

ATTEND THE OREGON TRAIL PAGEANT

LA GRANDE, UNION COUNTY, OREGON

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CIVILIZATION ADVANCES WESTWARD

From the Beginning of Time
Human Race Has Turned
Toward West.

MOVEMENT TO OREGON
COUNTRY AN EPOCH

Advances Made With Great
Sacrifice and Great Loss
of Life.

(By A. W. Nelson.)

Long before the dawn of civilization there lived an Aryan people on the banks of the Euphrates in what is now conceded to be the cradle of the human race. Eventually the glacial havoc caused them to move and being barred by mountains on the east, they had but the south and west for choice. A few drifted southward and founded what later became India, but the great majority moved west. Since that day there has been a spirit of roving unrest in white peoples that can be ascribed only to migration westward. There are scores of migratory areas between the Euphrates and the Grande Ronde Valley, but we are concerned here only with one, the last and the greatest. The migration to the Northwest was by far the greatest in all history and it is particularly near and dear to us of Eastern Oregon. It is near because sons and daughters of the intrepid ones who blazed the Oregon trail are yet among us. The very spot where La Grande is built upon its hallowed ground because its soil is stained with the life blood of pioneer martyrs who paid the great price. It is near to us because all around us are traditions and history to make the Oregon Trail distinctly a part of Union County and Eastern Oregon. I am reminded that back there in 1812 a party of explorers headed by William Price Hunt had come, on December 28th, 1811, as far as where North Powder now is, when a Frenchman named Peter Dorion built a bed of sage brush on the bleak prairie upon which his wife gave birth to a child that night. Hunt and his party had gone on to Catherine Creek where Union stands. There they shared frugal New Year's repasts of dog meat with Shoshone Indians. Late that afternoon Peter Dorion, his wife and the babe joined the party again, having come from Powder River to Catherine Creek about as all men of the party were. On the first of January they crossed the Grande Ronde Valley and hit into the mountains. Somewhere in the vastness of these rugged hills, the little baby slipped away to peaceful repose and its bones are still there. That's one strange incident. One year later a messenger named Stuart was carrying dispatches from Fort Astoria to

St. Louis. Late one evening he dropped down Deat Canyon near La Grande and pushed on to discover a pond of steaming water surrounded by great quantities of game and fowl. Stuart had discovered Hot Lake. Still other endearing episodes: In 1845 the late Mrs. Jennifer Currey, who all La Grande's knew, was carried across this valley by her mother, Uncle Jap Stevens, proprietor of the La Grande bottling works, passed through this very spot in 1854, strapped to a cayuse. I am reminded that over in Union is an angelic faced pioneer, Eliza Nodine, who in 1853, rode mile after mile over the Oregon Trail in a wagon drawn by one oxen and her stalwart husband. I am reminded that the mother of J. D. Slater of La Grande and her brother, Geo. Grey, of Cove, came over the Oregon Trail in '53 and were among that party which was lost for several days without water in the vicinity of Bend, after diverting over the Meek's Trail at Vale. I am reminded that Tom Bates, who died in the poor house at Union several years ago, was a trapper for the Hudson Bay Co. in the Grande Ronde Valley in '37. These are but a few reasons why the Oregon Trail

is dear to us today. Scores more who came west between 1841, when La Grande was settled, and 1870, are still with us in flesh and blood. There are numerous other episodes of origin earlier than 1842 when La Grande was first settled. Take the episode of the late Ben Brown, who with his wife were abandoned and marooned along with another man and his wife, and four or five other single men, in the winter preceding 1852. One well known incident of that winter was the disagreement of Mr. and Mrs. Brown's married companions which lead to the first divorce of Union county. The rest of the marooned party sat as a jury and granted the divorce. The woman later married one of the single men in the party. Solomon Eades was a "type distinct" in La Grande for years. He died recently but he left history. His mother was a party of an immigrant train passing through the Grande Ronde valley in 1852. On reaching The Dalles, she gave birth to Solomon, and three days later mother and babe were in a rail going down the Columbia. Solomon Eades returned to La Grande shortly after becoming of age and was the first instructor of Greek and

