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Produced and Directed by S. SYLVAN SIMON

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Public Schools of County Started to Organize 1847

CHILDREN OF SETTLERS AND ORPHANS OF THE TRAIL GEARED EDUCATIONAL EFFORT

By Hervey S. Robinson
(continued from last week)

The educational effort of early Washington county, which resulted in the beginning of a public schools organization in 1847, was deeply rooted in the tragedies of the various trails into the Oregon country. Fully as much as for the children of the early pioneers, first schools were designed to care for the upbringing of orphans whose parents had fallen in Indian attack or by other causes in the adventurous trek from the eastern part of the United States into the raw West.

The saga of early Oregon teachers tells of the Flathead Indians pleading for someone to teach them "the White Man's way of Heaven," answered in 1840 by a party of independent Congregational missionaries. Burning with the zeal of true missionaries, the party of Harvey L. Clark, Alvin T. Smith and P. H. Littlejohn, with their brides, set out for the Oregon country, answering a call for service to their God.

Unlike their Methodist contemporaries for these young evangelists there were no missionary boards backing them with financial aid and prestige. They were entirely on their own, having but their own resources for support in the carrying out of their crusading mission.

In Wyoming, on their westward trek, the Oregon-bound party met six American trappers who were being forced out of a livelihood because the American Fur company was about to withdraw from the trade. These trappers had come to the Rocky Mountains in early youth, engaged in trapping for many years and now, almost as poor as when they came, they were obliged to seek an opportunity for life elsewhere, in a new community.

They had been cut off from white society so long, they had Indian wives and had acquired families of children dependent upon them for support.

After having spent the winter of 1840-41 at the Whitman and spalding missions, the adventurous pilgrims finally reached North Tualatin Plains where, to their surprise, they again encountered their trapping acquaintances from the Rocky Mountain rendezvous, part of the six families settled roughly in the vicinity of the Beaverton area.

Near the historic landmark of Glencoe, now mostly a name designating a settlement that had been, Harvey Clark and his wife opened a school for the families of these trapper acquaintances and of other settlers in the Tualatin Plains area. This was the first educational effort in the Tualatin sector and one of the first in the Oregon Territory.

With this beginning experience in pioneer teaching, the Clarks, in 1845, moved on to West Tualatin and took a claim on Gales creek covering a large part of the present location of Forest Grove.

Combining the functions of farmer and preacher, Reverend Clark built a log church and served as pastor for both the Congregational church, at home, and the First Presbyterian church at Willamette Falls, a walking distance of 20 miles from Forest Grove.

Into this more or less settled routine that the Clarks had thus begun, in their new location, came a disturbing fact. Each annual wave of migration from the United States brought an increasing number of trail orphans, children whose parents had died upon the trail.

Basic Christian ethics, upon which solid foundation the western civilization was building, could not ignore this factor. These children must be cared for, must be trained and educated for the important building of civilization in the territory into which they had come. These early settlers, many with large families of their own, accepted the waifs into their homes and gave them the same care as they did their own children.

Mrs. Alvin T. Smith, writing in 1845 from West Tualatin Plains records: "I have quite a family to take care of; beside the two half-breed children, I have taken three whose mothers died in coming across the mountains." Harvey Clark opened his home, as he did his heart, for these young unfortunates, translating his Christian concern for their plight into an effort to care and educate as many as possible.

In the winter of 1847, as if by

a stroke of Divine Providence, there came to his assistance a remarkable helper, whose contributions to the immediate present only partly measured her stature as a builder for the future.

This newcomer, Mrs. Tabitha Moffet Brown, at the age of 66, had accompanied an aged relative across the plains and over the Cascade Range, by the difficult Applegate route, driving her own ox-team and asking quarter from no one. Not burdened by family cares but possessed by a heart-warming love of God and Humanity, her quest, upon arrival, was a task whereby she could do something for somebody. And she found opportunity aplenty, in this new home.

The valiant educational efforts begun by Reverend Clark, meanwhile, were bearing historical fruit, as recorded in the OREGON SPECTATOR, of February 18, 1847.

Editor George L. Curry quotes a letter from Reverend J. S. Griffin which reports the establishment of a board of education with Griffin as secretary, "empowered with the responsibility of securing approved teachers, importing from time to time all necessary books and, as the agents of the people, to take such general superintendence of matters as will be best calculated to secure the permanency, utility and prosperity of school operations."

"The trustees are to hold their office for one year. And it was made their duty to call meetings of the school community, near the close of the year, for the purpose of reorganizing said board of trustees and to call other general meetings for counsel and instruction, as the occasion may require."

"It was also made the duty of

the secretary to make such importation of books, stationery and apparatus as the board shall order."

To which communication, Editor Curry offered the tag line, "Let the seeds of knowledge be sown broadcast and we shall have a vigorous, industrious and happy population."

Search of records indicate that Griffin, editor and publisher of the OREGON AMERICAN, had noted what is believed to be the first public school organization within the vast area of the Oregon Territory, a fitting forecast of the great strides that would be made in the field of educational endeavor within what is now known as Washington County.

(To be Continued Next Week)

SPECIAL SCHOOL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, in compliance with Sec. 111-908, O. C. L. A., to the legal voters of School District No. 107, of Washington County, State of Oregon, that a SPECIAL SCHOOL MEETING of said District will be held at Schoolhouse, on the 5th day of August, 1948, at 8 o'clock in the P. M., for the following objects: To vote on the question, "Shall district No. 107, Aloha-Huber be consolidated with district No. 81, McKinley, and an apportionment of assets and liabilities be made as provided for in Section 111-3149, Oregon School Laws, 1946?"

Dated this 22nd day of July, 1948.

ATTEST:

KATHARINE B. PLAIR
District Clerk
GERALD B. GRAY
Chairman Board of Directors
Date of first publication July 23, 1948.
Date of last publication July 30, 1948.

What'll it be folks!
**Chicken? Steak? Ham?
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Veal Roast Leg or Rump Cut lb. **75c**
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Beef Pot Roast lb. **73c**
Fillet of Sole lb. **48c**
Fillet of Cod Eastern lb. **45c**
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Ry-Krisp Raisin-Wafers 9-oz. pkg. **23c**
Sugar Cookies Old Time 9 1/4-oz. pkg. **25c**
Ritz Crackers Nabisco 1-lb. pkg. **32c**
Graham Crackers Money Maid 2-lb. **51c**
Soda Crackers Snowflakes 1-lb. **27c**
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Soap Features

Cashmere Bouquet Toilet Soap **2/23c**
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Supurb Soap Granulated 24-oz. pkg. **33c**
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Par Soap 21-oz. pkg. **33c** 48-oz. pkg. **71c**
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