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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OTTO ELMER

It Took 21 Years To Clear 200 Acres

(Reprinted from the memoirs of the late Otto H. Elmer, who formerly lived in the Clarkes area. This material was loaned to us by his family and Lee Matthews, Oregon City.)

FOREWORD

(by Otto H. Elmer)

The human race has probably never before had to adjust to changes as great or varied as occurred during the past century. Three years before I was born my mother spent long weeks crossing the Atlantic Ocean by sailboat while recently I started from my home for Europe in the afternoon and arrived there the following morning. We now speak to our children who live hundreds of miles away with no more effort than is required to speak to next door neighbors. Where our homes were then lighted with kerosene lamps we now have electric lights. Flour mills and saw mills near our home were then powered with water power. We then knew nothing of automobiles, of phonographs, moving and talking pictures, radio, television, or modern health care and photography was in its

Elmer died on Christmas Day in 1977 in Kansas. He is buried in the Clarkes Cemetery.

My first recollection of the outdoors of this world is being surrounded on all sides with huge, dead trees. The 200 acres of land in the Willamette Valley of western Oregon where my father and mother were establishing their home and where I was born had been a primeval forest of great Douglas fir trees and garden things. This land had been granted by the United States government as a Federal Donation Land Claim to a Mr. Randall who, prior to selling it to my father, had built a house and barn and had made a beginning at clearing the land. Prior to my awareness of the outdoors, my father had girdled the trees surrounding our home, that is, chopped away a ring of bark around them to kill them and there they stood, a host of tall, dead objects fencing me in on all sides.

The beautiful fields of the farm where father and mother lived and where their six children were born is a monument to the vision, persever-



OTTO'S BROTHER BEN ELMER in front of the house where they were raised on Beavercreek Road. The house was later moved and still stands. It is still in use today as a residence. (Photo courtesy of Phyl Wentz, daughter of Ben Elmer, Mulino.)



cost me less than \$25.00 a month while my grandson must now pay \$5,000.00 for one year of college, tuition and subsistence. Currency then consisted of silver and gold coins but no paper money. Gold coins were of \$5.00 pieces, \$10.00 coins known as Eagles, and \$20.00 coins known as Double Eagles.

The object of this autobiography is twofold: to record experiences and happenings to me during my lifetime and to picture, if I can, life with the conveniences we then had which to us were entirely sufficient. Of one thing I am certain - we were happy, contented with what we had, and life was good. The future then held rosy promise even as it does now. Life for me revolved around our farm of which I was a part, our school, our church, and association with other boys and girls. As I neared the end of public school days my dream was to be permitted to go to college.

The happenings recorded in these pages are true and are from memories. A diary was of help in writing about homestead days in Montana. Note books of my work at Kansas State University were used in writing the chapter about our years in Kansas. Esther, my wife, was of help in remembering about people and about dates. She was of great help in recalling incidents I had overlooked and in the help I derived from our conversations concerning happenings during our fifty six years together.

(Following is an excerpt from Mr. Elmer's autobiography. It mainly centers on his boyhood in the Clarkes area of Clackamas County, Oregon. Otto H.

who brought about this change from the forested area when he acquired the land. A similar tribute is due to hundreds of settlers in western Oregon and western Washington who made their homes and cleared their farms on erstwhile forest covered land in that part of our country.

The method used to clear coniferous forest-covered land near the end of the nineteenth century was unique and different from methods employed elsewhere to bring virgin land under cultivation. Tall trees, some with diameters up to six or more feet and which grew in such density that sunshine never reached the ground, had to be cleared away. The axe, the cross cut saw, the shovel, the peavey, log chains and a few other implements were all the tools that were then available and horses furnished the only power.

Fire was used to fell the trees after they were dead and the wood had partly dried. A hole about an inch in diameter was bored horizontally about a foot or more into the base of the tree. A second hole a foot or more directly above the first hole and angling downward was then bored to meet the first hole. Live wood coals were placed at the junction of the two holes, and by fanning the coals with a hand bellows, a fire was started that in time burned the tree down. Two or three such fires were started in the base of each tree. After the tree had fallen, it was burned into sections with fires started in holes at about ten foot intervals into the trunk similar to those made to burn the tree down. Pieces of the trunk that had not burned

were dragged to the stump with horses and a log chain then set afire to burn the stump out and to burn large roots to below plow depth in the soil. Not many years later blasting powder was available to uproot stumps and roots, but such new methods were not commonly used near the end of the nineteenth century.

