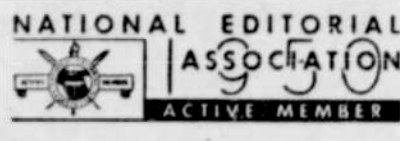


BEAVERTON ENTERPRISE

BUSINESS OFFICE AND PLANT PHONE BEAVERTON 2321
Plant located in Beaverton—Tualatin Valley Highway and Short St.

Published Friday of each week by The Pioneer Publishing Co., at Beaverton, Oregon. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office Beaverton, Oregon.

STANLEY W. NETHERTON Editor and Publisher
MRS. EDNA BLACK Associate Editor-Office Mgr.
WALLY KAIN News Editor



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Most Precious Rock Notes
Ore. Survey Starting Point

MARKER ESTABLISHED WILLAMETTE MERIDIAN
NEAR SYLVAN, 1851; BROUGHT ORDER TO CHAOS

By Hervey S. Robinson

Any reader who has additional information on names, places or events covered by Mr. Robinson are invited to write the newspaper. In this way, a more complete historical series will be possible.

Address letters to Hervey S. Robinson, % Beaverton Enterprise, Beaverton, Oregon.

(Continued from last week)

On a hillside three miles from Portland at a place practically unknown to most Oregonians, a man drove a stake, on June 4, 1851, to mark the "starting point" for the U. S. land survey of Oregon Territory. This stake was officially replaced on July 25, 1895 by a six-inch stone marker which may truthfully be said to be the most precious stone in the Pacific Northwest.

If you own any portion of the earth's surface in Oregon or Washington the integrity of your title hinges upon a legal description in relation to this pin point on the earth's surface.

The man who drove the stake was John B. Preston, first U. S. Surveyor General for Oregon Territory. The place is a small state park, just off the Burnside Road, a short distance west of Mt. Calvery cemetery and about three quarters of a mile north of the bus station at Sylvan.

It is at the extreme northeast corner of Washington county, where it joins Multnomah on two sides.

Land claims were in a state of utter confusion when Preston arrived in Oregon City on April 30, 1851 to take up his duties as surveyor general and, incidentally, registrar and receiver of the U. S. Land Office.

The legislative assembly of the Provisional Government in 1843 had passed a law giving "every male descendant of a white man 21 years of age or over" the privilege of selecting and recording as his claim 640 acres of land.

All these claims were annulled in 1848, by the passage of the act creating Oregon Territory and revived in 1850 by the enactment of

the Oregon land law, with certain modifications, chief of which was a clause, inserted by Territorial Delegate, Samuel R. Thurston, to enable his Methodist pals at Oregon City to "swipe" the claim of their former benefactor, Dr. John McLaughlin.

Under this law, as there were no land surveys, public or private, at that early day, when a man went out and selected his land, he took a light ax or an Indian tomahawk and blazed on the trees a line of marks around his claim. In the prairie lands he planted posts at the corners and properly marked them. Then he filed a description in the Provisional government land records.

Here is the description of one of these original land claims in Washington county, seven or eight miles from Beaverton. Some of our readers will recognize the description and the names of pioneers mentioned:

"Beginning at a point near Reasoner's old blacksmith shop near the mouth of a small canyon, thence up that canyon to the head, thence to an oak tree blazed on both sides with a T, cut in the north side blaze, thence on a straight line with the head of said canyon and oak tree to a point intersecting the east line of George Richardson's or William Graham's land claim, thence south to a point due west of a line that divides the land claim of James Hicklin and Darius Taylor thence east to where it intersects the meridian line and thence to the mouth of said canyon to the place of beginning being the land claim of Darius Taylor."

Naturally, under the circumstances, these land claims often overlapped. Mrs. Minerva Thessen Oatfield, who as a child lived in the vicinity of Milwaukie, says of this period: "Differences over line fences were often settled by a 44 Colt, where at least one of the participants usually lost permanent interest in corner stakes."

Adding to the general confusion, the territorial legislature had passed an act, September 5, 1849, to establish free public schools, and setting aside sections 16 and 36 in each township as school land. Some of this school land had already been taken up by homesteaders and legal complications loomed, and besides, how could any one know until the survey was made just where sections 16 and 36 lay?

Political pressure compelled the survey and staking of private claims first and the establishment of the public school system was delayed from 1849 until 1856 while sections of school land were slowly being located.

