

EWING YOUNG—FIRST WHITE SETTLER IN YAMHILL COUNTY

Address by George H. Himes, Assistant Secretary and Curator of the Oregon Historical Society.

The first American settler in Yamhill county, in fact, on the west side of the Willamette river, so far as can be determined, was Ewing Young. Nothing is known of his early history save that he was born in Knox county, Tennessee, was a cabinetmaker by trade, and a man of intelligence and nerve, with a fine physique, and too energetic and fond of new experiences to follow mechanical pursuits all his life. His fondness for adventure led him to join a trapping party some time in the twenties of the nineteenth century, and as early as 1828-29 he had visited California with a company of trappers and hunted on Tulare Lake and San Joaquin River. Some time later he returned to New Mexico and married a Tosa woman, by whom he had one son, Josquin by name. For reasons unknown, he left his wife and child without ceremony and returned to California in 1831 with another party of trappers. This party soon broke up at Los Angeles, and Young was left to follow his own inclinations among the Spanish priests and native Californians.

In the summer of 1834, while at Monterey, Young formed the acquaintance of Hall J. Kelley, a Boston school-teacher, and probably the first person seriously to consider the practicability of colonizing Oregon.

Kelley, recognizing the bold and enterprising spirit possessed by Young, sought to induce him to go to Oregon. Kelley, being an enthusiast and possessed of fine attainments, was able to induce Young to accompany him to the far away Columbia with the view of laying the foundations of empire beside the great "River of the West."

The party, consisting of 15 men, left California in the summer of 1834. These men were secured at Monterey and San Jose, and some of them were evidently of doubtful character. They had nearly one hundred mules and horses for use and sale. A number of the company left the expedition before the 424 parallel was reached, but not before stamping upon it an unsavory reputation, as will be seen a little later.

On the way up through Southern Oregon, Kelley was stricken with fever, from which he was rescued by Michel La Framboise, an employe of the Hudson Bay Company, who was on his way to Fort Vancouver with his season's gathering of furs.

In coming through Rogue River Valley they had a little difficulty with the Indians on account of their thieving propensities—hence the name Les Couquins (the Rogues). Among some of the early explorers these Indians were called the "Red Indians."

There are other theories about the origin of the name, but the one here given is probably the true one.

Arriving in the Willamette Valley, Young and party stopped at the M. E. Mission, and one of his men, probably Webley Hauxhurst, assisted the Lees in building a cart, the first in the settlement, save some very rude affairs with wheels made by sawing off round logs.

Upon arriving at Vancouver, Young and Kelley met a cool reception. The Hudson's Bay Company's schooner Cadboro, from Monterey, had arrived before them. This brought a letter from the Spanish governor of California to Dr. McLoughlin accusing Young and his party of being horse thieves. Color was given to this statement by the fact that the party had nearly 100 horses. The gates of the fort were closed against Young, but Kelley being ill, his fever having returned, was given a hut outside the fort, with a servant, medical attendance and the needed comforts for a time.

Young soon returned to French Prairie and there found himself posted as a horse thief. This made him furious. He tore down the notices, hurled maledictions on the Governor of California, and warned the Canadians and the missionaries against such a course, and wrote to the Spanish governor demanding to know the cause of such malignant stories. With the slow communication then in vogue up and down the coast, it took time to get word from Monterey. Investigation followed as rapidly as possible under the circumstances, and in due time Dr. McLoughlin modified his opinion of Young and Kelley. At one time Young wanted some clothing, and sent to Dr. McLoughlin the necessary beaver skins to purchase the needed articles. The doctor refused the skins, but sent the goods, with some food, as a present. This enraged Young and he returned every article, and went to Fort Vancouver and poured out his vials of wrath upon the old doctor. The interview was a stormy one, without a doubt, and if what was said could be known at this day it would doubtless add a good deal of spice to the events of that time. The stern and autocratic Dr. McLoughlin met his match in the stalwart cabinetmaker from Tennessee.

Those who came through the Willamette Valley with Kelley and Young were as follows: John McCarty, Webley J. Hauxhurst, Joseph Gate, John Howard, Lawrence Carmichael, Brandwine, Kilborn and George Winslow, co-reel.

Courtesy M. Walker, who came with Wyeth in 1834, and who was in the valley when Ewing Young arrived, says of him: "I candidly believe that it was through that thoroughgoing man that Oregon was brought so speedily into notice. I made the acquaintance of Mr. Young about the 1st of November, 1834, soon after his arrival in the Willamette Valley from California. He erected a dwelling on the Willamette River, opposite Champoug, being the first house erected on the west side of that river by a white man." Mr. Walker then states at some length the causes of friction between Dr. McLoughlin and Mr. Young, already alluded to, and finally recites the fact that the charges made against Young and Kelley were withdrawn and regret expressed at the occurrence.

