Blakeyville wedding.

The Lane County Historical Society
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The Lane County Historical Society

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Has your family story been told? Do you have pictures of early Lane County people, places, events? We would like to help you preserve these valuable bits of history for posterity. If you have something to share, please write your editor at the address above, or phone me at 345-3962, and we will plan to be in touch to work out details.

COVER PHOTO
This is Isabelle Blakely's (later Joe Blakely's) house which became a post office. Bell Kelsey and John Fairler wedding. Thomas, Rose and James Blakely are at left. The very old people near the right window are Bert Kelsey and Isabelle Blakely. Wilbur Winfrey on right end of first row. Isabelle's husband John died many years before this picture was taken.

All pictures of Blakelyville and related families have been provided by Joni Winfrey who is writing a family history book.

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THE FOUNDERS OF BLAKELYVILLE, OREGON AND RELATED FAMILIES

The following story was compiled from material collected by Joni Winfrey of Springfield, who is writing a family history book.

John Blakely was a stowaway on a ship from Ireland at age twelve in 1829. He came to the Willamette Valley in 1887. He and wife Isabell and ten children lived on the north side of the Willamette River eight miles above Lowell. Carters lived across the river where their descendants live today. Other families soon began to move in and settle in and around the Blakelys and the community became known as Blakelyville. Blakelys had a hop yard.

In 1926, six centennial 50¢ coins were issued by the U.S. government to be given to the six oldest American citizens. Isabell received one of these coins, which has a covered wagon on one side and a full statue of an Indian on the other. Isabell was the grand

marshall of the Eugene 4th of July parade that year. She was at least one hundred years old.

It was probably while Rose Mackey Winfrey worked in the Blakely hop yard that she met twice-widowed Thomas Blakely. He had one stepson, John Clark, and two sons, Lester and Walter, from his former marriages. Rose brought three children, and together Thomas and Rose had three more sons: Harold, Clyde and Orval.

Several of the Blakelys were drowned in the Willamette; Thomas' brother Emmett and some of his sister Stella's children. Rose and her son Jimmie were buried at Landax and her son Wilbur oversaw having their remains moved to Mt. Vernon cemetery in Springfield.

The Blakelyville post office was doing business from January, 1910 to June 1918 in Clark's store near the Armet railroad station. McArthur's Oregon Geographic Names says postal officials changed the name to Eula (Jo Blakely's daughter's name) to shorten it. The railroad changed it to Armet because Eula was too much like Eola in Polk County.

The Crale family of Blakelyville.

Clara Winfrey's husband, John Clark.
THE JAMES MACKEY CLAN

The Mackey clan came from Edinburgh, Scotland, by way of Holland and Canada. In the 1800s they moved on to Indiana or Illinois. There they changed the spelling of the name to Mackey. (Joni's husband), James Wilburg Winfrey is the grandson of Rosa Ann Mackey whose father, James Albert Mackey, was born in Ohio in 1829, and died in Springfield, Oregon in 1885. His wife, Lucy Stipes, was the thirteenth child of John Stipes.

Lucy and James were married in 1851. They had 11 children, including three sets of twins. On March 2, 1882, they all, but two children, started for Oregon as part of a wagon train. Son John's wife definitely did not want to go to Oregon, so he remained in Kansas. Later he divorced her and followed behind the others. He made his home in Mable, Oregon where he remarried to Ida May Workman. He farmed in that area until his death at Marcola on January 11, 1933.

Daughter Susan and her husband Albert Dugger stayed behind in Bridgeport, Nebraska. James, Lucy and the younger children made their home in Springfield, where James farmed. Joe, Sarah Jane, Gilbert,
Gifford, Rose and Polly were the children who stayed with their parents. Older brother Sam went to Lebanon where he was a marshall for a time. Joe died of tuberculosis, age 27, in 1883, one year after his arrival in Oregon. The following year Sara Jane got caught in a rainstorm and at age sixteen she died of pneumonia. The next year, 1885, James died of tuberculosis at age 56. After James’ death, Lucy and the children moved to Irving for a short time, then on to Brownsville. About 1900 Bert and Lucy moved to Lowell, from which place Bert wrote the following letter to his sister Susan’s daughter, Essie, in Nebraska.

