



HARRIET NESMITH  
Aged 11 years

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
RICKREALL

BY  
HARRIET NESMITH McARTHUR

1930  
PORTLAND, OREGON

Press of  
Koke-Chapman Co.  
Eugene, Oregon

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE RICKREALL

By HARRIET NESMITH MCARTHUR

THE STORIES of the emigrations of 1843 and 1844 in which our people crossed the plains to Oregon and of the subsequent years of settlement and establishment of homes, we children knew only by hearsay. These stories were the common tales of the fireside, in which we were not particularly impressed by the hardships of the weary six months' journey and of the difficulties in starting homes. We were perhaps too young to appreciate fully these narratives.

My father,<sup>1</sup> young and unattached, came to Oregon on horseback, arriving at old Fort Walla Walla, now Wallula, in the autumn of 1843. He and two other young men, Otey and Haggard,<sup>2</sup> made their way to the Dalles, where they arrived on Monday, October 16, 1843. Here they exchanged their horses for an Indian canoe in which they navigated the lower Columbia River, arriving at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Vancouver, where they were kindly received by Dr. John McLoughlin, that good friend of the pioneers. Continuing their voyage they finally landed at Canemah on October 27. After some months at Canemah my father settled on a claim west of Monmouth, in what was later Polk County.

Three large families of this immigration remained on the upper Columbia and built boats in which they made the descent of the mighty river, and were welcomed at Fort Vancouver after a tragic passage in November, in open boats and in constant rain.

My grandfather, David Goff, and his wife and three children had a sad experience in the Blue Mountains in the fall of 1844. Exhausted oxen forced a halt for rest and recuperation. The meager rations gave out and the family's plight was relieved only by the gift of some dried salmon by

---

<sup>1</sup> James W. Nesmith.

<sup>2</sup> See Nesmith's "Diary of the Emigration of 1843," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, volume VII, pages 329-59.

friendly Indians. My grandfather, who was mindful of the danger to the rest of the large emigration, begged the members to go on. The Goffs arrived late at Dr. Whitman's mission in the Walla Walla Valley. Here they remained until spring, the children being placed in the school. I do not know how the time of the elders was employed, beyond lending aid in whatever their hands found to do at the mission. My grandparents and my mother,<sup>a</sup> who was thirteen years old, always spoke with great affection of these devoted people and mourned the tragic end of their fine lives. My father went with the volunteers to assist in the punishment of the Indians who massacred the Whitmans in 1847.

My grandfather Goff's family made the perilous crossing of the Cascade Range in the spring of 1845 before the building of the Barlow road, which was constructed in a rough way later in that year. There were incidents in these experiences that would be of absorbing interest if I had listened with more intelligence in my childhood, but I heard a common fireside tale with the indifference of youth.

After stopping a few weeks at Linn City, across the river from Oregon City, the faithful oxen were again yoked to the wagon and they began their final march, ever westward, until they reached the rich valley of the Rickreall. My grandparents took up a donation land claim extending across Rickreall Creek, and on the bank of the stream built what was then a comfortable house. Here they lived and died.

The Goff home was about 1000 feet east of the present highway intersection at Rickreall, on the north side of the Salem highway. There is a slight angle in this modern highway, at a point just about opposite the east end of where the old house would be if it were in existence to-day. I was born in this house on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1851, at the time my father was operating a mill west of Dallas.

My mother, her sister and their cousins, the daughters of Colonel Nathaniel Ford, had the rare good fortune of attending the Jefferson Institute as pupils of John E. Lyle.

---

<sup>a</sup> Lucinda Pauline Goff.





GOFF HOUSE NEAR RICKREALL, POLK COUNTY  
Photographed about 1895

The institute was a log building on the donation land claim of Carey Embree, two miles west of the Goff home. Julia Veazie Glen has written interestingly about Mr. Lyle and the institute, in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* for June 1925. The term under Mr. Lyle's instruction was unfortunately all too brief, for pretty girls were scarce and in great demand by the hustling young settlers. At very tender ages these girls were married, and there was little rest or romance in their lives. Mr. Lyle married beautiful Ellen Scott,<sup>4</sup> and a warm friendship has existed between her family and ours unto the fourth generation.

My parents' first home was on a claim west of Monmouth, then at the mill two miles west of Dallas. Henry Owen and my father purchased this mill from James A. O'Neal about 1850, and men hurrying to the gold diggings in California came there for flour. The locality of this mill was subsequently named Ellendale, for Mrs. Reuben P. Boise.

About 1853 my father moved to Salem and practiced law. I was a small child, too young to remember our Salem home, although I was large enough to set the curtains on fire, with a candle. Lafayette Lane, the son of General Joseph Lane, was in the house at the time and put the fire out.

My first distinct recollection is that of moving from Salem to our new home on the Rickreall, on an April day in 1855. The family consisted of my father and my mother, two little sisters<sup>5</sup> and myself, and the new home, which was temporarily in a barn, was ten miles west of Salem and but a few minutes walk from the Goff home. No subsequent experiences ever equaled the delight of the spring and summer months spent in that wide, sunny barn, sweet and fresh from the builders' hands, with no paint nor oil to mar the fragrance of the wood.

