

Lane County Historian



James Gay Family

The Lane County Historical Society

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LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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We are looking for manuscripts on Lane County history. Payment is in copies. Pictures illustrating the stories welcome. Self-addressed stamped envelopes must be included if you want your materials returned.

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MEMORIAL — *Stuart Hurd*

Our Society suffered a severe blow in the late summer. Stuart Hurd, one of our most active and dependable board members, was felled by a heart attack.

How does one properly eulogize such a man? Genial, a lover of people, Stuart was our official greeter. He knew "everybody" and radiated a great warmth and interest of concern. Many of our elderly benefited from his timely visits and generous help. We miss his unfailing good humor, optimism and great fund of historical knowledge, which he shared with charming candor with school children and college professors alike. Stuart was "all wool and a yard wide", our pioneer measure for honesty, integrity and the other virtues that make a great American.

Stuart Hurd's many contributions to this Society and his importance to Lane County will not be forgotten. The disposition of his growing memorial fund has not yet been decided.

— Hallie Hills Huntington, President

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Our thanks to Ed Pitkin of 2161 Bailey Hill Road who informs us that the family name of the Elmira Post Mistress in office in January, 1947, (see LCH, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, p. 81) is Wiedke. She was his wife's sister.

Cover photo: James Gay family 1. to r. standing, Ed, Annie, George; seated, James, Lincoln, Mollie (Frances).

— Courtesy Arthur Sperling

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H5

THE 1851 TRAIL DIARY OF JAMES WOODS GAY
&
THE SUNSET TRAIL — REMINISCENCES
of
MARTHA GAY MASTERSON

by Mary Rodman

The discovery of an unpublished Oregon Trail diary, written over 127 years ago, is an exciting event in itself. Moreover, the pleasure of such a find is doubled when the clue to the logbook's existence is found in the memoirs of the diarist's sister - memoirs penned some fifty years after these two pioneers crossed the plains and homesteaded in Lane County.

James Woods Gay (1828-1903), the oldest son of Martin Baker Gay and Johanne Stewart Gay, was 23 years old when the family group (11 children, a daughter-in-law, and a hired man) emigrated from Springfield, Missouri in four covered wagons in mid April of 1851. One of James many duties was to keep the logbook of the trip. His sister, Martha, was then 13 years old. Martha - with five older and five younger siblings - was the middle child of the large family. Although she kept no written record of the overland emigration, she retained vivid memories which she was to set down in a 75 page manuscript of 12 chapters, entitled *The Sunset Trail*, composed around the turn of the century when Martha was in her 6th decade. One of these recollections mentions her brother's diary but only as a peripheral part of her narration.

My oldest brother, James Woods Gay, kept a diary. One day after we had crossed a river (a branch of the Platte) he missed his book which has been lying on the wagon seat near him. Of course he was sorry to lose the diary and asked the captain for permission to go back and look for it. He rode the black pony to where he thought he had lost the book and saw it lying on the ground. When my brother jumped down to pick it up, he was alarmed to see Indian tracks in the sand where we had just crossed the river. He knew the tracks had been made since we were (had been) there and he came back to camp as hard as the pony could run to tell us.

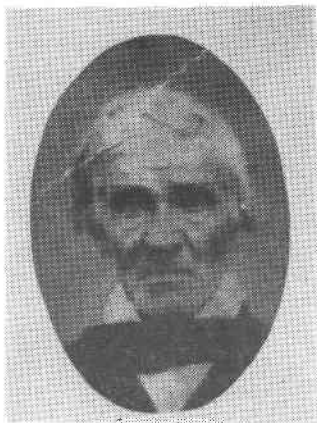
The captain, upon hearing James' report, gave instant orders to decamp, and the travellers sought safety in numbers by hastening to catch up with another train of wagons some miles ahead.

Tracing the trail diary from this moment of rescue on the sands of the Platte proved a surprisingly easy task, thanks to the thorough groundwork previously done by two other researchers. In 1966, Ethel Thompson Briggs a great granddaughter of Martin & Ann Gay from West Virginia, came to Oregon to make a genealogical record of Gay descendants. Later, Lois Barton, spurred by her interest in all pioneer families of the Spencer Butte area, photocopied this family tree "on the off chance that it might some day prove useful" in her own research. Thus a telephone call to one of the descendants, Arthur J. Sperling, of Eugene, (a grandson of James Gay) reaped an instant and delightful harvest.

"There's no question he picked up his diary and brought it to Oregon", Mr. Sperling said. "It's right here on a shelf in my living room."

The diary is one of the few pioneer heirlooms in the safekeeping of Mr. Sperling. A 6 x 7 inch, lined copy book - whose first few pages are missing, - the diary's first entry is May 16, 1851. James logged each remaining day on the overland trail. Furthermore, he continued to use the book as a record of his farming, cabinet making business, the weather, family visits, and other details until the year 1888.

The trail diary of the brother and the reminiscences of his sister compliment and supplement one another. The diary is terse - a succinct record in telegraphic style of mileage tracked, of landmarks,

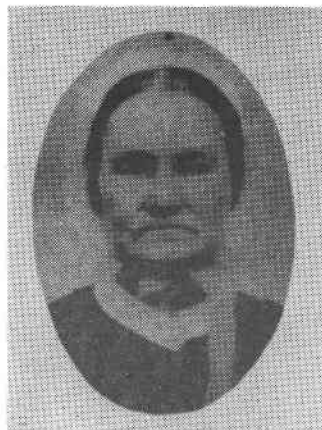


Martin Baker Gay

of weather, of difficult fords and ferries, of game caught, of troubles with wagons, or with the stock, or from Indians. Above all, it notes the quality (or the dearth) of grass and water. Grass and water - the essential requirements to keep the wagons moving, the "fuel" of the prairie schooners. Whether pencilling his entries at the end of the day by campfire or perhaps when riding on the jolting seat of a springless wagon - James (with a few very notable exceptions) confined himself to barebone facts. As the log for June 24th indicates, he was undoubtedly far too busy or fatigued to do otherwise.

we past the independance rock 2 mils from camp I did not have time to examon it all that I see was covered with names I did not have time to wright my name on it . . .

Martha's manuscript, by contrast, is a series of informal remembrances and impressions, recollected in leisure, and viewed from the distant vantage point of half a century's retrospect. The Sunset Trail recaptures the remote past - not only events but also the opinions and emotions of the author. Written at the behest of her family, the Sunset Trail views the crossing of the plains as a whole. From the 2000 mile journey of 162 days, Martha selects the most colorful happenings. Occasionally these memories merge as the author backtracks or runs ahead of herself as one flash of memory ignites another. Rarely does the manuscript supply dates, camp locations, or other precise details.



Ann Gay (Johann) — Courtesy Eva Johnson

James' diary, a contemporaneous source, often provides this specificity. Yet the logbook does not, because of its very purpose, reveal the more human side of the family's experience. Martha's recollections re-create other facets of reality - the pleasures, discomforts, joys, and fears - of the pioneers as they made their epochal journey.

