

'A Taste Of Oregon History: (An Exclusive)

by Stephen E. McPherson,
Special Correspondent

One of the fascinating things about Oregon's early history is that many an aspiring entrepreneur garnered the opportunity to assume a significant position in the business world. Those persons who identified a need and then developed a capacity to satisfy that void soon found themselves firmly established within a given segment of commerce. If such a person also were endowed with certain skills he soon became one of the valued members of a very special guild.

James Watts, previously acclaimed for his invention and development of an effective steam engine, is credited with having initiated the woolen industry in Oregon. According to the legend, Mr. Watts first visited the Dalles in the mid 1800's. After

navigating the Columbia River he was so impressed with the vast natural beauty and natural resources of this unspoiled wilderness that he vowed to return and establish a foothold. Watts went back to Missouri and returned to Oregon with his family in 1848. He arrived in Oregon with 330 sheep which had survived out of the 450 that began the journey. These animals flourished on the newly found lushness of Oregon. Coincidentally, their fleece was extraordinary unlike their progenitors back East. Watts and his family fabricated many woolen products by hand from this great abundance of wool. The excess was sold. In time they supplied the gold miners of California with gloves which turned a handsome profit. Watts then organized and built the first commercial woolen mill in Oregon. The Willamette Woolen Manufacturing Company

of Salem was established in 1856. In addition to the commodable climate of Oregon, the abundance of mineral free water for processing wool and the potential for hydro-electric power made the wool industry a natural endeavor for this region. Within a rapid succession of events, a number of woolen mills were established.

The Pendleton story had begun long before these events and spanned two continents. The wet mild weather of the Pacific Northwest is similar to that of England.

Enter Thomas Kay. He began services in the family woolen establishment at the age of thirteen. After serving an apprenticeship of seven years, Kay embarked for the United States where the growing woolen industry had offered all sorts of enticements in order to attract trained and experienced journeymen to our shores. At the

age of 20 he accepted an offer to apply his newly acquired skills to the woolen mills of New England. For six years he pursued the craft he had learned in England and rose rapidly through the promotional ladder. He served in a supervisory capacity in several eastern mills before succumbing to a predelection for the wonderlust and the pioneering call of "Go West, young man!" Once in Oregon he again accepted a supervisory position, this time at a mill near Brownsville. By now, every important event in his life appeared to follow a six year cycle. At the end of that period he established the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill in Salem. It became a family adventure with total involvement.

Fannie Kay, his daughter, acquired a particular delight in the various nuances of the family business to the extent that she became highly proficient in its entire operation.

In the mean while the Bishop component of the family team had developed a re-emergence of its own at the other end of the textile spectrum. Clarence P. Bishop had developed a thriving business

by selling fine woolen products to Oregonians. It was inevitable that he and Fannie Kay would cross paths with each other, but it was a delightful quirk of fate that they should fall in love and marry. There was little doubt that their children would also become intimately involved in the woolen industry.



C. P. BISHOP

Clarence and Roy recognized the tremendous potential of the then floundering Pendleton Mills. They bought it, upgraded it with the latest technology and turned out their first product in September 1909.



FANNIE KAY BISHOP

One of their products which immediately caught the fancy of many Oregonians and Indians alike was a newly designed blanket. Later they were to add a line of men's shirts and finally women's clothing. Their products became an instant success from the very outset because of their strong emphasis on quality. This is still the hallmark of the Pendleton tradition. Pendleton operates on the vertical system of production which means that it can maintain the high quality for which it is known by controlling every step of manufacturing from the processing of the raw material to the completion of the finished garment. In addition, they have established a tradition of quiet eloquence with a low profile. This feature story is one of the few interviews Pendleton has ever given to a newspaper.

Bethel A.M.E. Honors 97th Session of the Puget Sound Annual Conference

Bethel A.M.E. Church, 5828 N.E. 8th Avenue has the unique distinction and honor of hosting the opening of the 97th Session of the Puget Sound Annual Conference. This is the first in a series of Annual Conferences to be held across the Fifth Episcopal District which is the largest Episcopal District in the world. It incorporates all of the states west of the Mississippi River, with the exceptions of Texas and Oklahoma, which belong to other Districts.

Another unique aspect of the 97th Session, will be the appointment of the new bishop to the Puget Sound Conference. Bishop Henry Murph, the eldest of the active bishops has retired, his replacement will be named at the General Conference which is being held in Fort Worth, Texas. Bishops are appointed every four years during the General Conference. As many as 500 - 800 representatives will be attending the 97th Session of the Puget Sound Conference, from Alaska, Montana, and Washington.

Representatives from other conferences as far away as Missouri, will also be present for this auspicious occasion. Several former pastors of Bethel A.M.E. Church such as, "the Rev. Grady Brown, Ellis Casson, A. Lee Henderson, L. Fisher Hines, Leslie White and other are expected to attend.

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