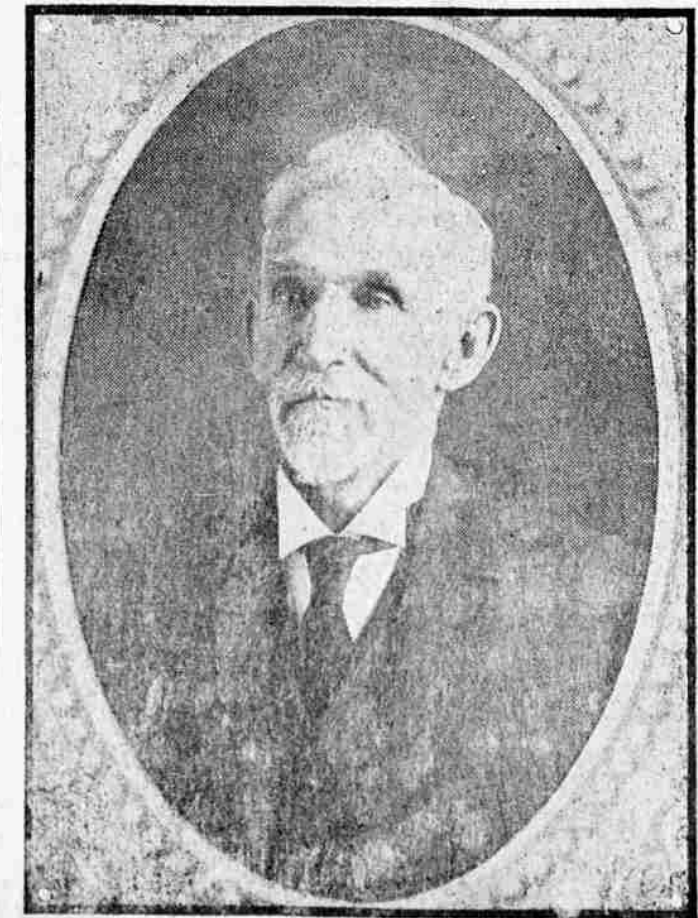
Corvallis, June 7.—(To the Editor Observer)—A group of us, former Grande Ronde residents, had a rare treat the other night. We were invited to the home of Prof. J. B. Horner and he very kindly showed us the lantern slides he had made of Union county pioneers.

Listen, Pioneers. If you do not attend the pioneers' picnic this year, you will always wish you had. These pictures will be shown there, and you will see many of the Union county pioneers, both the living and the dead, as they looked when they were many years younger. You will feel that you are young again, and your hearts will fill with love for the old neighbors and friends, and you will look up those that are still living and give them a friendly greeting.

Young people, see those pictures and familiarize yourself with the features of those who made it possible for you to live in peace and contentment in beautiful Grande Ronde valley. Try to get acquainted with those splendid possibilities.

Respectfully,
KITTIE GOODALL TURNER

A. C. HUNTINGTON EARLY MERCHANT.



Both in point of years and time spent in the city. A. C. Huntington is one of the most "pioneer". He is one of the very earliest merchants of the Grande Ronde still living, if not the oldest.

GRANDE RONDE PASSED UP BY THE EARLIEST IMMIGRANTS

Exploration was the motive which brought to the sight of the white race the region of the great Northwest. That was near the close of the eighteenth century when Captain Gray's vessel which had been cruising along the western coast entered the river which bears the name of the craft, the "Columbia."

Commercialism was the succeeding element which brought white people to the far western coast. They came principally to trade in furs. There is no doubt, in fact it is well authenticated, that members of the old Hudson Bay company and the Northwest trading company made frequent incursions into the upper Columbia valley with side trips to Grande Ronde and Powder River in Oregon and the region of the Snake river in Idaho.

Religious fervor as manifested in the desire of sects to colonize and to do missionary work among the benighted habitations followed as the

next logical sequence. But rather different from that which impelled the Mormons to migrate in 1847 to the Salt Lake Valley to found a religious colony the Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Catholics and other denominations came to the "Oregon" country with a mixture of political ambition to save this part of the country to the domain of Uncle Sam instead of forfeiting it to the British crown.

They Passed It Up

Grande Ronde was in the pathway of the larger portion of the people who set out from the east to reach the northwestern country. This movement did not begin until several years after the pioneers of Salt Lake had become comfortably established. Those who passed through this valley in the early fifties in the last century took note of its attractiveness—the first real oasis they had struck since leav-

A TYPICAL WESTERN PIONEER.



Dunham Wright, shown above, lives at Medical Springs and is one of the best known settlers of Union County—as well as one of its most distinctively interesting characters.