

# Lane County Historian



Workers preparing flax to be run through a scutching machine, Benton County Flax Growers plant 1946. Courtesy Horner Museum.

**The Lane County Historical Society**  
**Vol XXXV, No. 2** **Summer, 1990**

# The Lane County Historical Society

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# THE FLAX INDUSTRY OF LANE COUNTY

by Steve Wyatt



Flax harvesting with a flax puller, 1949. Courtesy Horner Museum.

Many people may not realize that Oregon once had a flax industry of its own. Flax, the vegetable fiber plant which in some ways is similar to cotton, has been grown for thousands of years. Linen, the finest cloth woven from the fiber of the flax plant, has been found in the tombs of Pharaohs and is mentioned in the Bible. For centuries Europe has been the center of the flax and linen industries. The United States had no fiber flax industry of its own and imported flax and products woven from flax. The events of World War II and the subsequent disruption of European imports changed this. It was soon apparent that the favorable climate

and soil of the Willamette Valley was the only place in the United States where flax could be grown on a commercial scale. Products woven from Willamette Valley flax were needed for the war effort. Fourteen flax plants were rapidly constructed in Oregon, three of these were in Lane County.

Flax had been grown in the Willamette Valley since the earliest pioneers arrived. It was recognized in the 1870s at international competitions that flax grown in Oregon was some of the world's finest. Soon after the fine quality of Oregon flax became common knowledge, attempts were made to develop a flax industry

in Albany and Turner. These efforts quickly met with failure. The principle deterrent was that harvesting and processing of flax required a great deal of labor.

In the 1890s interest in flax rekindled. The most outspoken advocate of flax was Juliet Lord, wife of Governor William P. Lord. Mrs. Lord and the Ladies Portland Women's Club formed the Women's Flax and Fiber Association. This organization worked tirelessly to establish a flax industry in Oregon. After many unsuccessful attempts, their efforts eventually paid off when a flax plant was established at the Oregon State Penitentiary in 1915.

The efforts of Juliet Lord and the Women's Flax and Fiber Association caught the attention of Eugene businessman Frank L. Chambers. Chambers, who helped establish the Eugene Woolen Mill, the Eugene Opera House and the YMCA, became Lane County's most vocal advocate of flax. With his wife, he traveled to Europe to investigate the particulars of the flax industry. Oregon Governor Charles Martin appointed Chambers to the State Flax and Linen Board. The flax board oversaw the operation of the penitentiary plant and worked to establish a flax industry in Oregon.

It was not until the 1920s that new technology made an industry possible. A flax harvesting machine (*a flax puller*) and other innovations made the flax industry less labor intensive. Until the 1930s, the flax industry was primarily a Marion County phenomenon. Salem was the location of the penitentiary plant and two linen mills. The industry spread

to Lane County and other areas of the Willamette Valley when the Oregon State Flax and Linen Board secured Works Progress Administration funds to create badly needed jobs and strengthen the fledgling flax industry. Despite the establishment of the WPA plants the industry did not experience very much growth until World War II, when cheaper European flax imports were cut off. In 1939, there were 3,900 acres of flax grown in Oregon. In 1952, the peak year of production, there were 18,000 acres in cultivation. Flax was extremely important to the war effort and was declared a defense commodity shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Flax from the Willamette Valley was used to make parachute harness, fire hose, bomb slings, linen thread for army shoes, packing material for marine engines, signal halyards and other items necessary for the war effort.

The flax plants of Lane County were retting and scutching plants. Retting is the process of soaking the flax in large cement tanks of water. This made it easier to separate the fiber from the flax. This process took place during the summer months. After soaking they were placed out in nearby fields and allowed to dry. Bundles of flax were then set up leaning on each other to form wigwams. Scutching was done during the winter months. It is a mechanical process where the fiber is removed from the woody part of the flax plant. The Lane County plants then sold the fiber to the spinning and weaving mills in Salem or on the east coast.

The first fiber flax plant to be



Workers binding wigwams of flax into bundles to be processed. Courtesy Horner Museum.



Wigwams of flax drying at the Northwest Flax Products plant, Springfield, OR summer of 1943. Courtesy Horner Museum.

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constructed in Lane County was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Springfield on a 15 acre site. The Oregon Fiber Flax Growers Association plant and similar flax plants were constructed by the WPA in Mount Angel and Canby. The WPA made these plants possible by allotting \$19,500 to get the flax industry in Lane County established. Of the allotted funds, \$14,500 was to fund the construction of the plant. The remaining \$5,000 was for the first year's operating wages. Ground was broken April 15, 1936 for the new plant, in Springfield, with a great deal of fanfare. Governor Charles Martin was on hand to turn the first spade of sod. Martin was accompanied by E.J. Griffith, the state WPA administrator and other state officials who met with local officials and businessmen. Martin proudly posed, shovel in hand, with his wife for a picture which appeared in the *Oregonian*. His wife is dressed in a linen dress made from Lane County flax fiber.

In a deal with the WPA, the cooperative sold stock to purchase some needed materials for the construction of the plant and to purchase the necessary flax processing equipment. The WPA, who did the actual construction of the plant, gave it to the state after its completion. The state then leased the plant to the cooperative at a rate of one dollar a year. The first flax for this plant was grown by twenty-seven different growers. They placed a total of 194 acres of flax in cultivation. Any grower who purchased ten dollars worth of common stock in the cooperative could send his

flax to the Oregon Fiber Flax Growers Association plant to be processed.

After its first year of operation, the WPA granted the Oregon Fiber Flax Growers Association an additional \$22,558 to expand its facilities. The grant enabled the cooperative to double its capacity from 600 to 1,200 acres a year. By 1938 the plant had 723 acres in cultivation. It was during World War II when this and the other flax plants ran at capacity. The flax industry did not successfully adapt to the post war economy. By 1949 the Oregon Flax fiber plant had ceased operations.

