

Flood Dec. 3, 1861, Thought Worst in History of This Valley

Salem had no ark on the hill tops in 1861 and again in 1890, but nevertheless flood facts are pretty definitely recorded—except exact height of the water. The flood which reached its peak December 3, 1861, is considered the greatest in local history.

While the high mark on February 3, 1890, was said by residents who saw both disasters to be about two feet under the one of '61, the later flood goes down in history as carrying more water. It is reckoned there were about 25 feet of surplus water in 1861.

Wharf Loaded With Stone Goes Down River

The '61 waters reached the height at 6 o'clock in the evening of Tuesday; Monday morning wheat was moved from the Matheny warehouse, at the foot of State; Monday night the warehouse, a sawmill, a cider factory and all houses on the front were swept away, including a high chimney which it was thought would stand against any water. A wharf loaded with stone went too. Early Tuesday morning waters were flowing through the town in a channel three or four feet deep and for more than a quarter of a mile in breadth.

Twelve persons across the river from Salem were removed from a barn top just before the

barn was swept away. Many rescues were made by boat and skiff; at least two lives were lost. At Wheatland, a warehouse with 2,500 bushels of grain was swept away.

The February, 1890, flood was more disastrous to Salem, and

Long Admired!

BY HARRIS ELLSWORTH
Editor, Roseburg News-Review

"It is a pleasure for us to extend our greetings and congratulations to The Oregon Statesman on the occasion of its 80th birthday. We have long admired The Statesman as a leading morning newspaper in this state, and have the highest regard for its owners and publishers. It is our sincere hope that The Statesman may continue to enjoy its position of leadership for generations to come."

had it not been for the fleet of four steamers that did noble work in rescuing many drowning. Electric lights, train serv-

ice and communication with the outside world were at a standstill. No trains came in for nine or ten days.

But that does not tell the worst of the '90 flood: it sent to the bottom of the river the big bridge over the Willamette between Marion and Polk counties.

"Awful Crash" as Bridge Gives way

The Statesman of the next morning describes the crash:

"At 20 minutes to 2 o'clock the south one of the center piers on the Marion county side swung around apparently from the bottom, bent and cracked just above the water line, followed by the two main spans of the big bridge. The crash was awful. Water was thrown high in the air and in a few seconds the better part of that costly structure was floating down stream. When the pier gave way there were 100 persons standing under the trees watching the boiling, foaming water. . . The north pier stood a half hour swaying from the immense pressure below, and then toppled over with a mighty noise."

From 10:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. Sunday the rise was three feet and 10 inches.

Person—"Yesterday afternoon Stephen J. Chadwick and Mark A. Fullerton started for Colfax, W. T. where they intend making their home in future and

where they intend to practice law. They are both rising young attorneys of more than average ability, and will be missed greatly from this city."—Statesman Nov. 19, 1885.

SALEM MINSTRELS

"Friday evening at Reed's opera house, this troop of home talent proposes giving one of their inimitable entertainments for the benefit of the Capital Guards of this city. Our city should take a pride in this company, and see that they have a good house that will net results that will give the Capital Guards a neat and tasty uni-

form, as that is the purpose of this entertainment."—Statesman, May 23, 1877.

"WAIT FOR THE WAGON"

"Concord coach—In the Oregon State Company's line of stages is one Concord coach (running between Oregon City, via Salem, and Corvallis,) the only one in Oregon. Its cost, laid down in Oregon, was \$1100. It reminds one of the old-fashioned days of stage travel, before railroads grid-ironed the States, and sent the traveler whirling over the country at a head-swim pace."—Statesman, June 14, 1859.



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Eighty Years of Scientific Medicine---What Has It Accomplished?

Eighty years ago there were no hypodermic syringes, few clinical thermometers—probably none in Oregon, no stethoscopes, no electric lights—not even kerosene lamps, no autos, and no telephones. The x-ray had not even been dreamed of. Microscopes were found in few universities, while even these were cumbersome, faulty and seldom used.

Just eighty years ago Louis Pasteur, a young French scientist, was beginning the study of fermentation and spontaneous generation, research which was to lead to a transformation in the practice of surgery and eventually conclusively support the germ theory of disease. Lack of antiseptic surgery caused gangrenous wounds and resulting amputations to be almost the rule rather than the exception. Childbirth was attended by a heavy mortality.

Plagues of various kinds spread periodically over Europe and America. Smallpox was a dreaded pestilence; cholera menaced the seaports and often spread as far inland as Cincinnati, while cholera infantum was a scourge of infancy. Malaria and yellow fever devastated the South and ravaged as far north as Philadelphia and up and down the Mississippi valley. Typhus and typhoid fever, practically unknown in this day of knowledge of sanitation, were common and deadly. Measles possessed a virulence not known today.

In the late eighties diphtheria swept over the Willamette Valley. Salem, the center of the epidemic, was a city of grief-stricken homes for the disease proved especially deadly to children and some families lost five little ones during those few terrible weeks. Those who did not actually contract diphtheria lived in constant fear, for with little knowledge of fumigation there seemed to be no way to stop its onslaught. At that time there were probably not more than six or seven doctors in the community, and they were kept busy all hours of the day and night. Other communities were facing the same problem so it was not feasible to import physicians.

