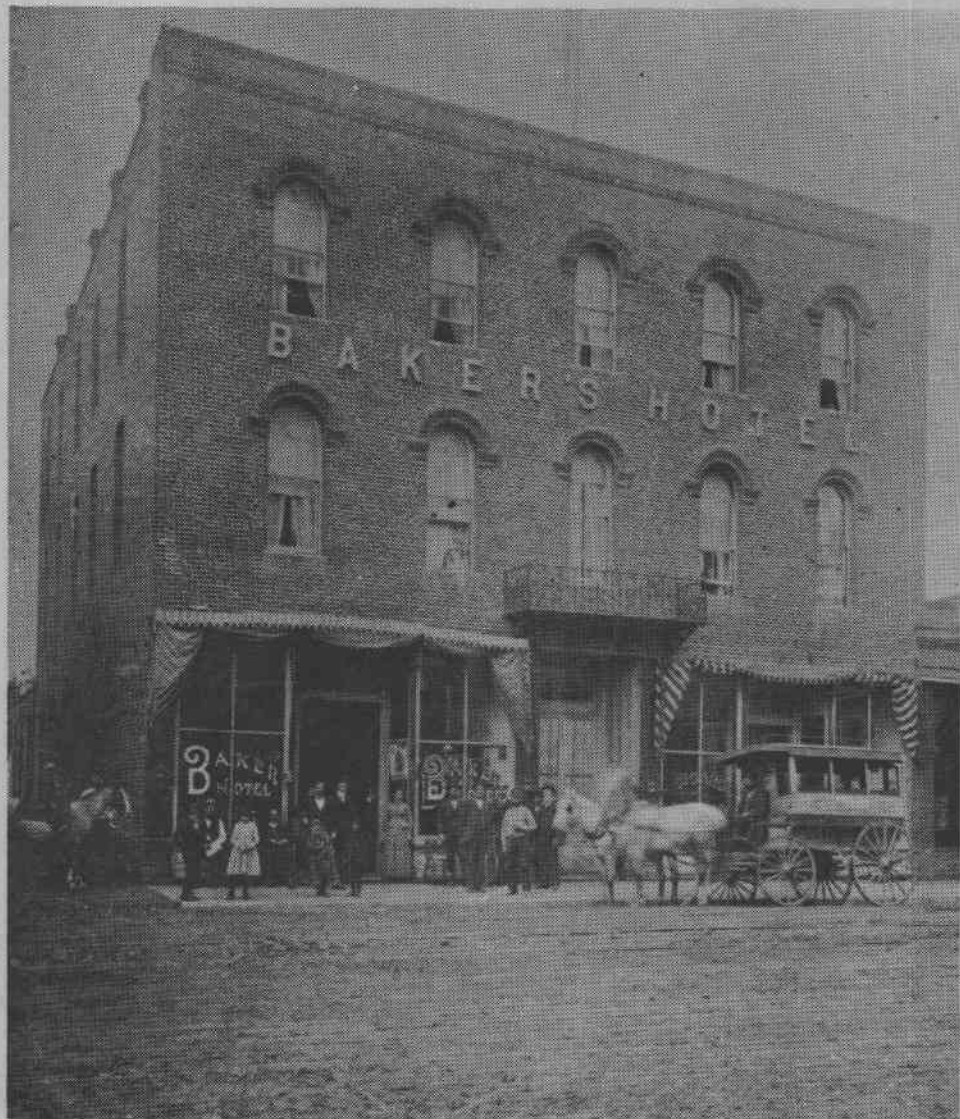


Lane County Historian



The Smeed Hotel, Eugene, 1884. Surviving early commercial buildings offer most cities advantages over shopping center; allowing more diverse activities, historical record and a richer range of architectural styles.

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LANE COUNTY HISTORIAN

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Surviving on the Territorial Road is the Ferguson house, 1869, woodshed and the family cemetery. Unique as a house form in the state it may be derived from a medieval Pennsylvanian type.

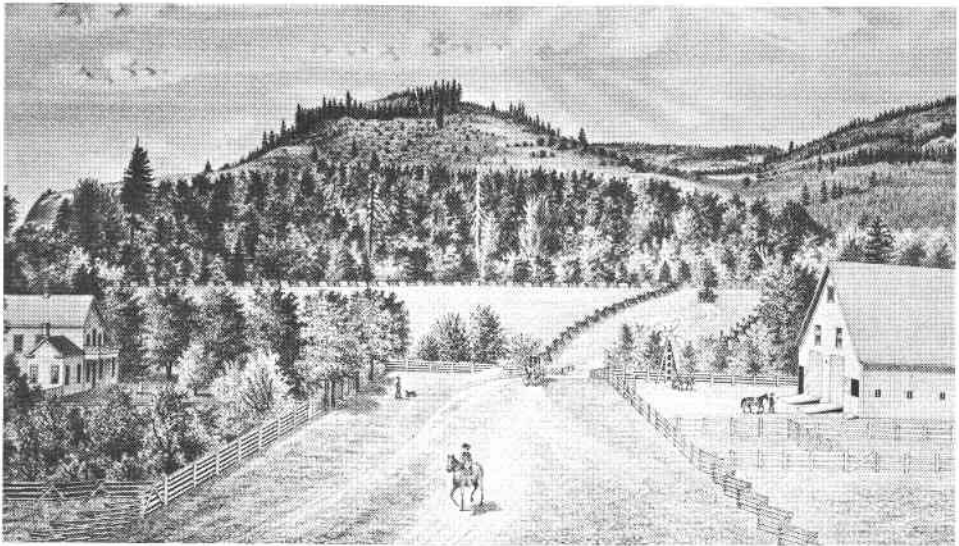
Preserving Lane County's Historic Resources

By PHILIP DOLE

Chairman of the Lane County Historic Preservation Committee;
Professor of Architecture, University of Oregon

The beauty of Lane County is so pervasive that within the cities, towns and countryside a person may find that wherever he goes his activities are placed in wonderful surroundings. The frightening aspect of this phenomena is that the attitude of many developmental activities implies that Lane County's beauty cannot be damaged and that its beauty is a super-abundant, self-replenishing resource. Not only do most agencies exclude factors affecting the quality of the environment from their decision-making processes but there has never been a serious look at what is unique about Lane County and what considerations the county's unique features require in order to preserve and to enhance these surroundings while incorporating necessary and desirable change.

