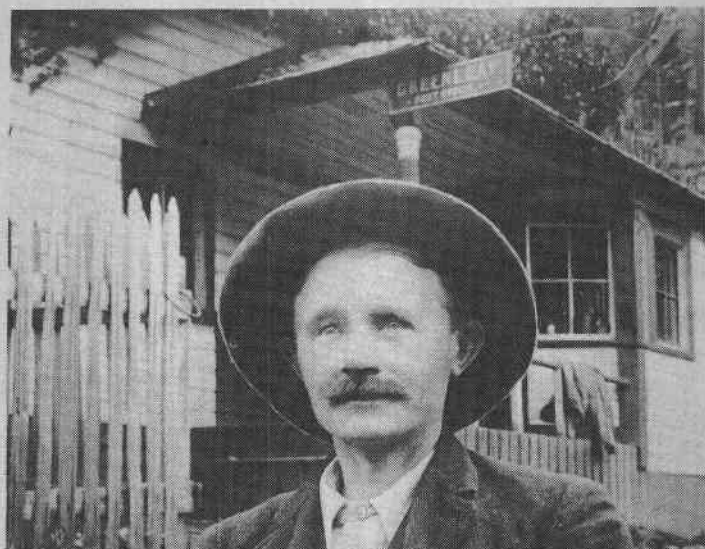
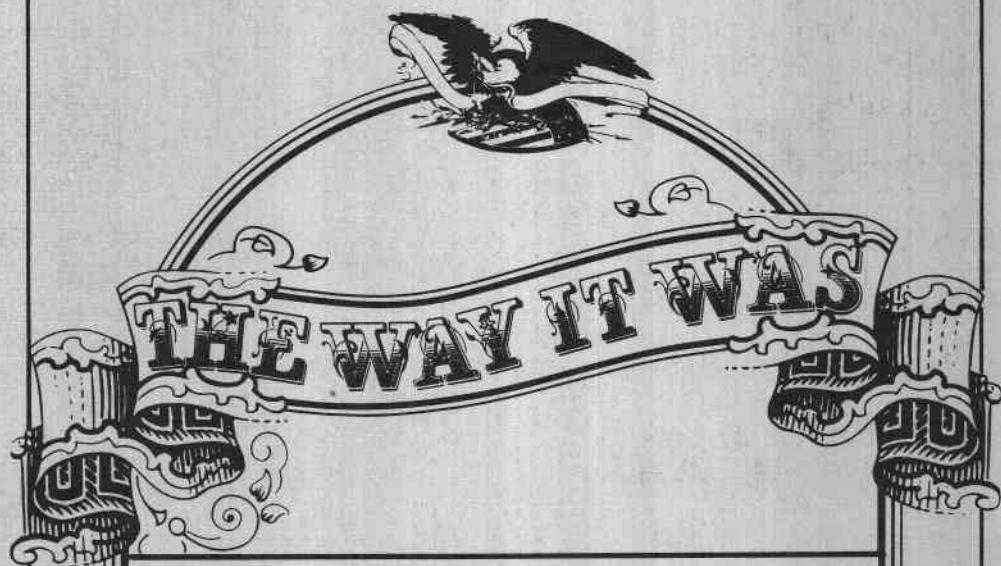


Lane County Historian



Herman Steinhauer at the Greenleaf Post Office, 1911 M. Wheeler photo

The Lane County Historical Society

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LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

The **Lane County Historian** has carried very little material in previous issues about Lower Lake Creek history. Much of the material in this issue is designed to fill that gap in County coverage. The following stories recount events which took place largely since the turn of the century. For coverage of earlier years two publications provide much interesting material. They are the 1980 issue of the **Siuslaw Pioneer** telling **THE STORY OF DEADWOOD CREEK**, 132 p, published by the Siuslaw Pioneer Assoc. and a book titled **LOWER LAKE CREEK**, 64 p, by Dale Steinhauer and Barbara Parker, the publication of which was made possible by a grant provided through C.E.T.A. Both these publications cover the early history in some detail and include maps of homesteads, location of schools, churches and post offices and personal reminiscences. Dale Steinhauer has been most helpful in providing pictures for this issue of the **HISTORIAN**. The **Lower Lake Creek** book is available from Barbara Parker in Deadwood, for a contribution to the community health clinic, and the **Siuslaw Pioneer** from The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum, 07959 North Fork-Siuslaw Road, Florence, OR 97439 (winter hours 1-5 Sat. & Sun.). Price \$7.00 if you pick it up. Add \$1.00 for postage and handling for mail order.

LOWER LAKE CREEK NEWS

These news reports from Lower Lake Creek communities were collected by Dale Steinhauer to whom we are much indebted for them as well as the pictures in following pages and on the front cover of this issue. —Ed.

1890, June 21, "A Cougar Picnic on Deadwood, and other Items,"

The Eugene City Guard, p. 4

"On last Tuesday evening as Charlie Potterf, of Deadwood, this country, was reading the official election returns and talking to John Richardson, Sr., his father-in-law, and Johnnie Richardson, Jr., Mrs. Potterf told him that some one hallooed down the road. All listened and again some one was calling. The words "cougar" and "gun" could be made out. Charlie and Johnnie got their guns and hied themselves thitherward. Now Mr. and Mrs. Howard Pope had been spending the day with Mr. and Mrs. Potterf, and had started home after supper. They had walked down the road near Ed. Potterf's house, when they were surprised by finding two large cougars — one lying in the road and the other on a log not ten feet away. The cougars were very poor, hungry and fierce looking. They were there for meat, and they certainly looked like they needed it. They acted like they wanted it, too. They arose with dignity, flourished their tails by way of salute, grinned like a hungry tramp at a barbecue, and refused to give the road. Then the one in the road made for Mrs. Pope. It was then that Howard said some naughty words. He and Mrs. Pope had to run, the proper thing under the circumstances. He followed them about one hundred yards. Howard waived a huge bouquet that Mrs. Potterf had

