OREGON IN EARLY DAYS

PERSONAL REMINISCENSES OF GOVERNOR T. T. GEER.

Settlement of Some Mississippi Valley States Was a Reflex of Immigration to the Pacific Coast.

Governor Geer addressed the Summer School at Newport Friday evening on "Personal Reminiscenses of Oregon." He discussed at length the immigration of the 40s, the dangers that beset the pioneers, early traveling to Portland, legislation in territorial days and commented upon the situation in the state while the Civil War was being fought. Governor Geer is an indefatigable collector of data about early Oregon, and many of the facts related by him have never before appeared in print. Following is the text of his address:

Reflex of the Pacific Immigration.

The motive which guided so many of the settlers of the Mississippi Valley to leave their homes and seek new ones on the far-off Pacific Coast, of which so little was definitely known, has for many years formed a theme for interesting discussion not only by students of history, but by the pioneers themselves. For instance, in 1847 my grandfathers lived not many miles apart, one in Iowa and the other in Illinois. They each owned a good farm in that most excellent country of prairie land of matchless fertility. The settlements were new and the settlers were in no wise crowded. Compared with any other country that was at that time well known, those states had advantages which would seem to be unsurpassable. Each of my grandfathers, who was a stranger to the other, until they met "on the plains" had lived in the state of his adoption but seven years, when he was seized by the Oregon fever and, sacrificing fully half the value of his worldly goods on the consuming altar of a forced sale, started with his entire family, with bouyant heart and elastic step, to the promised and promising land over towards the Western goal, which has been the irresistible lode-star of the human race sinces the historic days of Palestine.

This tendency of mankind which has been a marked one at least 60 centuries, has met with no permanent impediment in all these years, and is susceptible of no analysis or solution beyond the physical necessity for geographical expansion, unless we make the exception to the general rule that many of these Western movements, especially in our own country, have gone beyond the actual necessity of making more room for a race whose numbers were rapidly increasing. Really, the settlement of several of the great states just west of the Mississippi River was reflex movement from the first wave of emigration that struck the Pacific Coast. Kansas, Nebraska and large parts of Iowa were settled long before the first heavy emigration to Oregon. And the indescribable hardships those brave pioneers encountered, who made the trip between the years 1840 and 1850, almost reach the domain of the incredible. Of course, in the stress of absolute necessity, where questions of life or death were involved, men have been known to go through fire, itself, but, viewed from the standing of the latter-day native son or daughter, there seems no palliating excuse for subjecting themselves and their families to the dangers and discomforts that were necessarily a part of that great undertaking.

And yet, it is quite certain, that if there were a great country still further West of us, perhaps a pretty well established report that it really existed would be a sufficient reason for a majority of us to take on a Western fever, especially if all the floating rumors concerning it led to the belief that it would be a very dangerous journey to undertake.

During last year it was my good fortune to be one of a party to reach the summit of Mount Hood, and not many miles west of the base of that grand old sentinel of the ages, I had pointed out to me the famous Laurel Hill, where thousands and thousands of the early emigrants were compelled to let their wagons down that frowning declivity by tying one end of a long rope to them, fastening the other to a tree at the top and carefully "paying out" the rope until the vehicle had reached the bottom. Many of the stumps are to this day standing, whose surface plainly show the creases worn by those hawsers of the early pioneers. While sitting around the fireside of my father's humble home in the days of my early boyhood, I have often heard him relate many of the stirring experiences of that memorable journey from Illinois to Oregon, but there were few among them that made a more vivid impression on my youthful mind than the dangers encountered on Laurel Hill.

Although I have been a native son for 50 years, I had never seen that historic spot until last August, and when I finally found myself standing in its tangible presence, it seemed to me that the very air was pregnant with the spirits of departed heroes.

Old Emigrant Road Preserved.

For miles the wagon road is in precisely the same place as when made by the emigrants in the 40s, and, although it has not been used for perhaps 50 years, the annual Winter rains serve to wash out the roadway and have preserved it undimmed for half a century. As I stood in the very tracks made by my father more than 53 years ago, surrounded by the giant monarchs of the forest that even then were majestic but silent witnesses of the unheralded invasion of their virgin domain, I paused with uncovered head, wholly unnerved by the chain of historic recollections which were awakened within me. I imagined I could see the weary emigrants and jaded oxen as they approached the summit of this awful declivity, not far from the perpendicular, and looked at its base, with a feeling that, at last, after crossing the Rocky mountains and escaping the savage assaults of the treacherous Indians, here was a difficulty that was actually insurmountable. Not only precipitous, but the face of the hill is terraced with frowning and ugly boulders that are themselves almost equal in size to the average wagon wheel. I confess that I was filled with a sense of awe as I stood and reflected that I was one of the descendants of those noble old pioneers, and had just about persuaded myself that I could undoubtedly do as well under the same circumstances and was sincerely regretting that there was no probability of my ever having an opportunity to test the matter, when I suddenly remembered that to secure a good view of the scene before me, I had actually dismounted from a bicycle, and stood there gorgeously arrayed in a lavender "sweater," with golf stockings to match.