If someone attempted to list resources which enhance the quality of the physical environment it would become abundantly clear that an essential and rather unique characteristic of the county is its broad diversity. This diversity is frequently noticed in a statement such as "we are within reach of the mountains and the sea." As far as it goes that is a good description and an important observation on natural resources. But the most glaring omission is no mention of the valleys where most of Lane County's people live. In response to that statement a great deal of public concern and consequent legislation has indicated some but not enough, respectful conservation measures for the mountains and the sea. Yet that emphasis on Lane County's attributes pathetically and



A unique farm is that built by George Armitage on Old Coburg road near Eugene. The elegant New York State type house, 1856, and the huge New York State type barn, 1877, are among the many pioneer buildings which still stand in the extensive farm building complex. A group such as this could make a fine folk-museum.

persistently overlooks the places people frequent—the cities and immediately surrounding countryside. In consequence of the de-emphasis on man-made attributes of the county there is “comparatively” far less county-wide respect, public concern, and legislation and fewer representative agencies to either preserve or to enhance man-made features.

Illustrations accompanying this article indicate some structures which survive from earlier building in the county. A current exhibit at the Lane County Museum, co-sponsored by the Historic Preservation Committee, gives more information on a number of significant surviving early buildings. In fact there are, surviving all over the county, landmarks, unusual buildings, industrial operations, special places, landscape developments and other man-made features which in combination describe the various stages in the hundred years of settlement in Lane County from beginnings in the 1840's to the present day. There are for example enough survivors strategically located, if known and



Grave stones are just one example of the fine artwork left by early residents of the county. Cemeteries were carefully sited on knolls, simply but dramatically planted to leave us with park-like landmarks and very valuable sanctuaries for solitude and birds in an urban age.



Charles Hamilton Wallace, a circuit riding preacher for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church also was an active, very skillful brick mason. This chimney with the masonic emblem is in the Junction City vicinity on River Road, 1870.

cared for, that every person pursuing his work and his leisure interests could at the same time enjoy an environment rich in cultural history. Recognition of these architectural and landscape inheritances would include providing new uses for many old structures, providing more choices in the kinds of structures people can live, shop or work in, providing at all levels of school first-hand opportunities to study the ideas and technologies which have produced our man-made physical environment, as well as bringing into the valleys opportunities for recreation and tourism.

Through initiation by the Lane County Pioneer-Historical Society the Lane County Historical Preservation Committee was formed in mid-April of this year. The committee extends its interests and re-



Jacob Spores, Coburg vicinity about 1854. A nearly intact survivor of a once typical, now rare, pioneer house type which probably derived from a southern state such as Kentucky.

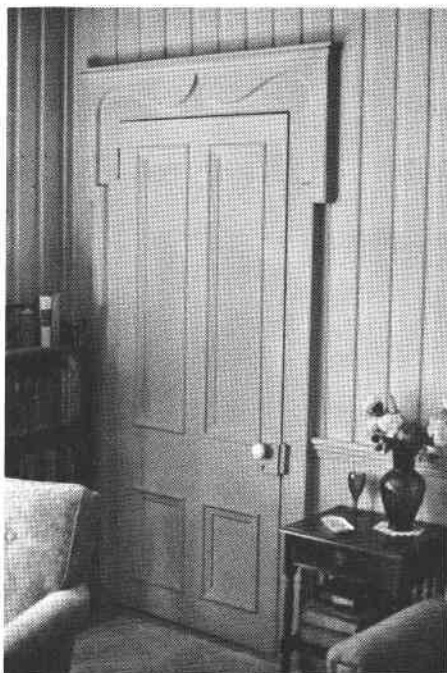
sponsibilities beyond the pioneer period. Whether old or recent, all significant building is the concern of the committee. But preservation is equally concerned with the context and surroundings of buildings, with the understanding that part of any building's function and expression is understood through its relationship with its site. A major part of man's building and accommodation for his way of life is through landscape constructions such as fields, cemeteries, roads and scenery. Landscapes are as often endangered as individual buildings and changes to landscapes affect many present and future people.

The Lane County Historic Preservation Committee members are Mrs. Robert Ballin, Philip Dole, Mrs. James Fortt, Ronald Lovinger, James Savage, Mrs. Irene Trippett and John Warren. Individually they represent association with such diverse interests as interior decoration, early Oregon architecture, local history, landscape architecture, the county museum and local business concerns. Collectively they represent people who have expressed a concern for the preservation of the county's cultural history.

One of the committee's first concerns is to extend its representation and insure involvement throughout all parts of the county. Adjunct

committees will be formed in several localities with membership particularly concerned with the development of local "historic" opportunities. A second program of the Historic Preservation Committee is to develop an extensive inventory of information on "historic" resources throughout the county. A primary function of the committee is to inform and alert the public and the agencies representing the public interest to the opportunities inherent in the county through an enhanced use of its historic resources.

A greatly extended and greatly expanded interpretation of "museum" could accomplish many useful conservation acts. One might wish to designate all the eastern cultures which are manifested in Lane County's older buildings, develop historic trails, historic districts (such as the older part of



James Stevens house, interior doorway in the paneled parlor, 1875.

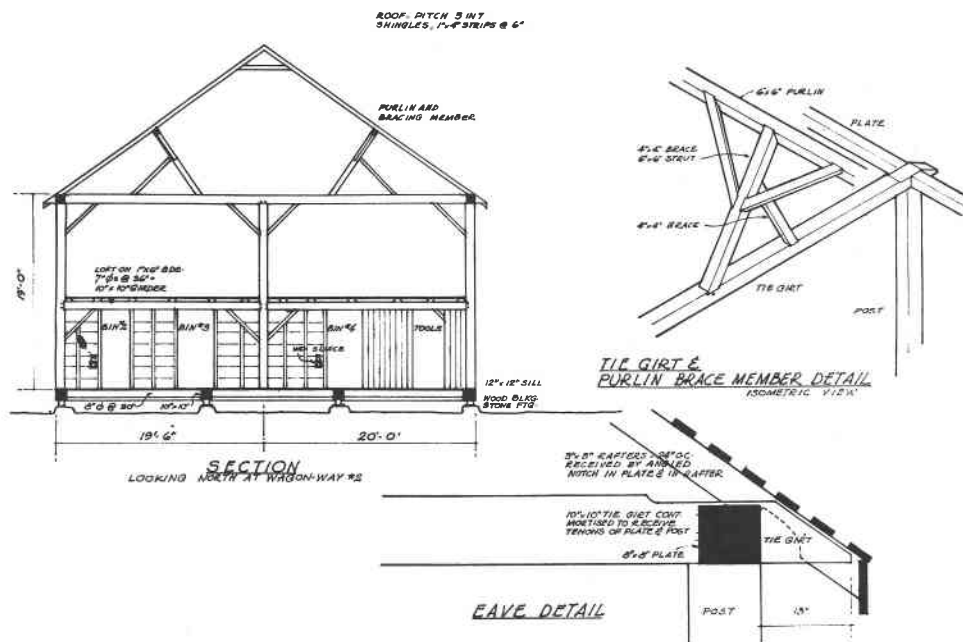
Florence), adopt the European folk-museum notion and preserve one of the more intact earlier farms, extend parks and recreation to include appropriate sites for logging, sawmill and mining museums. There are at present a number of museums in the county—few of them adequately staffed, or budgeted. The cities of Westfir, Florence and Cottage Grove each have one. Some museums experience difficulty having opening hours. None including the county museum is budgeted adequately enough to encourage and develop educational programs which would necessitate special exhibitions with changing information as well as rather extensive provisions for permanent display, cataloging, research and storage. But as it is, despite the huge population of this county compared to other counties in the state its annual museum invest-

ment is about a third that of say Douglas or Jackson County. Outside the museum itself, preservation activity in Lane County has been practically nil in contrast again to the two counties named.

