

THE EARLY HISTORY OF EUGENE

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CHAPTER I

THE JOURNEY WEST BEGINS

Among the three thousand adventurous pioneers who headed westward from Missouri in the spring of 1845 to settle in the Oregon Country were several people whose coming was to mean much to the city of Eugene and to Lane County.

The story of those hardy emigrants and their journey across the plains to Fort Hall, southwest from there over the deserts and mountains to Sutter's Fort in California, and north from California to the Willamette Valley is a thrilling one to those of us who live here today in the vicinity in which they settled.

In that group were Eugene Skinner, who founded our city in 1846; his wife, Mary, who gave the city its name; Elijah Bristow, to whom goes the honor of being the first settler in Lane County; and two other young men, William Dodson and Felix Scott, Jr., who became Mr. Bristow's neighbors.

Eugene Franklin Skinner, who was born in Essex, New York, in 1809, was a well-known farmer in Putnam County, Illinois, in the year 1845. He had received a good education, especially in the field of law, and had at various times been elected to political offices. In 1839 he married Mary Cook, and they

had three daughters, all of whom died in Illinois.⁽¹⁾ Eugene suffered from poor health. As he and Mary heard more and more about the wonderful climate in the far West and the possibility of getting six hundred forty acres of free land there they made up their minds to go west to settle. They hoped to gain better health and free farm land as well.

Many other people, both from the East and the Middle West, were interested in emigrating to the Oregon Country in the 1840's. There were many reasons for this interest. Many frontiersmen, like Elijah Bristow of Virginia,⁽²⁾ enjoyed pioneering and looked forward to the adventures of the journey to the new frontier. Farmers were searching for rich farm lands nearer the coast where they might have better chances to raise and market more plentiful crops than they had in the Middle West. They had just come through a depression period⁽³⁾ in which they had lost most of their money in farming. Some people, like Mr. Skinner, came in search of a more healthful climate. Among all those who came there were some who realized that they were helping to win the Oregon Country for the United

(1) Eugene Morning Register, Anniversary Edition. (Eugene, Oregon: Gilstrap Brothers, 1904), p. 1.

(2) A. C. Walling, Illustrated History of Lane County (Portland, Oregon: the author, 1884), p. 324.

(3) Bell, James C., "Opening a Highway to the Pacific, 1838-46", Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, edited by Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, vol. 96 (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., agents, 1921), p. 185.

States simply by settling in that far-off territory.⁽¹⁾

On the basis of explorations which British and American explorers had carried on, Great Britain and the United States both claimed the area which is now Oregon and Washington, and the two nations had agreed in 1818 that people from both England and the United States might settle there until a boundary dividing their claims had been agreed upon. This dispute had not been settled when the Skinners and Bristow began their journey in 1845. Until it was settled the United States government could not give legal rights to the free land which the emigrants were expecting to get, but through the Provisional government, which had been organized in Oregon by the earliest settlers, on their own, in 1843, there was a chance to claim free land and hold it until a Donation Land Law could be passed by the national government. (This was done in 1850, after the boundary dispute was settled in June, 1846.)

Whatever the reasons may have been, the spirit of "On to Oregon" spread throughout the Middle West, as well as in the East, and caravans gathered at Independence, at Westport Landing (later Kansas City), and St. "Jo" (St. Joseph), Missouri in the spring of 1845, as caravans had been doing every spring for three or four years, ready to start to Oregon when there was grass enough for the cattle.

(1) Melvin Clay Jacobs, Winning Oregon (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1938), p. 65.

Why did these villages become the starting places for the great westward migrations? They were on or near the Missouri River, and, since many emigrants from the East traveled as far as they could on the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Missouri Rivers, these outposts of civilization became the logical meeting places for the relatives and friends who were planning to go West together. Independence had already become noted as the frontier trading headquarters for the Santa Fe Trail. The first Oregon trains followed the old Santa Fe Trail as far as they could, rather than make a new trail, but later emigrants found that they could save about four days' travel by ox team, by starting from St. Jo, which was up-river and seventy miles farther west than Independence. There was one serious drawback against St. Jo as a starting-point: the Missouri had to be crossed, and crossing any river, especially a wide, treacherous one like the Missouri, meant trouble and danger.⁽¹⁾

There were usually several wagons in a train. Each family might have two or three wagons, loaded with provisions and supplies. Sometimes two or three trains would be traveling within sight of each other, each train having its own captain. Whether they traveled fairly close together or not depended partly upon the presence of Indians nearby, upon the amount

(1) Irene Paden, The Wake of the Prairie Schooner (New York: MacMillan Co., 1947), p. 2-4, 54.

or scarcity of grass for the stock and water for the whole company, upon the condition of the trail, or even, sometimes, upon whether the leaders and members of the caravans could get along well with each other!

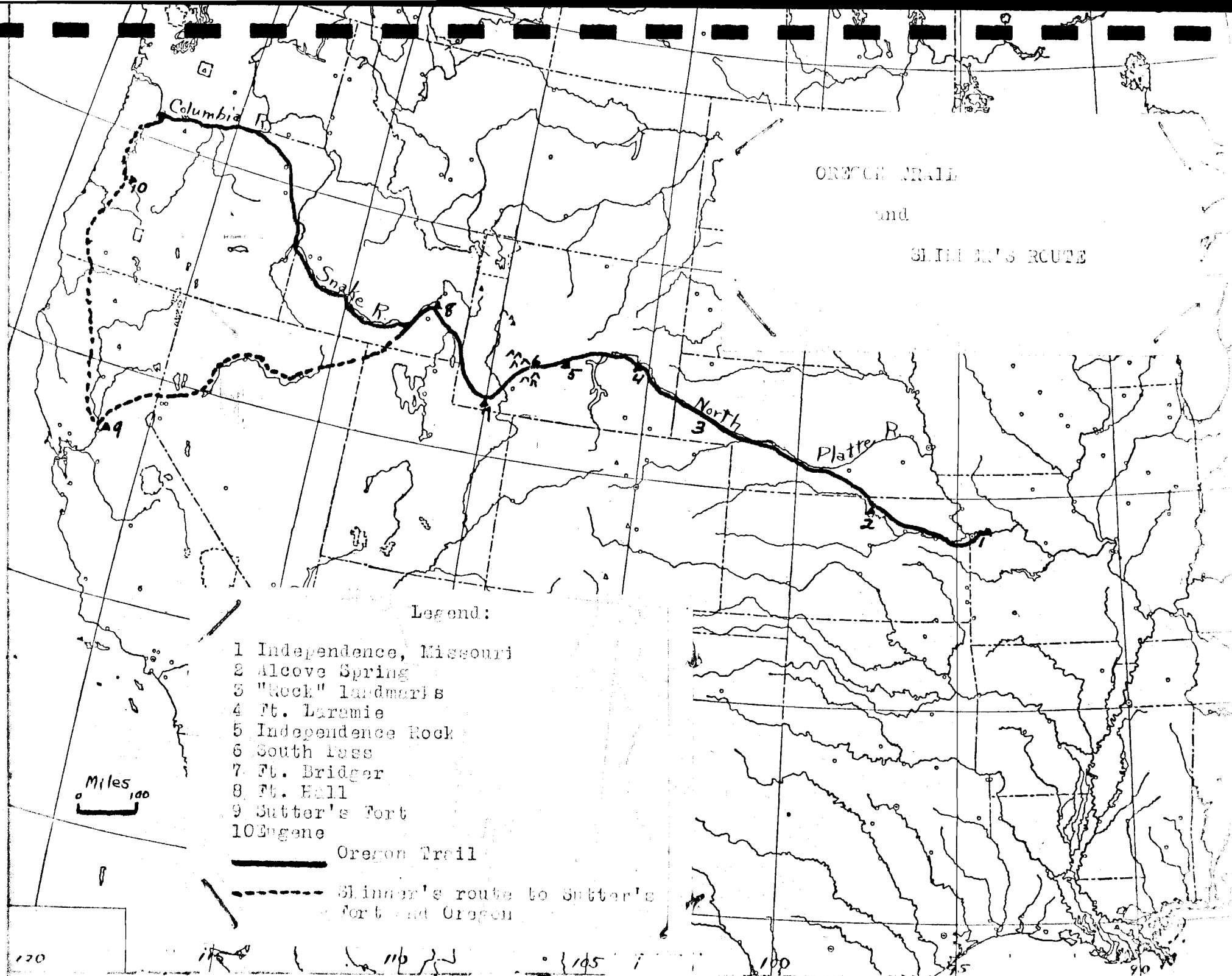
The majority of the emigrants were good people--hard workers, honest, neighborly, and kind--believing in the Golden Rule and living by it. But, as in any large group of people, there were some undesirable characters among them--lazy men and women, people with violent tempers and hateful dispositions, and, occasionally, fugitives from justice. Those people who were poor managers and who had not brought enough supplies and those who were sickly were a source of continual worry to the more conscientious members of the trains.⁽¹⁾

In many ways the first few trains that came over the California-Oregon Trail were the luckiest. There was plenty of grass and fuel available. The emigrants had planned their supplies carefully and well, for the most part. A Trail Guide book was available.⁽²⁾ Cholera, the dreaded sickness which afflicted the trains in 1849 and in the 1850's, had not yet made its appearance. The novelty of the trip in itself helped keep up the morale of the travelers, and, too,

(1) Sarah Hunt Steeves, Book of Remembrances of Marian County, Oregon Pioneers, 1840-1860 (Portland, Oregon: the author, 1927), preface.

(2) L. W. Hastings, The Emigrant's Guide to Oregon and California (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1932).

they realized that they were not alone, but a part of a mighty flood of settlers on the move. The plains Indians, who took it for granted that if a murderer were caught another person in his group or tribe had to be given up for punishment by death, hadn't yet had serious cause to start claiming hostages, and were either curious, indifferent, or timid. The first trains started out early enough in the year so that they had good weather for traveling and didn't have to race so hard against time and bad weather as did later caravans.



CHAPTER II

THE OREGON TRAIL TO FORT HALL AND THE LANDMARKS ALONG THE WAY

The Skinners and Elijah Bristow kept no available record of their travels,⁽¹⁾ but by 1845 the route had been traveled enough that we may be reasonably sure of its course. When the landmarks are mentioned we shall refer to them as they appear now also.⁽²⁾

The Trail led from Independence, Missouri, west and northwest to the South Platte River (in Nebraska), then to the North Platte, to Ft. Laramie (in Wyoming), southwest to South Pass and Green River, and north to Ft. Hall (in Idaho), where the Skinners and Bristow separated from the main Oregon-bound caravan and went to California.

The Trail was not a new one. It had developed in ages past. In the course of their travels across the plains through the centuries roving bands of Indians and buffaloes had traced faint trails along creeks and rivers, from the

(1) Mention is made of the Skinners and Bristow as fellow-emigrants in accounts written by a relative of Felix Scott, Jr. and by B. F. Bonney, a member of the Skinner-Bristow train.

(2) The writer visited most of the landmarks mentioned in August, 1949. Other sources of reference are listed in the bibliography.

frontier to the Rockies.

These trails were convenient for the American fur trappers and traders (the Mountain Men) to follow on their way from the Missouri to the mountains. The pack trains sent out by the fur companies to the summer rendezvous marked the trails more distinctly as they plodded westward toward the mountains, loaded with supplies, and homeward with the winter's fur harvest. In the 1830's the companies began using wagons for hauling supplies, after Captain Bonneville had succeeded in taking a wagon train through in 1832, and soon there was a makeshift road as far as the Green River in Wyoming.

The first white men known to have traveled the length and the general route of what later became the Oregon Trail started from the western coast at Astoria. They were a few members of Astor's fur-trading company on their way back to the States in 1812-13.⁽¹⁾

A few missionaries traveled to the Oregon country with fur-trading parties in those early days. Dr. Marcus Whitman and Reverend Henry Spalding took their wives with them, and these two women were the first white women to cross the Rockies. Their success encouraged other women to attempt the long journey.

⁽¹⁾ Paden, op. cit. p. 325.

Adventurous pioneers began heading west by way of the overland trail by 1840, using, oxen, horses, wagons, and carts. In the Great Migration of 1843, guided by Marcus Whitman, about one thousand emigrants crossed the plains and the Rockies on the now well-defined Oregon Trail.

Thus, by 1845, when the Skinners, Bristow, and others of the Eugene group began their long slow trip to their new homes they were not unaware of the route they were to travel or the dangers and difficulties they might face on the Trail, but they were undaunted and set out with high courage and determination.

Their starting place, Independence, Missouri, well known then as a frontier trading headquarters and now notable especially as the home of Harry S. Truman, grew up around a spring of good cold water. The deserted-looking spring may still be seen on a back street near the city's electric plant.

A great number of emigrants reached Independence by way of steamboats on the Missouri. The landing place, known as Wayne City or Independence Landing, was about five miles from the village itself. One may visit the peaceful site today, but only by a vigorous stretch of the imagination can one picture the hustle and bustle it enjoyed in its hey-day--the scramble of unloading--the hurrying passengers, bulky wagons, skittish horses, slow-moving oxen, enormous amounts of supplies and freight--all destined to move steadily westward, to

California or to Oregon.

In the village were to be seen blacksmith shops, saloons, rooming-houses, a mule-market, the village square surrounding a log courthouse, muddy (or dusty) streets, covered wagons, freight wagons, mules, oxen, horses, Indians, and hundreds of busy travelers.

On the outskirts of the town the emigrants formed their wagon trains and waited impatiently for the go-ahead signal.

The old log courthouse, which became the village's first schoolhouse, has long since been replaced by other courthouse buildings and has been moved to a different location in the old part of the town (on Main and Kansas streets).

Most Oregon-bound wagon trains left Independence by way of the southern branch of the Santa Fe Trail, which they followed for forty miles, before branching off to the northwest.

One of the last signs of civilization the emigrants saw before reaching the prairies was the Shawnee Mission, twenty miles west of Independence. Built by the Methodists in 1839, the first brick building served as a school for Indian boys and girls. Attendance grew rapidly; another building was erected in 1841, and by 1845 one hundred thirty-seven pupils were enrolled. A third building was built in 1845. These three buildings are now preserved as historic landmarks, the first one serving as a museum.

Trees were so scarce along the Trail in that section that one, known as the Lone Elm, which stood near a creek thirty-four miles from Independence, served as a landmark and rendezvous for many years, until the gold rush days, when it finally disappeared from the landscape.

The road from Westport (Kansas City) joined the Independence road near the present town of Gardner, Kansas, forty miles out on the way, and here the Oregon Trail led off to the northwest while the Santa Fe Trail went southwest. On the schoolgrounds stands a monument which marks the general location of the forks. A crude sign "Road to Oregon" at one time pointed the way for the emigrants.

Within the next forty miles or so when they reached Papin's ferry (Topeka) crossing the Kansas River, the travelers, having had several days' experience on the Trail, talked over their plans, checked their equipment, chose their captains, if they had not already done so, and got their caravans better organized for the long journey ahead.

The Trail stayed close to creeks or rivers wherever possible. Near Marysville, Kansas, at the ford over the Big Blue River known as Independence Crossing, there was a comfortable camping spot, popular with the emigrants. Shade and firewood were plentiful in the grove of trees by the river, and a spring beside a small creek nearby furnished good cold water. This landmark, being off the modern highway a few miles, is now

seldom visited. In this quiet secluded spot, so little changed since the covered-wagon days, one has the feeling of being very close to the past. The Trail wound over the rolling prairie land to the spring by the creek and down among the trees to the river bank. The creek, which dries up by the end of summer, earlier in the year pours over a semicircular ledge of rocks near the spring forming a waterfall. An emigrant in the Donner party of 1846 carved the fitting name of "Alcove Spring" on one of the rocks forming part of the ledge, but the process of erosion has caused this section of the ledge to fall face-down into the creek bed a few feet below, so that the name cannot be seen. Other travelers carved their names or initials on other boulders and these may easily be seen. The spring still provides cool refreshing water. The ruts of the Trail show plainly on the sidehill and in the camping spot a few hundred feet to the west on the river bank.

