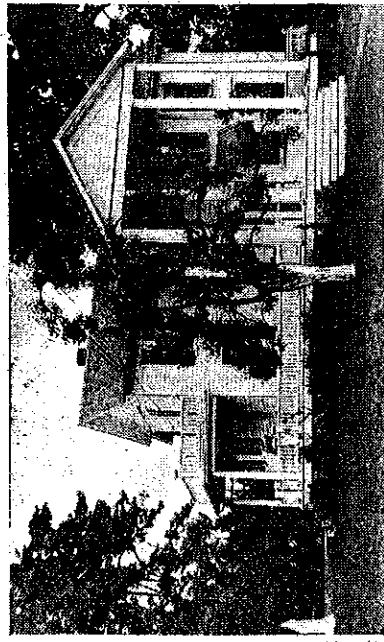
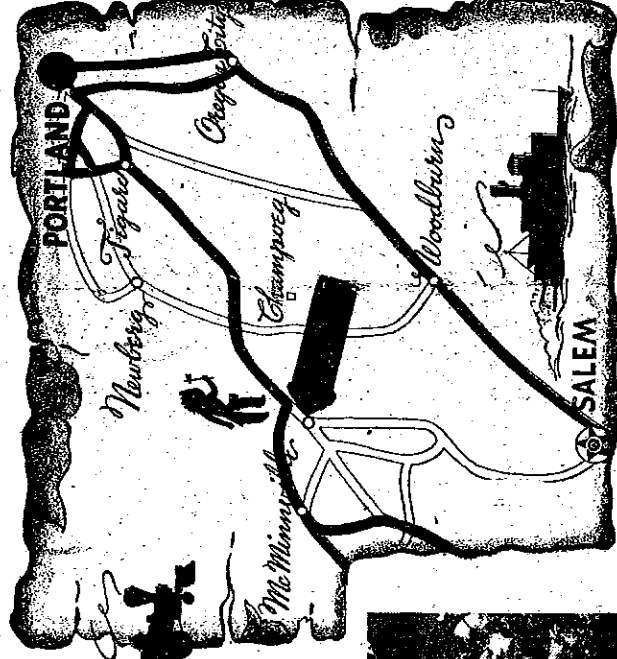


Town of Tradition

Old Dayton, Old Yamhill, Is Modern Community That Remembers When Life Was a Bit Primitive



Joel Palmer's home built in the 1850s; is an outstanding example of pioneer architecture.

By Ben Moxwell

PEACEFUL Dayton, Yamhill county, treasures and preserves lingering traditions of halcyon times dating back to Indian wars, steamboating and narrow gauge railroads.

When Joel Palmer returned to Oregon in the vanguard of the 1847 immigration he settled on the south bank of the Yamhill, later and nearby Dayton in the middle 1850s. Palmer was appointed Indian agent for the Oregon territory and was responsible for the establishment of Indian reservations.

One of these, the Grand Ronde reservation, was located in the foothills of the Coast range 25 miles west of Dayton and became the unhappy hunting grounds of thousands of savages, including the hostile Rogue River tribes. Supplies were shipped to Dayton by boat and hauled to the reservation by oxen.

In those times the roads really were only beds of mud, and two days were required for lumbering oxen to wallow from Dayton to the reservation and Fort Yamhill.

Noah Preston Robinson believes that he is Dayton's oldest inhabitant, and no one disputes his claim. Mr. Robinson, 84 years old, was born on the townsite April 12, 1855. Just then Joel Palmer was rounding up the recalcitrant Indians and Willamette valley settlers were abusing the intruding immigrant leader for establishing a rendezvous for savages in the sparsely settled community.

And there is a story he recalls about Joel Palmer. Palmer was a proprietor of a sawmill and had recently completed his pioneer mansion that still stands as an outstanding example of architecture in the 1850s as it developed in Oregon.