There was a simple furnishing of chairs, tables and two high four-poster beds, with valances to conceal that indispensable bit of pioneer furniture, the trundle bed. The

---

<sup>4</sup> A daughter of Felix Scott.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Jane and Martha Ellen Nesmith.

large room above, which was to be a hay mow when the building was put to its legitimate use, was a charming place in which to play in rainy weather. Sugar in a barrel, rice and coffee in foreign bags and fascinating tea jars, were stored there. One day, by way of entertaining a small maiden of my own age, I invited her to assist in mixing the coffee and the rice. The former was the green berry which was to be roasted and ground. Before accomplishing too much mischief, we discovered a bottle of cherry pectoral, a popular cough medicine, and we drank sufficient to make ourselves desperately ill, although there was either too much or not enough prussic acid to kill us outright. I must add that when the barn ceased to be our home and the hay was in the loft, we had great frolics jumping from the high beams. Wild strawberries grew to the very doors, and the unbroken, virgin soil in many places was abloom with beautiful flowers.

The building of the new house was of absorbing interest as the kindly carpenters, Messrs. Ferguson and O'Donnell, gave us long shavings in wondrous curls, and made boxes and toys for our play house. Some details of the construction of the dwelling may be worth telling, in view of present-day methods and materials. The shingles were made in the Chehalem Mountains, and a load required two or three days' hauling, and it was a wide roof. The lath was split by hand, as was much else that to-day is millwork. We were duly impressed later on to be informed that the door and window casings in the parlor were suggested by Egyptian architecture. Just why I do not know. The building rested on three-foot lengths of large oak logs. There were four ample rooms with fireplaces, a central hall and a wide veranda that seemed to extend welcome. The ceilings below were very high, and the long straight stairway was all that could be desired for rapid descent down the banisters. The furniture was made in Salem by a New England cabinet maker, and it is pleasant to pay tribute to the superior craftsmanship of William S. Barker.<sup>6</sup> The condition of the beautifully

---

<sup>6</sup> Father-in-law of Edward Lothrop Coldwell.



wrought maple pieces today bears witness to his skill. We moved to the new house in August, 1855, and a fourth little sister<sup>7</sup> was added to the trio in September. Owing to such a lively flock, it was possible to keep only one room presentable, and later the parlor was pretty with mahogany furniture upholstered in hair cloth and with red damask window curtains. In keeping with the fashion of the day, a few choice books adorned the center table: *A Token of Friendship*, Shakespeare and Burns in red morocco bindings and Thomas Moore in aubergine and gold. Burns, well worn, was always in evidence on my father's reading table.

The planting of the orchard must have been the next important undertaking, and it was done on a generous scale. The trees were purchased from that pioneer nurseryman, Henderson Luelling, and included apples, pears, plums, cherries and quinces, with small fruits and ornamental trees and shrubs. Many were inferior in quality, but nothing has surpassed the Rambo and the golden russet apples, though to-day other varieties with fine flavor and color find favor across the seas, whither our ships are carrying them. Bartlett and other pears were as perfect as those of to-day. Greengage and damson plums made the same delectable jam for which they are still famous. Why has the Mayduke cherry passed into limbo? I concede much to Bing, Lambert and Royal Anne, but the Mayduke was of delicious flavor, though it did not bear transportation beyond the nearest shaded veranda. There were no imps of the evil one in the guise of aphis, codling moth or scale, only row upon row of healthy trees of abundant fruitage after a few years had brought them to maturity. Neither was there a market, though of a certainty the cider and vinegar barrels were filled. The fruit was there for the asking and gathering.

After the Civil War had devastated the border land, overrun by both armies, there were large emigrations to Oregon of people thankful to reach a land of plenty, and my father was not sorry he had planned and planted so generously.

Of ornamental trees and shrubs, there were the catalpa,

---

<sup>7</sup> Velina Pauline Nesmith.

laburnum, mulberry, acacia, Scotch broom and others. Of roses, the Mission was the favorite, and was said to have been brought from California, whither it had been taken by early Franciscan friars. A wonderful climber was the Prairie Belle, but its multitudinous petals were so tightly packed that they never quite unfolded.

I seem so often to digress from my story of a little girl, but it is necessary to tell of the environment that was so much a part of our lives. We had no playmates nearer than a mile, and few at that, so we were quite dependent upon ourselves and surroundings for entertainment and amusement. After a few years two brothers<sup>\*</sup> arrived to enlarge the family circle, and the elder children helped with the care of the younger ones, not always willingly.

The fashioning of playhouses was a favorite occupation, and the simple construction was an easy matter: a few boards securely fastened to a tree or fence corner, with a fragrant thatch of fir boughs. The edifice was adorned with bits of broken china, glass or quaint bottles. Decrepit cups and jugs minus handles, past their usefulness in the kitchen, were thankfully received. My elder sister was fortunate in having a tiny set of dishes from the Hudson's Bay Company store. Our dolls would make a sad showing by the side of the sophisticated beauties in present day shops, but we loved them, with all their ugliness. We each had a gift of what seemed too wonderful for daily use, dolls that came from San Francisco, and were kept in a Chinese camphor chest covered with leather, painted red, and rarely opened for inspection.

