

# Memories Of Swan Family Early Day Homesteading Recalled

**Editor's Note:** Mrs. Margaret Foster of 950 Riverside Drive, Rte. 2, Junction City, Ore., received a copy of a homestead story printed in the feature section of the Herald and News. Since she lived on one of the early-day homesteads on the

located in Klamath County, it is not surprising that at the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century there was a spirit of rebirth and progress in the atmosphere of the Klamath County seat of government. Klamath residents and people coming to the

farmland north of Merrill, which Carleton was operating. An acquaintance, Frank Moreland, was interested in the homestead opportunity, but was desirous of having neighbors with children for companions for his wife and children, Albert and Dorothy.

Swan telephoned his sister-in-law, Olive Carleton, a nurse in Albany, whom his daughter, Margaret, was visiting. He asked if she would come to Klamath County and file on an adjoining homestead to be a companion to his wife. Telephone service in 1910 was a far cry from the modern system of today providing for long-distance dial service. This telephoned communication required the greater part of a day, each segment having to be relayed by operators from one station to the next throughout the distance.

Both parties to the call were persistent, and the result was that Miss Carleton understood enough of her brother-in-law's conversation to pack immediately and make the railroad journey to Klamath Falls with her niece. By this time there was railroad service to that county seat via Weed, Calif. A few years earlier part of the journey had to be by stagecoach from Ashland over Green Springs Mountain.

Filing was made on adjoining homesteads at the foot of the east side of Aspen Mountain about a half mile beyond the flat where a number of mountain streams drained into Aspen Lake. To the south of Mr. and Mrs. Swan's homestead was the homestead of Mr. and Mrs. Moreland, and on the mountainside was that of Bruce Gaddis.

Swan had hired a crew of workmen to build the two log cabins, which were covered with cedar shakes. A picket fence was built to surround the clearing, to keep possible wild animal visitors out and the children within. The two women were the actual homesteaders, and there was adequate income for living expenses. Homesteading for the Swan family and Miss Carleton was a way of life, just as rural living is today popular with many who derive their livelihood from city employment.

Swan retained his position as county school superintendent and traveled by horse-and-buggy or horseback to be with his family during weekends. When Miss Carleton and Margaret Swan arrived, activities had already commenced on the homesteads. Mr. and Mrs. Swan and John were waiting with a large wagon of materials and provisions to take the newcomers immediately to their new home. The trip was only 20 miles, but was not completed before dark. A camp was made for the night beside the lake. That night the children were first introduced to the howling of coyotes, and crawled deep under the bed covers for security.

That sound was to become a familiar one during the years of homesteading and later years on the farm at Merrill. The following day the travelers arrived at their new homes, where men were busily cutting and peeling trees for the cabin and splitting shakes and pickets. Tents had been erected for the workmen and for the family. A long table was built for eating purposes, and cooking was to be done on a kitchen range, at present set up outdoors. Mosquitoes were so obnoxious that tents had to be kept tightly closed at night with no candle or lamp light to attract the insects. Cedar smudges were built under the table at meal



**EDUCATOR** — John G. Swan came to Klamath County to help organize and become principal of the Klamath County High School. He became superintendent in 1910 and lived near the Presbyterian Church with his wife, Jessie Carleton Swan, and children, Margaret and John. He was also interested in irrigation and ranching and owned ranch interests at Merrill. He filed and lived on a homestead on the west side of Upper Klamath Lake, lived at Merrill and later became principal of the high school in Ashland.

west side of Upper Klamath Lake as the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. John G. Swan, she has contributed her memory of those early days.

Mrs. Foster, a teacher, has recently been associated with Oregon State University in the office while recuperating from an illness.

By MARGARET FOSTER

Homesteading, a method of distribution of free land to people of the United States for development, was advocated in numerous sessions of Congress before the Homestead Act of 1862 was passed by a northern Congress. During the same year the Morrill Act was passed to finance agricultural colleges, and the bill to finance a transcontinental railroad with the aid of grants of land from the public domain was also passed. Other methods of land distribution, including grants to states, purchase under the Pre-emption Act and purchase of Indian lands had been developed and continued, so that the dream of free land for the masses of people was often only a dream, since much land open for homesteading was remote from markets and undesirable.