During the war, more flax was grown in Lane County than could be processed by the Oregon Fiber Flax Growers Association plant. Construction began on a second plant. The Approved Flax Company, located 12 miles northwest of Eugene, was owned by a hose manufacturer, the Approved Equipment Company of New Jersey. Located on a 68 acre lot near Clear Lake, this plant and the Penitentiary plant were the two largest plants in the state. They both had a capacity of 6,000 tons of flax per year. A memo dated June of 1943 reveals the Approved Flax Company plant had 160 employees, many of whom were women. Workers were paid at a rate of sixty to seventy cents an hour, with a considerable amount of overtime during the busiest times of the year. All of the plant production was used for the war effort.

In 1942, three-fourths of the plant and its equipment was destroyed by fire. Because the flax produced by this plant was used to manufacture fire hose for the Navy, reconstruction of

the plant began immediately. In 1945 the plant fell victim to the rapid decline in flax prices and shut down.

The third retting and scutching plant in Lane County began operation in 1942. The Northwest Flax Production Company plant had a capacity of 3,000 tons. Funds were borrowed from the federal government through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The plant was built in response to President Roosevelt's proclamation which declared fiber flax a strategic necessity. The plant was located seven miles north of Eugene. The company's office was located at 628 Willamette Street. A letter written January of 1946 indicates the company's officers were:

Frank L. Scobert, President  
Cal C. Young, Vice-President  
Clarence F. Hyde,  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Claude B. Swango, Manager  
M.G. Howard, Director  
Frank L. Chambers, Director  
Violet Rockwell, Director

Like the other flax plants the war's end and the resumption of importation of flax meant that it could no longer operate profitably. When the company sold off the last of its flax fiber in 1947 it had fiber from the previous two years which had gone unsold. After the equipment was cleared out the buildings were rented to Sears Roebuck who used them for warehouses.

Many Lane County farmers grew flax for the Benton County Flax Growers and the Harrisburg Flax Growers. The Benton County plant remained in operation from 1942 to

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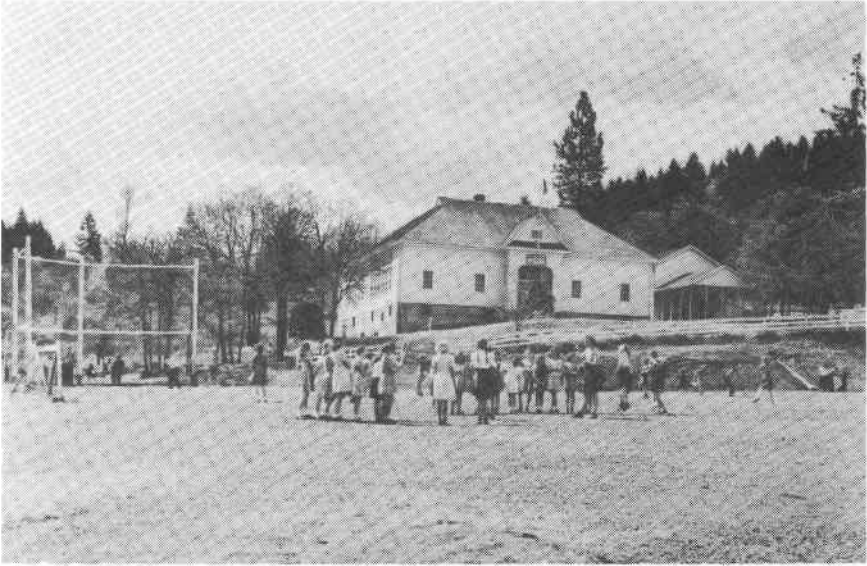
1947. It was sold in 1947 and was to be converted into a feed and seed clearing establishment. The active years of operation of the Harrisburg plant also approximated the war years.

Many factors contributed to the death of Oregon's flax industry. High shipping costs contributed to the industry's defeat. After the war, flax shipped from Europe to the East Coast spinning mills was less expensive than flax shipped by rail from Oregon. Another obstacle the flax industry failed to overcome was the adoption of grading standards based on the spinning quality of the fiber. Good, medium and poor quality fiber were marketed in a single lot and valued according to the lowest quality of the mixture. Yet another contributing element to the rapid demise of Oregon's flax industry was the introduction and popularity of nylon and other synthetic fibers. However, the possibility of a resurgence of the industry exists, the United States still imports fiber flax.

Ed. note: An article by Steve Wyatt in the Capitol Press of March 16, 1990 states, "The history of flax production in Oregon came alive recently at Oregon State University with the discovery of more than 500 photographs documenting flax production and processing . . . in a dumpster behind the Ag. Utilities building . . . They were turned over the OSU's Horner Museum, where Steve Wyatt, a graduate student in museum studies, saw the stuff of a degree project." □

# HISTORY OF THE STELLA MAGLADRY SCHOOL

by Alta (Mrs. Roy) Nelson



Stella Magladry School ca 1955. Courtesy Alta Nelson.

The first school house in the area was located on Crest Drive about 1907 and was known as the Blanton School, the name was later changed to the College Crest School.

The original building was remodeled on the interior and is now in use as a residence at 1291 Crest Drive. The school house was located in the center of the population for the area at that time. An average of 16 children attended the one room, eight grade school. A ninety-foot well with an attached hand pump furnished the water supply.

In 1925 it was decided to move the school to a more central location as the area on Chambers and Friendly Streets were also served by this school

and parents in that locale felt it was too far for their children to walk.

Mr. John S. Magladry, also known as "Black Jack", a prominent lumberman, owned the land which was desired for the new building. Mr. Magladry offered to give the land free to the district if the school were to be named in the memory of his departed wife, Stella. The conditional use deed was recorded February 9, 1926.

The school was built and the first classes were held in April 1927. The original building had two classrooms for the eight grades. A spring to the east of the building was used for drinking water. There was also a well at the school.

Stella Magladry was taken into



Eugene School District 4J system in 1945.