Martha's viewpoint is that of a child. For although she was 13, going on 14, (during a period of history when many girls were betrothed or already married) she apparently was regarded as a youngster in her family. With four older brothers, a sister and sister-in-law, both twenty years old - it is not at all astonishing that she numbers herself among the "children" of the train.

James, on the other hand, was a married man, shouldering the many responsibilities of adulthood on the trail: those of teamster, hunter, fisherman, mechanic, sentry, and scout. Martha, it would seem, had far more leisure to observe and to listen than her brother. He often took off to hunt or to reconnoiter on pony back. Martha walked close to the family wagons, witnessing scenes which escaped James' attention. By carefully comparing the two documents, one finds that Martha's recollections can generally be reconciled with the diary. And often (even if the sequence of events may differ) the memoirs amplify and enrich the logbook. Without the Sunset Trail as a companion piece, we could not decipher the real drama between many of James

understated and cryptic entries.

In addition, the first two chapters of *The Sunset Trail* give an account of her parents' origins in Virginia and in Kentucky as well as remembrances of the author's childhood in Missouri. The background and the character of our early settlers are of import to the understanding of local history. Martha's backward glances shed light on the strong personalities of her parents who, in early middle age, left security - even ease - to take part in the westward migration. They turned their backs on a good life in the hopes of finding a better.

Martin Baker Gay (1803-1867) was a Virginian whose roving spirit first beckoned him westward at the age of twenty. He settled temporarily in Kentucky where he married Ann Evans Stewart (1808-1874) in 1827. Ann was also called Johanne by the family. The young couple, now the parents of six children, moved to southwestern Missouri a decade later. In "a wilderness area" near the town of Springfield, the family lived in a cabin-whose logs were hewn by Gay. For eight years they remained in this outlying region. Four more children were born, and their father built a large frame house.

The author's memories of this period are idyllic. Although she does not state the extent of the land holdings, she depicts a vast and fertile tract with large fields of corn and cotton and of orchardland. The Gays kept poultry, sheep, dairy cattle, and other livestock. By 1845, according to the reminiscences, the farm was a self-sufficient "village" with many outbuildings - barns, a dairy, workshops, and housing for the "tenants". (The "tenants" presumably were slaves. Martha refers to the "darkies" harvesting cotton. M.R.)

The farm prospered. Everyone, including the small children, worked hard. Martha took care of the chickens and helped to sow corn before she reached the age of seven. Her father's energies, not content with running the farm, sought other outlets. He soon had

a thriving side business as a cabinet maker.

In 1846, the family moved into Springfield, there building another home and a cabinet shop on seven acres of land on the edge of the town. The rocky land yielded enough boulders to build a stone wall around their property - a wall which was to serve as breastworks for the Confederate Army during the Civil War battle of Wilson Creek.

Aided by his two older sons, James and Charles, Martin Gay earned a good livelihood as a cabinet maker. Martha and her older sister, Mamie (Mary Gay Cosgwell: See Lane County Historian, Vol. VI, No. 2, June '61), attended a seminary for young ladies. Two of the younger brothers were enrolled also, for boys were admitted to the academy if they could remain "quiet and obedient".

Life in Springfield, Missouri, during the mid eighteen forties, according to Martha's portrayal, was socially animated, intellectually stimulating, and full of ante-bellum charm. The standard of living - for the Gays - was affluent. Immediately across the street from the Gays lived neighbors whose staff of "servants" (slaves?) included a coachman, a gardener, a cook, and a nursemaid. Martha mentions their own family cook, Dinah, and refers to a man of all work without giving his name. Other friends of the family lived on a beautiful estate where the owners kept a flock of peacocks and raised silkworms.

In this city home, the eleventh child - a 9th son - was born. During these three years in Springfield, Martin Gay began to speak more and more often of new horizons.

We were happy and prosperous and the future looked bright but alas! Father got the Western fever and longed to go to the new country, far off toward the setting sun.

For years Gay had been dreaming of the Oregon Territory where he and his family could acquire land. He was in correspondence with former Missourians, already settled in the

Willamette Valley, who sent back glowing accounts to him of the genial climate and remarkable beauty of the Northwest. And of course, in Springfield, as throughout his home state and the nation as a whole - Oregon had become a household word. Johanne Gay, however, did not share her husband's enthusiasm.

Mother did not want to go, to undertake the long and dangerous trek with a large family of small children. She begged father to give up the idea but it seemed he could not do so.

When Martin Gay first began to voice concrete plans to cross the plains, he was 46 years of age. Johanne was 41, the mother of 11 children, five of them still youngsters, and one a babe-in-arms. Her hesitancy seems quite justifiable. All the children, according to Martha, strongly shared their mother's reluctance to uproot themselves from their comfortable home, good school, and many friendships. But eventually Johanne assented to her husband's wishes, and during the spring of 1850, the Gays began their year-long preparation for the migration west.

Gay ordered four canvas-covered wagons, "strong and water tight to be used as boats, if necessary, in crossing swollen streams." He made a careful search for stalwart oxen and for good horses. "Fire and ammunition were stored in waterproof boxes, sidearms provided for all old enough to carry and use them." A huge tent was made; sleeping berths set up in the wagons; a table and sheet iron stove installed. Hand-sewn clothing - to last through the journey and longer - was made. They drew up a list of provisions for food and medicine - to serve 15 people for the five months on the trail. (See the list of supplies on the Linchpin wagon in the Pioneer Museum for an idea of the necessities recommended by the guide-books.)

The Gays sold their old family farm and their home in Springfield along with all their furnishings. By early April, 1851, they began exchanging keepsakes with friends. A few days before departure, they listened to a

"farewell sermon" at their church, and on Thursday, April 10, the caravan of four covered wagons set forth.

The family paid a nostalgic visit to the farm; the children waved good-bye to their country schoolhouse; they then made a sentimental journey to spend three days with their grandmother in the "next county". At the grandmother's home, they awaited with suspense the arrival of their new sister-in-law (Frances Gott Gay) who had married James the previous autumn. Frances' mother and father were conspiring to prevent their daughter from leaving to Oregon.

Her parents had coaxed her to stay (i.e. behind in Springfield) saying that if *she* would not go, her husband would remain with her in Missouri!

Martin Gay had promised to wait 3 days for Frances but not one day longer. At the zero hour, the bride arrived by coach with her grieving father and brother. And the Gay family "parted with dear grandmother knowing full well we would never see her again".

The poignance of such farewells must have been one of the greatest hardships the departing pioneers had to endure - hardest of all perhaps for the older generation so fully conscious of the finality of the leave-taking. One feels pity for the bride's mother who apparently could not bear to prolong the agony of farewell by accompanying Frances in the coach to witness her actual departure. One feels compassion, also, for Johanne Gay, so reluctant to leave her home. She was now in her seventh month of pregnancy, aware that somewhere along the trail ahead, she would give birth to her 12th child.

In chapters IV-VII, Martha highlights the memorable incidents and impressions of the overland journey. In retracing the path with her, we shall also refer to James' diary.

