

THE OREGON CENTENARIANS



MRS. MARY RAMSEY WOODS 119 YEARS OLD.

Mrs. Mary Ramsey Woods is the most remarkable of Oregon's three remarkable centenarians. Her 119 years seem to rest lightly on her, and one feels a sort of awe in talking to one who remembers the early history of the United States; who came into this world before the constitution and who was a young mother when the Oregon country was explored by Lewis and Clark.

Next in interest to Mrs. Woods in Oregon's gallery of remarkable centenarians is Jasper Force, who with nearly 106 years back of him, enjoys going to a circus as much as the youngest child.

The third centenarian is Colbert P. Blair, who is still active and hopeful, although he passed the century mark with the ending of the last year.

No state in the union can possibly boast of three such remarkable old persons, and while each of them lives in a different part of the state, they all attribute their longevity to the remarkable climate of Oregon.

ABOUT the time that the American colonies realized the necessity of federation, while the United States constitution was as yet unwritten and the nation still unborn, there came into the world on a farm near Knoxville, Tennessee, a girl baby who was destined to witness the marvelous changes that have since transformed the world and to survive out of the old time into ours.

Mrs. Mary Ramsey Woods was born as Mary Ramsey on May 29, 1787. Not in her 119th year, she is still quite active and maintains a lively interest in the world and its doings. Daily she walks about the garden or sits upon the porch in sunny weather to chat with neighbors, to sew, or to live over in memory scenes of long ago.

Mrs. Woods talks in a quavering voice, but very distinctly, with a marked southern accent. In speaking of her life, she said: "My memory of the past is very good. Sometimes things get a little clouded, but after I think a while they straighten out. I have lived a quiet life and never had much excitement. I never had but one serious illness, which was 36 years ago, when I had typhoid fever, and as a result lost the sight of my left eye. My 'third sight' is well worn, and though I can see out of but one eye, I can still thread a needle and read large type. Since my illness I have been hard of hearing, too, and you have to shout to be heard."

since then have worn false teeth. A most remarkable thing happened last spring; I cut a tooth. Would you believe it? It caused some irritation, and is considerable annoyance, interfering with the false teeth, but it is there all right. Haven't the best idea how it happened.

"I weigh about 130 pounds, which is pretty good for a woman my height, about 5 feet three inches. I dress and care for myself and do not need help from my daughter, except when I have a sinking spell, as I do once in a while when my extremities get numb."

"Until late years I have always been in comfortable circumstances. We had land and slaves, which were wealth in the south in the old days. My daughter owns our home, and that is all that is left of our property now."

"My father fought during the last six months under Andrew Jackson, but he was a paid soldier. We lived near the river, and I remember the excitement of driving from his home, Andrew Jackson was to be president, and wanted to him. We were all Democrats, and are still. I haven't much use for the black Republicans."

child, according to the old family Bible, Kate Ramsey, the mother, died after a few hours' illness, at the age of 110, 65 years ago. The day before her death she had walked a distance of five miles, knitting all the way, as was her custom. A few years before the father, Richard Ramsey, had dropped dead from heart disease. He was a brickmaker and contractor, and burned the brick used and built the first brick house in Knoxville.

When Mary was 12 years old she joined the Methodist Episcopal church. For the 106 years she has been a communicant, and is still a devoted Methodist. Her folks were well-to-do, were slaveowners and possessed considerable property. She was married at the age of 17 to Jacob Lemons, a farmer, and the couple lived happily together in their Tennessee home for many years. She was left a widow 73 years ago, about the time that Andrew Jackson was nearing the end of his first term as president.

Four children were born to the couple: Mary J. Lemons, who died in Tennessee two years ago at the age of 98; Isaac Lemons, who died in Kansas City, Missouri, 49 years ago; Nancy E. Bullock, who died at Hillsboro 38 years ago, and Mrs. C. B. Reynolds, who is now living in Hillsboro, and who, though 78 years of age, is devoting her life to the care of her aged parent.

