

WHO'S WHO FIRST CENTURY

JAMES G. & CATHERINE DOHERTY

So that we may better know ourselves we attend to the past. Heppner's centennial provides a timely occasion for each of us to reflect on the heritage that we celebrate.

The story of James G. and Catherine Doherty is unique only in its import and preciousness to their descendants. Aside from that, it provides an illustration in microcosm of the settlement and development of this fair country. Their story, though differing in particulars, is not unlike that of any other early family. It begins in 1883 in County Donegal, Ireland, where James Grant Doherty was born and raised.

The early Irish emigration had gained its impetus from the potato famines of 1845 and 1846. By 1883, emigration was old-hat and conditions in Ireland had improved considerably. The liberal English Prime Minister, Gladstone, had assumed office in 1868 saying, "My mission is to pacify Ireland." My grandfather, who was one year old at the time, was neither impressed nor pacified. But he was patient enough to wait until he had turned 16 before leaving the old sod.

Armed only with the expectancy of opportunity, he boarded the steamer Encoria. He disembarked in New York City on October 8, 1883, not yet having gained his sea legs. He stayed there just long enough to get bearings. Upon inquiry of the way to Oregon he was pointed west and straightforward headed in that direction, Horatio Alger notwithstanding.

In Eastern Oregon, my grandfather had a benefactor, Charles Cunningham had come to Umatilla County in 1869 and by 1883 was well on his way to becoming "Mr. Sheepman". My grandfather, like many other Irish immigrants, worked for Mr. Cunningham. In 1887 my grandfather went into the sheep business for himself on Buttercreek and moved to Black Horse Canyon, a dry-bed canyon running northeasterly for some nine miles from Lexington to a point intersecting with Sandhollow.

My grandmother, three-times-a-Doherty, moved with him because they had been married in Pendleton, July 6, 1883. By "three-times-a-Doherty", I mean that both her parents were Dohertys (before marriage). Also, after marriage, which made her twice-a-Doherty, and marrying my grandfather made her three-times-a-Doherty. Anyway, when my grandparents started having children there wasn't going to be any doubts that they were Dohertys. Just to be certain there were no doubts, they had thirteen. Apparently, my grandmother was patient, too. It only proves that my grandfather's expectancy of opportunity was not without foundation.

Truly, I love my grandparents though I never knew either one of them. You'd have to respect them if you could visit Black Horse Canyon. With thirteen kids competing for what forage there was, there undoubtedly was little left for stock. Nonetheless, they did well enough to get the thirteen kids raised, though I've heard neighbors say that none of the thirteen were halter-broke.

The rest of their story is the usual one of toil, birth and death, happiness and sorrow. But the true story herein lies not in the family itself, but in the fact that two immigrants, seeking the American Dream, came, became a part of and grew with the country. If my grandparents could gather their off-spring today, they would count over 44 grandchildren, 96 great-grandchildren and 6 great-great-grandchildren. They would say, "All things considered, life's been good to us." Life's still being good to us and, in a sense, my grandparents are still a part of and are still growing with the country.

That's what a centennial is all about. (By Dennis Doherty.)

FRANK AND CLAYTON AYERS

By Justine Weatherford

Two Ayers brothers were among the earliest in the county coming in with ox teams from Iowa. T.W. had a squatter's claim on Big Butter Creek and Bill made his claim over on Little Butter Creek.

James T. Ayers, Bill's son, came west by train a little later, and he too homesteaded near Pine City where his sons Frank and Clayton grew up. The children of Mr. and Mrs. James T. Ayers were Arthur who died in 1960, Ruby (Mrs. Roy Coxen of Hermiston), Edna (Mrs. Buri Coxen) Salem, Frank, Harvey who died two years ago, and Clayton.

FATHER DROVE MAIL ROUTE

Frank and Clayton's dad worked for Joe Vey at first for \$1.00 a day, then tried the sheep business on his own place. He especially enjoyed the job of driving the mail route from Heppner to Galway (Pine City.) Using horses, he made the 30 mile round-trip each day through dust, mud or snow. Mr. J.T. Ayers lived in Hermiston in his later years and was very proud to be able to keep his auto driver's license until he was almost 90 years old. He died in 1953.

THE BROTHERS REMEMBER

Frank Ayers can recall many stories about the Indians who camped on a bench above Pine City. Clayton recalls early attendance at the Pine City Church where he heard preacher John Hoskins (grandfather of Fred Hoskins Jr.) Frank says their great-uncle T.W. Ayers employed the Vey brothers from Portugal for \$1.00 per day; then in time they bought the ranch and T.W. Ayers moved into Heppner and served as Morrow County Judge.