Mr. Magladry was born in New York City, N.Y., December 28, 1863 and passed away December 21, 1940. Each year at commencement time Mr. Magladry attended the school program and gave a short talk.

Mr. and Mrs. Magladry had one child, a daughter Grace, who resided at Cascade Manor in 1957. Mrs. Preston Coursen, 1956-57 PTA Program Chairman, wrote to Grace Murray who sent a photo of her mother.

In April, 1958 the area including the school site was annexed to the city of Eugene. November 1958 the school's sewer system was connected with the city sewer line.

In 1977 there were 160 students enrolled at Stella Magladry. The school was closed in 1982 due to



Stella Magladry. Courtesy Alta Nelson.

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declining student enrollment. The building was then used as an instructional material center for district staff. Most recently it has been taken over by the Waldorf School.

Information in regard to the early school was obtained from:

Mrs. Marie Brown  
Mr. Maurice Bradway  
Mrs. Blanton  
Mr. Truman Wills  
Mrs. Ralph Crowe  
Mrs. Guy Adydelotte  
Mrs. Robert Bennett

Curiosity as to "Who was Stella Magladry?" led me to research and gain the information in February, 1957.

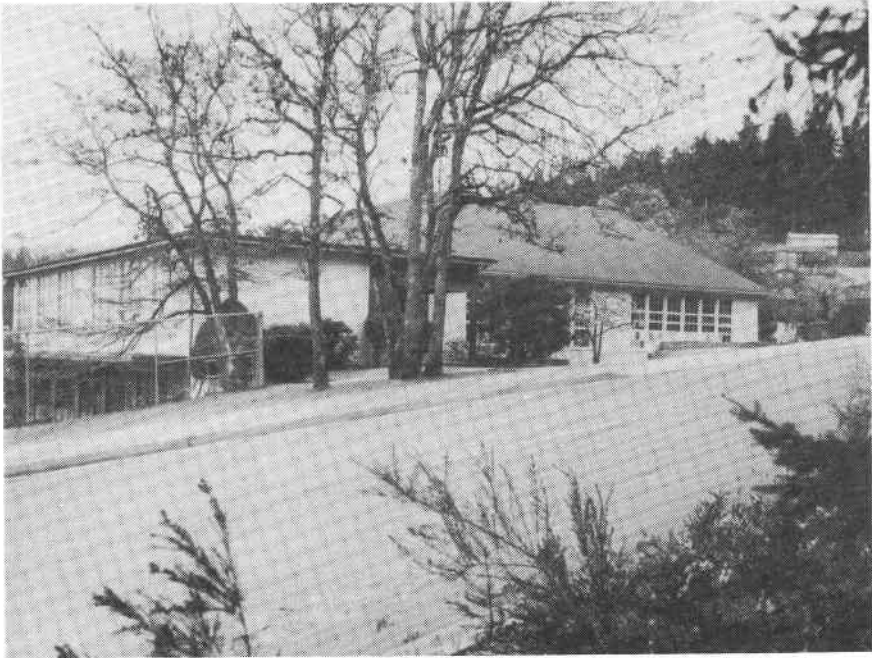
Mrs. Roy R. (Alta) Nelson □

### *A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAND ON WHICH STELLA MAGLADRY SCHOOL IS LOCATED*

I. Wesley Whitbeck and J.O. Storey acquired 352 acres from the state of Oregon in 1905. The area was platted and named College Crest in 1909.

Mr. P.M. Morse, a pioneer surveyor of the Eugene area, believes the State of Oregon owned the land as the area had possibly been given to a Spanish-American War Veteran who had let it go for taxes.

J.P. and Mary Howe bought a portion of the land in 1910. J.S. and Stella Magladry purchased the land from Mary Howe, a widow, in 1913 and platted Magladry's subdivision which was bounded on the west by Chambers St., on the east by Friendly St., on the north below Brauner Blvd. and Whitney St. and to the south



Stella Magladry Elementary School, ca 1980. Courtesy Alta Nelson.

Whitbeck Blvd. and Lorane Highway.

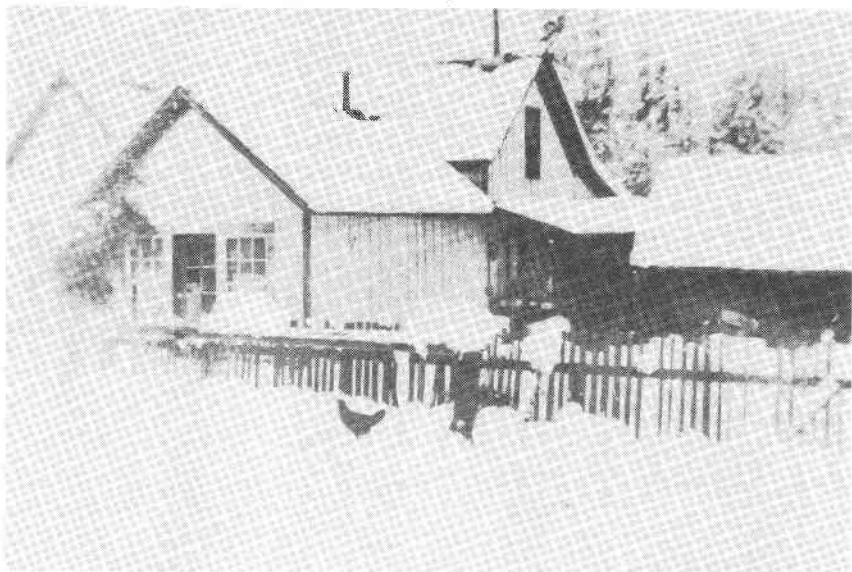
John Columbus Snodgrass had a farm on the school site in the early 1920s. The buildings consisted of a house about where the school house is located, a barn down the hill to the north and a spring house to the east in the little ravine. The spring bubbled up out of the ground forming a creek. Quartz rock was to be found

in the creek bed. Mrs. Nellie Moore McWilliams, granddaughter of John C. Snodgrass, spent much time at the farm as a child.