The Trail led northwest from the Big Blue through the Little Blue Valley to the Platte River in Nebraska, where the emigrants got their first view of the "coast of Nebraska" with its sandstone bluffs and rocks. It was in this area that the early wagon trains met up with enormous herds of buffaloes. The buffalo was of great value to the emigrants, furnishing meat, hides, and fuel in the form of "buffalo chips", or "prairie coal",⁽¹⁾ as the dried manure was called. On the

(1) Clifford M. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1940), p. 83.

plains where there was no other fuel to be had, "buffalo chips" filled a definite need. One pioneer wrote that a bushel of chips could be gathered in one minute, and that it took three bushels to make a good fire.⁽¹⁾

In the region along the Platte River, known as Pawnee territory, the emigrants frequently met bands of Pawnee and Sioux Indians who were often on the warpath against each other. In later years the Indians fought the whites too, but at first they were usually friendly.

Storms, stampedes, and river crossings were the main dangers faced by the travelers in the early 1840's.

When the forks of the Platte were reached the wagon trains turned left for a few miles, along the South Platte, near the present town of Brule, Nebraska, and over the first of many famous natural landmarks south of the Platte, the sandstone formation known as O'Fallon's Bluffs. The wide, shallow ford at the forks became known as the lower California crossing. It was an extremely dangerous one, with its swift, muddy water, quicksands, deep holes, sand bars, and its custom of flooding unexpectedly.

From this crossing the wagons headed northward toward the North Platte Valley over rolling hills to Ash Hollow, near the river, where the trail led over the smooth top of the

(1) T. J. Geer, Fifty Years in Oregon (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1912), p. 135.

bluffs down a long, fairly steep slope into the peaceful hollow below. Here was to be found a level, grassy camping spot with a few scrubby ash trees, encircled by bluffs on three sides. The modern highway goes through the Hollow and in a few hundred feet reaches the bridge, crossing to the north bank of the North Platte.

The hill over which the wagons went down into Ash Hollow was sometimes spoken of as "Windlass Hill." This was the steepest slope the travelers had found so far, and their usual method of just chaining the wheels (since they had no brakes to keep the wagons from running over the oxen) was obviously not suitable on such a steep place. They didn't want to take the time to dig a road. Instead they made a windlass by fastening a wagon to the ground on the hilltop, with the wheels left free to turn, then they tied one end of a rope to the axle of that wagon and the other end to another wagon with a team in front which was to be let down the hill. The men held back on the wheels of the top wagon as the axle turned and that let the wagon down slowly and safely, unless the rope broke. The windlass wagon had the most dangerous ride!⁽¹⁾

At the foot of the hill stand the ruins of a little stone cabin dating back to early days. A still earlier cabin had served as a Trail "post office." Between the Hollow and the

⁽¹⁾Paden, op. cit., pp. 120-1.

river on the west is an old Trail cemetery.

The journey along the North Platte was fairly comfortable and pleasant. The Trail ran over rolling land between the bluffs and the river for about fifty miles, passing five separate outstanding "rock" landmarks which were at one time all part of the original bluff formation.

The first of these is Courthouse Rock which, with its neighbor, Jail Rock, looms up commandingly from the valley floor a few miles south of the town of Bridgeport. Due to the clearness of the air the Rocks didn't look to be far away from the Trail but the distance was about twelve miles, as interested travelers found who went to have a closer look at these unusual objects. Courthouse Rock is about one thousand feet across at its base and about four hundred feet high, and was so named by an early traveler because of its resemblance, from a distance, to a courthouse building with a dome on top. The smaller rock standing close to the east side of the "courthouse" was fittingly named Jail Rock, since in those days courthouses and jails were usually placed near each other in towns, even as Eugene's are now. One traveler called the smaller rock the "Clerk's Office."⁽¹⁾

From Courthouse Rock can be seen Chimney Rock, fifteen miles or so further along the river, across from Bayard,

(1)"Uncle Sam" Handsaker, Pioneer Life (Eugene, Oregon: the author, 1908), p. 58.

Nebraska. The Trail went along the higher land near the foot of the bluffs to avoid the marshy land near the river and passed close by the tall limestone shaft or core known as Chimney Rock, which once rose two hundred fifty feet or more into the air. Now the column rises only about fifty feet above its cone-shaped base, due to erosion, lightning, or perhaps to target practice by a company of soldiers passing through, as local people say.

The bluffs along the North Platte were sometimes called the Wildcat Hills. Castle Rock was another off-shoot from these hills which attracted the interest of the travelers.

The last of the North Platte's famous natural landmarks was Scott's Bluff, on up the river about twenty miles from Chimney Rock. This bluff, eight hundred feet high, is simply the eastern edge of the hills which reach the river at this spot. The name Scott's Bluff was given to this place because of a sad incident. According to an old story dating back to fur-trading times, a trapper named Hiram Scott, returning from the mountains, became ill as he was heading east with a group of trappers, and two of his companions stayed behind with the sick man, planning to take him down the river in a boat and to re-join their group at the easily recognized landmark. The good intentions of the men did not last long. Their boat was wrecked and because they did not want to bother any longer with the sick man they left him and went on, meeting

their friends at the bluff. They told them that Scott had died, but instead the sick man somehow made his way painfully and desperately to the bluff, covering a distance of sixty miles. By the time he reached there the others had of course gone one, and with them his only chance for help. He died by the side of a spring in a spot now marked by a memorial stone. His tragic story became known the next summer when his bones and some of his belongings were discovered by other trappers.(1)

The Trail, for the earliest migrations, led through Robidoux Pass (or Canyon) in the hills around the back side of Scott's Bluff (west of Gering) and down to river level again. Later migrations used Mitchell's Pass, an easier one, nearer the river.

At the forks of the Laramie and the North Platte rivers the emigrants, having traveled steadily for about six hundred seventy miles in two month's time enjoyed thankfully the hospitality of the American Fur Company's trading post, Ft. Laramie. This post and Ft. Hall, which were of so much value in furnishing supplies and protection to the emigrants, were built as a result of an interesting circumstance.(2) In 1832 Nathaniel Wyeth, a young inexperienced "Boston" (American)

(1) Paden, op. cit., pp. 147-8.

(2) Ibid., p. 152.

trader led a fur-trading expedition across the Rockies to the Pacific and back, but failed to make any profit from the trip. On the return trip east he made an agreement with a fur company that he would come back to Green River in Wyoming the next summer with a pack train of supplies for trading.

The next summer he started out to keep his bargain, but some other men who knew about the plan (one of them was the brother of the man who had made the agreement with Wyeth) started out, too, also with supplies to trade. They got ahead of Wyeth on the way and one of them (Campbell) set up a crude trading post at the Laramie river forks to trade with the Sioux Indians, while the other (William Sublette) went on to Green River, arriving ahead of Wyeth and beating him to the traders' business.

This of course made Wyeth angry and he went on to the Snake River valley (in Idaho) where he set up a trading post of his own, naming it Fort Hall. (We shall hear about this fort again later in the journey.)

Later, in 1849, the United States bought Ft. Laramie from the American Fur Company and made it a military fort to furnish protection to emigrants passing through that region. In 1936 the government began restoring it as a national monument. It is a worthwhile spot to visit, in its beautiful setting on the uplands by the banks of the Laramie. One rare relic which

may be seen there is a roadameter,⁽¹⁾ presented to the museum there by the Mormons in recent years. It is a copy of the wooden device invented by a Mormon in 1847 to be attached to the rear wheel of a wagon to measure the distance traveled in the course of a day.

When the wagon train left Ft. Laramie the Laramie River lay in their path on the south side of the North Platte and had to be forded. From then on the Trail led for one hundred twenty miles or so through the Black Hills, as the mountains near Ft. Laramie were called,⁽²⁾ where the going was quite difficult. Laramie Peak, the first real peak the travelers had seen, served as a landmark on the southwest. There were many creeks in this area and good water, fuel and feed for the stock were plentiful. The Trail crossed the North Platte for the last time south of the present city of Casper, Wyoming.

For the next fifty miles, through barren desert-like country, the emigrants were bothered with heat and alkali--irritating alkali dust and poisonous alkali water. This made the pleasant camping spot at Independence Rock on the bank of the Sweetwater River seem especially enjoyable. Here they could rest and refresh themselves and their stock before crossing the river.

(1) Andrew Jenson, The Historic Old Record, Vol. 2 (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1890), p. 22, p. 36.

(2) Paden, op. cit., p. 168.

Independence Rock, eight hundred thirty-eight miles from Independence, Missouri, was the most famous Trail landmark of all. All the main trails came together at this Rock, and to the travelers it became known as the Great Register of the Desert. It served as a bulletin-board for names of passers-by, as well as messages to friends or relatives coming behind. The Rock is a large rounded mass of gray granite, about one hundred feet high, and almost a mile around. It looks like an enormous lump of modeling clay shaped to resemble a huge animal lying down, or as another person describes it better: "It looks very much like a giant haystack in the midst of a vast field."⁽¹⁾ Its sides are fairly smooth, with cracks here and there, and show clearly the polishing effect of the great glacier which must have covered it at one time. The name was given it by American Fur Company trappers who spent Independence Day there in 1830. There is a wire fence along in front of the section where most of the names were carved to keep it from being damaged. Not many of the names can be read now. Most of them were not carved in deeply but were painted on with axle grease or other mixtures.

One young girl, who came to Oregon in 1854, told of finding a curiosity on the summit of Independence Rock: "An emigrant wagon, the owner being busily engaged in making and

(1) Walter Meacham, The Old Oregon Trail (Manchester, N.H.: The Clarke Press, 1948), p. 40.

disposing of, to the weary emigrants, dried apple pies, a rare treat, no doubt. This was the most elevated 'pie counter' of any at that time from the Missouri River to Portland, and just how the wagon reached the apex of the rock is known best by those who placed it there."⁽¹⁾

The Sweetwater is a narrow stream of clear cool water and, so the story goes, got its name from the fact that a trader in the early days lost all his sugar in the river as he was crossing.⁽²⁾

From the Rock can be seen, five miles or so in the distance, to the right of the Trail, another easily recognized natural landmark--Devil's Gate (or Gap). Through this narrow steep-walled gap, 400 feet high, a quarter of a mile long, and 100 feet wide, the usually peaceful river makes a noisy and violent crossing of the Sweetwater Range (or the Granite Range, as it was sometimes called). The Trail led through a low pass to the west of this Gap.

Traveling at an elevation of six thousand feet the wagon trains were now beginning to climb the barely noticeable uphill slope of the Rockies. Behind them lay the Sweetwater Range, with Split Rock showing against the sky.

While still near the river they passed Icy (or Ice)

(1) Handsaker, op. cit., p. 14.

(2) Paden, op. cit., p. 207.

Slough, an unusual landmark, which in the early Trail days furnished ice for travelers even in the middle of summer. It was discovered by some men while digging for water in a swampy place. About a foot underground they found a six-inch layer of ice. The water at that high elevation became frozen during the winter and, covered by a thick layer of grass and soil, remained frozen even during the hot summer. According to hear-say, the slough no longer furnishes ice, but the place may still be seen.

One might expect that the covered wagons met with their greatest troubles of the whole trip in crossing the Rockies, but such was not the case. Actually the route across South Pass, discovered in 1824 by trappers, followed an easy grade and furnished fairly smooth going. The long slow pull was accomplished so gradually that the emigrants scarcely knew when they had reached the seven thousand foot summit. The best evidence was that the waters of Pacific Spring, just over the summit, flowed westward. The Pass is about twenty miles wide and eighty miles long. From the summit looking west the home-seekers were seeing the Oregon Country for the first time.

The modern highway passes north of the Trail, joining it at Pacific Spring and following near it to the town of Farson, Wyoming. Shepherders tending their large herds of sheep are common sights near the road on the western mountain slopes.

The Trail crossed three creeks in this region, fittingly

named Dry Sandy, Little Sandy and Big Sandy, before it finally reached Green River. This section was desert country watered mainly by the summer-flooding Green River, a clear swift-flowing cold stream, difficult to cross.

The emigrants were able to replenish their scant stocks of supplies at Fort Bridger on Black's Fork, a fort built by Jim Bridger in 1842 especially for trading with the emigrants. Nothing remains of the old fort itself, but the quarters built by the army in later years are still standing and there is a museum.

The Trail went north into (present-day) Idaho through the beautiful Bear River Valley, where the main difficulty was that of fighting off the hordes of mosquitoes.

Just before leaving the river the travelers came to Soda Springs, the most unusual landmark along the Trail. Here in sunken spots (potholes) on the hillside and in tall rock cones along the river bank were found natural fountains of cool bubbly soda water. One of those on the river bank was known as Beer Spring, and another, the only hot spring especially mentioned was Steamboat Spring, which steamed, spouted, rumbled, and bubbled at regular intervals. To the sight-seers these springs were a source of interest and discussion for days before and after. Most of them are now covered by the waters of a lake formed by the building of a dam on the Bear River.

From the Springs to Ft. Hall, the fort built in 1834 by

Nathaniel Wyeth, there were no landmarks until the trains came within sight of the Three Buttes across the Snake River from the fort.

Between Ft. Hall and the Raft River crossing where the trails forked, one leading to Oregon and the other to California, there are at least two Trail landmarks that may still be seen. The Trail went between some huge boulders which were called Massacre Rocks, ten miles from the town of American Falls. Here Indian ambushes sometimes occurred. Two miles from there was Rock Creek Camp, a good camping spot, where the names the emigrants carved on the boulders still show plainly.

CHAPTER III

CALIFORNIA OR OREGON

When the trains which had left Independence in May, 1845, reached Ft. Hall they were met by an old mountain-man, Caleb Greenwood,⁽¹⁾ and his three sons--John, 22; Britain, 18; and Sam, 16--who had been sent by Captain Sutter to meet any Oregon-bound trains and encourage settlers to go to California to his settlement near Sacramento instead of going on to Oregon. Sutter's purpose was to get farms started near his place on which wheat could be raised; then he intended to trade the wheat to the Russians in Alaska for furs, and thereby make a fortune for himself.⁽²⁾

Mr. Greenwood told the emigrants about the dangerous Oregon Trail that led to the north, the hostile Indians in that region, and the cold climate. He said that although no emigrants had gone to California yet by wagons, there was an easy grade and that crossing the mountains would not be difficult; that Captain Sutter would supply the emigrants with

(1) Fred Lockley,, "Recollections of Benjamin Franklin Bonney", Oregon Historical Quarterly, 24:36-55, (1923). p. 38, and Joel Palmer, "Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains, 1845-6" from Thwaite's Early Western Travels, vol. 30, (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1906), pp. 87-9.

(2) Lockley, op. cit., page 38, page 48.

potatoes, coffee, and dried beef, and would help them over the mountains with their wagons. Upon arrival he would give six sections of land from his own Spanish land grant to every head of a family who would settle near his fort.

In spite of the warnings from the leaders of the trains about the uncertainty of land titles in California, the folly of going into a country which was under a foreign flag, and the unknown dangers to which they would be exposing their families, many of the people decided to go to California. Eight wagons left the main trains and followed Caleb Greenwood and his sons. And who were among that group? The Skinners, the Bonneys, William Dodson, the Felix Scott, Sr. family, Elijah Bristow, and a few others. They had made up their minds to spend the winter in California at least. Mr. Greenwood drove south with them for three days, then he headed back to Fort Hall to persuade other emigrants to go to California. His sons were to guide the wagon train to its destination.

At first the going was good, but after two weeks' traveling they came to a sagebrush desert, across which their progress was slow and painful.⁽¹⁾ At the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains they camped for several days, waiting for other emigrants from Ft. Hall to catch up with them for the trip across the mountains. A pack train arrived from Sutter's

(1) Horace Greeley, An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859 (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker and Co., 1860).

Fort with the promised supplies.

The trip to the summit took four days, and was very difficult. Going down the western slope of the mountains was about as bad. The slope was so steep the travelers had to fasten trees on to the back ends of the wagons and drag them along to keep the wagons from running over the oxen.

Upon reaching the valley floor the party camped beside a clear mountain stream, while the women did the family washings and the oxen were given a rest from their hard work. The children of the train played in the stream. One of the boys found pieces of rocks that looked like wheat on the gravel bars. A man to whom he showed them recognized them as gold and cautioned the boy's father to keep still about the find, saying they would go back there the next spring and get rich.⁽¹⁾ The father didn't pay any particular attention to the matter and nothing further was done about the find then.

