

FROM SALEM, OREGON, TO SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, IN 1859

Approximately six years have passed since arriving in Oregon and the lad of fifteen years has, so he thinks, become a man, having recently passed his twenty-first birthday, and is now looking for "new worlds to conquer."

Filled with bright anticipations of future success, no thought of possible failure ever entered his mind.

Perhaps more for the love of adventure than anything else, I had made up my mind to quit the Willamette Valley, with all of its wonderful attractions—climate, soil, snow capped mountain peaks, and whence flowed many sparkling streams; to sever the fond associations of home and the ties of newly made friendships and to launch out into new and untried fields.

My home life had been as happy, perhaps more so, than that of the average person just entering upon young manhood. However, "The Home Sweet Home" idea seemed to me to contain more of fiction than of fact. I had yet to learn how "dear to the heart are the scenes of our childhood when fond recollection presents them to view."

If the boys and the girls, the young men and the young women of today, could be made to fully realize that "There is no place like home," there would be fewer sad hearted Fathers and weeping Mothers. However, it seems to be the lot of man to learn many of life's most important lessons by sad experience.

While I look back with much pleasure upon the years spent in Oregon, I am glad I cast my lot upon the shores of Puget Sound—The Mediterranean of America.

I think perhaps I had not been fully weaned from the life of adventure incident to six months spent upon the Great Plains among the Indians, the buffalo, the antelope and the bands of semi-wild horses, and that this may have had more or less to do with my determination to leave Oregon, without having any very definite idea as to where I might finally locate.

From this growing inclination to wander on, to try new and unexplored fields, my Father sought to dissuade me, suggesting farm life as the safe and sane life for me. This suggestion of my dear old Father did not appeal to me as he had hoped it might. Seeing therefore that I had made up my mind to go, Father gave me his blessing and advised me to join a party then being made up in that vicinity bound for Seattle, a small and insignificant village of about one hundred inhabitants (within the

then incorporated limits of the town), located on the east shore of Elliott Bay, an arm of Puget Sound. Inasmuch as my sister Loretta had but recently married Judge Thomas Mercer, a resident of Seattle, and one of the party referred to, I readily fell in with the suggestion, and August the 29th, 1859, found me one of this party of twelve persons bound for Seattle.

This party was composed of the following named persons, to-wit: Judge Thomas Mercer and his wife, Hester Loretta Mercer (nee Ward); Hon. John Denny, his wife and daughter Loretta; James Campbell and his wife with their two sons and two daughters, Rice, Findlay, Virginia and Susie, and myself.

John Denny, "Uncle" John Denny, as we all loved to call him, was the Father of A. A. Denny and D. T. Denny, both of them residents of Seattle, where they had arrived November 13, 1851, landing at that time at Alki Point, where they spent the Winter.

The first night from home, which was near the Pringle school house, three miles south of Salem, was spent at the Campbell homestead, in the Waldo hills, seven miles southeast of Salem; from whence, early the next morning, the party with wagons, teams, loose stock—most of the latter being the property of Judge Mercer—made the final start for Seattle.

I had in my care on this trip for sale, a number of work oxen belonging to my Father and my half brother B. S. Ward. These I disposed of at a fair price, sending the proceeds of the sale to "The folks at home," care of the purser of a steamer bound from Puget Sound to San Francisco. This steamer never reached port, going down somewhere off the Oregon coast with all on board. This money was sent in this round about way, because there was an express from the Sound country to San Francisco, thence to Portland, Oregon, and on up the Willamette Valley to Salem, but no express overland from Seattle to Portland, Oregon. This money was a loss severely felt by my home people.

Our party of twelve persons were seventeen days in making the trip from the home near Salem to Seattle, much of the way over a very rough road, in many places little more than a trail. People of today who travel on well equipped trains, making the run from Seattle to Portland in six hours and passing enroute prosperous towns and cities, can hardly realize that where these now are, there was then the dense forest all unoccupied except by wild beasts and roving Indians.

Salem, the capital of Oregon, had not to exceed one thousand inhabitants. Hon. Arthur A. Denny, in "Pioneer Days on Puget Sound," gives the population of Portland in 1851 at 2,000, and says Portland

claimed 6,000 in 1853, which I think an over-estimate. Oregon City had not to exceed two hundred and fifty.

At Portland, wagons, teams, cattle and people shipped aboard a small steamer for Monticello, two miles above the mouth of the Cowlitz river, where we arrived after an all day's voyage down the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Monticello had a future, but being located upon ground liable to overflow, has since been abandoned.

Our route led us along up the Cowlitz river for some considerable distance, passing the homes of a number of early settlers, who had fairly well improved farms and who seemed to be leading prosperous and happy lives.