But by one means and another the land-hungry citizens of the United States and the immigrants attracted to this country by stories of great opportunity spread westward, and the United States was a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. In 1890 the superintendent of the census announced in a bulletin:

"Up to and including 1890 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement, etc., it can not therefore, any longer have a place in census reports."

As the era of an abundant supply of land from the public domain was drawing to a close, various projects for conserving and developing the remaining lands were being put forth.

H. W. Campbell introduced his method of dry farming by leaving soil fallow for a year. During the T. R. Roosevelt administration reclamation projects for irrigating arid land were being developed.

While popular thought often considers homesteading a method of acquiring land that was possible only in the 19th century, it is interesting to note that during the 20 years from 1890 to 1917, 100 million acres of homestead was acquired by final entry, an acreage actually 43 per cent larger than that acquired during the preceding 30 years.

As a matter of fact, original homestead entries in the Pacific states reached their peak in the period from 1911-15, when claims were filed for 7,993,700 acres, even though homesteaders are usually thought of as the people who came to the West in the covered wagon days.

With the lodge of Edward Harriman, the railroad magnate who had transformed the Union Pacific Railroad, dubbed by J. P. Morgan as a "streak of rust through the desert," into an efficient and great railroad system,

times to protect legs from serving as the menu for mosquitoes. The workmen and family adjusted quickly to pioneer life. There was gaiety and joking all day long. During this period Margaret had an attack of appendicitis and was cared for by her aunt nurse. So that she would not be deprived of the pleasure of watching the construction of the log cabins, a bed was made on the door that was lying on the ground awaiting the completion of the cabin. Even an illness was a pleasure when such

gun, determined to defend the camp from animal invasion. A tense period followed while the howling sounded ever nearer. Finally it was broken by adult laughter, and the children cautiously peeked out of the tent. The animal making the terrifying noise had appeared and was no more than a small gray housecat. Where it came from and how it got on the side of Aspen Mountain was never determined. This cat lived with the family during the homestead epic and later was taken to Klamath Falls.

There were the cooking quarters, with a small kitchen range that was adequate for heat. At the other end was a bunk bed planned for winter sleeping. Actually it was seldom used except by visitors, and on one occasion by Margaret, who became terrified when disturbed during a bath by the visit of a woodrat, which danced on the dishpan hung on the wall back of the cookstove. Adopting once again the ostrich-like procedure of the night on the flats when she was first introduced to the howling of coyotes, she ran across the room and sought refuge under the bed covers of the bunk, remaining there long after the adults assured her the woodrat was gone, frightened but not killed by Mrs. Swan, who again used the gun to protect the household.

The sleeping porch was screened for protection from mosquitoes and had canvas curtains in winter. The children were Dr. Denton's and sleeping caps; the adults adopted a new innovation, pajamas, and also wore sleeping caps. The children were often companions of their aunt in her cabin across the line.

Throughout the winters neither adults nor children suffered from colds or other respiratory illnesses. Later, when the family returned to Klamath Falls it was revealed that the children had not had an opportunity to build up immunity. When Margaret entered public school, she suffered as did Indians from germs common in white communities, having recurrent attacks of sore throat, earache and finally mastoiditis.

The cellar had a sloping door that was used by the children in winter for a sled slide. On the back side of the cabin from November until May was a huge pile of icy snow, where the snow had been pushed off the roof. This ice-snow bank was the source of ice for the freezing of the daily dessert. The family had a small ice-cream freezer and made either ice cream or sherbet each day.

The cow supplied sufficient milk and cream for eating and cooking purposes, for butter, and for the ice cream. In the summer she, as well as the cat and dog, followed the women and children on their hikes to the lake.