According to Captain Sutter's diary⁽²⁾ it was October 25th, 1845 when the weary emigrants drove into Fort Sutter, or Camp Sutter, as it was often called. The Captain gave them a hearty welcome. He made room for twelve families to live in the fort, and furnished supplies for all those who would join his colony.

(1) Lockley, op. cit., p. 45.

(2) New Helvetia Diary. A record of events kept by John A. Sutter and his clerks at New Helvetia, California, from Sept. 9, 1845 to May 25, 1848. (San Francisco, California: The Grabhorn Press, 1929), p. 51.

The Fort was a busy place. Indian laborers were used to help with the plowing. The men of the wagon train were pressed into service to make ox-yokes⁽¹⁾ and to break the native cattle and the oxen to the plow.

Neither Sutter's Fort nor California was to be home for all of the band of travelers who had come so far together, after all. Two reasons prompted many of them to go on to Oregon. There was much sickness among the people at the Fort that winter, for one thing, sickness which was called mountain fever (probably typhoid), and some of the emigrants died of it, among them several children. But the chief reason for leaving was that trouble was developing with the Mexican government over the coming of the Americans to California, which was Mexican territory. The Mexican government insisted that the people who came overland to California must have proper passports and that any who came after September, 1845, must become naturalized citizens if they wished to remain. Friendly relations having been broken off between the United States government and Mexico, a Mexican general with a band of soldiers came to the Fort in the spring of 1846 and said that all Americans who did not intend to become Mexican citizens must leave California.

Most of the Americans preferred to remain Americans and

(1) Ibid., pp. 52-3.

made arrangements to leave immediately and go to Oregon. Captain Sutter urged them to stay, but when he realized that their minds were made up he helped them get ready.

Obviously, the shortest way to get to Oregon was to go directly north. There was no road, so they decided against taking the wagons. Captain Sutter offered to exchange horses for their oxen, and this was agreed upon. The plan was to follow the old Hudson's Bay trappers' trail on horseback to the Willamette Valley, a trip which would take from six to eight weeks. (1)

Traveling in this manner presented many new problems to the emigrants. Managing the young children on horseback was the hardest problem to solve. An old Scotchman at the Fort finally got the idea of making pack saddles, somewhat like baskets, with arms fifteen inches high, and placing one pack saddle on each side of the horse, with one child in each. The horses didn't like this any better than the children and the mothers did at first, but soon the plan proved successful. (2)

The old trail led over the Siskiyous, across the Rogue River Valley, through canyons and over steep ridges to the Umpqua, and across the Calapooia Mountains to the Willamette

(1) John Bidwell, A Journey to California (San Francisco, California: John Henry Nash, printer, 1937), p. 45.

(2) Lockley, op. cit., p. 49.

Valley. Through the length of the Valley it skirted the foothills of the Coast Range on the west.

When the travelers reached the vicinity of Dallas, in Polk County, they separated, some going to Rickreall ("La Creole"), some to Independence. Here they were reunited with their neighbors and friends from whom they had parted at Fort Hall the summer before. The newcomers from the south were able to report a fairly comfortable trip from California; the weather had been good; they were not bothered with wagons and oxen; and they had experienced only minor difficulties with Indians on the way.

CHAPTER IV

CHOOSING A HOMESITE IN OREGON

In June, 1846, leaving Mary at Rickreall to visit with the women-folks, Eugene Skinner and Elijah Bristow with two of their friends of the Trail, Felix Scott, Jr. and William Dodson, headed back up the valley on horseback looking for homesites. Each one was planning to stake out his claim to the six hundred forty acres of free land which he expected the federal government to allow to the early settlers.

They rode for seventy miles or more, and finally, after crossing the McKenzie River and the Middle Fork of the Willamette, near the head of the valley, they reached a low, rolling ridge covered with oak, fir, and pine. Here Elijah Bristow, thrilled with what he saw, exclaimed, "This is my claim! Here I will live, and when I die, here shall I be buried."⁽¹⁾ The countryside reminded him of Pleasant Hill, Virginia, where he had spent his childhood. (He later was granted a request by the Oregon legislature to have the place named Pleasant Hill.) The party camped at a nearby spring in a grove of firs and cut logs with which they erected a "claim cabin", a

(1) Eugene Morning Register, Anniversary Edition, op. cit., p. 7.

makeshift affair representing the foundations of a house. This was part of the procedure for claiming the land; other steps included "stepping off" the claim, "blazing" trees, and driving stakes at the corners of the piece of land.

Dodson and Scott marked off claims nearby.

But Eugene Skinner hadn't found just what he wanted, until, as the party started back on its way north, he and his companions stopped to get a view from the Butte by the Willamette, the Butte which the Indians called Ya-po-ah and upon which they performed ceremonial dances occasionally. After walking back and forth on the summit several times, enjoying the peaceful scene below him, he said, "Boys, you take up your claims where you like best; this spot of ground is good enough for Eugene Skinner and his family. The location is beautiful, surrounded by these hills, reminding me of a bird's nest, and, with this beautiful river on the north side of this butte, is an ideal place for a home." He staked out his claim to the allotted six hundred forty acres of land at the western base of the butte. Then the four men returned to Rickreall.⁽¹⁾

Eugene came back to his claim in the fall of 1846, bringing a man along to help him build a small cabin for his family.

(1) Phoebe Skinner Kinsey. A typewritten report signed by Mrs. Kinsey, daughter of Eugene Skinner, telling the story as she understood it to have happened, about the staking out of the Skinner claim, the building of the cabin, and the coming of the family here from Dallas in 1846. (In possession of Mr. Lester G. Hulin.) P. 2.

and staying only long enough to get the cabin built. Some Indians who were here advised him to build on the hillside instead of along the river as he had planned to do, and he took their advice. They warned him of floods. This first cabin of Skinner's became a landmark in itself.

Two of the unfortunate emigrants who arrived in December of 1846 over the newly-opened Applegate Trail from the south, after a tragic journey, mentioned in later accounts having seen the Skinner cabin, one of them speaking of it as "the first sign of civilization we had seen in traveling two thousand miles."⁽¹⁾

The other emigrant, who wrote of it later, was a boy of thirteen, James Leighton Collins, who told of his family's arriving here about the 10th of December, 1846, in company with another family. They were in desperate circumstances, exhausted by the hardships they had undergone on the Applegate Trail, and now they were faced with bad news told them by William Stilwell and another man from North Yamhill, whom they encountered near their camp at the edge of the forest southeast of Skinner's Butte. These men warned them that "the bottom lands of the Long Tom River to the north were so flooded that they thought it impossible in their circumstances to reach the settlements with wagons before the next summer; and that it was absolute

⁽¹⁾ Tolbert Carter, "Pioneer Days", Oregon Pioneer Association Transactions, 1898-1912. 34th Reunion, (1906), p. 86.

madness to think of doing it during the winter, in the condition they were in."⁽¹⁾

An old French trader, just coming back from taking supplies to another starving train still further back on the trail, came and camped close by them that evening. He was on his way north to the settlements with a dozen ponies bearing only empty pack-saddles. He took pity on the two helpless families and agreed to take some of the members and their belongings with him.

Three people remained behind to look out for the rest of the property and the stock--Mr. Collins, his son James, and Harrison Turnedge, the younger brother of the other man in the group. James told of moving into a partly finished cabin that Mr. Skinner had built during the summer at the base of the butte, and of preparing to spend the rest of the winter there. Soon after the families had gone on with the Frenchman, a man by the name of Samuel Ruth came to the cabin. He was badly crippled in one leg, destitute and nearly starved, and had no friends to turn to for help. He said he was from Baltimore, that he had been a sailor for several years, and that he had arrived in the Valley on foot, having been a stock-driver for a wagon train which had run into difficulties and was coming behind him. He begged to be allowed to stay at the cabin, and

⁽¹⁾ Steeves, op. cit., p. 72.

the three men could not turn him away, although they realized that they did not have enough supplies for the three of them, let alone a fourth person, and a helpless cripple at that.

The men talked over their situation and decided they had better try to get some provisions from somewhere to tide them over the winter. Mr. Collins took one of their two horses and rode north, intending to get back as soon as possible.

While he was gone snowstorms and freezing weather came on and he was delayed several weeks. In the meantime Harrison Turnedge became ill, and James found himself the only able-bodied person at the cabin. Their plight was getting serious. The stock were across the slough on the island; the snow lay four inches deep all over the Valley; the game had gone up into the hills for the winter; and they were almost out of food of any kind. James had to go on foot to Spencer's Butte on a hunting expedition. He killed a deer, and that was practically their only food until February, when Mr. Collins came back and moved them all to their new home. (1)

The cabin hadn't been vacant long when, in the spring of 1847, Eugene brought his wife and their little baby daughter, Mary Elizabeth, who had been born in December, to their new home, traveling up the Valley by wagon.

They had reached the end of the Trail at last!

(1) Ibid., pp. 73-4.

CHAPTER V

EUGENE CITY IS FOUNDED

Getting settled was in some ways a very simple matter. The cabin was soon put in shape, and with shelter assured, the pioneer couple began investigating the problem of a good water supply. The presence of a wide circle of green rushes on the hillside was a clue to locating a good spot for a well, and sure enough, water was reached at a depth of only a few feet.⁽¹⁾

The crude fireplace took a big supply of wood, but wood was plentiful; all one had to do was to go chop down a nearby tree.

Deer, and even elk, were quite plentiful in the Valley, and, if one tired of meat, it was a simple matter to catch a mess of fish from the clear rippling Willamette.

Flour for baking was the most difficult article to get. The nearest flour mill was at Oregon City, 100 miles to the north. When Mary needed more flour, sugar, salt, or cloth, it was necessary for Eugene to hitch up the team and make the long slow ten-day trip to Oregon City and back.

While he was gone, Mary and the baby, Mary Elizabeth,

⁽¹⁾ Kinsey, op. cit., p. 2.

who wasn't yet old enough to toddle around, were left alone to get along as best they could. Brave though she was, Mary must have dreaded being left alone. The thought of the wild animals prowling around at night might well have frightened her. She couldn't help but worry about the possibility of sickness and accident, either to the baby and her or to her husband. The presence of Indians, friendly or unfriendly, roaming through the Valley was a cause for worry also.

The Indians were usually friendly to these first white settlers, but sometimes Skinner had to show considerable firmness toward them to make them understand he couldn't be bluffed. They were extremely curious about the white people and their belongings. Mary never did really enjoy their visits. She found that she was expected to serve large quantities of food when they came, and not to mind when they showed extra interest in the baby and its curly hair.

According to early accounts only one white person lost his life at the hands of the Indians in this region. He was a young Englishman, named Spencer, who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. He was passing through here with some companions on fur-trading business. The group set up camp late in the afternoon at the foot of the butte called Cam-pa-te, a few miles south of Skinner's Butte. Spencer, wanting to see the view from the top of the butte, went for a hike by himself. He failed to return that night and the next morning his

companions started searching for him, only to find his arrow-riddled body lying on the hillside. One of the Indians who had taken part in the killing bragged about it later to some of the white settlers. Dr. Elijah White, an early missionary, wrote of having named an elevation, which was the same butte, no doubt, Mt. Spenser, in honor of the Secretary of War.⁽¹⁾

In September of that first year (1847) Mrs. Skinner had a newcomer to take care of--a baby daughter, Leonora, born September 1st. Leonora was the first white child born in Eugene and in Lane County.⁽²⁾ (Later two more daughters, Phoebe (1850) and Amelia (1855), and a son, St. John (1851) were added to the Skinner family.)⁽³⁾

Keeping house and looking after the family kept Mrs. Skinner very busy, but still she missed getting to visit with other women-folks over her knitting on Sundays, so she was delighted when other families began taking up donation land claims and settling nearby.

(1) Miss A. J. Allen, Ten Years in Oregon (Ithaca, N.Y.: Mach Andrus and Co., printers, 1848), pp. 268-9.

(2) Eugene Morning Register, op. cit., p. 22.

(3) Walling, op. cit., p. 487.

CHAPTER VI

NEIGHBORS

Elijah Bristow had built his cabin in 1846, also, and had sat right down and written to his wife and family in Illinois to come on out to Oregon. By the time they got the letter and made the long trip to their new home it was 1848. They were surprised to find quite a settlement at Pleasant Hill!⁽¹⁾

Many of the 1847 emigrants, worn out by their tedious journey, and finding the beginnings of a settlement in such a likely spot, made up their minds to settle there, too. Several families, including those of Isaac Briggs, Elias Briggs, Prior Blair, and Charles Martin took up claims near Bristow's. Three bachelors--Cornelius Hills, Charnel Mulligan, and Wickliff Gouley--settled there at that time.

Benjamin Davis, John Akin, and H. Noble, with their families, settled near the Skinner's. Abram Coryell and his son, Louis, took up a claim near the spot where the Coast Fork and the Middle Fork meet to form the Willamette.

As more and more families increased the size of the Skinner settlement, the people realized it was desirable to begin making some definite plans for the new town which seemed

(1) Walling, op. cit., pp. 325-6.

to be developing on the banks of the Willamette. A survey for laying out a town was made in August, 1851, but was not platted and recorded until April, 1852. The first townsite was laid out between the Butte and the river and Seventh Street. Mary Skinner was given the honor of naming the town which had been called "Skinner's Post Office," and she named it Eugene City, in honor of her husband. There were seven streets running east and west, numbered from First to Seventh, and four running north and south, named Ferry, Mill, High, and Water. Water Street ran along the bank of the river.

Those early settlers assumed, from their experience with rivers "back East," that the Willamette would naturally become the main route of travel and trade to the towns further north. And so it was for the first few years, but later Eugene City grew away from the river when water transportation was replaced by the railroad. It seems odd now to think this city was ever expected to become a river port!

Eugene City was selected as the county seat of Lane County in 1853; was incorporated as a town in 1862; became known as City of Eugene in 1864, and finally as Eugene in 1889.

In 1851 there was no one living on the existing townsite. Even Skinner's home was outside the city limits! In that year, however, Judge Risdon hired Hilyard Shaw to build him a house on what is now Pearl Street between Ninth and Tenth

Streets. It was a fourteen-by-twenty-foot structure, and cost seventy-six dollars.

The Skinners had many neighbors by this time. William Smith had built a home one-half mile from the city-limits on the Springfield road. Hilyard Shaw had a little house north of where Deady Hall was later built. Prior Blair and Lemuel Davis and their families had moved to town. Four miles down the river lived Joseph Davis and his family; below them lived the James Peek and John Vallaly families.

Henry Peek and Abraham Peek took up donation land claims across the river, and it was the latter's farm that Walker Young, father of Cal Young, bought and settled on in 1852. Lester Hulin, father of Lester G. Hulin, took up a claim on the Long Tom in 1847, but later, in 1850 he settled just a few miles northwest of town.

(This is not by any means a complete list of early settlers.)

A millrace was cut through the northeastern part of town following the slough bed, in 1851. A flour mill was built on its banks shortly afterward, in 1855, and a woolen mill in 1882.

Hilyard Shaw and William Smith started a sawmill on the river bank near the store which James Huddleston had opened. Mr. Huddleston had a store near the Skinner cabin but he moved it over to the river bank, taking E. P. Ankeny in as his partner. Eugene Skinner started a much needed ferry service on

the Willamette, and Jacob Spores operated a ferry on the McKenzie near the Coburg bridge.

By 1855 there were between five and six hundred people living here. The discovery of gold in California helped bring prosperity to the valley, thereby making it possible for the pioneers to have better homes and a higher standard of living earlier than they might have had otherwise. According to one account⁽¹⁾ there were in the city at that time: "nine drygoods stores, two book stores, one drug store, one bakery, one restaurant, two hotels, two billiard saloons, two printing offices, three cabinet shops, four blacksmith shops, two tinshops, two paint shops, one planing machine shop, two meat markets, two livery stables, one flour mill, one sawmill, one barber shop, one college, one district schoolhouse, a courthouse, a jail, one church, a Masonic lodge, three physicians, four lawyers, four clergymen, and one newspaper."

Now the Skinners and their neighbors could buy most of the household articles they needed right here at home.

Eugene, the city, could look ahead to a promising future.

