

## Old Covered Wagon Trail Retraced By Brookings Man He Journeyed As A Youth

WHEN WILSON FREEMAN and his family concluded a two and one-half month vacation trip recently, they had fulfilled a dream that Wilson had for many years: To retrace the route by which he came to Oregon as a boy.

Wilson came to Oregon when he was a 13-year-old boy, back in 1907. He came in a covered wagon, pulled by a team of horses.

This fall, he made the trip again . . . this time in a 1952 Buick. There was little resemblance between the vacation trip in 1953, and the trek that brought the Freeman family to Oregon 47 years ago.

Wilson was born in Shelby county, Texas, but when he was three years old, his family moved to Indian Territory, now the state of Oklahoma. And it was here, Freeman says, that his father one day drew a line on a map, stretching from Oklahoma to the Pacific. He looked at the little town at the end of the line, and told his neighbors, "I'm going out to Harbor, Oregon, and build a house right on the edge of that ocean."

They left in April, 1907; father, mother, two boys, 13 and 15, and one daughter, 18, all traveling in two covered wagons pulled by teams. They had \$600 to make the trip, and when they decided that wasn't enough, they sold one of their wagons and teams

They traveled from point to point, staying roughly along the line that Father Freeman had drawn on the map. There were no maps—they relied on the few people they met along the way for directions.

A number of things happened along that road. Once they were accused of stealing horses, and had to stand by while they were questioned and their own horses examined. Another time, an escaped murderer was found hiding in a thicket near their wagon, and they were accused of feeding him, but again they cleared themselves, and were allowed to proceed.

Finally, they hit desert country, and for three days and nights they went without water. The horses' tongues had started to swell when they ran across a boy and girl out hunting rabbits. They took them to their farm where they were given water, but it was so alkaline they couldn't keep it down. Food they received there, however, gave them enough strength to get to a fresh-water stream, where they refreshed their horses and themselves.

The family had lived mostly on jackrabbit and corn bread after the first month, cooking it whenever they could find fuel to cook with. Occasionally they found wood, and in the desert they used tumbleweeds and cow chips. Sometimes they were able to find work

from a rancher to provide food, but they soon realized that this was delaying them too much, and the cold weather was approaching.

Fifteen miles from Denver, the family came to the first automobile that they had ever seen. Roads were not wide enough then for the cars to pass the wagons, and the wagons would move off the road to allow the car to pass. Tempers were usually pretty tight, too, when the "gas-buggies" came along, frightening the horses.

Some place in western Oklahoma or southern Kansas, the family met the meanest man in the world. The Freemans had food but no fuel, and they stopped at this man's home, offering to buy fuel or to pay for the privilege of cooking it in the man's oven.

The man refused, so Wilson's father picked up his gun and laid it across his lap. Then he reached down and handed an axe to Wilson, saying, "Son, cut down six fence posts, and cut the staples out of them." Then the family went on their way, later stopping to build a fire and cook their food. On their trip this year, Wilson found the self-same house, which still stands.

On they went, across the prairies, battling against time to reach the west. Cyclones were numerous, and they often had to tie down their wagons and throw themselves under them . . . once losing the canvas from the wagon. Once, with fifty cents left, and no food, they stopped to help a farmer put up his hay in the face of impending rain.

By the time they had reached Greeley, Colorado, snow and storms had closed the passes across the Rockies, so they stopped there for the winter. In the spring they started again, but at Cheyenne they found the snow still too deep, so they sold their horses and wagon, and went on by train.

In Oregon at last, they homesteaded their place near Harbor, and began their life in the new country . . . the life which has brought them to the place they now enjoy.

The trip this fall contrasted in every way with the earlier one. The Buick made a little better time, and was a little easier riding as they moved north from Brookings, up to Salem, where they paused for the state fair, and on down US Highway 30 to Idaho Falls, down the beautiful Columbia River gorge.

Yellowstone park was their next stop, and the Freemans say it was the most interesting of the whole trip. They took moving pictures of the beautiful scenery and animals in the park, including Old Faithful geyser.

After two days there, they wandered down Highway 287 to Cheyenne, where they hit the trail on which Wilson had journeyed westward in a covered wagon, 47 years before.

They followed the old route as closely as they could, back to the Gulf of Mexico. But very little was the same.