My very earliest recollection of things reaches back to my father's cabin in the famous and lovely "Waldo Hills," which was situated within two miles of the Waldo homestead, and the year was 1854, when I was 3 years of age. During the next year we moved to the town of Silverton, and, starting to the little district, or, rather, private, school the next year, and wearing long aprons, I remember, which were the cause of a great deal of taunting on the part of the larger children, I found myself fairly launched upon the troubles and responsibilities of life. Among my earliest recollections are the stories of experience gained by my parents crossing the plains, but my impression then was that they had at that time been in Oregon fully as long as I now know they have been, at this date. The fact is, I came nearer being a pioneer, instead of a native son, than I at that time realized, and when it is remembered that we have a second generation of native sons and daughters, who know nothing whatever, from experience, of pioneer life, we are the better prepared for the reflection that social conditions in Oregon are in no way different now from those to be found in the older portions of Ohio and Illinois.

The Governor's First Oregon Apple.

Oregon was so new a country when I can first remember that I easily recall the first apple I ever saw. My father had been away somewhere and brought home about a peck of red Astrachan apples in an old-fashioned, seamless floursack. The promise of the household was pledged to my sister, who was two years younger than I, and myself, that after dinner each day we should be given an apple apiece. The process of devouring those apples was so extremely satisfying to the juvenile stomach, and the daily supply was so excruciatingly dispropor tionate to the yearnings and capacity of the youthful appetite that we at once adopted a method of home consumption that prolonged the daily pomological interview to the utmost bounds. Taking out seats on the kitchen door-sill, we would carefully peel our apples, coiling the peelings systematically on the floor for future action as to them. Then, after eating the fruit, with a premeditated deliberation that came near producing an irresistible conflict between the taste and the appetite, we would attack the core, through the employment of a system of dilatory tactics that was lovely to behold. By the time the core was consumed, the middle of the afternoon would be reached, when, as a last resort, we would indulge a flank movement on the peelings, the complete subjugation of which usually required the greater part of the remaining portion of the afternoon.

The mere fragrance arising from that pioneer sack of apples furnished me more satisfaction than the actual eating of all the apples I have consumed during the last two decades. Whenever in after years I have been inclined to grow a little skeptical as to the story that Joshua caused the sun to stand still, I have only to recall the abominable length of those interminable August afternoons in 1858, as a means of re-establishing my faith in the biblical story in all its original attractiveness and unquestioned accuracy.

In their inability ever to know anything about these rare pioneer experiences, our younger native sons and daughters are entitled to, and have our sincere sympathy.

It was during our residence in Silverton, in 1859, that Oregon was admitted to the Union. I was then not quite 8 years old, but I remember that while playing in the front yard I heard the firing of cannon in Salem, and immediately ran into the house and asked my mother what it was about. She said Oregon was admitted as a state, and in response to my incessant fusillade of questions as to the nature of the event she informed me as well as I was capable of understanding that Oregon would no longer be a territory, but a state. My ability to ask questions, however, had been abnormally developed out of all proportion to my capacity for digesting intelligent answers, and I remember that I brought the conference to a sudden termination by asking her what the new name of Oregon would be since it had become a state!

It was in that same year that I made by first visit to Portland. My father had been somewhat extensively engaged in the poultry business and the nearest market was Portland. In those days the only means of communication between that city and Silverton was by horses and teams. After several trips had been made and I had heard of the wonderful things to be seen in the great city graphically described during the evenings by the family fireside, I began a series of systematic importunities seeking to secure the paternal consent to be one of the party on the occasion of the next trip. In this effort I was quite successful, and I remember that we camped the first night in the outskirts of the town of Aurora—then universally known as "Dutchtown." The delights of that trip have seldom been duplicated by any of my subsequent experiences. We went through the towns of Belpassi and Waconda (I believe they were separate towns on French Prairie), but they have both long since passed into history with the Roman Empire as having fulfilled their earthly destiny, and nothing today marks the spot where they flourished in auld lang syne.

Portland in the Late 50's.

We crossed the river at Boone's Ferry, and the second day reached Portland, and I remember my father sold his chickens to a man named Arigoni, whose hotel, it seems to me, projected immediately over the bank of the river. In recent years I have been, on tow occasions, on the top of the famous Auditorium building in Chicago, which is more than 20 stories high, I believe, and went over on the Ferris wheel during one of its revolutions, but they reach a very commonplace height, indeed, compared with the dizzy altitude attained by some of those buildings on Front street, as viewed by my youthful eyes in '58. I recall that there were then large firs standing at intervals along the river bank, and that where the Portland Hotel now stands, or in that vicinity, the tallest of forest trees were as numerous as bicycle collisions are now. We reached home on the fifth day, and, as nearly as I can remember at this time, it took me the best part of three months to fully lay before my less fortunate schoolmates, in roseate hue and impressive manner, the varied assortment of information and startling data I had collected while on my first visit to the great metropolis.