One day Palmer became distressed when he viewed the loose slabs and trimmer ends lying around the sawmill. He turned to his Indian employe, Pawnee, to clean up the mess.

"The Indian, returned with a grunt and relitigated, 'pile 'em, burn 'em,'" Palmer then departed.

Presently townspeople and Palmer observed heavy smoke rolling up near the site of the sawmill. It looked alarming so they rushed to the fire. But they were unable to save anything. The whole structure was a fire. The Indian had piled the slabs against the side of the mill, touched them off and, as he explained to Palmer who was not amused, "he pile 'em, he burn 'em."

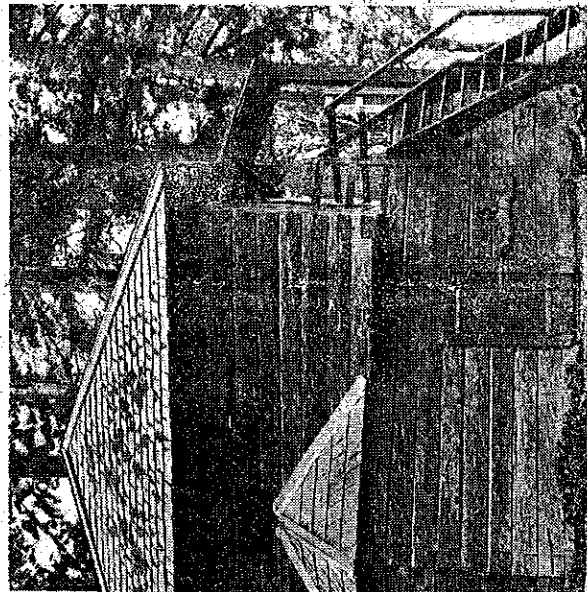
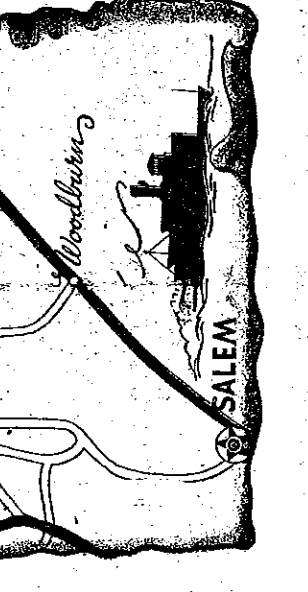
Mr. Robinson's memory naturally doesn't go that far back. But if you are patient and wait until he has packed the bowl of his briar with cut plug and touched it off he can tell you now Dayton appeared when he was "a little feller" just before the flood of 1861.

Years ago when what is now the business section and most all of the residential area was covered with hazel brush and the Yamhill river to the banks of the Yamhill river in two or three log cabins, a couple of stores and the inevitable saloon.

In the autumn of 1861, preceding the second rainfall of nearly 72 inches that started to pelt down in October, the Williams and Lippin cottages and the San Brown stores were located close to the river bank. When the Chinook rains melted the heavy snow the Willamette backed up the Yamhill and the Yamhill came down with a "swooosh" and carried the stores away.

Jacob's hotel, it appears, had been built higher on the bank and escaped the deluge.

Thirty years later, when Western Oregon experienced another devastating flood and the Yamhill was rampant again, Mr. Robinson rowed to a tree down near the bridge, that, incidentally, washed out, to mark the crest of the flood. When his axe blazed the mark, it struck also old-



Fort Yamhill blockhouse served as a garrison in the 1850s, as an Indian jail on the 1870s, as a pigsty in the 1890s, and now as a pioneer landmark in Dayton city park.

fashioned cut nails that once held a board in place that had marked the crest of the flood in 1861.

Even in those times Dayton, located as it is some four miles from the mouth of the Willamette, was the major shipping point for Yamhill county. In the 1850s the diminutive Hoosier, first steamboat on the upper river, was busily chugging back and forth between the Yamhill river and Canemah. This steamer was 60 feet long, and was powered by a pile driver engine coupled to sidewheels. One day, when the Hoosier was in the vicinity of Salem she broke her shaft. The engineer and a deckhand removed it and carried the part to Salem to have it refitted.

