FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

The Reith family of Lewis and Clark, one of the best-known families of that area have been providing milk for the region for more years than most of us can remember. Evelyn Leahy Hankel is back again in this issue, bringing us the story of this fine farm family. Illustrated by photographs provided by members of the Reith family, this article details life with members of the Reith family from 1877 until the present day. We are very pleased to be able to present it to our readers.

In “The Powell House”, Ed Parker gives us a brief history and description of one of the county’s famous historic homes. “Bay House” as it is called, has been home for the Powell family first and then the Parkers. Ed, grandson of the famous Gelo Parker, still lives in the old house and in this issue, tells us about the house and the people who lived there.

People are always asking us when we are going to publish something on our own family. We have always declined to do so on the grounds that there are more important families to consider first. But in this issue, we will raise the curtain just a bit and give our readers a glimpse of our paternal grandfather, Zachariah Thomas Tetlow, long-time plumber of Ft. Stevens. Actually, we know very little about him since he died in 1926.

The final part of the Celestia Ann Neal Gearhart story appears in the issue. Lavishly illustrated by photographs provided by members of the Gearhart family and written by three members of the family, this article is a fitting tribute to one of Astoria’s longest-lived and best known woman.

“A Letter From John” first appeared in the Astoria Budget on April 25, 1952. We read it and liked it so well that we thought we should republish it in Cumtux because it does give us a rare glimpse of early day Astoria.

And finally, we are presenting one of Mrs. Minnie Myrtle Marxen’s historical essays which once appeared regularly in the Astorian Budget. “Forgotten Lexington” tells the story of Lexington, a town now vanished and almost forgotten. We had no photos to illustrate it with but even so, the text is certainly must reading for any serious student of Clatsop County history.
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Cumtux - Chinook Jargon
To know ... acknowledge ... to inform
The first John Reith family migrated from Scotland to western USA in the early 1800s. Reith was a stone mason married to the daughter of a Scottish sea captain. The couple settled in Iowa but their son John W. Reith seeking a more adventurous life headed west in 1877 at the age of 21 years by immigrant train to San Francisco then by boat to Portland, Oregon. Rumor on board that ship frightened the young men to remain hidden below deck as they passed the notorious city of Astoria where shanghaiing was common practice. John W. did not take the threat seriously as he soon ventured down river to Astoria and found work with the intrepid pioneer, D.K. “Dan” Warren on his huge landfall which the town of Warrenton encompasses. John W. enjoyed the friendship of Warren and while in his employ learned the first lesson in dike building, the career that was to bring him fame along with his life as a dairymen.

The second year that John W. was working for Warren, who raised most of the cattle, sheep and hogs for the whole county, he was sent with Warren’s crew of men, a dozen of whom were Chinese, to build a dike around a garden area to keep out the June floods. The work was soon discontinued as the river mud was sticky and clung to the men’s shovels so tenaciously that it would not shake off. One clever Chinese man told John that the same kind of soil was found in the area of his home in China and how to deal with it. “You good friend of Boss, you tell him other guys to other work,
you and me build dike." The solution was simple: As the shovel was forced deep in the mud it was moved side to side slightly thus breaking the vacuum so the sticky substance would slide off easily. Warren was convinced and Reith and his Chinese friend finished the job. From this experience Reith became a dike man and used his expertise for many years in the Lewis and Clark area where he settled.

John W. purchased land in the Lewis and Clark area from W.E. DeMent, an Astoria druggist who owned much land across Youngs Bay. Reith’s land of 136 acres was near the Lewis and Clark river.

John W. Reith went back to Iowa to visit his family and his girlfriend, Emma Batchlor. Soon after his return to Lewis and Clark, Emma came out to Portland where she visited with a relative, Dr. Botkin. John made numerous trips up the river and soon came home with Emma as his bride. Since there was no house on his property he rented the DeMent house nearby (now the Will Johnson Place). Here they stayed until first the big barn and then the house was completed on their own land.

The six older children were born in the DeMent house and when John III, named John H. Reith was three months old, the largest barn in Clatsop County and the big white rambling farmhouse were completed and the family moved in. It was interesting to note that John H. was the only one of the seven children to follow his father’s career of
dairyman-diker and remain all of his life on the Reith farm where he is today, alone except for daughter Nancy Pyle who lives “Just across the road.” The youngest Reith, Helen, was born in the Big House and today lives “just down the road.”

John W. had begun a milk route into town with other Lewis and Clark dairymen long before the move to the big house. The men would milk their cows at midnight, load the three gallon cans into row boats and row toward town. Foggy nights made the progress slow and often confusing till many a boatman found himself rowing in circles listening for the guiding sound of the tide boxes on the Astoria shore. The dock landing was near the present Garcia Ford building where a large barn structure housed the horses and wagons used in the deliveries. The men would gather at a nearby waterfront restaurant for a 5:00 breakfast of mush and milk from their own cans in turn. They would leave for their separate routes where each householder had left a container on the doorstep indicating the amount of milk wanted. The dairyman would dip out the milk from the large can at the door step.

There was usually friendly competition among the farmers as to who had the richest milk or the purest commodity and often jokes were played on each other. The old saying was passed around, “you may be short of milk when you left home but by the time you got to town you had plenty.” One dairyman was especially proud of his product and would boast never having added water to his cans. One night having provoked the others with his boasting, two of the men clandestinely snagged a small fish from the bay and plopped it into the jug of breakfast milk supplied that day by the braggart. When the flopping fish landed in the mush bowl the irate farmer resorted to fisticuffs and the good humor of the
men ended in skirmish. This gem of a story was retold many times through the years at the table in the dairyman’s tavern.

The first steam operated boat was the “Brisk” owned by William Larson and it was soon competing with the Reith’s “Milkmaid” on the river. These boats made transportation to town much easier on the dairymen.

John and Emma’s life overflowed with work on their large dairy farm, building roads and raising their seven children.

The County officials had promised the men of Lewis and Clark if they built the road to the Youngs Bay, a bridge would be constructed across to the mainland by the county. Around 1900 a great deal of work was done to bring the road to the bottom of Lewis and Clark Hill. The men used their own equipment and John Reith and John Larson would hitch up their teams to the scraper when the haying was done and work all day long until darkness sent them home. John Reith and John Larson graded the Lewis and Clark road from Miles Crossing to Netel Grange. The county would donate a few dollars but the greater expense and all the labor fell to the Lewis and Clark men. Often disputes as to which way the roads would run had to be overcome by the workers.

During this work period in John’s life, Emma took over the dairy work with the help of the growing boys. The seven children were now: Kathryn “Kate”, Will, Jessie, Zella, Floyd, John H. and Helen. Will soon was able to take the milk route into town. Floyd and John H. had their milking chores and had to clean the barn every morning before school. Then there was always milking before supper every evening. In 1918 with the installation of the first milking machine and followed by the coming of electricity in the early 1920’s, the family rejoiced with these labor saving devices. Before electricity acetylene lamps were used in the house and barn and water was carried by hand for all household chores of washing and bathing. A tank by the wood stove in the kitchen heated water for all uses.