Although but 10 years of age when the Presidential campaign of 1860 began, I remember with vivid distinctness the talk of Civil War as being the probable outcome of it. Those were, indeed, stirring times, and the feeling ran so high and there was so much said around the family firesides and in public places about the danger of war that every child of my age took a personal concern in the question. It was the custom in those days to publish large charts during campaigns containing pictures of Presidential candidates with accompanying biographical sketches. We had one in our sitting-room with pictures and sketches of the four candidates in 1860, and before the Summer was half over I was entirely familiar with the salient points in the lives of each of them and the party to which he belonged. My father was a Douglas Democrat, as the supporters of Douglas were called in that campaign, and one day in the early Fall a political meeting was held in Silverton, at which Hon. Selucius Garfield, of Washington, was the speaker. Hon. Asahel Bush, of Salem, accompanied him, and the two distinguished gentlemen took dinner at our house. I remember listening, "with bated breath," as the saying is, to their comment on the political situation as they partook of the noonday meal, and afterwards was permitted to go to the meeting. It was the first one I ever attended and the rounds of applause and the shouts that were brought out by the eloquent Garfield produced on my mind the impression that the men were ready to begin war right there!

Historic Buildings of Salem.

There was sincere mourning in our household when the election returns indicated the undoubted defeat of Douglas, and at this moment I can distinctly recall how deeply I shared the general gloom, and I knew enough of the situation to ask my mother if there was still danger of the destruction of the Union. I had learned that the Southern people had threatened to destroy the Union, and that that meant war. I didn't care so much about the Union, as I remember it now, as that I had a deadly horror of war, and she replied with a look of joy on her face that I shall never forget that Lincoln was friendly to the Union.

In the early Spring of 1861 my father sold his home in Silverton to the well-known pioneer and banker, Al Coolidge, who still owns it and occupies the same house as a part of his residence, and moved to Salem, where I made my home during the entire period of the Civil War. The early history of Salem forms one of the most interesting chapters in the annals of the state. It was there that the pioneer missionaries of the Methodist church made their first efforts to establish orthodox Christianity among the Indians, and to establish schools for all classes of our people. When, as a boy, I lived in Salem, Father David Leslie, with his streaming, snow-white hair, was a familiar figure on its streets, and Father Waller was an indefatigable worker for the interests of the church he represented, and the Willamette University. The old Methodist Church building, built in 1851, and whose walls have so often resounded with the eloquence of Pearne, Hines, Leslie, Lee, Parrish and Waller, has long since been moved to an obscure back street, and for more than 20 years has been used as a steam laundry. The use of these old pioneer historic buildings for such menial purposes seems little, if any, short of absolute desecration. I am always impressed with this feeling when I pass by the old Courthouse for Marion County, which is now used as a livery stable, on a side street. Its outer walls are of the same material, precisely, and with the same artificial painted appearance of stone as when, first seeing it as a boy, 40 years ago, its effort at deception was so successfully accomplished that I readily took it to be a stone building. How it must speak out, although in the language of mute imploration, in its dilapidated and neglected condition, to the few old pioneers who still linger about the streets of Salem, as they recall the time when that grand body of men who comprised Oregon's Constitutional Convention met within its walls and builded better than they knew a governmental fabric that has so well and successfully stood against every effort to change it, in any particular, for more than the lifetime of a generation!

There is not one of the old pioneers who was a prominent factor in the building of the state who has not been in this old relic of the early 50s on many occasions of far-reaching importance. It was in it that the famous murder trial of Beale and Baker took place, in the Spring of 1865. As a boy of 14, I attended the trial, walking in from the country, 10 miles distant, for that purpose, and was greatly interested in the arguments of the attorneys. As I remember, they were prosecuted by Messrs. Mallory and Williams, who were then partners in business in Salem, and each of whom has since served a term in the National Congress. They were defended by Hon. David Logan, one of the prominent lawyers of pioneer times, and who was three times the unsuccessful candidate for Congress by the Republican party. The trial Judge was Hon. R. P. Boise, who, by the way, is still on the circuit bench for that district. I believe Judge Boise has seen longer service in the public affairs of Oregon than any other man who has ever been a citizen of this state. On the 12th of December, 1853, Hon. J. D. Boon, who was then Territorial Treasurer, mentions in his report to the Legislature, that on December 17, 1852, he "paid R. P. Boise, per order No. 21, filed in this office, $300." I think Mr. Boise was elected Prosecuting Attorney in about 1853, and has been almost continuously in the judicial service of the state since, and now, at the age of 80 years, he is physically hale, strong mentally, has four years yet to his credit in his present term as Circuit Judge, and is rounding out an active and creditable career in the state he helped to found, and is enjoying the esteem of all his fellow-citizens.

The Building of Salem.

