

Oregon's First Homes



Samuel Brown House, Near Gervais, 1850

By DAVID C. DUNIWAY
Oregon State Archivist

When you drive down Pacific Highway 99E, from Portland to Salem, can you tell which houses were built before the end of the nineteenth century? Do you know whether the style of a house is truly old? If you knew that the Sam Brown house at Gervais was built in the 1850's, do you know its significance? Next time, when you drive by, slow down and see one of our most beautiful Southern type homes, built by a New Englander for his Missouri wife from the gold he found in California. It stands to the east of the road, a field to the north of the cross road that leads to Gervais. Its two story porches, sup-

ported by tall, square pillars, are a vision to gracious Southern architecture, and yet the house was built by a Yankee from Yale who studied what is known as the Palladian order. Especially characteristic of many houses of the period is the doorway, framed by narrow windows. Sam Brown's was a major coach stop on the old stage road that led from Portland to San Francisco.

Once you have seen the Sam Brown house, look for its brethren down the back roads. On the edge of Dayton you will find the Joel Palmer house, built by the man who founded the town and its mills. He was our first Indian agent and was the center of stormy political battles. It should be easy to identify, since it is so like the