Mr. Kelley returned to Boston as soon as he was able and wrote a pamphlet soon afterward, in which he dwelt at length and with severity upon the sufferings which the American settlers were compelled to endure through the Hudson's Bay Company, complaining that it did not hesitate to put into execution the most cruel and arbitrary measures to drive away such as would not submit. This was brought to the attention of the President and Secretary of State, and a letter was at once addressed to a U. S. naval officer, Lieut. W. A. Slacum, instructing him to proceed at once to the American settlements on the Pacific Coast and investigate the subject of American occupancy in all its aspects. Soon after Slacum's arrival in the Columbia River he called upon Young and everything was explained satisfactorily. In due time a report of his observations was sent by Slacum to Washington, and the circulation of that report had considerable influence in drawing public attention to Oregon.

Mr. Young continued to live on his place west of the Willamette River, a few miles below Champoug, his principal business being to look after his Spanish horses, and doing his trading with the American Company (Captain Wyeth's) of which Walker was the agent. Being dissatisfied with his mode of life, it not being active enough, Young planned to erect a distillery, but the want of kettles and other needed apparatus prevented. In the spring of 1836 Capt. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, who had begun a colony on "Salween" Island, determined to quit business and return East; then Young bought one of the cauldrons that had been used to pickle salmon and began the erection of a distillery on Chehalis Creek. By this time Young and Dr. McLoughlin had become fully reconciled, and the latter told Young that the distillery would ruin the farming community, and gave him the assurance that if he wished to engage in any enterprise which would be beneficial to the settlement he would give him aid to a reasonable amount. This caused Young to change his plans and he began the erection of a saw and grist mill. About this time, late in 1836, Young conceived the idea that best cattle would be a great aid in carrying on farming and gaining a livelihood, and proceeded to organize a joint stock company for the purpose of bringing cattle into Oregon from California. Since this was the first incorporation having its origin in Oregon Territory, Willamette Settlement.

"Articles of agreement made and entered into this 15th day of January, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven.

"Whereas, we, the undersigned settlers upon the Willamette River, are fully convinced of the importance and necessity of having best cattle of our own in order successfully to carry on our farms and gain a comfortable livelihood; and

"Whereas, we find it impossible to purchase them here, as all the cattle in the country belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, and they refusing to sell them under any circumstances, and as we believe that the possession of cattle will not only benefit us personally, but will materially benefit the whole settlement, we, the undersigned, do therefore agree:

"1st. To avail ourselves of an offer of W. Slacum, Esq., to take passage in the American brig Loriot, Capt. Bancroft, free of charge, to proceed to California to purchase cattle for ourselves and all our neighbors who choose to join us in our enterprise either by accompanying us themselves or furnishing the means of purchasing cattle in California.

"2d. We agree to furnish funds according to our means, making a common stock concern subject to the following conditions: The expenses of all those who go down to California are to be borne by the company, calculating the time so employed at the rate of twenty dollars per month; provisions likewise to be paid by the company.

"3d. The wages of the men thus employed to be calculated as so much money, and each one to be credited accordingly; and each and every member of the company shall have his portion of the cattle which may arrive safely at the Willamette, these to be divided agreeably to the capital and wages employed in the enterprise.

"4th. All those who go for the purpose aforesaid to California, hereby bind themselves to return to the Willamette with the cattle and to use their best endeavors to protect the same.

"5th. We hereby agree that Ewing Young shall be leader of the party and P. L. Edwards, treasurer, and they shall be joint purchasers of the cattle.

"6th. If any man shall desert the company in California he shall forfeit all wages which he may have earned.

"7th. If after the arrival of the party in California any man shall choose to labor for his personal benefit he shall have liberty to do so; provided that he shall be bound to invest the proceeds in the common stock, and that he shall not enter into any engagements which shall prevent him from leaving when required; but such person shall not be entitled to any remuneration from the company for the time so employed.

(Signed)

Ewing Young,
P. L. Edwards,
James A. O'Neal,
his
John x Turner,
mark
Webley J. Hauxhurst,
Calvin Tibbets,
Lawrence Carmichael,
his
Pierre x Depau,
mark
George Gay.

William Bailey.
Enab x Erquette.
mark

Stock was subscribed for as follows:

Ewing Young	\$1,119.27 1/2
P. L. Edwards	42.73
Jas. A. O'Neal	326.72 1/2
C. Tibbets	182.53
Pierre Depau	216.35
C. Erquette	139.54
John Turner	176.27 1/2
George Gay	165.00
Lawrence Carmichael	233.12 1/2
William J. Bailey	121.62 1/2
Jason Lee, for M. Mission	627.12
Willamette Settlers and Dr. McLoughlin	568.00
Douglas & Finlayson	300.00

\$4,602.59 1/2

In addition there was a contingent fund of \$627.84.