During the last few days I have made some inquiries among the old settlers still living in Salem about the early occupation of that place, and have found it a very interesting theme for study. The early Methodist missionaries first settled on what is to this day known in Marion County as "Mission Bottom." It is one of the richest agricultural districts in the entire state, and the particular spot where the buildings were erected is owned by Hon. Alexander M. LaFollet. The buildings have long since all been removed or destroyed, but the remains of the cellars and wells are still there to annoy his horses, as he has occasion, once every year, to plow across or around them. Only a few years ago, a well-dressed man from California appeared at his farm and wanted to exhume the remains of two little children who had died in the early 40s—children of his brother. Mr. LaFollet could give him no information in the matter as to the location, and the man finally found the widow of Webley Hauxhaust, who was present at the burial of the children and remembered that the graves were near an oak tree, and in that immediate vicinity oak trees were very scarce. After looking around the pasture awhile, Mrs. Hauxhaust located the tree and found the faintest trace of an old grave, and it proved to be the exact spot. The man found the little bones and took them away in an old carpet sack which he had brought for that purpose.

The missionaries stayed at the "mission" but a few years, for it is on the lowlands, near the river, and was regarded as a very unhealthy location, but if that was ever a valid objection to its occupancy it has long since been removed (if the physical appearance of Mr. LaFollet and his near neighbor, "Benl" Jones, is to be admitted as evidence). But the earlier settlers there soon had their eyes on the higher site, where the City of Salem now stands, and in 1844 built the old "Oregon Institute"—famous in the history of Oregon as the pioneer insitution of learning on the Pacific Coast. Professor J. L. Carter, late superintendent of the State Blind School, recently informed me that he has often heard his mother and father, who settled on the mission in 1840, relate attending a meeting of the early Methodists at "Chemeketa Prairie," in the Summer of '41, and they ascended the river, the distance being about six miles, in canoes, and took with them two broad sawed boards, on which the assembled pioneer Methodists might eat their dinners. They were the product of the new mill that had just been built at the mission, were the first sawed boards that ever entered the City of Salem, and were returned to the mission in the evening by the same means of canoe transportation.

The first buildings for residence and business purposes were located in what is known as North Salem, at the crossing of Mill Creek, and some of the oldest are still standing. Perhaps the very oldest is a part of the present residence of Judge Boise, which was built and occupied by L. H. Hudson, who was one of the settlers of the mission, and among the first to move up to "Chemeketa Prairie." This old relic, has, however, been "worked over" and presents all the appearances of an up-to-date architectural dude, but the "Island House," which was the chief hostelry in the days of the Willamette woolen mills' palmy experience, with some of its contemporaries, while perhaps quite 50 years of age, looks to be fully 75, as it is gradually settling into the earth, through the palsy of decay and that dissolution that waits upon the heels of neglect.

Early Legislation in Oregon.

In the later 50s, however, the business of Salem had largely drifted to the banks of South Mill Creek, and there is less business done in North Salem now than there was 40 years ago. There is only one store there at this time, and it is in the same brick building that was occupied for the same purpose, when I first when there in 1861, by J. D. Boon. Mr. Boon was one of the pioneer merchants of Salem, and was elected Territorial Treasurer December 16, 1851, by the Legislature. This was in joint convention of both houses. On the same occasion Mr. W. H. Wilson was elected Territorial Auditor by a vote of 14, to 4 for B. F. Harding. But Mr. Harding fared better afterward, for on the next ballot he was elected to a position of Commissioner of Cayuse War Claims by a decisive vote of 23, to 3 scattering for other worthy aspirants.

The last session of the Legislature to be held at Oregon City met there December 2, 1850, and adjourned on the 21st until the 30th, and adjourned sine die February 8, 1851. There were eight members of the Council and 15 of the House. The record shows that Ashael Bush was elected chief clerk of the House by a vote of 11 to 4 for B. Genois. Bush is still one of the busiest of the business men of Salem.

The first session of the Legislature that ever met in Salem convened there December 1, 1851, and adjourned January 21, 1852. Hon. Samuel Parker, of Marion County, was the president of the Council, and Hon. B. F. Harding, afterward United States Senator, was clerk of the House. I understand that Hon. Ben Simpson, who was a member of the House from Marion County in that first Legislature that ever met in that first capital of the state, is still living in Alabama, and, if so, he is probably the only member of either house in that session who is still alive. The first session was held in the old Rector building, on Commercial street, an old landmark which disappeared many years ago. In after years the Legislature met in the block now known as the Turner building, and continued its sessions there until the erection of the present State Capitol. Provision was made at once for the erection of a State Capitol building with the help of the general Government, and the commissioners' report to the Legislature December 22, 1853, shows that $9608 had been expended in excavations and foundation work on the exact spot where the present Capitol building now stands. January 4, 1854, Governor John W. Davis reported to the Legislature that of the $20,000 appropriated by Congress for the erection of public buildings "at the seat of government" there had been expended $9874, leaving a balance of $10,126. This building was never finished, however, and some time in the '50s was burned to the ground. No further effort was made to erect a Capitol building until 1874, when provision was made for the present structure, which was first used, I believe, in 1876 by the Legislature that elected Governor Grover United States Senator.

