

# LaCreole Academy Played Large Part in Origin of Town of Dallas

By LILLIAN BILYEU

The names of many individuals is closely interwoven with the early day history of Dallas, and many of their descendants are still identified with the affairs of today.

The name of John E. Lyle stands out in the educational story of Dallas. Coming to Oregon in 1845, he immediately started a school in one room of the Nathaniel Ford home at Rickreall. Attending this school were members of the Applegate, Embree and Ford families. In 1846 a log cabin was built on land donated by Cary Embree where Lyle opened the Jefferson Institute. The term lasted for 24 weeks and tuition was \$8.00. Church services were held in the building on Sunday and the first county provisional court was held there also. The first records of these court proceedings were kept by Lyle and are still to be found in the vaults of the Polk county courthouse. In 1855 due to the keen interest of a group of men, among them F. Waymire, S. Shelton, R. P. Boise, W. P. Lewis, John Lyle and others, sufficient land, materials and money were donated for the construction of the LaCreole Academic institute, for many years an outstanding educational institution. Part of the former building is now incorporated in the present high school and a stadium has been constructed on the former campus with funds given by trustees of this former institution.

## Courthouse Moved Across Stream in '56

Two towns in Polk county at one time aspired to become the capital of the state, one Eola, then known as Cincinnati, and Buena Vista. The original settlement of Dallas was located at the turn of the present Salem-Dallas highway and was known as Cynthia Ann or Cynthia. Here in 1851 it was decided to build a courthouse two stories high, on the site now occupied by the corner store in North Dallas. The courthouse and town of Dallas, the name having been changed by legislative act, was moved to the south side of the Rickreall in 1856.

The new court house was built on the present location and was a frame building with Doric columns rising to the top of the two stories. There were many oak trees on the block, which had a board fence around it with a row of maple trees inside. Hitching posts were outside the board walk. In June, 1898, this courthouse burned. All records were saved with the exception of tax rolls. The present building was constructed in 1899 from native stone quarried near Dallas. The first county jail was built in 1857. The account book of William C. Brown, then in the mercantile business records that seven barrels of lime cost \$67.68; hauling 1950 pounds of iron from Portland to Dallas was \$29.25 and the cost of the iron was \$156. In 1928-29 this jail was abandoned and the present addition built to the court house, with jail quarters upstairs and sheriff's offices below.

## Grist Mill First Industry in Community

Industry also had an early start in and near Dallas. A grist mill and small store were erected at Ellendale in 1844-45 by James O'Neil and was purchased in 1849 by J. W. Nesmith and Henry Owens and resold by them in 1854 to a group from New York, among them Ezra Hallock and Luther Tutthill proceeded to develop water power for a saw mill.

## REED'S OPERA HOUSE, EARLY VIEW



—Copyright: courtesy Cronise Studio  
GROUND FLOOR USED FOR STORES; SECOND STORY FOR HOTEL. THIRD FLOOR FOR OPERA HOUSE. PERIOD OF THE '70'S. BUILDING NOW KNOWN AS THE MILLER BLOCK, CORNER COURT AND LIBERTY.

Lewis brothers purchased the grist mill in 1857 and 1863 ceased to operate it and moved their store to Dallas. In 1865 the grist mill was torn down and a woolen mill erected on the site. The mill employed some 20 men and turned out 250 yards of cloth each day. Tom Kay, Sr., was employed at this mill. The venture was not a great financial success but operation continued until it was destroyed by fire in 1871.

## Tannery, Begun in '63, Still in Operation

During the time Dallas was making strides towards becoming a city. Dr. John Boyle opened a drug store in 1858 on the corner now occupied by Savery's

drug store. The first church which shortly became the Methodist was established this same year. A tannery started up in 1863 and today is the oldest business in the county still operating. Four charter members of the first volunteer fire department are still living. They are U. S. Grant, John Grant, F. J. Coad and Frank Rowell. Ab Byerly started the first saw mill in 1886 on a site later occupied by the Spaulding mill. William Savage opened the Dallas city bank in this same year. One hundred children were attending the public school and the tax revenue was \$800 to maintain the school. Wheat was selling for 67 cents per bushel.

# Col. Cann Ball Bat Held in Trophy Room

Col. T. H. Cann who formerly held a position as clerk of the school land board under Governor Grover's administration, during his incumbency in that office, manufactured an elegant baseball bat. The bat, however, was better suited for ornament than for use.