The following letter was addressed to Hon. Gueloupe Vallejo, the Spanish Governor of California:

"To His Excellency Gov. of the State of Up. California:

"Sir: Your petitioner would beg leave to inform your Excellency that there is on the Willamette River, south of the River Columbia, a small settlement of citizens of the United States. This community have from their origin labored under many difficulties for want of horned cattle, of which they have none, but knowing that your Excellency is aware of the advantage which they confer, your petitioner cannot think it necessary to express in detail the reasons why cattle are indispensable to the prosperity of an agricultural people. Under these circumstances a part of the citizens of said community, on the 12th day of January, A. D. 1837, formed themselves into a joint stock company for the purpose of procuring cattle from Upper California. The object of your petitioner, as well as that of said company, are expressed in the following extract from their articles of association, viz:

"Whereas, we, the undersigned settlers upon the Willamette River, are fully convinced of the utility and necessity of having neat cattle of our own in order successfully to carry on our farms and gain a comfortable livelihood; and

"Whereas, we find it impossible to purchase them here, as all the cattle in the country belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, and they refuse to sell them under any circumstances, and as we believe that the possession of cattle will not only benefit us personally, but will materially benefit the whole settlement, we, the undersigned, do therefore agree, etc. etc.

"In pursuance of the object expressed in these articles, a party of ten American citizens and three Indian boys, of whom I was chosen leader, took passage in the American brig Loriot, Capt. Bancroft, of which Wm. A. Slacum, Esq., of the United (States) Navy, was charterer.

"In compliance with the wishes of said community, your petitioner would pray your Excellency's permission to purchase cattle to the number of five or six hundred head of the citizens of California for the purposes expressed above; and relying on the friendly relations in which the citizens of the United States have always stood towards your government, and on your personal generosity, he awaits determination.

"I am your Excellency's Humble and Obedt. Servt."

(Signed) Ewing Young.

"San Francisco, 10th March, 1837."

"This apparently did not avail anything as Young returned from Monterey on March 1st with the information that Vallejo would not permit cattle to be driven out of the country, saying such permission was in the hands of the civil government, at Santa Barbara. Thither Young went and made a statement of his desires. In due time, after much circumlocution, consent was obtained that seven hundred head of cattle might be secured, provided they were bought of the government instead of the missions to which they belonged. By the 22d of June the whole number of cattle had been secured, and soon afterwards the homeward journey overlaid was begun with 320 head of practically wild animals. This was a very trying experience, and tested the patience and endurance of the entire company to the utmost. The task of driving that number of wild snorting brutes five or six hundred miles without the aid of trained dogs, through a trackless wilderness, with the untamed savages constantly on the alert over a considerable portion of the route to make trouble, would alone afford material for an interesting chapter in the early history of our state. Through it all, however, Young preserved his equanimity, and proved himself to be possessed of qualities which belong to every true leader of men.

"Not until the 12th of September that the Rogue River Valley was reached, and it was about the middle of October before the party arrived at the settlements in the valley. Two hundred head of cattle had been lost on the way. The expenses of the expedition, together with the original cost of purchase, brought the price up to nearly eight dollars a head. Then the number was divided up pro rata, as set forth in the articles of incorporation.

"As may be remembered by many of those who came to Oregon in the late forties and early fifties, many of the descendants of these cattle were to be found in the Willamette Valley, and in numerous places they were as wild as the untamed deer and far more dangerous. I doubt not but that there are those within the sound of my voice who have had more than one narrow escape as a result of coming in contact with these wild cattle. By patient effort many of them were tamed, and as the immigrants of the early '40s brought blooded stock across the plains, a judicious course of breeding in a few years brought to the settlers a grade of stock that aided greatly in the young industrial life of the valley.

In referring to this cattle business, the late Judge Deady, in an address before the State Pioneer Association in 1875, said:

"This was a very important event in the history of the colony, for without the cheap labor of the patient ox and the simple food of the faithful cow, the plough must have rusted in the furrow and the young pioneers gone hungry to bed. Thereafter the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company was at an end, and the settlers soon had a sufficient supply of 'long horns' for food and labor."

That may be seen how many of the sons and daughters of pioneers got their start; and this is a lesson to them never to despise the day of small things.

