

EARLY HISTORY OF DELENA COUNTRYSIDE

By SELMA M. RICHARDSON

Mrs. Roselinda Jane Morgan came to Rainier, Oregon, from Atlanta, Ill., in 1882, bringing with her four grown children, Alfred, Arthur, Mary, and Mrs. Laura Walters. They first lived in what was known as the Fox house, in Rainier. In 1883 Mrs. Morgan bought State land, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Sauter, in Hudson, and sold the timber to Olson Bros. Logging Co. Arthur Morgan homesteaded land on the divide between Elk Creek and Lost Creek, about the year 1893. Alfred Morgan homesteaded land adjoining the Richardson property on Lost Creek in 1888. Mary Jane Morgan married James Hudson, and settled down in the Hudson community, on the place now owned by Mr. and Mrs. F. Birkholz.

George Washington Richardson came by covered wagon, from Independence, Missouri in 1846, when he was ten years old. His father, Clayton Richardson, drove a wagon which was one of a wagon train headed by Mr. Applegate. They made their home at Amity. In 1884 George W. Richardson came to Rainier, married Mrs. Laura Morgan Walters, and set up housekeeping on what is now known as the Heath place, in Hudson. In 1886, Mr. and Mrs. Richardson settled on a homestead in the Lost Creek area, and lived there sixteen years. At first they lived in a log cabin built by the previous homesteader, Henry Kyle. Later Mr. Richardson built a three room house of rough lumber, and then began building the present house in 1886. Mr. Richardson farmed the place, did some fishing for salmon in the Columbia River, cut cordwood, did freighting for the Siverson Bros. Logging camp. He hauled lumber from the

Meserve Mill at Delena to Rainier and to Mayger, for shipment to Portland. This lumber was taken to Portland by steamboat. Two sons, Harold D. and George H. were born to the Richardsons. In 1902 the Richardson family moved to Hudson, and some years later sold their Lost Creek property to Charles Norman. The John Dilley family at present live there.

Dr. John Meserve with his wife and twelve children came to Delena in the early 1880's and settled on what is now known as the Fenimore place. They were quite a talented family interested in a great many things, particularly music and diet. They formed the Meserve Family Band, furnishing the music for most public occasions. They began the Delena school, built a hall, owned and operated the first Delena saw-mill, which turned out a very good product. The boards were beautifully finished, and they also made many kinds of moldings. The Eccles Lumber Co. bought the Meserve property in the spring of 1902, and this family all left. The Eccles or Mormons, as they were called, sold to the Portland Lumber Co. Lumber from this mill was floated along a flume to Inglis, where it was loaded on boxcars and shipped to Portland. This flume was built by a man named Runyan.

The Wagner shingle Mill was located right across the road from the present Samples house, above Alstons Store. They sold most of their output locally. Marion Fowler did some blacksmithing at his shop, at Delena, and later moved to Rainier, and set up a blacksmith shop there.

Neighbors of the Richardson family were the Holsapples, Washburns,

Wonderlys, Kysers, and Holmes. These were long-time residents. The oldest house around the country is the grandpa Kyser house, back of Alstons Store.

Delena had the first Post Office in the country area west of Rainier. It was in a separate building, west of the school, near the yew tree which still stands. The first Postmaster was Lincoln Meserve, and this office served all of Delena, Lost Creek, and the surrounding areas. The mail was carried by John Cramer from Mayger, three times a week. Later a Post Office was established at Hudson on what is now the Rinck place, the first post-master being T. J. Everman. About a quarter of a mile west of Alstons Store, a post-office called Dent was set up, the post-mistress was Mrs. Marion Fowler. On Lost Creek, on the Will Kyser place, was another post-office, the post-master being W. H. Kyser. Sometime in the 1890's a mail route was instituted the mail coming from Rainier. The first mail-carrier was L. D. Duzan. The small post-offices held in private homes were discontinued, except the Delena post-office which remained in operation for years afterward.

The first Lost Creek school was on the Walter Kyser homestead, between the Washburn place and the farm where Elmer Blunk now lives. The settlers got together and built a one-room rough lumber house,

about the year 1888. The first teacher was either Walter or Wm. Kyser, both of whom were school-teachers. The desks and seats were made of dressed lumber, and books were furnished by the children attending school.

The Custis family held the first school in Delena, in their own home in the 1890's. Later the Meserves held school in their home. Some time afterwards the settlers built the first Delena school-house, which was located on the site of the present building.

The Emil Shmidt saw-mill was located three quarters of a mile across the flat from what is now Alstons Corner. It was just a small mill, not doing a great deal of business and most of the output was sold in the neighborhood. This mill was sold to the Siverson Brothers, who turned it into a logging camp. The logs from Siversons were hauled to the top of Mayger hill on a tramway, a small railway built of wooden rails and logs; the tramway went across just about where Albert Norman's house now stands. The tramway hauled the logs to a chute somewhere east of the Kallunki place, where they were sent down to the Columbia River. The logs went down the chute so fast they caught fire, and hit the water with such tremendous force many of them were split wide open. The Siversons sold their camp to Roy Edgerton of Clatskanie.