The big farmhouse was just right for the family of nine and often a boarder or two. The house builder was Mr. Stewart and he did most of the work himself even painting the house and a decorative white streak all around the roof for effect. The 36 foot tall chimney was completed in one day by two masons who worked until dark.

The girls did not do barn work but there was much to be done in the house. Kate, Jessie, Zella and little Helen each had chores in keeping good hot meals on the table for the hungry men and boarders. They were taught by Emma to become fine seamstresses and fashion their own clothes and to keep the house in spotless condition.

The older children attended Prospect Park School where Mary Adams taught while she boarded at the Reith home.

Helen Gronholm
John H. attended Prospect Park one year and then he and Helen walked one and a half miles down the road to the new Lewis and Clark School. They remember carrying the popular UNION LEADER cigar boxes, square, tin and with a handle, the perfect lunch pails, down the planked road often grabbing on a passing milk wagon. One day holding on to the tailgate caused real trouble when the wheel hit a mud puddle and both were spattered from head to toe. “We didn’t dare go home but rather go on to school and face the teacher!” laughs Helen.

After the bridge over the bay was completed the boys ran the milk routes. Will began taking twelve year old John H. along on his Uppertown route. One late summer day Will, wanting to attend the state fair, left the route to John who was pleased to prove his ability with the team and wagon. He had no trouble that first day remembering the customers while his team of “Fanny” and “Billy” pulled the wagon. The remarkable horses would stop at each customer’s door and would not budge until delivery was made. Soon the Uppertown and Midtown routes became John’s.

On Friday night John would end his milk route just as the five o’clock train the Beach Special, from Portland arrived at the depot loaded with passengers for Gearhart and Seaside. Often there were two trains pulled up at the station at the same time and the sight of the powerful locomotives was a thrill to the dairyman’s son. Near the depot was a saloon owned by Martin Franciscovich. At one end a small restaurant to serve the travelers. As John would pull up with his team a window would open above the saloon and Franciscovich would lean out and call, “Boy, I want a...
The Reith farmhouse at Lewis and Clark.

pint of cream today but don’t you go in
down there (the saloon) I’ll meet you at
the door.” This reminder was repeated
every weekend when John would go into
the restaurant and order his favorite
supper, salmon cheeks. “Oh Boy” John
reminisced, “were they good!”

Grandfather John Reith the first,
came out from Iowa for an extended
visit with the John W. family. As a
working stone mason all of his life he
could not sit idle but immediately in¬
quired around Astoria and discovered
the plans for the new Arlington Hotel.
He applied and received the contract
for setting up the entire foundation. To
do this he opened the Hildebrand
quarry behind present Clatsop College
buildings. Rock was hauled to the site
and the foundation was laid. After a few
such jobs John Reith went back to
Iowa for the remainder of his life.

John W. became more in demand for
his knowledge of dike building and was
taken away from the dairy often to
supervise big jobs in the county. At
Knappa Big Creek many workers led by
government men were having difficul¬
ty filling a slough. They had installed
round tide boxes instead of the flat
type recommended by John and they
had refused to use spruce boughs along
with the fill. John tried to convince
them to try his methods but they
would not change their ways until the
job was almost abandoned when the
supervisor agreed to try John’s method
which was successful.

The last dike job that John W.
directed happened while he was in bed
with flu. Mr. Giles of Chinook, Washington came to get John for a big job near Ilwaco. At this time John was known as the professional dikeman of the area. When finding him sick in bed he begged him to “just come over and supervise, you won’t have to do a lick of work.” So John crawled out of bed, overcoming the objections of his family, and went with Giles across the Columbia. Soon he had a shovel in hand with the crew. Luckily he had no repercussions from the flu.

In filling a large slough like this one, the crew would fill each side as much as possible then lay spruce limbs in the center and cover them with mud by all workers emptying their wheelbarrows at the one time. The tide boxes were flat and installed first. The wheelbarrows were made of barrel staves which gave them a deep cradle-like capacity.

John W. was instrumental in organizing Lewis and Clark Telephone Company the first farm line in the county. He was a charter member of Netel Grange and an honorary Kiwanis Club member. John and Emma were ardent members of the First Presbyterian Church as were their children.

In 1946 John W. Reith retired and turned over the dairy farm to his son and successor, John H. Reith. He lived four more years to the age of 93 years and 11 months and peacefully passed on to join Emma February 2, 1950. Today John and Helen, the two remaining children of John W. and Emma recall with pride their Father’s many achievements and especially the solid silver trophy.

A county fair was one year held at Gearhart for the first time in 1912. It was a long way for the local farmers to drive their stock from the Lewis and Clark farms but participation was good that first year and large stock barns and exhibit buildings had been erected. SP&S gave a fine trophy for the outstanding dairy herd of 1912 and it was won by the Reith herd of Guernseys. The solid silver trophy proudly owned by John Matthew Reith the son of John H. and bears the inscription:

BEST INDIVIDUAL DIARY EXHIBIT
WON BY
JOHN W. REITH
CLATSOP COUNTY FAIR,
GEARHART
SEPTEMBER 12-14, 1912
PRESENTED BY
SPOKANE-PORTLAND-SEATTLE
RAILWAY COMPANY

By 1914 the fairground at Gearhart was abandoned and the Port Docks in Astoria became the site for the county fair.

While father John W. Reith was working on the roads and dikes helping to build the Lewis and Clark community, the children were growing and seeking lives of their own.

Kathryn “Kate” Reith married Albert Johnson and presented the Reith family with three grandchildren: Florence Johnson Robinson, Kathryn A family reunion picture of the John W. Reith clan, taken upon the occasion of the 90th birthday of the founder of the well-known Lewis and Clark district family. Grouped around the lower Columbia pioneer on the porch of the Reith home are his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and members of their immediate families.

From left to right, top row - Floyd Reith Jr., Mrs. Albert Porter, Joseph Olsson, Carl Reith, Wilson Porter, Lou E. Wilson; Second row - John Reith III, Mrs. John Reith Jr., Jane Reith, Mrs. K.A. (Kathryn) Johnson, Floyd Reith Sr., John Reith Sr.; Third row - Patricia Olsson, Mrs. Alfred Vogel, Mrs. Carl Reith, Mrs. Joseph (Zella) Olsson; Center Row - Mrs. L.E. Wilson, sister-in-law of Mr. Reith himself; Fifth row - Mrs. Harry (Helen) Hutchens and son Gordon, Nancy Reith, Mrs. Floyd Reith Jr., and her two daughters Janyce and Patricia.
Johnson Vogel, who has one son, Robert Vogel and John Wesley Johnson.

William “Will” Reith became a dairyman, bought his own farm near the old Hess Place and built a big house (Riekkola house). Will married Loretta Cornelius of the pioneer Olney Cornelius family but Loretta’s untimely
death only six years later left Will bereft with two young daughters Jane and Ann. Will was a progressive farmer and had a milking machine in his barn before some of the older dairymen including his father. Jane Reith Simpson and Ann Reith Davidson are Will and Loretta’s daughters. Will married Marjorie Wilkinson.

