

Influence of Catholics is Marked

Father Blanchet as Vicar-General of Great Territory, Laid Basis for That Religion
St. Paul Center of Church, Boys' College and Sisters' School in Early Territory Days

THE early history of the mid-Willamette valley is inextricably connected with the missionary urges of two great religious groups, Catholic and Methodist. Each possessed evangelistic zeal for Christianizing the natives and the settlers. The work of the missionaries of each order overflowed into the political developments of the day and had a potent influence on the territory's uniting with the United States.

Catholic history in Oregon and in the Marion county area pivots about the name of Father Blanchet. He it was who received the first appointment in 1837 as vicar-general of the then vast, little known Oregon territory. Taking with him Rev. Father Modeste Demers as assistant, Blanchet traversed the 5000 miles between his original Quebec pastorate and his new field of duty, by canoes, portages, barges and horseback. The territory assigned him embraced 375,000 square miles, was largely populated by Indians and only a fringe of trappers, hunters and settlers lived in the vast area.

French Prairie men Ask for Priest

Father Blanchet's appointment was hastened by the petitions of a group of settlers in the district now known as St. Paul. These men, retired employees of the Hudson's Bay company, had settled in this new-called French Prairie district and through Dr. John McLoughlin, factor for the company at Fort Vancouver, these Champooick county farmers in 1834 and in 1835 sent word to Bishop Provencher at Manitoba, Canada, asking for spiritual leadership from the Catholic church. Their prayer was effectual; Mgr. Provencher when in eastern Canada arranged for the western transfer for Blanchet and thus the new impetus to Catholicism was given to Oregon.

Father Blanchet's first efforts were at Fort Vancouver, now Vancouver, Wash. Here he conducted a mission in the winter of 1838 and into spring of the following year. Anxious to extend the Catholic influence, on December 12, 1838, Father Blanchet started to Cowlitz, in southwestern Washington, and here four days later he held the first mass in the house of a Canadian settler and chose a 640-acre site for a mission.

Hudson's Bay Permit Obtained in 1839

Momentarily the progress of the Catholic missions effort in Oregon was stopped by the temporary refusal of the Hudson's Bay company to permit religious effort in the territory south of the Columbia river. The company ascribed its protest to the fact that the area was then in controversy over title between Great Britain and the United States.

Blanchet's efforts, however, were not withheld long from the Willamette valley. Hardly had the eastern dignitaries reached Fort Vancouver than Joseph Gervais, Etienne Lucier and Pierre Beleque, a delegation representing settlers on French Prairie, paid the new men a visit and invited them to visit in Oregon.

Thus it was that on January 3, 1839, Father Blanchet set out for the settlement in the Willamette valley a few miles above Champooeg, near the present

LANDMARKS IN THE SALEM OF YESTERDAY



W. S. BARKER FURNITURE FACTORY LOCATED COMMERCIAL AND PERRY STREETS WHERE MARION HOTEL NOW STANDS. —Left

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ERECTED 1852, MOVED IN 1872 TO GIVE PLACE TO PRESENT BRICK. —Right

BENNETT HOUSE, SALEM'S FIRST HOTEL, CORNER STATE AND HIGH STREETS. —Left

W. S. GRISWOLD STORE, SOUTHWEST CORNER STATE AND COMMERCIAL STREETS. THE STATESMAN OFFICE WAS ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THIS BUILDING FROM 1855 TO 1866. FIRST BRICK IN SALEM; ENLARGED TO PRESENT SIZE BEFORE 1852. GRISWOLD'S OPERA HOUSE, SALEM'S FIRST THEATRE OCCUPIED REAR OF SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS. —Right

THE JOHN D. BOON HOUSE, BUILT BY REV. JASON LEE, IN 1840; RE-MODELED BY J. B. McCLANE, WHO RAN A STORE IN ONE CORNER. McCLANE EXTENDED THE PORCHES ACROSS NORTH END OF HOUSE. JUDGE R. P. BOISE BOUGHT THE HOUSE IN 1880, BUILT AN ADDITION ON THE FRONT, NEW PORCHES, AND CHANGED WINDOWS ON SOUTH SIDE. HOUSE STILL STANDING, 960 BROADWAY. —Left

EPISCOPAL CHURCH, OLDEST PUBLIC BUILDING IN SALEM, STILL USED FOR PARISH HOUSE. —Right

KENYON'S PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY, FIRST STUDIO IN SALEM; LOCATED ABOUT 370 STATE STREET. —Left

"HEADQUARTERS" STOOD CORNER STATE AND COMMERCIAL STREETS, PRESENT SITE OF LADD AND BUSH BANK. STORE BELOW, LAW OFFICES ABOVE. —Right

OREGON INSTITUTE — WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY. TWO LOWER FLOORS USED FOR CLASS ROOMS, DORMITORY ON THIRD FLOOR, BURNED TO GROUND IN LATE '70'S. —Left



of St. Paul.