Almost every aspect of preservation is dependent on public and



Elmer Calef's house, 1872-3, not far from the Armitage farm was copied "exactly" from a family home in Vermont.



The eave details of Elmer Calef's barn and other characteristics show that it too was copied from Vermont. No other barn in the entire Willamette valley has a construction like it or as fine in these details.

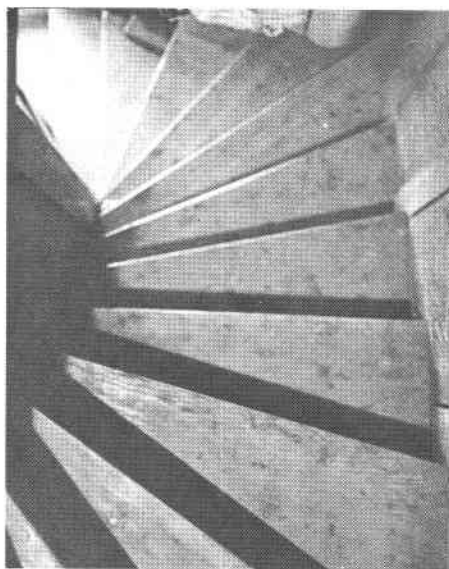
local concern. Protection and enhancement of Lane County's resources, whether rural landscapes, individual buildings or landmarks, is almost entirely a responsibility of the population within the county. Responsibility will usually include recognizing the future importance of a preservation action, encouraging protective legislation, encouraging appropriate uses and supporting necessary budgets. Political units larger than the county can offer very little assistance. The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, for example, is a rather feeble law and at best it may only *designate* a few (perhaps three) buildings in any county as nationally significant. It will not guarantee that these "three" are protected or preserved.

"Three" buildings would mean almost nothing as far as describing the cultural history of the county and would also exclude

many other buildings and landscapes of great historical significance. But the greater deprivation would be of those kinds of features, meaningful through long association, present in almost every locality and enjoyed because a view, a road, a group of buildings give



The Church at Walker, 1891. George Lea of Cottage Grove, designer. While Cottage Grove has several fine churches the demolition of churches in the county has taken a very severe toll.



David Zumwalt house. An important, remarkable characteristic of many pioneer houses was that they transplanted so recently ideas from the east coast which were ways of living and building inherited from the 1600s and from medieval England, as is this boxed in twisting staircase.



David Zumwalt house, Lorane Highway, circa 1860. A handsome, remarkably intact example of now rare type of early farmhouse. Construction technology unusual, too, using handhewn sills, plates, posts and girders.

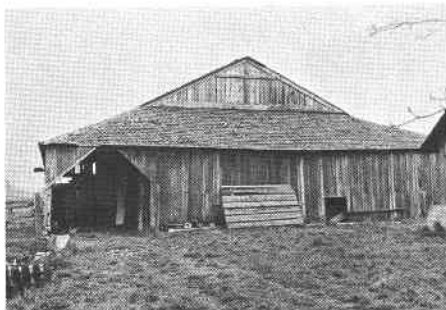
distinction to that locality. If we wish to have in the future a county as interesting as it is now, the means and the methods will require public enthusiasm expressed aloud and voiced as a concern in the newspapers, in each planning study, in response to every developmental project and to all political bodies.

Members of the Lane County Historic Preservation Committee

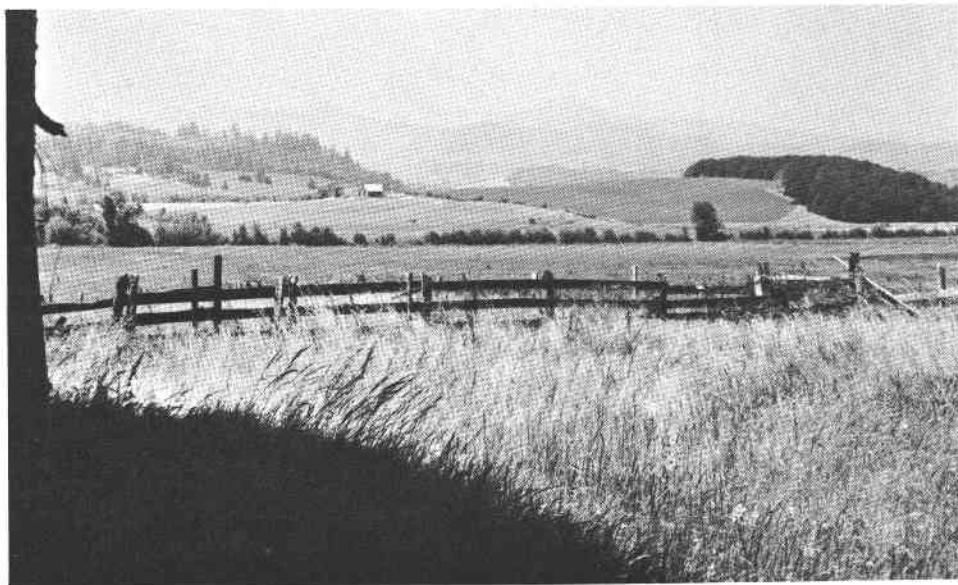


The former McFarland house, Cottage Grove about 1891, perhaps designed by George Lea. Such fine wood work is still prevalent on house surviving in Cottage Grove.

would welcome information on unusual buildings, landmarks or landscapes. We would also appreciate information on individual interests as to potential preservation projects. We would particularly appreciate learning which surviving buildings and landscapes you are especially fond of.



Perhaps no barns of this type remain in Lane County. Built between the 1840s and the 1860s, with hand hewn frames, they featured a very low roof pitch, leantos and through the combination of neat workmanship and simple surfaces buildings whose attractiveness is difficult to surpass.



Rural landscape feature markings left by early, strenuous agricultural enterprise and wonderful intervals of open space, old buildings inevitably in land mark positions. Pleasurable particularly in a more urban age but unprotected from the potential of thickly distributed modern building which will destroy it.

Reminiscences of the Hammitt Family

By CLAUD HAMMITT



Norman Peter and Francis Zumwalt Hammitt taken at the time of their marriage in 1858.

My father, Norman Peter Hammitt, was born in 1828 in Ohio. His father's name was Benjamin. George Hammitt, Revolutionary War soldier, was probably his grandfather. The Benjamin Hammitt family moved to Ottumwa, Iowa, and in 1848 Father and his brother Austin struck out across the Plains for California.