Frank Ayers has no children; Clayton's daughter Juanita is Mrs. Ray Duke of Pendleton and his son Ray is in business here. Frank and Clayton Ayers have similar abilities. They are both mechanical and both love to grow flowers and vegetables.

The Frank Ayers live on Center St. where Jessie Jones and her daughter Venice Styles lived, and they have modernized the house and have the front and side yards gay with flowers and a good selection of vegetables growing in the small back yard.

The Clayton Ayers live on Gale St., and their yard is in full bloom now; their back garden has more of most everything than they can eat, and they will be giving much to friends. Clayton has modernized quite a few older homes in town. These Ayers brothers have many talents and keep themselves busy always.

THE McMILLANS OF LEXINGTON

John Taylor McMillan and his wife Margaretta Dyer McMillan came west from Mohawk, Tenn. in 1886 with eight of their nine children; the ninth, Cora (Mrs. Earl Warner) was born at Lexington and lives in Corvallis with her sister Mary Lou (Mrs. George Broadley). The other children who came west are deceased, but one son's widow survives. The sons were Elbert D., George L., William P., Samuel "Gus", and John F. Mrs. "Gus" (Frances) lives in the Rose Villa Manor in Portland—she sold her Lexington home across from her mother-in-law's home to the Gene Orwicks. A daughter Elza married Mr. Pointer, and they are both deceased.

The McMillans were farmers, but William P. became a pharmacist and ran a drug store at Lexington; John F. is remembered as a builder of homes—Mrs. Trannie Barnett Parker's large home on the south-east side of town is one he built as is the house across from it where Mrs. Florence McMillan lives now, which was built for Elbert D.

DURING LEXINGTON'S BOOM

During the days when Lexington was a bustling community of many stores and homes, about half the homes were filled by McMillans, and the Beach family had many of the other homes. Mrs. Mrs. John T. McMillan (Margaretta) is remembered as a small lady with only one arm (she had had an arm amputated because of blood-poisoning, thought to have been caused by poor dye in her long black gloves.) She lived in the gray house between her daughter Cora Warner's home (now the Bill Marquardt home) and the apartments that the Leonard's have just sold to the Wrights.

The three brothers George, "Gus", and John F. farmed

northwest of Lexington where Scott "Denny" McMillan and the Nelson brothers farm now. Elbert D. farmed a little closer to Lexington where the C.C. Jones are now.

PRESENT DESCENDANTS

Still living in the county are Scott "Denny" McMillan and Colleen (Mrs. Buster Padberg) children of John F. (Mrs. Sy Slocum) a daughter of "Gus", and Mrs. Florence McMillan who is the widow of W.E., the son of Elbert D. McMillan. There are many fourth and there are many fifth generation descendants of the original McMillans living in Morrow County and around the state.

MRS. ORIS PADBERG (CATTIE FRIDLEY)

Several recent visits in Cattie Padberg's home at Lexington have brought out some interesting facts about her family and about the earlier-arriving Henry Padberg family.

THE FRIDLEYS

Cattie's parents were Lewis Fridley and Marietta Woodruff Fridley who were married in Missouri and came to Harrisburg, Oregon. Her father developed rheumatism and a doctor recommended that Mr. Fridley move to Eastern Oregon and get out of the damp valley. The family came to Social Ridge and got a homestead from Jim Brown, and their daughters attended the Social Ridge School. Cattie is the oldest, her next sister, Edna is now Mrs. Lars Langland of Modesto, Ca., and the youngest, Lois is Mrs. Walter Beck of Stockton, Ca. Cattie married Oris Padberg at the old Padberg Ranch, then Will's, near Lone in 1919.

Cattie, who is now 73 years old, has an unusual old carved table in her home. She says it was "unclaimed after the 1903 Heppner flood." She relates, "My father helped gather up bodies and restore order after the flood. Peoples possessions were put together in piles for families to come claim. After quite a long time when no one claimed this old table, my father brought it home and got help in repairing it."

THE PADBERGS

The first Padberg, Henry came from Germany, and he settled on Rhea Creek in the 1870's. After he reached Oregon he married Martha Riggs and their children were William, Leo, John, Louis, Mary, and Liddy. John married Della Lieualen, the daughter of blacksmith Ranson Lieualen, and they had two sons, Archie and Oris. Archie stayed on the John Padberg ranch and married Susie Allstott and they had four children Archie, Vernon, Juanita, and Lola. After his first wife's death he married Mildred Tucker and they live in Heppner.

