History of JACKSONVILLE

By Jessie Beulah Wilson

The following sketch of the early history of Jacksonville was prepared by Miss Jessie Beulah Wilson, one of the pupils of the Jacksonville High School, and read by her at the commencement exercises of the school held at the U. S. hall last Friday. While but a brief sketch it gives many facts in regard to the early history of the oldest town in Southern Oregon that will be of interest to both the pioneers and the new settlers of Jacksonville and vicinity:

We are enjoying privileges and comforts to-day in this picturesque old town that would not be possible if the pioneers had not endured privations and hardships. It seems fitting that we pay some attention to the events which occurred during the infancy of this village.

Much of the history of Jacksonville is unwritten but fortunately many of those that helped build the foundation still survive and upon the faithfulness of their memories the accuracy of the records is assumed.

Jacksonville is the oldest town in Southern Oregon and the county seat of Jackson County. It is connected with great historic events. Many people wonder why Jacksonville was situated in such an isolated place. The problem is easily solved. It was on account of the rich gold mines found in Jackson Creek at this early day. The news of the rich discovery extended far and near and soon the hills and gulchs, as if touched by the wand of an enchanter, whitened with the tents of thousands of miners.

It was in December 1857 that Rich Gulch was struck, the first gold being found near the present crossing of Oregon Street. Gold had been found earlier in Jackson Creek opposite the city brewery by two young men who comunicated the fact to James Cluggage and J. R. Poole who were traveling through the valley. Afterwards, the discovery of Rich Gulch was made by James Skinner and Wilson who claimed four hundred feet of the Gulch. It did not take the discovery long to leak out when men washed out a pint of gold in a day. In Feb. 1852 every foot of land in Rich Gulch was claimed, and by March all the hills and gulches around were taken in spite of the hostility of the Indians.

The first trading post was established February, 1853, by Uppler & Kenney. The stock carried consisted of a few tools, the roughest clothing, boots, and a large quantity of tobacco and a liberal supply of whiskey, not the royal nectar, but nevertheless the miners, solace in heat and cold, and I am sorry to state in prosperity and adversity the same. Let us state here that this one vice has been the ruin and downfall of many a noble man, but it seems as though this vice is second nature to a miner.

The first house was built by W. W. Fowler near Main street, then the only street in town. Lumber was whip-sawed in the gulches and cost $250 per thousand. Soon clapboard houses were erected with real sawed doors and window frames.

In 1852 a miner named Potts was shot by a man named Brown. There were no written laws so they accepted the Iowa Code. W. W. Fowler was appointed judge. There were twelve men elected to act as jury. Brown's case was tried he was proved guilty and was hung on an oak tree north of the Presbyterian church.

In the summer of 1852 Henry Klippel and Smith made a partial survey of the town and formed Oregon and California streets.

The following winter was very severe and supplies became very scarce. Flour at once sold at a dollar per pound, tobacco sold already at a dollar per ounce and salt was priceless. Beef was plenty and game also. The people subsisted on meat entirely without the staff of life.

Disputes arose among the miners concerning the water rights. A big meeting was held on the banks of Jackson creek. At this meeting Rogers was appointed Alcade. The attorneys were P. P. Prim and Daniel Kenney, while the ladies society consisted of Mrs. Jane McCully, Mrs. Nepolian Evans and Mrs. Lawless.

Many buildings were erected this year. Owing to the fact that supplies were brought on pack-trains, not a single pane of glass was used that year, cotton drilling being substituted.

In 1853 a deadly war had been determined on by the Indians and several settlers in the valley had been killed by them. One day in August the sound of a Siwash rifle was heard in the eastern part of town and a mule with a bloody saddle came galloping along California street and was recognized as that of Thomas Wells, who had been absent from town but a few hours. Armed men went to the place and found Thomas Wells, a prominent citizen, mortally wounded. This deed frightened the people and what made things worse there was but a small supply of ammunition in town. A few days later a man named Nolan was shot dead by the Indians. Two Indian boys came to town named Little Jim and another mere stripling whom the people thought were spies. They were seized by an excited crowd that did not know what to do with the prisoners. The mob wavered between desire and doubt until F. M. Patton decided the question. The boys were hanged on an oak tree near Jackson creek protesting all the while they had never wronged the whites.