Jessie Reith married A.J. Berry and since they had no children helped Will with the two little girls.

Zella Reith worked in Astoria after high school for a time at Owen and Peeke Grocery as bookkeeper. She met and married Joe Olsson, a carpenter who was building the radio station out at the Hess Place. Zella and Joe’s children are: Patricia Olsson Barton of Covina, CA who has two children, Robert and Gail. Margery Follett of Danville, CA has four children, Linda, Jean and twin sons Glen and Keith. Joseph Olsson of Beaverton, Oregon has three boys, Craig, Don and Bruce.

Floyd Reith took his turn at the diary work and milk route in town after the bridge was in. He left with the Astoria contingent for the army in World War I arriving in France March, 1918. His letter to the MORNING ASTORIAN in 1919 told of life in the service and war duty. Upon his return to Astoria at the end of the conflict he worked on the Gile farm in Chinook moving to Lewis and Clark in 1928. Floyd became a well-known insurance agent in Astoria until his retirement when he turned the agency over to son Floyd Jr. Carl married Hazel Warris and their daughter Sharon Reith Young lives in Wapato, Wash. with her husband and two daughters, Ashley and Kate. Floyd Reith Jr. attended Oregon State College married Laura Ihander RN and they have lived in Astoria all their married life. They have two daughters, Jeanyse Reith Snow of Astoria, Patricia Reith Krumm, who lives in Oregon City and son Arthur Reith who at present time resides in Alaska.

John H. Reith stayed with the dairy and the farm when the brothers and sisters chose other careers. One afternoon John was walking down Commercial Street in Astoria toward Owen and Peeke Grocery where Zella was working, when he paused in front of Western Union to hear the latest score in a football game between Oregon and Oregon State. He noticed a pretty girl had also stopped to hear the score and soon discovered she was an Oregon fan while he was for Oregon State. John and the young lady chatted about their teams until John boldly suggested, “There’s a dance at Elks tonight, would you care to go with me?” She would — and her name was Helen Gronholm and she lived in the Gramms Apartments which just happened to be one of John’s milk customers. After that first date John H. Reith and Helen Ida Victoria Gronholm began to “go steady.” John would stop on the route to help Helen and her
roommate with their chores of carrying wood and groceries up the long flight of stairs to their apartment. Often he would find a piece of pie or cake set out for him on his night route. John and Helen were married Sept. 24, 1924 and began married life in the big house on the farm. John took over the dairy and farm when his father retired in 1946.

Helen and John have two children. Nancy Reith Pyle built her home right across the road from the big house where her father lives. She teaches at Lewis and Clark School and is a very young grandmother since her daughter Carol June Lagerquist has her own little daughter. John and Helen’s son John Matthew, also lives close by in Astoria. He has two children, Tracy Reith and James Matthew Reith.

John H. and Helen lived a long, happy married life, busy with many community affairs in Lewis and Clark where John also used his expertise on diking and road problems. He was a member of the Federal Land Bank Board of Governors for 38 years and he and Helen would look forward to the yearly meeting trip to Spokane for the board meetings. John was left alone when Helen died in July, 1982. She would have been 82 years old in Sept. of that year.

The youngest child of John H. and Emma Batchlor Reith is Helen, who as the baby of the family got away with less chores than the others. Her fondest memories are of following Mother to the barn, watching her feed the calves and milking the cows while little Helen sat on the fragrant hay mow and played

The Reith men. (L to R) Floyd, Carl, John, Johnnie and Grandpa Reith.
with the newest baby kittens. When all the brothers and sisters left home but John, she finally had her turn as Mother's helper until she went off to Oregon State College. One summer vacation Helen became aware of a young man who had always lived, "just down the road." He was Harry Hutchens and that summer he was helping her father in the fields. Helen and Harry soon followed the road to romance and were married. Helen was happy to remain part of the Lewis and Clark community and live "just down the road" from the family. Helen and Harry have one son, Gordon.

Today, in 1985 John H. Reith is a robust 86 year old Scotsman. His has been a full life as dairyman-dikeman like his father John W. and his hard-working stone mason grandfather John Reith the First. He lives in the big, white house packed with years of memories, still rising at 5:00, the milkman's hour, to enjoy, "the best of the day" seeing around him his big dairy barn, the gracious old pine tree planted by his father in front of the house and Nancy's modern bungalow across the road.
The house, east of Astoria, is situated 0.4 miles east of the entrance to the Maritime Base on highway 30. The land surrounding the house, which presently belongs to Edwin K. Parker, was originally part of the Charles and Ann Stevens Donation Land Claim of 323 acres granted on 1 August 1873 by the United States Government. Stevens took up the claim in 1854. Volumes 37 and 38 of The Oregon Historical Quarterly contain an interesting series of letters by Stevens to friends in Illinois. In them some reference is made to his activities on the claim.

Henry Powell, the great-grandfather of the writer was born in England in 1825, married Martha Brown there in 1849, and immigrated immediately to
the United States where he and his wife settled in Albion, Illinois. He became a United States citizen in 1856. His exact occupation is unknown except that older, presently-living family members have characterized him as a "gentleman farmer" and "horse trader."

In 1875 the Powells and their family of nine children, eight girls and the youngest, a boy, migrated to Astoria where, the writer assumes, they built the present house after purchasing the Stevens donation land claim on 18 October 1876. There exists a picture of Henry and Martha Powell and several of their children on the front porch of the house. The youngest child, Mable, born in 1872, is in this picture and appears to be quite young. Thus it seems that the house must have been built at least by 1876.

Henry Powell sold portions of the land claim and subdivided the remainder into "Powells Addition to East Astoria" and into parcels for his children. Henry died in 1892 and Martha three years later.

The writer's grandfather, Gelo F. Parker, was born in 1854 and arrived in Astoria from Petaluma, California in 1874. He was a clerk in a general merchantile store until he filled the position of the city and county surveyor in 1887. During this latter period he met the Powells, did extensive survey work for Henry Powell and married one of the Powell’s daughters, Lucy, in 1885. This marriage took place in the present home.

During this period the only way to get to the house from Astoria was on foot, on horseback, or by boat. The house was called “Bay Home” (as it was situated on Cathlamet Bay) by family members and use of this name has continued through the years.

After the senior Powell’s death the house was inherited by two of Lucy’s sisters and apparently was occupied on-ly sporadically by various family members, particularly during the summer months. Eventually a wagon road was extended eastward past Tongue Point and remains of this road can still be seen on the property above the railroad.

Gelo Parker and Carl Hanson were merchandisers in Astoria from 1887 until 1897 when Mr. Parker went to Alaska as a government surveyor on the Skagway to White Horse Railway. He returned to Astoria in 1902 and from 1908 until his retirement in 1934 was Clatsop County surveyor. Gelo kept a diary from 1879 until his death on 6 September 1942. These diaries are now in the library at Bay Home.