Information pertaining to the area was obtained from:  
Lane County Recorder's Office  
Mrs. Nellie Moore McWilliams  
Mr. P.M. Morse

□

## GLIMPSES OF THE PAST IN BLACHLY, OREGON



First Slayter home and store. Courtesy Mrs. Stuart Myers.

### Editor's note:

Material for this account was compiled from three sources. 1. a *Ruralite* story by Loren Mitchell in the February, 1979 issue. 2. A Slayter family history compiled by Earl Myers. 3. History of Lake Creek Valley, compiled by Mary Minter, and the Horton Ladies Aid. 4th printing, 1990.

Our story begins with selections from Earl Myers account.

The first route into the valley, worthy of a name, began near the present community of Low Pass on Highway 36. Once on the summit of the mountain it followed along the top of a ridge and came down at the Leonidus Post home, three quarters of a mile from the present Blachly

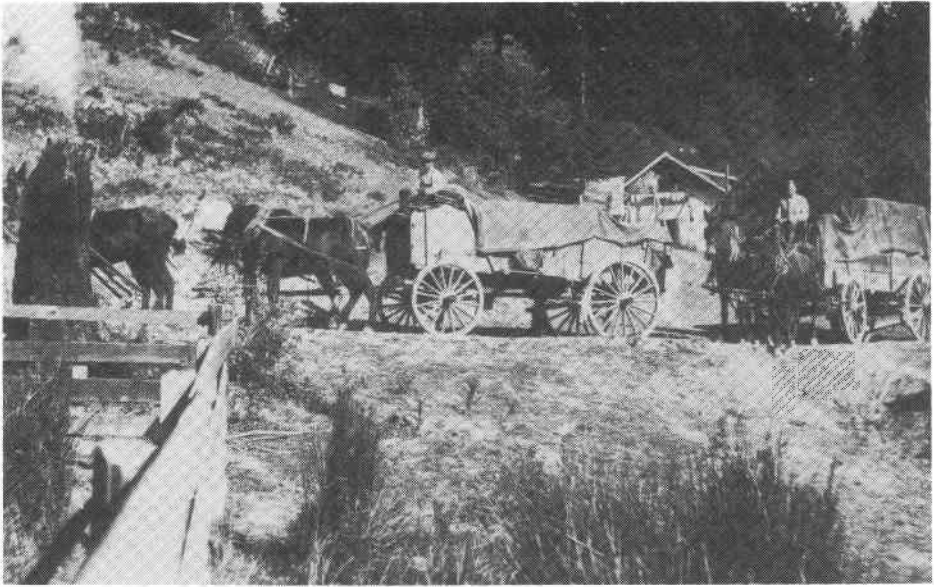
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Cemetery. This was called the Post Road. Dirt and rocks in summer, mud hub deep the rest of the year, it had been grubbed out exclusively with hand shovel and mattock, with boughs and chunks of wood thrown in the worst places.

On ascending a steep grade, an oak block, some eight inches thick and two feet long, drug along behind a back wheel . . . to hold the rig when a team was forced to "blow".

It was over this road the Isaiah Slayter family jounced and jolted in 1899 to build a new home, which was to become the nucleus of the village of Blachly.

Only five families lived in the valley at this time. These were trappers and hard-scrabble homesteaders. In the



Slayter Freight wagons. Driver on left is Charlie Slayter, on right, probably Claude Hulburt. Courtesy Shirley Slayter Addison.

beginning, monthly turns were taken to make arduous trips to Junction City and bring back supplies. In time, Isaiah was asked to do all the hauling, as he was centrally located, and the others would buy from him. This he agreed to, and a small corner of his living room became the "Store". Sugar, flour, shot, powder and lead were the stock initially carried.

The government decided to install a post office in the opposite corner of the room, and Alice Slayter, Isaiah's wife, was designated post mistress in 1892. The village was named for William Blachly (who came to the Lake Creek Valley in the 1880s with his wife Melissa. They took out homestead papers June 18, 1896. *Lake Creek Valley history*, p. 18)

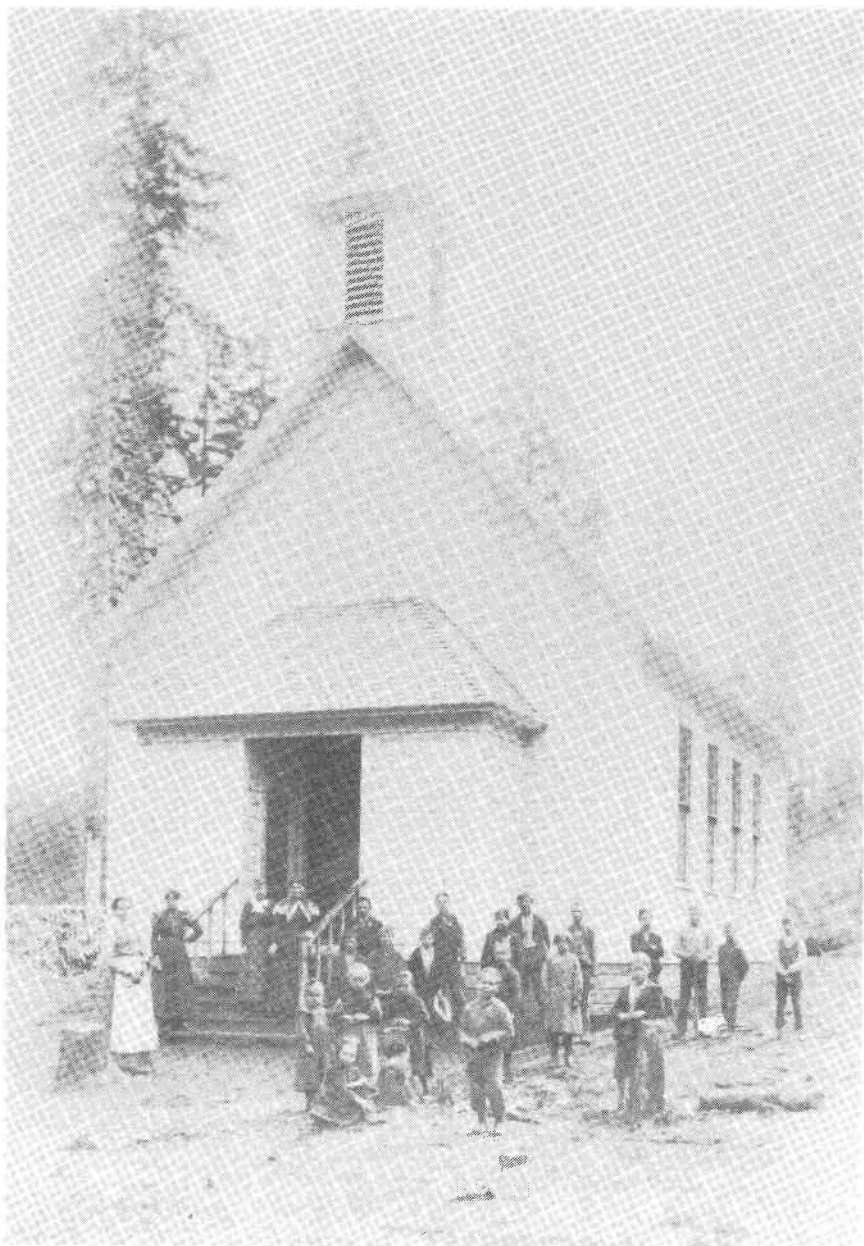
The first school in the Blachly area that can be traced was half a mile from the present school, a one-room