Years later another Hoosier ran on the Yamhill. This small craft was gear-driven, and Dayton folks could hear the Hoosier rumbly as they lay before she appeared around the bend.

In the 1870s thousands of bushels of grain were shipped from Dayton each winter. One warehouse held 50,000 bushels, another held 60,000 bushels. Mr. Robinson recalls that teams arrived throughout day and night and took their place in a mile long string of wagons waiting opportunity to unload at the warehouse. Drivers remained with their wagons, and often at the height of the season, did not get home for two days.

This was inconvenient for the farmers, and worked a hardship as well upon the river transportation companies. What the community needed, the farmers decided, was a railroad between Dayton and Sheridan to end all this rush and tedious transportation.

They looked at it this way: Between Dayton and Sheridan, there were some 300,000 acres annually producing 1,000,000 bushels of wheat. If every acre was assessed at \$1.00, the aggregate would be \$1,000,000. If that were the two points. Enthusiasts believed that the proposed railroad would increase land values at least \$5 an acre.

The plan looked good on paper so farmers met in Amity November 17, 1877, and pledged \$24,000. About the same time the Dayton, Sheridan & Grand Ronde railroad was incorporated for \$200,000. It appears that the farmers received "freight scrip" instead of stock, and that these certificates entitled the holders to face value in transportation.

Anyway, the narrow gauge with rails three feet apart, and built that way for the sake of economy, opened between Dayton and Sheridan October 24, 1878. Mr. Robinson remembers the narrow gauge well since he is a steam engineer by trade and

In 1880 Yamhill river steamboats loaded grain brought to Dayton warehouse by the narrow gauge railroad.

from Portland to Astoria via Fuquizar landing on the west side of the Willamette and from Ray's landing on the east bank to Coburg. Then the total system consisted of 183 miles of track and steamboats transported both freight and passengers between the two river terminals. The boats were hauled in financial troubles, and the system, disintegrated. Dayton was deprived of the roundhouse and ultimately entirely lost her railroad facilities.

Dayton, however, remained the Yamhill river terminal for river transportation until about the time of the World War. Sternwheelers that made history on the upper Willamette, during six decades, persisted in the Yamhill town, as a regular port of call, although the channel had so narrow that the larger boats had to back down the river from Dayton.

Adequate railroad facilities, eventually, replaced areas of production that once supplied Dayton with a river commerce, and later, freight traffic. The significance of the Yamhill points as centers of trade, although Dayton has diminished in size since the turn of the century, retaining some of its departed glory. Log rafts and noisy tow-boats churning the water that the Hoosiers I and II once sailed on.

Supplies for Fort Yamhill and the Grand Ronde reservation were unloaded at Dayton for overland trans-

portation in the late 1850s. Although the fort was abandoned in the 1860s, Dayton now possesses the entire log blockhouse occupied by Phil Sheridan's garrison in those turbulent Indian times before the Civil War.

Also the blockhouse was used as a steamship when it served as a colliery house for refractory Indians. Years later, perhaps when improved Indian conduct made the house less necessary, the disintegrating blockhouse was used as a pigsty.

About this time Oregonians became aware of their pioneer traditions and sought to preserve historical landmarks. With this motive in mind Mr. Robinson and others were engaged to disassemble the log blockhouse and take what remained of the neglected structure to Dayton, home of Joel Palmer, founder of the Grand Ronde reservation. As much of the original was preserved as possible. However, the logs comprising the west story had rotted away during the pesty days and that to be retained.

New restored, Fort Yamhill blockhouse appears as it did 80 years ago when it stood on the hill and looked down upon the reservation to the hostile tribesmen.