Gelo and Lucy Parker had three children. They spent many happy summer months at Bay Home and Lucy kept a diary of anecdotes concerning children’s early years. This diary was later transformed into a delightful book, lavishly illustrated in water colors and called “Babies of Bay Home.” The original diary is presently at Bay Home. Lucy died in 1932 on Christmas Day.

The writer’s father, H. Kenneth Parker, son of Gelo and Lucy Parker, was born in 1890 and was a life-long horse seine operator on the Columbia River. He married Dallie Swick in 1920 after a sojourn in the U.S. Navy during World War I. They and their two children, the writer and a sister, occupied Bay Home until 1941 when they built a new home just east of the old home. They lived there until their deaths in the early 1950s.

Bay Home was unoccupied for several years after 1941 until Kenneth’s sister Leannah Cosgrove, moved from Seattle, did extensive renovation on the interior downstairs and lived in the house until 1958 when she returned to Seattle.

The writer has occupied the house since 1960.
I look at the old photographs and wonder what my grandfather Zachariah Thomas Tetlow was really like.

I never knew him because he died in 1926 at the age of 63, and at that time I was only two years old. All that I have of him are some faded photographs, a handful of useless oil stock certificates, and a gold watch with a Knights of Pythias fob which I occasionally wear even though the watch hasn’t run since I can remember.

I don’t even have stories to tell about him. My father was a taciturn man who rarely spoke about his family, and my Aunt Sadie would say only that when adults talked, the children were shooed from the room. So there are no tales I can tell about my grandfather’s life.

I do know that he was born in England in 1863 and migrated to America with his parents, settling down in Chicago. He was employed as a plumber and entered the Civil Service which sent him to Ft. Stevens where he spent most of his life working as the post plumber.

I know that my grandmother died in 1906 leaving him alone to raise four children; Sarah, May, Al and Zach Jr., my father. All of them are dead now, too.

But that is about all that I know about my grandfather. I look at the old photographs and wonder what he was really like. He looks like a congenial man, fun-loving and generous. He looks as if he enjoyed a good time with friendly companions. He certainly looks as if he was a lover of good food and drink. And I know that he must have been an optimist for who else but such a person would invest so much hard-earned money in a pile of useless wildcat oil stock certificates?

He must have had his share of joys, triumphs, sorrows and unhappiness but I will never know about any of them now.

I think I would have liked him.
These photographs are not what they seem to be. This respectable group of Hammond residents were hamming it up at a church social some time before 1906. The presence of my grandmother (the lady with the soup ladle) makes us certain that they were drinking milk since she would not be caught dead drinking anything stronger. My grandfather Zachariah Thomas Tetlow is the rather portly gentleman with the bucket who appears in both photographs. The other participants are unknown.
A PARTING TRIBUTE

By Celestia A. Gearhart

Scholars, for four months we have come together,
Through stormy and cold has been the weather.
Day after day have teacher and scholars been meeting;
Each and all with a kind and friendly greeting;
Till it seems our hearts are entwined
In friendships bond, strongly combined.

You have conned your lessons o'er and o'er,
The rich fields of learning to explore;
And delved mines of knowledge there to find
A benefit to you and all mankind.
Are you finding the coveted treasure
Which for you seek with faithful measure?

As upon the past you are wont to reflect,
Do you see any idle and willful neglect
Of the duty of any day or hour,
Or of anything that was in your power?
If so, from the sad past refrain,
And let your duty be your greatest love.

If, in your teacher you have failed to find
All that is just, good and kind
I ask forgiveness of all you.
Remember to all I tried to be true;
And that we're all human, and make
Many, Alas! many a sad mistake.

You have been studying books with anxious strife
While I have been gleaning from each life
All that's good, pure of heart and true,
Of unkind motives only a few.
All your graces are garnered by me,
To wreathe in my own fond memory.

In some faces I find innocent mirth,
In others that ever stirring worth,
Which carries one through
All he attempts to do.
In some kindness, In others gentleness pictured rare,
In all some good, if love to each other we bear.

Oh! that today as our work together we end,
I could in your lives forever blend
Some power that would impel you to stake
Your fortunes on marks of your make;
And when you think you've reached ambition's height
Know there is something beyond well worth your might.

And now we linger with silent dread
Upon the last farewells that must be said.
And each and all love to weave
A wish in our parting leave,
That sometime we may meet,
Teacher and scholars each other to greet.
For some time, the grandchildren of Celestia Ann Gearhart, have felt that something should be written about the life of Grandmother Gearhart as she was special to us and a unique lady. I, Agnes, asked the grandchildren to each send notes on their remembrances of Grandmother. I was also fortunate to find and make notes from Mary Neal's diary for the years of 1867, 1868 and 1869. Mary Neal was Grandmother's sister. So from old newspaper clippings, letters and such we have come up with the following.

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Dec. 31, 1848 - Dec. 22, 1952

CELESTIA ANN "LETTIE" NEAL GEARHART

by Agnes Gearhart Garner
Jean Gearhart Sandoz
Marjorie Gearhart Boehm

(Part 2 - Conclusion)

Son Neal and his wife, Dora, had five children, Hazel, Agnes, John, Clark and Hugh. They lived on a farm near Myrtle Point, Coos Co., Oregon. Son Edgar and his wife, Elsie, had two daughters, Jean and Marjorie. They lived next door to Lettie. Son Philip and his wife Nell had two daughters, Caroline and Barbara. They lived in Seattle, Washington. Daughter Esther never married and she made her home with Lettie.

Lettie and her daughter Esther made a trip to visit Neal's family on the farm. This was in 1917. They traveled by steamer to Marshfield (now Coos Bay) then by train to Myrtle Point and by horse-drawn buggy the 15 miles to the farm.

From 1927 to 1930 granddaughter Hazel Gearhart (Clark) lived with Lettie while she attended high school in Astoria. Hazel thought her grandmother was a good cook and had well balanced meals - fruit, salads, meat, vegetables and carbohydrates. Grandmother didn't think that they should work together, so Hazel cooked dinner and did the dishes on week days and on Saturdays she cleaned house, carried up wood as needed and mowed the lawn. She said that Aunt Elsie Gearhart, Edgar's wife, told that
Grandmother never interfered with their family life even though their back doors were very close.

Hazel remembers Lettie telling this story: “A neighbor criticised me for letting the boys play on the lawn. I replied, “The boys are more important than the lawn.”

Agnes Gearhart Garner’s special memory of her grandmother is of her 80th birthday, Dec. 31, 1928. This was the only time she had all of her children and grandchildren together for most of two days. It was a happy occasion for all with a lovely birthday dinner. She was a proud and stately woman and expected the children to behave and so they did.

Daughter Esther contracted pulmonary tuberculosis during the 1930’s from which she never recovered. When in remission she would be home from the hospital, semi-invalided. Esther and Lettie would help care for

Celestia Ann Neal Gearhart in front of Sarah Byrd’s house near Seaside
each other. With Lettie's failing sight Esther would read and write for her.