The chest also housed two gold dollars of my sister's, and three of my own. I do not quite grasp the meaning of surplus, deposits or capital that our moneyed institutions now so cheerfully announce to the public, nor were our funds in circulation, but stayed right there in the bank. As a means of barter, trade, cajolery or gaining unwilling cooperation in some daring scheme, those five gold dollars put modern money in the shade.

---

<sup>\*</sup> James Bush Nesmith and William Goff Nesmith.



The valley of the Rickreall, its twelve or fifteen miles of length which we knew, was not a thickly settled community, being occupied by pioneers on their donation land claims. Homes were far apart, my grandfather's the only exception, being a quarter of a mile away. Like our own family, the others were increasing, so a school was in time considered, and was soon built.

The structure was of unplanned boards without and within, though the desks and seats had the merit of being planed, and were polished by our sliding back and forth. They were high, so that our short legs dangled. A stove, a table and chair for the teacher, a blackboard and a lump of chalk completed the furnishing. Of books, the youngest had a pale green primer wherein they struggled with their A B Cs, and with some highly improving lessons as they advanced. I remember the illustration of one, depicting a very exemplary citizen going forth with his proper son and daughter to visit "a boy who was ill, because he did not do as he was told." They boasted they were not ill, and could "run and skip and hop and play," obviously because of superior merit. I hated the trio and their correct clothes, sympathized with the sick lad, and hoped something would happen to the others. I remember Webster's spelling book in its dark blue cover. We certainly learned the multiplication table and state capitals. Peter Parley's all embracing book of learning was in use, and as I remember, it touched upon almost everything in the world.

The school was beautifully situated on a high bank not far from the creek, which here swept widely to the south, making a fine playground between the county road and the heavily wooded stream. The great first growth of fir, maple, alder, ash, wild cherry, crab apple, vine maple, service berry, syringa, and many others, made a beautiful border indeed. The school was just west of the present West Side Pacific highway bridge at Rickreall.

Of at least two of our teachers I cannot speak too highly. The first, Miss Elizabeth Boise, a New England woman, pupil of the famous Mary Lyon of Mt. Holyoke, Massachusetts, original, vivid, and well grounded in the essentials,

steered our undisciplined minds in the difficult path of learning. Owing to distance and muddy winter roads, our school term lasted only through the spring and summer. Sometimes on warm summer afternoons, when little heads were drowsily drooping over desks, and dangling legs were weary, she would take us to the cool rippling brook for a practical lesson in geography. Shoes and stockings were flung aside, and with the material at hand, sand, gravel and water, we were taught something of the natural formation of the earth's surface, on a very small scale. Rivers, bays, sounds, lakes, peninsula, isthmus, cape and island, I never forgot those lessons when I was so fortunate as to have a wider view of the earth and the limitless seas.

The other teacher, Miss Roxana Watt, with the clear head and broad and intelligent outlook upon life, which characterized the pioneer family of which she was a member, added to this an understanding of the hearts of children, and tact and patience, which rendered her a faithful teacher. Roxana Watt White is still living, and interested in the world's problems.\*

Our little school could not long claim their services, as they were very naturally in demand for more desirable positions. There were never more than twenty pupils, fifteen being a fair enrollment, with girls in the majority.

One day the teacher who gave us easy lessons at the creek announced we were to prepare for an entertainment, *al fresco*, owing to the limited seating capacity of the house of learning. Our families were to be invited, and the old maple with the wide space shaded by spreading limbs was the chosen place for the festivities. The boys were to make a table, the girls to decorate it, and our mothers were to be asked to furnish "a spread." There were to be pieces spoken and dialogues rendered. Every child must take part in the entertainment, so there followed days of intense concentration in memorizing, no small matter for children not over zealous in profound study.

---

\* Died December 1, 1929.



At last the great day and our guests arrived. We performers were in our prettiest clothes, and amid a breathless silence the recitations began with the smallest girl and Mary's ever living little lamb, very faintly lisped; a small boy, more confident, rolled his eyes skyward in search of the "Twinkling Star." "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck" and "The Sailor's Dream" were rendered, and then dialogues, in which girls personated flowers. Mine was a modest violet, an unfortunate selection, not at all in keeping with my character. I set out boldly, got stage fright, and ignominiously retired. The older boys, more ambitious, quite outdid themselves in oratory: "The Assyrian Came Down Like a Wolf on the Fold," the "Sleeping Turk" was rudely awakened at midnight, and Sir John Moore was silently committed to his last resting place. The end of the recitations came when my sister was called to do her bit, "The Last Rose of Summer," laboriously studied from the big volume on the parlor table. The climax came when she repeated the last words:

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one  
To repine on the stem,  
Since the lovely are sleeping,  
Sleep thou then with them.

and scattered the petals on the ground. The picture has outlived the stress and change of seventy years, and will live until the end, the bright June day, the sunlight filtering through the branches of the old tree, my little sister with her shining hair and dark eyes, and the Mission rose, no deeper pink than her cheeks, as the petals softly fluttered to the earth. Our kind mothers assisted with the little spread, in fact it was quite a generous one.