When the gold fields proved disappointing, Father enlisted in the United States Army and was sent north to Oregon. He served as Captain in the Southern Oregon Indian Wars and was placed in charge of freighting ammunition from Redding, California to Southern Oregon. On being mustered out at the end of his service he made his way to Eugene City to join his brother Austin who was already established in business, engaged in carpentry and cabinet making; his main stock in trade being cord bedsteads.

In 1855 Austin Hammitt with Mahlon Harlow secured the bid to build the new Lane County Courthouse at \$8,500. Father was made head carpenter. They went to the woods for timber and did all the

work with hand tools. As I recall, Father's pay was \$1,000 for the main structure and an extra \$10.00 for a "ten-holer" in back. Two such facilities were unnecessary in the days when office staff and patrons were all males.

Editorial Note: "On January 15, 1855, the erection of a suitable court house was determined upon and not before it was needed, for that hitherto in use was barely large enough to accommodate a full bench and bar. It must have been a touching sight to see twelve intelligent jurymen being herded under the sylvan shade of an umbrageous oak, when in consultation, by an energetic deputy sheriff. The general outline of the building was ordered to be as follows: Ground plan, forty by sixty feet; two stories high, one of which to be fitted as a court room, the other for offices. There was no delay; on the 29th January, the plans of A. A. Smith were accepted, and on the 3rd April the contract to build, for the sum of eight thousand five hundred dollars was awarded Mahlon H. Barlow and A. W. Hammitt, and in a short time duly completed.

The position was not chosen, however, without considerable feeling being expressed, to obviate all of which it was built on the line dividing the donations of Charnel Mulligan and Eugene F. Skinner."—A. G. Walling's History of Lane County, 1884, Page 373.

Hammitt Family pictures from the collection of Claud Hammitt, San Jose, California.



Lane County's First Court House, 1855. (Lane County Pioneer Museum Library)

Father was always interested in self-improvement. He with other young men of the new city, hired a tutor whose name I wish I could tell you. Among other things they studied were carpentry techniques and astronomy.

Meantime (1850) Solomon and Nancy Zumwalt with eleven children, left St. Charles County, Missouri, for Oregon. They traveled with the Harlow-Tandy Wagon Train though the family always called it the Zumwalt Train. The party wintered near Salt Lake City and did not arrive in Oregon until 1851.

Editorial Note: For account of Zumwalt-Harlow-Tandy Train see the following:

"The Tandys, Pioneers of 1851" by Charlotte Mitchel. Lane County Historian, Vol. VIII, No. 2, Page 33-37.

"Letter to Mahlon Harlow from William Ward," March 23, 1852. Manuscript. Lane County Historian, Vol. IV, No. 4, Pages 83-87.

"A Letter to the Editor from Andrew

Jackson Zumwalt," Lane County Historian, Vol. IV, No. 1, Page 13.

"... Mahlon Harlow and family joined party captained by Jerome B. Jeer and on May 16, 1850, started across plains—wintered at Ogden, Utah, when learned grass along route burned. Considerable trouble with Mormons. Harlow arrested on trumped up charge of harboring and secreting rogues, acquitted.

"About middle of March, party moved on to Box Elder Creek, overtaken by Mormon official, demanded Harlow and mother-in-law pay tax of \$52.00 on cattle, horses and wagons and carriage.

"Route taken up again, encounter with Indians, none of emigrants injured..."—Eugene Guard, January 24, 1896.

Solomon Zumwalt settled first in Polk County; then in 1853 took a donation land claim near the old River Road to Irving. In April, 1853, Lane County's first Methodist church was organized in the Zumwalt log cabin.

At the first meeting of the Methodist Church in the Zumwalt home was Solomon's daughter, Francis, who, when she died in 1925, marked

the passing of the church's last charter member.

Francis and grandfather and Solomon's Father, Adam Zumwalt, fought in the Revolutionary War. As a pioneer he migrated to Kentucky and was a friend of Daniel Boone. Francis' grandmother was Mary Roods, daughter of Andrew Roods, immigrant from Holland and who was a soldier for the British before the Revolution and was at Braddock's defeat. Francis' great grandfather, Andrew Zumwalt, came to America in 1737 from Poland.

Young Francis attended the old Columbia College during the presidency of the Reverend E. P. Henderson. She earned her expenses at the hotel, called, I believe, the "Eugene Hotel," which was owned by her brother, "Lite" Zumwalt and Louis Potter, a brother-in-law. The

young waitress spent much time polishing the pantry mirror which just happened to afford a view of the lobby and its assemblage of young men patrons. The reflection of one very handsome young man held Francis' attention the longest — 'Til to her horror the brazen image looked straight back and winked.

The handsome fellow was Norman Hammitt, and, in 1858 he and Francis were married. They settled first in Eugene City on land next to John Lessure's donation land claim. They bought a cow with \$100 of Hammitt's army pay script. Later, he sold the remainder of his script at a very low price rate. Around 1870 the couple bought one of the best farms of the Mohawk, the Jake Ramsey place.

Austin Hammitt bought land along the McKenzie River which



Hammitt home after addition. Left to right: Mrs. Virgil Roland, a cousin; Maud, Grace, little Gladys Roland, Mrs. Hammitt.

became the McKenzie Stock Farm, and, later, became a part of the Weyerhaeuser plant. Hammitt then moved to Contra Costa County, California, where he served as county judge and state legislator.

Back on the Mohawk, the Norman Hammitts had sixteen children, of whom they reared thirteen, three died in infancy. The children were Ben, Belle (Mrs. Will Seavey), George, May (Mrs. Fred Bean), Paul, Marvin, Fannie (Mrs. John Barger, later, Mrs. George Easter), Maude (Mrs. Rollie Presnall), Vic, John, Ralph, Claud and Grace (Mrs. Aldred Dillard). I was the third youngest and am the last living surviving.

Other pioneer families in the Mohawk were the families of Matt Spores, Matt Stafford, Jerry Parnell, Dave Boggs, Jap Evans, Rodney Scott and Hayfield. I remember Old Man Hayfield well. Whenever he went visiting of an evening he lighted his way with a torch, a tin can nailed to a length of wood and which was filled with pine chips, a common practice in those days.

Another unforgettable character was Old Joe Huddleston who moved the Boxer Rebellion all the way from China to the Mohawk. He was for all-out war against the proposed new school. If you were with him you were a Boxer, but if you were on the other side, you were a Bad Guy, a High-Binder. When the school was built in spite of Joe's good fight, he named it after one of the Chinese battlefields—that is why the Mohawk School was always better known as the Ping Yang school.

The Hammitt house which sheltered thirteen children, two parents, orphaned cousins, as well as visiting relatives, was added onto again and again until there was eventually a two-story wing. After

Father's death, Ben, having made some money in the Coeur d'Alene mines, built Mother the house which is still standing. In those early years, our parents' bed was in the front room. In a trundle bed which pulled out from underneath slept four of the little ones—two at each end.

