

INTRODUCTION

This story was recorded for the benefit of the descendants of J.H. Lewis and Jasper Chastain. That the descendants would have an appreciation for the trials and dreams that led the families in their quest for a better life.

Written by Maggie Lewis Johnson McCrite – June 4th, 1943.

*Give me a hill for a pillow,
Covered with nice evergreen trees.
Pull the clouds close under my chin
Now turn out the moon.*

CHAPTER ONE

California to Oregon

In writing a little history of my travels from Kansas to Compton, California, then on to Walla Walla, Washington, in 1880, I feel like my little story wouldn't be complete without mentioning something about how we, as a company, felt on arrival in Walla Walla, July 5th, 1880, and just a little experience of our ups and downs, good times along with hardships, of the early Pioneer.

Not complaining, but I am proud to call myself a Pioneer of three states. I was born in Douglas County, Kansas, fifteen miles from Topeka, the capitol, June 4th, 1864, during the Civil War. Everyone knows better than I can tell, what the Pioneers had to endure in those days.

When we moved to Los Angeles, in 1876, it was a small town. The streetcars were drawn by horses; very few bridges. When Clam Beach was a favorite place for young folks to spend Sunday's picknicking. This was before Long Beach was ever heard of.

My first trip to Santa Monica was in August 1876. How well do I remember it! There was a small town three miles from Santa Monica called Old Santa Monica. It was being moved to a more desirable location. There was at this time one building, a grocer store with the family living above. A narrow gauge train connected this little plot of ground, if I may call it so, with Los Angeles, eighteen miles distant.

My Grandfather Lewis had a Bee Ranch fourteen miles from San Bernardino. My Uncle Will Lewis lived at Temiscal. In going to see them we had to cross the San Bernardino River, which was very treacherous as it was mostly quicksand. How well do I remember many would say "If we could only build a bridge over it", but that could never be done. The river was wide, water shallow and very clear.

I would like to mention many things long forgotten by many.

My father owned thirty acres in the rich orange Azusa country. All this country around Azusa was under a Spanish grant. The people had been 'lawing' over the land for years. Father gave his away to come to Washington. The grant was settled before we left the state.

J.H. Lewis, Jasper Chastain and Mr. Snerly decided to leave Los Angeles try their luck in making a home somewhere in Washington Territory, where they could homestead some land. These men made up a train of fourteen wagons, leaving Los Angeles at noon, April 5th 1880. Dave Bowman, a young man and a friend of the family, came along in the train. For many years he made his home with the Lewis Family. My sister, Mary, rode in Mr. Bowman's wagon as he was chosen to take the lead in the train.

My father's family consisted of five children, Thom (*Thomas 18 yrs old*), Mary (*17 yrs old*), Maggie (*Margaret 16 yrs old*), Winnie (*Emily Winefred 13 yrs old*) and Edwin (*10 yrs old*).

On our first day we traveled fifteen miles. Getting started was strenuous and every one seemed tired out. The first night out was hard as we were all inexperienced to camp life, and to make things worse it rained. Sister's Mary, Winnie and I slept on the ground under the wagon tongue with the canvas over it, but we were drenched and no place to go to get dry. The next night we made up our minds that we weren't on a pleasure trip and got busy adjusting ourselves to whatever came our way, and I will leave it to the reader to decide this by the time we reached Walla Walla, Washington.

Our next night we camped at Burbank; a little station. We made very little headway for several days. Everyone seemed overloaded and the horses were soft. In fact after a week out, everything possible was disposed of.

Cooking on a campfire was a new trade for all of the ladies, but like everything else, we all soon got in the harness, so to speak.

Our first stop was at Fernando, another station with good feed for our horses. The women washed and cleaned house (wagons), did a little baking in the Dutch Oven, and kettles hung over a camp fire.

Oh, we're improving right along, getting used to sleeping on boxes and trunks-any old thing for a pillow, jeering each other on what a wonderful time we were having. Everyone was getting pretty well acquainted, and very congenial, all pulling together fine. We had one grouch, but that could be expected, and his wife was so perfectly lovely that it made up for old man grouch-Snerly by name.

We are now at Newhall. (Store is about all.) The young folks, ten of us, work pretty hard building roads, as this is a new country. After supper we play games. One young fellow had an old fiddle, and brother Tom; a French harp. We had great times dancing on the ground, and could dance to any tune, just so we had music.

April 11th. Another man and his wife joined our company today; a Mr. and Mrs. Marshall. He was soon called on to be the captain of the train, as he was a very fine fellow, but a great talker.

In other words, a big bluff that was just what we needed. He certainly filled the bill, as he knew he had a good backing. If anything had gone wrong the men said that our captain would be the first man to run. Well, he proved many times to bluff a lot of horse thieves, which were very plentiful all through this country.

Soon after we pulled in at Kingsford for the night, a hack with four men and a lad of 19 pulled in our camp and made themselves right at home. All were strangers to our train but this young fellow happened to be from Downey, California. His name was Roy Davis and he knew the Snerly's as they had all lived in the same town. By the way, Roy passed through our camp and dropped a note to Mrs. Snerly saying, "Don't recognize me. I will tell you as fast as I can with these notes. These men are on your track but I'll keep you posted as to their plots, etc." We had been on the road now for two weeks. The next morning our captain informed the men that we couldn't let anyone else camp with us as there were twenty-two wagons and our horses needed all the grass possible. He told the men they could move on or else fall back. They didn't choose to do either, but camped a little way off.