given to Mrs. Pope. The cougar gave up the chase. Whether it was from the scent of the flowers — what Howard said — or from the dust thrown in his face by flying feet, it is not known. When they got near enough to make anyone hear they called for help. Charlie and Johnnie got to them with the dog and the guns. Johnnie showed his courage and gallantry by undertaking to escort Mrs. Pope down to the scene of action. He gave Howard his gun, and while Charlie and Howard ran on ahead he brought up the rear with only a knife for defense. Arrived at the spot, the cougars had gone. The dog put one up an alder tree in about three minutes. Both boys got in a shot and the cougar fell in the creek. The dog jumped in one top of it and pulled it ashore. In ten minutes more the dog scented the other one inside of the field in some high fern along a high picket fence. The dog was on the outside. The cougar ran up and down the fence, the dog keeping up with it. It was some little time before a shot was fired as there was danger of shooting the dog. Finally Charlie ran in behind the cougar and got in a shot, then Howard one. It took another shot each to finish it. Mrs. Pope and Johnnie sat on the fence and saw the fun. Charlie killed a large cougar near the same place two weeks ago. Fred Pepiot killed four this spring on Lake creek not over five miles away. The two just killed had made away with one of Mr.

Potterf's hogs a few days before and were then lying in wait of some young calves that were more than two hundred yards away.

"There is considerable chittem being peeled in this vicinity.

"Geo. Dysinger had one of his valuable work oxen killed by a tree a few days ago. Bear are now gormandizing thereon.

"Mr. Owens [Ben Owen] took 150 head of stock cattle upon Bald mountain for the summer outing, last week."

1891, April 1, "Deadwood Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 1.

"Spring work has commenced. We have had no extreme high water this winter. Stock is in fine condition and we have no loss of stock to report.

"Our genial and accommodating Post Master [Thomas Pope] has a fine new picket fence around his house and garden.

"A man representing himself as being agent for a San Francisco Lumber Co. has been looking for timber land on Wild Cat, Siuslaw river and Lake creek. He says he is much pleased with the timber and intends to report it as being good and should the timber suit them they will put in a saw mill at the Head of Tide. [Mapleton]

"Another party has been through this part of the county looking, so he says, for a R.R. route from the Willamette valley to deep water on the Siuslaw. If the party would find a low grade they should examine the pass above the lake as it is considered the lowest pass through the Coast range.

"A Junction doctor, in attending a patient here, questioned very close as to

what he had to eat. He insinuated that we, as a class, did not have the necessities of life. Now doctor come among us and you will find none in the country live better. We raise the finest potatoes, onions, beets, carrots, cabbage, pork I have seen anywhere and with valley flour why should we not live well?" I.C. Uno.

"What is Lake Creek? It is a valley 25 miles long, with wide bottoms that are rich sandy loam. In root crops we raise the finest carrots and produce from 400 to 500 bushels to the acre; of potatoes we produce from 300 to 400 bushels to the acre of the following varieties: Early Rose, White Elephant, Burbank seedling and Peach Blow. Ruttabagas produce from 700 to 900 bushes to the acre, and are rich food for cattle. Turnips and parsnips do exceedingly well here. Sugar beets have not been very thoroughly tested as to the amount of sugar they will produce but the beet grows large and should there be a sugar factory put in on the Siuslaw, we could furnish many thousand tons of them each year. Cabbage is fine, sweet and of the best quality. Kale grows from three to four feet high and is rich and tender. There is no root crop that cannot be raised here with profit."

1891, Dec. 23, "Deadwood Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 1.

"We have had no mail for two weeks or more on account of high water, and it looks now as though we would not have any for some time to come.

"The gentle voice of a rooster belonging to a democratic friend of ours can be heard saying, 'Rah for Blaine.' He says he will dispose of it before '92.

"I notice in a recent issue of your valuable paper something about Oregon mist, but judged by the amount of water that had fallen it hit oftener than missed."

1893, November 25, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"A new settler by the name of O. Marshy [Almasi] is looking for a claim here. He says hot winds won't burn the crops here as it did in Neb. Several parties have been looking up timber claims in this neighborhood, but it is to hold for speculation."

1894, March 10

Eugene City Guard.

"The people here are kicking! They want to see some one kicked!! They ought to kick high, hard and fast.

"The **Weekly Oregonian** located our fish hatchery on Knowles' creek on the Umpqua river, as well as Senator Alley. They wish it to be known that Knowles' creek is on the south side of the Siuslaw river. That the fish hatchery is on the other side of the Siuslaw river. That it is located on Mrs. Bean's place which is not kicked about. But the fishing house is not built according to specifications; where it was to be all grained lumber, there is scarcely any at all. Instead of clear stuff, it is full of knots, and is mostly of bastard stuff. Where it was to be seasoned lumber, it wasn't. When you do down there next summer, after the lumber has had a chance to dry, you will see that the whole thing is a 'holy' swindle — very much so in the way of holes. The contractor don't deserve kicking half so much as the office of the great state of Oregon, that accepted the

hatchery and took it off his hands. We would like to know who made the most out of this job. We would like — as a good democrat — to call the attention of the populists, the grand jury and Gov. Pennoyer, also the fish commissioner and game warden to this great monument of dishonesty. The people near the hatchery will soon be kicking too. If they don't, they ought to be kicked by the KICKER."

1894, March 10, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"When will the Eugene PM learn that Greenleaf is on the Junction-Deadwood route and not the Siuslaw route.

"We kick old satan because the **Register** announced that Thos. Tabor was married to Mrs. Nancy E. Page, when it was Nancy E. Pope. Now as Mrs. Page lives on Deadwood and as we only have one wedding a year over here we want all the credit due us, and also all the glory. The bride was 52 and the groom on the shady side of 72, and both hale and hearty. They were married March 7.



Nancy Pope, circa 1890

1894, April 28th, **Eugene City Guard**

"We are kicking, if not cussing, because we have received no **Guard** for nearly two weeks, or any San Francisco or Portland papers, and yet we have mail twice a week. Will some lunatic tell us if the post office in Eugene or the way offices are to blame?"