Despite such a large family, Mother and Father enjoyed company—it was about the only social life customary for the times—and our home was always filled with visitors, relatives and friends, near and distant. Also, our place was the logical stop-over for people who were traveling between the Upper Mohawk and Eugene.

We always ate in relays, the "young-uns" at the second or even third tables. We raised most our food, stored vegetables, fruit was preserved or dried and smoked our hams. Sometimes Father bought a quarter of beef and this is how we kept it: We had a pole about fifty feet high which was equipped, like a flagpole, with rope and pulley so that the meat could be hoisted up above the flies. The outside formed a hard crust, the inside stayed fresh. I liked to haul it down and cut off a strip of that very dry crust to chew on.

Grandfather Solomon Zumwalt made our shoes of cowhide which he tanned himself. He made his shoe tacks of whittled maple wood. Father knew how to stretch them when they started pinching. He would fill the bottom with beans or wheat and water, tie them tightly at the top, and let them stand overnight.

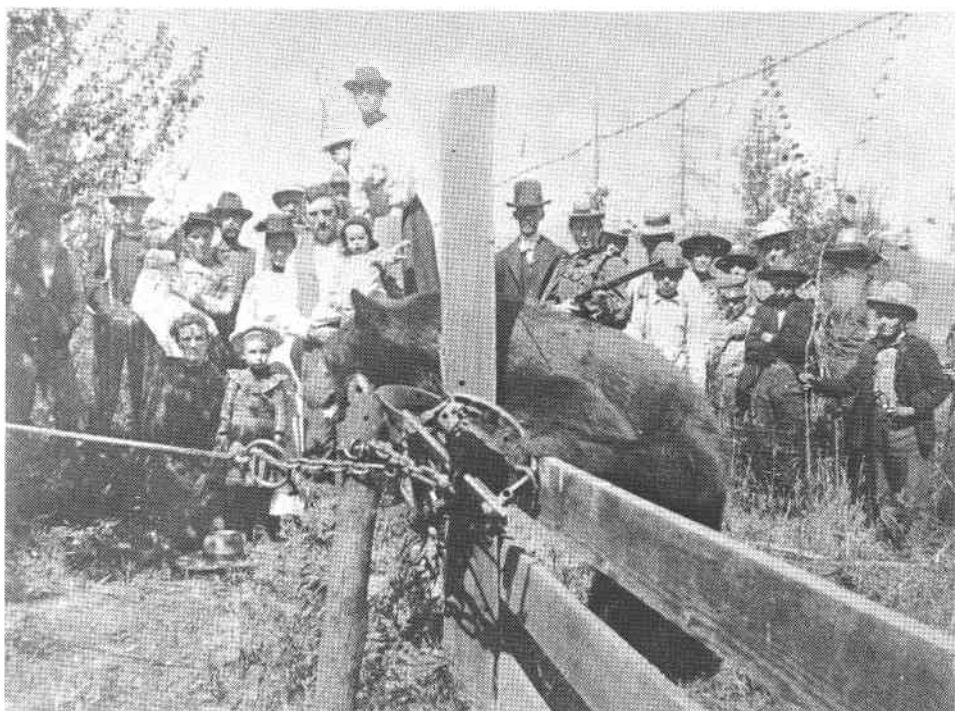
Before there was rural free delivery only those Mohawk citizens who lived directly on the route from Springfield to the Mohawk Post Master's house got direct mail service. They hung their leather sacks on a post or tree on their

property and the post man dropped their mail in the sacks as he galloped by. Everyone else had to collect his own mail. We had quite a distance to go until the Democrats got in again: then Father rode over and got the pigeon holes and my sister Maud became the new Post Master—or Post Mistress. I was her assistant—in charge of “Post Haste” mail which had to be delivered immediately. Sometimes I had to take it three miles or more and often on foot. It was on rainy days folks liked to pick up the mail. They stayed at the house the rest of the day then accepted Mother’s invitation to stay for dinner.

Deer were always plentiful up the Mohawk but we lost our best deer stand when Ray Stafford built

his house smack on top of it. Then, there were bear. Halfway between our house and Frank Stafford’s was a bend in the road called “Bear Corner.” The pests came down from the east mountain, swam across the river, and feasted on fruit in Frank Stafford’s plum and pear orchards. Often, I saw fresh bear tracks along the road and once I heard a bear chasing me. I didn’t take time to turn around and look—I just took to my heels and ran home.

One year a renegade bear started making raids on the sheep. He would kill more than he could eat just for the fun of it. We finally got him though it took two different traps and then he broke loose before we had secured him; men



The trapping of Old Renegade was a big event. Left side of post: front row, Mrs. George Yarnell, Gladys Yarnell. Back: Austin Root, Ralph Hammitt, Emma Davis holding Arleva, Marion Davis, Mary Boggs, Vic Hammitt, Emmet Boggs holding baby daughter, Fred Zumwalt, Maud and Grace Hammitt. Right of post: Four boys in front row: Frank Root, Ray Stafford, Harry Yarnell, Uncertain. Back: Jim McGee, Emma Davis’s sister, Unkown, Ettie Root, Lena Anderson, Mollie Stafford, “Beanie” Smith.

went flying in all directions. I fell down right in front of the maddened animal and I was told later my speed on all fours was fantastic.

Another time, at night, Father heard the sheep bells jangling in the woods across the road from our place. He sneaked over with his gun, saw the bear, took aim and shot. The animal fell. When he went back the next morning, the "bear" turned out to be Mr. Yarnell's old sow. Father paid for it and later, he, with the help of Mr. Yarnell, butchered it.

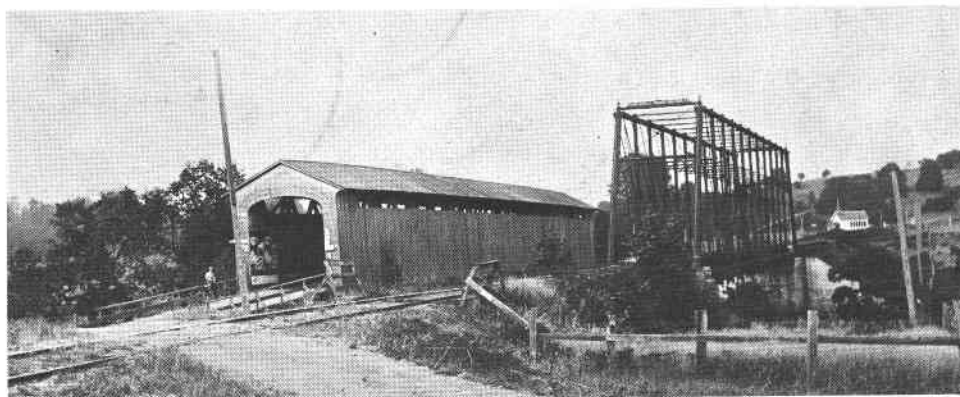
"Mohawkers" did not always get along. If adjoining neighbors developed a bad enough feud, sometimes they wound up by putting in a "devil's lane." This was two fences running parallel between their land with a "no-man's" strip in between. But that solution did not necessarily end the feud. Often, more friction developed between the neighbors. Each one watched the other; a fellow had better not let his cattle graze on more than half of that "neutral" strip.