Utilizing one of the printed emigrants' guide-books (we don't know which one) the family crossed Missouri; then travelled northwest across Kansas; thereafter following the waters of the Big and Little Blue Rivers; those of the

Platte; the Sweetwater; the Bear; the Snake; the Malheur; the Umatilla to the Columbia; then Barlow's pass, and the Willamette to this valley.

At last we were finished with all the leave-takings and started out on our trip across the plains. Each day we were leaving civilization behind and were nearing the point agreed upon for the organization of our company for a certain day. We reached the place on time. Many were already there and others soon arrived.

This excerpt illustrates the vagueness which pervades *The Sunset Trail*. Lacking the initial part of the trail diary, whose first entry is written at a camp on the branch of the Blue River, we cannot yet rely on the logbook to pinpoint date or locale. It is fairly safe to assume, however, that the meeting place was at Independence, although St. Joseph, Missouri, was also a point of rendezvous by the year 1851.

At one of these gateway sites, a captain was elected, a different "leader" appointed for each day - the man to be the driver of the vanguard team. "In a long train," Martha notes, "the leading teams have the best position on account of the dust which is dreadful at times and almost suffocating." The lead teams enjoyed a slight advantage in obtaining grass as well. Only a slight one, however, for traffic on the trail was already heavy. All wagon trains tried to get going by mid April when the prairies began to green. Some 1500 persons, according to *The Road to Oregon* by W.J. Ghent, crossed the plains in 1851. The wagons in the original Gay Train were a tiny part of the great, general exodus.

Martha's reminiscences will have a familiar ring to readers of other trail narratives and diaries. She recalls the frightening violence of thunderstorms; the sudden onrushed of buffalo herds; stampedes and runaway wagons; dangerous fords; and the company's constant apprehension of Indian attack. Her story also mentions her delight in some of the scenic wonders, of treasured friendships made on the trail, and the pastimes around the campfires in the evenings.

The wagons arrived at Fort Kearney, without untoward incident, on May 23rd. On June 1st, they forded the wide and treacherous South Platte. Martha describes their dread of the quicksands of the shallow, sandy river. It was necessary to cross "in a half-circle", to go down with the current about midway across the river, then turn to move diagonally across and against the current. The train of wagons managed the difficult, nerve-racking crossing successfully, but other troubles instantly erupted.

We started in and went downstream and then came out on the other shore safely but then an argument - the first since we left the East! Some wanted to rest for the remainder of the day and others wanted to go on. Hot words were spoken and one man drew his gun to shoot another. The captain rolled out on the road and said all who wished could follow him. Some others started and called to their friends. Father did not go; four families stayed with him. Those who had gone on insisted on travelling fast. Father and some others did not care to rush along and wear out their teams at the beginning of the journey. The fast travellers got to Oregon before we did but lost nearly all their stock and had trouble in different ways.

The newly organized company elected their own captain. There were eleven men "able to carry arms". The four families who remained with the Martin Gay train all originated from the same home county - Green County, Missouri.

James' diary gives this account of the fording of the South Platte and the aftermath:

June 1 to d (day) 7 miles to camp across the platte river with out any baots (boats?)

June 2 12 miles to camp split in the company

(Note: Re-organization of a company often took place much earlier than the division noted by Martha and James. Such re-groupings were formed at the Kansas crossing, or at an encampment along the Big or Little Blue, according to the Oregon Trail Revisited by Gregory Franzwa and the *Wake of the Prairie Schooner* by Irene Paden. The first stages of the journey were wisely considered a shakedown cruise to test

the compatability of the travellers. M.R.)

Making steady, if slow, progress - the new company descended into Ash Hollow on the Nebraska plains, passed Lone Tower and Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff, and on the 11th day of June, arrived at Fort Laramie. They covered 31 miles on the next two days. On June 14th, in the early morning hours, Johanne Gay gave birth to a daughter, Julia, at a campsite along the North Platte.

Early in the morning of June 14, I was awakened by the wailing of a child. I asked mother whose baby was crying and she said it was hers. I kept quiet for along time fearing I might have to welcome another brother! . . . Imagine my joy when mother said, "It is a little sister."

Here, a reader of the reminiscences, cannot suppress certain questions. Did Martha sleep in another wagon, or in the tent, and then go pay an early morning call to her mother? Or if she shared the same wagon, did the young girl sleep so soundly that she slumbered through her mother's travail? Or was Julia's birth an extraordinarily easy one? Whichever interpretation one choses, it is clear the covered wagon baby brought great joy to Martha.

James entry for the red letter day reads as follows:

June 14 wash day & rest & hunt killed black tailed deer and antelope sister juley borned

On the following day, the wagons began moving again.

June 15 to d (day) 17 miles to camp on a creek wood plenty to day we 4 miles & struck the river plenty of wood to d at 12 oclock we left the river buffalo seen

Throughout the months of June and July, James notes the game he and other hunters brought down to provide welcome feasts for the company larder - buffalo, antelope, deer, and sage hens. One the 18 of June, "we killed 3 buffalo". On the 14th of July, "250 fish caught" on the Bear River.

After the birth of Juley, they continued along the Platte, then followed the Crooked Muddy, and made their

way through the dismal regions of the alkali flats and ponds in the deserts of present day Wyoming. Then following the Sweetwater, they reached the South Pass of the Rockies - crossing it on the 30th of June. On the 4th of July they crossed Green River. Martha gives us this account of the family's celebration of Independence Day.

We crossed Green River the Fourth of July. It is a broad stream and flows along quietly. Its banks, thickly studded with beautiful trees, were reflected in the clear water. There was a good ferry across the river and we crossed so quickly we scarcely realized it. We then made camp and prepared to celebrate the Fourth of July, the best we could under the circumstances. The ferry man had a violin and he favored us with some very good music. The boys fired a salute and mother said we must have a good dinner and graced our table with a real cake.

James' entry for the holiday takes no note of the festive doings.

July 4 day 12 miles to camp on green river good grass we crossed the river without any trouble and traveled down it 8 miles to single camp.

Three days later, by the 7th of July, they had passed Fort Bridger. Soon thereafter they began encountering hostile Indians. Johanne Gay became ill.

My mother who had endured the hardships and privations of the journey, bravely and uncomplainingly, had to give up. Tired nature called for rest. She hovered for days and weeks between life and death and in her fevered delirium would see her children carried off by the Indians or tortured by her side . . . We often begged her to let us stop so she could rest and gain strength, but she would say "no, go on, I am afraid we will all perish in the mountains if we are late in arriving there . . . Finally mother showed signs of improvement and asked to sit by the campfire . . .

Soon after mother recovered, a Mrs. Ross, one of our company, was stricken with fever and was very ill, but with good care was brought back to health. Those two cases were all the serious illnesses we had during the journey.

(Note: Whatever the nature of Johanne Gay's and Mrs. Ross' sickness, we know it was not cholera. The emigrants of 1851 were fortunate in escaping this tragic plague. The worst epidemic occurred in 1849, and a severe one in

GAY FAMILY NAMES

Martin Baker Gay b Jamestown, Virginia 10-24-1803
m Johanne Evans (Evins) b Kentucky? m Boone Co., Kentucky

CHILDREN

James Woods Gay b McCreary Co., Kentucky, 2-5-1828
m Frances Gott, 10-10-1850, Greene Co., Mo.