The summer of 1938 son, Neal drove to Astoria and took his mother down to this farm for a months visit. Enroute home Neal had a minor car accident in which his mother was shaken up and her head bumped causing her to develop two black eyes. Daughter-in-law, Dora, in her diary said, "She (Lettie) took the accident better than most young people," and the next day Dora wrote, "Mother Gearhart is in fine spirits in spite of the wreck."

Lettie was a true pioneer, schooled in self preservation. October, 1942, she wrote to Neal's wife, Dora: "After the wood was wheeled to the basement I did my defense work (It was World War II and everyone was doing defense work) by piling the wood in the basement. I also have helped to dry corn. Two neighbors have given us salmon and I think my salting down is successful." (Age 92, no less).

Granddaughter, Marjorie Gearhart Boehm, remembers that Grandmother's two big concerns were how she was going to pay her taxes and how the church would raise enough money to meet its budget. She had her own special pew where she sat every Sunday in church and she didn't appreciate the early arrivals on Easter who occupied her place, so she just didn't attend on Easter.

She had a big yard and was always battling the growth of dandelions that would pop up. She would be out on her hands and knees weeding even when she was in her nineties. When she got tired, she would just lie down on the sidewalk on her back and nap. Many motorists would stop thinking she had come to an untimely end. My most vivid picture of her is sitting in her rocker in her living room in front of her fire in her Franklin stove working on her wool braided rugs.

She had a lovely old desk in her living room that she sat in front of a lot to do her writing. She was quite a poet and has left some lovely poems that she composed. The items that stand out in my memory in her dining room are the old calendar clock hanging on the wall and the sideboard that held the cut glasses and pitcher that sparkled like diamonds. As a child, I loved them so that Grandmother gave them to me before she died to give to my first born, Barbara Ann Bolton (Burbridge).

Her bedroom had the softest feather bed I had ever seen. She also had a pot belly wood burning stove in her bedroom on which she heated a flat iron and then wrapped it in newspapers to warm her feet in bed. In later years she had to be very frugal. She saved her coffee from breakfast and drank it cold the rest of the day. The two specialties that she cooked that I loved were Floating Island Pudding, a custard with meringue floating on top, and creamed cod fish on boiled potatoes, an Easter brunch specialty. She also often baked bread and pound cake.

She had a bunion on her foot, so to accommodate it, she just cut a hole out of the side of her leather shoe and that took care of it. She had a lot of trying days and vented her wrath with the expression, "Oh Ps haw!" Everyone respected Grandmother. She was president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, so most people didn't drink alcohol or smoke in front of her. While she didn't approve, she never preached or scolded concerning such matters.

She told me one time that when her boys were growing up that Neal and Philip always had their noses in a book while Edgar, my father, was usually out somewhere. She said she used to worry about Edgar, wondering what he was up to. One day the roof caught on fire and she said, "Boys, the roof is on
“fire!” She claimed that Edgar was up on the roof before she could bat an eye and had the fire out before the other boys had closed their mouths. She said from that time on she never worried about Edgar.

I remember hearing stories that when Grandmother had money she would make loans which were not, in every instance, paid back due to Grandmother’s reluctance to press for payment. The Gearhart grocery and feed business was run by Chinese. They used to give my sister, Jean, and me Chinese lichee nuts and once gave us a $10 gold piece on a chain. We used to love to visit them.

The big Astoria fire in 1922 burned the downtown business property from which much of Grandmother’s income was derived. This was during depressed times and she never did have the money to rebuild.

Jean Gearhart Sandoz, Edgar’s first born, remembers Grandmother saying people thought she was so smart because she wouldn’t ask questions but chose to look them up, this way she would remember the information longer. She hated getting old, mainly because her peers and friends were all gone. She had extremely high principles. She was active in many reform movements. She was very frugal.

Jean also remembers that each morning when Grandmother got up she put on her house dress which she kept on until her daily chores were accomplished. Then about 2 o’clock she put on her afternoon dress, after she had cleaned up and then was ready for any guests who might drop by. She had a Sunday or party dress, usually black with a white collar.

The foods Jean remembers that Grandmother made often were cottage cheese from sour milk, steamed carrot pudding and pancakes. She can remember many family gatherings around her dining table. She also remembers Grandmother and Esther spending many hours sitting out on their back porch in the sunshine. She also recalls that they cooked many a meal for the minister. She had a plaid cape with a hood that we called the witch’s cape. We borrowed it often for Halloween costumes. After dinner, Grandmother would sit in her rocking chair in front of her pot bellied stove to warm her knees, or sit in front of her desk and play solitaire. She also loved to work cross-word puzzles and was very good at it.

Grandmother was always on a quest for more knowledge. At the age of 76, when her daughter, Esther was attending the University of Washington she went to Seattle to keep house for her and took classes as well, one by Professor Edmond S. Meany on the history of the Northwest. She left a very interesting account of these lectures in a handwritten album that is meaningful to all of us today.

Grandmother was going to the basement to clean and fell and broke her hip when she was 94 years old. The doctor said they learned so much during World War II about keeping mobile, he recommended putting a pin in her hip, so they did and it worked for her. Jean would go over each morning to help her out of bed, would bathe her and get her dressed and into her wheelchair. She could walk a few steps, but not comfortably. To prop herself up in bed, instead of a wedge pillow, she would turn a dining chair upside down and lean against the back.

From that time on Grandmother was pretty much in Jean’s care. Esther was home part of that time, but soon she had to leave herself, so Jean was more or less responsible for Grandmother. She always considered it a pleasure because she was so dear and was glad that she could help her financially as well. Grandmother had great pride and dignity. She was proud of her family
and her age. She was mentally keen to the end of her life.

The Neal family had family reunions every five years beginning with the year 1905 until 1940. Lettie’s husband’s family, the Philip and Margaret Gearhart descendents, held reunions in 1948, 1952 and 1956 at Seaside and Gearhart, Oregon. These reunions were very special to Lettie as her family meant a great deal to her. She hosted the 1905 and the 1935 reunions and attended all the others.

At the 1905 reunion at Lettie’s in Astoria all the living Neal sisters (4) and brother John were present along with Elvira Neal, a cousin, Clara Morgan Long, a niece, and her two oldest children, Louisa and Harold, brother John’s two daughters, Ada and Mary Neal and Lettie’s children, Edgar, Philip and Esther. They interspersed visiting in Astoria with visiting at sister Candace Luce’s in Forest Grove and attending the Lewis and Clark Fair in Portland.

At the time of the reunion, Aug. 10, 1940, at sister Rebecca Neal Miller’s in Newton Falls, Ohio, Rebecca and Lettie were the only two of the family of six still living. Lettie was 91 and Rebecca was 89. Son Neal and his wife, Dora, drove from Oregon taking Lettie and her niece, Mary Luce Moulton. This was a long trip, before air-conditioned cars.