To add to his headaches Preston was subjected to a bitter sniping from certain newspapers who were on the opposite side of the political fence.

In the face of all these difficulties, Preston went right to work. He let the first contract for surveying to James E. Freeman to survey the Willamette meridian north to Puget sound and the base line from the Pacific ocean to the summit of the Cascades. With his partner Ives, receive \$25 per mile for running the meridian line north and south and the same rate for the base line. The rate for standard parallel and subdivision lines was \$12 per mile.

Freeman ran into many difficulties in running the lines for the first 75 townships to the Umpqua valley. He had to offset several times to keep from running into the Cascade mountains. The land act provided only for a survey of the Willamette valley as far south as the Umpqua and of the Puget Sound region, the most thickly populated districts.

The Willamette meridian was to be placed where it would cut down through the Willamette valley and the Puget Sound in the vicinity of the settlements, and the base line was to be located south of the Columbia river so survey crews would not be bothered with the river.

Funds were scarcely sufficient for surveying even this much. Contracts were made when the going rate for common labor was \$52 a month. Before the work began the California gold rush had taken almost all of the able-bodied men and wages were doubled.

Carpenters asked \$8 a day and common labor wanted \$75 to \$100 a month. Butter sold for 75 cents a pound and flour at \$15 a barrel, but in spite of these conditions, the contractors somehow managed to do an amazingly competent job.

Many of the early surveyors were

attracted to Oregon by the prospect of quick cash and high adventure but remained to become substantial citizens and help to carve out a state after their survey work was done.

Most of the old time cadastral engineers, (surveyors to you) are in their graves but their contribution to the stability of early Oregon, and the peace of mind that

they have given to succeeding generations in the knowledge that their land descriptions are accurate and boundaries properly located can scarcely be over estimated. The Willamette Stone should be made a shrine to surveyors and cadastral engineers everywhere.

(Continued next week)

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NORTHEAST TENTH AND FLANDERS

SPRING HOUSE HUNTING

Comes the first inclination of Spring and the fancies of the renter or the apartment dweller yearns for a house and a plot of ground, somewhat removed from the hustle and hurry of city life.

Weekends of sunny weather, from now until the middle of summer, will find more and more home seekers who have scanned the real estate ad sections and who take to highways and side roads in search of a spot to call home.

The Tualatin valley comes into particular attention for house hunting. The feeling of this semi-agricultural area is strongly rural, even though a scant 15 or 20 minutes travel brings all the services and advantages of a metropolitan area.

There is, of course, even more to living in the Tualatin valley than being in the outposts of the Portland area. In all the communities of the valley, there are businesses which take care of the essential services and bring about a tight-knit nucleus of interest that leads to character of a town.

For those who enjoy the rapturous living in an area like ours, where there is elbow room and good neighbors, much is owed the enterprise of merchants and businessmen here at home. They stand by, patiently, always ready to give a little more service or a little extra effort to serve those who are neighbors and fellow townsmen.

And the fact that these businessmen are always nearby, whatever the crisis that looms up to bedevil a household, is only part of their need. Without them, we would be required to go far afield for the purchase of food, clothing, other goods and medical or dental services.

What must be recognized is that every merchant, in the conduct of his business or profession, is helping to make a community out of a concentration of houses and homes. And their enterprise rewards a community by making it more attractive to newcomers who, likewise, need shoes and gasoline, amusement and the sterner requirements of living.

Yes, Springtime is house hunting time. On our classified page there is, each week, full evidence that an opportunity to own a square or so of good earth and establish a home is ready and waiting for those who tire of apartment houses or the life of a renter.

As more residents come, more business services will follow in their wake. From such things are sprung the developments of progress and community success.

To all these seekers, the Tualatin valley cordially offers a welcome. May they come to our area in vast numbers, finding here, as so many of us have, a home and a new life.

We who already are settled in these communities, while noting that others are coming to join us, might also give a more appreciative glance to the businesses that have been established to serve us.

Living in the valley encourages one to consider such residence as home. Even those who work in Portland nevertheless enjoy identity where they live; their daytime citizenship in the Big Town ends when they finish their stint of work and leave for home.

So, with Spring house hunting, may we urge those who take advantage of the lot of living in Tualatin valley to be more than suburbanites. May they use our businesses, vote in our elections, join our organizations and be a real part of the fabric of our times!

OTHER COUNTY SERVICES

There seems to be a shade of futility in one of the tasks facing the county court, this time of year. This concerns the annual budget for welfare purposes.