Charles Franklin Gay b Tennessee, 9-14-1829
m Rebecca Burkhart 5-27-1858, Albany, Or.

Mary Frances Gay b Boone Co., Missouri, 9-21-1831
m John Cogswell, 10-28-1852, Lane Co., Or.

John Walker Gay b 12-25-1833 Missouri
m Helena Pike, 9-29-1877, Linn Co., Or.

Martin Baker Gay, Jr. b 10-15-1835 Missouri
m Elizabeth Dillon 5-17-1866, Lane Co., Or.

Martha Ann Gay b 11-8-1837 Ark.
m James A. Masterson 8-27-1871, Lane Co., Or.

Evans Stewart Gay b 10-21-1839, Mo.
m 1. Mary Davis 6-7-1868, Portland, Or.
m 2. Sarah Crandall Wilsey 1-27-1877

David Green Gay b 9-14-1841 Mo.
m 1. Charlotte Temple Linder 5-4-1871, Eugene, Or.
m 2. Kehturah Isham 4-19-1893

Daniel Goode Gay b 4-13-1844, Springfield, Mo.
m Ella Richardson

William Kelly Gay b 4-12-1846 Mo.

Lodowick Wadlow Gay b 8-28-1848 Mo.

Sarah Julia Gay b 6-14-1851 Nebr. Terr. crossing the plains

1850. The disease again ravaged the wagon trains in 1852, according to Ghent's *The Road to Oregon*. M.R.)

James makes this reference to illness on the trail - the only such mention in his diary.

July 11 today we lay by on the account of sickness 2 antilop killed wagon left

A close scrutiny of this stark entry reveals a great deal. The sickness must indeed have been critical, if the wagons "lay by" for the wagons were passing through hostile Indian territory in southwestern Wyoming. To tarry might well prove fatal. And the last two words of James' entry - "wagon left" understate a major setback for the entire company. To be forced to abandon one of the wagons scarcely beyond the mid-way point of the journey was a calamity. We do not know whether the broken wagon belonged to the Gays or to one of the other families in the company. Whichever - the ordeal of re-packing; of salvaging precious food stuff and other cargo; of jettisoning the ex-

cess; of re-assigning storage space, seating, and sleeping quarters - delayed the entire group. The loss of a wagon was in itself a source of physical and psychological stress. How much more so during a period of worry over illness in the company and prescence of hostile Indians.

By checking back in the trail diary, we note that ever since the wagons had moved away from the comparative security of the area of Fort Bridger - there were several entries indicating trouble. In context, it is easy to see why James had little time to write in detail about his mother's illness.

July 8 10 mils to camp on creek good road and grass pine timber indians repairing wagons we crossed 4 creek at fort bridge

He mentions Indians again on July 9th and 10th. Although we cannot be certain of either the time sequence of the locale, several passages of Martha's recollections can presumably be reconciled with this early July period. Indian harrassment was a frequent occurence.

One incident in the Sunset Trail unquestionably took place in late July in Idaho. Both documents mention the frightening episode of the runaway wagons.

Sometimes we had to travel after night to reach grass and water for the stock. It was considered a dangerous thing to do and it was only with great caution that we could undertake it. The Indians would conceal themselves in a ravine or near the road and wait for the train, then frighten our teams. . . . I remember one night . . . Father and the Captain had gone on ahead of us to find a camping place, when very suddenly just as we were crossing a ravine every team seemingly started at the same moment. They ran a short distance when my brother whose team was in the lead managed to get them stopped and the next wagon locked wheels with his and in this way all the teams were controlled excepting the last one which struck out across the country. The herd of cattle and horses came dashing up and added to the confusion.

James notation for July 30 reads as follows:

20 miles to camp on rock creek good grass bad road this morning for 6 miles and the remainder was good, we had the unpleasant sight this evening of seeing the train of loose stock runaway & one wagon run 200 yards & 4 more started but was stopped one wagon (ongue) broke

After the stampede had been controlled and the runaway wagon rescued, according to Martha, they caught up with the scouting captain. No fires or lights were permitted that night. At dawn, they saw Indians "skulking about". Some few hours later, on the trail, five Indians tried to stop the captain and Martin Gay who were again reconnoitering ahead of the train. At the noon rest stop of the same day, the Indians again appeared.

Their chief rode from one wagon to another, peering in to see if he could lay his hands on anything he could steal. . . . the chief rode up to the wagon where mother was sitting with my baby sister in her arms and made a grab at the child but his horse jumped and mother screamed for father who rushed up to her. The chief gave a signal to his men and they all dashed off toward the river. Just then we saw a long train of emigrants coming up behind us. No doubt their timely arrival had saved us from death. We heard a few days later that there

had been three hundred warriors near by and they attacked a train at the same place and massacred all the emigrants.

(Note: No such massacre in the year 1851 is on record in general histories of the Oregon Trail. Such a rumor, however, with all its attendant terror could wreck havoc on nerves. The story of the murder of the Whitmans in 1847 was well known. M.R.)

Four days later, on August 3, James records this hearsay tale of terror - possibly a variant of the rumor which terrified his sister.

5 miles to camp on salmon fall creek . . . this evening a man came to camp and told us that the Indians had killed 1 man and crippled another one and all so 1 girl and robbed the wagon of much as they could pack and taken one horse and killed one oxen.

It is clear to see that fear became one of their most familiar companions during July and August. Danger from immediate attack; apprehension of dangers ahead; rumors; sickness; mechanical troubles with their wagons; and accumulated travel weariness became the order of the days. Another grave difficulty threatened. Their oxen were wearing out from the long, long pull. Martha writes.

Our oxen were very thin and weak. Teams were doubled up to enable them to get over the bad roads and up hills. We cast away everything we could spare and gave away our over supply of provisions we had on hand and lightened the loads all we possibly could. Everyone who was able to walked most of the time as we could easily keep up with the train.

By glancing through the trial diary selectively, we can see the overall problem of the loss of the livestock.

July 20 (one day past Sody Springs on the Bear River in Idaho) today 20 miles to camp at the foot of a big hill where they is plenty of wood and water and grass today there was rain around us cows leg broke

July 21 today 20 miles to camp on a branch we traveled threw mountains all day & got threw them and come in the plain of fort hall on snake river rain today cow bout dead

July 26 (Ogden River) 9 miles to camp . . . 3 head of stock left

On July 30, the stampede and the

runaway wagons - already cited - took place.

July 31 12 miles to camp on rock creek
... oxen left

August 3 5 miles to camp on salmon fall
creek plenty of grass bad road for 2
miles Indians at the camp today oxen
dead ...

August 5 (on the Snake) 14 miles to camp
on the river ... sandy road & big hills
throughout the day heifer left today

August 7 (a branch of the Snake) ... my
pony left the train and went back to
where we camped last night. ... oxen dead

August 12 (Boise River) ... oxen dead

August 15 (Malheur River ... oxen dead

August 18 (Snake) 12 up the river bad
road all day high hill and deep ravines
... cow lost ...