January 1, 1900
Lowell, Oregon
Miss Essie Dugger,

Dear niece we reseaved your kind an welcome letter an was very glad in deede to here from you we air all well at preasand we air having some very storymy wether it never gets very cold in this Country it very suldom gets below zero when it snows it is a wet stucky snow we had a very ded Christmas an new years here this year its so lonesum to us we got a Letter from Maud and she is going to sen her Picture i wish you would send us yours to them Pictures i was going to send you long time ago wasant very goo and I dident send them to you i am going to get some more taken when i go to town we live 45 miles from eugene city an you see it is along ways to town and we dont go to town very often when i git them taken i send one to you No Essie we dident get your County paper i would like the Best kind to have gotten it No we havent got eny of your mothers picture do you think we could get some taken from it we got a Letter from Sams folks and they say the smallpox isin a miles of Lebanon an i havent herd from them for some time i dont know weather the smallpox has got to Lebanon yet or not Sam has hd the small pox But i don’t know weather the rest of us has had them we go a lotter from Pairlee in ohio and she said thire was quite

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a smallpox scare Back thire But she didn't say where it amounted to very much or not i would like the best kind to see all of you folks an we may see you all some day rite and me all about the Country and all the folks i hope you have a very Nice time for Christmas an new years do you have a very large school $40 a month is as good as they Pay in this Country for teaching it is a good deal owing to the district wether they pay that much i will close for i cant think of much to rite wishing tohere from you soon goodby to all from Berk Mackey to Essie

In 1903 Bert married Imma Emilie Augusta Miller in Fall Creek. He built a house for his new bride on Highway 58 between Pleasant Hill and Trent. The house is still standing in 1987. Bert moved to Washington state sometime between 1910 and 1914 to be near his twin brother Gif, and died at Clatskanie, Oregon in 1937.

Lucy Mackey died in Pleasant Hill, August 22, 1906. Her obituary states, “The deceased was born in Virginia March 22, 1833. She crossed the plains by mule team in 1882 with her husband and family. She was a member of the Christian Church for a number of years. A few years ago she took the faith of the Baptist Church. She was the mother of eleven children, seven of whom survive her, as follows: Henry C. of Potlach, Idaho; John W. of Holly, Oregon; Samuel C. of Lebanon; Gifford E. of Pleasant Hill, Mrs. Rose Blakely of Lowell, and Mrs. Pairlee Hennings of Kickville, Ohio.”

Lucy and Bert's house near Pleasant Hill — still standing in 1987.
Thomas Winfrey, his granddaughter Mary and son-in-law Shelly and their children. Boy on left is Clint Shelly who died in Springfield in 1985 at age 95 years.
POST OFFICES OF LANE COUNTY, from the book by David Ramstead and Clarin Lewis
Lane County Oregon Post Offices, A Reference Catalog of Lane County Postal History.
THOMAS WINFREY FAMILY

Thomas Winfrey, born in Kentucky in 1810, a licensed Baptist Minister, farmed in Missouri where he and his wife Lucinda had ten children. Their sixth born, James Riely, his wife America and family came to Oregon by train with Thomas in 1886, landing in the little banking community once known as Yellow Dog — (Irving). Soon they moved to Westfir, homesteading where the U.S. Forest Service now has a tree farm. The old Winfrey log cabin served as a school house for a time. Clara Winfrey Clark, Thomas’ great granddaughter, described the log cabin. “It had two large rooms with a fireplace in the living room. The beds were in the back of this room where the women and children slept. ... The kitchen and dining room was all together. I don’t recall where the men slept, as I was quite young then.”

Around 1900 James Riely and America left the homestead and moved to Pleasant Hill, where both passed away in 1915.

Thomas was buried at Landax in January, 1902, and his remains moved to the Mt. Vernon Cemetery in Springfield when Lookout Point Dam was built. The Main Street in Westfir was named for the Winfreys.

John Gideon Winfrey, son of James and America, was born in Missouri in 1864 and came to Oregon in 1886. He left his parent’s home and went to work in a mill at Brownsville, where he met and married Rose Ann Mackey. Around 1895 John became ill with diabetes, so moved his family to Landax, known as Rush Island at that time, to be near his family. Their third child, James Riely, named for his grandfathers James Mackey and James Winfrey, was born at Rush Island in 1896. John died in 1900. Rose and the children picked hops in the Blakely hop yards in the summers.

Rose’s daughter Clara said, “I don’t know how mama did it, but she always kept us children neat, clean and well dressed.” Clara remembered the children playing while her mother heated creek water over an open fire and did the family wash.

Rose Mackey Winfrey and Thomas Blakely wedding picture.
In the fall the men and women of the community came to Rose’s house. The women fixed a large meal while the men cut a winter’s supply of wood for her. Rose did her shopping at Lowell in the Hyland store, a log cabin at that time.