One of my jobs as a small boy was to pick up and haul small limbs and bits of wood on the stoneboat to the fire. The stoneboat consisted of two poles about six feet long fashioned for sled runners and a four foot by six foot cross plank cover and was provided with a hitch for the horses. I liked this job because of the fire's attraction and this allowed me to drive the horses. I remember hurrying home from school evenings to get in

on the land clearing job with the horses - old Frank and Dick. Father started clearing his land in 1889 and the 200 acres, except for a wood-lot, were all cleared and under cultivation by about 1910. Looking back it now seems unfortunate that so much prime timber was destroyed, but at that time timber was considered not valuable and the soil was needed for the production of crops and livestock.

My father, the seventh of a family of eleven children, was born March 9, 1865 in Wisconsin to parents both of whom had immigrated from Europe. His father, Jakob, with his parents, my grandparents, had in 1846 at thirteen years of age come from Switzerland to Wisconsin. His mother, Alwina (born Trosky) came from Germany a few years later. Our Elmer

forbears came from the village of Elm in the canton (state) of Glarus. The history of Switzerland records that in 1289 our ancestor "der Elmer" was designated the village of Elm representative of Emperor Rudolph, the first king of the Hapsburg dynasty, whose domain then included Switzerland. At that time people did not have surnames and "der Elmer" referred to this man as one of the family who lived in the place (as now) known as Elm.

My father spent the first seventeen years of his life at Vandyne, a village near Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In 1882 his father and family moved to Oregon and settled at Clarkes, about 12 miles southeast of Oregon City. At that time there

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)



ELMER FAMILY ON THE FRONT PORCH, date unknown. In the back are Otto, Ben, and father Sam Elmer. In front are Edna, Olga, Elsie and mother Elmire. Estherlee is on the lower step in front of her mother. Of the family, only Ben and Edna are still living. Ben lives near Meadowbrook and Edna lives in Woodburn. (Photo courtesy of Phyl Wentz, Mulino.)

Mother Hid Plate Of Food To Avoid Mistress' Wrath

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

was no railroad in Oregon and to get there the family went via the Union Pacific Railway to San Francisco, then by boat to Portland.

My mother, born Elmire Gasser, was born October 11, 1863 in Moutier, Switzerland. She was the fifth of a family of eleven children. Moutier has long been a city of watch making factories (an Omega factory is located there). After she was through with school mother, worked in a watch factory to help out with the family budget. She did not like this work. She also worked in a home as a domestic. Mother related to us children how hungry she became in a home where she worked. The pantry was kept locked and

the keys were always carried on a chain by the mistress. When mother was caught snitching a bite of food she was rapped on the hands with a stick. On one occasion, mother remembered, she was eating some snitched food in her room when she heard the mistress coming and to avoid being caught she hid the plate in her bed. When mother was about thirteen years old her family moved to Berne, and after she had gone for a while to a school where German was spoken she began working for a German speaking family of a physician where she learned more German and where she served as an apprentice cook. An apprenticeship to learn to cook, to bake, or to learn some other trade is still common in

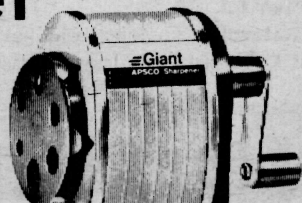


SAM ELMER, DOG SPORTY, ESTHERLEE Elmer, Elmire Elmer and Ben Elmer. Estherlee was about 5 and Ben was about 9 when this picture was taken. They are standing between the house and the cellar. (Photo courtesy of Phyl Wentz, daughter of Ben Elmer, Mulino.)

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Switzerland as we learned when we visited there. In Switzerland to learn a language it is still common to live in a home where the language to be learned is spoken. While on a train from Berne to Munich, Germany we rode in an apartment with a teenage French girl who was on her way to live for six months with a German family near Munich to learn the German language. A distant cousin, Beatrice Ramseier, with whom we were able to speak English, had spent six months in a school at Brighton, near London, England where she learned to speak English.

We know very little of

Portland in October 1889.

Mother had been violently sea sick during her sea voyage and she continued to be unable to eat well during the month-long journey by train. Arriving at Portland she had lost much weight and felt poorly and Mrs. Corbett had her take a rest of several weeks before starting work. Not being able to read or to speak English was a handicap in cooking, especially in being unable to read labels on food packages. She became greatly distressed one time when she had used soda, thinking it was baking powder.