"At the regular meeting of the Woman's Union of Deadwood valley last week, where a full attendance was had, after routine business the society went into executive session. One of the members asked that resolution No. 3, of 1891, be read. This was the firebrand in the powder house. This is it: 'Resolved that a three years' limit of celibacy be placed on all bachelors, and those not married at the end of that time be run out of the settlement or hung.' It was shown that the bachelors unanimously petitioned, on the special plea of 'hard times,' for just one more year of grace. This brought on one of the most stormy debates the society ever witnessed. The married ladies were in favor of granting the prayer of the petitioners, but the single women were unanimously opposed to it. They argued that if times were hard it was all the more reason why they should marry, as two could sit at the same table; warm and cook by the same fire; live in the same house; and, as one fair maiden put it, sleep in the same bed. They even showed that it would be absolute economy to get married. They even showed more. They showed their tempers. No men were admitted, but your correspondent being a married man, on promise of a new dress, got the news. On a vote, the married ladies having a majority the time was extended. The maidens fair voted unanimously 'No!' " Kicker

1894, May 26, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"We the patrons of the Greenleaf postoffice would like very much if the Eugene postmaster would not send our mail by the Siuslaw route, but via Junction. We are tired of having our mail go down the river for a week then to Deadwood for another week's visit before we get it and we are tired of getting mail from New York and Boston dated the same day as the Eugene mail one week ahead of the Eugene. We need a change."

1894, June 2, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"Fred Rowe was shouting people's party until he saw how the people's party and democratic party were fusing when he flopped to the G.O.P. Now Fred stay with it.

"A canvass of this precinct shows the populists out of sight in the rear and the democratic party clinging to the last straw, while the G.O.P. will cast a rousing vote.

1894, July 14, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"Mrs. Wm. Wheeler's father and mother came up from Frisco and have taken up a claim on Nelson Creek.

"The Presbyterian church at Deadwood will be dedicated next Sunday with appropriate ceremonies, and the sacrament of the Lord's supper will be administered after the afternoon sermon. Also an opportunity will be given anyone who may wish to join this church."

1894, July 28, "Greenleaf Items, July 23, 1894,"

The Eugene Register, p. 3.

"J.G. Stevenson passed through on his bicycle calling on schools and reports our house and school in good working condition and compliments us in securing so efficient teacher as Miss Davis.

1895, February 23, "Greenleaf Items,"

The Eugene Register, p. 2.

"Mike O. Marshey [Almasi] had the misfortune to fall from a horse while crossing Salt creek and had a leg broken.

1908, January 3,

From Greenleaf **West**

"Gerhard Steinhauer was coming in from Eugene Monday with a double team and when nearing his brother Herman's place on Lake Creek a stub came down across his team. It was so rotten that it broke up and covered S. and his wagon with debris, but it struck the horses over the haunches with so much force, as to crush them flat to the ground. Strangely, no bones were broken and the animals sprang to their feet and went on at a speed they had never aspired to before."



Mable Wheeler (Steinhauer), b. 8/2/1002 at Greenleaf, OR

THE ELNANS OF DEADWOOD

The following story about the Elnan family and their days in the Deadwood area is compiled from an interview with two daughters, Ruth Bell and Laurie Rice, taped July 1, 1982, and from a Register Guard clipping of June 1, 1953.



Olaf Elnan at age 18, Courtesy Ruth Elnan Bell



Constance Williams, Graduate nurse, 1894 on the left. Courtesy Ruth Elnan Bell

Olaf Elnan was born in Norway and his wife, Constance, in Minnesota.

Born Constance Williams ... (she) went as a small child with her parents to Sioux Falls, S.D., where she grew to womanhood. As a baby she had a disease which would now be termed polio and from afterward did not walk until she was past two years old The eldest of nine children, Connie took care of her younger brothers and sisters from the time she was a very small child. She says her nurses training began at 10 years when her mother was

delivered of a child by a neighbor woman. As soon as she had dressed the baby, the neighbor returned to her own home. Young Connie did not like the way the baby was dressed and promptly dressed it to suit herself Connie also did much caring for mothers and babies when her mother was called to a second home to deliver a baby after having delivered one at the first place.

When Connie was a young woman she went to Everson, Washington, to visit her grandmother. Here she took nurse's training at St. Luke's

Hospital in Bellingham and later at Everett General Hospital, graduating in 1896

After nurse's training during the 1890s Connie went back to Dakota to visit and there met young Olaf Elnan who had come from his native Norway to work on Connie's grandfather's farm. Soon wedding plans were consummated at the grandmother's home near Everson, Washington Feb. 7, 1900.

Olaf worked as a fireman in a shingle mill in Washington for a while.

Olaf had left Norway at age 18. When he and Connie were married they sent a ticket for his mother to come to the wedding. His father, a sea captain, had contracted blood poisoning from an injury and died and was buried at sea when Olaf was 7 years old.

On January 31, 1905, the family, at this time consisting of Olaf, Connie and two daughters, came to Oregon, settling in the Goldson neighborhood west of Junction City where Olaf had purchased a farm. The arrival of another daughter in the spring and later a son completed the family RG, 6/1/1953

After farming in the Goldson area a few years the family moved on to Deadwood. Jack Young was manager of the fish hatchery at the mouth of Green Creek at that time and Mrs. Young's father, Charlie Rhodarmel worked with him. "Nice people." They were at the hatchery when Elnans moved to Deadwood and "they allowed us to put up a tent on their property while my father and brother and some of the neighbors built our house up on Green Creek. We

only lived on Green Creek two or three years because I can remember that my mother carried me in her arms when we went up to look at the Deadwood place," Ruth said. The house they built on Green Creek was sawed lumber, board and batten construction. It burned in a few years. So many of the old records are gone. The thing Ruth felt the worst about that burned was grandfather's sterling silver plate, cup and saucer and silverware he used on his ship.