Wilbur Winfrey, son of John and Rose, was born in Brownsville in 1894. He lived in Landax as a young child. After his father’s death his mother married Thomas Blakely. At age twenty-one Wilbur married Minnie Gibson and they lived in the Fall Creek area. Wilbur worked in the woods most of his life.

He assumed responsibility for moving the remains of relatives buried at Landax when the community was to be submerged by the Lookout Point Dam.

THE GIBSONS OF FALL CREEK

Absolom and Jemima Gibson sold their Kansas farm after a cyclone destroyed most of the farm buildings and, with his father Uriah and their seven children, loaded their oxen and wagons onto a train to San Francisco. Arriving in 1889, they hitched up and drove to Oregon and homesteaded on Little Fall Creek. Their oldest son, Fred, came west in 1900. The Gibson men built a log dam on Little Fall Creek to help float logs which ended

Absolom and Jemima Gibson family, taken in Stockton, Kansas in late 1880s. Back row, l: Fred. Girls in that row are Lillie and Bell. One girl was married to an Emmett. As a young bride she fell and died in a pig vat. Then her husband married the other sister. Baby in front row is Liela. One other sister is Bertha.

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Fred loved to dance. One year he married James Riely Winfrey. Their travel at Booth Kelly Mill in Springfield. Over the years Fred had several saw mills, one on Big Fall Creek near Analuck’s farm. At this mill Fred’s oldest son, Howard, was badly injured when a cutoff saw broke loose and hit him in the chest. The men loaded him on a wagon, took him to the railroad and thus to the hospital in Eugene. He survived.

Fred also had his own baseball team at Fall Creek. Their daughter Minnie married Wilbur Winfrey, son of Rose Mackey Winfrey, and their daughter Frances and Ella went to Coburg and stayed so he could run the dance hall there. James Wilbur Winfrey said, “I can remember Grandad Gibson went to town nearly every night to dance.”

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Fall Creek School, early 1900s. Fred Carpenter in back. 1-r, back row: Teacher, 4th — Minnie Gibson, 6th — Frances Gibson. 2nd row, No. 3, Neva Gibson; 7th Effie Gibson. 1st row: No. 2, Sherman Gibson; 5th, Fred Gibson, Jr.


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LANDS OF THE PIONEERS

By Daye Hulin

The British were busy colonizing the Northwest when the Federal government awoke to what was transpiring and approved the Oregon Donation Land Law (DLC) September 27, 1850. This granted to every settler or occupant of public lands above the age of eighteen years and being a citizen of the United States, or having made declaration of intention, on or before the first day of December, 1850, and who shall have lived upon and cultivated the same for four consecutive years and shall conform otherwise to the provisions of the Act, the quantity of one half section or three hundred twenty acres of land, if a single man; and if married, or shall become married within one year from December 1, 1850, the quantity of one section or six hundred forty acres, one half to his wife, to be held in her own right. If either shall have died before the patent is issued, the survivor and heirs of the deceased shall be entitled to the shares or interests of the deceased in equal proportions. American half-breed Indians are included.

All white male citizens of the United States above the age of twenty-one years settling in the territory between December 1, 1850 and December 1, 1853 — one half section (320 acres) to the male and one half section (320 acres) to his wife to be held in her own right. In February 1853 the Donation Law was amended so that the Surgeon-General could receive money ($1.25 per acre) after two years of occupancy instead of the former four years of residency.

The donation law expired April, 1855. Land offices in Oregon were established at Oregon City, Roseburg, The Dalles and LaGrande. The original papers were filed at these offices, with copies available in the National Archives.

The Donation Law greatly encouraged settlers to come to Oregon. Emigration reached a peak in 1852 when many were lured by free land. By the fall of 1852, donation claims had been filed by 1,079 settlers to 590,720 acres of land. Many were in the Willamette Valley and in Lane and Linn County.

The Homestead Act made it possible for any eligible citizen over twenty-one years of age who could pay $34.00 to acquire 160 acres of unoccupied land and after five years of residence upon it to acquire title to it. After six months of residence, upon fee payment of $1.25 to $1.50 per acre as a commuted homestead. These were often located in Central and Eastern Oregon.

In 1916 a stock-raising Homestead Law allowed homesteaders to take increased land to permit cattle grazing to supplement agricultural endeavors on poor land. Suitable lands available for homesteads was rapidly diminishing. A total of 3,493,637.24 acres had been acquired.

The first Federal Homestead act was passed May 20, 1862. By 1883 final entries in Oregon totaled 638,843 acres.

