

Pioneering Oregon

PART II

This continues the story as told by Margaret Boles Burdine to Katherine Bogle.



Odd jobs kept Earl busy and I helped out by working when I was needed at a small restaurant. We not only paid our way but we were able to save a little money which seemed like a lot to us. We soon had saved \$500.00 and I found out the money began to "burn a hole" in Earl's pocket.

Earl began to listen to stories about great opportunities somewhere else and he put aside letting me help decide what we were to do. He heard that Coos Bay was the place to be in Oregon; "they" were planning to build a bridge there and jobs would be plentiful. It was beautiful country. He would go first and send for us later.

We came to Portland first and took a boat call "The Bear" to Marshfield.

Things went well with us from the beginning. In our family we all had some work to do. My husband bought a team of horses and hired out to do hauling. While he was hauling, the children and I cooked food for the hogs and saw that they were well fed. We were doing well and had acquired the two houses and land.

Then one day Earl met some people in town and invited them out to see his place and the stock. They complimented him on what he was doing, but said he was in the "wrong" place. They told him about a "wonderful" valley where they came from. If you were there, they told Earl, you could raise your own grain and feed. It is dry there, and not so much rain like here. "You can make a fortune in a few years and retire," they said.

I heard their talk but it didn't interest me. I was satisfied and so were the children. So was my husband where he met these "great friends."

It wasn't long until his partner he had to help him began to complain that there was too much work to raising hogs. I was expecting an addition to the family and I couldn't do anything to help with the hogs. The three meals a day, the washing, ironing and sewing and mending were all I could do. The partner pulled out, Earl gave him more money than he should and then he sold the hogs. That was his way of doing business.

Soon Earl began to talk about that wonderful valley he had heard about. I tried to get him to let well enough alone. But my talk did no good.

This was in the spring of 1920 just after WWI. I told him that this was not the time to break up and go to a new place. No, he couldn't think of anything else. He was tired of the

rain - he had to go to a dry climate.

My husband arrived in Yakima on the first of July. The valley was a perfect picture with orchards loaded with fruit; the meadows were filled with men, horses and machinery making hay while the sun shone; the pastures were full of lovely fat cattle and cornfields were in their glory. My husband looked at it all and saw it as a second garden of Eden where he could make a fortune.

Earl met a fellow who had lived in the valley a good many years and owned an acre of land with some chickens to raise. He assured my husband that he was a devout Christian and made Earl welcome in brotherly love to his home and to his advice. He was glad to be of service to Earl and just happened to have a good friend in the Real Estate business if Earl had some money to invest. Earl bit.

He visited the real estate office and the office had a listing of a place with a good pasture - just the place that Earl needed, the two new "friends" told him. He paid them \$500.00 right then and promised what they asked: \$500.00 more in 30 days and several thousand to be paid later with interest.

Our Marshfield home was sold in haste and at a substantial loss so that we could "get rich in a few years."



We arrived in Yakima on the 12th of August when the thermometer registered 112°. We disliked the place from the first. The river bordering the property was not for swimming - water was like ice. But we had come to stay and we had to make the best of it.

The snow began in November and the winter was long and cold. The spring came and we could see ourselves doing big things. I planned to raise chickens and turkeys and to have a large berry patch. We were going to grow our vegetables, plus corn and wheat and sugarbeets.

On the 19th of May in 1921, my husband came in from the barn looking a little strange. He said, "I believe we are going to have a flood. The river is out of its banks." Earl had asked his new friends about the river flooding and they had told him the place had flooded about 20 years ago and not since. Now the water was raising rapidly, flooding the corn and the alfalfa and the cattle were marooned on a small island.

The water stayed on the crops for a month. The gardens and berries were washed away. Our neighbors told us the place and sell again, over and over.

We prayed. My husband wanted a lawyer. I didn't. He did and found one who took our money and did not help us. I was really sick of

everything.

I hated the place, but I couldn't give up. The children and I picked fruit for other people. I canned fruit for the winter. My husband worked his team in the hay fields for other people. We made a living. We sent our children to school. Fannie went to high school four years and never was tardy or missed a day. Two of our other daughters did the same thing a few years later.

We could never get any money ahead because of bad management. In April 1925, Earl spent a whole season helping an old lady with her apple crop. He was to get half share on harvesting the crop. They beat him out of it because the agreement had been only verbal, and he couldn't prove a thing. He didn't get one cull apple nor a handful of hay. He had to borrow money to buy hay for our stock that winter.

The Lord works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. A nice place of 20 acres became available and my husband didn't want it. But I did. I borrowed some money from my sister and the children gave me \$40.00 they had borrowed picking pears and I had enough to quietly take option on the place. It was quite a while before I told him we owned it.

I worked packing fruit in a warehouse to help with the payments and kept trusting the Lord. We milked our cows, fed our hogs and turkeys for market, and always some of the money went to pay for our property.

The children enjoyed going to school and church and belonging to the 4-H clubs. The girls belonged to sewing clubs and the boys belonged to the chicken club. They all became delegates, at one time or another, to Pullman College Affairs. Sometimes they went for a week's camp. They won prizes for their work at the County Fair for their entries.