The first regular court was held September 5, 1853, by Hon. Matthew P. Deady, who held the office of district judge. Columbus Sims, prosecuting attorney, Joseph W. Drew, deputy marshal and Matthew G. Kennedy, sheriff, were the other officers.

During the spring of 1853 the Methodist church was founded. The most active workers were Rev. Joseph S. Smith, the first pastor, his wife and the Misses Overbeck and Royal. They solicited money from the miners, gamblers and sporting men, for the church. The church was not finished this year but was removed to where it now stands and afterwards finished by T. F. Royal. It was used as a place of worship by the Methodists and Presbyterians for over twenty-five years.

Communication was opened in May by Cram, Rogers & Co., of Yreka, a branch of the Adams Express House & Co., San Francisco. C. C. Beekman, then a sturdy young man, was dispatched as messenger extending his trip over the lonely mountains to Crescent City, carrying letters, papers, and hundreds of thousands of dollars of gold dust. It looks strange that the plucky messenger was never molested, going alone most of the time and always choosing night for his lonely journey.

James Cluggage McCully was the first white child born in Jacksonville on August 27, 1853, son of Dr. and Mrs. McCully. Every miner and trader in the town considered himself a godfather to the new comer and made it their business to spoil the little codger and teach him lessons that it took years of Sunday school training to eradicate.

The year of 1853 was a year of greatest prosperity, a hasty peace had been patched up with the Indians, and the miners were ready to go to work again without being molested. A large quantity of gold was brought into town and on Saturdays and Sundays the streets were crowded with buyers and sellers. Night was the season of gayety and enjoyment.

The first brick kiln was burned in 1853 for the store of Morford & Davis.

The winter of 1853 was very pinching, the small store of flour was divided until it was exhausted. One evening Henry Klippel and John Hilman were passing through a back lot while going home when Klippel suddenly stopped and said, "John, I smell bread." "So do I," replied Hilman. In a few moments they found two loaves set out to cool in the rear of Sam Goldstein's premises. They were very generous, they divided with the owner and took but one loaf. The next morning they visited the trader, priced clothing and boots and ventured at last on bread stuffs. "Ah, ha!" exclaimed the trader, "I smell somedings, you are the rascals that stole my loaf." "We are" replied Klippel, "and we propose that you divide flour as we divided bread with you last night so shell it out." With uplifted hands, Sam with a husky voice assured them, "So help him Abraham," that it took the last spoonful of flour to make that loaf. Burying his face in his hands he wept, and the boys departed deeply touched. Information as to the state of Sams larder caused a life-long regret that they did not take the other loaf.

The first school was conducted by Miss Royal in the fall of 1853.

The second brick building was built in 1854 on the corner of Main and Oregon streets.

On March 15, 1855, Warren Lodge No.

Chris Ulrich

Dealer in

SASH, DOORS, GLASS and BUILDING MATERIAL

Planing, turning and other wood work done on short notice. ::

Manufacturer of

CORN MEAL and GRAHAM

Each made of selected grain and guaranteed the best on the market :: ::

Ground Barley, Cracked Wheat and Other Feed.

MATT CALHOUN

Real Estate Dealer.

I have in my hands at the present time a large number of Bargains in FARM, FRUIT and GARDEN LANDS, and TOWN PROPERTY, of which the following is a partial list.

No. 1—Is 550 acres more or less, 300 acres Rogue River bottom land, all fenced, good house, barn and other buildings. The balance, about 250 acres, good for timber and pasture. This place is situated on Rogue River, near town. The land is of fine quality. Price per acre.....$25

No. 2—Is a tract of 1520 acres, all fenced, 1200 acres good alfalfa land; a stream running through it of 150 miners' inches of water with which the whole 1200 acres can be irrigated. The other 320 acres is higher ground, which is well situated for reservoirs and feed grounds. This tract is situated in Klamath county, about 20 miles from Klamath Falls, a county road running by it and a railroad now within about 50 miles and building rapidly towards it and is certain to pass near by it, or cross it in the near future. A good farm house and barn and corrals on the place. One of the best bargains in all Southern Oregon. Price per acre.....$10.