## Features

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1963



**ON WEDDING DAY** — Following the death of his wife, Jessie, John G. Swan, educator and farmer, was married to Mrs. Rachel Applegate Goode, who was the author of "The History of Klamath County," published in 1941. It was publicized with the help of Lindsey Sisemore, editor-in-chief; Harry B. Schultz, managing director; and Howard L. Schuyler, managing editor. This picture was taken of Mr. and Mrs. Swan, Aug. 2, 1942. The children are Nell Louise and Francis Effinger, Mr. Swan's grandchildren.

interesting entertainment was at when the family moved back to the town. It was the first of the homestead pets, and was later joined by chickens, a collie-shepherd dog, and a small Jersey cow.

The cabins when completed were warm and snug. The children helped "chink" them with moss and mud. Both were covered with shakes for further protection from the weather. Miss Carleton's consisted of one room without a porch. The Swan cabin was larger. At first it had one large room, a sleeping porch, and a cellar, where provisions were stored. The cellar was important; it held provisions sufficient for the entire winters. Later another room was added.

At one end of the large room

called "wild orchids" of Western Oregon.

Margaret was 6 in December, and the question of education was faced. Mrs. Swan, who had been an elementary teacher, began tutoring her. Swan brought examination copies of books from the county office. Margaret learned to read from the "Brownie Primer" and "First Reader," the "Overall Boys Reader," and the "Sunbonnet Babies Primer." Instead of the regular textbooks, she was taught number combinations, the multiplication table,

stood out in family memories. During the remainder of the winter the landscape was blanketed in snow, which covered the manzanita and other underbrush. The children skied on it, pulled their sled over the crust, and built tunnels. The adults kept paths between buildings on their homestead and between their homestead and the Moreland and Gaddis homesteads, heaping the snow high on the sides. Once a friend came with horses and sleigh and took the women and children on a surprise trip to

travels rapidly up a mountain, it goes rather slowly down. As Aspen Mountain rose to timberline and was an extinct volcano, the top was strewn with volcanic debris and had little timber. That fact likely saved us.



**SUNDAY JAUNT** — Back in August, 1908, when this picture was taken, there were no daily buses to take visitors to the rim of Crater Lake. The road was steep and rocky and a hard pull for horses, even with light rigs. These folks, headed for a picnic outing, left to right, were George Robert Carleton, Margaret Swan, Ellen Conrey, Jessie Swan, Margaret's mother, John G. Swan, Margaret's father, John C. Swan, her brother, and Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Jinnette and son Karl, who still live at Merrill. Note lantern on side of wagon seat. A cousin of Mrs. Margaret Foster, Alfred Carleton, and his family also live near Merrill.

and a few Latin words. Miss Carleton taught her to hem and hemstitch.

After the first summer the mosquitoes deserted the household for whatever diet they existed on before the arrival of the homesteaders. At first it was believed that they had unaccountably become less numerous. However, whenever visitors arrived, the mosquitoes returned to torment them just as they had the crew of workers and the family during the first summer. Selective in their diet and desiring new tidbits? Those mosquitoes certainly were.

Introduction to heavy mountain snows came on the first Thanksgiving. There had been light snowfall previously, but not enough to be inconvenient or startling. Thanksgiving Eve was a clear, moonlight night, so beautiful that the children were permitted to remain up later than usual and watch for the arrival of their father. The women had a wild goose, shot by a neighbor, and were engaged in preparing it for dinner on the following day.

Preparations were almost complete for a true Thanksgiving dinner. Pies had been baked; cranberry sauce had been cooked. Swan did not arrive that evening, probably deciding not to make the trip in the dark. The next morning the women and children awakened to a transformed scene. Everything was blanketed in a heavy coat of snow, so deep that the children could not walk in it. The women shoveled paths between the cabins and to the cow shed and chicken shed. A mother hen with chicks in a small coop was completely buried, and had to be rescued. It was providential that the dinner had been prepared the previous day, for there was no time for cooking.

Finally Swan arrived on a large horse he had obtained from the farm, not on his smaller riding pony, which was not stout enough to battle the deep snow. He assisted in the shoveling and the care of the chickens and cow. It was lamp-light when the delicious Thanksgiving dinner was served, a dinner that always

left the fire camp the morning before to go to town as they were exhausted from fire fighting, had become lost, slept in the forest all night, and had not had anything to eat since leaving camp.