Uncle Lite Zumwalt had a devil's lane. Joe Huddleston, who always loved a good fight, also had one. The man on the other side of Joe's got religion and suggested that they bury their differences and do away with one of those shameful

fences. Joe, who liked making friends about as well as he enjoyed enemies and a good fight, agreed. But he did not realize his Christian "saved" neighbor had other plans. He intended to take down the fence on his own side, thus adding the entire strip, the "devil's lane," to his property. Back went the "devil's lane" and the feud was revived.

It was possible, even up the river-bound Mohawk to have culture. We had a little drama group and put on plays up and down the Mohawk in different schools. We had lots of fun practicing. Father also belonged to a Chess club in Eugene. There were always several games going on by mail. Some opponents lived as far away as Portland. Often, several weeks had to pass between moves: one game might drag on for the better part of a year.

Father was civic-minded and served the pioneer community in many and various ways. He was a Grange Master and was instrumental in organizing the Mohawk branch of the old Farmers' Alliance. He was a hard-core Democrat and very active in county politics. I remember that Father took me, a very young and very bored boy, to a county party convention, commonly held in those days before



First Hayden Bridge, 1877, replaced Matt Spores' ferry. Photo from collection of Merle Moore

the coming elections. The session was devoted to nominating speeches. Father made one too, though not as long-winded as some. Sometimes, one speech would last for hours.

Father also served for many years on the school board. When Stafford School replaced the earlier log structure which was across the river, the distance from the court house had to be established for the records and Father paced the entire ten miles in order to set it straight. To father, the ten-mile stretch was nothing, one day he had walked all the way home from Salem.

As a road supervisor, Father was one of the first to put in a macadamized road. He had seen the technique demonstrated at the International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1894, and decided it was the solution to the Mohawk's dusty-in-summer or churned-up-in-winter road conditions.

He helped to construct the first Hayden bridge, a covered structure, which replaced the old toll ferry. Mother used to tell how frightened she had always been of the ferry crossing. The horses would paw and stamp around, the craft would dip and sway, and Matt Spores, the ferry-man, though powerfully built and strong, would pull and strain at the sweeps.

As Justice of the Peace, Father officiated at some of the murders which occurred regularly up our way. Eugeneans used to say, "Up the Mohawk they have a man (murder) for breakfast every morning." We did lose some of our best friends that way; Dave Boggs and Sam Skinner for two.

Though her own brood numbered thirteen-plus, Mother always had time for everyone. She was the local midwife and family "psychologist;" she was the one person other women told their troubles to.

Mother liked people and I remember the many times she would entice our mare Nellie to the saddle so that she could go on a "call" or just for a visit to the homes of Mollie Stafford or the McGees; on her lap in the saddle rode baby Grace and toddlers Ralph and I would hang on behind.

Even in those days folks had to have some money coming in. One of our main crops was hops. In the fall our place was like a county fair; relatives and more distant neighbors arrived to help with the crop and camped around our house. In addition University students and whole families came out from Eugene for a "vacation" with pay. Always, too, there were the Indians, families of Warm Spring Indians crossed the Cascades each summer to work in the Willamette Valley.

One of the Indian families, the Jim Sticoni clan, returned to us each summer, arriving with all their earthly possessions including horses and dogs, so that with ten or so workers, we also had thirty or more horses to graze in our pasture. Jim's wife was a proud woman who claimed to have been one of Buffalo Bill's wives. She would not answer when Mother tried to show off her Chinook. "Ay spik Inlich," Mrs. Sticoni would say.

Sundays we used to watch the squaws tan deer hide. They soaked the skins until they were slimy, then kneaded them. Next they rubbed them well with deer brains and chewed the stiffest parts.

One day when Father took a load of baled hops to Eugene a wagon dropped off along the way and rolled into a "thank you Marm;" some one had been slighting his road work. Father was thrown off the seat, over the fence and into an adjoining field. He landed on his head. Some of the

neighbors got him to the nearest house which was that of "Uncle" Jobey Davis. Doc Paine came out and without x-rays determined that Father's neck was broken. The doctor adjusted it as best he could and packed pillows around it.

After a week at the Davis' Father insisted on coming home. Mother and the older boys went after him with a quilt-loaded wagon. But Father could not stand the jolting in the wagon. So, with plenty of neighborly support, he staggered the three miles home.

The caravan, swelled by relatives, neighbors, little kids and dogs, passed Stafford School where I was in attendance and I can still hear the rumble of our wagon and team and still see the anxious concerned-faced marchers.

At home, Father's most comfortable position was in a rocking chair. For days and nights running into weeks, this remained his "sick bed." We got our first clinical thermometer at this time and my sister May learned to administer the hypodermic needle. This experience led May to enter the new training school for nurses at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland and she became the first Registered Nurse most Mohawkers had ever seen.

My youngest sister Grace and I were among the first Eugene High School students when that institution was still housed in the Court-house which my father had built forty-five years before and which is now replaced by a new building.

Editorial Note: The first high school in Eugene was held in the original Lane County Court House which was built in 1855 and moved to the southeast corner

of 7th and Oak Streets in 1897 in order to make room for the new Court House. The Court House served as a high school from 1898-1900.

In order to attend school as there were no buses or regular transportation of any kind up the Mohawk, it was necessary for us to lodge in Eugene. At first we roomed at the Widow Burr's. Her husband, Sherwood Burr, had been a noted Eugene personage. Like most Eugeneans the Widow Burr had a cow. Each morning, Mrs. Burr's son, Anthony, would lead the cow down the main streets to a good grazing site. The streets were mostly mud or dust, lined with high grass and weeds and cows were a common sight.

Later, my folks decided to combine our lodging requirements with a good investment and bought a house in town. So then Grace and I had our own house for the rest of our high school days.

In time Father recovered from his injury but it left him always erect of stature, even more straight and stiff than before. He died on June 2, 1901, aged seventy-three years. Mother died in 1925, aged eighty-three years. The Mohawk home remained in the Hammitt family until the early 1930's when it was sold to the Hansen family, who, I believe still own it.

Of Norman and Francis Hammitt's sixteen children, eight sons grew to manhood but only three grandsons bore the Hammitt name. Today, there is only one great-grandson with the family name. He is my grandson, Deane Hammitt of Carmichael, California, presently in service with the United States Air Force.