The story of this momentous visit is related in O'Hara's "Catholic History of Oregon":

"When the vicar-general arrived at Champooeg he was provided with a mount and rode to the church, which stood at a distance of four miles. The church, the first erected in Oregon, a log structure, 30 by 70 feet, had been built in 1836, having been undertaken as soon as the settlers had received Mgr. Provencher's pastoral promising them missionaries and exhorting them to the faithful practice of their religion. Father Blanchet took possession of a small room behind the altar and spent the afternoon in receiving visits from the people, whose ardent wishes had that day been realized.

First Mass Held At St. Paul in 1839

"The following day, January 6, the church, the first in the Pacific northwest, was classed under the patronage of the Apostle St. Paul, and Holy Mass, for the first time in the present state of Oregon, was celebrated in the presence of Canadians,

their wives and children. For four weeks the vicar general conducted a mission among them, instructing all, baptizing the women and children and blessing the marriages."

Blanchet took possession of a section of land around the church before he left, confident that Dr. McLoughlin could secure permission for a permanent mission on the Willamette river south of the Columbia, in territory excluded from Catholic missionary work by the first order of the Hudson's Bay company. This permission was received before the year of 1839 was ended.

St. Paul became the center, in the '40's, of the Catholic educational movement in the Oregon territory. Joseph Larocque, a chief trader for the Hudson's Bay company, donated 4800 francs for a school for boys. Work began in 1842 and the school was opened in the fall of 1843. On the opening day, 30 lads, chiefly sons of farmers, were enrolled.

Sisters Help in Building Convent

The same year a convent for the Sisters of Notre Dame was

completed at St. Paul, the Sisters handling planes, doing glazing and painting the windows and doors. Nineteen pupils, of ages 16 to 60 years, were in the first classes of the school. Father DeSmet, a Jesuit, who had come to the new territory from St. Louis, at the same time had established the Jesuit mission of St. Francis Xavier on a site donated by the vicar-general.

For five years these educational, missionary enterprises flourished but a series of misfortunes terminated the effort. The gold rush to California drained the population away from St. Paul and caused St. Joseph's College for boys to be closed. In 1849 subsequently the Jesuit mission locked its door and in 1852, the Sisters of Notre Dame were forced to abandon their school.

An excerpt from a description of life on French Prairie in the pre-pioneer years is interesting: "There was a time when French Prairie was the home spot of the Pacific northwest. In those ante-pioneer days the Canadian French had made their homes on the beautiful prairie

Red Schoolhouse, Slumbers in Big Trees at Hubbard

HUBBARD, March 27. — The little red school house that many years ago stood by the side of the road on the present Orle Boje farm, no longer echoes to the joyous school life of Hubbard boys and girls but quietly reposes under the big fir trees on the George Hovenden farm west of Hubbard where it does duty as a machine shop. The school house, called the Goudy school, was named in honor of William Goudy, an Oregon pioneer school teacher, and the father of Miss Mary Goudy who is now living in Hubbard where she has spent 76 of the 80 years of her lifetime.

Miss Goudy says that her father taught in Hubbard's first schoolhouse, a little log building that was cast aside when the Goudy schoolhouse was erected. The latter schoolhouse was followed by a two-room building which later was moved back and a much larger wooden building erected. Then as Hubbard grew in size a better school building was needed so the present large brick schoolhouse, that is dear to the heart of Hubbard folk was dedicated March 21, 1916. The building is located not far from the spot on which was located Hubbard's first log cabin.

DEUX TEMPS CLUB

"A number of Salem's young men met Friday night at the old Odd Fellows hall and organized a social dancing club. The object of the club is to hold a series of informal parties, bi-weekly, Saturday evenings, from 8 to 12 o'clock. The officers elected were Carey F. Martin, president and C. L. McNary, secretary. The executive committee consists of the foregoing officers and Sherman W. Thompson, Chas. E. Rolan and Oswald West. The name decided upon for the organization is the Deux Temps club. The first dance will probably be held on the evening of Feb. 1st." — Statesman, Jan. 19, 1896.

WAS IT EVER FOUND?

"A Large Sum of Money Lost— M. Abrams and Co. of Deer Creek on the 14th inst. lost \$14,000 in gold dust and coin. Mr. Abrams had the money in saddle bags upon a mule he was riding, and getting off, the mule took fright, and running, the saddle bags were lost. At the time he got off his mule he was just the south side of the Calapoohia; the mule was next seen at the foot of the mountains, and not seen again until taken up at a place where he had been accustomed to feed, sixteen or eighteen miles distant. They have been hunting for the money constantly, but at last dates had not found it." — Statesman, July 29, 1856.

and in the absence of their country-women had espoused the dusky maidens of the Calapoohias, who raised for them bright-eyed groups of half-breed boys and girls. The Catholic Fathers were here to bless the union and guide the lives of these youths, and the condition of these people was one of peace and plenty. The earliest comers among the Americans took homes among them and speak with pleasant memories of the quiet, peaceful, faraway life which the French and half-breed population enjoyed."