One cannot but admire mother's courage in undertaking her journey to America

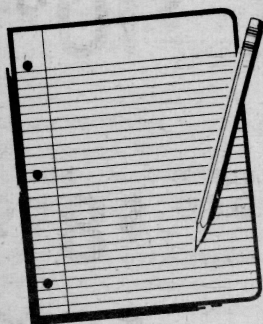
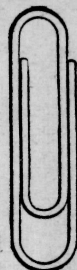
now the heart of downtown Portland.) His trips from his home in Clarkes to Portland were at that time over twelve miles of very rough and during the winter, muddy roads to Oregon City and then another twelve miles to Portland. It would require two days time to have one evening with his sweetheart. They had decided before the spring of 1890 to marry and their wedding day was May 8 of that year. One complication of mother leaving the Corbetts to marry my father was that part of the transportation cost from Switzerland to Portland that the Corbetts had advanced was still unpaid but the Corbetts accepted this payment from my father.

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thirteen years she lived in Berne before she came to America in 1889. It was some time before 1889 that the Hager family, mother's friends, had moved to America. While one of the Hager girls, Rosa, worked for a Portland banker's family, the Ladds, Mrs. Ladd inquired if Rosa knew of a French cook who could be persuaded to come to America to cook for her parents, the Corbetts. The Corbetts, also Portland bankers, would advance the cook's fare to Oregon, which was then to be repaid from wages. Rosa suggested my mother and then wrote to her about his offer. After an exchange of letters, mother accepted Mrs. Ladd's offer to come to Portland.

We do not know the date mother left Switzerland or how long it took to make the journey. The ocean was crossed in a sail ship and a sticker on the trunk she brought with her indicated that she left from Havre, France. Her ship landed at a Canadian port and mother believed that she crossed the continent on a Canadian railroad, which is probably true, because the Canadian Pacific Railroad from Quebec over the prairie provinces to Vancouver, British Columbia had been completed in 1885, four years before mother came to this country. From Vancouver she went south, probably by ferry boat to Seattle, and then by Northern Pacific Railway to Portland. Mother related that on the Canadian train she became acquainted with a young French lady who used mother's alcohol lamp to warm milk for her baby. Mother gave the lamp to her new friend, not suspecting that for many days she would have need for it before she would arrive at Portland. Mother arrived in

alone. Not only did she not know the English language, but she probably had but little conception about where she was going or how far it was to her destination. One thing to sustain her was that she was going to where she would find her friends, the Hager girls. It was probably these girls who took mother to the church services where she was to meet her future husband, my father. Father visited her at the Corbett home (then located in what is

It was when I was but three or four years old that father built the house that continued to be the family home until we six children were all grown and father and mother had left this world. All I can remember of the building of this house was my playing with small pieces of lumber that were scattered about on the ground.

There were six children in our family, Olga, my oldest sister, was born in June 1892, Elsie

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



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Entered College At 15

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

in 1894 and Edna in 1896. My brother Benjamin was born in 1902 and Estherlee, the youngest in our family, arrived in October 1906 when I was fifteen and away at college. Little did I realize that fall of 1906 when I entered Oregon Agricultural College that the time I would spend at home was nearly at an end and would consist of only the summer vacation months until I graduated. I had however lived with mother and father long enough to receive from them something I have never lost - a deep seated Christian

faith. Our parents were Christian people whose belief in God and serving Him was evidenced both in what they said and in Christian living. The early training by Christian parents is a heritage that persists even though one wanders away now and then.

I began going to school at age five in a one room schoolhouse where all eight grades were taught. The schoolhouse had four rows of eight double desk seats - enough seats for 64 pupils. A large wood-burning stove stood in the rear of the room just inside the entry hall-



FAMILY REUNION AT THE FISH HATCHERY on the Clackamas River. Front row: uncle Joe Elmer, grandpa Sam Elmer, aunt Ursula and Fred Philippin, John Vick, uncle Jake Elmer and uncle Adolph Elmer. Back row: aunt Martha Elmer, grandma Elmore Elmer, aunt Sophie, Fred Lindau, aunt Tina Elmer and aunt Mary Elmer. The family used to hold reunions every year in the same place. (Photo courtesy of Phyl Wentz, Mulino.)

way. On each side of this hallway were cloak rooms - on one side for boys and on the other for girls. Hooks on the walls were for coats and hats and across the length of these rooms were shelves to hold the lunch pails that we all brought with us. Outdoors there were two outhouses. Wood for the stove was stacked in a woodhouse and when it rained during recess

time we boys frequently crowded into this house to talk and to chin on the crossbar or do other gymnastics.

The teacher when I started school was a man, Charles P. Tallman, and pupils varied in age from beginners like me to boys and girls that were seventeen years old. I remember being in awe of these large people some of whom lived on

surrounding farms and others who had temporarily stopped working in local sawmills during the winter months. Those were the days when people, including Charles P. Tallman, believed that to spare the rod was the way to spoil the child. This disciplinary belief resulted in brisk fights with older boys

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Wagons Drove Near Fences, Making Walking Perilous

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

some of whom were nearly as large as their teacher and who refused to take a 'licking' without fighting back. I never forgot the humiliation I suffered when during my first days at school I had to walk to the teacher's desk to receive a caning for some infraction I did not realize I had committed.

