

PERSONAL MEMORIES OF EARLY PIONEERS

(By Capt. H. C. Coe)

In the fall of 1852, W. C. Laughlin and Dr. Farnsworth, emigrants, having just crossed the plains to Hood River, with their families, took up claims there. Laughlin took up the place that was later known as the Coe farm and Farnsworth the farm adjoining on the west, now the Adams place. Laughlin had a good many cattle that he drove over the mountain to Hood River, then known as Dog River. He built a log house about 16 feet square, roofing and flooring it with shakes and puncheons, or planks split from logs. Dr. Farnsworth built a more pretentious structure, having two rooms. The winter proved to be a very severe one, and having brought but little feed, and not knowing the value of willow browsing, he lost most of his cattle. Early in the spring, distressed by his losses, he returned to The Dalles, and took up a claim adjoining that town on the east side. The property later proved very valuable. He lived there until his death in 1864. Dr. Farnsworth moved to Portland when the Laughlins left, and we had no other account of him.

Nathaniel Coe was born in Morris-town, N. J., in 1788, and when a small boy his father moved with his team to western New York. He enlisted for the war of 1812. In 1823 he married Mary White, a New York city girl, and made his home in Nunda, Livingston county. He was for many years a member of the same assembly. In 1852 he was appointed by President Fillmore, as special post agent for the Pacific Northwest, to organize and establish post offices and mail routes in a territory bounded by California, the Rocky mountains, British Columbia and the Pacific ocean. In the fall of 1854 he moved to Hood River, where he died in his 80th year September 16, 1868. Mary W. Coe was born in New York city in 1803, came to Oregon in 1854, and died at Hood River January 25, 1893, in her 90th year. They had five children, Cornelia, dying in 1852 in her sixth year; Lawrence W., Charles C., Eugene F. and Henry C., the writer of this article.

Lawrence W. became quite prominent in the steamboat business. He was superintendent of construction of the Cascade portage railway, and later in company with R. R. Thompson, built and operated the first steamboat on the upper Columbia. The company was later merged into the Oregon Steam Navigation Co., of which he was manager for the Columbia river line. He was one of the large stockholders. In 1864 he sold out his interest and moved to San Francisco, where he died in 1901. Charles C. died at Hood River December 24, 1872. Eugene F., Captain Frank, as he was familiarly called, was one of the pioneer captains on the upper Columbia, and later on the middle and lower rivers. He was a half owner in the Hood River homestead. He died in Portland in January, 1898. Henry C., the writer, was born in Livingston, N. Y., August 11, 1844. He commenced steamboating in 1866, and has followed it intermittently since. In 1891 he subdivided the first tract in the present city of Hood River. In 1911 he went to Los Angeles, where he has since resided.

With Nathaniel Coe on his first trip to Hood River came two men, William Jenkins and Nathan Benson, his brother-in-law, both from Auburn, N. Y. Mr. Coe took up the abandoned Laughlin claim, and Jenkins the Farnsworth place. Later Benson took up the place east of town at the mouth of the river and built a log house at the landing on the point of rocks. It was carried away by the high water of 1894. Jenkins was drowned with his little son, as was also James Laughlin, son of W. C. Laughlin, of The Dalles. His wife, who came out from New York in the spring of 1855, later married W. A. Kurt. She later sold the farm to Dr. W. B. Mitchell, of The Dalles, and moved to Denver, Colo., and later to Los Angeles, where she died in 1905. When Mrs. Jenkins came out from the east a younger brother, James M., also came. He homesteaded a place on Indian creek. In 1857 James went back home and married, Nathan Benson's fiancée, returning with him and his bride. She was married in Portland on her arrival. In the fall of 1863 Nathan Benson sold his farm to the late J. B. Condon, later a prominent attorney of The Dalles, and went back to Auburn, N. Y., where, it was said, he lost all his property and died in the insane asylum. Some time in the early 70s James Benson sold his Indian creek

farm to W. W. Chipman, of Cascade Locks, and moved to Five-Mile creek near The Dalles, and later to The Dalles, where both he and his wife died. They had three children, Frank, James and Belle, who still live in The Dalles. There was also an older brother, William Benson, who lived a short time with his sister, Mrs. Jenkins, after her husband died, and went to Colorado with them. I never heard of him afterwards.