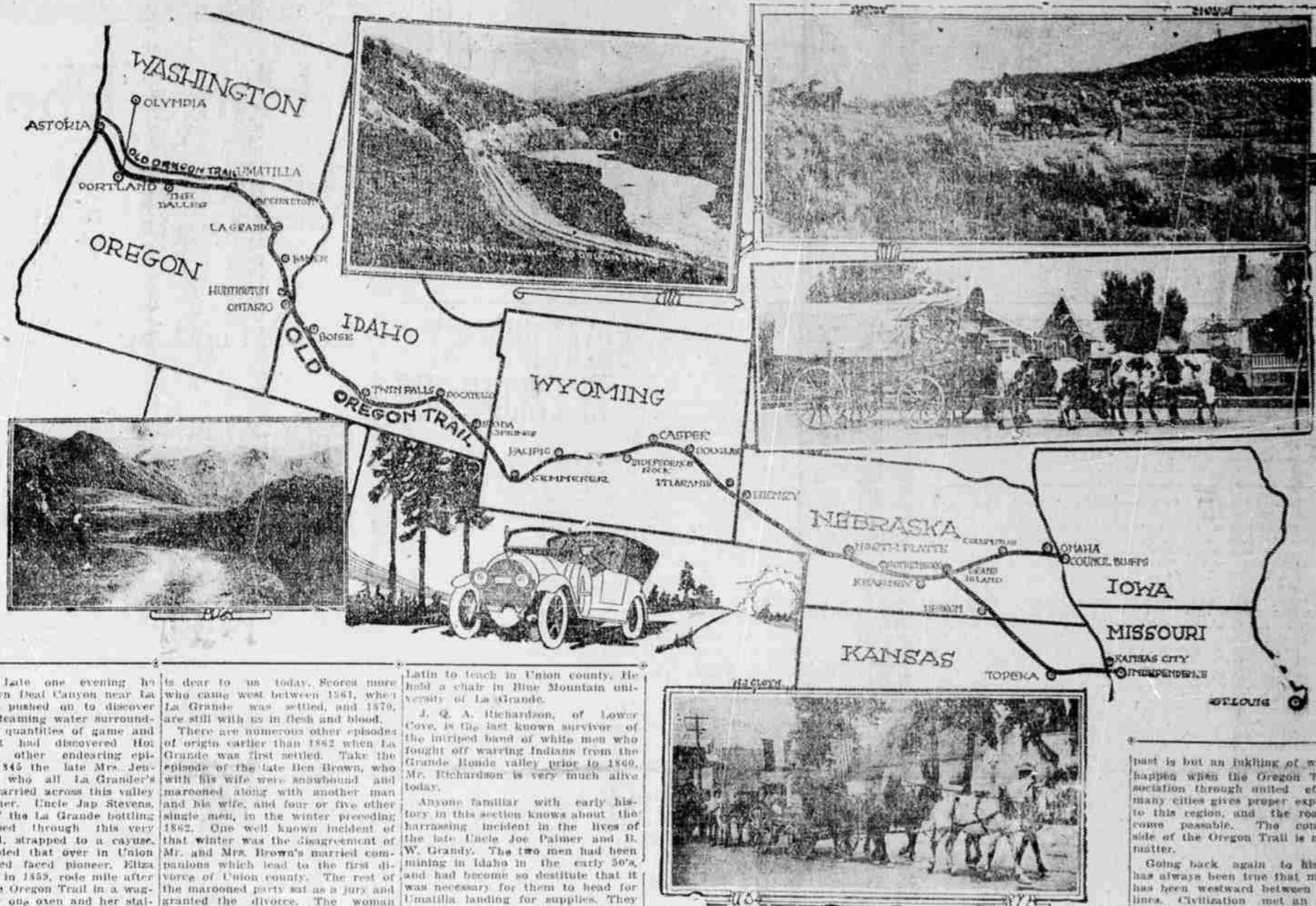
Latin to teach in Union county. He held a chair in Blue Mountain university of La Grande. J. Q. A. Richardson, of Lower Cove, is the last known survivor of the intrepid band of white men who fought off warring Indians from the Grande Ronde valley prior to 1860. Mr. Richardson is very much alive today. Anyone familiar with early history in this section knows about the harrowing incident in the lives of the late Uncle Joe Palmer and B. W. Grandy. The two men had been mining in Idaho in the early 50's, and had become so destitute that it was necessary for them to head for Yamhill landing for supplies. They "mashed" across Oregon, passing through the Grande Ronde valley in the dead of winter, with bleeding feet and insufficient clothing, suffering every inch of the way. Incidentally, it might be recalled that both men later returned to La Grande with their families, landing here July 3, 1862. One year ago there was born an institution known as the Oregon Trail association. Though yet in swaddling clothes and a tending, it has worked wonders and wrought strange results. Legislatures, com-