Our schoolhouse was more than a mile away from our home but other children in our school walked as far as four miles to school. Roads during the winter were muddy. To keep away from the deepest mudholes, wagons were driven as near to the zig

zag rail fences on either side of the road as possible which made walking for children more difficult. It was seldom that the weather became sufficiently cold to freeze the muddy ground and cold weather was welcome because it made for easier walking.

At school we were first taught to read and my first lesson was on a large chart supported on a stand. On this chart the word CAT was printed below the picture of a large cat. This chart contained numerous pages containing such words as ball, boy, and bat to which the teacher pointed with a long stick pointer (used for a dual purpose when

conditions demanded). Other studies as pupils advanced included writing (known as penmanship), spelling, arithmetic, mental arithmetic, grammar, history, geography and physiology.

My mother's native language was French, she had learned to speak German during her teenage years but she had little opportunity to learn English during her first years in America. She and father at home spoke in German, the language they both knew and her progress in English was slow until after we children started going to school. My first English was learned from a neighbor boy, Orphet Martin, who worked for my father before I started going to school. After I started going to school mother would in the evenings have me tell her what I had learned and through this she began making progress in learning to speak English. We children were the means through which she learned to understand, speak, read and write English. During her latter years mother's letters to me were written in that language.

Mother loved music and she loved to sing. She had a good alto voice and sang that part in congregational singing at church and in group singing for entertainment. During early years in my memory mother sometimes sang French songs she had learned in Switzerland and visitors occasionally came to our home with whom she could speak in French. The thing that was however of greatest interest to us children was to hear her yodel - as she had learned as a girl. Hearing her speak and sing in French and hearing her yodel was a delight to us children and as may be expected we learned some French songs and we all had our own version of Swiss yodeling.

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School Was Center Of Community Social Life

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

An occasional visitor to our school was an old man, Johnnie Card, who felt called upon to periodically come to our school and make a speech to us school children concerning patriotism. I remember that we were greatly bored and I do not remember what he said in his speeches but I well remember the appearance of this little old grey haired man with his extremely sparse beard who carried a 'Tommy Tittlemouse' hat that he twirled while he spoke.

School hours began at nine o'clock and ended at four in the afternoon. There were fifteen minute recess periods midway in the forenoon and afternoon sessions and there was a one hour noon period. Lunches carried in tin pails were bolted as quickly as possible so that we could play. Among our games was baseball where players worked up from fielders, pitcher, catcher then batter. The batter was out and became a fielder when after a hit he did not succeed in running to the base and back before the ball was returned to the catcher. Other games were darebase and blackman. We

which served as a picnic ground and a site for some of our Fourth of July celebrations. Swings and other paraphernalia had been provided for use by the school but our most exciting sport in this forest was the game of deer and hounds. A few boys, the deer, were given a short start after which the hounds gave chase. Just how far this chase went into the forest varied but at times we did not get back to school until after the one o'clock bell had rung and school was in session.

School entertainments were infrequent but there usually was one at the end of the school year. Other entertainments, known as basket socials, included entertainment for grown folks and ended with the auctioneering of beautifully decorated baskets containing food that girls had prepared and that were sold to the highest bidder. Buying the basket gave the buyer the privilege to eat the basket lunch with the girl who had prepared the basket. Boys were not supposed to know whose basket they were buying and spirited bidding ensued when some boy was thought to be bidding on his girl friend's basket.

On one occasion school was

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FRONTISPIECE FROM A LEDGER book used by the Sam Elmers.
(Loaned to us by Phyl Wentz, Mulino.)

pictured with the dog in Victor's trademark, "His Master's Voice". This recent discovery where one could hear words and music was a great wonder.

The telephone was another invention that came to us when I was still in Public School. The

of opinion as to whether a ground circuit or a metallic circuit should be installed. Only one wire was used for the ground circuit in which the electric circuit was completed through a wire to the ground. Two wires were used to complete the

grades that contained books of great interest to me. Our teacher allowed us to read these books at our desks when we had finished preparing our lessons. My liking for books began with this school library during the years I was in public school.

did not have much snow and in place of snowball fights we had burr fights that were fought between sides with the green cones from a large Douglas fir tree that stood near the schoolhouse. This tree bore large numbers of cones that squirrels dropped to the ground to dig out the seeds but which we appropriated. Green fir cones were potent missiles and it required stout hearts to withstand a burr barrage when they were thrown accurately.

