

Bartholomew Family History

By MARY BARTHOLOMEW SETH

(The following story was handed us by Randall Peterson and contains much interesting history):

During the past 60 years, Heppner has suffered and survived two great tragedies — the flood of 1903 and the fire in 1918. I do not remember the first one—being only 6 weeks old at the time—but I will not forget the fire. At the time, my grandmother's niece, Pearl Shepherdson, was visiting her for the summer spending part of the time with her on the homestead, part at our ranch and part in town. The fire happened on the 4th of July when most of the town people were celebrating at home. It started in the early afternoon and burned much of the town unhindered. The Methodist Church and all the homes on the west side of the street from my grandmother's house except Dr. McMurdock's were burned and on north and down Main Street. The Palace Hotel was burned and other smaller businesses.

My grandmother and cousin were alone in the house and became very excited, of course. They attempted to save the furniture and dragged a good deal out in the yard and then went upstairs and threw bedding down the narrow stairs blocking them so they had great difficulty in climbing out. However, the fire did not cross the street and the house suffered only from blistered paint across the front. The huge trees all along that side of the street no doubt saved it. Two young men of my father's threshing crew arrived to assist my grandmother but found everything under control and helped in carrying back the furniture.

But the greatest tragedy of all was the big flood in June, 1903 caused by the cloudburst. Most of the water came down Willow Creek in a great wall carrying boulders, houses, animals, barbed wire fences and newly cut hay. The residential district of the town was along the creek right in the path of the torrent. The new steam laundry filled with heavy machinery dammed the water for a short time until a lake 20 feet deep formed and then gave way, losing the water on its victims. Some men managed to get to the hills but not many women and children. Skirts were long in those days and soon became water logged trap for the stumbling women. Many tales of bravery have been told of that terrible experience.

Mrs. W. J. Leezer of Heppner later wrote in her autobiography for the "Pioneer of Oregon" that—

"We had a house on a hill in Heppner and during the Hoppner flood our home was a refuge for a great crowd of people who were washed out of their homes on the lower levels. The flood occurred on June 14, 1903, which was a Sunday we had just finished our Sunday dinner when the storm began to rage. We had a Jersey cow below the house and I thought she would be drowned so I went out to try to rescue her, not realizing how terrific was the storm. A young boy, Leo Blackman came running toward me and told me to go back to the house.

When I did, I found so many people running to the house that I thought it must be on fire and that they were coming to help us. I soon found however that they were coming for safety. Trees and houses were carried along by the flood and the devastation was terrible. Two hundred people lost their lives in the flood. My house was literally packed to the very door with refugees; there were beds in every available place including the bathroom.

The house was so crowded that when I heard a knock on the door on Monday, I opened it and seeing two people standing there, said I thought it would be impossible to take them in. Then I discovered it was my daughter, who had come from St. Helen's Hall in Portland, and Bud Shipley, a Heppner boy who saw her arrive in the devastated town.

She had been able to come by train as far as Lone and through the kindness of a railroad official was given a seat in a hack which brought doctors and nurses from Portland.

We had no Red Cross in those days, but we received much help. Portland sent 500 men and they did a wonderful work in helping to clear away the debris. Pendleton came to our rescue, too, and sent supplies.

Among those who were killed in the flood were my niece, Mrs. Robert Hynd, and her two children. Mr. Hynd was found three miles from the bodies of his wife and children. Mr. Hynd while almost overcome, he was resuscitated.

After the flood, Heppner people were always frightened by

a heavy rain and made it a practice to come to our house when a storm threatened.

The number of dead amounted to one fourth of the population of the city. Not even the larger and more publicized Johnstown flood of 1889 took such a proportionately great number of its inhabitants.

Fred Coe Bartholomew was a young man of 19 at this time. He had arrived in town the day before on his return from school at the Columbia College in Milton. He was with his father in the Methodist Church when the flood struck. His recollections are—

"The day before the flood I came by train from Columbia College at Milton and the next day, Sunday, June 14, 1903 at 2:30, I was at Sunday School at the South Methodist Church—a Sunday School that my father instituted which he patterned after a like school he attended by the Moody Institute in Chicago. Cards were printed and given to each pupil in attendance and upon arrival, the card was presented to me at the door and punched for records and any child who did not miss a Sunday for a year was taken for a train ride to Petty's Grove for the day and a picnic.

I will never forget the last Sunday before this excursion was the time for the cards to be looked at to see who got a ticket for the train ride and the picnic of course, very few had every Sunday punched out but my father went to the parents of the child and of course each parent would dig up and all were taken. But the Sunday of the flood when Sunday School was out at 3:30, an awful hard rain and hail was coming down and all the sixty children were not permitted to leave in the storm and it was figured out that these children, if they had been at home, at least 23 would have been drowned. Most of these children had no home to go to and were taken to Mountain House on the hill for the time being, waiting for the news of their parents. This was sure a sad time for the crying and screaming youngsters and it was always in the night before parents who were not drowned came on the scene.

