

The Other Elkanah Walker

While searching for pioneer records about Walla Walla and its vicinity, Mr. William S. Clark communicated with Mrs. Angie Burt Bowden, of Seattle, well known for her work with the Daughters of the American Revolution and other organizations. She was born in Walla Walla and cherished a girlhood memory of having heard Elkanah Walker speak in that city. This intrigued Mr. Clark and he finally obtained documentary evidence on the subject.

Mrs. Bowden had sought information from Mrs. Ruth Karr McKee, of Kelso, a former Regent of the University of Washington. Mrs. McKee is a granddaughter of Rev. Elkanah Walker. She wrote Mrs. Bowden that it was true she had heard Elkanah Walker speak in Walla Walla but it was the son and not the older missionary colleague of Marcus Whitman. The son is usually referred to in history as Rev. J. E. Walker. The son was always deeply impressed by Doctor Whitman's memory and decided on a missionary career for himself. He was sent east to a seminary in Maine. He chose China for his field of work. Before leaving, in the spring of 1872, he made a pilgrimage to Walla Walla in order to stand by the side of Whitman's grave and to visit and speak at the seminary, now Whitman College. Mrs. McKee's letter says: "Knowing Uncle, I can just imagine him standing by the grave and dedicating his life to the carrying of the message westward across the Pacific as Whitman had brought it across the wastes of America. Whatever we may believe about Whitman's ride, we must know that Whitman's death dramatized the mission story and the settlement of the Northwest, and invested it with an aroma of sentiment that will make it immortal."

Mrs. McKee adds a postscript saying that her uncle completed fifty years of mission work in China. That Whitman's martyrdom was to him an inspiration is shown by the fact that he sought the grave again during a visit home and then wrote a poem "By Whitman's Grave," beginning:

"Gray-haired, I stand by Whitman's grave,
Where once I stood a timid child."

Golden Wedding

Mr. and Mrs. George Noyes Talcott of Olympia celebrated their golden wedding on Wednesday, December 28, 1932. They are well known pioneers of Washington Territory and State. Mrs. Talcott is of the Chambers family.