Our school ground was near the edge of a fir forest. Underbrush and dead timber had been cleared from about an acre

On one occasion school was dismissed early in the afternoon so that preparations could be made for a mechanical talking machine entertainment. Tubes to carry sound were laid out from a machine on the stage to receivers that were to be held to the ear, placed at every seat. Phonographic equipment had at that time not yet been perfected. Later at a school entertainment my Uncle Joe sitting at a table besides what was then known as a gramophone entertained with a machine that had a celluloid cylinder record. The appearance of this machine was similar to the early phonograph

was still in Public School. The only telephone I remember seeing prior to the one that was installed in our home was at Uncle Jake's home in Portland. My curiosity compelled me to lift the receiver to my ear but I hurriedly replaced it when a voice said "Number please". I was certain I had done something wrong and fully expected to hear about it.

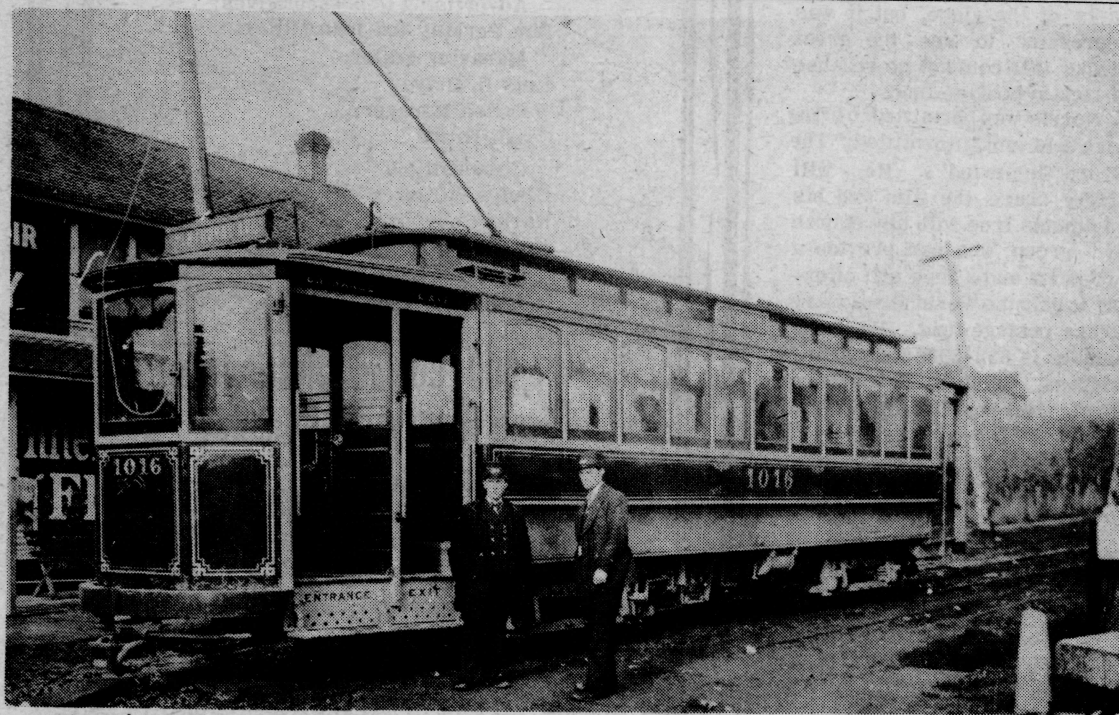
Our community telephone line was owned by about a dozen families who set the poles and strung the wire under the supervision of a man who also installed the instruments in the homes. There was a difference

wires were used to complete the metallic circuit. The original installation was a ground circuit but because of unsatisfactory performance it was soon changed to the two wire circuit. A telephone in the home through which one could speak to a neighbor several miles away instead of having to go to his home to see him was all too wonderful. Each neighbor's signal was a different ring - ours was three shorts and all telephones of our party line rang when someone made a call. There was no privacy in telephone conversations as one could tell from the clicking of lifted receivers as they were taken from the hooks when you made a call.