(1) Irena Dunn Williams, Reminiscences of Early Eugene and Lane County (Eugene, Oregon: the author, 1941), p. 16.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCHES

To the first settlers Sunday meant a day of rest. After the chores were done and breakfast was over there was usually a quiet time for family devotionals and maybe for singing some of the old familiar hymns. The work of the family was so planned on Saturday that very little had to be done on the Sabbath. The women baked bread and cakes or pies ahead, and roasted huge pieces of venison or beef, so they wouldn't have to do much cooking on Sunday.

After the midday meal, or before, the family would sit around and visit with relatives or a neighboring family who might have dropped in. The children were allowed to go for a hike up on the Butte or over to Day island. Sometimes the families would get together and, taking a picnic lunch, cross the old mill dam over to the grove of trees near the river for an outing on the river bank. Sometimes, in later years, they crossed the Willamette on the ferry and had picnics on Patterson's Island.

These people were mostly serious God-fearing people who had been used to going to church back home and who were eager for their children to have the proper kind of bringing up.

Of course, there were a few reckless people who had other standards of living, just as we find today, but the very fact that we have churches and schools and high standards of living is largely due to the ideals held by those first citizens of Eugene.

As the settlement grew, into the valley came the Circuit Riders--the preachers on horseback--to minister to the religious needs of the people. These men (among them Joab Powell, I. D. Driver, and Philip Mulkey) held church services either in the homes or out under the trees. When one of them came riding up to the home of some family to stay a few days he was expected to visit the neighboring families and to help anyone who needed help with personal or spiritual problems. Word soon got around that he was in the neighborhood and church services were arranged for the following Sunday in the home or in a nearby grove. Huge picnic lunches were brought by each family for miles around to be enjoyed at noon between the morning and afternoon services. These occasions meant a great deal to everyone. Not only did worshippers get the Bible teaching they craved; they also got to visit with other folks and to hear the latest news from back home. When the big day was over the Circuit Rider made ready to be on his way early the next morning on his lonely ride across mountains, creeks, or rivers to the next frontier settlement. These men filled a real need in the lives of the people they served.

The first church in this locality was the Baptist Church, which was organized in 1852 on the Harlow farm across the river. This was followed by the Cumberland Presbyterian, which was started in 1853 at the schoolhouse on the farm of Walker Young also across the river. The first church building in Eugene was built by this group in 1857 at Sixth and Pearl Streets.

In 1854 the Episcopal Church group held its first service in the temporary courthouse. Eugene Skinner gave some land for a church site, and St. Mary's Episcopal Church was opened in 1859.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1854 and there was a church building ready for use by 1859.

The Eugene Presbyterian Church, started in 1855, and the Christian Church, in 1866, were others of the original churches.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHOOLS--PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

Oh, yes, those pioneer children had to start to school on Monday mornings, even as you do now!

To be sure, their schools were considerably different from ours, but the reasons for having them were much the same. Those mothers and fathers knew the value of an education and they did not intend to have their children lose out on schooling just because they were pioneering a new country.

It is true that they were not used to public schools as we have them now--schools supported by tax money collected from every taxpayer, and to which all pupils are entitled to go free of charge. They were accustomed to select or private schools taught by local women, often in private homes, for whose teaching services they paid money directly to the teacher. This way of doing meant that some children, from poor families, might not be able to afford schooling.

The first school in Eugene was started in 1853 in a small log schoolhouse at "the Point of the Hills" at the south end of Harris Street.⁽¹⁾ It was taught by Miss Sarah Ann

(1) Leonore Gale Barette, Thumbpapers (Eugene, Oregon: Picture Press Printers, 1950), p. 10.

Moore (an aunt of Mrs. Nellie Tyson of Eugene), and was a select school. It was the first of a great many schools of its type conducted in the town during the next twenty-five years, none of which lasted very long. There were as many as five in session at one time.

The territorial legislature had passed an act in 1849, which was the first general school law, providing for a system of common schools. Some changes were made in this law in 1853 and 1854, and under this revised law public school education began in Eugene. Rev. Robert Robe was the first county school superintendent and one of his duties was to "district" the county. Eugene was organized as School District Number 4 in 1854 or 1855 (the first school records were lost). A two-mill tax was levied for the support of the public schools and the money was divided according to the number of children in the districts between the ages of four and twenty-one years.⁽¹⁾

The first public school was opened in 1856 in a log building at the corner of Eleventh and Olive on land donated by Mr. Skinner. It was taught by J. H. Rogers, a "Yankee Schoolmaster."

The public or district school idea grew slowly. Perhaps a public school seemed like a charity school to those independent early settlers? Perhaps it didn't offer enough? We'll

(1) Joseph Schafer, "An Historical Survey of Public Education in Eugene, Oregon", Oregon Historical Quarterly. 2:55-77. (1901), p. 55.

find out more about that later.

By 1875 the district school had so many pupils in attendance that it had to make use of an annex, and an old private-high-school building at Eighth and Pearl, called the Red Top Annex, was put into use.

Three years later, in 1878, the new Central School opened at Eleventh and Olive, midway of the block. It was a one-story building at first, costing four thousand dollars. Later another floor was added to it. (The population of Eugene was three thousand three hundred six by that time.)

According to the records of 1884, four hundred students were going to school in the new building, and there were six teachers in charge.

Times had changed; the public school was here to stay.

(In 1903 the Central School was moved to the original schoolhouse corner on Olive Street to make way for the first High School, the present City Hall, which was built at the corner of Eleventh and Willamette that year.)

Students having had advanced subjects in the upper grades went directly from the early select schools into academies or colleges, or if they wished they could go out to teach. There were no high schools as yet; the first two years of college courses were about equal to high school level, and a college course actually covered six years of work, due to that arrangement.

Late in the 1850's Professor Cornelius established an academy known as Eugene Academy, but it didn't stay in session long.

Professor Enoch P. Henderson started a private high school at Eighth and Pearl in 1866, which lasted four years, at which time John Arnold and Robert Veatch, just graduated from Willamette University at Salem, opened a private school. It stayed in session only one term, and the next year Mr. Arnold taught Latin, Higher Algebra, and Geometry in the public school. He wanted to develop a good secondary school, and by teaching higher subjects in the public school he helped encourage the establishment of a public high school.⁽¹⁾

In 1870 the St. John High School was opened in the Skinner Butte Academy building by the Rev. D. McManus. Reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, Latin, Greek, and French were taught--subjects intended to prepare students for college entrance.

The University, which was established in 1872 and opened its doors in 1876, began encouraging the establishing of public high schools, and by 1897 had done away with the first two years of its course, which was equal to high school work. The Eugene School Board thereupon began offering the first year of a high school course in the public school.

(1) Ibid., p. 69.

(In 1903 the new High School at Eleventh and Willamette was put into use, and twelve years later the present Eugene High School was built.)

(The University High School started its career as a Junior High School in connection with the Education school in the Oregon building on the campus in 1916, and gradually developed into a six-year high school. In 1920-21 the new building on Alder Street was built and the University High school, now a standard four-year high school, moved in.)

CHAPTER IX

THE UNIVERSITY

Eugene's first college, Columbia College, was established in 1856 by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Oregon, and was taught by Professor Enoch Henderson. It was located on College Hill, near the corner of Nineteenth and Olive Streets. Fifty-two students enrolled for the first term, and the college's prospects looked bright, until on the fourth night after the term opened, when the school building burned. It was rebuilt and started out anew with one hundred students. Before the end of the first year the building again burned to the ground. A third building, this one of stone, was put into use. By this time the enrollment had increased to one hundred fifty. But still the college was doomed to failure. Mr. Henderson resigned; a new president was chosen but he, too, resigned, and the Board of Directors gave up and closed the college.

The reasons back of all this trouble were political as well as financial. This was near the time of the Civil War and although Oregon was a long way from the battle front people took sides on the issues of the day--slavery and states' rights, mainly--and feeling ran high here in Eugene. Mr. Henderson and the Board disagreed upon many policies; the

Board members didn't agree among themselves; the second president turned out to be a Southerner, and on top of all these troubles there was the matter of the cost of rebuilding school buildings!

Columbia College, even though it lasted only a short time, was of great importance in the later school history of the town for two reasons. The people of Eugene remembered it as an important center of learning, and some of its students were among those who later worked the hardest to have the University located here. On the other hand, these people, after having known about the college courses, were not inclined to be satisfied with the offerings of the district schools. The town was not ready to supply the kind of secondary school that was needed, so the people fell back upon the idea of private schools. In this way the presence of the College held back the development of the public (district) school and of the public high school.⁽¹⁾

The idea of a state university developed slowly. Farms were far apart; transportation was slow and difficult; there were few towns; and the Gold Rush had occupied people's attention for two or three years.⁽²⁾

The United States Congress in 1851 actually helped bring

(1) Ibid., p. 57.

(2) Henry D. Sheldon, History of the University of Oregon (Portland, Oregon: Binford and Mort, 1940), pp. 17-18.

on a demand for a state university by offering to give two townships of government land to each state, the income from the use or sale of which was to be used to create a fund for the support of a university, once it had been built by the state.

Even though the new state was not ready to build a university on its own, the offer of free land to start a fund was too good to turn down, and suggestions were soon made for suitable locations. In 1851 Marysville (now Corvallis) was suggested as a site, and the next year Jacksonville in southern Oregon was mentioned.

In 1862 Congress passed the Morrill Land Grant Act giving the states 90,000 acres of land each toward forming a fund for the support of an agricultural college. There were at that time seven Church colleges in Oregon: one in each of these towns--Salem, Marysville, Monmouth, Forest Grove, McMinnville, Philomath, and Newburg. A start was made toward fulfilling the Morrill Act plans by adding an agriculture section to the private college at Marysville, controlled by the Methodist Church South.

Many people favored putting the two funds together and creating one large institution, while others wanted one college at least that was not under the control of any church.

By 1872 the question of where to build the state university was certain to come up before the state legislature. Several

Eugene men--B. F. Dorris, Judge Thompson, E. L. Bristow, Dr. A. W. Patterson, J. G. Gray, T. G. Hendricks, J. J. Walton, Jr., W. J. J. Scott, and W. H. Abrams--formed the Union University Association for the purpose of trying to get the legislature to choose Eugene as the site for the state university. Their plan was to offer to buy a site in Eugene and to build a fifty thousand dollar building, to be ready for use in two years.

Other plans were suggested to the legislature by various other town groups, but the Eugene offer was accepted, after considerable argument. The fact that two-thirds of the state's population was in the Willamette Valley, and that the Eugene offer was the only one which was not connected with any church group influenced the decision.

The Union University Association members met with troubles galore in their attempts to live up to their bargain. They had agreed to raise \$20,000 themselves and the county Court was expected to raise the other \$30,000 by taxation. The Court received so many complaints from taxpayers that it was not able to furnish its share of the money and the Association members had to raise the money the best way they could. It was a hard struggle. They had to ask for cash gifts, wheat, livestock--anything that could be sold to get cash.

The promised building, named Deady Hall in honor of Judge Deady, president of the Board of Regents, was finally turned over to the state in 1876, two years late. It was not

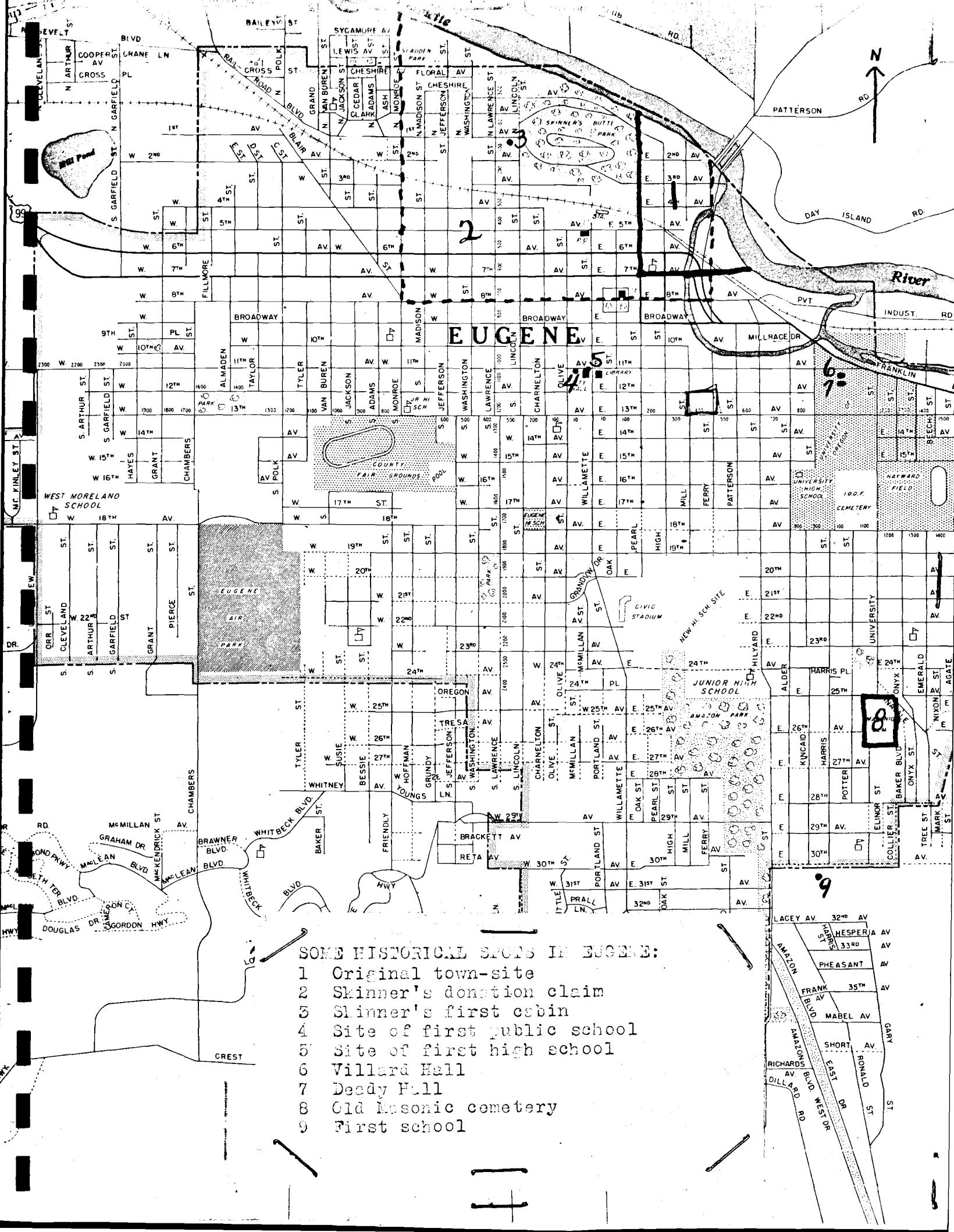
completely finished. Only the first floor was ready to be used for classes. The second floor was ready by 1877, and soon afterward the third floor was put into use as an assembly hall. Later it had to be used for classrooms, because of increased enrollment.

A board fence seven feet high was built around the campus, and a well was dug.

One hundred seventy-seven students registered in October, 1876; ninety-seven of them at the preparatory level and eighty at college level. Many students had followed their instructors here from other colleges.

You may wonder about the five instructors who started out so bravely in this unfinished building located away out on the edge of town, with almost no equipment, and with no certainty of getting regular salaries. They were to be paid out of whatever money came in from tuition and from the interest on the government land fund.

The first president was J. W. Johnson. He had come West from Missouri by ox team as a boy, later returning East by way of the Isthmus of Panama to attend Yale University, from which he graduated in 1862. He became president of McMinnvill College, and later principal of Portland High School, the only public high school in Oregon at that time. He was a strict teacher and a hard worker who expected his students to work hard, too. He taught Ethics and Latin.



SOME HISTORICAL SPOTS IN EUGENE:

- 1 Original town-site
- 2 Skinner's donation claim
- 3 Skinner's first cabin
- 4 Site of first public school
- 5 Site of first high school
- 6 Villard Hall
- 7 Deady Hall
- 8 Old Masonic cemetery
- 9 First school

Dr. Thomas Condon, a witty Irishman, well liked by his students, came here from Pacific University at Forest Grove, where he had been an instructor. He taught Geology, History, and Natural History. He studied the John Day fossil beds in Central Oregon and made a valuable fossil collection. He was an interesting speaker and was soon recognized as a leader in the educational field in Oregon. Condon Hall and Condon School are named for him.

Professor Mark Bailey of Massachusetts, president of McMinnville College, came here to teach Mathematics and Astronomy.