Judge Deady, continuing said: "I suppose the 'blue blood' of these Castilian cattle has long since become so diluted with the ignoble herds driven hither from the West in after times that today it is scarcely perceptible in the ordinary bovine of the country. Indeed, the improved short-horns and other wonderful adipose products of modern cow culture are rapidly taking the place of all others. But the time was when the broad, unbroken prairie of the Willamette were dotted over with droves of these later footed descendants of these seed cattle of Oregon. Many of you remember their striking appearance—a half wild look and motion; a light, long, round body, clean, bony limbs, and a handsome head crowned with a pair of long, tapering, curved horns. When tame or at rest, they were as mild looking as gazelles; but a herd of them alarmed or enraged was as terrible as an army with banners."

Whatever cloud may have surrounded Ewing Young at the outset of his career in Oregon was entirely dissipated by his efforts to introduce cattle, and he at once became an influential man and an important factor in the life of the colony. He completed his sawmill on the Chehalis and kept it in operation until the winter of 1840, when it was washed away.

On February 15, 1841, Young sickened and died, his end no doubt being hastened by his many trials and disappointments. He was buried on his farm under an oak tree. This property, or at least a portion of it, is now owned by the heirs of the late Sidney Smith, who is well known in this country. In this connection, it may not be amiss to suggest that it would be a most commendable thing for the public-spirited citizens of Yamhill County, pioneers, sons and daughters of pioneers, and citizens of these later days alike, to join in raising a fund by voluntary contributions, or in any way that may seem to be the wisest, to erect a suitable marker or monument upon the public highway nearest the place where Mr. Young was buried, with a suitable description of what it stands for, and then raise an additional sum to be spent in the construction of some public building, for school or library purposes, to perpetuate his name as the first American settler in Yamhill County.

When Young died, the community was at a loss regarding the disposal of his estate, he being the first American in Oregon to die leaving property. He left no will, and if one had been found there was no judicial authority in the country to take charge of it. Accordingly, after the funeral on February 17th, a meeting of citizens was held, pursuant to notice. This has been fitly called the "Primary Meeting of the People of Oregon. After the organization the occasion of calling the meeting and the necessities of the community were discussed, and a plan of action outlined. The business of settling Young's estate being urgent, Dr. Ira L. Babcock was elected Supreme Judge, and George W. Le Breton, clerk of court and probate recorder, and it was resolved that until a code of laws was adopted, Judge Babcock should be governed by the laws of the State of New York. His first official action was on April 15, 1841, when he appointed Rev. David Leslie "administrator of the estate of Ewing Young, yeoman, deceased, intestate." In due time the estate was settled up, and it netted \$724.26, and was loaned out. In 1844 this money was collected and paid into the treasury of the Provisional Government, which was pledged to refund the same to the heirs or creditors of Young whenever they should appear. By the same act \$150 of the sum was used in building a jail at Oregon City, the first west of the Missouri River. Thus it is seen that Young's death was the primary reason for organizing the Provisional Government, and his estate gave its treasury its first funds.

In 1854 an heir appeared in the person of Josquin Young, before referred to, and he petitioned the legislature for the territory for his father's money. He was empowered by the legislature to bring suit, but he did not do so. At length the Supreme Court, consisting of George H. Williams and Matthew P. Deady, gave judgment for Young. In the meantime he (Young) had sold his interest to Judge O. C. Pratt, when this was known, a political opponent of Pratt, a member of the legislature, secured the passage of a bill stopping the payment of the judgment. Thus the matter rested until 1862, when through the influence of Judge Deady, persons having claims against the territory were authorized to bring suit. Pratt took advantage of this condition, brought suit, secured judgment, and received \$5108.94, in November, 1863, twenty-two years after the property was taken possession of by the first probate court.

Cost of a Horse.

It costs on an average \$104.00 to raise a horse to the age of three years on the farms of Indians and those of other states. This price has been carefully figured by experts of the department of agriculture, who based their figures on those furnished by 10,000 correspondents scattered throughout the country.

New Mexico can raise horses cheaper than the other states, or at an average price of \$98.50. In Massachusetts the raising of colts is more expensive than in any other state, the average horse at three years representing an investment of \$141.50.

Not to Be Repeated.

Shakespeare's contention that "there was never a philosopher who could endure the toothache patiently" was disproved by Canon Liddon. After an experience that would have closed the mouths of most of us Liddon found it possible to write to a friend: "I have been quite laid up with trouble with my few remaining teeth of which I had five taken out the day before yesterday. As only four remain, this particular experience cannot be repeated in this present life." This is a classic instance of the triumph of philosophy over pain.—London Globe.

IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

Notwithstanding occasional periods of depression in financial matters, the business of this bank has shown a steady and consistent increase throughout the twenty-five years of its existence. Following are given the relative deposits on January 1st of the last three years:

January 1, 1913	\$296,163.18
January 1, 1914	330,158.10
January 1, 1915	348,543.96

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