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As aliens cannot acquire valid titles to real estate under the preemption, homestead and other laws, the privileges of which are restricted to citizens or those who have declared intention of becoming such, any free, white alien over the age of twenty-one years, may at any time after arrival, declare at any court of record his intention to become a citizen and to renounce forever all foreign allegiance. This declaration must be made two years before application for citizenship, five years after residing in the country and one year within the state or territory where the court is held.

References:
1. Kirkham, T. Kay, The Land Records of America
3. Irvine, Mrs. William Introduction to index of Oregon Land Claim records.

EBBERT MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY — 1868-1986
by Allene Bechtle

There were sixteen members and four probationers enrolled in 1868 at the time John H. Adams was appointed the first pastor to serve the vast Springfield Circuit. The services in Springfield were held in a small school house on Mill Street between “D” and “E” Streets.

In 1871 the Methodists were invited to share the Baptist Church building at Second and “C” Streets. This amicable relationship continued until 1881 when the Methodists acquired a store building between Second and Third Streets on Main Street for their activities.

From as early as 1882, week long revival meetings, usually with outside speakers, became yearly events. One church member recalls the time the author of The Old Rugged Cross, Rev. George Bennard, was the evangelist. He gave each one a copy of this hymn.

An important milestone was reached in 1885 when they built their own “new white” church with a parsonage beside it on the southeast corner of Second and “B” Streets. These buildings housed the activities of the Springfield Methodist Episcopal Church members and facilitated the steady growth of the congregation. Preaching services were held at varying frequencies. When the Springfield congregation became self supporting in 1885 it was soon separated from the Circuit, and made a station, permanently.

Growth of the congregation continued steadily. When Rev. J.T. Moore became the pastor in 1913 the membership had grown to 213 and by 1916 it was 304. January 17, 1916
marked a turning point for this thriving church when Miss Margaret Morris made an offer of $15,000 toward the erection of a church building in memory of her uncle, James Armstrong Ebbert. The offer was accepted and arrangements were made to begin work immediately. Land was purchased on the corner of Sixth and “C” Streets and the building was completed and dedicated on December 3, 1916. The church of 1916 was tied to the earlier “white” church by the bell, which was brought from the older church and hung in the southeast tower of the new building.

Church School, which has been an integral part of the congregation from the beginning, continued to grow in the 1940s and 1950s necessitating the addition of an educational unit. The first section was completed in 1951. Later the second part was completed and the parsonage connected to it to serve as a youth house. The move into this latest addition was made on January 1, 1961. In recognition of the inaccessibility of the sanctuary for the handicapped the outside ramp was built and dedicated on February 22, 1978.

Groups and organizations within the church have been vital in supplying its members with the necessary Christian nurturing and instruction. One such group was the Quilters. Except for holidays, every Thursday since 1918 has been quilting day. Quilters come early in the morning to quilt, have a potluck lunch and quilt some more. It is estimated that approximately 10 quilts per year have been completed — 10x67 =670 quilts. In the beginning the quilters charged $3 to $5. At present a king size quilt may bring $150. Only Gertrude Potter is known to have been one of the first group of quilters.

The Ladies Aid and Foreign and Home Missionary Societies were active prior to 1914. They became the Women's Society of Christian Service and later the United Methodist Women, in keeping with the national church unification dates of 1939 and 1969. The Men's Brotherhood, chartered in 1914, became the Methodist Men in 1965 and the United Methodist Men in 1969. The first youth group was organized in 1892 as the Epworth League, known later as the Methodist Youth Fellowship and finally the United Methodist Youth.

Through the years a variety of study groups, including the Lay Witness Missions, have supplemented the educational program, as did the church library begun in 1954.

Choirs have always been an important part of the worship services. The adult choir has been constant through the years. At various intervals youth, children's and cherub's choirs as well as the bell choir added music for the congregation.

The church purchased a set of English hand bells circa 1965. Marjorie Knotts recruited a bell choir from the women's group, which eventually became proficient enough that they were sought to perform in other churches, clubs, civic organizations and nursing homes. Over the years, choir membership has changed. A highlight for this group was when, on October 7, 1984, they joined two
other Methodist bell choirs in the Hult Center to help celebrate the 200th anniversary of Methodism in the U.S.

The local church has had its own outreach programs in addition to the usual pledges to conference projects and benevolences. In the 1940s it sponsored a Sunday School in the Paramount area and later transferred it to the then newly organized Nicholas Gardens Church of the Brethren. In 1964 the Ebbert church sponsored the St. Paul United Methodist Church in the Thurston area. A number of displaced persons and refugee families have been sponsored since 1951. Community participation and support of local benevolent organizations has always been an important aspect of the church.

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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