A Tale of a Watch — and Its Pioneer Owners

A watch purchased in England in 1834 by Johann Augustus Sutter, a Swiss, born on February 15, 1803, at Kandern, a small hamlet not far from Basle, has been owned since 1953 by another Swiss, John Huber of Eugene, Oregon, who was born just 30 kilometers from the watch's original owner. Sutter attended school as a lad very near John Huber's boyhood home where he was reared.

John Huber bought the watch after reading an advertisement in a Eugene newspaper, November, 1953:

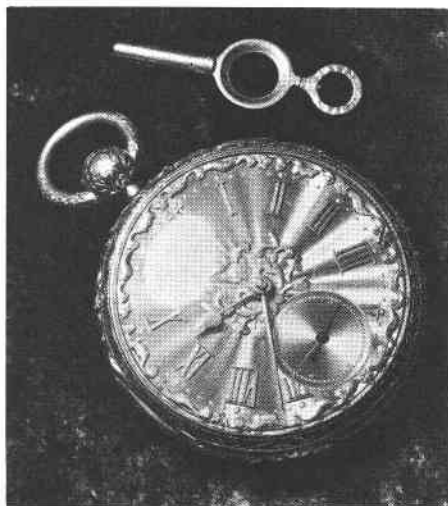
"For sale, Antique watch formerly belonging to Eugene F. Skinner, founder of Eugene, and prior to that to Capt. John Sutter of California. As is."

The watch was for sale for \$120 by Eugene jeweler Bristow, a relative of Elijah Bristow who had come across the plains with Eugene Skinner and wintered with him at Sutter's Fort in California in 1845-1846.

The gold English Fusse watch is elaborately engraved and of 18 karat gold. The face of the watch is circled by a garland of flowers in green, yellow and gold. It is a key-winder and is wound by opening the back and inserting a key in the hole. There is a tiny chain like a bicycle chain in miniature which operates the mechanism of the watch and is attached to the winding sprocket and the main spring.

The watch was made by Maurice Tobias and Co., London, England, in business from 1794 to 1840. Research revealed the watch parts had been made in Switzerland and assembled in London but that the engravings had been done in Milan, Italy.

Johann August Sutter possibly bought the watch in Liverpool, England, where many immigrants took ship for America and undoubtedly just before his own de-



Exterior of watch with key.



Interior of watch with miniature bicycle chain.

Photographs, "Helvetia Diary," are from the collection of John Huber, Eugene, Oregon.



Johann (John) Augustus Sutter, from the painting by Frank Buchser, 1866. Museum of the City of Solothurn, Switzerland.

parture for the new land. The watch traveled with him to New York, then westward where he spent the winter of 1834-1835 near St. Louis, Missouri. The next three years he was with the Santa Fe traders in Missouri and New Mexico.

In April of 1838 with a party of seven, Sutter started for California. The group reached Vancouver in October but was unable to continue as the weather prohibited overland travel. Nor was there a ship available for California so Sutter set sail for the Sandwich Islands, a round-about route to California.

He remained in the Sandwich Islands for almost a year. In April of 1839, Sutter set sail for Sitka and then traveled south down the Pacific coast to San Francisco and from there to Monterey.

At Monterey Sutter secured a land grant for the entire Sacramento Valley from Governor Alvarado and then became a Mexican citizen in order to secure a title to

the property. He called his new territory soon to become an empire, "New Helvetia," over which he ruled with absolute authority.

Almost one hundred and forty years have passed since Johann Augustus Sutter bought his brand new watch and set sail for the new land. Both the watch and Sutter "lived" and "made" history.

Sutter and the watch did not part company until 1848 when Eugene Skinner on a return trip to California from Oregon during the Gold Rush made a trade with Sutter for the watch. Other reports indicate the watch changed hands between Sutter and Skinner when the Skinner family and Elijah Bristow wintered at New Helvetia or Sutter's Fort during the winter of 1845-1846.

After Sutter made the trade with Skinner, he regretted the loss of the watch and offered to buy it back for \$300.00 but Skinner refused and would not consider a sale.

A diary called "The New Helvetia Diary" kept from September 9th, 1845 to May 25th, 1848, documents Skinner's stay at Sutter's Fort. However, it does not mention the watch transaction between Sutter and Skinner.

Sutter's Fort had become a "Wagon Train" stop for the emigrants who traveled across the plains to California. Many, invited by Sutter to stay and settle in California, established themselves in the Valley. Others remained only for a brief period while enroute north to Oregon.

Sutter, technically a Mexican citizen, was eager for American immigration into California. He foresaw the time when American interests and developments might determine the destiny of California.

A sympathetic and hospitable man despite his reputation as a stern autocratic ruler, Sutter

housed and aided the emigrants, many of whom arrived destitute. Others he rescued from the deep snows, including the disastrous and tragic Donner Party.

Sutter in his *Reminiscences* wrote, "My farmhouse and storehouses were filled every winter during these immigration times with poor, wet, hungry men, women and

children, seeking a fortune in the new land. . . . These poor people usually arrived in a destitute condition and hard indeed would have been the man who demanded payments for shelter, food and clothing . . . they came to my door with nothing but their tired bodies and their rain-wet clothing."

The first entry in the New Hel-

NEW HELVETIA

iary

A RECORD OF EVENTS KEPT BY

John A. Sutter

AND HIS CLERKS

AT NEW HELVETIA, CALIFORNIA,

FROM SEPTEMBER 9, 1845,

TO MAY 25, 1848.



April, 1846

NEW HELVETIA APRIL 1846.

L. W. HASTINGS of upper California, having consented thereto, has been this day, and is in virtue of this record, appointed as administrator of the Estate of the late Dr. W. B. Gildea deceased, and is, hereby, fully authorized and empowered to receive all property belonging to the said estate, to collect all demands due and owing to the said Estate, with or without process of law, and to do all other acts and things necessary for the security and protection of the said estate from injury or loss, and the said Hastings, as administrator of the said Estate, is further empowered and required to pay, or cause to be paid, to the extent of the assets all just demands and claims, against the said estate as the same become due, and are presented, always however, in the following order, 1st the funeral expenses, 2 the expenses of the last illness, and 3rd all others without distinction, other than that of presentation and proof.

In testimony whereof I, John A. Sutter, alcalde of the jurisdiction of the Sacramento, have set my hand, and affixed my seal at New Helvetia, in upper California, this 20th day of Febr 1846.

JOHN A. SUTTER, Alcalde

WEDNESDAY 8

Arrived T. Sicard from Bear Creek, A. Sanders from above—departed Knight for Cosumne, and the launch for Hock with Bristow as a passenger.—

THURSDAY 9th

Arrived Launch from Yerba Buena Passengers Messrs Talbott, Dornte and Flugy, also Merrit & two others from the valley above—

FRIDAY 10th

Arrived W^m Johnson and Knight from Bear Creek. Departed J. Bonney & family, Minier & family, E. F. Skinner and family, and E. Dupeis for the Valley above—

vetia Diary about Eugene F. Skinner was in October 25th, 1845, "... 4 wagons more came in today—Mr. Ide's and Mr. Skinner's."