Territorial Records Incomplete.

The early records of the legislation of Oregon are very incomplete. No public records were kept in regular form until 1853, when the Legislature appointed La Fayette Grover a commissioner to collect and publish all the authentic information he could find on the subject. I have been examining these collected archives during the past few days with what time I could spare for that purpose, and have found them interesting, indeed. The very first of the preserved records says that "at a meeting of some of the inhabitants of the Willamette Valley, held on the 17th of February, 1841, for consultation concerning the steps to be taken for the formation of laws, the election of officers, to execute the same for the better preservation of peace and good order, the following business was transacted: Rev. Jason Lee was chosen chairman, and Rev. Gustavus Hines secretary," etc. Reference is made in these minutes to a prior meeting, but no record of it was ever kept.

In order to illustrate to our younger native sons and daughters and to remind the older ones what a small beginning furnished a basis for the work of our pioneer fathers and mothers I have selected a few extracts from the early records of their efforts to found a state. For instance, before the organization of the territorial government in 1849 the Legislature consisted of but a House of Representatives. The Legislative committee met at Oregon City December 16, 1844, and adjourned from day to day for three days for want of a quorum, the members present being Messrs. Burnett, Lovejoy, Newell and Mr. Speaker, and those absent Messrs. Gilmore, Hill, Keizer and Waldo. The general appropriation bill, passed and approved by Governor Abernethy December 22, 1845, amounted in the aggregate to $10,5; $500 went to pay the members of the House, the clerk was allowed $40, and the engrossing clerk was paid $20. My recollection is that the amount paid out for clerk hire during one of our present sessions is somewhat in excess of this sum. December 19, 1845, this law was approved by Governor Abernethy:

Section 2. That the Governor of Oregon is hereby authorized to give public notice, throughout Oregon, either by publishing the same in the newspaper, or otherwise, that he will receive sealed proposals from all who may desire to give donations to the government for the purpose of erecting public buildings and locating the seat of government—said proposals to state the amount to be given and the kind of property in which it is to be paid.

It might be said in connection with this proposition that the manner in which our assessment laws are disregarded at present in many cases amounts to little more than a voluntary contribution on the part of some of our counties toward the support of the state government. December 12, 1845, Governor Abernethy approved the following law:

In addition to gold and silver, treasury drafts, approved orders on solvent merchants and good merchantable wheat at the market price, delivered at such places as it is customary for merchants to receive wheat, shall be a lawful tender for the payment of taxes and judgments rendered in the courts of this territory, and for the payment of all debts contracted where no special contracts have been made to the contrary.

And December 12, the following year, 1846, it was declared that "in the payment of debts due the territory or individuals or companies, or other wheat arrangements, unless there is a special contract to the contrary, 60 pounds shall be received as one bushel."

The House met in Oregon City December 7, 1847, and at the afternoon session, the record says, Mr. Hembree, "from the committee appointed to secure a room, reported that 'the room now occupied by Stephen Meek could be obtained for $1 25 per day,' which report was adopted." But the next day, the record says, the report, on motion of Mr. Nesmith, was rejected and the House adjourned "to meet at the Methodist Church in 30 minutes." No reason is assigned whatever for this very disrespectful treatment of Mr. Meek. The early Legislators seem to have encountered a great deal of trouble in securing rooms in which to engage in their deliberations. At the beginning of the session of 1846 Mr. Meek reported as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the committee appointed to procure a room for the use of the Legislature beg leave to report that they have discharged their duty by examining a room proposed by Mr. Knighton, at $2 a day, and one proposed by Mr. Card, at —— per day. Taking everything into consideration, we recommend the former.

And at the opening of the session as late as 1848, Mr. Crawford, of Marion County, reported:

Your committee, to whom was referred the procuring of a house in which to hold the present session of the Legislature, beg leave to report that they have examined several houses, and have decided in favor of the one owned by G. W. Rice, which, together with wood for the session, can be had at $5 per day, in scrip.

During the Presidential campaign just closed a great deal was said in many parts of the United States about what was called "Oregon's black law," being an obsolete clause in our constitution which forbids negroes holding property, or even living, within the state. I find the forerunner of this provision in an act of the Territorial Legislature, passed December 19, 1844, which reads as follows:

Section 2. That if any such free negro or mulatto shall fail to quit and leave the country, as required by the act of which this is amendatory, he or she may be arrested upon a warrant issued by some Justice of the Peace; and if guilty upon trial before such Justice had, the said Justice shall issue his order to any officer competent to execute process, directing said officer to give 10 days' public notice by at least four written or printed advertisements, giving notice that he will publicly hire out such free negro or mulatto to the lowest bidder, on a day and at a place therein specified. On the day and at the place mentioned in said notice, such officer shall expose such free negro or mulatto to public hiring; and the person who will obligate himself to remove such free negro or mulatto from the country, for the shortest term of service, shall enter into bond with good and sufficient security to Oregon, in a penalty of at least $1000, binding himself to remove said negro or mulatto out of the country within six months after such term of service shall expire; which bond shall be filed in the clerk's office of the proper county; and upon failure to perform the conditions of said bond, the attorney prosecuting for Oregon shall commence a suit upon a certified copy of such bond in the Circuit Court against such delinquent and his securities.