"We moved to the Deadwood place because there was more farming area. That's where I started to school," Ruth said.

Ruth's first teacher was Minnie Jeske. She went seven grades at the Deadwood school which sat right there on the bank of Lake Creek where the highway maintenance depot is now. The state took over the property and tore the building down after the school consolidated with Mapleton.

Laurie's first teacher was Miss Green. She was only there a short time. Another woman finished out the term. It was a country school with all eight grades. It got pretty tough for Miss Green, not quite five feet tall. Those great big boys, they put snakes in her lunch box and things like that. She was from eastern Oregon and she wasn't used to such wild people. Miss Green came from Crooked River country and she used to be amazed that Lake Creek was called a creek. She said, "Our Crooked River is much smaller than that and it is a river." Mattie Neely was the next teacher's name.

Laurie said, "I worked at the fish hatchery when I was about 10, picking eggs. The eggs were in wire baskets and the ones that were good would stay

pink. You'd watch 'em and you'd see the little fish eyes and so on, but the ones that were not fertile would just be kind of a pinkish white and you'd pick those out. The people that were running the hatchery had holding ponds for the salmon. There was a fish rack there. And fish would come up into what they called the trap. They would take them out and put them into these holding ponds until they were ready to spawn and then they would take the eggs from the females and they would milk the males and stir the eggs all up and then put them in the baskets. They had long troughs with the water running through in the hatchery and they would put these wire baskets in the troughs. There was fresh water running through there all the time.

"I don't remember that I ever got paid. I just helped. My father worked there at the time. I was too young to be on the payroll, but I enjoyed it."

Ruth said, "What I remember is Jack Young out there with his spoon. As the fish grew they'd take them out of one pond and put them in another. The fish that'd spawned would die, you know, and they'd grind them up and dry them to make food for the fish. I don't know whether anything was added to the food, but Jack would spoon that dried food out and the fish would just come up jumping for it. It was so much fun to watch."

"We used to visit the Almasie home sometimes. They lived in Greenleaf. I always remembered the poppyseed rolls that Grandma Almasie always had. She made a special poppyseed cake too. Mollie was a Christensen then and lived on Nelson Creek. They had cherries on that place. It was two or three miles up

Nelson Creek at the foot of the mountain. There were big black Bing cherry trees all along the lane up to their house. They would have us come up there. We would stay overnight and sleep on the floor and pick cherries to can. People came to help them use the cherries. Their boys were small then. That was long before they went into the rodeo business. Mollie was such a beautiful young woman. She had beautiful hair.

"I think we were the only Scandinavians in the Deadwood area," Ruth said. "I used to think it was a disgrace because our father spoke broken and a lot of people would make fun of him. There was one man in particular that I used to get so mad at when I was eight or nine years old. I thought, 'Why you old beast! I wish you were back in Norway or someplace where you had to get along in a foreign language.' The funny part is when dad had to get up in front of people he spoke better English than I do. In Norway he sang with St. Olaf's choir. He had a beautiful voice. He used to sing to us sometimes — Norwegian songs. The folks joined the grange. I don't remember what office he held, and spoke properly there. But just in everyday talk at home and to different people he'd talk broken. Our mules were Jack and Jeff and he'd call them Yack and Yeff, and so on.

When I was very young my folks talked Norwegian if they didn't want us kids to know something. We learned a little of the language. When my brother started to school he could speak either language but my father was afraid he would not be considered a good American so he told us, 'We are

Americans now. We will speak English.' "

Father started a shingle mill when he first moved to Deadwood. He worked at the fish hatchery for a while. Then it was like it is now, you worked at whatever you could find. He farmed quite a bit, later on. The Deadwood place, we called it, where you turn in to go up Deadwood Creek. We lived there for a while. He farmed two places. He rented the "big Deadwood place". He had a dairy and sold cream. In the early days they picked it up with a team and wagon. They had a regular route there.

When we lived there, I can remember that so well, our place was kind of the half-way house between Florence and Eugene. They'd make it to our place and stay all night and the next morning go on to Eugene. They being anyone who was travelling. Anyone. It didn't make any difference. We fed them and fed their teams. It wasn't an official stage stop.

Leonard Brooks was the mail carrier down Deadwood Creek from Alpha. He came down in the morning and stayed at our place until the mail came in from Swisshome. Like I said it was a stopping off place for people and dad would take care of their teams and mother would feed them and they would leave in the morning and say, "Well, thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Elnan. We sure enjoyed everything," and that was it. No money, ever. We shouldn't say that about Leonard Brooks because he paid because of being the mailman. The rest of the people, a lot of people we didn't even know, knew here was a place they could stay overnight and get a free meal, supper and breakfast as we

called them, and know that their animals would be well taken care of, and that was it. We had the same situation when we lived at Goldson. We were at the foot of the mountain and people would come from Junction City and stop at our place and go on the next day. Our mother was a wonderful cook and our father a good host for the animals. The Elnans were poor people, but the community helped to keep them poor. Dad put up all the hay he could get ahold of. We didn't know we were poor. We never wanted for anything. We had wonderful parents, a good Christian upbringing, and we were richer than the people that come and took advantage of us.

"Hunsakers were our neighbors, Edward and Helen and William and Otto Hunsaker. Otto was the one that went into the service when I was 14," Ruth said. "I remember when he came home, what a big deal that was. Everyone went to meet him, the neighborhood hero. He was right in the fighting in France. I was very much impressed by his going off to war. I'll always remember when we went to the railroad depot to see him off. There was quite a group of neighbors and one of the fellows said, 'Well, goodbye Otto, if I never see you again.'

They had a high school at Mapleton when we were ready but they wouldn't accept any more students at that time because they were overcrowded," Laurie said. "Four of us girls, my other sister and I and the Alcott girls went to high school in Florence. We rented a house there.