Mrs. Mary Spiller was principal of the English preparatory department and taught Elocution. Miss Mary Stone was her assistant. The preparatory department took the place of a secondary school.

University life in the 1870's was vastly different from University life today. The University was one building-- Deady Hall--standing all alone out on the edge of town in a stubblefield, overlooking the millrace, and surrounded by a high board fence, complete with a stile. There were a few oak trees on the northeast corner, which were later called the Condon Oaks and which are still standing.

The class of 1883 planted some cedar trees, but most of them died during the dry season. The regents paid the janitor to set out some firs, cedars, and maples the next year, and

many of those trees are still there.

The students paid forty dollars tuition for the year, and board and room in private homes cost four dollars a week.

The subjects offered were intended to "train the mind." The students studied their lessons carefully and were expected to be able to repeat them to the instructor exactly the way they were in the book. The purpose of education then was to train orators, lawyers, ministers, writers, and statesmen.

The students' leisure time was very strictly supervised. They had to get permission from the faculty to go to church entertainments or lectures in the evening. They were not permitted, except on extremely rare occasions, to take part in plays, since play-acting was not acceptable. The new students were welcomed at a walk-around, an informal get-acquainted party. Dancing was forbidden by the faculty.

Literary and debating societies served as the main form of recreation. The women students formed the Eutaxian Society, and the men formed the Laurean Society; the two organizations being kept entirely separate in their activities.

A baseball club was started as early as 1877 and a few games were played. A gymnasium was built in 1890 (in which boxing gloves were not allowed!).

A University band furnished music for entertainments in 1879 and 1880.

(Football became popular in 1893. Cal Young was "coacher"

of the first team.)

The big event of the year was Commencement. Each graduate, dressed in his best and looking very solemn, made a speech. People came from far and near in their wagons and hacks to attend this serious occasion, which lasted all day. At noon each family brought out a lunch basket and everybody ate together under the trees.

In 1881 legal action was started by two men to collect about eight thousand dollars in old unpaid bills, dating back to the starting of the University, and it looked for a time as if Eugene might have to give up its building, Deady Hall, to pay these debts. The wealthy railroad builder, Henry Villard, saw the news of the affair in the Portland newspapers and he wrote to Judge Deady, offering to help pay the bills and save the University building. He paid seven thousand dollars, and a group of Eugene citizens paid the remainder, and the Hall was saved.

Mr. Villard became interested in the struggling young university and gave a large sum of money to help it along. This gift and increased funds from the state made it possible to add more instructors and equipment and to build another building. In 1886 a two-story brick building, fittingly named Villard Hall, took its place beside Deady Hall.

CHAPTER X

TRANSPORTATION

Going places in those times took a great deal of energy, endurance, determination, and courage. A simple journey, such as to Coburg by horseback, for instance, meant saddling up; crossing the Willamette by canoe-ferry, with the horse swimming alongside (until better ferry service was started); riding along the old Indian trail to the McKenzie, crossing the McKenzie on Spore's ferry, and riding on to Coburg. All of this took hours.

The United States government, in 1857, ordered Phil Sheridan and two regiments of soldiers to build a Territorial Road up the western side of the valley, which they did, following the old Hudson's Bay trappers' trail from Portland to Dallas, along the foothills southward to the Long Tom, past Crow, Franklin, Lorane, and on to the Umpqua Valley. Another road, which was later spoken of as the East Side Territorial Road was built at about this time along the foothills of the Cascades, from Oregon City, by way of Silverton, Lebanon, Brownsville, Coburg, Eugene, and Springfield.

Travelers could ride horseback, or if they were wealthy enough to own one they could ride in comfort in a buggy, which held two people and was usually pulled by one horse.

Hacks were in common use for state occasions; they were two or three-seated conveyances with black oilcloth-covered tops, and were built high off the ground, requiring two iron steps by which a person climbed up into the vehicle. A farmer took pride in his handsome team and hack. Farm wagons were used for travel, too, and if more seats were needed than the three spring seats which came with the wagon, boards were laid across the top of the wagon bed and people sat on them.

The building of the Territorial Road was the signal for the coming of the Concord stagecoach, which, with its lively teams of horses and its picturesque driver, furnished a faster and much more exciting means of travel. It was a real hair-raising experience to take a trip by stagecoach! The traveler could expect to either be shaken to pieces, frightened to death, or, possibly, to lose all his valuables if the stage was held up by "road agents," as sometimes happened. There was never a dull moment! The mail, which had previously been carried by men on horseback, was sent now by stage.

Freight wagons, pulled by six or eight mule teams, carried heavy loads of freight to the mines and to southeastern Oregon over the Oregon Central Military Road which was completed in 1865 by way of the Middle Fork of the Willamette, connecting with Owyhee in the Snake River region.⁽¹⁾

(1) Oscar O. Winther, The Old Oregon Country (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1950), p. 125.

Cattle owners and farmers with farm products to sell wished for a road to connect the Valley with Eastern Oregon by way of the McKenzie, but it was not until 1861 that an attempt was made to open up a road. In that year Captain Felix Scott, Jr., one of the four original settlers of the county, drove a band of cattle over the mountains, making use of Indian trails wherever possible. The route proved to be too difficult for wagons, but continued to be used for a stock road, until after the discovery of the Lost Creek Canyon in 1871, when the road was re-routed through that canyon and could then be used for wagons.

Thirty miles a day was about all that horses could travel, and the stagecoach horses were changed every eight or ten miles at regular stations along the way. When travelers from Eugene City wanted to take a trip up the McKenzie to Foley Springs, a favorite resort of the times, the journey took two days. The first day's travel by hack would take them to a stopping place where Vida is now. (We can drive there in thirty minutes.)

Canoes and rafts were used first for river travel, and served a useful purpose. By 1853 boats were being used on the Willamette between Portland and Salem;⁽¹⁾ gradually the service was extended to Corvallis, and during the rainy season the

(1) Randall V. Mills, Stern-Wheelers Up Columbia (Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books, 1947), p. 191.

boats could make it to Eugene. These earliest boats were side-wheelers.

The first steamboat to reach Eugene's landing was the "James Clinton" which arrived in March, 1856,⁽¹⁾ having made the fifty-three-mile trip from Corvallis in three days! In 1861 the steamer "Relief" not only reached Eugene, but went on to Springfield also, it being the only steamer to go that far.

Many attempts were made to establish steamboating on a paying basis, but the upper river just wasn't deep enough for navigation, and after one final effort--the trial run of a fine new steamer named "The City of Eugene" which grounded on a gravel bar behind the Butte in the 1890's⁽²⁾ to everyone's disappointment--steamboating became a thing of the past on the upper Willamette.

Various surveys were made for railroads to tap this region as early as 1864. One plan called for a railroad from Jacksonville to Portland, another for one from Portland to the Willamette Valley. Still another would have connected Eugene with Corvallis, which was still considered a river port.

The Oregon and California Railroad Company, with Ben

(1) Ibid., p. 55.

(2) Ibid., p. 191, and Lucia Moore, Nina McCornack, Gladys McCready, The Story of Eugene (New York: Stratford House, 1949), p. 229.

Holladay, famous early day railroad builder, as president, built the first railway lines through here, connecting Portland and Sacramento. The first train of cars arrived on Sunday, October 8, 1871, and received a welcome by the whole town. The coming of the railroad soon brought an end to stagecoach travel.

CHAPTER XI

INCIDENTS OF THE TIMES

Webfoot. You want to know why we're spoken of as Webfoots? Well, there's a story about it that goes like this: The term seems to have originated near the banks of the Long Tom River. As the story goes, a commercial traveler (sometimes called a drummer) "was spending the night at the home of a farmer. It had been raining very hard, as it frequently does yet in the Willamette Valley, and most of the Long Tom soil was submerged, which caused the traveler to remark sarcastically, 'The children living around here ought to have been born webfooted.' The farmer's wife replied, 'We had thought of that,' at the same time exhibiting to the astonished tourist her baby's feet, which had webs between the toes. The story lost nothing in the telling, and we still remain webfooters."⁽¹⁾

Floods. It seemed as if the Willamette just waited until the pioneers got nicely settled, with their homes, farm buildings, and fences built, before it began showing them what it could do. In the winter of 1851 there was a flood which did considerable damage but it was mild compared with

(1) Eugene Morning Register, op. cit., p. 5.

the flood of 1861. That one came after two months or more of snow and rain and it flooded the whole valley to a depth of four feet, carrying away buildings, fences, and stock, and scaring people half out of their wits. Eugene City was flooded, as were the other river towns to the north. Many thrilling tales were told later of rescue work. The settlers were given a rest during the next twenty years until 1881, when another disastrous flood came along, destroying much property and doing widespread damage. It did not reach as high a level as the flood of 1861 but it was bad, nevertheless.(1)

In the high waters of 1890-91 the Willamette changed its course to the present channel through the north side of town.

Willamette. The part of the river below the falls at Oregon City was known as the "Multnomah" by the Indians and the upper section was called the "Wil-lam-et," "Wil-luh-met," or "Wil-lath-met." It is not known how the last useless "te" was adopted.(2)

Early Doctors and Medicines. Weren't there doctors and dentists in early Eugene? Well, Dr. A. W. Patterson came here expecting to practice medicine, but he didn't find enough doctoring to do to keep him busy, so he became a surveyor, and later a county school superintendent and writer of textbooks.

(1) Walling, op. cit., p. 337.

(2) Ibid., p. 357.

When a doctor was needed in those days someone would have to go to his house to tell him. Then Doc would grab up his medicine satchel and go on horseback or in his buggy to the sick person's home. He'd examine the patient as thoroughly as possible with his simple equipment and, if he thought he had any medicine that would help, he'd mix up some and leave it. The members of the household would stand around, watching intently as the doctor opened his medicine case containing rows of little round slim bottles of drugs. He'd choose very carefully and deliberately one or another of the bottles, measure out the amounts he wanted on a piece of paper, and then ask for water to be brought, after which he'd stir the mixtures into a glass (or cup) of water. Next he'd write the directions on a piece of paper and lay it on top of the glass.

Later, doctors mixed the powders and put them in little gelatine capsules to be swallowed with a drink of water. Some common remedies for various ailments which they recommended were quinine, castor oil, liniment, Dover's powders, Blue Mass, and turpentine.

Of course, there were many home remedies that were used without having been approved by the doctor. Among these were such items as ground mustard and flax seed for poultices; turpentine and carbolic acid for wounds; horse liniment for man and beast; gunpowder mixed with milk for ringworm; vermifuge, cinnamon and hoarhound tea with cayenne pepper in it,

for bad colds; skunk oil for chest colds; and others too numerous to mention.⁽¹⁾

(Dentists, such as there were, used a murderous-looking instrument called a turn-key for extracting teeth.)

Cupping was used as a method of giving relief in some forms of sickness. It was done by using a little glass cup into which a few drops of alcohol were poured, which were ignited by a lighted match. The fire burned up the oxygen, and when the cup was quickly clapped on the patient's body a vacuum was formed, and the flesh was sucked into the cup. It seems to have been done to stimulate circulation.⁽²⁾

Diseases and Ailments. Smallpox appeared in 1869, in 1872, in 1876, and again in 1881. At first nobody knew what to do to prevent its spread. The second time it broke out the city council established a pest-house five miles from town where sick people were to be taken. It wasn't until the epidemic of 1881 that vaccination was resorted to, and even in that year the pest-house was still used.

Inflammation of the stomach and bowels was quite common and was probably what we know as appendicitis. Lung fever was the name then for pneumonia. Putrid sore-throat must have been diphtheria. It was extremely contagious and nearly

(1) Steeves, op. cit., p. 345.

(2) Williams, op. cit., p. 34.

always fatal. Felons on the fingers were very common, and sick headaches were, in a sense, fashionable.⁽¹⁾

Tolling of the Bell. While we are still on the subject of sickness let's read a resolution presented in city council meeting on October 9, 1876:

Whereas, it having become an universal custom to toll the court-house or public bell on the death of any and all persons, even in the silent hours of night, and even when others are languishing on sick-beds, when every stroke of the bell causes a shock to their weak nerves, and in many instances is a serious injury to them, to say nothing of the many timid women and children who experience terrible feelings at the tolling of the bell; therefore be it

Resolved, That the tolling of the bell at the death of a person is a custom unknown anywhere else, except on extraordinary occasions, and we condemn the practice.⁽²⁾

First Council and Mayor. You've heard the council mentioned. Maybe you'd like to know something about that first council and our first mayor? When the city of Eugene was incorporated in 1864 the charter provided for a council to be elected, but until the specified election date arrived, the following men were appointed to serve: J. B. Underwood, president (about the same as mayor); J. A. McClung, E. F. Skinner, F. B. Dunn, C. C. Croner, William T. Osburn, T. G. Hendricks, trustees; A. A. Skinner, recorder; Bell Jennings, treasurer; C. H. Fox, marshal; Thomas Chase, street commissioner. They

(1) Ibid., p. 34.

(2) Walling, op. cit., p. 408.

had the power to establish hospitals, prevent or remove nuisances, provide water for the city; to license and regulate peddlers, taverns, money-changers, hackney-coaches, wagons, carts, and omnibusses; to provide for the removal of standing water; and in other ways take care of the city's business.⁽¹⁾

Barbershop. Early day barbershops served a very useful purpose. Men went there for shaves, haircuts, and to have their beards and moustaches trimmed, but, in addition to this they also went there to take baths, if they were single men who "roomed" in a boarding house or private home. Each man who patronized a certain shop had his own shaving mug or cup which sometimes had his name on it and which was left on a shelf in the barber shop between visits.

Newspapers. One of the signs of progress in a city is the publication of newspapers, and Eugene began boasting a newspaper as early as 1858, called the "Pacific Journal." Others followed, continuing for a few months, or, in some cases, a few years. Among them were: "People's Press"; "Democratic Herald"; "State Republican"; "Democratic Register"; "Herald of Reform"; "Eugene City Review"; "Union Crusader"; "Oregon State Journal"; "Eugene City Guard." Sometimes one of them would be in circulation, sometimes two, and occasionally, none at all.⁽²⁾

(1) Ibid., p. 395.

(2) Ibid., p. 348.

Banks. The Lane County Bank and Hendricks and Eakin's Bank were opened in 1883, further signs of the growth of the town.

Skinner's Post Office. The settlement here was sometimes spoken of as Skinner's Post Office, but when the townsite was laid out the original location didn't prove to be satisfactory. "During the heavy winter rains it became a quagmire and obtained the well earned name of 'Skinner's Mud Hole.' Indeed it is said that the mud there was of so fine a quality and so deep that two hogs that were rooting about in the semi-aqueous streets sank out of sight to be forever lost to view." (1)

Fourth of July. The Fourth of July was a great day for celebrating. People came into town from all over the countryside. There were fireworks and a parade, and anvils were fired on the Butte at dawn in imitation of a cannon. "One anvil was placed on top of another with some powder placed between, and touched with a long lighted stick. As the top anvil jumped off into the air at the explosion, it made a tremendous boom which could easily be heard all over town in those days when the houses were few. This anvil ceremony also signified Christmas." (2)

City Improvements. In 1869 the Eugene City Water Ditch

(1) Ibid., p. 392.

(2) Williams, op. cit., p. 37.

Company was formed to bring a ditch of water into the town from a point two and a half miles above the city. In 1871 arrangements were made to have Willamette Street graded, and gas lights were contracted for from the Maxim Gas Company of San Francisco for the streets of the city. 1883 saw the building of a fire engine house, and the purchase of a fire engine.