August 19 ... we traveled on higher
land today we got sight of some timber
oxen dead

September 14 (Barlow's Pass) 7 miles to
camp on the sum of the c mts crossed a
mud pond 2 oxen left

At least 13 head of cattle were lost. As
neither the trail diary or the
reminiscences tell us how many oxen
and cows the caravan started out with
from Missouri, we cannot really gauge
this loss. But there is no doubt the death
of the poor beasts saddened the
travellers. Martha expresses her pity
for the oxen as they approach the end of
the journey at Barlow's Pass.

With brave hearts and jaded teams, we
slowly ascended the eastern slope of the
cascades. Old and young were out in the
rain storm, walking up the rugged moun-
tains over rocks and felled trees, through
mud and water.

There was great deal of crowding and
confusion. The road was so narrow and
the huge trees so thick on either side, no
one could pass the teams ahead. Some
were obliged to move slowly and others
wished to hurry and could not do so ...
There could be no haste with the poor,
tired oxen. Sometimes they fell in the
mire to raise no more. Then others were
put in their places, thus we struggled on.
One day the great train of us only moved
a mile.

Theft of livestock also was a threat. A
far greater danger were attempts to ter-
rorize or to kill them. To turn back to
early August and find the travellers
camped on the Snake, approximately 30
miles west of "the big salmon falls", we

read of one of the most dramatic in-
cidents of the entire trek. On the even-
ing of August 8th, the wagons were put
in a circle to corral the animals. At
dawn, the travellers found poisoned ar-
rows in three of the cattle.

I was aroused ... by my sister calling to
me to wake up and see what was over
my head. I at once opened my eyes and
there was an arrow over my head, stick-
ing in the wagon cover and another at
my side! Moccasin tracks were in the
road near our wagon. ... When we left,
our road led up a hill and we could see
the Indians taking possession of our
camp ground. After that night of terror,
we always tried to keep near some other
wagon train.

James' diary pinpoints this frightening
episode.

August 9 18 miles to camp on the plain
... 5 arrows found this morning 3 of
them in stock they was in 30 steps of
the wagons ...

In typical fashion, he does not exag-
gerate or dwell on the matter. The same
entry confines as he lists other facts of
the day:

... about three miles from the spring we
come to a creek of good water and 7 or 8
miles from there welcome to another one
in a deep canon ruff road all day

Only once in the entire diary does
James give in to his own mood of grow-
ing weariness and despair. These
atypical lines express a desire to cast off
the burdens of adulthood and become a
child again.

August 1 I wish my mother was with
me this evening at the little salmon falls
I wish my papa was hear this evening to
kiss me

Then, conscientiously, he again pencils
the name of the month and the date,
and logs the 10 miles travelled that day
and the "good grass, ruff road".

Early August meant not only rough
terrain but also one of the most
dangerous and difficult crossings. On
August 6, the trail diary describes the
crossing of the Snake at the Glenn's
Ferry.

today we crossed the river and camped on
the bank for the day it is a daggerness
ford it will average 3 feet for 400 yards
we cross right opposit to 2 islands we
all got over safe after 6 hours work 20
wagons crossed today & 43 more to cross
tomorrow this river is fit for nothing

from head to mouth too only give the indians fish and water.

The following day, they managed to make 11 miles and found grass and water plentiful.

I seen some men digging a grave today for a chile it was the first fresh one that I have seen since we started

By the third week of August, they arrived at Powder River and sighted the beautiful Blue Mountains. There they found good bunch grass. On the 24th, they arrived at the Grande Ronde. Martha's description gives us this graphic picture of their descent.

To make the descent safely, a tree with a brushy top was tied behind the wagon and the team taken off; then with long ropes or chains to hold the wagon upright, it was lowered to the foot of the hill. Then another, until all were landed in the pretty little valley which we thought was paradise. . . . Near the hill on the river (the Umatilla) we saw Indian wigwams and all over the valley were thousands of Indian ponies. . . . One chief said he had five thousand head and his tribe owned many thousands more. He came to our camp, bringing his squaw and papoose with him. . . . Father asked them to take supper with us.

The tone of James' diary, describing their encampment on the Umatilla, also shows a definite elevation of spirits. He notes a "good road and plenty of grass", as well as "thousands of the finest ponies that I have ever seen in my life".

On the first of September, they camped by a pond on the flats near John Day River. On the third, they arrived at the Columbia. On the fourth, they lay by in order to take their turn crossing the Deschutes.

September 4 4 miles to camp on fall river we could not cross it wagons before us all the indian canoes was run off and 2 mean men had a little boat and \$5 a wagon this evening it could not run, the post had to be moved

September 5 we lay on the banks and done nothing

On the 6th, they made the crossing.

Today we crossed the river 2 wagons on the boat and while it was returning for the 3rd the rope broke and we crossed 2 over in 2 canoes the indians working them

Four days later, on the 10th, they arrived at Barlow's Pass. Martha recalls a "wonderful display of the Aurora Borealis" during this stage of their journey, and "Mount Hood crowned in snow, kept sentinel watch over the chain" of mountains.

At the pass, the Gay family parted with their travelling companions who chose to go to the Dalles and thence travelling by flatboat. The narrow Barlow Road over the south shoulder of Mount Hood was thronged not only with arriving emigrants but with "people from the valley with strong teams going out to assist friends across the mountains." Crawling through mud, the wagons reached the summit on the 14th of September in a snowstorm. In order to make the steep descent, they again unhitched the oxen, tied trees to the backs of the wagons, and used rope to brake the cumbersome prairie schooners.

On the old Barlow Road, Martha's older sister, Mary Gay Cogswell, first caught the attention of her future husband. As Martha was trudging somewhere through the pass, she heard a voice exclaim, "See the big stove."

Some emigrants had left it (the stove) when almost in sight of the valley. While we were all standing looking at the stove . . . two men came along on horseback . . . One was John Cogswell. Mamie, my sister, was standing in front of the stove with her foot on its hearth, resting and waiting for our wagons to come up the hill . . . We heard afterward that the older man said to the other as they rode off, "Did you notice that beautiful black-eyed girl standing in front of that stove? She is to be my future wife."

(Note: For the story of the Cogswells, see *The First Hundred Marriages in Lane County, Oregon Territory*, Lane County Historian, Vol. VI - No. 2, June 1961.)

On the 19th day of September, approximately one hundred and sixty-two days after their departure from Springfield, Missouri, Martin Baker Gay and his family arrived at Foster's Ranch on the upper Clackamas River. (Note: Philip Foster, 1805-1884, who in 1846 assisted in building of Barlow Pass, and whose trading post and

hostelry was a mecca for overland travellers - a warm symbol of journey's end. M.R.)