For the 73 years Mrs. Lemons lived with her children, sometimes with one and sometimes with another. They were settled in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Missouri, and the widow lived with her children until she died in 1853 she accompanied her youngest daughter, Mrs. C. B. Southworth, across the plains to Oregon, arriving in Hillsboro in 1853. She was then 65 years old, but rode a bay mare the entire distance from Tennessee to Oregon.

Her husband rode in an oxcart. The party came leisurely, bringing a dozen slaves with them, some of whom are still alive. After her arrival in Oregon Mrs. Lemons built the first hotel in Hillsboro. Shortly after she married John Woods, with whom she lived until his death, a score of years later. The couple ran the hotel until 40 years ago, when they turned it over to their daughter, Mrs. C. B. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Southworth, her only surviving child.

For many years Mrs. Woods was post-mistress of Hillsboro until advancing old age compelled her to take life more easily. Since then she has done housework until the last few years, but now confines herself to the care of her person, sewing or knitting.

Only 11 Once. Mrs. Woods talks in a quavering voice, but very distinctly, with a marked southern accent. In speaking of her life, she said: "My memory of the past is very good. Sometimes things get a little clouded, but after I think a while they straighten out. I have lived a quiet life and never had much excitement. I never had but one serious illness, which was 36 years ago, when I had typhoid fever, and as a result lost the sight of my left eye. My 'third sight' is well worn, and though I can see out of but one eye, I can still thread a needle and read large type. Since my illness I have been hard of hearing, too, and you have to shout to be heard."

When Ringling Bros. circus was at Medford last year the old gentleman wanted to renew the acquaintance he had with the Ringlings in their boyhood days at Baraboo, Wisconsin, and incidentally to see the animals and hear the olden, golden jokes again. After Walter Ringling had recovered from the shock of the introduction he said:

JASPER FORCE 106 YEARS OLD.



C. P. BLAIR 101 YEARS OLD.

"Why, old fellow, you don't look a day older than you did when I last saw you 25 years ago, and we thought you were older than anybody then!" "You have grown some, too," said Force. "What makes you live so long out here?" "Oh, climate, good water and graham bread," responded Force. "Do you think that removing to Oregon prolonged your life?" "I know it. If I had my whole life to live over I'd live it all here in the Rogue river valley," responded the old man.

When Ringling did the right thing with a bit of pastebord and recalled the famous remark of the governor of North Carolina to the governor of South Carolina, the old gentleman declined the invitation with thanks and stated that he drew the line at the demijohn, but had no objection to tobacco.

Used Tobacco Since a Boy. It has been years since the old man had any teeth, and yet his digestion is excellent and he still enjoys his tobacco as well as he did 100 years ago, for he contracted the habit when he was only 6 years old. Some doubt has been expressed as to the truth of his statements, but since his residence in the vicinity of Talent began in 1895 he has always told the same story, and incidents in his career, and his statements do not conflict in any way, convincing the most skeptical of the truth of his statements. He states that his father, Jonathan Force, was killed at the age of 42 years at the battle which ended the war of 1812, Perry's victory on Lake Erie, and that he remembered the receipt of the sad news of his father's death. His bosom swells with pride today as he recalls his sensation when his father "licked the British."

Jasper was married December 26, 1825, to Mary Hartman in New York state, and lived with her happily until a sultry day in the fall of 1853, when a terrible cyclone destroyed their home in Kansas, and not only killed Mrs. Force, but also their two sons, Jacob and David, and their only daughter, Mary Ellen, who chanced to be with them at home on that fateful day, thus leaving the father alone and desolate in the world, with no nearer relatives living so far as he knows. After this terrible disaster, with his heart heavy and sad, already almost a nonagenarian, the old man turned away from the peaceful, pastoral existence, in the days which Scripture treats of, to the Willamette valley, Oregon, remaining there 11 years, when he came to his present home at Talent. Here in the show of the Siskiyou range, looking over one of the fairest scenes of beautiful Oregon, where nature seems to have done her best to make a model home for the human race, he hopes to end his life.

Rather Fight Indians Than Eat. "In those days I would rather fight an Indian than eat," said he. "Somehow, I never liked Indians. They were never fair, and for treachery, well, they had a monopoly on that." Mr. Blair was one of the first friends of the late Senator Mitchell had in Oregon. While living in Benton county Mr. Blair was active in politics, having been elected to the state legislature in 1863. Later, when Mitchell commenced to become a factor in Oregon politics, he found no truer friend and no stronger supporter than Mr. Blair.