"I told them we were not prepared to feed any such number, but I would call the wife and see what she could do. She told them we were short on food ourselves, but they begged for 'just anything.' After thinking a moment, she said, 'We have a sack of corn meal and plenty of milk. You fellows go to the creek and wash up, and I will make a lot of mush. My sister will make you the best cream biscuits you ever ate.'"

"They let out a shout, washed and combed, and were soon back. Before very long the meal was ready, and a goodly quantity of mush, cream, and biscuits was consumed. After they could eat no more, we explained how to find their way to the road, and they left, declaring that it was the best meal they had ever eaten."

The second summer Mr. and Mrs. Tighman Swan, Swan's parents, who had a homestead near Rocky Point, made an extended visit. Grandpa Swan was a Civil War veteran, who had marched through Georgia with Sherman, and he entertained the household with his songs and stories of Civil War days, while Grandma Swan assisted with the housework. Visitors earlier in the season included E. F. Carleton and his son, Blondel, from Salem, Blonson, now a professor at the University of Portland, still remembers the ice cream made from the snow pile.

During the second summer there was a large timber fire on the far side of the mountain. An account of the episode was written by Swan and found among his papers. It reads as follows:

"One summer when we were living on our homestead in the pine forest at the east base of Aspen Mountain, there was a great fire on the other side of the mountain. The fire was in a green growth of giant yellow and sugar pine, and for days a large force of men worked night and day trying to curb it. It was in mid-August, and everything was as dry as tinder. It was so close to us that we could hear the ominous roar and swish of the fire as it burned in the resinous tops of the great trees. Black smoke rolled in clouds over the mountain and completely suffocated the sun. The heat was baking."

"We greatly feared that we would have to abandon our snug log cabin and seek safety in flight. But, while a forest fire

## Fishing For Mackinaw Can Be Fun As Reporter Discovers At Odell

By GEORGE ALOTRICO

Big Odell Lake, with its 3,600 surface acres of cold, sky blue water ranging to a depth of about 300 feet, holds one of the biggest sought after of all sports fish, the formidable mackinaw or lake trout.

The lake, a veritable trout factory, has the typical physical characteristics of most mackinaw lakes, deep, steep sided, cold and quite often in a dangerous wind-swept rage. The big boats for rent at the lodges at either end of the lake are more than a match for the waves, however.

Whitefish, one of the mack's favorite foods, are abundant in the lake, as are roach and kokanee, second and third in dietary preference.

In many lakes, especially Canadian, the fish grow as big as 40 pounds with some fish up to 60 pounds caught on rod and reel. Fish caught at Odell have

seldom reached over 25 pounds, however, with the biggest catches each year usually in the 20-pound bracket.

Water temperatures in the area of 45 degrees are favored by this prize fish and at Odell the average summer temperature at 50 feet is about 48 degrees. The surface water remains near a constant 60 degrees, while temperature at 100 feet and more drops to 37 degrees and colder.

Fishing at Odell should be done at depths of 80 to 100 feet where the water temperature is just right and the forage fish most abundant. Biologists at the lake found that the whitefish are seldom netted below a depth of 80 feet.

That should give fishermen some indication where the macks are found. A great many fishermen, out of habit more than anything, still fish at depths of 150 to 200 feet and deeper, thinking that the fish are only down in the coldest water.

The average size of Odell macks is about 21 inches, Art Gerlich, area state fish biologist, told this reporter recently. Art has been studying the lake for the last few years and knows its characteristics and history as well as anybody.

Odell was first stocked in the early 1900's with fish that were at the Lewis and Clark Exposition at the Portland World's Fair. About 10,000 were brought from the fair to Odell by a group of Bend sportsmen. These fish were from Great Lakes stock.

Fishing, however, remained mediocre until 1951 when the first stocking of state hatchery fish occurred. These fish were from lake trout eggs shipped from Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan, and they were held in special rearing ponds at the Klamath Hatchery until they attained the size of six to eight inches. The yearling

fish were marked by the removal of the adipose fin. Although the game department stocked the lake each year since, the 1951 stocking has been the most successful according to creel returns.