mercial organizations, men and women are flocking to it for guidance. This organization exists for two reasons. One is commercial, the other sentimental. We shall touch lightly on the commercial side. However, men of vision know that Oregon can reap millions annually even as Maine, Florida, Colorado and California have done. Don't try to "hid" yourself into thinking there is nothing to capitalize of natural resources. In spite of crabs, in spite of the rottenest roads in the world, in spite of an initiative generally to enter to tourists, Eastern Oregon has but money coming this way. But the

part is but an inkling of what will happen when the Oregon Trail association through united efforts of many cities gives proper exploitation to this region, and the roads become passable. The commercial side of the Oregon Trail is no small matter. Going back again to history; it has always been true that migration has been westward between parallel lines. Civilization met an obstruction on the banks of the Mediterranean. Civilization would not be stayed and humanity piled up on the coast, crushing the vanguard until it leaped the ocean. Then it piled up on the shores of Northern France. Eventually the oncoming forces shoved the leaders across the channel into England. Then England

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Route of the Old Oregon Trail to the New West



Sitting in With the Highway Commission

E. O. JOHNSON, OF PORTLAND JOURNAL, GIVES LIGHT ON
MANY ANGLES OF ROAD WORK

When the Good Roads law first hit Oregon; when the legislature of 1917 threw aside the restraint that had held Oregon in the mud since 1811 first settlement; when the state was floundering and pleading to take its place alongside of Washington and California in highway construction, it was then that an organization was formed to put up the now noted six million dollar bond issue for highways to the people for their approval by ballot. C. S. Jackson, editor and owner of the Portland Journal, was enthusiastic for the highway construction, and he arranged with E. O. Johnson, one of the ablest men on the Journal, to handle the good roads news. Mr. Johnson was with the editor of the Evening Observer throughout the campaign, and since that time he has attended every meeting of the Highway commission. We have often said that he is the best informed man in Oregon today on the road situation, including the finances, the location of roads and the local conditions that exist in every community in the state. When the Evening Observer decided to issue this Oregon Trail edition our first thought was to induce Mr. Johnson to write an article on "Sitting in with the Highway Commission." He responded in the following excellent article which not only covers to the reader historic details of highway work but also something of the way the finances have been expended, and the earnestness of men who have been on the commission.—(Ed.)

(By E. O. Johnson, Good Roads Editor of the Portland Journal.)

That Bruce Dennis is somewhat of an optimist and a dreamer of better days no one can deny. Yet even some of his dreams fall far short of realization. For example when he came to Portland in the year 1917 from La Grande to serve as execu-

tive of the campaign committee for the six million dollar road bond act which had been referred to the voters he had no vision of himself getting into his automobile after supper and driving from La Grande to Walla Walla before dark, or running out to Baker to see Bill Polman.

He thought that possibly his boy might be able to do these things for him. But all that he expected to experience was a comfortable ride to Hot Lake or Union or perhaps a little jaunt out to Island City, past Walter M. Pierce's place to Imbler or Elgin. Bruce's ideas were in line with the conservative good roads booster of that period, who had but little conception of the cost of road construction and the volume of traffic that would follow improvement. They knew, though, that if the state was to grow, improved roads were essential and that a start should be made placing the day of final accomplishment away in the future. It is not too much to say that the results have been far beyond anticipation. Main trunk lines are practically complete. Radiating out from Portland are miles of paved highway. The Old Oregon Trail across the state from east to west will soon be an all year round road, the almost insurmountable grade on Walla Walla hill has been eliminated and the John Day valley, without railroad transportation, has been unlocked.

Six Millions Looked Big. When the state highway system was adopted by the legislature of 1917 it was asserted that it would

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The Journey's End--Grande Ronde Valley

