

## Edgar Recalls Some Thrills Of Early Polk County Days

By BEN MAXWELL

J. W. Edgar, who has lived in Polk county 82 years, remembers when there was no West Salem. But his keen memory goes back even further, and he recalls years in the 1870s when a manually-operated drift ferry crossed the Willamette from Salem's Ferry street to a landing a little north of the present bridge.

Mr. Edgar, now a resident on Route 1, was born 12 miles south of Portland in December, 1866. His family had just arrived by covered wagon from Missouri and paused near Oregon City long enough to refresh themselves and welcome birth of the child.

Then the journey was resumed until the father found a suitable location northeast of Dallas. J. W. Edgar was then six weeks old and he has lived in Polk county almost continuously during the past 82 years. From the 1890's until recently he was a resident in the Popcorn district.

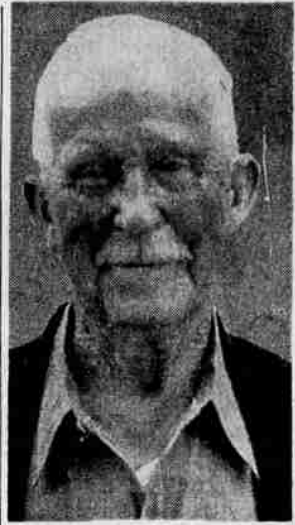
"Certainly I remember 70 and more years ago when there was a ferry across the Willamette between the Salem and the Polk county side," Mr. Edgar said. "That was before Matheny started his steam ferry and about 10 years before the first bridge was built. It was a manpower ferry that was coaxed across the river aided by current and the operator's muscles. As a ferry it wasn't much. Two loads of cordwood or four teams was about its limit.

**Fuel was Cheap**  
"Later a steam ferry was started by Matheny, and Tom Holman succeeded him. That ferry also left Ferry street and landed a little north of the present bridge. In the early 1880s, just before the bridge was built, crossing schedules were maintained at half hour intervals. I hauled scrub oak cordwood to Salem and crossed the ferry to make deliveries. In those days oak wood was \$2.50 a cord."

Mr. Edgar recalls that there was then not enough West Salem to give it a name. The Matheny house stood near the end of the present bridge (it was dismantled about two years ago). Then or a few years later came the Churchill, Ferguson and Skinner homes. Sixty-five years ago Hiram Skinner owned most of what is now West Salem and a big share to today's Kingwood Heights. Even then, however, the first schoolhouse in the community (now occupied by Mrs. Sally Damrell) appeared to Mr. Edgar as an old building.

Mr. Edgar recalls the first inter-county bridge as a flimsy affair cheaply constructed to meet a pressing need for better transportation. When the structure opened for traffic in early December of 1886 it appeared as a light steel and wooden structure scarcely wide enough to allow two loaded wagons to pass. On February 3, 1890, it became known around Salem that the surging and flooded Willamette would reach 37 feet and knowing persons declared the bridge could not long resist the torrent.

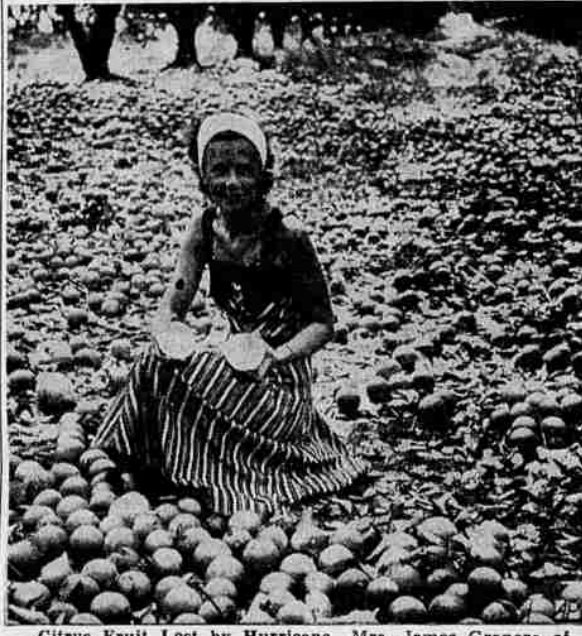
**Ahead of Flood**  
When the news reached Mr. Edgar, then in Salem, he resolved to start for home and at once. The west approach was



J. W. Edgar

already deeply flooded and he paid 50 cents for skiff fare to get ashore. In less than an hour, at 1:40 p.m., to be exact, there was a snapping of timbers and a resounding crash at the structure folded into the seething flood.

Today a narrow road leading northward through Holman park steeply ascends the Eola hills to follow a route that was once used to reach Doak's ferry, later Lincoln. Even today the remnants form no part of a good road and in winter it is impassible.



