

## MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD

### *Preface*

I think there was never a child in the history of Washington or Oregon who ever had so sad a story to write as I, Anna Griswold. My father was shot but lived to gain the block house, where he sank with his head in my arms and died. I well remember the three days' siege in the blockhouse, without food or water; my mother and I on either side of our dead, and the cannon booming over our heads.

I lay my pen down at the close of my childhood days to take it up again in my teen age, during my childhood, to tell of those days when all was joy and happiness during the time when my father was yet with us.

### *Memories*

"In childhood's hour, with careless joy,  
Upon life's stream we glide."

In the year 1851, my father and mother, George and Candace Griswold, lived on the bank of the Mississippi River, in Clinton County, Iowa. I see, from the old family Bible which I have, that unto them were born six children, two boys and four girls. One boy died in infancy, the eldest, George Abner. The others were, Elizabeth Olive, Mary Lydia, Lynn, Eugenia and Christiana, the youngest of the family.

With eyes now dim and faded, at the age of 84 years, I will try to recall the place where I first saw the light of day in the year 1843. Our house, as it is pictured in my mind, would be called a double log house, consisting of two large rooms with a passage between them, and covered over, which we called the "dark chute." One room served as dining room and kitchen and the other as a sleeping apartment. I recall this dark chute very distinctly. At the left of the door as one went in, stood a barrel of molasses and I would get my sister Mary to go with me and draw that molasses to make candy, of which my father, as well as myself, was very fond.

The bedsteads all had white testers overhead with curtains around the sides. Here I lived on the bank of the Mississippi with my brothers and sisters the first few years of my life. My

father had a wood yard and hired men to cut cord wood and load it on to flat boats after which the river boats would hitch on to them, and when unloaded they would then return to load up again. I recall one of these Mississippi River steamboat's names, *Dubuque*.

I have touched rather lightly on my early life but will now take it up again with my parents, who, in the year of 1851, wished to make the long journey across the plains with ox teams. So on the banks of that river in the month of May, our happy family was broken up, never to be united again, and I alone am all that is left of them. But I must not digress as I am writing of my childhood days. The story of my life I will now take up at the end of that long journey which ended in October at the Cascades, at what is now called Stevenson. Father rented a saw mill at that place and here I was with my father, the most of my time and I would ride on the carriage as it went to and fro. Often he would whittle out wooden dolls for me. The next year we went to Portland in a skiff down the Columbia River, father, mother, my sister and myself. Before my story closes I will write of another trip down the Columbia. Father again, returned to the Cascades, leaving mother, my sister and me in Portland. Later on he bought a house and lot at the middle Cascades landing from the Cenoweth donation land claim. He then sent for mother and me, leaving my sister in boarding school at the Academy in Portland, Oregon. Here at the Cascades, with the help of a cook, my mother ran a house to supply the traveling public and my father's occupation was transporting government and individual freight around the falls. He also ran a saw mill at the upper Cascades.

When a child I was with my father, helping him whenever I could. At one time, I remember, when he was trying to catch a mule, I ran to help him and fell down on a rock, losing my breath, and, oh! how tenderly he came and picked me up. He would often praise me for what I did for him and I have many times heard him say, "Christiana, you do me more good than any hired man I have." Ah! then how happy I would be when I played around our peaceful home in that little village! I would sit for hours on a rock which commanded a good view down the Columbia River and watch for the steamboat to come in sight around a bend of the river, making its trip (not daily) from Portland. This was a source of great pleasure to me as the boats would wind their way up the river and land at my father's wharf-boat. Only at certain

stages of the water could the steamboats make these trips. From my seat I would watch the deck hands unload the boat, and my father, with some help, would convey the mail and the freight to the top of the incline plane into the warehouse. There they would transfer it to the wooden cars, drawn by mules over the portage, a distance of two and one half miles, there to be transported to another steamboat, above the falls, going to The Dalles, Oregon. The name of one of the boats above the falls was the *Mary* and one that landed at the foot of the incline plane, at the middle landing, was named the *Mountain Buck*. Directly above this middle boat landing, which this place was called, was a very steep bank, which I would often stand upon and ring the dinner bell, calling the work hands to their dinner. Ah! those happy, happy days! Little did I think then, that within a very few months, a blockhouse would be erected there. There were only three families living at this little village at the time of which I am writing and they were employed by my father. In Skamania County, Washington, at the middle Cascade landing, was where my father lived. At the upper Cascade landing, Bradford and others lived, while at the Lower landing lived Hamilton and others. The Cascades included these three boat landings and was then sparingly settled.