Along the line of our travel after leaving the Cowlitz river, at the Bishop homestead, we passed a number of settlers who had but recently returned to their homes, from which they had been driven by the Indians during the Indian War of 1855-6. All seemed happy and glad to resume life on the frontier, with all its duties and responsibilities.

At Arkansas (at Pumphrey's), on the Cowlitz river, near where the Olequa empties into the Cowlitz river, on Ford's Prairie, on the Grand Mound Prairie, on the Yelm, the old French Canadian settlement in the vicinity of Old Fort Nisqually (formerly the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company north of the Columbia River), Bird's Mill, on the Puyallup River, and in the White River Valley, settlers were beginning to gather in considerable numbers.

At Bird's Mill, only a short distance from Fort Steilacoom, then a military post, we went into camp for a day, then into the town of Steilacoom; from whence, everything except the cattle was shipped to Seattle.

In company with Judge Mercer and the Campbell boys, I came through to Seattle with the cattle. Our first stop after leaving Bird's Mill was on the north side of the Puyallup river, at the home of a Mr. Carson and his wife, who were living in a block-house, built and occupied by the settlers for defensive purposes during the Indian war of 1855-6. Our party undertook to drive from Carson's to C. C. Lewis' place, on the Duwamish river in one day, but failed and were compelled, after traveling for an hour or two after daylight had left us, to stop for the night.

I unsaddled my horse and laid down under a cedar tree, using my saddle for a pillow and slept soundly until about daylight next morning, when I was awakened by rain falling upon my face. As soon as it was light enough to see, we gathered our scattered cattle together and, wet and cold, proceeded on our way to the Lewis home, where we waited while Mrs. Lewis prepared us a breakfast of hot biscuit and coffee, with ham and eggs, to which it is perhaps needless to say we did ample justice, having

had nothing to eat for more than twenty-four hours, except a light pocket lunch at noon the day before. We were then nine miles from Seattle. We left our cattle three miles further on, with Walter Graham, arriving in Seattle early in the afternoon of September 14, 1859.

My first meal in Seattle was taken at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David T. Denny, who were then living in a small house on the south side of Marion Street, between what is now First and Second Avenues. I do not remember all we may have had for dinner that day, but I do remember the fine large baked salmon which graced the table, and how I relished this, my first introduction to salt water fish.

Of the people who were then living in Seattle, it may be truthfully said they were possessed in large measure with those qualities, intelligence, honesty, industry, and a spirit of independence and self reliance so essential to the founding of a great and growing community. There was an entire absence of the "wild and woolly west" spirit. The founders of Seattle were a law abiding and law enforcing people.

That the location at Seattle was no chance affair, but was made after careful and intelligent investigation, will appear from the following quotation from "Pioneer Days on Puget Sound," by Hon. Arthur A. Denny, wherein he says: "In the month of February we began exploring around Elliott Bay, taking soundings and examining the timber."

Acts of theft were few and far between, but when detected were promptly and adequately punished. Holdups and burglaries were unknown. The "clothes-line," with the Monday's washing thereon, might remain out all week with perfect safety. So the man who had located on a homestead and had commenced to improve the same, might leave his ax or saw at the place where he had discontinued his work at the end of the day with every assurance that he would find it where left whether his return was upon the next day or the next week.

One of the things which impressed me most soon after my arrival in Seattle, was that every one seemed to be busy—there were no idlers here, and consequently no beggars.

Hospitality and goodfellowship were proverbial. It was not an unusual thing for men in traveling the trails from one point to another to fail to reach their destination as expected, but as was usually true, all carried a box of matches and a rifle or revolver and when thus equipped felt perfectly safe though they might have to spend the night under the friendly shelter of some large fir tree.

In the early days, men sometimes ventured out some distance from the settlements and located upon homesteads, building their cabins and clearing the land, laying the foundation for peace and plenty in the declining years of life. These early settlers were almost without exception

unmarried men and were not always at home, being absent therefrom sometimes days and possibly weeks on business, but should the traveler come upon one of these isolated cabins as night was about to overtake him, it was a part of the unwritten law of the land that he might enter therein, making himself at home for the night, using whatever he might find there with which to make himself comfortable and, upon his departure next morning, leave a note of thanks therefor.

I sometimes feel as if I could almost wish for the return of the grand old pioneer days of sixty or more years ago.

Chief Seattle, for whom the town was named, was a square shouldered, deep chested, stockily built Indian, with a voice like a trumpet. I saw him upon one occasion when he was addressing a council of his people, at a point about where First Avenue intersects Yesler Way. His clothing at that time consisted of a pair of pants, a shirt and a rather heavy blanket thrown over his left shoulder and drawn around under his right arm and shoulder, where it was fastened, thus leaving the right arm free, which was frequently raised in gesticulation, while the left arm and hand seemed to rest loosely by his side.