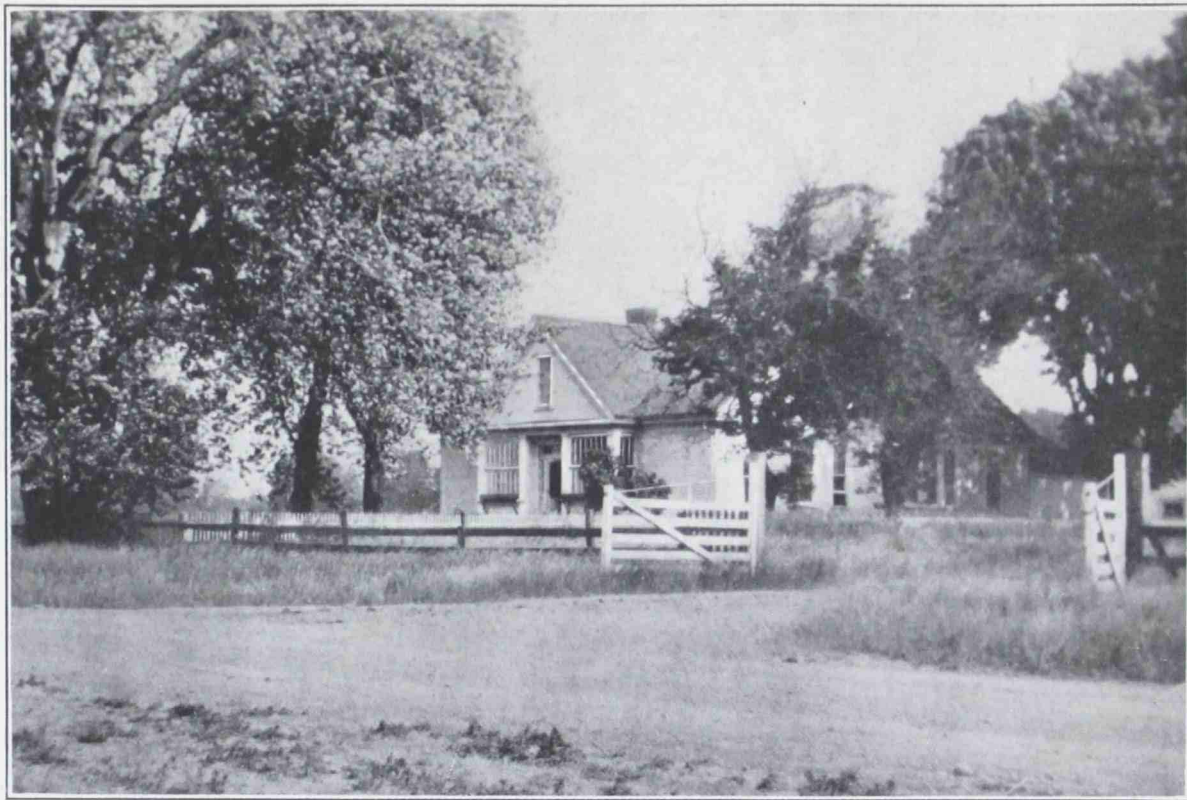
But enough of the old school, with its poor fashioning and its meager equipment. Whatever we youngsters acquired beneath its rude shelter was entirely due to our faithful and conscientious teachers. The old building, with its memories of pleasant playmates, of birds and squirrels coming fearlessly in through the open windows, fell away long ago, and no peace rests in that quiet place as of old. A

constant and never ending stream of restless motorists rushes across the fine bridge that spans one of our favorite placid pools.

With the meager interests of children at that time, we found our greatest pleasure in the birds and flowers, in a loving and quite unscientific way. When March winds whistled through the great oaks, with fitful gleams of pale sunshine, we welcomed the discordant cries of the crows, as they came from the rookery further up the creek, but not with the same joy with which we hailed the advance bands of wild geese as they swept across the sky in V-formation. It meant spring was nearby. There was mystery and wonder in our young minds as we heard our elders discuss their great migrations from the sunny south where they wintered, to the distant lakes and even to the verge of the frozen sea, where they nested and reared their young. We loved their strong swift flight, though too soon it carried them beyond our eager gaze. They did not always pass us by, for green spring-wheat fields or early fall sowing sometimes halted them, and we children ran to the east veranda up stairs, to rest the old spyglass on the balustrade and train it on the orderly ranks, with sentinels placed to warn of danger. Fall rains and fogs brought the migrations, vastly increased, but we did not welcome their southern flight, for it forebode winter.