For days and weeks the money was coming in for the help of the flood victims. As I remember it totaled something like 65 thousand. My father was chosen to distribute as best as could be to the homeless and needy. The people that had been drowned were washed down the creek and were buried in the hall that was as big as small marbles and were frozen stiff and it was 5 or 6 days before they were dug out. I drove a team from the livery stable of Sam Meadow's barn. It was a hack and the bodies as were carried out were placed three wide in the bottom row and then two on top and the sixth on top and I rushed them to the morgue where they were washed and identified. I made 19 trips and then it was days before they thought they had them all accounted for. It was some time before these frozen bodies were cleaned as it seemed they were so frozen and stiff."

My mother has clippings from the Portland papers of the reports of the people of Oregon and other states for the victims of the flood, and which they echo far and wide. Meetings were called in Portland and committees appointed to gather contributions and to send men and supplies to the relief of the town. Among other things a note is made of sending 100 coffins. Since the railroad was washed out, Lexington was made headquarters for all supplies being shipped in. The papers were filled with accounts of heroism, rescues, and near rescues.

Much money was contributed both in Portland and to the authorities in Heppner. The committee in Portland and to the authorities there, use a great deal to buy supplies of all kinds and to hire men to work in Heppner cleaning debris and burying the dead. Every effort was made to do this quickly to avoid contaminating and water supply. A report in the September 11, '03 issue of the Oregonian by the Heppner committee acknowledges all receipts and lists every contribution and every disbursement of the money received there. This amounted to \$61,106.95. But she does

not have any reports of the money received in Portland nor of their expenditures. According to the report quoted, some \$1500 remained in Portland after all expenses were paid and it was set aside to form the nucleus of a fund for a similar disaster.

People of Morrow county to this day recall with horror the great Heppner flood. Floods are still all too common for in February, 1963, there was a small one which filled people's yards with mud and recalled to many the results of the 1903 flood. The population of Heppner has changed during 60 years but the stories go on. And the mass grave in the Heppner cemetery is a grim reminder—"Lest we forget."

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No. 2	19½	44½

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Tuesday Nite Owls

Team	W	L
Cal's Cafe	3	1
Fiesta Bowl	2	2
Ed Dick	2	2
MLadies	2	2
Gardner's	2	2
Bristow's Market	1	3

Jack Sumner Named Grand Conductor

Jack Sumner has been named Grand Conductor for the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. He is serving this year under Ben O. Young of Portland who is the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Oregon. Jack has had the opportunity to travel over the state with Mr. Young.

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Mr. and Mrs. Hal Sunday of McMinnville are here during the holiday vacation with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Barton Clark. On Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Sunday, with her brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ned Clark, went to Tollgate skiing.

Cecil Rill of Heppner recently returned home from St. Anthony in Pendleton where he underwent corrective surgery on his ankle. The surgery was to repair an old injury as a result of a broken foot. Mr. Rill was in the hospital for a week and is reported to be making a good recovery.

AGENDA—SCHOOL DIST. Regular Board Meeting 7:30 p.m., Jan. 18, Lexington Morrow County School District R-1

1. Call meeting to order. Chairman Jack Sumner
2. Minutes of December 10, regular meeting
3. Financial report
4. Delegations, if any
5. Superintendent's Report
6. Old Business
7. New Business

1. Consider 1971-72 school calendar
2. Consider 30 passenger bus bids
3. Approve contracts for new certified personnel
4. Consider contract renewals for administrators (executive session)
 - a. Mr. Bier—One year contract
 - b. Mr. Brandon—One year contract
5. Receive classified employees salary requests
6. Consider need for special board meeting
7. Consider need for special education program at Heppner Elem.
8. Consider budget items
9. School dismissal grades 7-12 for Small Schools Program Feb. 3
10. Reports
11. Teacher consultation meeting—Mr. Sumner
12. Announcements
13. Meet with PEC committee 7:30 p.m., Jan. 19, Riverside
14. Next regular meeting, Feb. 15, 1971, 7:30, Riverside High School
15. Budget message, Tuesday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m., District Office

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Mr. and Mrs. Steve Maus of Durango, Colo., made a surprise visit here with her parents during the Christmas holidays. They are students at Fort Lewis College. Mrs. Maus, the former Frances Abrams had called her grandmother, Mrs. Sara Morrow to tell her they were coming to surprise her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Abrams. While here they went on to Everett to visit the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Abrams.

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