District Schools. In 1875 the county school superintendent described the schools of the county as follows:

Everywhere within the limits of the county, the eye is pained by the contrast between large and flourishing fields of grain, extensive farms, large orchards, and a general appearance of prosperity and the condition of district school buildings, including both their construction and internal arrangements. One of the wealthiest districts crowds its children into a seven by nine foot house constructed of logs; the two windows are mere slits in the side, suggesting a comical comparison with a Chinaman's optics. Moreover, the door of this wonderful temple of learning is placed in the gable because the elevation of the building will not admit it at the side. One seats the pupils facing the center, another places their backs to the black-board, probably in consideration of children's well-known propensity to look behind them. Whatever may have been the motives suggesting the arrangements of many of our schools, they certainly are a study worthy the attention of lovers of the marvelous. It is with confusion that I confess there is not a public school in the county which furnishes a single article of apparatus, map or chart, not excepting the city of Eugene, where one-eighth of the children in the county are educated, or herded--whichever may be the most appropriate term--within four bare walls, constituting a mere shell that invites, by its desolateness, every species of vandalism and much better calculated to send forth upon the world a horde of barbarians that would have delighted Alaric himself, than to educate, refine and civilize. Another damaging feature in our school policy applies to the whole State, namely, the waste of money, time and energy consequent upon an almost entire dependence on the few dollars of public funds; an excellent provision and great aid, but almost worthless, because not supplemented by an equal amount that should be raised by direct

tax. Our people have yet to learn that parsimony and economy are as opposite as the poles and that two consecutive terms are worth more than three separated by intervals of mental idleness and dissipation.(1)

(1) Walling, op. cit., pp. 357-8.

CHAPTER XII

RECREATION

It's a Saturday in the 1860's and the cousins are coming from Springfield to stay over Sunday! Aunt and Uncle are coming, too, but it's the coming of the beloved cousin-play-mates that thrills our young Eugene pioneer children to the tips of their copper-toed shoes. Just think of all the fun they'll have together!

But first things have to come first. The chickens have to be fed; the cows milked; the horses and the barn taken care of; the pigs fed from the slop bucket--much of this has to be done even before breakfast.

Breakfast in the big, warm, good-smelling kitchen is a hearty family meal at which all of the family sit down together. After Papa returns thanks everybody pitches in with enthusiasm. There is always plenty of hot mush, with brown sugar and cream; home-made light-bread or buns; fried ham or pork or venison; eggs; milk and coffee or tea.

Immediately after the meal the rest of the morning chores have to be done in a hurry. (The cousins will probably arrive by ten o'clock!) There are the dishes to be washed and dried; the wood and kindling to be split and carried in; the beds to be opened up and aired for an hour or so; the bread to be baked,

having been "set" the night before with the potato-yeast starter; Sunday's dinner to plan and prepare for, which usually means the baking of cakes or pies and a jar of beans, and the roasting of a big chunk of meat; sweeping and dusting the house, and getting tidied up for company. Besides all this, the cats and dogs have to be fed their breakfasts, and that is, of course, the children's job.

The hours pass so slowly when you're waiting for something to happen! All of a sudden, though, the cry is heard, "Here they come, here they come!" and the children rush out to the front gate to welcome their company. Then everybody talks at once and nobody can understand anybody!

While the women-folks go on into the house to chat over their knitting or fancy-work, the men go out to the barn to take care of the horses. This leaves the cousins free to do as they please for awhile, and away they go to the orchard where they can talk to their heart's content, free from having to run errands, and where maybe they can find a few ripe apples.

The guests are eager to tell of their hour's ride over from Springfield. They tell excitedly of getting up early, of rushing through their breakfasts, packing their valises, helping with the chores, and finally, of climbing into the hack and riding down to the ferry.

The river is a bit high, and that makes the crossing more exciting and scary than ever. It is a funny feeling you get

when Papa drives the team and hack onto the ferry (or scow). The ferry seems to go down into the water a foot or more. It is fun to get out of the hack and stand by the ferry-railing, watching the river go swirling by. Then, when the ferry nears the other side, you scramble back into your seat. As Papa starts driving off the ferry, up the muddy bank, you feel the ferry boat come up in the water. It is a queer feeling to have that big ferry rise under you like that!

The horses have to pull very hard to make it up the wet bank but once they get up on the level ground they trot right along on the dirt road through the pine trees, following the course of the river.

There aren't many houses or people to see on the way to Eugene, but the ride is fun anyway. There's nobody home at Grandpa and Grandma Judkin's place, near the point. The weeping willow at William Smith's house has grown a lot since the last trip over. The Chichester house (corner of 13th and University) is a handsome new house in colonial style. The oaks nearby furnish some change of scenery from the stubble-fields that line the road much of the way. Once the county road (Alder) is reached, the journey is practically over.⁽¹⁾

By the time the young folks have made the rounds of the farm the call "Dinner is ready!" comes as a welcome sound, and

(1) Williams, op. cit.,

there is a rush for the wash stand by the kitchen door. One person pumps a bucket of water while another is hastily washing face and hands in the basin.

It always seems so much nicer when there aren't too many people for dinner. Then everybody can be seated and eat at once; otherwise the children have to wait for second-table, and that is hard to do when you're hungry. But that is the way you're taught to do. The fathers and mothers, aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers are older, and must be treated with proper respect, and children must learn self-control.

During the afternoon the whole group goes for a walk down to the landing dock on the river bank. The river is high enough so that the steamer from Corvallis should be able to make its run, and it's a lot of fun to watch it come chugging around the bend. Other people are gathered there near the store, waiting. Sure enough, after awhile the boat's whistle is heard and the steamer comes into sight, still several minutes away.

After considerable maneuvering around, the steamer's line is finally made fast to the dock and the passengers are helped off the boat. Cheery greetings and bits of news are exchanged by the boat's crew and the spectators as the boat is being unloaded. Gradually the crowd drifts away, needing to get home to do chores.

The evening meal is prepared hastily; the chores are soon done; and the men harness up the work horses to the wagon. The whole family, with guests included, is going to a dance to be held in a neighbor's new barn! They don't have far to go, and once there, the younger children are put to bed in the neighbor's spare bed or on the bedroom floor, while the dancers form their squares for a quadrille, and the evening is off to a fine start! The fiddler and the "caller" are given little rest until midnight, when everybody stops for a hearty midnight supper of sandwiches, baked beans, cake and coffee (which each family helped furnish). Within an hour the dancers are at it again, and the dance continues until daylight. Then it is light enough to see the way home and the party breaks up; everybody has to get home!

CHAPTER XIII

REMINISCENCES

Hearing old timers tell about the past is fun, and there are many local people with interesting stories to tell. We can't possibly visit them all, but let's get acquainted with some of the children and grandchildren of the first settlers! They are fine people, a credit to their pioneer ancestors.

But, first, let us finish the story of Eugene and Mary Skinner:

Eugene, never hale and hearty, caught cold while working to save his belongings in the flood of 1861, and was never well again. He died in December, 1864, at the age of fifty-five, and was buried in the old Masonic cemetery.

Mary, left alone by Eugene's death, married a sea captain, M. L. Packard, in 1867. Captain Packard, born in Maine, had spent many years at sea. His first year in Oregon was spent in Gardiner City, on the Umpqua River. The next year (1865) he came to Eugene City to live. Mary Packard died in 1881 and was buried in the Skinner lot in the Masonic cemetery.

Of the Skinner children Mary, the eldest daughter, died at the age of fourteen years, and Leonora at fifteen. Phoebe married John Kinsey from New York and had three daughters. Amelia married Mr. Combs. St. John married Amanda Walton and

they had five children: Leonora, Eugene F. II, Ann, Lora, and Maggie May. Only the grandson, Eugene Franklin Skinner II now lives in Eugene.

Eugene Franklin Skinner II. Mr. Eugene Franklin Skinner II, grandson of the founder of Eugene, operates the popcorn stand at the Irish and Swartz Westside Shopping Center. He is the only son of St. John and Amanda (Walton) Skinner, and was born in the white house which still stands in a grove of fir trees at the northern end of Monroe Street, on October 25, 1874.

In 1882 his family decided to move to Spokane, Washington. They loaded their household goods in a wagon and drove to Portland, took a boat from there to Umatilla Landing on the Columbia, and drove the rest of the way to Spokane. This was shortly after the Custer Massacre and the Indians in eastern Washington, like the tribes further east, were restless and discontented, so the United States government advised the white settlers to get out of that section for awhile.

The Skinners moved back to Lane County for two years, settling in the vicinity of West Point, at the foot of the Coburg Hills.

In 1884 they went back to the Spokane country. This time they went by way of the newly opened McKenzie Pass road. The journey in their heavily loaded wagon took thirty days. Mr. Skinner remembers passing by the site of the Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu and of seeing the lonely unmarked grave of the

Whitmans and the others who were massacred with them.

Eugene came back to Eugene to live with his uncle, Judge Walton, and continued his schooling. He went to the Geary school first and later to the Central school on West 11th. His last teacher there was Miss Ann Whiteaker, daughter of Oregon's first state governor. (Miss Whiteaker died in 1950 at the age of ninety-one years.)

Mr. Skinner married Miss Emma Furbush in 1898 and they had a family of nine children--seven boys and two girls.

Their oldest son, Eugene Franklin Skinner III entered the service during the first World War. He came back from France safely, married, and lived in Colorado for awhile before his untimely death at the age of twenty-seven years. Although he had a daughter, he left no son to carry on the honored name.

Another relative of the Skinners, who rendered valuable aid in the preparation of this study, is Miss Pauline Walton of Eugene. For many years she was in charge of the Oregon Collection at the University of Oregon library. She is a cousin of Mr. Eugene F. Skinner II. Her father, Judge Walton, was a brother to Mrs. Amanda Skinner.

Darwin Bristow. Darwin Bristow, grandson of Elijah Bristow, was born December 21, 1862, in a little log cabin near Pleasant Hill. His father, William Wilshire Bristow, was the first teacher in the first school in Lane County, at Pleasant Hill, and his mother, Elizabeth (Coffey) Bristow

later taught in that same school.

Mr. Bristow attended the local schools and was graduated from the University of Oregon in 1884. While in college the young student spent his summers working as a cowboy on the cattle ranches in eastern Oregon.

After graduating from the University Mr. Bristow married Miss Mary Medley, became a merchant in Cottage Grove, and finally went into the banking business. While living in Cottage Grove he served as mayor of the town three terms.

In 1904 the Bristows and their family of four daughters and two sons moved to Eugene. Mr. Frank Chambers and Mr. Bristow organized the Chambers-Bristow Bank which later became the First National Bank. Mr. Bristow served as vice-president of this bank until his retirement in 1942.

Illness now confines him to his home on Lawrence Street, where he lives with his daughters Greta, Helen, and Evelyn. Helen is an active worker in the "Welcome Wagon" group which welcomes new residents to Eugene.

Harriette Patterson. Miss Harriette Patterson, daughter of Eugene's first doctor, lives in the family home on East 11th. She relates many interesting stories from her family's history.

Her mother, Amanda C. Olinger, came to Oregon from Iowa at the age of six years, with her parents and grandparents, in the great immigration of 1843, with Marcus Whitman as the guide and Jesse Applegate as one of the leaders.

Her father, Dr. Andrew W. Patterson, was a graduate of the College of Pittsburgh. His first wife and baby died in the East and he took the trail to Oregon in 1852. This was the year when cholera first took such a toll of the emigrants, but Dr. Patterson got here safely. He took up a homestead west of Eugene, and shortly afterward at Eugene Skinner's request he surveyed a site for the new town. In 1859 he and Amanda C., whom he met when she was here on a visit, were married. They had a family of eight children, of whom Harriette is the youngest.

Dr. Patterson, besides being a physician, a surveyor, a soldier in the Indian Wars, and a state legislator, was interested in education. He served as county school superintendent and wrote language, spelling and medical textbooks.

During the great flood of 1861-2 the Pattersons stayed at Hilyard Shaw's cabin, located where the city gas plant is now. The only piece of land nearby that was not covered by water was the strip where 11th Street is, so that was the spot Dr. Patterson later chose for his home. (The present house was built in 1903, just a year before the doctor died.) The deed to the land dates back to 1863. Dr. Patterson planted the two fir trees, which still stand, in front of the house when he began practicing medicine again, after taking time out for other occupations. (The first settlers were too healthy to need the full-time services of a doctor!)

Miss Patterson tells of walking from her home over to the slough, crossing it, over to Day Island, then taking a skiff across the Willamette to Patterson Island, which was a popular picnic spot. The flood of 1890-91 changed the course of the river to the channel it now follows, and in so doing it covered six acres of Dr. Patterson's hop yard.

Alder Street, in earlier times, was a county road, then it became known as "A" Street, and finally at the suggestion of Ida Patterson (Harriette's sister), it was named Alder Street, because of the many alders which grew along the mill-race.

Dr. Patterson often had occasion to be out late at night, making calls on sick people, and his wife would place a lamp in the window to help mark the way home. She could tell when he was coming from the west because Prior Blair's hounds would set up a terrific baying as he passed the Blair place on the outskirts of town, now Blair Avenue.

During the smallpox epidemics the doctor kept an extra suit of clothes in the barn so that he could cut down the risk of carrying the disease home by changing clothes before going into the house. Once, to Mrs. Patterson's dismay, she saw the two younger boys parading around out on the wood pile dressed in their father's "doctoring-clothes!"

The Patterson home, with its antique furniture, massive old grand piano, the textbooks which the doctor wrote, and

other relics and souvenirs of the past, is a fascinating place to visit. In the attic there is a feather bed, and Miss Patterson tells of an incident which happened to her mother on the Trail which concerns either this bed or one like it. The wagon train had to ford a river, and, as part of the arrangements for a safe crossing, one of the men tied a feather bed on the back of a pony and put Amanda C. on it. On the way across the pony lost its footing when it stepped into deep water, and was swept downstream, but it and its passenger were saved by the fact that the feather bed held them up until they could be rescued.

Miss Patterson had private teachers and didn't go to school until she was twelve years old, when she began attending the Central Public School. She completed her high school and college work both at the University of Oregon, graduating in 1903.

Eugene has been her home continuously. She has left it only to take trips, including three to Alaska. In 1937, on a five-weeks' cruise which took them as far north and west as East Cape, Russia, she and her sister Ida (who had taught school in Eugene for forty-five years) continued the family tradition of traveling westward.

Lester Gilbert Hulin. Lester Hulin (Senior), like Eugene Skinner, was born in New York. He attended schools there, then struck out on his own in 1841, going to Iowa, where he taught school. In 1845 he joined Col. John C. Fremont who

headed a government exploring expedition to California. The next year he returned to Missouri with Lt. Abert, of the expedition. In 1847 he joined an emigrant train bound for Oregon, and the caravan, which included the Belknaps, Gilberts, Starrs, Hawleys, and other well-known early settlers, entered Oregon by way of the Applegate Trail. The diary which Hulin kept of the journey is a fascinating account of the trip and contains many sketches of famous landmarks along the way. Hulin filed a claim upon 320 acres of land northwest of Eugene in the Riverview section, but almost immediately he was lured to California by the gold rush. He worked in the mines for awhile, then freighted goods between Sacramento and the mines. He started back to Oregon on the Steamer "Hackstaff" which was shipwrecked at the mouth of the Rogue River. Along with thirty other survivors he came overland to the Willamette Valley, where he began improving his farm land.

In June, 1853 a young lady named Abigail Craig arrived here with her parents, having come from Michigan by way of the Isthmus of Panama. The young people met, and after a brief courtship, were married in December, 1853, by Reverend Robert Robe.

They were entitled to an additional donation land claim of three hundred twenty acres when they got married, but that seemed to them to be more than they needed, so they did not claim it. (In later years they moved to Eugene.)

Nine children were born to the Hulins, one of whom was Lester Gilbert, born January 14, 1873. This son has lived in the Riverview section and in Eugene most of his seventy-eight years, and has seen Eugene grow from a small village to a modern city.

He attended the public schools and the University of Oregon, from which he graduated in 1896 in a class of 20 students. He recalls that University life was quite sedate then. Students ran out of money then, too. In fact, Lester had to borrow three hundred dollars to finish school. The person from whom he borrowed the money was John Whiteaker, who had been Oregon's first state governor.

As a young man Mr. Hulin worked at various jobs. One of his first positions was that of clerk in a grocery store. He worked from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for twenty-five cents a day. This pay was later increased to fifty cents per day. When he became cashier in the local bank he received fifty dollars per month.

Mr. Hulin remembers hearing Henry Villard make a speech in Dady Hall in 1882 about the future of the University. In 1884 the Hulins went on Villard's Northern Pacific Railroad's pioneer excursion trip from Portland to Chicago. Lester recalls that the passengers slept on the seats, made their own coffee and cooked their meals on wood stoves in the rear of the cars.

Mr. A. G. Walling, who wrote the "Illustrated History of Lane County," called on the Hulins often, interviewing the elder Mr. Hulin about early times, and the father and son took Mr. Walling with their horse and buggy around to call on other pioneers.