Our mother was doctor, nurse and everything else out there from the time

she moved out there until almost the time she died. In later years there were other medical people around, but she used to help doctors deliver babies and so on. For a while she worked at the old, old Eugene hospital, on Willamette Street, on the left hand side just about where Fletcher and Smart is now. This was after she married and had her family. We stayed home and Laurie was head of the house. Our father was there of course, but she did all the cooking and that. I was pretty small and I used to get so lonesome for my mother I thought I couldn't stand it.

There was a boy up Deadwood that had a kind of appendicitis attack. Mom went to help and said they had to have a doctor soon because his appendix would rupture. The doctors came in. I think at that time the road was passable for a car as far as Deadwood. They came to our place and dad took them up there behind his mules, clear to the head of Deadwood creek. Mom and these two doctors operated on this boy. The doctors said he'd never live — never make it. She said yes he would, and he did. That was Carl Boyles. Many of the oldtimers credited my mom with saving their lives.

Called to the home of a woodsman, Mrs. Elnan found that he had been cut on the head by a sharp branch while cutting brush. Not thinking the cut serious the man continued working for some time. then went to the house when the bleeding did not stop. Soot from the kitchen stove and other home remedies failed to stop the blood flow. The man's wife sent for neighbor nurse Elnan. She soon found that the man was a "bleeder"

when tannic acid and other medicines she had taken with her failed to halt the flow. She then resorted to the only means she knew to staunch the stream — holding her forefinger over the cut vein just above and between the man's eyes.

But human hands become fatigued with hours of being held in one position. Mrs. Elnan asked her husband, Olaf, who was present to hold two of his fingers over her finger to ease the strain of pressure. He soon grew ill from the sight of so much blood and had to go out of doors. Another neighbor, a man of good stature, tried the same feat, soon fainted and had to be cared for by the injured man's wife. Still nurse Elnan sat by the man quelling the blood flow with her finger, until, at the end of a 24-hour period, the tannic acid finally took hold and blood clots formed. By this time the blood had soaked completely through the mattress on the bed to form a puddle on the floor.

The man, grateful for the saving of his life by Nurse Elnan, followed her instructions to lie still for the necessary recuperative period.

Called to attend an elderly woman very low with pneumonia, Mrs. Elnan found the woman sitting in a rocking chair. She carried her piggyback to the bed and nursed her to health in three weeks using fried onions as poultices, and making use of any available medicine of home origin.

A hurried summons to care for a two-year-old boy hurt in a hay rack accident brought another three

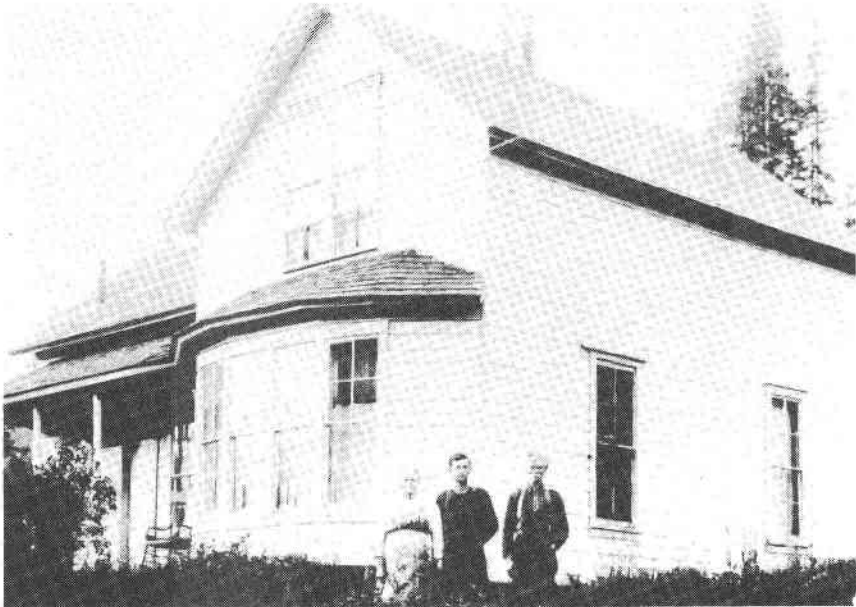
weeks' nursing. A farmer hauling hay had his entire family on top of the load. An unruly horse dumped the family into a ditch with the hay on top. The boy received a fractured skull and brain concussion from hitting his head on a large, sharp rock.

When Nurse Elnan arrived the boy was unconscious and later when a Eugene doctor arrived he said the boy was too far gone for him to help. The father replied, "Please, Mrs. Elnan, save my boy, or I'll think I have murdered him"

Mrs. Elnan shaved the hair off the boy's head, applied cold wet cloths until ice could be secured for ice packs. The boy is now a grown man, and a healthy, grateful person.

The exact number of babies delivered by Mrs. Elnan is not recalled, but they probably number several hundred. She said, "I never lost but one baby and that was because the parent's blood wasn't right; and the family doctor said that wasn't my fault." She never lost a mother in all her many years of nursing.

.... RG, 6/1/1953



Lawrence and Lucy Lamb and son Charles at their Deadwood home about 1910

MOLLIE ALMASIE CHRISTENSEN

adapted from a biography by Mary Rodman



Mollie Almasie Christensen, Courtesy Mrs. Henry Christensen

Mollie Christensen was born in a tent on the banks of the John Day River in eastern Oregon April 27, 1893. Mollie's parents, Mike and Susie Almasie, had started to Oregon from Nebraska with a half a sack of flour, the wagon and team of horses and a milk cow to see them and their six children to their destination.

Mike and Susie were both natives of

Bohemia, now Czechoslovakia. Mike (Mitchell) came from a wealthy, landed family. War took its toll of the Almasie land and Mike came to America. He landed in Pennsylvania where he married and worked to earn a living. His wife died and after a few years he married again — a girl much younger who spoke his native language. They had six children, Mitchell, Annie,

Andy, Jimmy, Joe and Olbina. In 1890 or '91 the Almasies migrated to Nebraska. The grasshoppers devoured their harvest two years in a row. As soon as spring came they started west.