There were, in June 1875, two active baseball clubs in existence. The college club had been acknowledged as the leading baseball club in the state, but there was an insurrection in the college club ranks and, under the captaincy of Captain J. L. Wortman, another club was formed. Its members called it the Aldine club. These two clubs were composed mostly of Willamette university men and competed for the prize baseball bat offered by Colonel Cann.

The games of the series were played on the ground adjacent to the university, now occupied by the supreme court and the state office buildings. The first game resulted in the score 30-17 in favor of the Aldines. The second game was played about two weeks afterwards and resulted in another victory for the Aldine club, score 27-14. They were accordingly awarded the prize baseball bat by Col. Cann, and it was accepted in behalf of the club by Captain Wortman.

## Bat now Reposes in Trophy Room

The bat was for a good many years in the possession of George H. Burnett who afterwards tendered it to A. N. Moores. For some years past it has been in the custody of the Ladd and Bush bank. It now reposes in the trophy room of the Willamette university.

The following composed the

Crandall, second baseman; W. D. Fenton, third baseman; M. G. Royal, left field; G. A. Peebles, center field; Horace Knox, right field.

The college nine were as follows: J. R. Coleman, catcher; D. W. Belt, pitcher and captain; J. C. McCully, short stop; Lee Matheny, first baseman; B. B. Gesner, second baseman; A. B. Croasman, third baseman; B. D. Rickey, left field; William Hawkins, center field; Emmett Williams, right field.

The umpire of the games was C. M. Walker. Scorers were George H. Burnett for the Aldines and Claude Galch for the College club.

J. L. Wortman was from Oregon City and afterwards achieved some distinction as a geologist.

Frank M. McCully was a school teacher and at one time was assistant superintendent of public instruction for the state of Washington.

J. O. Riggs became a dentist in Portland.

A. N. Moores, for over 20 years was superintendent of the Salem Sawmill company, now known as the Spaulding Logging company. He is now engaged in the investment and insurance business.

## W. D. Fenton Became Espee Attorney

W. D. Fenton is a graduate of the old Christian college at Monmouth—now the State Normal school. He was at one time democratic candidate for congress. At the time of his death he was attorney for the Southern Pacific company.

M. G. Royal was a successful school teacher.

G. A. Peebles also took up the profession of pedagogy and at one time was superintendent of schools at Salem.

Horace Knox studied law and died shortly after his admission to the bar.

J. R. Coleman, at the time of his death, was an employee of the Ladd and Bush bank.

G. W. Belt was a lawyer and at one time was judge of the superior court in Spokane.

## W.C.T.U. HAD HUMBLE START

### 12 Women in First Group In 1882; Mrs. Hatch Their Leader

A small group of Salem women met together February, 1882, to organize the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Salem, thus initiating this movement here before it was started as a state work.

Mrs. S. C. Hatch presided at the first meeting, and at the next session Mrs. M. A. Royal was chosen president and Mrs. Nelle W. Cooke secretary.

There were 12 charter members: Mrs. Hatch, Mrs. C. M. Patty, Mrs. W. G. Piper, Mrs. L. H. McCullough, Mrs. F. A. Matthews, Mrs. A. J. Leslie, Mrs. A. M. Bewley, Miss M. L. Allen, Mrs. S. C. Gardner, Mrs. T. Jeffries, Mrs. B. W. Cooke and Mrs. L. W. Huston.

Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian church memberships were represented in the initial meeting, at which it was decided gentlemen could be admitted to honorary membership upon payment of a dollar annually. At first dues for women were 50 cents.

J. C. McCully was from Jacksonville, was popular and noted for his keen wit.

Lee Matheny was a native of Salem, the son of Sheriff Matheny. It is understood he died recently in Washington.

E. B. Gesner was a farmer and now lives in Salem.

A. B. Croasman kept the leading clothing store in Salem, was at one time post master of Salem. He then moved to Portland and was appointed postmaster there. He is now employed in the federal court in Portland.

B. D. Rickey for many years was an employee of the Salem postoffice while his father was postmaster. He was engaged at the time of his death in the city engineer's office in San Francisco.

W. Hawkins was a druggist in Salem.

Emmett Williams was a printer in Salem and died a number of years ago.



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