... we arrived at Fosters and camped at that haven of rest for the weary emigrants. Five long months of tiresome travel and anxiety. For we scarcely felt safe for a day ... but we, with many others had lived through it all and gained the Promised Land. We were a happy band around our campfire that night. The weather was fine and we went cheerfully about preparing supper from the vegetables we bought of Mr. Foster. When we were all seated, enjoying the evening meal, Father looked over the happy group and said to Mother, "We must thank God, Johanne, that we are here in safety and good health."

On the following day, September 20, the trail diary notes that they travelled 2 miles and camped at a mill. Only ten more entries of James logbook commemorate the journey over the trail. Five of these give us the names of friends who were waiting to welcome the new arrivals. Some 63 miles after leaving Fosters, James notes:

September 24 4 miles to Mr cooks.

On the following day:

September 25 4 miles to Mr looneys.

They remained 4 days with the Looneys.

September 29 12 to Mr Dilard in Salem

September 30 to Mr burnets

"To Mr burnets" is James' last entry of the overland trip. The "ruff road" was now behind them.

Martha's memoirs depict the pleasures of reunions with the old family friends and the hospitable invitations to remain in their homes indefinitely. But the Gays did not take advantage of the generous offers. Instead, they put up their tent "near the town of Albany". Martin Gay instantly began to build a new house, finishing the main structure

before the rainy season. An idea of the family's industry and self-reliance may be gleaned from Martha's recital of the accomplishments of that first autumn and winter.

As soon as we moved into the house, some of the boys went to work in the woods splitting rails, the others hauled the rails home to build corrals for the cows and calves, also to fence in fields and a garden, ready for us in early spring. Parks for the chickens were built and one boy was set to work plowing whenever we had considerable work done on our new place. Father built a shop and made some nice furniture from Oregon maple.

Diligence and resourcefulness were second nature to Gay. Yet, despite the opportunity to lead a comfortable life in the valley, he still longed for other horizons. His dream was to find unfenced, still unsettled land where he could "run a stock ranch".

A man with the ability to transform dreams into doing - he began to explore. In the spring of 1852, he found his ideal site. This lovely land of hills, meadows, and woods lies south of Spencer's Butte. There were two Donation Land Claims: Martin B. Gay and wife, 319.98 acres; James W. Gay and wife, 319.98 acres; some 640 acres in all. Later on, according to Martha's recollections, "Father bought land at different times until he had two thousand under fence, besides thousands of acres in the foothills."

Both Martha's memoirs and the continuation of James' diary give many glimpses of the life of these early homesteaders in Lane County. But they are a sequel to the story of the crossing of the plains - a sequel to be written for some future issue of the Historian, or to be incorporated in a general history of the early settlers in the hills south of Eugene.

THE WAGON TRAIN OF 1843

Written by Ida Patterson
About Year 1900

The accounts of the first emigrant trains have always held a peculiar interest for me. My mother, a child of six years, was a member of one of the earliest trains - that of 1843. I have heard her relate, many times, incidents of the journey, and have wondered at the motives which could lead people to undertake what they did. I have often thought that their descendents, the men and women of today, lack qualities of both body and spirit which their fore fathers possessed. How many of us would be willing to undertake what they did, and how many of us would endure and live?

The first record of an expedition to Oregon by land is of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805-1806. Between three and four years were spent in making this journey. Their hardship, trials, and final success in reaching the Pacific are known to all. That they returned safely was cause for general thanksgiving.

In 1810 - 11 Nelson Price Hunt made the journey with the land portion of John Jacob Astor's expedition. Their condition when they reached the end of their journey is described a "being more dead than alive", and their experience seemed to demonstrate the folly of attempting to bring wagons, women and children across the Rocky Mountains and through the deserts.

In 1817 Hall J. Kelly made the first attempt to induce emigrants to come to Oregon. He made various appeals and efforts organized a society for the purpose and finally came overland through Mexico to Vancouver. His failing health, however, caused him to return home, after having lost \$30,000 in his attempts.

From 1835 - 1841 there is recorded no immigration to Oregon except that of missionaries.

The year 1841 brought the first emigration to the Willamette Valley when 111 persons successfully made the journey. They did not attempt to bring

wagons across the mountains, but packed their goods on horses and mules, loading them on every morning and unloading at evening and so performed the journey of 2,000 miles from the Missouri frontier, although both Bonneville and Whitman had years before taken wagons beyond the crests of the Rockies.

Counting these 111 persons, the number of white people in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho at this time, not connected with the Hudson Bay Company, was about 300.

The Hudson Bay Co., in the same year, fearing that the occupancy of the country by Americans would endanger their interests, induced 23 families from their Red River Colonies, to settle near the head of Pudget Sound. Although the Hudson Bay Co. wished them to remain here and thus strengthen the claim of England to the country north of the Columbia, their dissatisfaction with the place caused them to remove the next year to the Willamette Valley.

1842 brought 109 more people to Oregon - men, women and children. This number included Dr. Elija White, who as sub-indian agent for the region west of the Rocky Mts., was the first commissioned representative of the U.S. Government to live in Oregon, - also L.W. Hastings, A.S. Lovejoy, F.X. Mattheieu, and Medodonum Crawford, men who afterward became prominent in the political history of the state.

This was the first train that attempted to perform the journey with wagons. They succeeded in reaching the Green River with them, but there $\frac{1}{2}$ the wagons were left and the contents packed on mules and horses. At Fort Hall the remaining wagons were left and the company divided into sections and independently, as suited their circumstances or wishes, took the Hudson Bay Co.'s trail to Walla Walla. From Walla Walla part of the company took the Hudson Bay Co. boats down the Col-



Ida's mother, Amanda Olinger (circa 1855), who floated on the featherbeds at age six. — Courtesy Lane County Museum

umbia while the others followed the old Indian trail across the Cascade Mts. to Willamette Falls.

The journey of this train, from Ft. Hall to the Willamette Falls, - 1000 miles of wilderness - is described as an extremely careless one. No precautions were taken against the Indians, who showed the travellers the greatest kindness, supplying them with game and aid whenever necessary.

The emigration increased the white population of Oregon to a little less than 500 people.

We now come to the train of 1843, the first wagon train to Oregon. Many things make this of great interest and importance.

1. The discussion of the motives which impelled this determined impulse toward the west.

2. The time - the crisis of the controversy between the U.S. and England over the title to the country.

3. The controversy as to Dr. Whit-

man's connection with it.

4. The fact that it contained so many people who afterwards became closely identified with the history and the progress of the state.

J.W. Nesmith has thus described the gathering of this company and its organization - "Without orders from any quarter, and without preconcert, promptly as the grass began to start, the emigrants began to assemble near Independence, at a place called Fitzhugh's Mill. On the 17th of May, 1843, notices were circulated through different encampments, that on the succeeding day those who contemplated emigrating to Oregon would meet at a designated point to organize. Promptly at the appointed hour the motley groups assembled. They consisted of people from all the States and Territories, and nearly all nationalities, the most, however, from Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa, and all strangers to one another, but impressed

with some crude idea that there existed some imperative necessity for some kind of an organization for mutual protection against the hostile Indians inhabiting the great unknown wilderness stretching away to the shores of the Pacific, and which they were about to traverse with their wives and children, household goods and all their earthly possessions.