Welfare, it is well recognized, is a fact and a definite value which will be with us probably forever. Whether or not there are opponents to the concept of caring for the aged, the blind, the indigent, the dependent children and others who are not fortunate enough to care for themselves, payments will go on, through an arrangement between federal, state and county agencies.

The county's job is administration, according to rules imposed by state and federal agencies. But it must also provide a basis of money which the other two contributors match in substantial amount.

The county's problem of government, it must be noted, is not only that of schools nor of roads nor of welfare nor of any significant branch of its many services. The problem is to get as much government for as much money as the tax rolls provide.

The county has had a continuing increase in population which might lead to the assumption that more and more money is becoming available to county government. What has happened since the 1946-47 tax levy might illustrate the true trend.

Total county levy, 1946-47, was 21.3 mills. In 1947-48, it dropped to 16.3 mills. For 1948-49, county levy totaled 15.8 mills. Present taxation, 1949-50, is on a county rate of 13.2 mills.

Take a good look at those figures. Then,

look in any part of the county, paying particular attention to county roads. Does it seem that the lessening of taxes for county purposes is a favorable justification for the condition of these roads?

The explanation is not that the county court is trying to impress anyone with minimum millage rates. Rather, it is that state law limiting taxation increase to six percent of the highest amount during the preceding three years makes it impossible to tax in the manner that would provide adequate county roads and other governmental services in proportion to the rising population.

It shows, by the figures quoted, that the impact of new residents, while increasing the valuation, has lessened the millage rate for county levies. Such a situation, however, will have no restraining effect upon money budgeted for county welfare.

The setup on this phase of county government is that the judge and his trusty commissioners work with the county welfare office in determining the amount of money required to administer the task for the coming year. They spend long hours weighing factors and peering into the future and finally arrive at a figure which is their honest estimate of county needs.

This figure goes to Salem, where the State Welfare Department takes a look at it. If estimates are too high, it is said, the state department will cut. But if in the state's opinion the figures are not adequate to meet the year's needs, a mandatory increase is added and the revised budget is sent back to the county court.

You may be sure that the county judge and his two commissioners have no authority to alter, by one penny, the amount of levy determined by the state. It's only a matter then, of accepting the whole new figure and then trying to distribute the rest of the allowed tax money to the many other factors of government remaining.

The scope of county government is ever expanding. Perhaps it is a reflection of the growing population that more and more services are being fostered for a place on the annual budget. But the complication comes, real and inescapable, when the money such new services require must be allocated from a steadily shrinking taxation and budget base.

There must be some concern felt over the fate of other county services, on a par with the provisions for an adequate county welfare setup.

TARZAN LIVES ON

With the passing of Edgar Rice Burroughs, whose creation of Tarzan has enriched the reading enjoyment of two or three generations, there revives many memories of the first introduction of his startling, romantic ape-man. And the seemingly endless activities of the jungle hero might well stand as a miracle of creative writing.

There have been many who scorned Burroughs' writings. But year after year, by books, by movies, by comic strips, more and more readers thrilled to his adventuring and even further heightened his royalty checks.

Certainly, when adding up a lifetime of his work, he well stands as a dynamic figure of letters. And his influence has extended afar.

From most vigorous youngster, swinging from the branches of an old apple tree and shouting a jungle cry, to a staid adult who only betrays his affinity to the Tarzan story by a reminiscent glint of the eye, there is a feeling of regret at the passing of one who opened such new fields of adventure through his creative writing.

But though Edgar Rice Burroughs is departed, there yet remains the heroic figure of Tarzan the Ape Man, who will without doubt live on in various media of entertainment.

"STOP ME-TOOISM"

The Republican Party should begin measuring up to its responsibilities as a great and independent political party. "Me-tooism" in foreign policy should be stopped. A political party which is too timid or too tired to make constructive, positive, and realistic foreign-policy proposals of its own and to match them in debate and discussion with the suggestions of the White House and the Secretary of State can scarcely expect the public to entrust it with their future and their fate. We Republicans have not for several years met our full obligation in this regard as a great political party.

Karl E. Mundt,
Senator from South Dakota

IT'S PLANTING TIME

Oh my aching back! but this spring gardening is an adventure without parallel.

In fact, among county 4H club members, a great deal of enthusiasm is pent up and all ready to explode in a number of sod-busting projects.

Perhaps the youngsters' interest will be enough to pace their elders in this spirited season of planting time!

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