**Citrus Fruit Lost by Hurricane**—Mrs. James Graner of Vero Beach, Fla., is surrounded by Indian River grapefruit blown from trees by the Florida hurricane. Estimates of total citrus losses throughout the great grovelands of Florida range from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000. (AP Wirephoto)

ble. Sixty years ago it had that characteristic even in summer. When a boy, Mr. Edgar drove four straining horses hitched to a threshing engine headed up the hill. Several men rode on the hillside to keep the rig from tipping over. Two or 300 yards up the hill young Edgar glanced into the ravine and there saw the wreckage of another threshing rig that had tried for the top of the hill a few days before. That outfit had tipped over and crashed 200 feet below. Finally Edgar and his rig, counterbalanced as it was by heavy men, reached the top.

**No One was Hurt**  
Crossroads Methodist church stood where this road intersected the Popcorn road about three miles from Salem. E. F. Hosford donated the site for the church and cemetery. Mr. Edgar, who first attended services here in the early 1870s recalls that the church was in use until about 40 years ago. The Good Templars occupied upstairs quarters.

About 50 years ago Mr. Edgar and another were frantically trying to finish opening a grave in the churchyard before funeral services were concluded. A rock, too heavy for both to lift out, was the big obstacle. Mr. Edgar's assistant had a bright idea. He dashed to his nearby home for an explosive and when he returned he had plenty of powder and a short fuse. Mr. Edgar expressed skepticism about so short a fuse but that did not lengthen it and the hearse was due to arrive at any moment. So the charge was placed and the fuse lighted.

Edgar leaped out of the grave and started for protection. His assistant jumped too but he stumbled and fell back into the grave where the smoking fuse was hissing. This was no time for procrastination. Edgar returned to the grave and ex-

tended his hand to his assistant, now frantically scrambling for another footing. In an instant he was out and in another instant, with the pair less than 10 feet from the excavation, the charge exploded. Both were showered by dust and pelted by rock fragments. None was injured.

Even now, after 50 odd years, Mr. Edgar grows tense as he approaches the climax of that grave digging adventure. It came so near being a grave for three instead of one.

## Clay Urges U.S. Lead Fight on 'Aggressor'

Philadelphia, Aug. 30 (AP)—Retired Gen. Luscious D. Clay, former commander of U. S. military forces in Germany, spoke last night at the American Legion convention. He urged the U. S. to lead the fight against the "aggressor," which he never named. Clay addressed 700 persons at a banquet honoring Perry Brown, Beaumont, Tex., national commander of the Legion. He



**Crippled Vet Beaten**—Frank W. Chase (right) appears pensive after being taken into custody by police at Montesano, Wash., in connection with torturing and beating of his stepson, Henry Chum, 29 (left), a one-legged air force veteran. The scars on Chum's body are plainly visible. Police said Chase confessed the beatings over a period of 18 months, said the motive had something to do with an insurance policy. (Acme Telephoto)

said "aggressors will ever be a threat until it is evident that it is dangerous for the aggressor to move from his own territory."



**Fish Lure Perfected**—Here is Martin Neustel, Lebanon, exhibiting a new fish lure that he has patented and will place on the market as soon as necessary arrangements can be completed.

## Fishing Lure Invented by Martin Neustel, Lebanon

Fishermen will be interested in a new lure which Martin L. Neustel, 1270 Grove, Lebanon, expects to put on the market as soon as patent office drawings compiled by J. T. Anderson, Portland coordinator of patents, are approved.

The new lure is especially adapted to fishing through the ice or from docks or boats wherein movement is absent over the water surface. By simply raising and lowering the fishline, the lure will travel in a spiral circle and in its operations it is either diving or climbing but always following a circle.

Action is caused by the design of the outwardly extending fins from the lure together with a properly located weight within the body of the lure as well as a specially curved tail. When the line is raised the nose end of the lure will nose upwardly and forward and at the same time the tail causes it to circle.

The new lure will be shown at the State Fair in the moving picture "What's New on Review" at the agricultural building under the sponsorship of the fair and the direction of Anderson.



**Final GAR Encampment**—GAR National Commander Theodore A. Penland (left), of Portland, Ore., and GAR Chief of Staff Albert Woolson of Duluth, Minn., sat together in church at Indianapolis, Ind., and clasped each other's hands as World War II Chaplain Dr. C. L. Smith preached a sermon on "Faith of Our Fathers." Penland, 100, and Woolson, 102, are in Indianapolis for the final encampment of the GAR. (Acme Telephoto)



**Peaches for Schools**  
Washington, Aug. 30 (AP)—The agriculture department announced today it has brought 937,210 cases of canned peaches for school lunch program.

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