log structure. The schoolmaster was Dorr Hamlin, who later married Myrtie Slayter. One early teacher was Mary Norton who, in 1902, taught children from the Wolf, Campbell, Slayter, Thompson, Post, Jay and Reppeto families. She taught for many years in the area, including three generations in some families.

Volunteers, with Isaiah Slayter as supervisor, started gouging out another route to the outside. This was the Low Pass road. Since too much time would be lost going back and forth to work, the men camped on the job, with one man detailed as cook. The road was finally completed in 1896. Soon High Pass road was grubbed out. This gave the Horton brothers, Everett, Samuel and John, an opportunity to haul in machinery and set up a sawmill. . .

By 1900 there were seven children

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Blachly school, 1898. L. Ora Reed Hemmingway (teacher), Daisy Slayter and Maggie Sprague. Front, standing; Elmer Post, Emma Slayter and Charles Slayter leaning on stump. Courtesy Mrs. Stuart Myers.

in the Slayter family. The living room was stacked to the ceiling with store supplies. And travelers between Deadwood and Junction City were using the place as a halfway stop for the night. Demand for more goods and supplies kept increasing and the store and post office just had to be in another building. That meant more freight wagons and teams, and hiring a teamster or two to drive them. Within a couple of years a "T" was attached to the barn, another room was built on the back of the house, and the store was widened to twice its former width.

Rather than pay hotel and livery stable bills at the other end of the freight line in Junction City, Isaiah bought two adjoining barns on Greenwood Street. A house was built on the lot, and Jeff and Nell Campbell moved in. Jeff collected freight and had it at one of the barns, so Slayter freight wagons could be loaded at night and ready to roll in the morning. Nell boarded the drivers and put up their lunches. At one time the Slayters had the contract for hauling mail from Junction City to Blachly, and Jeff drove this route for them. When roads were especially muddy, or deep with snow, he delivered the mail pouches by horse.

Charlie Slayter was one of the freighters. At one time Slayters stabled 18 head of horses used for farming, freighting and carrying mail. Isaiah Slayter purchased a German coach horse for \$1,000. This imported animal was used by many valley residents to upgrade their stock. He was fed one egg per day to keep his coat shiny.

In 1904 a local telephone line was strung up the Lake Creek Valley. Emma Slayter was operator for 40 years. It was known as the Pioneer Telephone Cooperative system in the Blachly-Horton area. Harry Robertson did the line work and other maintenance. He was paid 35¢ an hour and rode horseback along the lines in the beginning. The system was operated by the subscribers. Each farmer paid for his own phone. About 1906 the line was extended to Deadwood and became known as the Blachly-Deadwood Telephone Co. Marion Wheeler of Greenleaf wrote in his diary, "On March 19, 1906, I went up to Mr. Slayters and came back with ours and Pope's phones strapped on the mule. On the 20th I went to Pope's and got our phones working."

Corvallis Creamery Company built a receiving station in Blachly just back of the Slayter store in 1906. Farmers brought their cream here in five gallon cans. Claude Hulbert weighed and tested it for butterfat.

When Elmer Post got his degree from OSU in the mid-teens he built a creamery where Robert Slayter's feed and hardware store located later. A man by the name of Moore was hired to make butter, and Ed Robertson was tester and helper. Moore forged checks on the creamery account and tried to abscond, but was apprehended in Junction City by Isaiah Slayter and Walter Blachly. The creamery operated until destroyed by fire in 1931.

Eugene Farmer's Creamery built a cheese factory at Triangle Lake in 1934. Elmo Christenson, with his father and brothers, was operating

the factory. Earl Brewer had charge of it from 1938-42, at which time the plant was closed. After electricity came to the valley and roads were improved, milk could be refrigerated and hauled to the Eugene plant for processing.

Bob Slayter of Blachly started hauling milk in 1936 for Elmo Christenson. He continued to haul milk over the years, retiring from his job with the Eugene Farmers Creamery in September 1966.

Blachly-Lane Electric Cooperative (REA) was organized in 1938. A news article states that it was the "second REA set-up" in Oregon. Power was originally generated by a dam over Lake Creek below Triangle Lake. Bob Slayter also served as a director of the Blachly-Lane Electric cooperative for 40 years, retiring from that office January 1, 1979.