Mr. Nesmith then proceeds to relate how Peter H. Burnett, called "Pete" Burnett was called upon for a speech. How, mounted upon a log, he delivered a glowing florid address, describing the crowded condition of the East where elbow room was lacking, and the magnificent country along the Pacific where the ground yielded abundant harvest with but little cultivation; where the streams were crowded with fish and native trees groaned under their load of fruit the year 'round. Where the principal labor of the settler was to keep the deer elk, buffalo and wild turkeys from destroying his gardens.

He called upon them to deliver this invaluable country from the British, and to build up an empire under the stars and stripes. He scorned the idea of any real danger from hostile Indians, expressing a wish to see the tribe which the present company could not easily "clean out" in the first encounter.

Other speeches of like tenor were made. These people seemed like a crowd of enthusiastic children. No one among them had ever been to Oregon, not more than half a dozen had ever read an account of it. Their idea of the journey was drawn chiefly from their own imaginations.

They finally elected a full set of officers with Burnett as captain and adjourned amid the great enthusiasm.

On May 20, 1843, under a thorough military organization, they took up their march toward the setting sun. John Gantt, an old army officer, acted as guide. He was well acquainted with the country as far as Green River, but of the country beyond that point, one half of the journey, he knew nothing. Had not Dr. Whitman overtaken them

near this place, their hardships would no doubt have been much greater than what actually overtook them.

This train consisted of 120 wagons carrying 1000 men, women and children. About $\frac{1}{3}$ of the people were capable of bearing arms. They had about 5000 head of cattle. As before mentioned, Peter H. Burnett acted as captain and James W. Nesmith as orderly sergeant. A council of nine men was appointed to settle all disputes.

They later divided into two columns, the "Light Column" commanded by Capt. Martin, who succeeded Burnett, and the "Cow Column" headed by Jesse Applegate. The two columns travelled separately but near enough to help each other in case of Indian attacks.

After a weary march of many months, they reached Ft. Hall. They were advised by Capt. Grant, the Hudson Bay Co. agent, to leave their wagons here, but after much discussion, upon Dr. Whitman's advice, proceeded with them under the guidance of Dr. Whitman and Sticcus, a Cayouse Chief and his band. They reached Whitman's station safely. From Walla Walla part of the company took boats down the Columbia to The Dalles, but the greater part of the band proceeded overland.

From The Dalles there was no road westward through the Cascade Mts. to the Willamette Valley. Rafts must be constructed by which they could descend the Columbia to the Willamette. This was by far the severest part of the whole journey. The many vicissitudes and dangers of the train at this time and their sufferings during the first fall and winter would fill volumes.

When we consider the whole journey of this train requiring nine months, we marvel at the patience and fortitude with which men, women and children endured hardship, privation and suffering. The leaving of homes and kindred, the physical hardships of riding all day long in a wagon, where families lived 3 months without bread, the giving out of provisions, the failing strength of the oxen, the casting away of cherished articles to lighten the load, the fear that Indians might attack them, sickness,

death, the graves by the road side - all these things form the details of a journey that has few parallels in the history of any people.

My mother, though but six years old, remembers many incidents of the trip - the stifling dust - the wind which sometimes threatened to overturn the wagon - the scorching heat when animals as well as people gasped for breath - the day when they travelled through a dense swarm of crickets - the prairie dog villages.

On Green River a rainstorm came upon the train encamped for the night. The wagons, according to custom were drawn up in a circle with the cattle inside. The thunder and lightening were terrific and the rain came down in torrents. The wind at time raised one or two wheels of the wagon. The frightened cattle stampeded and escaped from the wagon enclosure, some of the weak ones being trampled and killed.

In coming down the Columbia from Walla Walla, Indians were employed to transport the emigrants and their possessions down the river in canoes. When rapids were encountered, the goods were carried around and the Indian boatman took the empty canoes over the rapids, a very difficult and dangerous task. In walking 'round one of these portages my mother's youngest brother, a child of 2 years, was entrusted to the care of an older girl. The company strolled leisurely along and came to the camp in groups. On reassembling the child was missing and the girl who had had charge of him reported that she had grown tired of carrying him and had left him at some distance with other children of the party. Investigation disclosed that these other children had gone leaving him among a hundred Indians. The frantic father and his neighbors made haste to return but the child could not be found. It was supposed that he would never be seen again. When the searchers returned to camp, the Indian canoeman was building a fire, and seated on a log in a row were the lost child and his two sisters. The Indian was standing guard. He could speak no word of English, but

he had placed the children on the log and if they moved off he placed them back again, and so forced them to remain until their parents' return.

In bringing the canoe down the river he had seen the child and had recognized him. Taking off his only garment, a buffalo robe, he wrapped the boy in it, placed him between his knees and so had made the dangerous passage over the rapids - a difficult feat under the most favorable circumstances.

One of the most outstanding incident of the journey across the plains was the losing and recovering of the oxen which drew the covered wagon in which my mother's family rode. Turned out to graze as usual, when the train stopped at night, they wandered away. The train held over the next day, and a thorough hunt was made for them, but they could not be found. That evening the family faced the prospect of having to abandon their wagon and having themselves and their goods distributed among the other wagons as the train could not wait longer.

That night my Quaker grandmother in her distress prayed that the oxen might be found and that her family might be spared the disaster of being separated, possibly, in those days, never to be all together again. Sleep finally came to her and in a dream she saw the oxen and knew the place where they were. The next morning she roused her husband very early, described to him the place where the oxen were, and at the first hint of dawn, he went to the place she described. There he found the oxen and returned with them to the camp amid a general rejoicing. My grandmother and her family always believed that the finding of the oxen was a direct answer to her prayers.

We have a historic feather bed. It started from the home in Iowa in company with another. Many times on the journey, when the weary oxen showed signs of exhaustion did my grandfather advise that it be abandoned, but my grandmother protested and so over hill and valley, across the deserts and mountains, across rushing rivers, the feather beds rode triumphantly at the

top of the load puffed up with their own importance. Once far out on the plains, when arrangements were made to repel an attack by Indians, they formed part of a barricade behind which the frightened women and children huddled, while their whitened faces, but undaunted courage, the fathers, sons and brothers stood with ready arms to defend their families. They heard the sobbing of the frightened children, the prayers of the mothers and later the joyful cries when it was found that the supposed Indians were only travellers like themselves.

It has often been related in our family how my grandmother, Rachel Stout Olinger, challenged her husband, Abram Olinger, when the train was hurriedly barricading themselves against the attack. It is said that some of the women acted very foolishly, some screamed, some prayed, others stood bravely by their husbands, helping in every way possible. My grandmother, after placing her children in the safest place she could find, stayed with her husband as long as she could help him. Returning to her children, she said in parting, "Now Abram, don't thee get shot in the back".

At the portages on the Columbia, the feather beds were again challenged, but as before grandmother's wish prevailed so on they went. At Oregon City after another challenge and another rescue, they were loaded onto pack mules for the last stage of the journey. On they went, swelling (literally) with pride and arrogance at these evidences of their value.