Sager and Neal relatives were invited to the 1940 reunion and 59 persons attended. Aunt Rebecca’s church ladies served the dinner. The Newton Falls newspaper listed all present and concluded with the following: “Mr. and Mrs. Neal Gearhart of Myrtle Point, Oregon, Miss Caroline Gearhart of New
York City, Mrs. Clara Long of Zamora, California and Mrs. Mary Moulton of Washington, left Monday for a trip through the east, including Vermont, New York City (including visits to the world’s fair), Washington, D.C. Until their return Mrs. Gearhart (Lettie) is remaining here for a visit with Mrs. Miller (her sister Rebecca).”

Daughter-in-law, Dora Gearhart says in her diary of their leaving Newton Falls to start home, “The parting was pathetic as we realized probably Aunt Rebecca would never see her sister (Lettie) again.”

Grandson, Hugh Gearhart remembered that Caroline Gearhart told that Grandmother (Lettie) was very upset that she was not invited to go on to New York from Newton Falls to see the fair. She told Caroline that everyone just assumed that she wanted to stay in Ohio with her sister.

Grandson, John Gearhart, took his wife Marion to meet Lettie after he came home from World War II (1944). Marian remembers that Lettie was very much in charge of her home, giving daughter Esther instructions for preparing meals as if she were a child.

Grandson, Clark Gearhart, remembers Lettie saying “When you get old you just have to learn to live with your aches and pains.” Dora Gearhart, Neal’s wife, told that Lettie’s knees hurt her at times and she knit wool ‘knee-warmers’ to wear at night.

At the first Gearhart reunion in Oct. 1948, we had an early celebration of Grandmother’s 100th birthday. When she was asked to speak she said: “I wish to thank you heartily for the fine birthday party you have given me for my one hundredth anniversary. I am glad to be one of your number. You may be a very good looking crowd, but, you know, I do not see very well. The Gearharts must be a very good class of people for I have never heard of one of
them being hanged, or put in jail, or even drunk. To the younger generation I hope you will think of something more than just making money, as there is so much more to be done in the world. Rather may you emulate Grandfather, Philip Gearhart, as when a widow and her children were left without help, he took them in and cared for them until they could help themselves. I hope you may all have health, happiness and prosperity as you travel along life's road.

On the day of Lettie's 100th birthday, Dec. 31, 1948, granddaughter Jean Gearhart Sandoz, had a large reception and open house in her honor in her home in Astoria. Congratulations came from the Mayor of Astoria, Iowa State University, Iowa State College Alumni, and from President Harry Truman and many others. Immediate relatives attending were Lettie's two surviving children, Neal and Esther, nieces Clara Long, Laura Luce Egoscue, Dr. Nellie Byrd, Winona Gearhart Roberts and Faye Beaver along with grandchildren, great nieces and nephews. Quoting from the Astorian "Friends by the dozens came by to offer congratulations. They came from all over Oregon, from California and from Washington and some of the pupils she taught in 1878 came."

A special present was a money tree with 100 one dollar bills. Also on this special day a man, a stranger, came to the door and said he had never seen anyone 100 years old. Lettie obliged him by going to the door and speaking with him.

On Lettie's 102nd birthday, daughter Esther, son Neal, grandson John Gearhart, granddaughter Jean Gearhart Sandoz and family, niece Clara Long and great niece Louisa Long were there and 25 callers.

On Lettie's 103rd birthday son Neal and grandson John Gearhart were there for the day. Granddaughter Caroline Gearhart Smid came for two days. Esther was at home. Esther said, "Mother still enjoys dictating letters

The Gearhart family in 1928.
and isn’t it wonderful at 103.’”

Lettie died Dec. 22, 1952, just nine days before her 104th birthday. She lived in her home at 369 Grand, Astoria, Oregon for 66 years and it was only the last couple of weeks of her life that she developed pneumonia and was transferred to a nursing home where she died.

Lettie loved to write poetry. The first was written for her graduation from Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa in 1875. “A Parting Tribute”, “The Old Rail Fence” and “The Best Chair” were written in later years.

Among Lettie’s things was the jacket (called a basque in its day) of the dress in which Lettie graduated from Ames Agricultural College, now called Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Jacket description: Made of tan silk suiting material, trimmed with mother-of-pearl buttons, very fitted waist with steel stays front and back with slight flair at jacket bottom. Long sleeves are fairly fitted and trimmed at the wrist with a 4½ inch slit with a narrow plaited insert and three buttons and one

The 1935 Reunion of the Gearhart family

First row (sitting)
Pete Egoscue
Ronald Moulton
Philip Moulton
Louisa Long
Marian Tony
Barbara Gearhart
Marjorie Gearhart

Second row (sitting)
Laura Luce Egoscue
Robert Moulton
Mary Luce Moulton
Clara Morgan Long
Candace Luce
Celestia Gearhart
John Neal
Dorcas Neal

Third row (standing)
Ruth Egoscue
Edgar Gearhart
May Egoscue
Sidney Moulton
Esther Gearhart
William Clark Gearhart
Helen Priday
John Gearhart
Mrs. Philip (Edna) Gearhart
Jean Gearhart Sandoz
Hazel Gearhart
Neal Gearhart
row of self cording. The bottom of the jacket is trimmed with three rows of self cording. The jacket was sewn on a sewing machine. The button holes are hand made, but have such even stitches they appear machine made. The jacket is too small for granddaughter Agnes Gearhart Garner, who is a 9-10 size.

After consultation with all the granddaughters and Iowa State University, College of Home Economics, Department of Textiles and Clothing, 140 LeBaron Hall, Ames, Iowa, 50011, the jacket was presented to the University along with the class ring ISC 1875 and a hand woven linen towel. The University has a Historic Textile and Costume Collection and was especially pleased that the jacket was documented as to time and place and was connected with Iowa State University's early history. The linen towel was woven of flax, spun and woven by Leah Sager, wife of Jacob Sager, and sister-in-law of Lydia Annie Sager Neal, mother of Lettie. The towel was made at North Bristol, Ohio about 1865 or 1870.
In conclusion, granddaughter Agnes Gearhart Garner believes that the following Triplet Maxims found in Lettie’s scrapbook best describes Celestia Ann “Lettie” Neal Gearhart.

TRIPLET MAXIMS

Three things to do —
think, live, act

Three things to govern —
your temper, tongue and conduct

Three things to cherish —
virtue, wisdom and goodness

Three things to love —
courage, gentleness and affection

Three things to contend for —
honor, country and friends

Three things to hate —
cruelty, arrogance and ingratitude

Three things to teach —
thrust, industry and contentment

Three things to admire —
intellect, dignity and gracefulness

Three things to like —
cordialty, goodness and cheerfulness

—Author Unknown

THE BEST CHAIR

Yes, my hair is getting gray
And I totter by the way.
The faces I long to see
Are growing dim to me.
The voices I love to hear
Are dull and not so clear.
If things are dull and bare
Why should I care?
For don’t you see
The best chair is left for me.

In this chair I sit and dream
If things are what they seem,
If all my work is o’er
In four score years and more.
I like to watch the world go round

With feet on solid ground.
Now my hands I fold
And think of things of old.
For don’t you see
The best chair is left for me.