Passed December 19, 1844.

M. M. M'CARVER, Speaker.

December 30, 1850, a petition was presented to the Legislature, signed by S. A. Clarke and 144 others, asking for the incorporation of the City of Portland. A bill to that effect was introduced by Mr. King, January 11, 1851, read the second time on the 13th, and passed on the 14th, and went into effect immediately. The first section reads as follows:

Section 1. That so much of the County of Washington as is comprised in the land claims known as the "Portland claim" and "John H. Couch's claim," and bounded as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of Finis Caruthers' land claim, thence down the middle of the Wallamet River two miles, to the north line of Couch's claim, thence west along said line one mile, thence south along the line of said Couch's and Portland claims two miles, and thence to the place of beginning, shall be and is hereby erected and constituted a city corporate by the name of the "City of Portland:" Provided, that that part of the incorporation within the limits of said incorporation known as the Tanney property be exempt from taxation for city purposes.

Oregon City was incorporated during the same session, and became a city on the first Monday of the following April.

The town of Eola was incorporated January 16, 1856, when Delazon Smith was speaker of the House, and the incorporation act is fully twice as long as that of Portland.

Name of Champoeg County Changed to Marion.

Marion County was known as Champoeg County until the name was changed by the Legislature December 3, 1849. August 28, 1849, it was "resolved that the county seat of Champoore County be and the same is hereby located at the town of Salem, in said county."

On January 12, 1854, it was "Resolved, that the name of Rogue River be and the same is hereby changed to Gold River," and the second section adds that "this act to take effect from and after its passage." But the "consensus of public opinion" is that that act has never been enforced.

The House of Representatives that met in Salem in 1853 consisted of 25 members, all of whom are now dead, I believe, except Judge Boise and ex-Governor Grover. When the Council met there were but two members present, viz., Humphrey of Benton and Lane, and Scott of Umpqua, Douglas and Jackson. The Journal says that although the two members only were present, they promptly organized the Council. The record says that "on motion of Mr. Scott, A. L. Humphrey was elected president pro tem."

On the 22d of June, 1844, the Legislature enacted the following law:

That all males of the age of 16 years and upwards and all females of the age of 12 and upwards shall be deemed competent to enter into the marriage contract.

Sec. 2. That when either of the parties shall be minors, the male under 21 years or the female under the age of 18 years, no person authorized to solemnize marriages shall do so without the consent of the parent or guardian of such minor; and in case such person does solemnize such marriage without the consent of such parent or guardian, he shall pay the sum of $100 to such parent or guardian, to be recovered by action for debt before the proper court. Provided, however, that the want of such consent shall not invalidate such marriage.

The third resolution, passed at the session of 1853 by the House, resolved that "The Chief Clerk of the House be instructed to procure one copy of each newspaper in this territory, to be furnished each member of this House during this session." At this time that would be deemed a very extravagant resolution.

On the 20th of December, 1853, the name of the town of Marysville, in Benton County, was changed to Corvallis.

On the 2d of December, 1846, it was "Resolved, that the editor of the Oregon Spectator be allowed a seat at the clerk's table, for the purpose of reporting the proceedings of the present Legislature."

On December 16, 1847, Mr. Nesmith offered "a resolution for sending a remonstrance of this House to the President of the United States against the appointment of J. Quinn Thornton to any office in this territory."

On December 17, 1847, an act was passed to "appropriate $500 to defray the expenses of J. L. Meek, as a special messenger to the United States."

On December 22, 1845, the town on the west side of Willamette Falls, known as "Robins' Nest," was changed to Linn City.

In the general appropriation bill of 1844, section 4 provides for the payment of "the sum of $111 96¾ for the pay of Sheriff."

Divorces Granted by the Legislature.

On Wednesday, the 22d of December, 1847, Mr. Ford presented the petition of E. Bristow, praying the Legislature to name his residence "Pleasant Hill." And every few pages in the journals, for years, there is the record of a divorce granted where some worthy pioneer couple had agreed to go their separate ways, and in many of them the reasons for separation are given with recital of details that savors very strongly of modern yellow journalism.