I think it was in the summer or early fall of 1857 that Arthur C. Phelps and Sherman B. Ives moved up from the Cascades, where they had been in the freighting business over the portage. The Bradfords having completed the portage road to the middle landing, and the lower river boats then connecting at that point, put them out of business. Phelps took a place on Phelps creek, so called on that account. Ives settled on a place near Belmont farm. Ives was a married man but Phelps was a bachelor. With Ives was Mrs. Ives' mother, Mrs. Chandee Griswold, and daughter, Annie. Her husband was a victim of the Cascade massacre. Annie later married Henry Corum, from the East Side. This was the first marriage in Hood River. Ives did not stay long here. I think it was in 1861 that he moved back to the lower Cascades, where he lived the last time that I knew of him. Phelps was a cooper by trade but where he came from I never knew. In 1867 he married Mrs. Julia Barnes, a Miss Frances Newell, daughter of Prof. G. P. Newell, of Oregon City, and later moved to the valley, where they both died some years ago. He had one daughter, Julia, now a clerk in the Portland postoffice.

It was late in 1857 or early in 1858 that Joseph Stadden, of Ohio, took up the place now known as the Turner place on the East Side. He put up a comfortable cabin but did little else, and later sold the improvements to William Moss, who he or sold the place to D. A. Turner. It was while Stadden owned the place that Charles H. Butler came into the valley. Butler, I think, was a New Englander, who had gone to the Sandwich Islands for his health, being afflicted with tuberculosis, and having lost one lung entirely. Butler took up the place now known as the Odell farm, where Odell now stands. Butler had a strenuous time on his new farm. He had a wife and three children, and his house was rough and cold the ensuing winter. His 8-month-old baby was taken sick. It was a housewife place for his wife and he advised him to come down to the river settlement. He moved into the old Farnsworth house on the Jenkins farm, Jenkins having lived in a frame dwelling. Soon afterward his child developed diphtheria and died. It was not very long after this that D. A. Turner and William Odell came into the valley. Turner took over the Stadden-Moss place and Odell bought out Butler. We sympathized deeply with Butler. They were nice people and had at one time been quite well off but had lost everything in his endeavor to recover his health. After they left Hood River, they moved, I think, to Santa Rosa, Calif. He did very well, and for a time we got letters from them.

At the time that Butler came to the valley another family, named Whiting, arrived and took the place adjoining Butler on the west. Whiting was a civil engineer and had been in the employ of the Buckles portage railway across the portage on the Oregon side at the Cascades. Whiting was much older than his wife and was a very surly, cross-grained man. He would go away and leave his wife alone in his disagreeable shake house. They had no children. She finally could stand it no longer and she packed up her grip and walked down to our home and stayed until Whiting returned. Mrs. Whiting declared that she would never go back to the ranch again, so they packed up their belongings and left, going to California, where both died in the insane asylum. I think it was in the spring of 1858 that a man named George P. Roberts drifted into the valley from the Cascades. Just what he had been doing there or when he came there I never knew, but he told me that he came from the south. He had been in the mines in California, and was about as "ornery" a specimen as could be imagined. He evidently came from some prominent family of the white race variety, and his appearance tallied with his character. He had one shaggy white eyebrow and a blue eye while the other brow was a dark brown and an eye to match, and a shock of sandy hair. His general character was as "ornery" as his looks. His stock balance of truth was in such a depleted condition that he was cheerfully acknowledged to be the champion liar of Wasco county. In fact, if he ever told the truth, no one could ever believe him, yet he was a happy-go-lucky sort of a fellow, always good natured, often going days without a scanty meal a day, but always hungry or full, with a wonderful story of some marvelous adventure, like a page from the "Arabian Nights." Roberts took up some land where Frankton was later laid out, and by some means, unknown to his most intimate friends, procured half a dozen razor backed shorts and started a hog ranch by turning them loose. He thereby obtained the sobriquet of "Hog Roberts." The hogs thrived wonderfully. The vast quantity of acorns and hazel nuts and other food stuff such as fern roots and sun flower roots gave them an abundance of food, and in a remarkably short time the underbrush around his place was alive with a band of long legged, slab-sided racing hogs that a cayuse pony could not outrun. But Roberts was equal to the occasion. Sighting out their sleeping quarters, he built a rail pen around each. It being the fall of the year and getting chilly nights, they bedded in large droves. During the early morning Roberts would close up the gate at one pen and during the day slaughter them and take them to The Dalles for block hogs. Thereby he procured a very supply of whisky, tobacco and grub.

Not long afterwards he either sold or abandoned his ranch and moved to Viento, got him a squaw and proceeded to raise a band of half starved half breeds. He succeeded fairly well, as I at one time counted seven half or wholly naked, dusky kids. When his oldest child, a girl, was about 12 years old the squaw died, and Roberts would leave home for weeks at a time and leave the children alone,

with only a potato patch and what nuts or berries they could live on. Roberts was, of course, a great wealthier prospect, and claimed that in the winter months a full moon would always bring a chinook, or warm wind. It was mentioned that in January, '62, the thermometer never got within ten degrees of the freezing point, but generally ranged near zero. He was equal to the occasion and replied: "Had you been up in astronomy, you would not have asked that question, for you know that every 87 days January has no full moon."