Oris Padberg worked for Turner and Van Marter for a time, then worked with Ralph Jackson's machinery shop at Lexington, then started his own machinery shop. Oris and Cattie have three children, Marial Doris, now Mrs. L.D. Vinson at Monument; Elmer Eldon of Lexington, and Charles Henry at Dayton, Wn.

MRS. ERNEST HELIKER (VIDA ZINK)

Sitting out on an interesting, cool, patio and visiting with Vida Heliker and her neighbor Edith Pettys Nicholson was surely a pleasant way to spend a very hot Sunday evening. We did a lot of chatting about old times, and because I had already visited with Edith's niece, Vera Rietmann, about the Pettys' family, we didn't spend much time on them. Edith said she is expecting her very successful daughter Alice home from San Francisco soon, and might go back to California with her.

THE ZINK COVERED WAGON

Vida Zink arrived in this county in a covered wagon as a little girl when her parents came from the Willamette Valley (1889). Farmer Alfred M. Zink and his wife, the former Irene McKinley who was one of 9 children, leased the Leach Ranch out in Blackhorse Canyon for some years while their 6 children were young and they bought the old George J. Curran Ranch out of Lone, which is part of the Ralph Crum's land now. Vida and her sister Addie who was Mrs. Claude Devine and is now W.E. Tompkins of Glenns Ferry, Idaho, are the only Zinks left.

SANDHILL CRANES

One of Vida's vivid memories of her childhood years in Blackhorse Canyon is the yearly visit of the huge Sandhill cranes that come in to the Leach Ranch. Dayton O. Hyde, the Oregon Author of Yamsi, made these cranes famous. Vida recalls that many years ago when these cranes stopped several places in the county, one struck little Pearl Wright (Mrs. Joe Devine) at her family home near Ruggs and pecked out one of her eyes.

ERNEST HELIKER

Ernest Heliker came west from southern Michigan to the Lewis & Clark Fair in Portland in 1905. He and his friends were advised to come to Heppner to find work, and they bought train tickets with their last funds. Ernest stayed but his friends went east again. Ernest loved horses and farm life. He and his friends first worked at stamping wool in the huge wool sacks, very hot work which provided funds for the other boys to go east. Ernest then found work in a livery stable in Heppner where he had charge of harnesses. Then he drove stages to Monument and Hamilton for awhile. He went to farmwork and worked for the Padbergs for a time. In 1912 when he and Vida were wed, Ernest was working at the Howard Lane Pasture.

TO SADDLE BUTTE RANCH

After a few years the Helikers bought the Saddle Butte Ranch which their son Don Heliker is operating today. They also have a daughter Harriet who was Mrs. Lundell and is now Mrs. Bolman and is working as a bookkeeper in Seattle.

Vida has been living on 2nd St. in Lone for some time in an interesting old house, built by Tom Davidson about 1903 surrounded by lively trees and flowers that her green thumb keeps in fine shape. She has a lively interest in so many things and a quick memory of many friends and many happenings. Her husband Ernest died in Oct. 1961.

MR. AND MRS. RAY WRIGHT

My visit with Ray and Eva Wright in their modern home at the base of Heppner's east hill was most pleasing. They have lived there since 1965 when Ray Wright decided to retire, and they found Carl Thorpe ready to sell this attractive home.

The first Wrights were Albert and his wife Julia who came in the early 1870's to establish a small dynasty out Ruggs way. The family is now in the fifth generation, or in some cases the sixth generation. Albert and Julia had three sons and two daughters. Their first child Julia married Tim Bisbee who wrote an interesting diary. The elder son Silas and his son and grandson farmed the old place; the son was Oran who married Pearl La Trace, and their son Albert and his family live there now. Albert's brothers Bob and Clayton are in Hermiston.

THE ANSON WRIGHTS

Anson the third son who farmed in Hay Canyon, bought the George Noble place just above Ruggs where Ray and Eva farmed and where their daughter Beth's husband Barton Clark and son Ned Clark farm today. Before buying the Noble ranch Anson lived up Julia's Fork one winter in a small canyon just below the Anson Wright Park. Here Anson built a little old log cabin which his son Ray says still stands there.

The middle Albert Wright son, George, who lived near Lone Rock died before 1920. The younger daughter, Effie, married Frank Gilliam and their offspring, Ona, Earl, and Hazel (Mrs. Charles Vaughn) are still in Heppner. A son Leonard, a long-time weather facts keeper died several years ago, and his son Don Gilliam carries on with the weather statistics and works with the M.C.G.G. at Lexington.