On the 30th of November, 1845, is noted "... arrived Mr. Bristow from Feather River." Skinner was already active in the community for Sutter notes on the 31st of October, 1845, "... Skinner and Tusten were shingling the Hatter-shop."

Bristow was soon busy as well. On December 1st, 1845, the diary notes, "Started Peter Lassen, Mr. Bristow, Mr. Sanders, with a lot of horses belonging to Mr. Sanders, also Mr. Marshall accompanying them ..."

Editorial Note: The same Mr. Marshall, James Wilson Marshall, a mechanic employed by Sutter who made looms, spinning wheels, etc., for the Fort, and who while building a saw-mill at Coloma on the South Fork of the American River found gold on January 24th, 1848, an event which precipitated the California Gold Rush and changed the destiny of the West.

Sutter noted the phenomenal event with a terse entry in the Diary on January 28th, 1848. The cryptic sentence reads, "Mr. Marshall arrived from the Mountains on very important business."

Sutter tried to keep the discovery of gold a secret. He foresaw the menace of the gold and wrote in his *Reminiscences*, "My days of greatest affluence were just before the Gold Discovery. ... The great rush from San Francisco arrived in May, 1848. ... All was in confusion. My men all deserted me, which is not strange. I could not even shut the gates of my Fort and keep out the rabble without spilling their blood. ..."

Skinner at the Fort in 1845, continued to busy himself. On the 5th of December, the Diary notes, "... Skinner hung the door to the Cooper shop," and on the 8th, "... Skinner finished frame to grindstone."

Spring arrived and Sutter, anxious for new settlers, sent a party of emigrants to survey the surrounding country. On February the

3rd, 1846, Sutter notes, Departed Launch for Yerbe Burena. Passengers, Messrs Snyder, Sublette ... Skinner." On March 26th, "... Mr. Bristow was thrown from his mule and badly hurt."

Skinner and Bristow were soon on their way to Oregon. An entry, April 8th, lists Bristow as passenger on the launch to Hoch and on the 10th of April, "... Departed ... E. F. Skinner & family, and E. Dupeis (left) for the Valley above."

Editorial Note: "The first white settler within the present boundary lines of Lane County was Elijah Bristow who here cast his lot in June, 1846. ... Going first to California, he was dissatisfied with that country and came overland to Oregon, spring of 1846. In June of that year, accompanied by Eugene F. Skinner, Captain Felix Scott and William Dodson, Mr. Bristow started up the Willamette valley in search of a location suitable for the settlement of a large and increasing family. ... Arriving at a point, since known as Pleasant Hill, Bristow exclaimed, 'This is my claim ...'"

As the party returned, on their way down the valley, Eugene F. Skinner took up a claim where Eugene City, the county seat now stands. ... In the spring of 1847, Eugene F. Skinner returned to the claim he had selected the year before, and built his cabin at the foot of the "butte" ... called by the Indians Ya-po-ah, but which from that time forward took the name of the early settler near its base—"Skinner's Butte."—A. G. Walling's *History of Lane Co.*, Pages 324-325.

In 1848 with his family settled on the slope of a butte soon to be known as Skinner's Butte, Skinner traveled south again to California and the gold mines. Later, back in Eugene, the chain on his watch broke. Unable to have the watch repaired, Skinner made a trade with Alfred Orton, possibly around 1850, and exchanged the watch for a grain fan mill. Orton, an early resident of Eugene, kept the watch until his death in 1881.

A son, Edward Orton, inherited the watch from his father. In Aug-

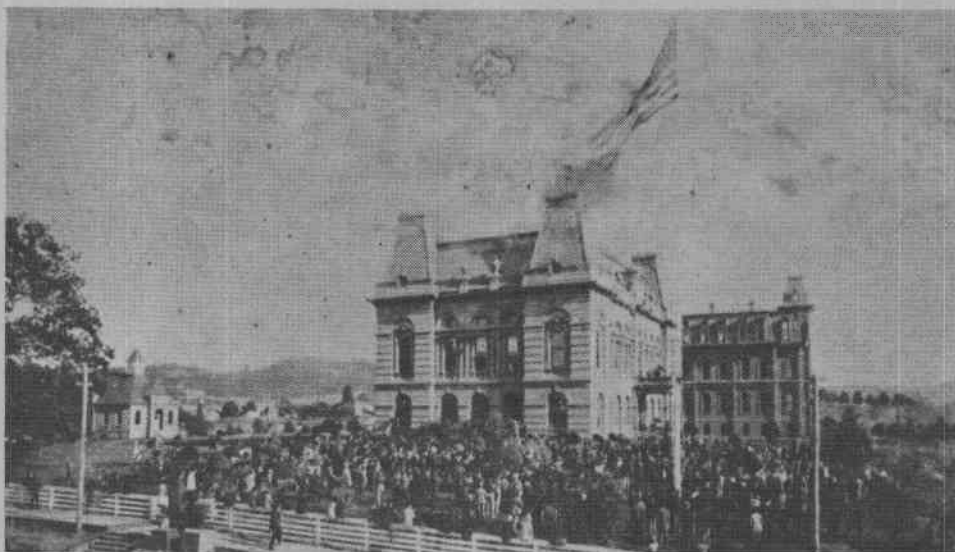
ust of 1932 he sold it to J. M. Toman, an Eugene jeweler. J. M. Toman, in turn, sold the watch to W. W. Bristow, a relative of Elijah Bristow, co-pioneer traveler with Eugene F. Skinner. W. W. Bristow, also a jeweler, on his death, bequeathed the watch to his son, W. W. Bristow, Jr., owner of Bristow's jewelry store in Eugene.

It was W. W. Bristow, Jr., who placed the advertisement in the Eugene newspaper in November,

1963, offering for sale the Eugene F. Skinner watch and which was purchased by John Huber, the present owner. Since his ownership of the Sutter-Skinner watch, Mr. Huber, a retiree from the Southern Pacific Railway, has done endless research on the history of the watch itself as well as on Sutter and Skinner, pioneer owners of the watch during the early days of California and Oregon.



Eugene F. Skinner in 1855.



Villard and Deady Hall, University of Oregon. Despite some harsh treatment twenty years ago the two stand as respected landmarks to the initiation of educational endeavors which were made possible by very generous contributions from the surrounding community.

All photographs used in "Preserving Lone County's Historic Resources" are from the collection of Philip Dole with following exceptions: Smeed Hotel, Ferguson House, Cortwright House, Armitage Farm (Lone County Pioneer Museum).

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
740 West 13th Ave., Eugene, Oregon

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Eugene, Oregon



The Cartwright House, Lorane Highway, south of Lorane, 1854. The finest of several early country houses which encourage considering development of the Territorial Road as an historic trail.