The train reached a swollen creek. The pack animals plunged into the water, among them the Indian pony on which my mother rode. There was a mis-step of the pony, a plunge into deep water, and the rapid current swept him off his feet into the deep whirling water below. The horror stricken people could

render no aid and the child was given up for lost, when lo! it was seen that pony, pack and child were floating gaily along on the water and that the current was carrying them rapidly to the shore some distance below. The pony struggled to the bank where many hands were reaching out to grasp the bridle and claim his precious load. On examination, the pony's pack was found to consist principally of two large, fat, corpulent downy feather beds and the cause of his escape was explained.

My mother sleeps nightly on one of those feather beds - the remnants of it. It has been washed and steamed and aired and renovated so many times that only the stubs of the original feathers remain, but no one suggested that it be discarded.

The train of 1843 was followed by that of 1844 which added 800 more people to the population of Oregon, that of 1845 was still larger, 1846 - 7 followed, the latter bringing about 4000 people. The road was now opened and each succeeding year saw a steady movement westward. The story of 1843 is in part the story of all. The march to the West has challenged the admiration of the world. Of them Whittier has written:

PIONEERS

"I hear the tread of
nations yet to be
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea.

The rudiments of empire here
Are plastic yet and warm,
The chaos of a mighty world
is rounding into form."

These are the people who proved that land emigration to the West was possible; who decided that the United States and not England should hold Oregon, and who brought civilization beyond the Rocky Mts. and laid the foundations of the Empire of the West.

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MOTHERS' CLUB

By Frances Peterson

(sources: History of the club 1929-41 by Mrs. Scott Corbett, Sr. of Portland, material furnished by Mrs. Robert Brooks, state president 1977-78, Mrs. W.T. Lemman, Eugene-Springfield Unit president 1976-78, Mrs. Gerald Hancock, Portland Unit president, 1976-78, Keith Richard, U. of O. archivist.)



First Officers - Mrs. W.F. Bond, Pendleton, V. Pres., Mrs. Walter M. Cook, Portland, Pres., Mrs. Wilson H. Jewett, Eugene, Treas. May, 1930 — Courtesy U. of O. Archives

University President Arnold Bennett Hall strongly urged the creation of a University Mothers' Club in 1928-29. His efforts bore fruit when on May 11, 1929, the first meeting of the University Mothers was held. Mrs. Eric W. Allen of Eugene presided at this meeting that saw the first slate of officers elected. They were:

President

Mrs. Walter M. Cook, Portland

Vice-President

Mrs. John Runyan, Roseburg

Secretary

Mrs. Wilson H. Jewett, Eugene

and Miss Marian Phy was appointed University of Oregon Consultant to the Club.

Originally the club was aimed at the mothers of the first year students in an attempt to acquaint these mothers with the University. Membership is now open to all mothers and University students.

The three major purposes, established in 1929, were and are: providing scholarships and emergency loans to students, promoting good publicity and public relation, encouraging fellowship among mothers of University students in a community.

The University of Oregon Mothers' club is organized on two levels; the state and the local. Each May, the officers of the state level are elected during Parents' Weekend - once called Mothers' Weekend. The activities for this weekend are planned by the Junior

Class. The state level officers, and the presidents of local units and a University consultant from the state board of directors which meets four times a year.

Units outside of Eugene were started in 1937. Student leaders on the campus took over the task of rousing interest in starting units. The State Board appointed District Vice-Presidents to help the President organize units.

In 1947 there were 18 units; Albany, Baker, Clackamas County, Coos Bay, Coquille, Eugene-Springfield, Pendleton, Grants Pass, Hood River, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Lakeview, Medford, Portland, Roseburg, Salem, San Francisco and The Dalles. At the present time there are only three units; Eugene-Springfield, Portland, and Bend. The alumni association is trying to start units again.

Karl W. Onthank, who also helped with the organization of the Mothers' Club was executive secretary of the club, a position he held until his death in 1967.

At the first meeting of the Mothers' Club a plan to have an infirmary constructed on the University campus was adopted. By 1935 \$10,411.54 was turned over to the University by the Club to help build the infirmary.

The Mothers' Club also placed libraries in all living organizations on the campus. This was commenced in 1931 and completed in 1932.

The Scholarship fund and Revolving Loan Fund, initiated in 1934 by Mrs. Elbert C. Peets of Portland, continues to be of benefit to many students at the University. Mrs. Peets was elected State President in 1936-37.

The Greenwood Memorial Fund was started in May, 1941, to help raise money for the Scholarship Fund. The Greenwood Memorial was named in honor of Mrs. A.C. Greenwood, a past state president. This fund offers a way for individuals or groups to make a scholarship fund contribution in memory of a loved one whose name will be recorded in the Memorial Album in the U. of O. archives.

Since the club's organization in 1929 more than \$100,000 in scholarship

funds has been provided. The students are selected and approved by the University Financial Aid Office working with representatives of the Mothers' Club state executive board.

In addition, a large Mothers' Club Loan Fund is maintained in the University's Accounting Offices. Over \$40,000 is available to students for emergency purposes.

There are essentially four ways through which funds come into the state treasury; membership dues, fund-raising events and interest from small endowments, Greenwood Memorial fund, and cookbook projects. In 1949 Oregon Mothers had a cookbook project, earning \$3,100 to add to the Revolving Loan Fund. The Cookbook project was repeated in 1976.

Redecoration of the University Placement offices in Susan Campbell Hall was accomplished in 1973-4 under Mrs. C.V. DeCamp, state president. In 1976 Mothers donated \$1,600 to the Music School to help purchase the recording studio in Beal Hall so that concerts could be broadcast over KWAX. In 1975-6, while Hazel Foss of Eugene was state president, \$5,000 was given the University to purchase blue carpets for Gerlinger Alumni Lounge. Hazel Foss also interested the Mothers in the "1976 Centennial Cookbook" project which generated more than \$9,700. Nine scholarships of \$500. each were given to deserving students from this money and \$4,500 to nine schools/colleges at the University. The money will be used for reference books, library materials, instructional films, purchase of a portable organ and an electronic writing and editing system. An additional \$500. was voted for the library, making a total of \$1000. which will go for a new study lounge for students.

Mrs. O.F. Stafford (Leila) of Eugene, daughter of John Straub for whom Straub Hall was named, was elected the first president of the Eugene-Springfield Unit in 1929-30. In May 1960 the Eugene-Springfield Unit presented the first Golda Wickham Award, a full scholarship made in recognition of Mrs. Wickham's service

as Dean of Women from 1945 to 1969.

Eighteen years later Golda Wickham was present at a brunch sponsored by the Eugene-Springfield Unit May 20, 1978, in Gerlinger Hall. In her Award

presentation speech Mrs. Wickham said "the Mothers have done a lot of wonderful deeds. The welfare and the needs of the students are the primary concern of the Mothers."



May, 1930, with U. of O. President, Arnold Bennett Hall, — Courtesy U. of O. Archives

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