As I have before stated, there were about one hundred white people in Seattle when I first arrived there September 14th, 1859, and about an equal number of Indians. As far as I am now able to remember, at this distant date, the following named persons were living in what is now the incorporated limits of the City of Seattle October 1st, 1859, namely:

Hon. Arthur A. Denny, wife and five children, who were then living in a small cottage on the east side of Front Street, now First Avenue, between Madison and Marion Streets.

D. T. Denny, wife and three children, who at that time occupied a small house on the south side of Marion Street between what is now First and Second Avenues.

Dexter Horton, wife and daughter, living in rooms back of the store then owned by Dexter Horton on or near the N. W. corner of Washington and Commercial Street, now First Avenue South.

Judge Thomas Mercer, wife (nee Ward), and his two daughters, Susie and Alice. The first named soon after married David Graham. Alice later on became the wife of C. B. Bagley, at present Secretary of the Board of Public Works of the City of Seattle. Their home was on the east side of old Commercial Street, now First Avenue South, sixty feet south of Washington Street.

L. M. Collins and family, then residing on the north bank of the Duwamish river, near where the present bridge crosses that stream.

John Denny, who with his wife and daughter arrived in Seattle

September 14th, 1859, occupied a small house on the east side of Front Street (now First Avenue), near Madison Street.

Henry L. Yesler and wife, whose house, a one story frame, was located on the N. E. corner of James Street and old Front Street (now First Avenue), the same being the corner occupied by the Pioneer Building of seven stories.

Hillory Butler and wife, then living on the N. W. corner of James and Second Streets, now Second Avenue.

L. C. Harmon, owner of the old New England Hotel, on north side of Main Street near Occidental Avenue, wife, two daughters and one son.

Capt. John S. Hill, wife and son; John A. Suffren, wife and son; Charles Plummer, wife, daughter and two sons; Charles C. Terry, wife and daughter; John Ross, wife and two sons, residence second lot north of Madison and Front Streets, now First Avenue; Capt. S. D. Libby, wife and adopted son. They lived S. E. corner Second and James. John Pike, wife and son, N. E. corner Second and James. Dr. D. S. Maynard and wife lived on East side of Commercial Street, now First Avenue South, between Main and Jackson Streets. L. V. Wyckoff, wife and two stepchildren, lived on Second Street, now Second Avenue, where the Alaska Building now stands. W. W. White, wife and two children, residence on S. E. corner of Front Street, now First Avenue and Columbia Street. David W. Conklin and wife, Mrs. Conklin kept the hotel on the southeast corner of Main Street and old Commercial Street, now First Avenue South. Walter Graham, wife and son, residing near the Denny Clay Company's works, on Duwamish River. And S. Wetmore and family.

The following named residents were then unmarried, viz: Ira A. Utter, D. Parmelee, George F. Frye, D. K. Baxter, R. H. Beatty, Albert Pinkham, H. A. Atkins, Ira Woodin, M. D. Woodin, T. D. Hinckley, W. H. Surber, J. T. Jordan, David Hill, Thos. S. Russell, Robt. Russell, Henry Van Asselt, J. A. Chase, A. C. Anderson, E. Richardson, William Fife, E. A. Clark, Steve Hilton, M. B. Judkins, Hugh McAleer, Manuel Lopez, Jeff Hunt, Dr. J. R. Williamson, Dutch Charley, Ned Ohm, Frank Matthias, Capt. Rand, David Graham, Jack Harvey, Jacob Wivens, Bob Gardner, D. B. Ward, and J. H. Nagle. Many former settlers had gone away but returned within the next year or two.

When I arrived in Seattle in 1859, the block-house, to which the people were forced to flee for safety during the attack upon the town by the Indians, was still standing. It occupied a prominent point on the west side of what is now First Avenue, directly opposite the intersection of Cherry Street with First Avenue.

On our way from Salem to Seattle, we passed a number of these block-houses after leaving the Columbia River, into which the white settlers had been compelled to flee in order to escape the hostile Indians.

I have sometimes thought we are prone to a too severe criticism of the Indians for the wars waged, not only locally but generally. Were they not doing what we would do if our own land was being overrun by a foreign foe? Possibly their methods may have been open to criticism. Be that as it may, they had not learned the lesson and had not grasped the great thought of "The survival of the fittest."

The Methodist Episcopal Church, under the guidance of Rev. D. E. Blaine, had erected a small church building on the second lot from the S. E. corner of Columbia Street and Second Street, now Second Avenue, now occupied by the building known as the Boston Block. This building was a mere shell, but had been used for church gatherings. Among other evidences of the attack by the Indians upon Seattle, was the scars this building bore, particularly the bullet holes in the windows.

From the possible one hundred people living here in 1859, Seattle has grown to a great—great in many ways—city of more than 300,000 inhabitants. It is not strange, therefore, if the old-timer finds it difficult to locate definitely many of the once familiar spots.

DILLIS B. WARD.