Years later Susie Almasie told Mollie that she never would have begun the long journey to Oregon by wagon unless she had felt completely confident that she could undergo childbirth along the trail. A granddaughter, Agnes Slack, says in **Lower Lake Creek**, p 54, "They were Slavic and didn't speak English too well Once a fellow wanted to trade horses with them. They traded, and a short time later along came the sheriff and said the horses were stolen, so he took them away." This happened after they reached the Willamette Valley. They were obliged to continue to Lake Creek, where they established a home, with one horse and the milk cow pulling their wagon.

They built their house on 160 acres of land out of one cedar tree. Sawed the boards with an up and down saw. One man on top and another, in this case Susie, underneath. The land was cleared by hand.

Mollie recalls watching her father build a type of root cellar made of mud and straw, in which the family stored their vegetables for winter. All their food with the exception of a ton of flour which they hauled from Eugene once a year, came from their own land. Mike and his sons hunted deer and bear to add to the family larder. They valued the bear fat for shortening. Susie knew how to tan deer hides and make bear rugs. One year the Almasies sent a bear skin back to relatives in Pennsylvania. To their astonishment a few months later they received fifty dollars in the

mail as a token of appreciation. It represented a fortune in those days.

The children caught crawdads in the creek. They also caught fresh fish. But where the Almasie kids really triumphed as providers was in catching salmon. When Mollie was about seven or eight her brother and sister decided she was big enough to help catch salmon. Brother Joe, arming himself with a pitchfork, went upstream. Mollie's sister, a long pole in hand, followed Joe and began her job of ramming the pole in the hole where the salmon were spawning. Mollie's job was to hold the lap of her dress out against a rock to catch the fish which her brother tossed to her. As soon as her lap was full of the leaping fish, she would scramble back to the house with the catch. Her mother worked in the house, salting and drying the fish the children brought her. By this resourceful method, the Almasie children made a substantial contribution to the family food supply, and had a grand time doing it.

As a little child Mollie had no playmates of her own age. She used to tag after her father whenever he worked in his shop. She loved tools. When around five years old she amazed her father by showing him a usable branding iron she had made.

When Mollie was six she began walking three miles to school. Her mother saw to it that the children studied diligently. Later on, after Mollie finished the ninth grade, she taught school a while. But she didn't like teaching and soon turned to other pursuits.

One of Mollie's memories of her schooldays is of her brother Joe's picking up a bough from the ground as they

neared the schoolhouse. As they walked along Joe would drag the bough after him, making the grooves look like bike tracks. To own a bike was Joe's idea of the greatest riches on earth.

In the fall of the year the family would come to hop yards in Eugene or Harrisburg to earn money for winter supplies and school clothes.

Mollie was the champion runner of the whole school. Despite the encumbrance of long skirts she could outrun even much taller boys.

Mollie's father worked in the woods as a horse logger as well as keeping up with his own homestead. The boys followed him into logging as soon as they were big enough.

Only one holiday was celebrated by the family each year. On Christmas Day no one worked. Early in the morning the children arose first. They would all go out the front door, and there by the threshold they would say a prayer their mother had taught them. They spoke in "Bohemian". After saying their Christmas prayer they went inside and opened their Christmas stockings. There might be a shiny apple. Maybe a few pieces of hard candy. Or hand-made toys. Once one of Mollie's brothers carved her a top. A little sack of hazelnuts the children used to play betting games when it was found in the stocking.

The Christmas dinner was a great feast all of which had been prepared the day before. For this day of days was a holiday for everyone, Mollie's mother declared, even for the family cook.

When Mollie was fifteen she became the owner of a fine chestnut saddle horse. Already a fine horsewoman, she spent some of her happiest hours astride this beautiful horse.

A year later, August 23, 1910, Mollie was the only one of the children at home with her parents. Her brothers were all working at a logging camp some eight miles away. Mollie's sister who had been married some years before, lived near the logging camp. Her sister was pregnant.

The family now had a telephone. One of Mollie's brothers called her to say a bad forest fire had begun near the camp and that she must get the wagon and go rescue her sister. He was not able to leave the work.

Mollie hitched up the team and set out for her sister's house. But when she had driven about half-way some men in the neighborhood stopped her. They said the fire was now spreading fast in the direction of her parents' house and that she must rescue them. There were high winds and the woods were tinder dry. Here is the story in Mollie's own words.

"The neighbors stopped me and told me to go back because the fire had already spread to where my sister was. My two brothers were working in that very camp nearby. and for me to go back and get my folks out. We lived in a canyon So I went back as fast as I could and I got a lot of stuff out of the house and threw it out. And I tried to get mother and dad to go in (the wagon) so I could take them to the neighbors Mother was willing, but father wasn't. Father says, 'I'm not leaving. I've built this home, and this has been my home for now many years, and I'm not leaving.'"

"I couldn't persuade him, but I was a big husky sixteen year old girl, and father was up in his seventies and kind of frail I said, 'Father you've got to go.' He replied, 'No. You or nobody else

is going to make me go. I'm staying. I'm going to fight this fire.'

"And would you believe that at three o'clock when they (Mollie's brothers) called me, by four o'clock it got so dark that you had to light a lamp in the house. So smoky And we could hear the fire roaring. (Finally Mr. Almasie half consented to leave. But only on his own conditions.)

"The only way I'll go, Mollie, is if you'll wet the barn down. Wet the roof on the barn.'

"Well, you could just as soon spit on the roof. But, in order to satisfy him I took the time. We had rain barrels, and I wetted the barn down. And then I said, 'Now let's go, Dad.'

"Well, I got to go into the house for a little while,' he said. Stalled every which way 'til I just bodily picked him up I had to pack him and put him in the wagon. 'Now,' I said, 'You stay there.' But by that time we were surrounded. Except for a small clearing. And it had a lot of snags in it, and you know snags will fall if they catch fire." So Mollie decided not to brave the clearing in the high wind and such clear danger of falling snags.