Denver had grown from a town to a city, fifty times the size it had been the first time through, and most of the other towns had grown almost as much.

Mining, oil wells, and cattle

Symptoms of Distress Arising from **STOMACH ULCERS** DUE TO **EXCESS ACID** QUICK RELIEF OR NO COST

Ask About 15-Day Trial Offer!

Over four million bottles of the WILLARD TREATMENT have been sold for relief of symptoms of distress arising from Stomach and Duodenal Ulcers due to Excess Acid—Poor Digestion, Sour or Upset Stomach, Gasiness, Heartburn, Sleeplessness, etc., due to Excess Acid. Ask for "Willard's Message" which fully explains this remarkable home treatment—free—at

were principal industries now along the prairies that had been so empty the first time. There were few sheep between Pendleton, Oregon, and Arizona.

The only town that had shrunk was Lehigh, Oklahoma. It was now a post office and combined grocery and filling station, while in Wilson's youth it had been a bustling city of 5,000.

His home town of Center, county seat of Shelby county Texas, was very little changed in size, but its livelihood had changed from cotton to oil wells, poultry and some cattle. Wilson found there some 60 relatives.

From there on, they had passed the haunts of his youth, and were just vacationing. We'll let Wilson tell it in his own words:

"At Spring Hill, La., we visited my cousin, who is president of a horse club of 80 members. While there we spent the best part of our time riding and working with the club. He states that their arena cost them \$50,000 and is a year and a half old. All the grandstand seats are made of concrete with two-inch pipe railings.

"We found New Orleans a very interesting town. At the time we were there President Eisenhower made his October speech. We took a lot of motion pictures of the old French quarters, and the widest street in the United States.

"From there we went to the town of Golden Meadows down the bayou, which has the longest street in the United States—170

miles long, with the houses built as close together as they could get all the way to the gulf. Golden Meadows is a great oil center and fishing industry. Thousands of fish boats go in and out of the bayou into the gulf daily. All the oil workers use boats for transportation, as this is a marsh country, and all the oil wells are under water. Due to the marsh condition, all the cemeteries are fitted with vaults above ground where the dead are buried. There is a narrow strip of land running from Baton Rouge to Golden Meadows with only one road in or out. The population is made up mostly of some tribe of Indians and French.

"On our way home we attended the self-supporting Huntsville, Texas, prison rodeo, put on exclusively by the prisoners, which is superior to most rodeos. Many of these prisoners were doing a life term, and had no respect for his own life.

(Concluded Next Week)

**ROSS SALVAGE**  
SAND AND GRAVEL  
TOP SOIL AND FILL DIRT  
Phone 2057 or 2341

**SHANGHAI CAFE**  
CHINESE COMBINATION DINNERS  
80c and 90c  
Chinese Specials Any Style  
NEW HOURS  
Open 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. through the week  
FRIDAYS 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.  
SATURDAYS 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.  
We Cater to Parties Phone 3161  
TOMMY MOO

**WHEN YOU SHOP IN COOS BAY**  
Have your car Serviced  
At Lou Blanc, Inc.  
Leave your packages in your car throughout the day  
Complete Service Fair Prices  
Cadillac and Oldsmobile  
Safety-Tested Used Cars  
Visit Our Wholesale Row  
**LOU BLANC, Inc.**  
Across the street from the Post Office in Coos Bay

**CHOICE PROPERTIES**  
Highway Frontage (Highway 101, Oregon's Main Street)  
CHETCO RIVER FRONTAGE - RESIDENTIAL LOTS  
NEW HOMES - RANCHES - FARM LANDS  
ACREAGE - INDUSTRIAL SITES  
INCOME PROPERTIES  
Beautiful Scenic, Parklike Ocean Frontage  
Gardner Bldg. Phone 2801 **W. H. BRADY** Brookings, Oregon  
REAL ESTATE BROKER  
"Who tries to do the common things of life uncommonly well."

**READY MIX CONCRETE**  
  
(Our sand and gravel is washed, screened and weighed to give full measure and proper proportions of aggregate, to insure quality)  
Crushed Gravel River Run Sand and Gravel  
Rock Fill Material Clay Fill  
Black Top Soil River Silt  
Clam Shell Soil Concrete Pipe & Ditching  
NO JOB TOO SMALL  
**Brookings RED-E-MIX Concrete Co.**  
Central Bldg. Phone 2442