Spring was really over the border when the quaint sound of a grouse in the tall fir tree across the creek assured us he was eating the tender little tips of the firs. A quail made a nest in the strawberry vines, and never resented our friendly visits. One day there was a nest full of shells, and the pretty brood never strayed far afield. A little brown bird had a nest in the Mission rose bush beneath the library window, and we liked to peep down on the patient little creature. One day an uninvited guest ruthlessly tore down the nest before outraged hands could intervene. It was her last visit. Another bird tragedy occurred when a would-be sportsman shot a nesting grouse that my father had discovered in a clump of oak grubs.

The bluejays had a raucous note and were said to filch



NESMITH HOUSE NEAR RICKREALL, POLK COUNTY  
Photographed about 1920



eggs, but I cannot bear witness. At any rate we loved their lovely blue plumage, as well as that of the gentle little blue-bird about whom there was no question of honest dealing. They took their crumbs as thankfully as the snowbird and other friendly feathered folk.

There were many varieties of brown and golden hawks, of evil repute as to the poultry yard, but of this I cannot take oath. They poised aloft on motionless wings, busy about their own affairs of field mice and other enemies of the farmer. Gray pigeons shared with the robins the abundant cherries, but the ever-ready, armed-for-fight robin got the best. The pigeons' plumage was beautiful, with that same iridescence of the great flocks that flutter about Saint Marks in Venice.

"High in the sky the cranes gave cry and spread their wings," so high we could just catch their weird note as we watched them, fascinated. They were rare visitors, and I know now their nests were in the tall trees near the sloughs of the Willamette River, their favorite feeding grounds.

In a wayside thicket of rose haws and thorn, there were red-wing blackbirds darting athwart the tangle, their vivid splash of color vieing with the hips and berries of the wild growth.

Though beautiful, the mourning dove's cheerless note did not please us, any more than the placing of some dry grass stems on a flat fence rail, on which the nestlings hatched, within reach of any marauding house cat. A man well up in bird lore has said their indifferent parentage prevents much increase of their kind.

The beauty and lovely note of the meadow larks charmed us, as well as their friendly perching on fence rail or post. Their well constructed nests, as to-day, were built in clumps of strong grass, far afield from skulking enemies along fences. Birds of prey, of evil searching, sometimes circled away in the sky.

As I have said, the creek border was beautifully wrought with flowering shrubs and trees, and here too, the flowers we loved grew as well. There were crow's foot, trilliums,



lamb's tongues (erythroniums), Solomon's seal, violets, and many others. We went to the open spaces for larkspurs, iris, columbines, saxifrages, low growing lovely pinks in gray green leaves, tiger lilies, buttercups, frittilarias, cat's ears and camas. I never remember finding the corn flower, bachelor button, or French pink (for it is known by all three names), excepting in a nearby orchard. It is said the seeds were brought by a woman in one of the emigrations, and her name is anathema to the farmer, for the plant is a pest in the wheat fields, which it beautifies all over the Willamette Valley.

All pioneers had abundant vegetable gardens, of necessity as well as choice, furnishing much of their living. Little packages of vegetable seeds had been tucked in the corners of the covered wagon, and a considerate Government sent seeds to be distributed by hopeful congressmen. One usually found a border of sweet Williams, mullein pinks, and marigolds, faithfully tended by the busy mother, in memory of the home she had loved and left forever.

My father wisely had a little plot spaded and planted for our especial care, and we grew to love it, and weeded and watered faithfully. The old favorites have come into their own again, portulacas, "mourning bride," a doleful name for a pretty bloom, larkspur, love-in-a-mist and many others. Tall and colorful hollyhocks grew by the pleasantly shaded arbor, and their gay blossoms were fine dresses for flower dolls.

There are few wild or native fruits in Oregon. Strawberries, gooseberries, black or dewberries, crabapples, and in some sections, wild plums, were fairly abundant, and we children liked the gathering. All made the best of jam and jelly, and this method and drying were the only means of putting up fruit. No steam cooker nor jars with adjustable tops were known.

Corn hominy was prepared with lye leached on the farm, and wheat was ground at the nearest mill. All varieties of late-keeping vegetables were well cared for, and the farm furnished most of the living. Poultry was a large item, as well as milk and butter. Sheep were kept for food and

clothing, as well as for mattresses for beds. Wool was carded, spun and knitted. One thrifty neighbor constructed a loom on which his wife wove his clothes. Beef and pork were cured in brine and in the smoke house, a very necessary farm building. Salt salmon was a great favorite, and was sometimes packed at home, though there were early packing establishments. Sugar, rice, coffee and tea came in on sailing vessels.

I can truthfully say of our clothes that the materials and making were excellent, and while not to the taste of the sophisticated youngsters of to-day, they suited the times. I am sure we owed much to the Hudson's Bay stores. For everyday wear we had nankeen, a fine tan cotton from China, and calico and prints, while a white dress and sash served for "high days and holidays," of which there were few.

For winter wear linsey-woolsey, an enduring weave of linen and wool, defied snags on trees and fences, which we fearlessly climbed. Good Scotch plaid we wore sometimes, and red merino trimmed with narrow black velvet ribbon for very "dressy up." Laced shoes and clumsy rubbers were worn when we took the muddy road. All wool delaines, not unlike challies, but much finer, were worn by the elders, and a black taffeta, full of skirt and flounced occasionally and with flowing sleeves, did duty for best during many seasons. Dainty undersleeves added a charming touch to the costume, as well as the gold belt buckle on a black belt.

