

Thomas Denney Settled in Fanno Area With Sawmill

TRADE DEMAND OF CALIFORNIA BOLSTERED ORE. TERRITORY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By Hervey S. Robinson

(Continued from last week)

The news of the treaty with Great Britain in 1846 giving the United States undisputed title to the Oregon Country came as music to the ears of the Denneys and Hicklins in a little frontier settlement in southern Indiana. The spirit of the pioneers was in their blood.

Great grandfather John Denney had come from England to pioneer on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. His son Adam, a soldier in the American Revolution, had moved on into North Carolina and Kentucky.

Adam's son, Fielding, fought in the War of 1812 and went to Indiana where he married Jane Hicklin, daughter of another family of pioneers and where his children Thomas, Robert Aaron and Rebecca were born. Now these children and their cousins, John, Felix and James Hicklin felt the urge to move on again to a new frontier.

Thomas Denney was a sawmill man. He had heard marvelous tales of the Oregon Country sent back by missionaries and travelers.

Stories of great wealth in land and forests. Land to be had for the taking. Great trees, untouched by the saw and people living in log cabins because there was no sawed lumber available.

He saw a great future for log-

ging and milling in Oregon. So he dismantled his mill in Indiana and packed and shipped his machinery around Cape Horn to Oregon.

That machinery was pretty simple compared to what we know now. Bandsaws and circular saws were not yet invented. It was just a kind of up and down affair much the same as a jig saw.

On January 4, 1849 Thomas Denney married Miss Barilla F. King in Jennings county, Indiana. In March of the same year, accompanied by his wife, his two brothers, Robert and Aaron, his unmarried sister Rachel and three cousins, Felix, John and James Hicklin, he started across the plains for Oregon with ox teams and covered wagons.

Several oxen died on the journey, from drinking alkali water, but aside from this they had little trouble and Mrs. Denney said that she enjoyed it greatly.

They arrived at Foster's farm in Clackamas county October 6 and from there came to Milwaukie, where Thomas found employment in Lot Whitcomb's sawmill for the winter.

He secured a donation land claim in Washington county, seven miles southwest of Portland. With lumber brought from Milwaukie he built a board shanty into which they moved and commenced pioneer life Nov. 29, 1851.

The sawmill arrived and was set up right on the claim. Located

on Fanno creek, it derived its power from the stream. Sometimes the water was too low. At other times with the aid of a dam, a good "head" was secured and the mill ran day and night to utilize the power while it was available.

The sawmill was a profitable venture. Most of the early frame houses in eastern Washington county were built from lumber sawed from Denney's California

rough boards brought \$100 per thousand, shingles \$25. Most of the material for a house was finished right on the building site.

Work proceeded slowly. It would take the carpenter and his helpers several weeks to get the lumber in shape. One man would plane the boards, others with special tools would put the tongue and groove on the flooring. Those old carpenters were masters of their craft. Some of their old houses are still standing, almost as plumb and true as ever, after nearly 100 years.

The Californians were producing plenty of gold and nothing else. They needed lumber, clothing, flour, fruit and vegetables and many other things for which they were willing to pay high prices and the Oregon pioneers hastened to take advantage of the market.

The rich virgin soil was tilled intensively. Oregon apples, cherries and prunes became famous. Fanno onions were known throughout the Pacific area. Standard Flour from Milwaukie was considered tops. Woolen mills sprang up and sent their product to the gold diggers and elsewhere.

Tom Denney was a community leader. He served several terms as Justice of the Peace in the early '50's. He took a leading part in the agitation for a road to Portland and donated six months labor by his hired man.

The roadway did not follow the

canyon but struck over the hills to the south cutting into old Seventh Street. Like the King of France in the old rhyme it went "straight up the hill and then went down again." The work was nearly all done with shovel and axe and proved so steep as to test the mettle of the best oxen.

The Denney cabin was soon replaced by a substantial frame house which was the center of much activity for many years. After Thomas Denney and his wife had passed away and the children all grown and gone to homes of their own, the old house was razed. It never had any occupants but Denneys.

(Continued next week)

Offer to Supply Student Speakers

The speech department at Lewis and Clark college, through its new student speakers bureau, will supply speakers for community groups as a regular part of its workshop and forensic activities, Adena Joy, forensic director, has announced.

Student speakers include Ben Padrow who speaks on "Conditions in Palestine" and "The Meaning of Judaism"; Arthur Silva, "The Psychology of Prejudice"; and "Need for Peace-time Draft"; Ralph Howard, "Recreation for Mental Health"; Harry Geil and Arthur Atkinson, "Federal Aid in Education".

Other topics available to civic, social and religious groups include "How to Protect Civil Liberties in the United States," "U. S. Foreign Policies Abroad" and "The Need for Economic Planning in the United States."

Interested groups may schedule speakers by telephoning Miss Joy at the college, C196 7531.

Parking Meters Should Produce Traffic Benefits

Motorists who feed coins into parking meters are entitled to something more than merely the privilege of parking, traffic engineers were told at a recent Oregon traffic engineering conference at Oregon State college.

Harry Aumack, Spokane traffic engineer, said that meter revenues—now generally used by towns and cities to reduce general taxation—should go into permanent traffic improvements and investments in off-street parking. He answered critics of parking meters by pointing out that meter-regulated spaces provide from three to five times as effective control as unmeted spaces.

One-way streets were also advocated at the conference as one of the least used but most effective ways of creating better use of existing streets. They not only utilize present facilities without great additional cost, but tend to reduce accidents and save motorists time. The public gets used to them in less than 30 days and merchants find within a few weeks that they actually gain sales volume because their shopping areas are more accessible, it was pointed out.

Officials of the Institute of Traffic Engineers praised western highway and traffic engineers for the lead they have taken in promoting traffic safety. The western section of the institute, they said, is the largest and most active in the country. The engineers commended Oregon State college for its part in sponsoring this first northwest regional conference and voted to make a similar meeting a yearly affair.

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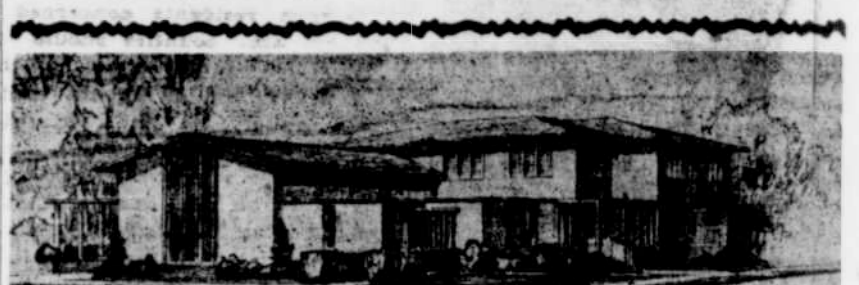
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