There was a community hall over the Slayter store which was used for square dances, plays, elections. It contained a tiny organ for music. Fiddlers who played for dances were Art Taylor, Bill Drugg and sometimes Herman Drugg. Three Irishmen, Murphy, Tony and Hooligan, sometimes furnished music for dances. One played a concertina, one a cornet and one a violin. On the three mile walk home after the dances they would strike up a tune as they were passing sleepy farm houses.

The story is told that when Isaiah Slayter arrived in the area he selected a big old growth cedar from which to build his house. The saw wasn't long enough to reach across the widest part of the tree, which had a hollow butt. But chopping a little they

enlarged the hole in the butt so grandma could squeeze inside and stand upright. One end of the saw was pushed inside, a handle fastened to it, and push-pull-push-pull, they got it down.

Another Slayter story tells of a time when a slide blocked the outlet of Triangle Lake and backed the water up into their house. Grandma let her hand drop over the side of the bed in the night. Water! She screamed and shook Grandpa awake. Sleepily, he swung his feet out of bed, and cold water came up to his knees. Very much awake now, he stumbled and splashed about till he found a candle. Water was up in the cookstove, up to the edge of the bed. There was nothing to do but grab up the children and get out. Luckily the barn stood on



Joseph H. Ferguson, Blachly mail carrier.  
Courtesy Shirley Slayter Addison.



higher ground and was still above the water line. There, lantern in hand, he carried each member of the family piggy-back.

When they were all accounted for, he waded back and gathered up all the dry bedding and clothes he could find. The barn was small, really only a shed, and they couldn't sleep with the horses. The only place to spread the quilts was on the pile of turnips . . . . When daylight came they found the water subsiding nearly as fast as it had risen. When sufficient pressure built up, it had broken the jam and the water fell quickly.

In early Blachly charivaries were integral parts of pioneer weddings. No wedding couple was truly considered "spliced" until after a charivari. It was as unthinkable as starting house-keeping without a frying pan — or sleeping in twin beds.

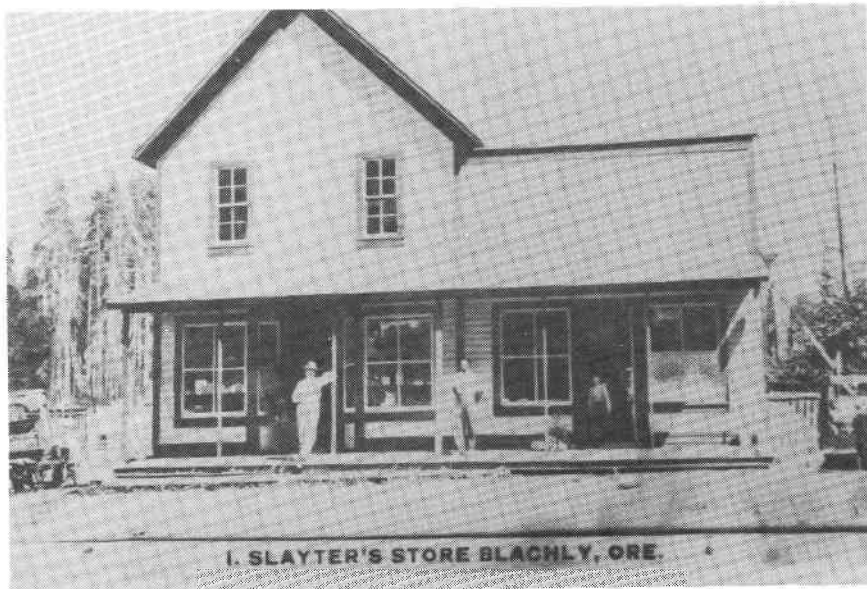
How loud, or rowdy, the affair got,

depended basically on how popular or unpopular the newlyweds were. Too, it depended on their reaction to being aroused in the middle of the night by a howling band of banshees under their window ringing cow bells, hammering on saws, and firing guns.

If they took it all in good humor, threw open the door and invited the crowd in to partake of candy, cigars and coffee, the charivari was a howling success.

Of course the nuptial bed would be well salted, and perhaps a sheep bell would be wired underneath to the springs; but that was expected. If a hostile attitude met the revelers — well, matters would get a bit out of hand.

One instance can be recalled when the groom angrily refused to let the party in the house no matter how loud and long they kept up the din. Finally two men withdrew to a pigpen,



Date on original 8.4.1949. Courtesy Mrs. W. Slayter.



scooped up a bucket of slimy mud and water, and threw this in the bedroom window on the couple.

At another charivari, with some of the Slayter progeny present, there was a slightly cool reception. Once the crowd was let inside, everyone stood around uncomfortably with little to say. The couple, knowing the ways of pranksters, had locked the bedroom door behind themselves. There would be no tricks in there. But, where there's a will . . .

One of the girls in the crowd sat down and started playing the organ. Several others, ostensibly to thaw the atmosphere, began singing. It was really to cover up any noise outside where a couple of boys were poking chickens in a bedroom window.

The boys made a serious mistake though. The room where the chickens were put was the spare bedroom. And there the chickens roosted on the head of the bed for three days before being discovered.

Earl Myers' book contains a picture with the caption, "Gasoline comes to

Blachly in five gallon cans via hard tired truck." The truck bears a sign reading "ZEROLINE — The Standard Oil for Motor Cars," and the station sports a sign for RED CROWN GASOLINE.

Joseph H. Ferguson, for whom Ferguson Road was named, was appointed to carry mail from Junction City to Blachly and return with stops at Cheshire and Goldson. His first term was from July 1, 1918 to June 30, 1922. He was the carrier for many years, into the early thirties — from Horton to Blachly in later years.

F.L. (Lucienne) Norton was the postmaster in Blachly for many years, beginning in 1954. He had come to the area with his mother in 1902, and had reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 when he stepped down from the post.