Hospitals, as we know them today, scarcely existed in the country, and there were probably none west of the Rockies. Salem's first hospital was not built until about 1885. There were no trained nurses; the average housewife could acquire, usually by experience, whatever knowledge of nursing existed. Surgical skill was limited largely to amputations and the opening of abscesses, and that with crude instruments and dangerously impure anaesthetics. While as for the thought of local anaesthesia, if there was any, 'twas that such anaesthetics were to be found only in the distant future.

The doctors of Salem served the country for a radius of many miles around the town. Summoned by a messenger on horseback, they laboriously retraced with him the journey, often taking many hours in making one call. There was little help available for diseases of the eye and ear—deafness and blindness were prevalent.

Yet withal, Salem has always had outstanding doctors, many of whom have left an indelible impress on the city. Dr. Elijah White, the first doctor in this part of the country, came around the horn on the ship Lausanne in 1837.

Salem, previously known as Chemeketa, is said to have been named about 1846 by Dr. W. H. Willson, a pioneer doctor, while Willson park serves as a memorial to the same man.

The name of Dr. J. Reynolds of Salem also appears frequently on the pages of Oregon history.

Dr. Robert Newell of Champoeg was present at the famous Champoeg meeting and has furnished historians with much of their knowledge of that gathering. Newell, as were most of the western doctors of his time, was prominent in the political life of the territory. He served twice on legislative committees elected to remake and amend the Provisional government.

For many years Oregon was not connected with the eastern United States by railroad. Young men and women who wished to fit themselves for the practice of medicine found it distinctly difficult to do so without entailing great expense. True, doctors came out from the eastern schools, but a need was felt for a western medical college. So the Department of Medicine was established at Willamette University in 1865, the first school of medicine on the Pacific coast and probably the first west of the Rockies. In 1872 there were ten M. D.'s in the faculty, most of them practicing physicians in Salem, but a few came from Portland to give their lectures.

Equipment for teaching medicine was scarce, as was also equipment for practicing it. The school depended for its existence upon the gifts of friends and the fees of its student body, which usually numbered less than thirty. After a time it was moved to Portland where it was believed there were greater facilities for actual clinical experience, but was finally returned to

Salem and placed under the deanship of Dr. W. H. Byrd, who with Dr. J. N. Smith, remained active in the work of the school during the rest of its existence.

In spite of the struggles and hardships which caused the life of the school to run less smoothly than was desirable, the Department of Medicine furnished Oregon in general and the Willamette valley in particular with a large percentage of its doctors.

The 1879 roster of the Oregon State Medical Society reveals that at that time 44 of its 88 members were graduates of the Willamette medical department.

The mere fact of the great distance intervening between the sources of medical knowledge and Oregon has not kept the people of this state from obtaining the best care such knowledge could provide. For the knowledge of the physician is that human life and of greater interest than any other type of learning. This natural tendency to spread the story of new developments could not be blocked by poor systems of transportation and communication, and Oregon doctors early received reports of what was happening in the outside world.

It was partly to provide for the spread of such knowledge that the Oregon State Medical Society was organized in 1875. Dr. Alfred C. Kinney, who had formerly lived in Salem and now makes his home in Astoria, was the first president of this organization.

In 1896 or 1897 the Marion county medical association was formed. Dr. Calvin C. White was first president of the organization and Dr. W. Carlton Smith was its first secretary. Both of these men were outstanding in the work of the society. Both died during the past year after long careers of service.

Ten or fifteen years after its organization, while under the presidency of Dr. H. J. Clements, the Marion county association merged with those of Polk and Yamhill counties to form the Polk-Yamhill-Marion Medical Society, the local organization which is now active.

The hardships attendant upon the practice of medicine eighty years ago have largely vanished before scientific study, but scientific study has not been given up. Eighty years from now in looking back upon the history of medicine, people will marvel at the progress revealed.

The ideals of the profession are much the same as they have always been and may best be stated as contained in the excerpts from "Principles of Medical Ethics" published by the American Medical Association.

"A physician should not base his practice on an exclusive dogma or sectarian system, for 'sects are implacable despots; to accept their thalidom is to take away all liberty from one's action and thought.' (Nicon, father of Galen, 130 A. D.)

"He should also be modest, sober, patient, prompt to do his whole duty without anxiety; pious without going so far as superstition, conducting himself with propriety in his profession and in all the actions of his life." (Hippocrates, 460-370 B.C.)

HOW DO YOU SELECT YOUR PHYSICIAN?

When we select persons for any position of importance, we are wont to delve into the subject of the educational preparation and fitness of the applicant for the work. Does our school board employ a teacher without knowing much of his school work and success, his professional standing?

But when it comes to selecting a doctor, many leave the matter to the last moment and then call a physician recommended by a next-door neighbor, the corner groceryman, or anyone of a dozen individuals not particularly interested in the matter.

Yet, it is possible to ascertain a doctor's worth as surely as we ascertain that of a teacher and by somewhat similar methods. What of his schooling, his record—his professional standing? Does he keep up-to-date in his methods through the fine medical journals at his disposal? We insist that our teachers must continue their education—does our doctor take post-graduate courses?

Too often external appearance and affability alone are the sole criteria of judgment.

In order to help anyone select a physician or dentist for general or special work, the Medical-Dental Headquarters, 154 S. High St., has especial facilities for information which are available to all.

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