I love life we hold so dear
With all its grief and cheer.
But when the two worlds meet
I hope to have a seat
In a lowly chair
Near the angels there
But here and now may you know
My heart is all aglow,
With thanks, many there be,
For the best chair left for me.

Composed by Celestia Ann Gearhart, Sept. 1941 and dedicated to the members of the Anniversary Club of the First Presbyterian Church, Astoria, Oregon. She was 92 years at the time.
A LETTER FROM JOHN

by John Green Jr.

Ninety-seven years ago John Green of Greenville, Mich., was working in Astoria and wrote a letter home to his parents. That 1855 letter was recently found by a small boy in the attic of an old home there, and a copy has been sent to the Astorian-Budget by Wyman Bock, Greenville historian.

John Green Jr. was the son of the founder of Greenville, Mich., and had left home to work as a joiner.

He wrote that there has been a gold rush up the Columbia and many people had left Astoria for the gold mines. He also wrote that he and a partner were in the lumber milling business, but that the lumber business had gone to pot for lack of a market and that he saw no future in it.

Green's letter, complete with his spelling, follows:

Astoria, Sept. 16, 1855

Respected Parent:

Your and Deborah Ann's letter of June 10th came safe to hand and found me as usual in good health but I would be better pleased could I be with you as short time if not more than one month though time are too hard to spend much money a-traviling.

Mother, you must excuse my negligence of not writing you sooner the delay wad owing to my being unsettled and I have not as yet come to any conclusion where I shall stop for any length of time.

As I rote you in my other letter we were obliged to stop operations on the mill as my partner has broke down and lumbering business was to dull to encourage any such an operation. About the first of July there was an excitement broke out of near gold mines being discovered near the head waters of the Columbia river. Among the rush Smith the man that lived with me last winter and myself started for the mines and got as far as Portland on the Columbia river, which are about two hundred miles from home, but by that time we came to the conclusion that a few individuals got up the excitement more for speculation than any thing else there was supposed to be then about two thousand on their way to the mines and more leaving their daily.

But however we thought it looked rather suspitious so we came back to Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia river where we worked a short time at carpenter and joiner work. I then went back to Shoalwater Bay and sold the most of my things except the mill and claim which I left in the care of a man living there to sell, there was two thousand dollars invested on the mill and I will get one third of what it will sell for.

I have just arrived in Astoria direct from the Bay. Graney Watkins, the old lady who lived with me last summer cried very badly when I left, the poor old lady seemed to think as much of me
as though I had been her son in fact she often calls me her boy. She wanted if I did not come back again t I dont just know whether I shall stop here this winter or go to San Francisco I can get plenty of joyner work to do there but it will be hard to get the money. Iv now about ... dollars owing me here whitch they say they can pay in about a month from now Mechanical wage here are now three dollars per day and found. I have just received a letter from San Francisco stating that times are getting quite brisk there and I had better come down if those gold mines proves a failure. I think quite likely I shall go. There is once in a while favorable news comes from there though there has been many come back and some bin killed by the Indians.

It appears that more or less gold can be found all over the country but not very ritch mines has been discovered as I can learn.

Nothing but gold mines can ever bring time up here in Oregon or Washington as they ware when I came here. Lumbering busines whitch was the only busines would built up the country has gone down and I am afraid will never be good again for California now manufactures lumber enough for her home consumption and Oregon and Washington has only the Islands to depend upon for a market.

There is now quite a revival here in the church we have meetings here every evening.

I have attended three parties and one wedding since I came here The young people ware quite agreeable and I enjoyed myself very well.

I must bring me letter to a close as the first bell has just rang and I must go to supper.

Please excuse my crooked lines and scribblings for it is duskish and I cannot see the rules.

My love to all the family and enquiring friends. Wright ofton, My Dear Mother.

Your Affectionate Son
JOHN GRREEN

Direct your letters to Astoria, Oregon Territory.
THE 9TH GRADE OF CAPT. RO

Front row (L to R), Reah Sharpe, Gladys Paasi, Carole Lee, Irene Bany, Gertrude Simonsen, Robert Olson, Donald Maki, Roger Tetlow,

Second row (L to R), June Niemi, Unknown, Virginia Anet, Henry Heinze, Jack Love, Jack Brunner, Leon Erickson,
Third Row (L to R), Doris Bjork, Roger Benson, Charles Gustafson, David Wullger, John Warila, Shirley Garlough,

Fourth row (L to R), Miss Nyman, Dick Williams, John Talley, Ralph Peters - (Principal), Eben Parker, Unknown, Bob Kellim, Wallace McConkey, Wallace Carlson, Unknown
FORGOTTEN LEXINGTON

All but forgotten is the little town of Lexington, first county seat of Clatsop county, whose compact business district comprising two hotels, a general store, a blacksmith shop, several warehouses and a number of dwellings occupied by first settlers once was located on the grassy banks of the Skipanon River within the present limits of Warrenton, of which thriving fishing and lumbering town it was the forerunner. The site of Lexington was near the present southern limits of Warrenton where Skipanon station on the Spokane, Portland and Seattle railway was later located. Lexington was the first town to be platted in Clatsop county. Surveyed in 1848 by W. Hall on a part of the donation land claim of Jeremiah G. Tuller, the original plat comprised six blocks laid out three blocks long and two blocks wide, with a fraction of a block situated on the Skipanon river at what was known as Upper Landing. The plat was not recorded until April 5, 1854. Later, the name Lexington, which had a postoffice as early as 1852, eventually fell into disuse and for many years the place was known as Skipanon, which in turn lost its identity when D.K. Warren platted the town of Warrenton in 1889 and the larger place absorbed it.

The first name of the settlement that became Lexington was Yellowbank, as near as can be ascertained at this late date. We know that Yellowbank antedated Lexington, but there is little other data to be found concerning the place. Unbound records in the possession of the Clatsop County clerk show that an election was held in Yellowbank, Clatsop county, on June 1, 1846. The poll book, while showing the names of the nineteen men who voted, together with the certification of the judges of the election, failed to state what officials were voted upon. Two

by Mrs. Minnie Myrtle Marxen handwritten pages, eight by fourteen inches in size, set forth the following facts:

"Poll book of an election held at Yellowbank, Clatsop county, June 1st, 1846.

Thomas Owens  William McGunnegille
S.H. Smith  Alonzo Phillips
William Hobson  Lewis Thompson
John Hobson  S.B. Hall
Lewis Taylor  John McCord
B. Kindred  William Riley
William T. Perry  J.L. Parrish
Calvin Tibbett  George Summers
Augustus C. Wert  Job Champion"

The undersigned judges of an election held in Clatsop County on the first day of June 1846 for the purpose of receiving the votes of the people for the officers and purposes within mentioned do signify the within to be a correct return of the votes taken.

Signed: William T. Perry,
Alva Condit, C. Tibbett."