No brief sketch such as this can encompass the history of a community. Your editor would welcome additional pertinent material for use in a future issue. □



Bob Slayter, taken last day on the job, Sept. 9, 1966. Courtesy Mrs. W. Slayter.



Gertie, Daisy, Bill, Myrtie Slayter, 4-8-1956. Courtesy Mrs. W. Slayter.

## *THE ELLEN HAWKINS CLUB and Other Area History*

by Miriam Rudd Wilbur

Editor's note: Mrs. Wilbur, who grew up on West 18th when it was but a country road, offered many pictures and memories of the area. She took your editor on a tour, pointing out places of interest. We visited the Mulkey Cemetery, as well as trying to locate such spots as a former brick yard and Mrs. Conger's home on a much-changed West 11th Ave. Mrs. Wilbur also referred me to Lorraine Devine, who supplied additional information about the Club. All photos with this article were supplied by Mrs. Wilbur.

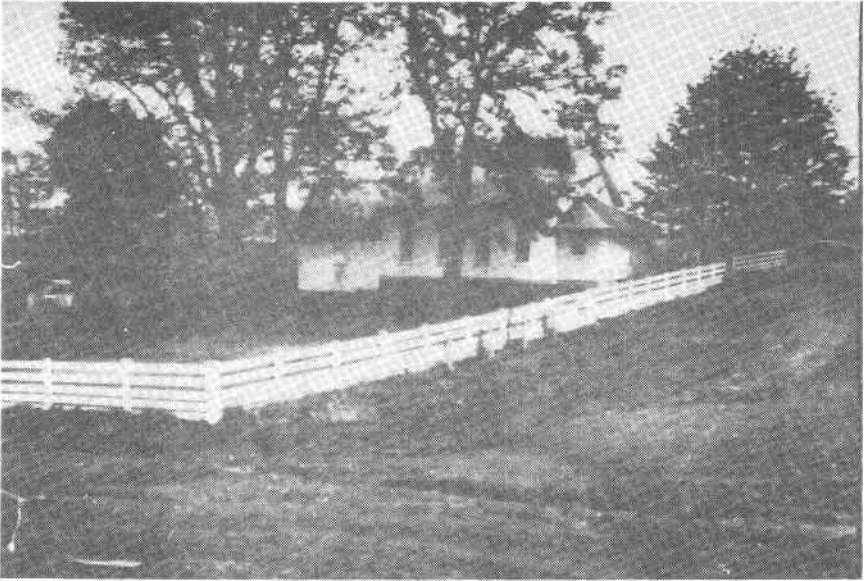


Ellen Hawkins club. Mrs. Conger under arrow, for whom Conger Street was named. Other names: Steele, Rudd, Hunter, McCornack, Chilton, Stewart, Barnum. Little boy is LeRoy Cox.

Nancy Hawkins and Ellen McCornack started the Ellen Hawkins club. Ladies of the neighborhood, all along 18th Avenue, those on West 11th and Stewart Road joined. It was a literary club in the beginning, but later included various types of activities such as weaving, guest speakers and just social gatherings.

The club met in various homes. I recall a meeting which I attended with my mother at Mrs. Conger's on West 11th Street, at her big square white house with a lily pond in front, past which the driveway to the house ran. A lovely home. Their pasture extended nearly to Bailey Hill Road. It was in their pasture that an airplane landed one afternoon — our

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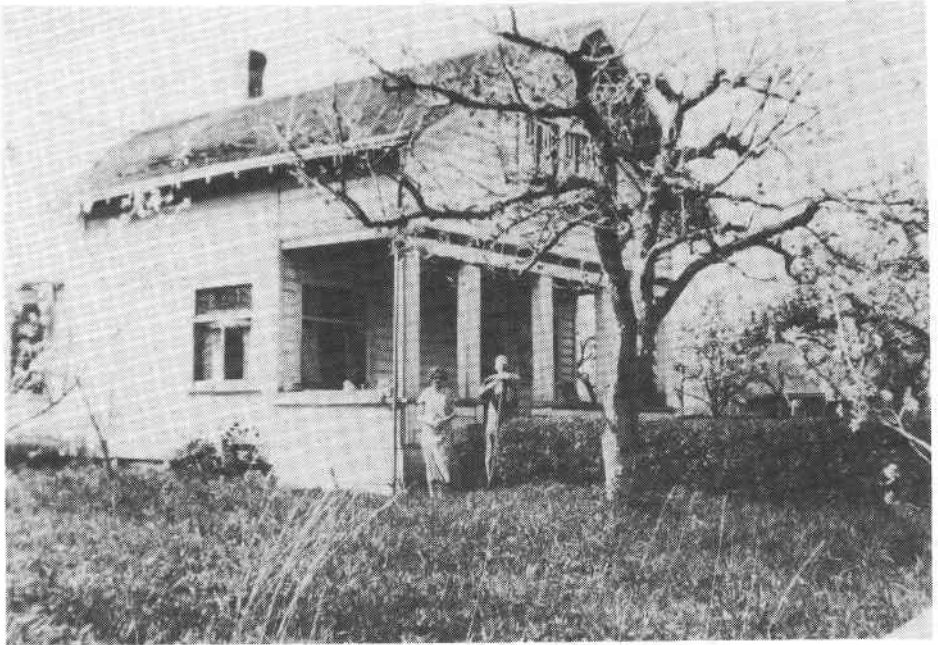
Bailey Hill School

first plane, about 1919 or 1920. It was a propeller plane, which all the school children and neighbors watched the next day as the pilot cranked it up and took off into the air.

It was exciting when the club met at our home. Mother would bring out her Haviland dishes and we would have a nice party. The club still meets today.



Four Oaks Grange Hall, next door to Bailey Hill School.



Rudd home on "Stringtown Road," a name for West 18th that Rudds rejected.