A word about men's garments would not be amiss. For common wear there were hickory shirts, suited for all sizes, at the Hudson's Bay stores. Dr. McLoughlin was of generous proportions, and ordered accordingly. Heavy, dark-blue woolen coats with hood attached, brought in from Canada, were seen in very early times. A serviceable blanket, with an opening to pass over the head, was worn like a poncho. In rainy weather, properly adjusted, it added much to the comfort of the rider, as well as of the horse. All men wore high boots, and in the winter, leather leggings fastened below the knee with leather thongs that had been passed around the leg twice. They, too, defied cold and rain.

As much traveling was accomplished on horseback, it



was quite necessary to have a good mount, and good horses had been brought in as well as the saddle and its furnishings. For ordinary needs of a week or more, the saddle bags served the purpose. This was a wide piece of leather fitted across a portion of the saddle, with a crescent cut to pass over the cantle. There were capacious pockets on either end of the leather.

Gay young cavaliers cut quite dashing figures on their spirited steeds, with accoutrements of highly embellished leather beautifully hand tooled. There were the saddle covering (mochila), stirrup covering (tapaderas), holster, leg-gings, highly ornamental bridle, with jingling spurs of silver, and Mexican saddle. My young uncle had learned the art of tooling from a Mexican, and we were fascinated to watch the process, and duly impressed when he rode forth on prancing Selim.

Army stores were sometimes sold, and a light blue infantry overcoat with a very short cape was seen very often.

Piecing quilts was a recreation. The quilting was done in a frame, and was a marvel of intricate design and beautifully fine stitches. In ill lighted houses, this could only be done in the summer. An afternoon party was sometimes given for friendly visiting, and to lend a hand in the quilting. Men were asked in later to join at a generous supper, and to exchange views on crops and politics, and maybe a little gossip. There were no children's parties. An infair was held, when a reception was given at the home of the bridegroom's father, and the mother endeavored to outdo the bride's mother in the matter of cakes and other delicacies.

It is not to be wondered at that there was little diversion or entertainment. Added to the duties of the mother was the making of garments, entirely by hand, and no ready made clothes, in our world at least.

Though no specialists took a chance at us (there were none), the country doctor with the old reliable remedies pulled most of us through the usual ailments that afflict young and innocent children. My father adhered stoutly to

his New England upbringing, in the matter of sassafras tea and sulphur and molasses. No garden was complete unless catnip and horehound grew in obscure corners, all good remedies for minor ailments.

Few can realize the life of a country doctor under the conditions of almost impassable roads, long night rides through drenching rains, and few comforts where he administered to the patient.

There was inadequate food and care for the sick, no nurses nor hospitals, only the kindly help of a neighbor.

The life of a pioneer woman was one of sacrifice and service, for her own family and for her neighbors, in trouble and illness and performance of the last rites for the dead. Maybe somewhere their merciful deeds will find recognition, though it was not for a reward that they gave themselves so freely.

I seem to jump about in my story; though I remember it well it may not be recorded in proper sequence.

Christmas was a day set apart, to which we children looked forward with eager anticipation. There were no shining lights nor glittering ornaments, in fact they were not to be had. Neither did we have a tree, but our simple gifts gave us pleasure: A highly polished red apple, nuts, raisins, a much prized sweet of pure white sugar in the shape of fruit and animals, quite hollow, and with a splash of color on the fruit. Once I had a beautiful dog, with a few touches of green to represent grass, where he stood on a little base. Being of a miserly turn, I placed my prize in a safe place, to my thinking. My sister found it and visited the delectable sweet for delicious sugary "licks." Alas, one day it was licked once too often, and it collapsed. I wailed loudly. Added to the other gifts, were usually a gay handkerchief, a bottle of cologne and some little toy.

Tallow candles were made and used on all farms, though we bought sperm ones by the gross in wooden boxes, a far superior article to the present day candles that are quite perceptibly part tallow. Vestas or sperm matches were on the bedside tables. A tiny ring of bone in the lids of the pretty boxes served for candle sticks. Lanterns were used in



the stable. All this seems primitive to those who press a button and flood an apartment with brilliant light.

Of newspapers we have yet in the family a file of the *Oregon Spectator*, for the first two years of its existence, which was prior to my day. I remember distinctly the two papers read and prized by my parents, *The Oregon Statesman* and *The Oregonian*. Asahel Bush, editor of the former, and my father were friends for many years. When Harvey W. Scott became editor of the *Oregonian*, he, too, was a friend, and certainly my father had a profound admiration and esteem for Mr. Scott, and no one read his unusual editorials more thoughtfully. Mr. Scott was a great man with a great newspaper.

*Harper's Magazine* was always in the home, and we children admired the fashion pages. There is nothing so frivolous in that staid publication now. A farm journal, of which Orange Judd was manager, and later the *Sun* and *New York World* held much interest for dwellers in this remote corner.