Senator Mitchell was one of the few great men of Oregon," said he. "He did more for the state than any other man. He was sincere and conscientious." Mr. Blair is no burden to his granddaughter, Mrs. F. H. Sawtell, at whose home he has lived for 15 years. He occupies an upstairs room and walks up and down stairs from six to ten times each day. He takes care of the room himself, declaring that "no one can make his bed to suit him." He eats

bacon always—these are what make life worth living to him. He is planning for the future, just as he did 15 years ago. He has promised the permanent exhibit at Medford a sample of his skill in weaving native grasses and timothy into attractive forms, a trail which he undoubtedly inherited from his German ancestors whose homes were on the Rhine. A favorite form in which he blends the timothy heads is into the resemblance of a tree—a unique and interesting specimen.

Keeps House Himself. Since the loss of his wife and family in the Kansas cyclone he prefers to be alone much of the time, and with the exception of about 18 months, when he was employed in a farmer's family, he has lived alone, doing his own cooking and washing his own clothes, always appearing in neat attire, greeting his fellowmen as their equal, always courteous and considerate and ready in conversation, even apt at repartee. There is a twinkle of amusement in his eye when he "gets the best" of an exchange of badinage, which makes one marvel that the human form could so long maintain undimmed a strong, bright mind which, though untutored and uncultured, is yet a credit to the American race. He comes of a long-lived race, his mother dying at the advanced age of 81 years in Clinton county, Pennsylvania, and his father, who served out her time as wife of Michael Walborn, her second husband.

Second only to his love of country is the old man's golden opinion of Oregon. He descants upon Oregon's advantages in matters of soil, climate and productions, especially fruit, as if he were a veritable boomer. Could he assert, as he would live all his long lifetime in Oregon. His counts as lost the portion of the span which circumstances compelled him to spend in Wisconsin and Kansas. When one views his environment, with peace, plenty and prosperity apparent on every hand, one must concur in his wisdom.

C. P. Blair Passes the Century. "Every one will get old if he lives long enough," is the aphorism framed by Centenarian Colbert P. Blair of Pendleton. Mr. Blair's chief pleasure is to relate experiences with the Indians. He has no sympathy with the red man, and even now grows enthusiastic when telling of the Indian wars in which he served and recounting the number of warriors he "fetched down." He served through the Black Hawk war in 1833-34 and escaped unhurt. He was in the battle of the meadows of the Rogue river Indian war in 1854-56, one of the fiercest fights with red men on record. In this battle he acquitted himself with great bravery, receiving high commendation from the commanding officer.

Labors in the Field. With the agrarian instinct as strong in his bosom as ever, he labors in the fields and tends the stock as regularly as the owner himself, and looks from nature up to nature's God with as keen enjoyment as a young man. He states he never owned an acre of land in his life, he only claims the privilege of working and living temperately and in moderation and he sees no reason why he should not live 10 years longer. He is not in any sense infirm, but looks rugged and strong and his veins are full of rich, warm blood, and if he lived in the days which Scripture treats of, he might yet have been the progenitor of a host of offspring. The secret of his longevity, he says, is temperance in all things. He wants his regular sleep, regular hours for work and rest, and an abundance of food. He does not want much meat, but wants it well cooked—in graham bread, good butter, fruits in their season, milk when he can get it, plenty of pure water, not drink at any time, plenty of to-

BEYOND

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

It seemeth such a little way to me Across to that strange country—the Beyond; And yet not strange, for it has grown to be The home of those of whom I am so fond; They make it seem familiar and most dear, As journeying friends bring distant regions near.

So close it lies that when my sight is clear I think I almost see the gleaming strand, I know I feel those who have gone from here Come near enough sometimes to touch my hand. I often think but for our veiled eyes We should find Heaven right round about us lies.

I cannot make it seem a day to dread When from this dear earth I shall journey out To that still dearer country of the dead, And join the lost ones so long dreamed about. I love this world, yet shall I love to go And meet the friends who wait for me, I know.