(Ed note: According to Mrs. Devine the club meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 1:00 p.m., usually in a restaurant, through the winter months. At Christmas they meet in homes of members and have a gift exchange. There is an average attendance of 10 to 14, primarily of people who grew up in the Hawkins Heights - Bailey Hill area, although the club is open to others, and new members are occasionally received. Mrs. Devine is a third generation member. The club has officers, occasionally invites a speaker, holds fundraising events such as a plant sale, to earn money for charitable purposes. One organization that they support is the Eugene Mission.)

My sister Charlotte and I attended Bailey Hill School. Some of the teachers were Mertie Chamberlin

(1917) who later married Chet Conger; Mr. Evans, Mrs. Paisley (1919-20), Clara Leuthi, J.K. West, Mary Mathers, Charlotte Rudd (1923-24), Carl Keeler, Miss Larson (1926) and Miss Roth. Usually they lived with one of the residents of the district. Mr. Keeler later became a professor at Portland State University.

The Four Oaks Grange Hall was a great asset to the Bailey Hill School, because it had a stage, a basement with a kitchen and dining room. All social functions were held in the grange hall. We put on our school programs in the grange hall — plays, music programs, recitations, contests, Christmas pageants, etc. One teacher, Elvira Dyer, was especially adept at programs using dance along with other orthodox productions of those days.



Mertie Chamberlin Conger, ca 1916, teacher at Bailey Hill School.



Mr. Keeler, Bailey Hill School teacher, 1921-22.



l-r: Louise Higgins, Margaret Rudd (Mother), Alice Barnum, Viva Steele.



Ellen Hawkins Club ca 1940. Back row, center-with lines, 1-r: Mrs. Conger, Mrs. Constance, Mertie Conger. Front row 1: Ruth Hawkins, 2nd fr. r, with child, Hannah Hawkins.

Other students at Bailey Hill school included William Steele, seven Higgins children, Vaughns, and McFaddens. William McFadden rode his horse to school from their home on Stewart Road. Cooks lived on the road next to a brickyard.

Mother's brother Matthew Stewart preceded our family to Oregon. We came in 1914. Uncle Matt ran a dairy farm on Stewart Road just west of Bailey Hill and north of West 11th.

We all had farmer phone lines, and the ment of the neighborhood kept them up. Our bill was \$9.00 per year. There was an old gentleman lived at the top of Hawkins Hill who had an ox team, the only one anywhere around.

My older sister Hannah worked for the old McMoran and Washburne store on Willamette and 8th Streets. She married Virgil Hawkins and lived in the big Hawkins house until the Hill was subdivided.

The Higgins owned 80 acres which is now the site of the Churchill Houses on West 18th. The Steeles lived between West 11th and 18th. The McCornacks lived across the road from Hawkins Hill in a beautiful grove. This grove was the place where the neighborhood had parties such as a Barnum Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration, ice-cream socials and even a wedding. □



## REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION

*By Wright B. Lee*

My father N. L. Lee had a farm nine miles from Junction City on the Hall Road past Cheshire. The renters cut wood two foot long and hauled it to Junction City with two horses where he piled it on a platform as high as the steam engine doors that was to be used as fuel to make steam for the engines. For many years the farmers furnished this wood for \$2.00 to \$3.00 per cord. Then coal was shipped in until oil became their fuel.

Junction City was where the freight crew changed as well as the engines so there were a number of homes and rooming houses for the crews until the division point was changed to Roseburg. Now it is in Eugene, as few trains go past here with the same crew, since the natron cut off to Klamath Falls was built over the cascades.

Grandpa was in the Civil War and was stationed at Fort Lapawa, Idaho Territory. Since early childhood he had wanted to become a doctor. While he was in the service he saved all of his money hoping to continue his studies that he had begun in the army under the surgeon at the fort. But when he returned home he found that his family was in very hard circumstances so all of his savings went to help them. Then he and Grandma were married and after returning from the reservation they settled in Lancaster. He was still ambitious to

become a doctor although by now he had two small children. He saved enough to enroll at Willamette, in Salem and was one of the early graduates of that school. Having had one year of study during the war he was able to graduate from medical school in two years. Grandma used to tell how hard it was when he was gone. He would go back and forth to Salem on horseback but he was gone most of the time. And they were very poor.

When the railroad decided to build a roundhouse and have a junction with a track from the coast to the valley at the present site of Junction City and the river had changed channels and no longer was an appropriate site for the riverboats to dock some of the families of Lancaster decided to move to the new townsite. They decided to skid them down using horses and Grandma took the children and went to visit her folks until the houses were set in place. When the railroad was completed to Junction City and the houses ready Grandma had her first train ride, from Albany to Junction City. She said that she was frightened to death. She opened the window and as she had two children at that time she just held a child in each arm ready to jump out the window with the children should something happen.

From the Editor:

Reader's letters are a source of encouragement and/or helpful advice. Two excerpts from responses to the spring issue follow:

"I received my first copy of **The Historian** (Spring, 1990) yesterday — and I was very pleased with the quality of writing and the format. You should be proud of your 'baby' . . . I would like to purchase all back issues that are available."

"Congratulations on your essay on 'Eugene Airpark' in Spring No. of **Historian**. It was well written and interesting. I cannot help but contrast the above piece to the tedium which often fills the **Historian**, viz. Family Histories. I appreciate that this is a device to obtain unremunerated copy, but it really fails on most counts to qualify as 'history'."

Most back issues are available for \$1.50 each, plus postage. A detailed index to the first 28 volumes is also available — a valuable aid to researchers. See sample page below. Order from your editor, or pick up a copy at the Lane County Historical Museum, for \$10.00 plus shipping.

"Craig, John--A Pioneer Mail Carrier": by Ruth Ellsworth Richardson, 3, 30-32.  
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"Creswell, A Short History of": by Mary Jane Ziniker Maloof, 9, 39-46.  
Creswell, Street Map of, 1875-1912: illus. 9, 56.  
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Cross, E. C.: ment. 14, 16.  
Cross, Lorie: ment. 23, 8.



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