About 1879 Roberts moved to the Warm Springs Indian reservation, where he died. About the time Roberts came to Hood River, Amos Underwood and John M. Marden took the farm now owned by the Marden ton. Marden later sold his interest to Underwood and went to The Dalles, where he married and lived until his death some years ago. Underwood married an Indian woman, and I think, of Chief Chenoweth. In the early 70s he sold his farm to Haynes & Sanders and moved across the river, building the town of Underwood.

Henry Haines and James Sanders, his brother-in-law, were most excellent people, and were a great addition to Hood River society. Mr. and Mrs. Sanders both died at Hood River, and he was living when I last heard of him. Haines had but one child, a daughter, who married Morton, and died some years ago.

Among the earlier pioneers was Laban Stillwell, who took the claim on the head of Indian creek, afterwards owned by B. A. Lilly, and later by C. L. Morse. Stillwell was a ship carpenter and in the spring of 1862 moved to Celilo and was in the employ of the O. S. N. Co. on their steamboat fleet. He afterward moved to The Dalles and later to Portland, where he died many years ago. He had two children, William and Charles, and a daughter, Julia, who married A. C. Phelps.

Among the later pioneers was a man named Brookshire, who took the place afterward owned by Russell Pealer. I do not remember the date of his coming but it must have been some time in '61. He was from the south and, of course, a southern sympathizer, and got but a scanty welcome from Hood Riverites.

In a few years he moved away. Dr. B. W. Mitchell and M. C. Nye, who took over the Jenkins farm in the early 70s, were a pleasant addition to Hood River's medical forces. Mitchell married Nye's step-daughter, Naomi Pike. Mrs. Pike and her little daughter were members of the ill-fated Donner lake party of early California days. Like Nye, Dr. Mitchell resorted to the mountains on Nye's back, the only child rescued out of the party. Dr. Mitchell was a southerner and his ambition in taking over the farm was as a frame dwelling for a negro family. Going to Portland, he found a negro family, consisting of a man and wife who had some eight or nine pickaninies, and moved them to the farm. The wife was against him, Mrs. Nye was taken down with pneumonia and died. The doctor himself was a victim of the white-man's plague and had to give up his home. He returned to The Dalles, where he died. Mrs. Mitchell later married the late John S. Schenck, of that city.

Among the nearly forgotten early day settlers was Rev. J. M. Garrison, who took a place adjoining Dr. Barrett's on the east. Rev. Garrison was a real pioneer, he and his wife having crossed the plains in 1846. I do not know just when they came to Hood River, but think some time in the early 70s. I was at the time. He was a retired Methodist minister, and came to Hood River from Wheatland on the Willamette river. His family consisted of three boys and three girls. David, Joseph and Jasper, and Mrs. James Hall and Ada and Emma. Mr. and Mrs. Hall lived on the Crapper place, and when they sold to Crapper, moved to the valley. David, an ex-service man, went to the soldiers home in Clackamas. Ada married George Evans, a former Hood River man. He died in Walla Walla some years ago. Emma married O. L. Barrett, later a well known O. R. & N. engineer, on the Portland-Dalles route. At the time of his death a few years ago he was the senior passenger engineer on the line. Mrs. Garrison was the only white person I ever met who remembered the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1846, when the east side of the crater was blown out. An aged Indian woman, Susan, formerly a well known character in Hood River, also remembered the event, as well as the explosion that rent away a portion of the top on the mountain, plainly to be seen today. Rev. Garrison later moved to The Dalles, where he died a few years afterwards.

Among the early pioneers was Stanley, from whom Stanley's rock took its name, and who owned what is now known as the Kobeg place. Stanley was a very eccentric man, strictly honest, and square in his dealings with his neighbors. For many years he posed as a bachelor, but one day he surprised everyone by bringing home a wife. No questions were asked and none were answered but it was hinted that he had long been married but separated. Mrs. Stanley was a very quiet, sedate woman and was very respected. After his death, in the early 90s, she went to The Dalles, and I think under the care of the county at the time of her death.

One of Hood River's well loved citizens was the late Dr. Perry G. Barrett, of the Barrett district. He was not here when the worthy doctor and his wife, Alameda, a truly lovable woman, came here from Erie, N. Y. Later on they were joined by Mrs. Barrett's father and mother, Valoria and Mary Dodge, also of New York. They were as lovable characters as I ever knew. Both of them died in Hood River and were taken to their old home for interment, as I believe were the doctor and his wife. Dr. Barrett was found one morning sitting on the floor of his barn leaning against the wall, dead from heart disease. He had gone out to do the chores and not returning, search was made. His wife, Alameda, died recently in the east. Their daughter, Julia, an only child, made an unfortunate marriage and died shortly after giving birth to twin boys. Their father having renounced all claims on them, they were adopted by their grandparents. After the doctor's death Mrs. Barrett sold their home at Hood River and went to Los Angeles with her boys, where she resided for many