In 1915 Mr. and Mrs. Hulin and their son (their only child) took an automobile trip to California to the San Francisco and San Diego Expositions. Such a trip was not to be undertaken lightly in those days. At a speed of 15 miles an hour and under difficult driving conditions they were lucky to get to San Francisco in a week. The trip to San Diego took another week. There they heard President Theodore Roosevelt deliver a stirring speech, and were near him later in a group that was standing before an exhibit, listening to a mechanically-played violin which was playing the President's favorite tune.

Cal Young. One of Eugene's best-loved citizens is Cal Young, a distinguished looking man of eighty years, with twinkling blue eyes, ruddy complexion, snowy white hair, and a friendly smile.

The history of his family, as it applies to our Eugene history, began in Missouri in 1852, at a time when the "Oregon fever" was sweeping the country. In that frontier region two young people, Charles Walker Young and Mollie Gillespie met, fell in love, eloped and were married, in February, 1852.

Mollie's father, Reverend Jacob Gillespie, was among those

who had the "Oregon fever." He wanted some of the rich land to be had in Oregon. He, like many other Missourians, had Negro slaves, and he wrote out to Oregon to Joseph Lane, the territorial governor, to ask if he could bring a Negro couple with him to Oregon. Lane answered that he could bring the young woman but not the man, since it was against the law to bring a Negro man into the territory.

In March, 1852, just a month after their marriage, the Youngs joined the Gillespies and others in a wagon train leaving Independence, Missouri, for Oregon. Rev. Gillespie became the captain of the train, which made the trip across the plains and mountains safely, reaching the Columbia River in late August.

The main party rafted down the Columbia, but Walker Young and some other men took the cattle and stock over the difficult Barlow Trail around Mt. Hood, rejoining their companions later at Oregon City.

While their families visited with friends at Oregon City Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Young came on ponies up along the foothills of the Willamette Valley looking for good homesites, even as Skinner and Bristow had done in 1846. They found most of the best free land taken. They liked the looks of Abraham Peek's "squatter claim" of 640 acres, and bought it from him for \$800. Walker Young, as part payment for his share, paid \$50 in money and gave a team of oxen worth \$150. A few years

later when an old Indian demanded payment for the land which the white men had taken from his people Walker paid him what he asked--a gunny-sack full of dried peas!

The two men returned to Oregon City and moved their families and belongings, including two bushels of seed wheat bought from the Hudson's Bay Company, to their new home on the Willamette.

When they arrived here Walker had fifteen cents in cash, but was fifty cents in debt to his father-in-law for the ferry crossing charge at the Spores ferry (near Coburg). The young couple set up housekeeping in a log cabin nearby, and the Gillespies lived in their wagon while their cabin was being built. Molly and Walker were hard workers and it wasn't long before they began to "get ahead in the world." Walker worked for \$1.50 a day for Mr. Briggs in Springfield, and Mollie earned \$1.00 a day working for Mrs. Briggs.

The Springfield vicinity was known briefly as "Scanty-Grease." It seems that some hounds ate the lard that was stored in Mr. Brigg's smoke-house and Mr. Briggs rode over to his neighbors on the Game Farm to borrow lard, saying they were scant-o-grease at his place!

The countryside presented quite a different appearance in those days from what it does now. There were few settlers--the Tandys and the Harlows, who had been neighbors of the Gillespies in Missouri, had settled near them. There was no underbrush in the Valley; the Indians kept the land burned

over quite regularly. Only big firs, pines, and oaks grew here and there. Wild life was abundant, especially ducks and geese. The Indians dug for camas roots in the lowlands. From fifty to one hundred might be seen at one time gathering a supply of these roots.

Once Walker visited a dug-out on Gillespie Butte where an Indian was lying sick. An Indian medicine man was there, wailing and performing various magic rites which were intended to drive the evil spirits out of the sick man. Using two bones, this native doctor put a burning coal of fire on the Indian's neck and after some hocus-pocus pulled out what appeared to be a long worm. Mr. Young saw that it was actually a piece of rubber, and he told the sick Indian that he was being "gypped" if he paid the ten ponies which the medicine man was demanding as a fee. The medicine man left without the ponies, and the patient finally recovered from the "operation."

In October, 1853, just about a year after the Youngs arrived here, word spread among the settlers one evening that a wagon train was attempting to make its way down the Willamette Pass. Two men, living at Butte Disappointment (Lowell) had seen the smoke of a campfire and, upon investigating, had found a starving man who was trying desperately to get to a settlement to get help for his family and friends whom he had left behind along the river. He said they were part of a lost wagon train which had been searching for a shorter way into

the Willamette Valley. The guide who had started out with them from The Dalles had deserted them when they became lost, due to storms, and their provisions began to run low.

By daylight the settlers, Walker Young among them, were on their way up the Willamette. They found the pitiful band of emigrants afoot, and, while some of the rescuers looked after the starving people, others went back to Big Prairie (Oakridge) to get the wagons which had from necessity been abandoned. They found that Indians had gotten there before them and had burned the wagons. (A stone marker was set up in 1950 on the Willamette honoring this lost train.)

The rescuers loaded the emigrants into their wagons and headed for home. There was no road. They followed the river, and it was rough going. Within the space of a mile they crossed the Willamette twenty-six times.

Walker brought with him Mr. and Mrs. James Breeding and their children, who later settled near here. (The first school which Eugene children attended was built on their donation claim.)

(In that same rescue party was Daniel Hunsaker, a bachelor, who later married Mary Williams, one of the young girls in the lost train. They had seven children, some of whom are living in Eugene. One of them, Mrs. William Preston, lives on Pearl Street and is ninety years old. Mary Williams' father, Thomas, is also mentioned in the story about Ellis Parker, which

follows this one.)

Mention has already been made of the disastrous floods which are a matter of historical record. The Youngs and all the other settlers along the river lost valuable hay and grass which they needed for winter feed for their stock. Finally Mr. Young vowed that never again would he run the risk of not having enough hay to feed his stock through the winter, and at the next harvest he stored seventy or eighty tons of timothy hay, laboriously cut with a hand scythe, in the barn, intending to leave it indefinitely. That hay is still there, after seventy years of more!

You may wonder what became of the Negro woman who came West with the emigrants. She married a Negro barber and moved to San Francisco, where Mr. Young, whenever he was in the city, visited with her.

Like most pioneer couples, Walker and Mollie had a large family--eight daughters and three sons. Mollie died in 1909 and Walker, in 1917. They are buried in the family cemetery on Gillespie Butte.

Cal Marcellus, their ninth child, spent his first school days at the Bogart district school (later Willakenzie) in the neighborhood, where he was one of a roomful of 75 pupils. He came into town to the Central Public school later, and when he was 15 years old, he attended the Bishop Scott Academy in Portland. He spent five years there as a student and two years

as a teacher.

Mr. Young engaged in various activities, such as operating a meat market, working in the Blue River mines, and managing the Heilig Theater, but he decided that he preferred farming on the old home place, where he and Mrs. Young live now, respected and honored by all who know them.

Mr. Young's son and two daughters are scattered far from the home place. The son, Walker Ford Young, is a geologist for an oil company in British Honduras. One daughter is a harpist with the Duluth Symphony Orchestra in Duluth, Minnesota, and the other one lives in Connecticut, where her husband is part owner of an immense toy factory.

Mr. Young has entered wholeheartedly into the life of the community. One project which he has backed unceasingly since the first Oregon Trail Pageant in 1926 is the building of a suitable pioneer museum in Eugene, and it now appears that the first part of this project will soon be accomplished.

Ellis R. Parker. Mr. Ellis Rutledge Parker, who lives on West 12th, has been a teacher in Lane County for sixty years. Now, at the age of 82, he reminisces with pleasure over the events of the past.

The story of his parents' coming to Oregon is interesting, and like others we have read, yet different.

His father, Joseph Parker, and a twin sister, Selenia, were born in Ohio in 1834, into a typically large pioneer

family. In the 1840's the family loaded their goods into a wagon and moved westward through Indiana to Illinois, where they settled on some rich river bottom land. Here they suffered greatly from fever and ague and finally from cholera, which took the lives of the mother and father within a two-week period.

The younger children were scattered among the relatives, and in 1853 Joseph and Selenia started to Oregon with their married sister and her husband who had the "Oregon fever." They left St. Joseph, Missouri in April and followed the well marked Oregon Trail without undue hardships. The Indians were somewhat of a nuisance but did them no harm. One Pawnee chieftain wanted to buy a young girl, Caroline Rutledge, offering 100 ponies for her, but his offer was not accepted.

When the train reached the last crossing of the Snake River in eastern Oregon one group of emigrants, led by Thomas Williams, broke away from the main caravan and headed due west, intending to locate the source of the Willamette River and follow it down into the Willamette Valley, figuring that would be a desirable short cut. It was this group, sometimes spoken of as the "starvation party of 1853" which Walker Young and other settlers went out from Eugene to help when word came that some emigrants were on their way down the Willamette in a starving and desperate condition, in October, 1853.

The remainder of the emigrants in the wagon train reached

Oregon City safely in the meantime and continued on up the Willamette until they reached Pleasant Hill. Here they settled, and here, a few years later, Caroline Rutledge and Joseph Parker were married, in a ceremony performed by Justice of the Peace Elijah Bristow. They spent the rest of their lives in the vicinity of Dexter, and are buried in the Pleasant Hill cemetery.

Their second son, Ellis Rutledge, was born in 1869. He began teaching in the nearby country school and continued that career for sixty years. In 1889 he married Rose Holbrook and they had a family of six children. When the older children reached high school age the family moved to Eugene (1907). Mr. Parker was elected principal of the Geary school and served in that position for twenty-six years. He later taught at Whiteaker school, which was so named at his suggestion, and at Jasper and Alvadore. He retired from teaching in 1945, and he well deserves the praise, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

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Personal Interviews

The writer has interviewed the following people several times in the period from 1945 to 1951 in the course of gathering reminiscences and background material:

Miss Pauline Walton

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Skinner II

Mr. Darwin Bristow and daughters Helen and Evelyn

Mr. and Mrs. Cal Young

Mr. and Mrs. Lester G. Hulin

Miss Harriette Patterson

Mrs. Frank L. Chambers

Mr. Ellis Parker

The writer saw most of the landmarks mentioned during a trip made along the route of the Oregon Trail in August, 1949.

APPENDIX A

COMMENTS FOR TEACHERS

The first unit of study in Seventh Grade Social Science in the Eugene public schools at the beginning of the year is Orientation, through which the student becomes acquainted with his classmates, learns the teachers' names, gets acquainted with the Junior High school course of study, and becomes accustomed to the routine, requirements, and standards of the school.

This booklet is offered as a source of material for the unit covering a period of two or three weeks which should connect the Orientation unit, or the study of the immediate surroundings, and the study of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, which constitutes the main topic of study in the social science course in this grade. The educational principle, dating back to Herbart and Dewey, of starting with what the student knows and of branching out from there to the new and unfamiliar applies very aptly in this case. The writer believes that through a study of local history, for which this material attempts to furnish a background, and through teaching from the known, many students will develop keen interest in their immediate environment, in the forces which prompted the settling of our area, and in the personalities of the pioneer settlers. This interest, once stirred, may easily develop

into a keener understanding of our state and national heritage. Through this approach the seventh grade student becomes oriented to his school surroundings, then to his community, and, finally, he gets a broad over-all picture of the Pacific Northwest as an integral part of our nation. In succeeding grades he studies, on a still broader scope, the nation and the world.

To phrase this in the students' language, by means of this approach they begin "to get what it's all about"; to realize that history isn't just something one reads in a book, but that the pioneers, for instance, were merely people like ourselves--some good, some bad; some educated, some illiterate; some well-to-do, some poor; some hale and hearty, and some sickly--seeking to better their living conditions by moving to a new location where there was a chance to get free land, where there was a milder climate, and where the many rivers and the Pacific Ocean offered trade outlets. Some people came west out of curiosity and for the adventure of the trip. Some came because their friends or relatives who had already migrated urged them to come. There was in the air, too, the matter of "possession being nine points of the law" in the dispute between the United States and Great Britain over the boundary between the Oregon Country and British territory. Since many of the students will no doubt have moved around a great deal they can appreciate the motives which prompt people to move. They are in a position to make valuable

contributions to class discussions through having seen many of the places around which the account centers.

The writer has used the present material in essentially this form for trial purposes for the past two years with a total of one hundred forty students. The attitudes of enthusiasm, interest, and understanding displayed in connection with this subject by the students (which has carried over to the homes) encourage her to believe the booklet fills a real need in a field in which the only other history book available is A. G. Walling's "Illustrated History of Lane County," published in 1884, which is suited to adult readers, and which is now out of print.

Students understand and remember best what interests them, and they normally find a study of the place in which they live quite interesting. The information in the booklet will probably best be used by teacher and pupils through the method of reading-and-discussion, supplemented by:

- (a) Field-trips to places of historical interest, such as the one for which an itinerary is suggested (at the conclusion of the section, "Comments for Teachers").
- (b) By inviting into the classroom as speakers local descendants of pioneers, or by calling upon them at their homes in class-arranged visits.
- (c) By use of any supplementary audio-visual material

students or teachers may bring in, such as pictures, models, exhibits, relics.

- (d) By visits to the Oregon Collection at the University Library.

Reading, spelling, and oral and written language work can be integrated with this unit very closely. There are unlimited opportunities for teachers to adjust the study to fit individual differences among the students, which is another reason why students enjoy it.

From this community study it is to be hoped that students will not only learn some history but also that they will develop attitudes of respect and appreciation for the foundations laid by the pioneers and a sense of perspective as to their own roles as future citizens.

This booklet covers only the first forty years of Eugene's history. Perhaps some day someone will write an authentic history of the intervening years, but, in the meantime, talks with old-timers, information contributed by the students' families (particularly by the grandparents) and data published in anniversary editions of the local newspaper may serve as sources of fairly recent local history.

The present should not be neglected--a teacher in this field should by all means acquaint herself as to the present state of affairs in Eugene concerning the government, the schools, and other topics of importance, and should share this

knowledge with her students. To be sure, it is desirable for them to do much of the necessary research themselves, with the teacher leading the way, and, in the case of a teacher new to the community, this would be most desirable.

Since the Skinners and Bristow kept no available record of the events, routes, caravan members, and other details about the migration and the choosing of a location for a new home, the writer has gathered the data from various sources:

- (a) From many books, periodicals, diaries, and journals.
- (b) Through correspondence with interested persons in various states concerning Oregon Trail history.
- (c) Through interviews with descendants of local pioneers.

From a trip along the route of the Oregon Trail, taken in August, 1949, in which most of the landmarks mentioned were visited.

None of these sources in themselves constitute reference material suited to the seventh grade interest and ability level.

From information furnished in large part by the persons mentioned in the preface the writer has been able to find sufficient references to the Skinner-Bristow party in other Trail records to furnish the essential information as to their starting, the journey, their breaking off from the main group at Fort Hall, their arrival at Fort Sutter, and their departure from there.

In Lockley's "Recollections of Benjamin Bonney" there is

an account of the Bonney party which lists the Skinners and Dodson as members of the group which broke off from the main group at Fort Hall and went to Fort Sutter, and also mentions the Skinners as coming north to Oregon when the Bonneys did, in 1846.

Julia Veazie Glen, a relative of John Lyle, tells in "John Lyle and Lyle Farm" about John marrying a sister of Felix Scott, Jr., and about the Scotts and Skinners traveling together on the Trail.

"New Helvetia Diary," kept by Sutter and his clerks at Fort Sutter from 1845 to 1848, contains entries listing the arrivals of the Skinners, Bristow and the Scotts; mentions their activities around the fort; and lists their departures.

Sarah Hunt Steeve's "Book of Remembrances of Marion County, Oregon Pioneers, 1840-1860" includes the story "A Pioneer Boy, 1846," which is an account of the experiences of James Leighton Collins, who spent part of the winter of 1846-7 in Skinner's cabin with two other men.

Tolbert Carter's "Pioneer Days" is a record of his party's trip across the plains, and of their coming into Oregon by the Applegate Trail. It verifies the presence of the Skinner cabin here in 1846. There has been some dispute as to whether Skinner built his cabin in 1846 or in 1847. The writer believes that a cabin was built in 1846 and that the Skinner family first came to start housekeeping in it in the spring of 1847.