But for all this, considering the difficulties that surrounded the pioneers who founded our territorial and state governments, the great distance to the seat of parent Government, the indifference shown by many of the leading statesmen of the country, the hostile and treacherous attitude and conduct of the various Indian tribes, the history of Oregon from 1840 to 1860 reads like a beautiful romance. And it was not until the 60s that pioneer customs and conditions began to really disappear. When I first went to Salem, in 1861, the only means of transportation from San Francisco to Portland was by means of stage coach. I can distinctly remember how Ben Stanton, one of the overland drivers, used to come over the hill in South Salem, with his four horses on a full run, under the crack of the whip, and blowing his bugle to notify the town that he was coming. The old-time stage driver might let his horses take an ordinary gait when driving through the country, but when he entered a town they were invariably traveling at a break-neck speed, and the way they would dash recklessly around street corners never failed to provoke the envy of every boy in the town. I can remember when my highest aspiration was to become a stage driver, with the ability to dexterously manipulate a four-horse whip, and to drive into the town where all the other boys were still plodding around at common vocations.

While indulging in reminiscences, I cannot fail to recall the famous flood in December, 1861. The first sleigh ride I remember ever taking was during the snow storm that preceded that flood. If I remember correctly, the snow went off with a warm rain, and the height reached by the river has never since been equalled. I remember that a policeman came to our house about 4 o'clock in the morning and notified us that we would have to vacate. As we hurried across the bridge leading into South Salem the water was so high that it touched the flooring, and in a few hours the bridge was gone. It was a sight never to be forgotten by those who beheld it, and I remember with what rejoicing the people of Salem welcomed the arrival of the first steamboat. It was the old Onward, with Captain George Pease, who is still in active service, as pilot, and it was tied up near the foot of Commercial street, not far from where the Willamette Hotel now stands. The arrival of Captain Pease, under the circumstances, and because of the immense amount of praise bestowed upon him for his great feat, for a time threatened to eclipse, in the minds of the boys, the reputation of Ben Stanton, the stage driver. But that trip of Captain Pease really stands out in the history of Oregon as one of great skill and bravery, and by the means of which, though undertaken under trying difficulties, many lives were saved.

Sympathizers With the Rebellion.

Strange as it may seem at this late day, there were during the days of the Civil War a great many sympathizers with the South, and many of them were as outspoken in their sympathies as though they were living in South Carolina. I remember hearing many such expressions myself. Many of these men became so noisy in the Summer of 1864 that it was rumored about that they would interfere with the holding of the Presidential election in November of that year. I belonged at that time to the then celebrated local militia company, the "Marion Rifles," with Samuel E. May as Captain. I remember that, in order to prevent any interference with the orderly holding of the election, a meeting of our company was held the night before, signals were agreed upon that were to be given in case of an emergency by the use of the Methodist Church bell, and each of us took his musket to his home, with a round of ammunition, ready at a moment's notice to meet, armed, at the armory. Luckily, however, no trouble arose, and the anticipated outbreak never occurred.

I say all this sounds strangely now, but time heals all wounds, and those who were Southern sympathizers then, and some of them are living yet, are as loyal to the flag today, and to its interests and its honor, as though that "unpleasantness" had never occurred.

I remember when the news of the fall of Vicksburg was received in Salem the event was made the subject of public services in the Methodist Church, and I recall with perfect distinctness how Father Parrish made a stirring patriotic address from the pulpit on that occasion. Those were exciting times, and some of the experiences were dramatic, wholly beyond the power of our younger brothers and sisters to realize, but the hope is cherished that they may never see its counterpart in the history of our country.

But the old days have passed, and we are confronted by new conditions and new responsibilities. But few of the old, sturdy pioneers are left, and they have practically dropped from the active affairs of life and are watching the efforts of their descendants to merit their great inheritance. After a life of so great usefulness and honor to his adopted state, Nesmith sleeps on the banks of the Rickreal, near the old homestead he loved so well, and where all his active life was spent, when not in the service of the commonwealth. The older members of the Applegate family have long since gone to rest among the lovely hills of Southern Oregon, where they selected their homes more than half a century ago, and which they helped to wrest from the murderous Indians of that section. Waldo and Newell, and the elder McBride, and Deady, and Smith, and Lane, and scores of others of equal eminence and usefulness, have long since gone to that undiscovered country. But although men may come and men may go, human responsibilities and duties never cease. It is a part of the history of the human race that younger generations have always proven themselves able to assume and to discharge successfully the duties falling upon them, and it is believed that the native sons and daughters of Oregon, together with those who have come among us, will prove no exception to this historical fact. Our devotion to the welfare and honor of our beloved state is unbounded and immeasurable, and our effort should be given to its continued development along such lines as will contribute to the advancement and betterment of all its people.

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A GREAT MAN'S IDEA.

GENIUS, as Ruskin defines it, is simply a superior power of seeing. Have you the genius to see how important an element in the success of your house-keeping is the use of Ivory Soap? Judged by the work it does Ivory is the cheapest soap in America to-day. It is harmless. Embroideries, laces and delicate stuffs should be washed only with Ivory Soap.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL PLAN.

Study of Elementary History in the Public Schools.