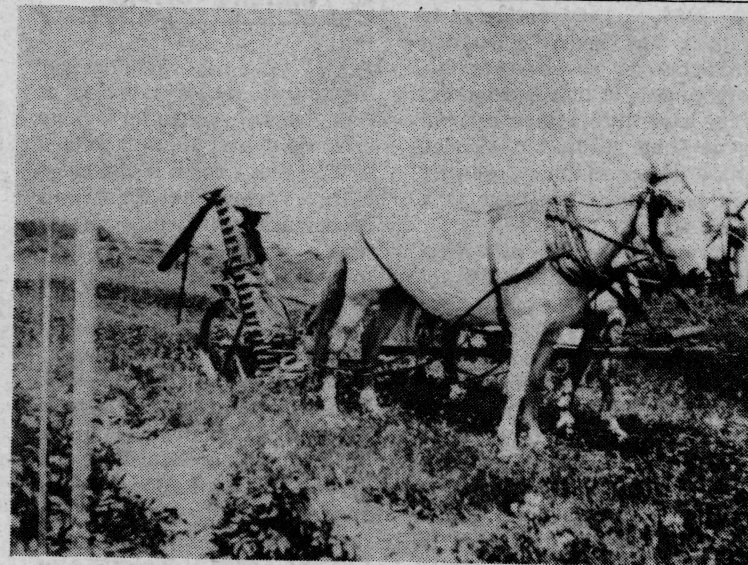
Our school was given a small library when I was in the upper

years I was in public school. Among the books I enjoyed most were those of the Henty series including "With Clive in India", "The Young Carthaginian" and others. Only about thirty years had elapsed since the Civil War ended and numerous illustrated were present about that war. The Spanish-American war was fought in 1898 and books added to our library were about Hobson who sank the Merrimac across the outlet channel of Santiago Bay to bottle up the Spanish fleet, about Dewey who fought the battle of Manila Bay, and about Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders in Cuba. These books were of great interest to us boys and were in constant demand.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)



J.R. PITTS, MOTORMAN (Left) and an unidentified conductor for the Portland Railway, Light and Power Company, 1909. The streetcar is no. 1016, Hawthorne Avenue. The sign on the building is an advertisement for White Satin Flour, which was milled at Helix in Umatilla County. James Pitts worked for the P.R.L. & P. Co. in the 1890's and early 1900's. He quit in 1910 and moved to Canby in 1911. (Photo courtesy of Rod Pitts, Silverton, son of James Pitts.)



JAMES R. PITTS MOWING clover hay near Canby, across from where the Philander Lee school and the swimming pool are now. This photo was taken in 1922. The mares were Belle (near) and her filly Judy. There are early Victor potatoes growing in the foreground. (Photo courtesy of Rod Pitts, Silverton, son of James.)

Flag Flew Every Day At Clarkes Store

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

I cannot remember much about the war with Spain. There were no telephones, radios or television sets and the only news we received was through the "Weekly Oregonian" a paper I was then still too young to read. We school children did know, however, that we were at war even in our remote countryside. A tall flagpole was erected at Clarkes four corners where the country store was located and the Stars and Stripes were flown every day. A small booklet containing the words and music of "The Star Spangled Banner" was given to every school child and we sang it at school. One of the young men of our community had enlisted for service in Cuba but the luster of his service was dimmed when he returned and it was learned that he had served in the Commissary. He was said to have used his saber to cut bread.

During my public school years we had two ponies - Nellie, a grey mare who could run real fast and Buncie, a bay who was slow and safe enough so that my sisters could ride her. Nellie was my particular delight. I rode bareback as had the Indians who had previously owned her. The saddle horse was the common means of transportation for boys and young men in those days - except when the boy took his girl somewhere when the top buggy was the favorite vehicle. Nellie developed a reputation for speed and I was proud of her when, being challenged by other riders, she outran the field on the county road where our races were run. The loser's favorite alibi was that Nellie and I had an unfair advantage in that she carried less weight and not even a saddle.

now is my wife, that passing the Elmer place afoot was a hazard because of our dog. My favorite of the dogs we owned was Tippie, a small, short-haired mongrel who followed me about and apparently liked me as well as I liked her. One day when Tippie and I were scouting through an uncleared part of our farm where felled logs lay among stumps and brush, Tippie suddenly began a terrific yipping and crying indicating she was being hurt. To reach her I crawled under some criss crossed logs and found her helpless because a marmot had a hold of her by the neck. Without hesitation I grappled the marmot whereupon it released Tippie and fastened its teeth onto my hand. It has been years since that encounter but my hand still carries the scar from that marmot bite.

Living on the farm as we did, there was always work to be done-even for small boys. Our parents saw to it that we children had jobs to do. We had cows to milk and I learned to milk before I had sufficient strength in my hands to get all the milk even though dad gave me the cow that was easiest to milk. Dad had to finish milking my cow. We always had cats in the barn and they were always present and expecting a feed of milk at milking time. It was easy to train them to drink a stream of milk that was being squirted from the cow and it was fun to direct the stream higher and higher until they could not reach it. They would then try to pull it down with their paws.