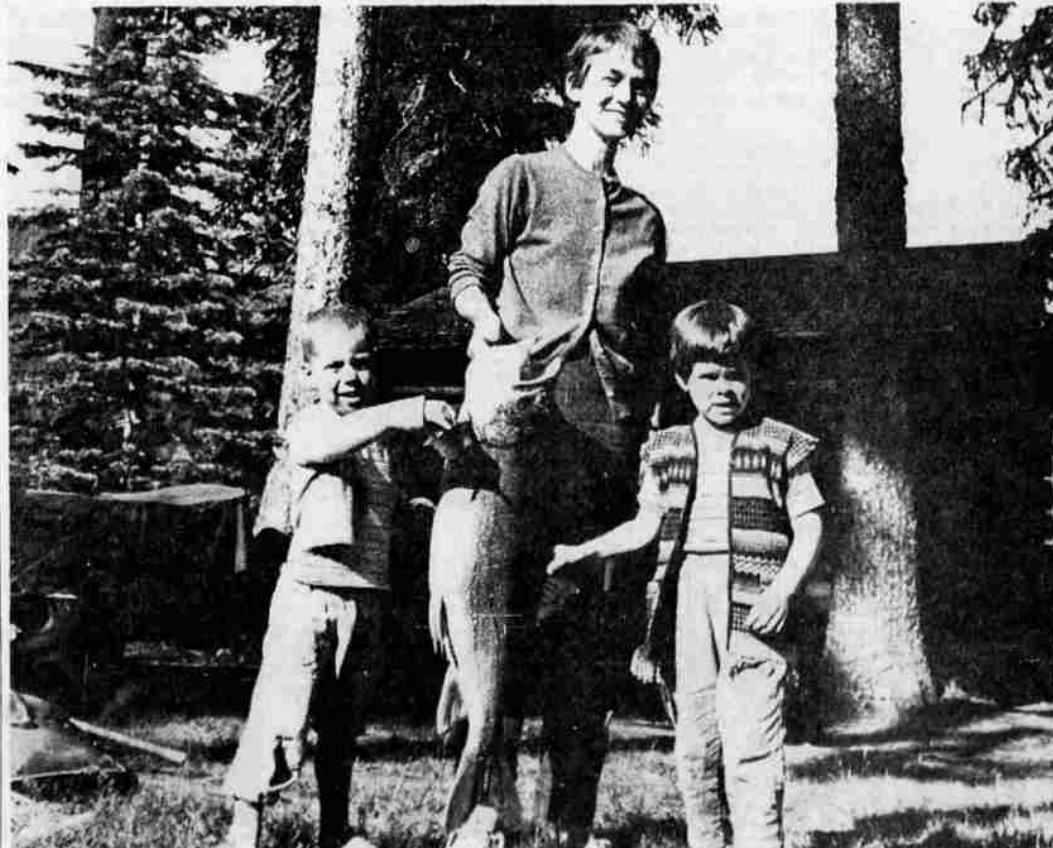
Since the eggs of the 1951 stocking have been most successful, the biologist is considering starting a brood stock from Lac La Ronge eggs and keeping them at the Klamath Hatchery so he can continue stocking with these eggs.

August is the best month for fishing and the trout begin to feed heavily in concentrations around ledges and reefs at 80 to 100 foot depths.

So if you want to try for a big game fish the time is now, the fish is mackinaw and the lake is Odell. Accommodations and boat rentals are at either end of the lake, Cascade, Summit Lodge on the west end and Odell Lake Lodge on the east end. Guide Carl Friedly works out of Cascade

Summit.

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**OUT OF THE DEEP** — Writer's wife, Carolyn, and children, David and Susan, pose with the 14½-pound lake trout he took at Odell on his first trip to the lake. The fish, which is almost as big as David, hit a paper thin wobbling spoon called the "Sutton" spoon, trolled behind flashers at a depth of 100 feet. Other gear included

a heavy rod, star-drag reel, wire monel line and a big net. About three ounces of lead was used to get the rig at the proper depth. The fish was taken off Princess Creek, a hotspot that Carl Friedly, who guides at the lake, directed the writer to.