Pioneers have come and gone. Yamhill steamboats of yesteryears are surrounded with an aura of romantic history, even the acute financial disaster of the narrow gauge railroad has a lighter side when viewed with retrospection.

Now, Listen World

By Elsie Robinson

YOU'VE been wondering how Young America feels about this "peace time draft," haven't you?

This writer edits a Young America column, receives on an average from 500 to 1000 letters daily from under-thirty Americans of every station. None approves of entry into European war, but 99-1/2 per cent, enthusiastically endorse military training, believe it's a good investment of time and energy even though it may mean separation from sweethearts, brides, babies and jobs. However, now and then, comes a protest like the following from Reynold Phillips, 23, of Seattle:

"Dear Miss Robinson: 'You'd like an opinion of military training. Here's mine. I had R. O. T. C. training in college. I've learned the proper way to throw a grenade. I've learned how to fire a rifle and if you shoot a man in the chest, you are most apt to kill him instantly; if you shoot him in the stomach you will bring him a fever and more painful than anything else is all right. 'Do and train him, it is all right. Arguments is helpful to the military training is helpful to the individual, but I fail to see that it has improved me physically, mentally or morally. One can get physical development much more quickly by playing basketball or handball, or just by taking a daily walk around the block. Some say that military training will prevent the mind from becoming stagnant and sluggish. I know better ways of doing this. One of them is schoolwork; another is athletics. 'I think our American democracy will have become pretty degraded when we must train our high school boys in the fine art of killing other high school boys.' That's an honest and courageous statement. And millions will agree that much of our military education sickens the flesh and scars the heart of any sensitive boy.

But have you ever considered, only what happens to the spirit of the fellow who does such training at a time when his country is fighting for its existence and the principles for which it stands?

I admit that it's foolish to tempt shooting a man in the chest or stomach. But it's infinitely more foolish to stand back while the greatest dream humanity has ever conceived is blasted to smithereens. —or our American way of life—being perfect. Frankly, we've committed many a cruel, unfair and unworthy act. And will probably do so again. But the ideals on which our government is based aren't unfair or unworthy. They are brave and generous. They should command more respect . . . Justify any man's martyrdom!

American democracy isn't nearly a form of government. It's a constant challenge to all that's best and bravest in every man. You can evade that challenge if you wish and find a way to live your life. But if you wish to live your life as a citizen, if you wish to be a citizen, if you wish to be a man, if you wish to be a man's preference or preference, you have a duty as well as a desire. You owe a debt to all who have made your present life pleasant and profitable . . . to the thousands of brave men who gave their lives without question that you might live in freedom and security. Now again the challenge has arisen. Once more, the brutal and greedy are sneering at our faith . . . once more they threaten to reduce our future generations to the level of rusted-out robots. Your fathers died to prevent such a fate for you.

And you think it was all foolishness, yes? And you're sure that you, personally, could profit more by playing checkers or betting a trivial ball? Oh, yeah.

You've got another think coming!



Noah Preston Robinson, born at Dayton in 1855, recalls narrow gauge railroad days in Yamhill county.

worked in the roundhouse, which was located at Dayton.

Ballast costs money so the narrow gauge had no ballast. Ties were laid atop the grade and rails were spiked between the ties. Rolling stock consisted of two pathetically small locomotives and eight or ten flat cars. There were no box cars and passenger coaches were fashioned by building passenger coaches were painted light brown and the flat cars red.

Locomotive No. 1 was about the size of a small steam threshing engine and lacked the "omph" to pull five loaded flat cars. On one stretch of track there was a considerable grade and the dinky engine chugging the five cars had to start a mile back to gain enough momentum to carry it over the hump. And sometimes it failed to make the grade. Then the engineer would have to back to a siding, uncouple his train, and take a section at a time.

The other locomotive was somewhat larger but neither was capable of pulling a narrow gauge train more than 12 or 15 miles an hour.

In 1880 a traveling man was anxious to get from Portland to Sheridan. A sleepy beltbody at the late,