Anson Wright had three sons mature, Clyde, Ray, and Walt. Clyde farmed a place purchased from the Farnsworths which adjoins the Barton Clark place and on which Clyde's son Harold now lives. Harold's son Kenneth runs the Ruggs Store with his wife Judy Smith Wright, the daughter of the Glenn Smiths. The Walt Wrights live further up toward Hardman, to the left of the highway, and they have two daughters, Patsy and Janet.

MARRIED SISTERS

It is interesting that two Wright sons, Clyde and Ray, married sisters, Mary and Eva Capon the daughters of Englishman John Capon who homesteaded below Monument.

Eva Capon and Ray Wright were married 60 years ago this year in Hardman by Minister J.L. Swift. They recall that after the wedding every one gathered at Eva's sister Alice's (Mrs. George McDuffie) for a big dinner.

The Ray Wright's daughter Beth's husband, Barton Clark is the son of Noah Clark who farmed at Eightmile. The Clark's son Ned and his family are with them on the ranch; their daughter Nonda (Mrs. Hal Sunday) is at Prineville.

Togetherness--Gontys and Shoes--In Heppner Since 1905

TOGETHERNESS...

Gontys and shoes have been associated in Heppner since 1905. It started then as Gonty Bros. by Edmond and Edward Gonty. They were sons of Mrs. Marie Gonty who had brought the boys from Belgium when they were young. Their father died when the boys were very small.

Ed's father, Edward Nicholas who learned to repair shoes in Belgium by the time he was 12 years old. When they came to Portland to visit Mrs. Gonty's sister, Antoinette Samotte, they planned to stay only long enough to learn the English language and then go back to Belgium, where Mrs. Gonty taught school. While they were in Portland, Edward spent some time in the Seattle-Tacoma area working in a shoe factory and a sawmill.



Holding the ball is Altha Devin Kirk, the captain of the 1916 girls basketball team. Bill Moran was coach. Seated the first team from left: Neva Hayes McArgue, Lorraine Goshens Vinton, Murial McCarty Rannion, mgr. Gladys Wattenburger. Second team standing: Marcia Winnard Nicholson, Cecile Stevens Musgrave, Pearl LeTrace Wright and Cecile Devore Hoyt. (No one seems to know Gladys Wattenburger's married name.)



Martin Reid, owner of garage, and Carl Cason, U nion Oil distributor. Garage was across the street from the present Library, about 1927.

They came up from Portland to visit the Vic Goshens. They liked the area so well they decided to stay. Edmond had graduated from the University of Paris. He was interested in taxidermy. He'd shoot a rabbit then stuff it so it would look natural.

The two brothers went into business together in shoe repair and selling shoes. Their place of business was next to the Frog Pond Saloon where the Shell Station now stands. Heppner was a booming, zooming town. After a few years, Edmond and his mother went back to Portland, Edward stayed in Heppner where he married Ellen Marlat. They had two sons, Edmond Edward (Ed Gonty of Heppner) and Thomas of Seattle, and so started the second generation of shoe men.

What was Heppner like in those days? About every two blocks was a little building housing a fire hose cart. Chuck holes in the street were a foot deep. All the kids rode bicycles.

A family outing was a day "down in the sands." They'd pack a picnic lunch and hunt jack rabbits in the area of Juniper Canyon. Ed has lived in the house at the end of Gale St. all of his life except for about a year after he was first married.

Ed started working in the store when he was nine years old. The shoe shop has been at home in various locations. At

one time it was in Dr. McMurdo's former office. The shoe shop was on the ground level floor and the shoe repairing was done downstairs. Ed can remember how his Dad would run upstairs to wait on customers. Mrs. Gonty ran the store in 1918 when her husband was very ill.

The shoe store was where MiLadies is now when the old Palace Hotel burned down. The heat from the fire broke the windows and curled the shoes in the window. All the fronts had to be replaced. The old fronts had gingerbread similar to the interesting front of Jimmy Thomson's Grocery Store. Gilliam and Bisbee was then where the First National Bank is now.

Ed married Eleanor Hemrich in 1936 when he leased the business from his dad. Ed has sold shoes from high top lace and button shoes to very mod of today's shoppers. The pattern of customers has not changed. He says, "a particular man is no worse than a particular woman!"

Ed is the happiest when he is working with woods or fixing a motor. The entire family likes the out-of-doors, which includes camping and rockhounding. They have four children: Ray of Seattle, Evie who is Mrs. Terry Blevins of Ukiah, and Tom and Doug at home.

Mrs. Gonty has a wide range of interests that include crafts, sewing, ceramics, gardening and helping others.

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