JACKSONVILLE, Or., Aug. 10.—(To the Editor.)—An editorial appeared in The Sunday Oregonian of July 28, entitled "Teaching by a Fad." It seems to me that the writer of that article knows more about "fads" than he does about teaching elementary history—or the purposes of its study in the schools. He condemns Thomas' Elementary History, which was recently adopted as a text-book in Oregon, because it is built upon what is called the biographical plan. This fact commends it to those who are professionally engaged in teaching the youth of the land, and is regarded by them as its most distinctive and meritorious feature.

We should remember, when considering the subject, that such a text-book is not intended for advanced pupils, but for those only who are not prepared or qualified to enter into the more solid and higher essentials of history. It is simply a beginning—a preparatory step to the more philosophical study of this useful branch of learning.

Nor is Dr. Thomas alone in this plan; Eggleston, Mowry, Montgomery and other prominent writers of school histories have pursued the same course.

McMaster's Elementary History is built upon the other plan, and ought to meet the views of the writer of the editorial mentioned. It is solid, philosophical history, "boiled down." When the child finishes it, he may then move on to a higher grade and enter upon more of the same kind of serious history, covering identically the same ground, reiterating the same incidents, but more "wordy" in texture. McMaster's Elementary History is, as the author states in the preface, "a narrative of events," and McMaster's School History is also a narrative of the same events. The ordinary pupil will grow weary of this sameness before he completes the second book. It will be about as interesting to him as Blackstone's Commentaries are to a 16-year-old girl. Dr. Thomas, in the preparation of his Elementary School History, has followed a course entirely consistent with pedagogical principles, in this—that primary education should be pursued along the line of the least resistance. To a child biography is the natural door into history. As Eggleston says: "The order of events in a nation's life is somewhat above the reach of younger pupils, but the course of human life, and the personal achievements of an individual are intelligible and delightful."

The acquisition of solid knowledge can add but little to a life that is not impressed with high and noble aspirations, and with ideals of man and womanhood far above the common level of this sordid age. No study is so well calculated to bring about such results as the one which enables the child to contemplate the lives of "the immortal few, who were not born to die," and who have succeeded in impressing their individualities upon the pages of their country's history. The youthful mind should be permitted to trace the devious steps which have led others to greatness and renown.

And in this connection I cannot forbear another quotation from Edward Eggleston's pen. He says: "The perseverance of Columbus, of Hudson and of Morse, the fortitude of John Smith, of Standish and of Boone, cannot but excite the courage of those who read the narrative of their lives. No intelligent pupil will follow the story of Franklin's industrious pursuit of knowledge under difficulty, without a quickening of his own aspirations. What life could teach resolute patience, truth-telling, manly honor and disinterested public spirit better than that of Washington? And where will a poor lad, struggling with poverty, find more encouragement to strictest honesty, to diligent study, and to simplicity of character than in the history of Lincoln? It would be a pity for a country with such examples in her history not to use them for the moral training of the young."

A history constructed on a biographical plan, naturally leads the young inquiring mind into the world of action which surrounded the great characters of each period of past events. The three books, (recently adopted in this state) Thomas' Elementary History, Dole's American Citizen and Thomas' Revised History, are a trinal unity on the subject of American history and government. Each book is a necessary complement to the other.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

WILLIAM M. COLVIG.

Laborer's Pay and Earnings.

PORTLAND, Aug. 10.—(To the Editor.)—A street talker upon Socialism last evening made the assertion that the average wages of all laborers in the United States was $1 42 and that they actually earned $8 per day, and that the capitalist received the difference. If this is not so could you kindly give me the exact figures or as near as you can?

S. B. HART.

The statement that the average pay of laborers in the United States is $1 42 per day is about right, but the further statement that each laborer really earns $8 daily is gratuitous assumption without any substantial support. These assumptions, pleasing, grotesque or impossible, constitute a large part of the socialistic "argument." Taking the total annual production of the country and dividing it by the number of laborers will give one result, but this would leave out of consideration any compensation for capital and talent not ranking as "labor," without which "labor" would be in a bad way. There are various ways of twisting figures to get results more or less irrelevant and immaterial. Fad chasers frequently find much pleasure in the fantastic use of figures.

Pulled Lincoln's Hair.

Leslie's Popular Monthly.

While Mr. Lincoln was living in Springfield, a Judge of the city, who was one of the leading and most influential citizens of the place, had occasion to call upon him. Mr. Lincoln was not overparticular in his matter of dress, and was also careless in his manners. The Judge was ushered into the parlor, where he found Mr. Lincoln sprawled out across a couple of chairs, reclining at his ease. The Judge was asked to be seated, and, without changing his position in the least, Mr. Lincoln entered into conversation with his visitor.

While the two were talking, Mrs. Lincoln entered the room. She was, of course, greatly embarrassed at Mr. Lincoln's offhand manner of entertaining his caller, and, stepping up behind her husband, she grasped him by the hair and twitched his head about, at the same time looking at him reprovingly.

Mr. Lincoln apparently did not notice the rebuke. He simply looked up at his wife, then across