Clerks officiating at the election were set forth as: Thos. Owens, S.H. Smith, William Hobson, Lewis Taylor, and Alvin Condit. Included among the names of those voting at the election, are those of some of the very earliest settlers on Clatsop Plains and it would appear that this was the very first of efforts on the part of the first arrivals to establish a town to serve the district. Certainly, the election was one of the first ever held in the county.

When Lexington flourished travel between the Clatsop Plains and Astoria went by water to a landing on the Lewis and Clark river, then over a wagon road that led across the low ridge between the Lewis and Clark and Skipanon rivers, or across Young's Bay to the Skipanon river and up that stream to the landings at Lexington. The old road connecting the two rivers was forgotten
for many years. In recent times it was relocated by the Astoria Hunt Club whose members slashed away the brush clogging the long abandoned route and now use it for a bridle path.

The first circuit court session in Clatsop County was held in Lexington, on November 26, 1850, with Judge William Strong presiding. D.E. Pierce was Sheriff. Clatsop county records show that on November 28, 1850 an election was held in Lexington for the purpose of selecting a judge of the probate court. G.W. Coffinbury was the only candidate and received 12 votes from the following men: William Hobson, John Jewett, D.E. Pease, R.W. Morrison, F. Swasey, J. Robinson, Thomas Owens, H. Carnahan, J.L.L.M. Cooper, A.C. Wert, S.K. Dow and R.S. McEwan.

Probably the first movement to procure roads in the vicinity of Lexington was a petition filed with the Probate Court of Clatsop county, April 8, 1851, asking for the appointment of viewers to view out and mark a road from the Lewis and Clark river to Lexington, at or near a "cabben" formerly owned by A.C. Wert and running to Lexington, crossing the Skoapanon river near N.F. Eberman's house.

Only a few months after this road was requested, Lexington ceased to be the county seat, the county commissioners and court moving to Astoria with the records. The meeting at which it was decided to make Astoria the county seat was held by the county commissioners in Lexington on October 20, 1851. Present were David Ingalls, Samuel T. McKean, and C.J. Trenchard, clerk. Following are the minutes of the final meeting in Lexington: "Ordered that lots be drawn for the service of each member. Result: Joseph Jeffers, term three years; Samuel T. McKean, term two years; David Ingalls, term one year. Ordered that David Ingalls be authorized to prepare rooms for the sitting of the U.S. District Court at Astoria at the November term. Ordered that the Probate Court of this county and the Board of County Commissioners hold their sittings at Astoria until otherwise ordered. Ordered that the Court adjourn until one and a half o'clock. 1½ o'clock, the Court met as per adjournment."

The first merchant of record in Lexington was Solomon H. Smith, one of the earliest settlers on Clatsop Plains, who for many years played a prominent part in the history of early-day Oregon, from teaching school at Fort Vancouver and on French Prairie to establishing the first ferry on the lower Columbia river, which he made from two canoes. In 1849 he opened a store at Skoapanon, stocking it with more than $12,000 worth of merchandise and in 1851 he leased the Harrall mill on the Lewis and Clark river and sawed lumber for the California markets. A native of New Hampshire, who, in his early twenties, was a cod fisherman on the Newfoundland Banks, Solomon H. Smith went to Boston where he entered the employ of Captain Nathaniel Wyeth. He crossed the plains to Oregon with Wyeth's overland party. When John Ball, the first school teacher in the Oregon Country gave up teaching at Fort Vancouver, Dr. John McLoughlin induced Smith to take over his duties. Smith was the first settler to bring horses to Clatsop Plains, which he did in the spring of 1841. He bought the horses in the Willamette Valley from Ewing Young, drove them to St. Helens, sending them by boat from there to Clatsop Plains. With J.H. Frost, a missionary, Smith drove the first cattle across the mountains from the Willamette Valley to Clatsop Plains. The route was by way of the Salmon River trail to the present coast of Lincoln county, thence along the beach to Clatsop Plains. Solomon H. Smith married Helen Celiast, daughter of Chief Coboway of the Clatsop tribe. One of
Smith's sons, Silias B. Smith, who had studied law in New Hampshire and had been admitted to the bar there, was the first attorney to practice in Skipanon, as Lexington was later called. He began practice there in 1875 and continued there and in Astoria for some years afterward.

Another pioneer who ran a store in Lexington and Skipanon was August Wirt, who crossed the plains to Oregon in 1844 and settled on Clatsop Plains near the Morrises. He moved to Shoalwater Bay and settled at Oysterville where he remained for some years engaged in the tonging and sale of oysters. Later, however, he returned to Skipanon and ran a store and hotel, his wife looking after these enterprises while he did freighting.

R.W. Morrison, one of the twelve men voting in the election for Probate Judge in Lexington soon after the county seat was established there, located on Clatsop Plains in 1844 and built a sawmill. He donated ten acres of his claim for the establishment of the first Presbyterian church in the Oregon country, the site of which is now occupied by the Gray Memorial Chapel, which honors the name of Dr. William H. Gray Prominently identified with the pioneer days of Oregon and an early settler on Clatsop Plains, Gray liberally supported the original church, whose pastor was the Rev. Lewis Thompson. Dr. Gray’s daughter, Caroline, later became the wife of Jacob Kamm, noted steamboat man of Oregon and a prominent figure in the Oregon Steam Navigation Company which once controlled water transportation in this part of the United States. Dr. Gray is author of an early history of Oregon.

One of the several small river boats which used to transport passengers and supplies between Astoria and Skipanon Landing was the Katata, named for a Clatsop Indian chief, who once became incensed at the missionary, J.H. Frost, and would have taken his life had not one of the pioneer women stayed his hand. This woman, Celiast, the Indian wife of Solomon H. Smith, seeing Katata level his rifle at Frost acted quickly and knocked the rifle from his hands.

Records show that Lexington — Skipanon had a schoolhouse in the early days and that several others were located on Clatsop Plains. There was a Presbyterian school, where in 1859, Dr. B. Owens-Adair, later prominent as an advocate of sterilization of criminals, taught and where the late Thomas A. McBride, justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, held classes for a time. As early as 1849-50 there was a log schoolhouse near the county road, where Joshua Elder taught. Another school was on the Alva Condit place. Truman Powers and Kate Schwatka were early day schoolteachers.

Judge Cyrus B. Olney, appointed justice of the Oregon supreme court in 1853, serving with Judges M.P. Deady and George H. Williams, resigned from the bench in 1857 and went to Clatsop county where he had a claim on Clatsop Plains. A small town in the county now bears his names.

Prominent among the pioneer settlers on Clatsop Plains were the following families: Smith, Gray, Taylor, Owens, Morrison, Carnahan, Thompson, Hosford, Olney, Gearhart, Jewett, Condit, Doherty, Welch, Glover, West and others. In 1873, D.E. Pease was running a boarding house in Lexington and B.C. Wirt operated a boarding house and grocery.

A petition to the County Court of Clatsop County, asking that the streets, alleys, lots and blocks of the Town of Lexington be vacated and giving the consents of the individual owners of property there, was presented December 4, 1879, which indicates the approximate date at which Lexington officially became a “ghost town.”
CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.
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