At one time my father was superintendent of Indian affairs, in a very wide range of country on which there were a number of reservations that were under his supervision. There was an agent in charge at each post. I distinctly remember Colonel John Owen, of Deer Lodge, Montana, coming annually to make his report, a long and weary journey. All payments were made in coin, and rations of blankets, etc., were issued to the Indians. There was a trusted messenger, One-Arm Brown, known all over the state. In the early days he was a familiar figure, and on Fox, a beautiful brown horse, he safely carried in his saddlebags large sums to distant agents.

In 1856 a great many Indians were placed on the reservations of Grand Ronde and Siletz, with an army post at each reservation. There were many Rogue River and Klickitat Indians, both quite superior people. The men were allowed out on passes issued by the agent, and they did good work in the harvest fields, binding grain by hand. The women gathered berries and hazelnuts, and we children were allowed to visit the women, and in their limited "Boston talk"

and in our limited Chinook, we heard stories of their tribal homes, while they skillfully wove little baskets for a "cultus potlatch." Their favorite camp was a high grassy bank with a deep pool below that afforded the cold plunge after a "sweat bath," warranted to kill or cure, according to the ailment.

The most notable of these women was Princess Mary, daughter of Chief John. He was at the Table Rock council in 1853,<sup>10</sup> and she never forgot our indebtedness to him, and incidentally to herself, because he wisely counselled peace, and prevented the massacre of the white councillors, of which my father was one.

These women knew the intricate and beautiful basket weaving of their own habitat. They collected and peeled great quantities of hazel sticks, and wove well wrought baskets suited to the needs of house and farm. Everyone in the valley was familiar with the old covered wagons in which these patient workers went forth to sell their handiwork.

At Fort Hoskins, Colonel C. C. Augur and Captain F. T. Dent, with their families, lived, and there was visiting between the fort and the farm when there was good condition of roads and weather.<sup>11</sup> There were only bachelor officers at Grand Ronde, Captain D. A. Russell and Lieutenant Philip Sheridan. My mother and a southern guest once visited Captain John F. Miller's family there. With their hostess, they were asked to luncheon by the young officers. I have wondered why I sat at that luncheon table; it must have been I was the sort of youngster that could not be left at home. I was not allowed brandy peaches, though they were served to the others. The outstanding incident of that visit was a friendship formed with the agent's daughter, an enduring friendship certainly on my part, that has withstood the stress of change and passing years, only to grow stronger. Captain Miller was Indian agent.

There was no religious service beyond the occasional visit of a circuit rider, who exhorted the small gatherings

---

<sup>10</sup> See *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, volume VII, pages 211-21.

<sup>11</sup> See *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, volume XXX, page 346.

in the schoolhouse. Camp meetings furnished the same instruction and friendly visiting of the campers, and relief from household cares and work. A chance visit to one of the nearest towns was quite a rare event.

One great, quite momentous happening was our parents' voyage to San Francisco, and we were more concerned as to their return than their embarking, for there were gifts of a doll each with painted china heads and painted faces and curls, and a smart hat for the little girls, very welcome after the hated and enveloping sunbonnet. Grandmother said nice little girls did not go bare of head. There was a little library of books that all children have loved, and some quite beautiful ones in red morocco.

The great, the wonderful purchase was a Wheeler and Wilson sewing machine. Being familiar with ponderous threshing machines, I did not grasp the idea of anything less sizeable, and was troubled about the space it would occupy in the large living room. This machine must have been one of the first in the country, and women came for miles out of curiosity, with miles of ruffling to be hemmed. My mother was kindness itself, and hemmed and gathered their flounces.

In this connection I might add my memory of implements antedating the use of machinery. I remember the strong and skillful sweep of the cradle that laid the swaths of grain with such beautiful precision. It was backbreaking work, but there was pride in its accomplishment. Threshing was done with the flail. Being of hickory, it must have had a place in the covered wagon.

One great event was the trip to the circus at Dallas. Dan Rice was certainly a pioneer here in that line. The lovely ladies jumped through the hoops, the clown was witty, and the horses performed wonders.

In 1858 appeared Donati's comet, one of the greatest in history, and we gazed fascinated, as it swept across the sky to the north. It was a spectacular comet, of wonderful brilliance.

Varying the meager traffic of the country roads, a peddler and his led horse came along, quite a convenient





PRINCESS MARY  
Photographed at Salem about 1895



happening to isolated homes. At the present day there is no mountain cabin too remote for a Sears Roebuck or other mail order house's prodigious catalog to penetrate. The peddlers sometimes carried their packs on their shoulders, and the contents were surprising. Specialists didn't belong in that generation, and spectacles from the pack helped tired old eyes.

Almost forgotten incidents are recalled by a word. A picture of the *Flying Cloud*, the queen of that fleet of fine old clipper ships, is associated with the voyage my mother's dearest friend made in 1851. A beautiful girl, she came with an older sister on a record trip of eighty-nine days from New York to San Francisco. Reuben P. Boise was waiting in this far away Oregon, and he went to San Francisco and claimed his bride, Miss Ellen Lyon.