Hay for the cattle, horses and sheep was stacked to the roof of the haymow at haying time and one of my daily jobs was to pitch enough hay down from the mow to the ground floor for the

turned out to pasture in the morning and still get to school in time. Doing chores was time consuming work every morning and evening on such farms as ours where besides carrying for the cows and other cattle there were horses to feed, water, curry and harness, pigs to feed, chickens to care for, and sheep to pen up every evening to prevent their being killed by coyotes or dogs. Much of the chores, especially during the short days of winter, was done in the dark both mornings and evenings and dad and I both carried a kerosene lantern for light. Later after I was in college dad installed calcium carbide (acetylene) light in our house and barn and this was a wonderful improvement.

Near our house was the cellar that had solid, thick stone walls and with the floor about two feet below soil level. The ceiling of the cellar was the floor for an upstairs room under the gable roof of the building where apples, pears and some winter vegetables were stored. One half of the cellar was a storage room for potatoes. The other half had a concrete floor and shelves on which stood the jars of fruits and vegetables that mother had canned and where milk stood in earthenware crocks for the cream to rise. The cream was skimmed off and churned to butter in a barrel churn. The butter was taken to Oregon City to be sold to the grocery store. We children drank only milk that still had its cream but some of the skim milk was used for cottage cheese. The surplus was fed to the calves and to the pigs. To make cottage cheese mother allowed skim milk to stand several days until it clabbered after which it was heated when

Occasionally mother made tripe from pig stomachs and we never had enough heart and liver. At times the stomachs were given by me to my friend Charlie Hi the Chinaman who ran the hopyard near our home. Charlie was always delighted to have me bring him "pig belly". He cleaned and washed the stomachs and then put the pieces on the stove to cook and then he invited me to have dinner with him. Since he had not stripped off the stomach inner lining as mother did, I thanked Charlie but I had to go home.

Beef was a rare treat at our home and we had it only when father brought some from town. Chicken was common since we grew our own hens and the young roosters were always subject to the pot. At threshing time father butchered one of our sheep for the threshing crew. My mother had a good reputation for serving excellent food.

Going to church at our house was as regular as Sunday. This was always a special day for me when we could be with other people and when, perchance, someone would come home with us for dinner and to visit or we could be invited elsewhere. To go to church we used a light weight spring wagon known as a hack that was drawn by two horses. Mother and dad sat on the front seat with the baby and we other children sat in the back seat. Services consisted first of Sunday School and then the minister preached his sermon. As we grew older we children either went to visit friends on Sunday afternoons or friends would come to visit us. One thing, however, seldom varied for me on Sunday - there was always the chores that had to

established where wagons, and later trucks, took the farmer's cream on regular days of the week. The cream hauler weighed the cream and took a sample to be assayed for butter fat content. Payment to the farmer was based on weight of the cream multiplied by the percent butter fat contained.

Three manufacturers of cream separators competed for sale of their machines to farmers in our neighborhood. These were DeLaval, Empire and Sharpless. To help farmers decide which machine they would buy, a demonstration was arranged at our farm where the three were present not only to be viewed but where cream was separated from milk from our cows.

Grain for cows and hogs was chopped at a neighbor's feed mill that was located at a dam and powered with a water wheel. The flour used in our home was ground from our own home grown wheat at Union Mills, a flour mill at Meadow Brook, about six miles from home that was also powered by a waterwheel.

A neighbor boy who was about my age, Curtis Martin, was addicted to chewing tobacco at an early age and it was while I was with him that I first tasted chewing tobacco. Father had taken me with him to a public sale at Meadow Brook and after some time Curt and I became bored with the sale. We walked down the road to Mill Creek and while standing on the bridge I bit off some from his plug of Climax. Curt warned me not to do any swallowing but it got away from me and I did swallow and immediately became violently sick and dizzy. The bridge had a four foot banister but I was so dizzy

had an unfair advantage in that she carried less weight and not even a saddle.

We always had a dog and some of our dogs did a lot of barking at passers by and appeared to be dangerous. I later learned from Esther, who

the mallow at maying time and one of my daily jobs was to pitch enough hay down from the mow to the ground floor for the day's needs. The job that gave me the most trouble, however, was cleaning the cow stable and bedding their stalls with fresh straw after the cows were

allowed skim milk to stand several days until it clabbered after which it was heated when the curds were separated from the whey by pouring all into a muslin bag and hanging the bag up to allow the whey to drain off.