Everyone who is familiar with the history of the northwest will remember the deeds done by the hostile Indians, in what was called at that time, the "upper country" around old Fort Dalles. These Indians were on the war-path and troops were being sent from Vancouver to subdue them. In the year of 1855, Captain Wallen landed at the middle Cascades, with soldiers, and, seeing the helpless condition of this place, laid over, and, under his supervision, and my father's help, a blockhouse was hurriedly erected near the steep bank on the Columbia River, where I had my play house. When Captain Wallen completed his work he went on up the river, leaving guns, ammunition and soldiers to hold that fort. Reports came from the upper country of renewed hostilities and my father tried to persuade mother to take me and go to Portland, but she would tell him if he stayed, she would, as she did not think it was any more dangerous for her than for him, and he would say he was needed there to transport the freight. About this time we could see signal fires in the mountains, (the Indians' mode of telegraphy). A cloud was now appearing to mar the happiness of my childhood. We would sometimes hear the blood-curdling war-whoop in the night and would then go into the block-

house, which was near my father's house, and stay until morning. My father was always good and kind to the friendly Indians at the Cascades and they would profess great friendship to the settlers, saying, if the hostile Indians came, they would come and warn the white folks, but when they did come they joined the hostile band. The Indian has not much friendship for the white man.

On the fateful morning of the 26th day of March, 1856, between the hours of eight and nine o'clock, when everyone was at their different occupations, the Indians attacked the three boat landings at the same time. At the lower landing the settlers were warned and all escaped in a boat without any loss of life and some few wounded. At the upper landing all collected at Bradford's store and held it with great difficulty. There were quite a number killed and wounded at the latter place. This also happened at the middle landing, I being an eye witness to it. I will only write of the attack on the Fort. Hearing the firing of guns, I walked out into the yard and stood talking to a boy by the name of Tommy Snooks when suddenly the bullets began to whiz around and over us, one hitting him in the leg. We then realized our great peril and hurried to the Fort. By this time people were seen running for safety from every direction. Mother had just gone to get water and came in with the pail on her arm. We could not see the Indians as they were shooting from behind rocks and trees. Father came into the Fort and, seeing me, he asked if mother was there. He then sat down on the ground and we soon saw he was shot in the knee. I supported his head in my arms while my mother alone, (as everyone had to be at their post or had some wounded of their own to work with), tried to stop the flow of blood with a silk handkerchief and some of her clothing. He only spoke three times and amidst the cracking of guns, the roaring cannon, and the awful din caused by the horrible yelling of the savages, he quietly breathed his last. As mother and I sat by his side during the three long days' siege in the Fort, it seemed we could not bear any more grief. But when we had to lay him in the grave and leave him and our happy home and be sent to Portland for safety, (as we were expecting another attack) there, as I stepped into that flat-boat, on my thirteenth birthday, I thought, as I cuddled close to my mother's side, how friendless we were; there on the broad Columbia, deep and wide, its flow perpetual keeps; there is where my childhood days ended and I lay down my pen.

I have omitted six months of my childhood days which were

spent on the great plains in a covered wagon, which, as I now recall it, was merely one long journey, from morning till night, with the sight of a few Forts on the way: Fort Bridges, Fort Kearney, Fort Hall and Fort Dalles; Indians in their wild and native state, also great herds of buffalo in the distance. During their wild stampede they would make a noise like thunder.

CHRISTIANA GRISWOLD CORUM.