No. 3 — House and 4 lots in Phoenix. Price.....$600

No. 4 — 204 acres of good land, all fenced and in cultivation. A good farm house and barn. A No. 1 farm. Near town and railroad. Price..$9,500.

No. 8—55 acres, house and 2 barns, 12 acres bottom land, the balance, 43 acres, all good land, ¼-mile from depot; 12 acres under ditch at the head of the ditch. Price.....$5000

No. 9—400 acres, within four miles of Medford; is a fine farm, well improved good buildings, small orchard; the best bargain for a farm in Jackson county. Price per acre.....$10.

No. 10 — 23 acres all fenced and in cultivation. A house and barn, about 50 fruit trees just coming into bearing. 1½ miles from town. Price.....$1,000.

No. 11—145 acres on Butte creek, 25 acres in cultivation, 25 acres more to put in; all fenced, fair buildings, Jackson county, Oregon. A bargain.

No. 12—264 acres, all under fence, good 5-room house, good spring. water conveyed to house by pipe, 2 good barns, 215 acres of choice land in cultivation, good for all kinds of grain, 30 or 40 acres would produce good alfalfa. This is one of the best farms in the valley, 2½ miles from Phoenix. Price per acre.....$35

No. 14—400 acres, 6 miles from Medford, a good house, 2 barns 100 acres in cultivation Phoenix.

No. 15—138 acres on Rogue River, 100 acres of as good land as any man could wish for. No improvements. Thirty acres of it could be made ready for the plow with 15 days labor. Price..$500

No. 22—House and barn in Phoenix. 2 lots 60x120 feet. Price.....$650.

No 25—House and 3 lots in Phoenix, lots 60x120 each; good house well finished.

No 26—House and 2 lots in Phoenix, lots 60x120 feet each.

No. 30—18 acres well improved, house, barn and other out buildings; one-half in young orchard; near Phoenix. Price.....$1200.

No. 31—An 80 acre farm seven miles from railroad, level land, good soil, 15 acres cleared and fenced, 26 acres in pasture, remainder easily cleared. Dwelling house well finished, cost over $500. Bearing orchard; fine well and springs; is sub-irrigated, and can be made one of the best small farms of Jackson county. Is owned by a non-resident who will give a bargain in order to sell quick.

No. 33—15½ acres, all in cultivation; house, barn, etc., near Phoenix; will be sold all together or divided.

No. 34. — 1200 acres all improved. Fine bottom land, Rogue River running through it; 500 acres under irrigation and balance easily watered. Good buildings and other improvements; six miles from railroad; near postoffice and school. Fine alfalfa, fruit or garden land. Is the cheapest land in Jackson county. Price per acre.....$30

No. 36—1743 acres of pasture land on Rogue River. Will be sold at a bargain.

No. 37—1560 acres, 800 acres of it fine plow land; all well watered by fine creek and springs. Large part under cultivation and all under fence. Will be sold in tracts to suit purchasers. Convenient to market and in good neighborhood.

No. 39.—2½ acres, three-fourths of a mile from Medford. Good garden land. Good box house.....$350

No. 40—30 acres, on a creek affording plenty of good water; good soil and fine fruit land. Three acres in alfalfa; good buildings; near good school and other advantages. $1500, one-half cash balance on time. Is a big bargain.

No. 41.—4000 acres of choice land selected in an early day. Will be sold in tracts to suit. Will make a dozen or 20 fine farms. This is an opportunity to secure a home in the best part of the Rogue River valley.

No. 43.—40 acres of unimproved land. Has some good fir, pine and oak. Most of land can be easily cleared; good soil, plenty of water; half a mile from school and church. Six miles from Bybee bridge. Price per acre.....$10.

No. 45.—Over 80 acres of good alfalfa land; 50 acres Bear creek bottom land with a large irrigation ditch. Two first-class houses, two good barns and a fine spring house. Adjoining land selling for $200 an acre. Price per acre $130

No. 47.—City property, 2 acres, fine new house, good well and barn. Good land, 4 blocks from central school.....$750.