The families in the valley to whom we were most attached were those of Mrs. James W. Boyle, my mother's cousin, and Mrs. John E. Lyle, of Dallas. They each had three daughters the ages of my sisters and myself, and we had occasional happy visits.

The Rickreall, which has stirred up contention as to name, is not always the placidly flowing stream rippling over shallows and now and then deep pools. Snow in the mountains, followed by pouring rain, converts it into a raging torrent, with driftwood and uprooted trees borne on its turbulent waters. It sweeps over fields where barriers offer no resistance. Less substantial county bridges in early times were washed away, and the first railway bridge near our home in the 1880s was carried out.

Although our family's first experience with the gentle Rickreall in flood time antedates my day, it was something to be reckoned with and not forgotten. The winter following the purchase of the mill had all the elements of a freshet, snow in the mountains and heavy rains, and the resulting flood was quite successful in carrying out the mill. Fortunately the services of a competent millwright were available in the person of Frederick Waymire, who reconstructed the plant in 100 days, in time to furnish flour for men going to the mines in California.

There was a ford near my grandfather's house, and a fair road had been made on the steep bank on either side. Belated horsemen, coming at night, when this raging flood had filled the bed of the stream, were bewildered by the pitch darkness and the swirling water. More than once I have heard that call for help, answered by my grandfather's or uncle's hallo, and his going with a lantern to wave and shout directions until horse and rider landed in safety, a comfortable stall and provender for the former, and a pioneer's kindly care for the latter.

Only silver and gold were in circulation, and the "slug," a \$50 gold piece, was occasionally seen. Nothing less than a dime was used, and that was rather casually considered in money transactions.

When I was ten years old a change came to the lives of the family, and the years on the Rickreall ended, to be resumed six years later. My father was sent to Washington, and served on the senate military committee during the Civil War. He had the honor of knowing President Lincoln, and army men of distinction whom he had known in early times here. The incidents of the voyage of many weeks are vivid to-day, all then so new and thrilling. We rolled and tumbled on an old tub from here to San Francisco. It was the beginning of the war, and there we were detained several days for the embarking of the troops, all from the Pacific coast being ordered to the front. The boat from there to Panama was literally packed in every corner.

The stirring notes of the band always delighted us. There was but one stop in the two weeks, when we entered a beautiful little land-locked harbor. Its high shores were covered with a dense tropical growth to the very water's edge. Manzanillo was the port for gold and silver from the Mexican mines, to be sent to England for coinage. An afternoon was spent there, while natives carried on boxes of treasure.

General E. V. Sumner, in command of the troops, arrested two disloyal passengers, and when we reached Panama, the country of Colombia being neutral, forbade the passage of prisoners of war, and a little company, half clad,



indifferently armed for fray, was ordered out. A United States man o' war in the harbor shifted its position, the business was settled, and our 500 troops took the railway train, along with the passengers.

We were charmed with the little boats that darted about the harbors at either end of the railway journey, with their fascinating cargos of fruits, flowers, and shells. Very small natives dived for coins thrown from the ship's deck. The trees and all the tropical growth of vines and flowers were beautiful.

The eight day trip to New York was thrilling at times. Those in authority were in some fear of an attack of a privateer. Our boat, with the troops and treasure, was not a prize to be reckoned lightly. As in the late war, we sailed with no cabin lights.

One night there was a violent thunder storm, and lightning struck the sea like the report of a cannon. Everyone hurried on deck. The first one to arrive was the stout wife of the colonel, who hadn't descended from her bed without assistance for nine years.

Eight days from Aspinwall, now Colon, landed us in New York, on a gloomy day of fitful snow, after the sunny tropics. A railway journey of two or three days, and we were settled in a pretty village and new faces and new school books claimed our attention. We seemed rather curiosities for a time, coming from the unheard of place, about which our companions knew nothing.

In those first years the war was of absorbing interest, and children were expected to do their bit to help in the great conflict. Later, there were changes of school life and a little travel, and at the expiration of six years, in 1867, we returned to the old home.

Friendships were renewed, though there were sad vacancies. Pioneers came to welcome us, and acquaintances of my father's in Washington did not pass us by. They were mostly army men who had gained honors and their country's gratitude. Among them were those we had known on their frontier post. Philip Sheridan and his bride, going to visit the humble quarters at Grand Ronde, called. Shortly after our



return, Secretary W. H. Seward, enroute to Alaska to ratify the purchase, (a remarkable bit of statecraft), came out of his way to spend the night. The night was far spent indeed, in which Mr. Seward and my father discussed the war and conditions following its close.

The time had come when there were no longer any little girls in our home on the Rickreall. Then the fourth generation came to the old farm, lived and played in the Goff and Nesmith houses, and loved the happy times spent in orchard, barn and creek. They, too, learned where to find the birds and flowers and how to cure the hazelnuts gathered in the woods. But the happiest times were when Princess Mary and her family arrived from the Grand Ronde for her regular summer visits to get fruit and to make baskets for the "tenas" ones.