years, and died recently in the east. Dr. Barrett was an army surgeon in the civil war. He was taken prisoner and incarcerated in the notorious Libby prison at Richmond, and stories of his personal experiences were intensely interesting. The doctor had a brother, Prof. Stephen Barrett, who taught school in The Dalles for a number of terms. Yes, the Barretts were good people, and Hood River was better for their having lived in it. But Hood River has one "old-timer"

left, who came there a young man, and has grown old and gray in your happy valley, accumulated a competence and by an upright life and dealings earned the love and respect of his neighbors, and who can give more accurately Hood River's history since his arrival in 1871 than any other man living, and that is Frank Conrad Sherrieb. Another of Hood River's pioneers of a later day was Rev. T. M. Ramsdell, who moved to the vacated Ives home at Belmont in the spring of 1860. His family consisted of his wife and 12 children. The oldest, Elizabeth, was about 15. He was a pioneer proper, having crossed the plains in 1821. He was a Methodist minister and a carpenter, and between the profession and his trade made a mighty poor living. He gave him all the work we had in that line but it was mighty "hard sledding" to keep the wolf from the door. He and his good wife had to leave the little ones to look out for themselves and go out to work. Having accumulated a little money, he built a little cabin on a place he had taken up, near the northwest corner of the Jenkins farm, now the farm owned by S. F. Blythe. After struggling through a while he was forced to give it up and moved to Portland. In a Portland paper of 1911 I read of a party given him on the 91st anniversary of his birthday. He had 41 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

This record of the earlier settlers of Hood River would be far from complete without special mention of the first American farmer settler in the great inland Empire of the state of Washington north of the Columbia and Snake rivers and the man who named the White Salmon river and settlement. While not an actual resident of Hood River, we always considered him as one of us, and his kindness and assistance smoothed over many rugged rough spots in the path of us at Hood River. From the columns of the Glacier I copy the following:

"Erastus S. Joslyn, one of the earliest settlers on the middle Columbia, and for many years the owner of what is the Glades ranch of White Salmon, the property of Judge A. R. Byrket, died recently at Santa Barbara, Calif., at the age of 79. The life of Erastus Joslyn is closely linked with that of the Hood River country. Mr. Joslyn was a native of Massachusetts, born in 1817, and his parentage September 17, 1825. The early years of his life were spent in

his native state, where he was married May 10, 1848, to Miss Mary Warner.

"In 1852 Mr. and Mrs. Joslyn started for Oregon by way of the Isthmus of Panama, arriving in Portland in the fall of that year, where they remained over the winter. In the spring of 1853 Mr. Joslyn made a trip up the Columbia river in search of a location. He selected a donation land claim at White Salmon, on which the present town of Bingen now stands. There for many years he and his wife were the only settlers on the north shore of the Columbia river between the Cascades and Walla Walla. In the fall of 1855 rumors of disturbances and threatenings among the Yakima Indians became alarming, although the tribe of Klickitats living about the Joslyn place remained friendly to the whites.

"Led by their chief, Klamakan, the Yakimas determined upon the extermination of all along the Columbia. Although at first restrained and discouraged by the friendly Klickitats, the apparently unwarranted arrest of three Klickitat chiefs by government officers precipitated an alliance and an attack upon the settlers. This arrest was strongly opposed by Mr. Joslyn, who, fearing its effect, moved his wife to Portland, leaving his claim in the charge of two men. Soon after they were warned by the friendly Indians to leave as they were in danger, and did so. Later the Joslyn buildings were burned to the ground. After the close of the Yakima war, the government appropriated the Joslyn farm as a temporary Indian reservation, exiling Joslyn for four years, for which some 20 years later it allowed him the munificent sum of \$1,500.

"Although never residing continuously in The Dalles for more than a few months at a time, Mr. Joslyn was identified with the interests of that city and September 17, 1859, assisted in the establishment of the First Congregational church, of The Dalles. Rev. and Mrs. W. A. Tenny, E. S. Pendell, William B. Stillwell, Mr. and Mrs. Z. Donnell and Mr. and Mrs. Joslyn were the incorporators. He was also one of the incorporators of the Wasco Woolen mills, besides representing Klickitat county in the territorial legislature for more than one term. In 1875 Mr. Joslyn sold his White Salmon home and moved to Colorado Springs, where Mrs. Joslyn died."

After Mrs. Joslyn's death he married Miss Annie Tuck and moved to Los Angeles, Calif., and later to Santa Barbara, where he died.

Auto License Drive Is On Local traffic officials, following instructions that have been given to officers over the entire state, are waging a campaign to have automobile license plates properly placed on cars. The law requires that plates must be in a conspicuous place. The rear plates must be so placed that the white rays of the tail light will illuminate them.

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