"I'm going to have to drive through the fire.' So I drove up the creek. I had to go through the fire. There were more trees afalling. But I got through. Through the fire and over to the neighbors. Someway or another the wind and fire had by-passed the neighbors. They had a green field of clover, and there's where I got the folks to There was bear, cougar, deer and every imaginable thing under the bridge in the stream I can still see those flames in my mind. You never forget something like that."

Some months after the great fire Mollie met a young logger named Lawrence Christensen. Born in Denver, Lawrence grew up in the Bailey Hill area of Eugene. Mollie and Lawrence were married in 1911, at the home of the groom's mother. A festive square dance was held to celebrate the occasion.

Lawrence was an expert at breaking log-jams. In Mollie's living room is a beautiful clock which she points to with affectionate pride.

"The clock in there still keeps good time. My husband broke logs, broke a jam in Lake Creek for that clock. One day's work for that clock"

The young couple lived in the Lake Creek area for a while. At one time they had eight head of cattle. Once when they ran out of hay, and had no spare money to buy feed, Mollie and Lawrence climbed to the top of Chickahominy Mountain to gather bearweed in sacks. They then rolled the sacks down the steep slopes to take to feed their hungry cattle.

Another memory of Mollie's brings back the occasion when they — at wits end to find fodder for the stock — finally tore up the floor in their barn to salvage the chaff which had seeped through the cracks.

In 1921 the Christensens leased a homesite on their present ranch. Some seven years later they bought 300 acres. Gradually over the years the ranch grew. Three children were born to them. Mollie served as clerk of the local school board for twenty years. She had learned to "call" from her brother Joe, and sometimes called square dances at the local community center and on Camas Swale.

Mollie helped supplement the family income by raising turkeys. She recalls dressing enough of the birds to fill a four-horse wagon load for market.

As the ranch grew and stock increased in numbers a friend, Earl Hutchinson, owner of a Eugene bicycle shop, used to bring a group of bicyclers to the ranch to watch the branding. He suggested putting on a little rodeo for the kids. From that project was to grow one of the most famous rodeos in the West.

Lawrence Christensen passed away about 1945. Mollie lives on in the beautiful valley they made their home. She loves looking out her window at the sweep of meadowland, especially in the spring when the grass turns golden with buttercups. She is proud of the accomplishments of the family business in which she has always played an active role. But she has retained her love of nature and simple things. Success, she says, is living well and enjoying the beauty of growing things.



Lawrence Christensen, Courtesy Mrs. Henry Christensen

"SHE-ROOSTERS": THE DRIVE FOR SUFFRAGE IN EARLY LANE COUNTY

by Melinda Tims

This article is an offshoot of a Master's thesis on women in early Lane County completed for the Universite' de Poitiers, France this last June. Much of the original research was done in local archives, including the Lane County Museum library, and while documentation on early women's experiences in the county is rich, little of the information has been written up.

Melinda Tims, July, 1982

Eastern feminists drafted the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions in Seneca Falls, New York just a year after the first white woman set foot in Lane County in 1847. While Easterners continued to agitate for women's equality of rights, local women were overwhelmingly silent on these issues. Survival on the frontier necessarily took precedence, and women's enormous contributions as helpmates on the family homestead, as mothers, and as remunerated workers may simply not have left them with the time or energy to engage in political militancy.

But when the women's rights issue finally did come to the foreground in Lane County in the early 1870s it sparked a very heated debate. The first issue of Abigail Scott Duniway's Portland-based newspaper, *The New Northwest*, appeared in May, 1871. The local press immediately drew up battle lines, arguing the pros and cons of Duniway's tendentious paper and of the "woman's issue" in its weeklies.

H.R. Kincaid's Eugene-based *Oregon State Journal* complemented *The New Northwest* on its attractive layout and wished it "abundant success". Editor Kincaid was not, however, wholly under the sway of the feminist point of

view. He regularly ran the popular ready-print stories of the day which ridiculed women and their female foibles. But he also gave equal space to the suffragettes and faithfully covered their meetings and conventions. The *Journal* even went so far as to endorse a woman's right to run for the U.S. presidency. The paper drew the line, however, when it broadsided Victoria Woodhull, the first female candidate for the office in 1872. Kincaid lambasted Woodhull for her very controversial stand on "free love", and when Duniway publically supported Woodhull's candidacy, Kincaid incredulously wrote that he had not expected his Portland colleague to go to such radical lengths.

The *Hawk-Eye*, another Eugene weekly from the 1870s, was also somewhat ambiguous on the issue of enfranchisement for women. The paper criticized Duniway for her outspokenness, but did not hesitate to reprint a letter to the editor by an area suffragette.

The Eugene city *Guard*, however, was decidedly hostile toward the "woman's issue". The local feminists who attended woman's rights meetings or "hen conventions" were branded the "vinegar-faced squad". The paper ran an

editorial proclaiming "woman's rights ... is a fearful doctrine and if it should ever prevail the consequences would be terrible to contemplate ..." Female proponents of the vote for women were also characterized as "she-roosters" and "strong-minded females". Susan B. Anthony's lectures throughout the area were dubbed a "scolding tour", and at the end of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's lecture tour the paper tersely quipped, "we got rid of her". An 1872 editorial even publicly implied that if rival editor Kincaid was favorable to the women's cause it was because he was excessively fond of Mrs. Duniway.

Despite this unfavorable press coverage and continual harassment (Duniway was burned in effigy in the streets of Jacksonville and locked out of the lecture halls where she was to speak in both Salem and Eugene) the woman's rights movement gained momentum throughout the West. Two feminist conventions were held in 1871, one in San Francisco and the other in Olympia, with female delegates coming from Oregon, Washington and California. The same year big-name East-coast feminists were stumping throughout the state on behalf of the vote for women. Minnie Myrtle Miller, local poetess and abandoned wife of Joaquin Miller, also gave public lectures on the topic, and the issue was discussed by local debate clubs.