An important event at our home was when it came time to butcher hogs for our home meat supply. Two or three pigs had been fattened in our hog fattening pen. One of my uncles usually came to help us kill the pigs and dress them. The water in a tank large enough to submerge the pig was brought to near boil so the hair could be scalded and removed. The pig was then hung up to be dressed and then cut up into various pieces. Hams, shoulders and bacon were hung up near the roof of our smokehouse to be smoke-cured with smouldering apple wood. The smokehouse was a mere shanty with walls, roof and a dirt floor on which a fire could be kept with safety. One of the smells of my boyhood days I well remember is the smell of smoke from our smokehouse. Much other work had to be done in addition to smoking hams, shoulders and bacon. Certain parts including much of the head, feet, ears, leg joints, etc., were cooked and made into headcheese. The fat used for cooking in those days consisted primarily of hog lard. The fat of the pig including that from the intestines and was then rendered with heat. Fat from the intestines was known as leaf lard. Mother also made sausage which was a rare delicacy. Small intestines were carefully cleaned and they then served as caseings for the sausage and this was also smoked.

thing, however, seldom varied for me on Sunday - there was always the chores that had to be done.

The advent of the cream separator changed farm dairying operations markedly as did many other new inventions that appeared shortly before and after the beginning of the twentieth century. Farmers increased the size of their dairy herds and at that time commercial creameries were being established who bought the cream from the farmers. Regular cream pick-up routes were

tely became violently sick and dizzy. The bridge had a four foot banister but I was so dizzy I was afraid I would fall off it. Curt helped me crawl on hands and knees down the bank to the water so I could rinse my mouth. Later when father and I started for home in the wagon I was still dizzy and it was with great effort that I kept him from finding out that I was sick. From about a mile before we arrived home the minister of our church rode home with us and although

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

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Power Crosscut Saw Saved Labor

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

tried to get him to take my seat alongside of father so I could stand behind them he insisted on standing behind us. To keep him from noticing me still weaving from dizziness was pure agony but we finally arrived home. I promised myself I would never chew tobacco again.

The fuel we used for cooking in the kitchen and for the heating stove was wood from our own fir trees. We had numerous fine tall trees to choose from and the tree chosen was limb-free to high up and thus had a minimum of knots to make for difficult splitting into small pieces. The tools used were a cross cut saw, an axe, a sledge and several steel wedges. The cross cut saw was about eight feet long with handles at both ends and was operated by a man at either end of the saw. To cut a tree down, a cut was made about a foot deep into the side of the tree at right angles to the direction we wished the tree to fall. A wedge of wood

was then chopped from the tree with the axe from about a foot above the cut to the depth of the cut. The tree was then sawed off from the opposite side. Just before it started to fall, a wedge was driven with the sledge into the cut behind the saw to help lean the tree in the direction it was to fall. Without opposing winds the tree could be made to fall almost exactly where we wanted it to lie. Stove wood was cut in fifteen inch lengths and the tree trunk was sawed into fifteen inch long sections after which with the aid of axe, sledge and wedges the sections were split into pieces that could be easily carried. These pieces were stacked in ricks to dry. Later the wood was hauled home and stacked in the woodshed. A building sufficiently large to hold a year's supply of wood for the home. It was my job to split this wood into pieces small enough for the kitchen stove and to prepare kindling wood for starting the fires.

Working on one end of the cross cut saw with my father

at the other end was hard work for me but dad was always understanding and never asked me to overdo. By the time I had grown big enough for the wood sawing job a friend, John Marshall, had assembled a power cross cut saw outfit where the saw was connected to a crank that was powered with a small gasoline engine. This power saw was a wonderful labor saving device and from then on our wood sawing was always done with a power saw.

One of the common native plants on our land was the brake ferns whose beautiful fronds covered the ground soon after the trees had been cut down and sunlight could penetrate to the soil. These ferns became a weed after the ground was plowed and planted to wheat or oats. To obtain a good crop it was necessary to destroy them. They were cut out from the growing grain with a scythe where the tip of the scythe blade was used as a hook to cut off the individual fern stems without cutting off the wheat or

oats. The ferns were cut off in narrow swaths across the field until the whole field was covered. This job required much time and sometimes dad hired help to get it done. Fortunately this fern was not persistent and died out when it was cut back a year or two. We had a small potato field on newly cleared ground where the fern grew so thick and so tall that one could not see the potato plants. Dad gave my sisters and me the job of hoeing this fern out which we did a row at a time. Fortunately the fern did not make a second effort that year to grow as do many other perennial plants.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

* * *

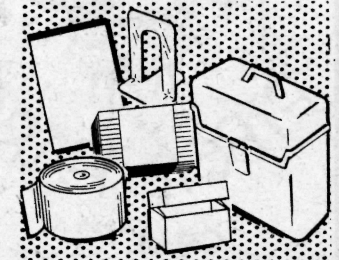
Think that day lost whose low descending sun views from thy hand no noble action done.

Jacob Bobart.

* * *

"Talking without thinking is as dangerous as running in the dark - and the end result is about the same." - Reub Long.

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