The four men--Bristow, Skinner, Dodson, and Scott--who are mentioned most were not necessarily together all the time or all the way. That they were together here and there is mentioned in the records listed.

Obviously the writer has had to supply general historical information to fill in the gaps left by the pioneer record-keepers and to preserve the continuity of the account. She believes this information to be accurate and in accord with the times as they were, according to the study she has made of the subject.

The following additional authors (listed in the bibliography) were referred to for accounts of journeys across the plains, made mostly before or about 1845, or about landmarks along the Trail--Bell, Bidwell, Delano, Driggs, Drury, Ghent, Greeley, Handsaker, Hastings, Jenson, Johnson and Winter, Kerns, Meacham, Paden, and Palmer. Many other sources of Trail material were found and consulted but have not been listed because it seemed desirable to have the list selective.

Mrs. Paden's "Wake of the Prairie Schooner" was most valuable as a source of reference to the writer in her trip over the approximate route of the Trail in 1949, furnishing as it does historical information as well as recent data on the landmarks. The writer interviewed some of the same people Mrs. Paden had contacted, and later corresponded with Mrs. Paden about various landmarks. Mrs. Paden is the wife of

Dr. William G. Paden, who was Superintendent of Schools in Alameda, California, at the time the book was published (1943). The Padens spent several summers doing Trail research and following wherever possible the exact route of the Trail.

The writer has carried on a considerable amount of correspondence with other people contacted on the trip and in regard to further data about various places and items.

The Indians living in this vicinity were of the Calapooia tribe, the name being spelled variously as Calapuya, Lakapooia, of Kalapuya. Some of the Molallas from southeastern Oregon, just over the Cascades, bothered Mr. Bristow and neighbors by trying to steal livestock occasionally.

The Indians commonly named sections of a river separately, not calling the whole river by one name, hence the use of "Multnomah" for the northern part and "Willamette" for the part south of the Falls at Oregon City.

The topics in "Incidents of the Times" and "Recreation," plus additional items, were discussed with groups of seventh-graders, and the ones that appear were considered the most likely to interest seventh-graders. The paragraph about the first council and mayor furnishes a logical opportunity to discuss the present administrative set-up in the city. Students find the contrast between the district schools of 1875 and those of today quite interesting. The meaning of education costs per pupil, of taxes, and of bond issues becomes

quite real, in the light of changing circumstances.

The description of doctoring and dental practices is a general one, not intended to be specific for one certain doctor or dentist.

The students' parents and grandparents are likely to recall rather vividly the kind of weekend described in Chapter XII and they can no doubt add much of interest that has not been included here.

The reminiscences were gathered in the course of visits made by the writer, accompanied by small groups of students, to the homes of the persons mentioned, or from talks given at school to seventh-grade classes by those persons. The notes were later read to or by them and any needed changes or corrections were made according to their directions.

Some Local Historical Spots of Interest

(Visited in the order given, this list could serve as an itinerary for a trip beginning at the top of Skinner's Butte and ending at the southern end of Harris Street, and including in the course of it a jaunt to Willagillespie district, over the Springfield bridge, to Pleasant Hill, to Cloverdale, and back to Eugene.)

1. Top of Skinner's Butte, where Eugene Skinner found a circle of stones marking the site of Indian ceremonial dances, and from which spot he selected his donation land claim.
2. The two markers at the western base of the Butte, both marking the approximate location of Skinner's cabin. The cabin stood about where the pile of sawdust is now, below the old quarry, from which gravel was obtained for Eugene's first paved streets.
3. The white house sitting out in a field and surrounded by firs at the northern end of Monroe Street, being the house in which Eugene F. Skinner II was born.
4. The white house at 260 West 6th where the founder died. The house has been remodeled. The location is easy to identify by the ivy-covered fir-tree stumps standing in front of the house.
5. The house at 482 Lawrence where the first president of the University (President Johnson) lived.
6. The home of Darwin Bristow at 414 Lawrence, an old-time home, in what was once the new residential section. Darwin Bristow is the grandson of Elijah Bristow.

7. The house which once belonged to "Doc" Owsley, on the alley between 14th and 15th near Pearl Street, a quaint balconied old home.
8. The building, said by some people to be the fourth oldest building in Eugene, now standing in the block across the street from the Central School Office, directly behind the Salvation Army building on East 7th.
9. The Cal Young home, to which Cal's father moved in 1852, on Cal Young Road, across the Ferry Street bridge. (Ask at station.)
10. The site, one and one-half blocks to the left of the eastern end of the Springfield bridge and near a weeping willow tree in that lot, where the spring-in-the-field was located, from which the town of Springfield got its name.
11. Natural landmarks on the way to Pleasant Hill--
 - (a) McVeigh Point, at south end (the top) of the overhead above Willamette Park.
 - (b) Coryell Point, overlooking historical marker and forks of Coast Fork and Middle Fork of the Willamette. Marker is for site of Coryell cabin, first in that vicinity.
 - (c) Springfield Butte, hill east of junction of Coast and Middle Forks of the Willamette.
 - (d) Quarry site just north of Goshen, where the new overhead is being built, where important fossil finds

have been made of ancient ferns.

(e) Mt. Pisgah, big "baldy" hill east of Goshen, to the left of the Willamette Highway (going eastward).

12. Marker on highway at Pleasant Hill telling of Bristow.
13. Site of Bristow's donation claim--to right off highway (heading east) on the first main-traveled road after passing the church. Follow it to its end, about one-half mile off highway--site of cabin was where the present house stands, in the middle of the field.
14. Pleasant Hill cemetery--a few blocks further east on Willamette Highway. In the cemetery are to be found the graves of many pioneer settlers, and a plain large unmarked rock midway between the cemetery road and the highway on the west side marks the site of the first schoolhouse in Lane County.
15. To go past the former home of John Whiteaker, first governor of the state of Oregon, go to the right off the highway on the main-traveled road just across and slightly east of the cemetery and, keeping to the right on the more-traveled roads, head for Cloverdale. (If in doubt, keep to the right.) This should lead down into Cloverdale Valley past a white farmhouse located on the left of the road just over the brow of the hill, about three quarters of a mile from the highway, and that is the former Whiteaker place. From it the road leads on down into the valley,

where it connects with another main road. Turn right on it and follow it to the Willamette Highway at the Coast Fork bridge.

16. Back in Eugene--on the corner of 19th and Olive, up on College Hill, is a marker showing the location of Columbia College, Eugene's first college, built in 1855, twice destroyed by fire, and finally abandoned.
17. The old Masonic cemetery--at the south end of University Street, where the Skinners, Whiteakers, and other well-known people of early days are buried.
18. Site at the southern end of Harris Street where the first school was located, on the knoll.

APPENDIX B

SOURCES AND VALIDITY OF DATA

Assembling these data would have been a never-ending, if not an impossible task, except for the assistance of Miss Pauline Walton. Being a relative of the Skinners (a cousin of Eugene F. Skinner II) and a long-time resident of Eugene, she is deeply interested in pioneer history. Not only is she keenly interested--she has read widely on the subject, and in her position as librarian of the Oregon Collection, which she held for many years, she had access to and helped acquire for the University Library much of the material that is now on file in the Oregon Room. It was through her kind assistance that the essential data embodied in the account of the Skinners and Bristow became known to the writer. Miss Walton has read and approved this account of the emigration and the selection of land claims.

It is unfortunate, from the historical standpoint, that so few of the pioneers kept day-by-day journals, but it is also understandable why they did not, considering the difficulties under which they traveled, and the fact that they did not all realize at the time the historical importance of their great westward movement.

The data are scarce and scattered. There is no one complete record written at that time of the Skinner-Bristow trip

to California and Oregon. The writer has had to fill in much historical data, as has been noted in "Comments for Teachers."

Data were accumulated by careful study of related sources-- by following clues as to references located sometimes unexpectedly in seemingly unrelated material, and through the kindness of interested persons, such as Mr. Lester Hulin, for instance, who allowed the writer access to his personal copy of Mrs. Kinsey's unpublished record. Personal observations made by the writer on her trip over the approximate route of that section of the Trail from Independence, Missouri to Raft River, Idaho, were valuable in helping her to visualize the problems faced by the emigrants. If, perchance, it should seem to the reader that the section relating to the Trail has been over-emphasized the writer can only say that she herself is keenly interested in Trail history and geography, that there is a wealth of data available about the Trail, and that stories about the Trail have a tremendous appeal to most students. Much of this material about the landmarks has not been available at their reading level before.

The writer retraced the remainder of the Trail from Idaho to Oregon City in 1950, but, not having been over the route from Raft River to Fort Sutter, she was forced to rely entirely upon the accounts supplied by travelers and writers, such as Bidwell, Bonney, Delano, Hastings, Greeley, and Paden, who did traverse that section, some of them in the 1840's and 1850's

and Mrs. Paden in the 1930's and 1940's.

Much correspondence has been carried on by the writer with interested persons about Trail history, including the Historical Societies of the various "Trail" states; Mr. R. R. Stuart of "Western Americana", San Leandro, California; Mr. Fred Stratton, South Pass City, Wyoming, who has written booklets on the history of South Pass; Mr. Otto Wullschlegel, Frankfort, Kansas, who, as an active member of the American Pioneer Trails Association, has traveled over the route and has studied sections of it intensively; and many others, including Mr. Adolph Tenopir of Marysville, Kansas, the taxi-driver who took the writer and her family in his taxi to Alcove Spring, a few miles out of Marysville, on a side trip that lasted three hours.

Through correspondence with Mrs. Irene Paden, author of "Wake of the Prairie Schooner" in October, 1949, the writer learned about a Latter Day Saints Historical Record (Jenson, ed.) of 1890, which told of the invention of a roadameter, or odometer, first used by the Mormons to record mileage on the Trail, and she was able to borrow the record from the Church Offices in Salt Lake City, Utah. In the same letter Mrs. Paden mentioned the "New Helvetia Diary" and offered to send quoted excerpts from it, which she did in a letter of November 25, 1949. She had copied them from the diary in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, and they concerned Bristow, Skinner, and

Scott. The present writer, through the University Library, finally obtained a copy of the diary from the Portland Library Association.

Many of the references appear in the form of "recollections", written years after the events transpired, which means that there is a greater possibility of error than if the source were a diary or a daily journal. "The Recollections of Benjamin F. Bonney" by Lockley, for instance, tell about the Bonney family crossing the plains to California and then coming to Oregon. Benjamin was only a boy when the trip was made, and the "recollections" were written when he was an old man. The person who collects and publishes the reminiscences may possibly become opinionated or prejudiced on the subject of pioneers and pioneer history and may lose the objective point of view in reporting, and this further effects the reliability of such material.

Many of the more scholarly accounts, such as Walling's, written in the literary style of the 1800's are overly dramatic, flowery, and verbose, rather than being strictly historical.

In the writer's opinion one of the best pieces of Trail reporting which she has had access to, done on the way to Oregon by local pioneers, was the diary of Mr. Lester Hulin, Sr. It contains some excellent sketches of landmarks. Another diary, that of John Kerns (uncle of Mrs. Frank Chambers), is an interesting commentary on his trip, written in what

might be termed the modern manner.

There are occasional inaccuracies in the sources. In Walling's "Illustrated History of Lane County, Oregon," for example, he says on page 325: "Skinner . . . returned and built the cabin in the spring of '47." On page 332 he says Skinner built a cabin in 1846 and "in May, '47 he removed his family to the cabin and became the first settler in Eugene City. . . ." Various reports appear to confirm the presence of the cabin here in 1846, namely those of Carter, Kinsey, Steeve, "Early Morning Register," and Lockley (Bonney), although the latter (apparently mistakenly) infers that Skinner built his cabin in the spring of 1846 (p. 52). (See "Comments for Teachers.")

Some historians of the 1800's, whose works were consulted but are not listed in the bibliography, appeared to lack the objective point of view to a considerable extent, notably W. H. Gray, and, to a lesser extent, Hubert Howe Bancroft. Likewise, most of the family accounts written largely as personal records lacked, quite naturally, evidence of a broad perspective and impartial opinion.

Many incidents may be related in Trail records about certain landmarks, and when one incident is to be mentioned in such an account as this the question arises as to which one it shall be. In describing Independence Rock, for instance, the writer could have told of the first Masonic meeting in

Wyoming being held near its summit (Paden), of Indian attacks on caravans there, and of many other happenings. Instead, she included what is probably the most unusual episode, one which was described in only a single record to which she had access. It could have been true; it adds an odd touch of humor, and, if true, that pie counter was a forerunner of our present-day curb service!

When we consider reminiscences about the early history of Eugene we encounter differences of opinion on some topics, but they are at a minimum in this account, due to the nature of the material included, which can be verified from many sources, and to the fact that the people most directly involved in it are no longer living and therefore debatable topics are limited. The location of Skinner's first home is a case in point. There are two markers near the location at 2nd and Lincoln, but, according to E. F. Skinner II, the exact spot was where a patch of rushes grew, near or possibly covered now by the big sawdust pile which looms up in that block. Mrs. Phoebe Kinsey (Eugene's sister) was asked where a marker should go many years ago, and she, having been away from Eugene for some time, had forgotten the lay of the land, according to her brother, and consequently the marker is in the wrong place. He was not living here at the time either and did not know about the mistake until much later.

It was not until Mrs. Barette's "Thumbpapers" was published

in 1950 that the location of the first school, at the "Point of the Hills" (Walling), was established quite definitely. Mrs. Nellie Tyson, niece of the first teacher, Miss Sarah Ann Moore, accompanied Mrs. Barette to the spot in May, 1950, pointing out the sunken place in the ground where the school stood. They measured the size and found it to be about twelve by fourteen feet. Another sunken spot nearby marked the site of the old well.

Reminiscences tend to lack accuracy, objectivity, and consistency, yet they are sometimes valuable in helping establish certain facts, and they are usually quite interesting. They give a personal slant on incidents of the times which is unique. The reminiscences in Chapter XIII are included in honor of the families they represent, for the additional contemporary material they contain.

One other possible source of material should be mentioned-- "The Story of Eugene," written by the three Wilkins sisters, Lucia Moore, Nina McCornack, and Gladys McCready, and published in 1949. This book was written at the request of the publishing company, Stratford House, and represents a great deal of work by the authors. The latter do not claim that it is a history of Eugene; they were content to call it "The Story of Eugene."

It was disappointing from the historian's point of view that the book did not turn out to be the long-wished for

historical account of the founding and later development of Eugene. It is more of a book of reminiscences. In such an ambitious attempt to tell the whole story essential data are often lost in the maze of literature and trivial material. The frequent shifting from the past to the present tends to confuse the reader. Inaccuracies creep in here and there: for example, on page 85 mention is made of Irena Dunn's attending the first school in 1853. According to Mrs. Irena Dunn William's own "Reminiscences" it was her mother who attended the school in 1853. The location of the school is given as being on the Fielding McMurry donation claim, while Mrs. Barette in "Thumpapers" places its location on the James Breeding claim. As has been pointed out earlier, Mrs. Barette visited the site in 1950 with a niece of the first teacher, who is herself a life-time resident of Eugene and who asserts that the location was at the south end of Harris Street, which was part of the Breeding claim.

The fact that the three writers are descendants of a local pioneer, that they have spent many years in Eugene and knew many of the people about whom they wrote adds interest to their story, but it also increased the difficulties of maintaining objective and impartial points of view about subjects which are very close to them.

Once the data were assembled, the task of the writer was

to organize them into a credible, interesting, and valid account of the Skinner-Bristow party's journey from Missouri to Oregon and of the founding of Eugene, suitable to seventh grade reading and interest levels. This thesis is offered as the culmination of her efforts.

The exact data about the trip to Oregon being scarce, it was necessary to supplement data of a general historical nature in many instances, as has been noted, and this was done with careful consideration. The essential facts are supported by evidence, which, while appearing in itself seemingly inconsequential, still serves to establish the validity of the account. There appears to have been no reason, for instance, why Bonney, in his "Recollections," or Sutter, in his "New Helvetia Diary," would have referred to the Skinners and Bristow as they did if the events they mentioned had not actually happened. Until further evidence, not available to the writer during her research, is unearthed she offers this account as being an essentially true and usable one.