The Lane County women who agitated for equality came from varied backgrounds. Both urban and rural county women subscribed to *The New Northwest*. One of them even sent a letter of encouragement to Duniway along with nine dollars to purchase subscriptions for three friends. The author

of the letter, however, did not dare sign with anything more than the initial "F". And in 1883 Eugene residents donated to the Oregon State Woman's Suffrage Association campaign fund, established to fight for female enfranchisement in the next general election, and even much smaller Creswell contributed eight dollars to the association's effort to secure woman's suffrage.

Such rural support is also demonstrated by the results of the June, 1900 election, the first for which information on Lane County's suffrage balloting is available. The amendment was once again up for a vote, and it passed in every precinct in the county except Eugene, Jasper and Blue River. Voters in the Pleasant Hill precinct, for example, supported the amendment by over a two-to-one margin.

In Lane County as a whole the measure passed with 52.3% of the vote in 1900. Although the issue did not pass statewide until 1912, after its sixth appearance on the ballot, women got the vote in Oregon eight years before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment which accorded woman's suffrage nation-wide in 1920. In fact, all of the first twelve states to ratify the measure were in the west.

The nineteenth-century feminist movement tends to be regarded as uniquely an Eastern, middle-class, urban phenomenon. It is true that the "woman's issue" got a late start in Lane County, yet once in motion, it rapidly gained ground. The county had its own "she-roosters" in both prosperous Eugene and backwoods Creswell who were reading Duniway's feminist newspaper, contributing to the state

feminists' association coffers, and working relentlessly throughout the nineteenth century to gain full political rights — a victory they achieved well before their Eastern counterparts.



BOOK REVIEW

by Glenn Mason, Director
Eastern Washington State Historical Society

Rattlesnakes, fruit trees, cattle, dairies, onions, cheesemaking, dances and open prairies, but most of all family and friends.

These are just a few of the things Eugene author Lois Barton shares with the readers in her book *SPENCER BUTTE PIONEERS: 100 Years on the Sunny Side of the Butte, 1850-1950*.

A relative "newcomer" to the area surrounding the southern Willamette Valley's most predominant landmark, Lois Barton has spent much of her 30 years residency documenting the history of her neighbors and the land on which they live.

From early newspapers and primary sources have come the facts for this fascinating history. But the real appeal of the book is the people she describes. From the thousands of feet of oral history tapes she has collected from residents of the Spencer Butte area comes the story as only

a first hand observer can recount it — honestly and emotionally.

The pioneers who settled the area were faced with the task of trying to earn a living from a prairie-like land that was not at all like the rich soil of the Willamette Valley floor flood plain just a few miles away. But as one descendent proudly recounted, those pioneers were "... competent, independent, took care of themselves, hard working and clever."

Cattle ranchers took the place of wheat farmers, crops that could survive the conditions were introduced, and the Spencer Butte area became productive.

The pioneers' stories are of the good times and bad, the struggles against nature and the human relationships

within this rural community of Lane County. When all else seemed bleak, the beauty of the land and close family and friends brightened the day.

Martha Ann Gay Masterson summed up the sentiments of many of her Spencer Butte neighbors. "When spring came how glad I was to be at home with mother and my little sister! I enjoyed tramping over the hills, gathering wild flowers and watching the white lambs playing in the sunshine . . . Happy childhood days!"

Lois Barton's book will make your day a little happier, too.

Copies of **Spencer Butte Pioneers** are available from Spencer Butte Press, 84889 Harry Taylor Road, Eugene, OR 97405. Send check or money order for \$9.95 plus \$1.00 handling and shipping for your copy.

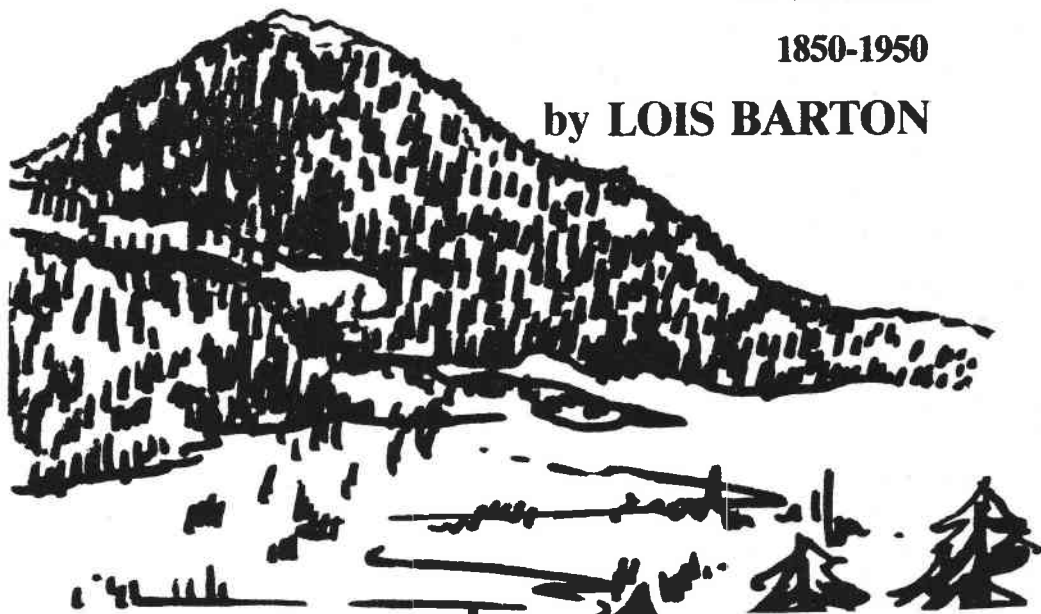
The book is soft-bound, 8½x11, 144 pages, more than 100 pictures and maps, full color photo cover. Lane County Historical Society is a contributing sponsor to publication of this rural Lane County history.

SPENCER BUTTE PIONEERS

100 Years on the Sunny Side
of the Butte

1850-1950

by LOIS BARTON



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