I never stand above a bier and see The seal of death set on some well-loved face But that I think, "One more to welcome me When I shall cross the intervening space Between this land and that one 'over there': One more to make the strange Beyond seem fair."

And so for me there is no sting to death, And so the grave has lost its victory. It is but crossing—with abated breath— And white, set face—a little strip of sea, To find the loved ones waiting on the shore, More beautiful, more precious than before.

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The Funny Things in Our Food

From Field and Farm.

THE cheap things are undoubtedly the worst, for the poor are at the mercy of the small local dealers, but we are all of us eating and drinking dyes stuffs by the quart. Of 55 samples of canned tomatoes analyzed by the government experts 25 were found to contain preservatives. Bonin red dye, is used in all sorts of things, even from the sweeping of bakershops. A large quantity of coffee was held up recently because it contained a large proportion of common clay. One manufacturer of mustard has refused to sell his product to his factory by the ton. Mustard is dyed with a poisonous form of coal tar dyes. In a pepper factory one man has nothing to do but wheel dirt, that being the cheap and convenient form of adulterant used there for ground pepper. No man can say what he is eating when he tastes pepper.

The variety of things found in it make the head swim. They include red sandalwood, wheat, corn, buckwheat, aniline dye, grain hulls, rice, pea and bean shells, cornmeal, sage, cocanot shells, olive stones, linseed meal, sawdust and sand. One may think to get around this fraud by buying pepper whole, but gets tamped dyes with lampblack. The same adulterants, with the addition of gypsum, tumeric, charcoal, bark and a few other things, are found in white and black rock candy. One baking powder and husbands complain because the bicacuta are heavy. There is formaldehyde in the milk and we speak of an inscrutable Providence which removes the babies. One of the means of adulteration is of blackberry brandy, because it is bought for invalids, aged and delicate persons who hope to get a little strength and appetite from it. Out of 400 samples of cranberries 460 contained no trace of blackberries. They were made of crude spirits colored with coal tar dyes.

What It Costs to Live Up to Society's Demands

(Continued from First Page, This Section.)

ments in New York—in other cities, too, for that matter—for just such people.

One "bachelor maid," daughter of a deceased Wall street broker, pays \$15,000 a year for her apartments opposite an exclusive club.

Not far away a man and his wife enjoy the possession of nine rooms at a similar rental, and they recently spent \$60,000 to have the place redecorated to their liking.

A three-room suite in the same building was had, unfurnished, for \$4,000 a year.

At one of the new hotels of the metropolis a sitting-room, two bedrooms and a bath will cost \$12,000 a year. Large suites may be had for \$20,000 or \$25,000.

These figures do not include meals, which may be made to cost anything desired.

It is for balls, fetes, dinners and other entertainments that revelers in the smart set let their money flow like water.

Flowers for a single ball may cost \$2,000. In season, a fashionable family will spend \$1,000 a month for flowers for small dinners, given about once a week.

Novelty is always demanded to whet the sated appetites of those who follow the fashion.

heartily and says he is always hungry. He has never been ill a day in his life.

"If a person wants to live long," he says, "he must be regular in his habits and get plenty of fresh air and sunshine. Irregular living and dissipation are sure culprits."

Over a Century Old.

Mr. Blair was born in North Carolina December 29, 1805, the year of the Lewis and Clark expedition. He says he expects to live many more years, but as soon as he becomes a care to his family he will be ready to die.

He is the father of eight children, four of whom are dead. The living are: James H. Blair and Mrs. Neely Clapp of Lincoln county, T. J. Blair of Pendleton and J. E. Blair, who has been a resident of Lake county 33 years, but who is now on his way to Montana, where he will reside.

A peculiar coincidence connected with Mr. Blair's family is found in the ages of the members of four generations. A great-grandson, Royal G. Sawtell of Athens, is 25 years old; a granddaughter, Mrs. F. H. Sawtell of Pendleton, is 53 years old; a son, T. J. Blair of Pendleton, is 75 years old; and Mr. Blair himself is 100 years old.

Photo of C. P. Blair, by Moorehouse, Pendleton.