We all went to church together and enjoyed the blessings of living every day.

We had a piano and Fannie Delores, our oldest daughter, could play. We would all gather around and sing together. We read the Bible and other stories and each one would take turns at reading. We had prayer each evening and always said grace at the table.

We had a lot to be thankful for. We had lots of company. We had saddle horses, bicycles and a creek to fish. But for property, and management, Earl could not find the right people to deal with. He took a regular job in the Post Office and we had a regular income to depend on after that.

One December my husband took the flu. I kept a good fire that night and had the house nice and warm because it was very cold. I wanted to get the doctor for him but Earl said, "No, I'll be all right in the morning."

Next morning, I called the doctor

because Earl was not better. The doctor said he had pneumonia. He was sick nine or ten days with the doctor coming every day to see him. I stayed up at night to take care of him and keep the fire going. Friends came in through the day and I could get a little sleep. The three older children were a big help when they came home from school.

On the tenth morning I helped the youngest boy with the milking and my husband said he was feeling all right. He ate his breakfast but a little later he called me to say he was feeling cold. I rushed to put some heat to his feet, and called the doctor.

Earl sat up in bed and said to me, "You have done all you can, so it's all right. Lord have mercy." He laid back on his pillow and closed his eyes and that was the end. That was

December 31, 1928.

I felt numb and alone. I had seven children from three years old to 18. I turned to my heavenly father for strength to carry on, as he is ever near.

It was a hard struggle without Earl. The boys pitched in and helped and so did the older girls. We had worked together all our lives and we continued.

We planted our grain, raised our chickens and turkeys, bought another cow and some hogs. One fine day three or four later we paid off the mortgage. I was very thankful to my heavenly father for the help from my children.

I worked in the cannery through the canning season for 15 years; working 10 hour shifts, six days a week seldom ever losing a day. I was glad to be independent, and kept on

farming.

I have had the pleasure of seeing my five girls march in the graduation class of the same high school. All the girls passed with good grades. Some of them went to college. Both of my sons were in the armed service and came home in 1945 without a wound.

All my children got married and settled down and "lived happily ever after." They are like the average American family. I have 11 healthy grandchildren and when summer comes they all want to come to this old place in the country where they can fish and swim and play in the hot sunshine like their parents did when they were young.

Like I said before, I have reaped a great reward. Thanks be to God.

(Photos: Buddy Bogle)



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Northwest Natural Gas provides the energy to heat water for the showers at YMCA's Metro Fitness Center. Center officials rely on natural gas to bathe 657,000 athletes' feet in the facility's showers each year. When one of Oregon's largest fitness centers uses natural gas for heating water efficiently and reliably, you can be just as confident when it comes to heating water in your own home. Whether it's for 657,000 athletes' feet or a pair of tender feet, you can count on natural gas to keep them in hot water.

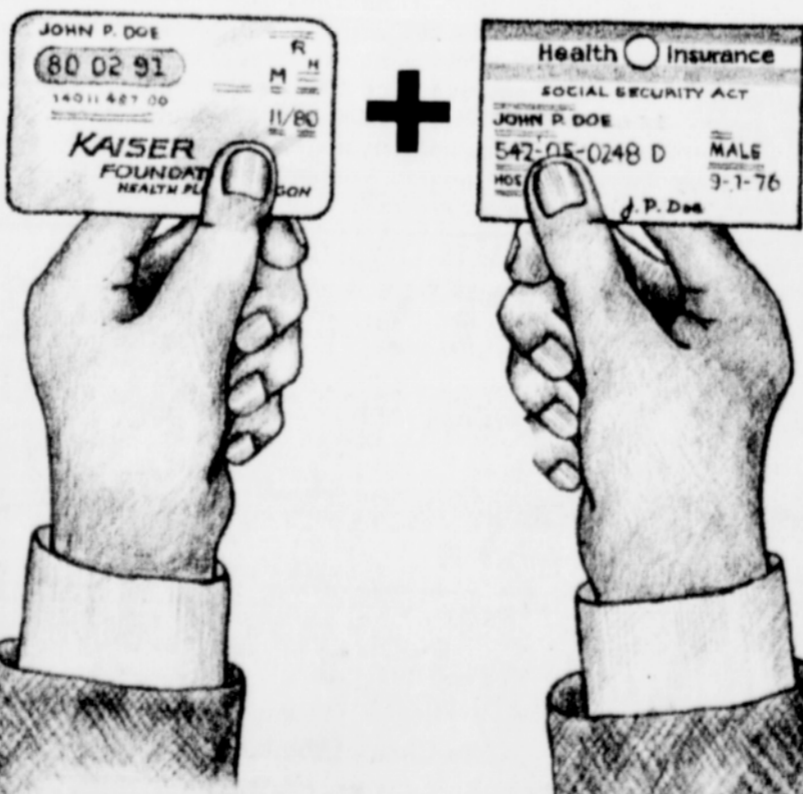


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Mrs. Margaret Bodine receives flowers from son-in-law, Otto Rutherford.