Every night they would call for a chat, also Roy, but he was with us in spirit and kept us posted as to their plans. These men painted a very colorful picture to Roy Davis, telling him that they were going to the mines. Roy being young, thought it would be great sport, and joined the little company expecting big things, as they were old miners. They promised him work where he might return home later with a pocket full of gold! But the tide turned after a few days out from Downey and the men informed him that they were on the track of gold, but not in a mine. There was a train of immigrants that pulled out from Los Angeles with plenty of dough and they intended to waylay them. Roy was in for it then, as they informed him that he was in it to do his best and would get his share. Roy resented and tried to beg off, but no, if he left or squealed on them he would never live to tell the story. Can you imagine Roy's surprise when they overtook our train to find people that he knew? He made up his mind that he would do his best to keep us all from being killed, and thanks to Roy, he worked hard to keep us informed from day to day of their plans, which many, and tricky was no name. I can only mention a very few, as it would take too much time.

Once, they hid their wagon and horses and laid down the side of a hill. Someone happened to see one raise his head, then the captain called a halt and made the men get up. They were all armed, and so were we. They said they were resting and looking for game. Our captain told them plenty.

A few days after this we came on them camped in an old log house at the foot of a mountain. We were invited to camp with them as they had a big camp fire. It was raining hard; everything looked inviting; our horses tired, and everyone hungry, but our captain thanked them and we moved on, expecting soon to find a camping place, but to our surprise and disappointment we were soon climbing the mountain and no place to camp. Naturally there was nothing to do but keep moving. Night was soon upon us, with no moon, a very rough new road and still raining.

The head driver, Dave Bowman, had hard work to see where he was going, so sister Mary proposed that she lead the train by taking two lanterns and walking ahead. This proved very satisfactory for the driver and all other wagons followed closely.

I drove one team with brother Tom tending the brakes, as there were many occasions for it. We crossed two streams with plenty of swiftly flowing water. Mary said she thought she couldn't be much more drenched and there was nothing else she could do but wade the streams, which she did. She kept going. To stop might cause trouble, as the wagons were so close together that for one to stop, all would have to.

To our great joy we started downhill about midnight. At the bottom we could see a light that seemed to be about a mile away, but as there was good feed for our horses we camped. When the men were staking out the horses they discovered that the feed was lobelia; poison to horses. Well, the poor old tired and hungry horses had to be harnessed, hitched up and moved on. It was still raining and everyone was tired and hungry, as we hadn't had anything to eat since the morning before.

The light we saw was at a small town called Rosa Station. We bought hay for the horses. Everyone seemed tire out. My brother Tom Lewis built a fire and put a big kettle of potatoes on to boil, and we certainly enjoyed them with a little salt. It is 3:00 AM now. I'll never forget how sister Mary looked, wet as a rat and dirty as a pig, but she made us all laugh at her pranks. Said she had the time of her life.

Next morning our "Friends", the men who caused so much grief, drove in and camped. It being Sunday, and still raining slowly, we took things pretty easy. Monday morning our captain, with our men back of him, went after the men rough shod. What they didn't say isn't worth mentioning. Anyway, they pulled out and back-tracked for Downey. To say that our train was relieved to see the last of them, is putting it mildly.

People in Rosa Station told us that they didn't see how we ever came through the mountains without some mishap. One hardly felt safe in daylight as there were many grades around the mountain, very narrow where one could look down steep canyons quite some distance. We missed seeing all this as it was a very dark night and we just crept along, so to speak.

Mary wasn't the worse for her experience. She was the life of the train and could always get a lot of kick out of good, bad, or indifferent, with always a word of cheer for everyone.

My brother, Ed Lewis, had a bad case of croup that delayed us two days.

We are now 500 miles from Los Angeles. After leaving Rosa Station, we found traveling pretty slow as the roads were bad and by the time 22 wagons passed over them they were almost impassible. Here's where everybody worked but father, and he worked sometimes.

We were passing through a valley, rich with grazing land, a stock county very thinly settled. I must not fail to mention the beautiful wild flowers – especially acres of dark blue Larkspurs around Bakersfield, which is quite a sheep country. At this time shearing of sheep was in full swing. The shearers seemed to be mostly Mexicans and a tough looking crowd.

From Bakersfield on was a desolate country with very few homes, which were just places to live and look after stock, mostly sheep. When we reached Poplar and Portersville, things began to look a little more civilized. The soil was very light around Tulare Lake.

We are now moving into a farming country, with houses a little better but all showing signs of a new country with beginners. This was also a horse thieving country and we had plenty of grief with them, but as we had two or three men standing guard ever night, and had ever since leaving Los Angeles, it proved necessary many times.

We are at Fresno now, a town about the size of Touchet, Washington. We camped here and had many callers – men to trade horses. They offered our men wonderful trades, very fine horses for our worst and worn out ones, which didn't appeal to our men. They turned down all offers as things didn't look just straight to them.

Here all streams are brim full, with no bridges. Next morning, our captain asked the railroad boss if they could cross their wagons over the railroad bridge. To this the clerk said, "I can't give you permission to do this, but I'll tell you when our trains are due, with occasionally an extra. If you use the bridge you will with your own accord, and if you do, don't put but one wagon on the track at a time, then rush it across as quickly as possible, as an extra may come at any time." The bridge ties were much farther apart than they are today. The water in the river, which was the San Jauquin, was so angry, my mother almost went into hysterics. The men finally tied her in a small rocking chair, blindfolded her, then four men carried her across. (I still have that little old chair, which is very dear to me.) The horses swam across.

Our next stop, after much hard work traveling over such muddy trail was Merced. Here the Merced River was brimful and overflowing with no wagon bridge, so we crossed the river on the railroad bridge, as we had done at Fresno. Our train pushed forward through many hardships on account of the rain and high water. Feed was very good for our horses.

Our next little town was Hickman, where we crossed a stream of water to Waterford. Next was the Stanislaw River, where we crossed over a ferry called Knight's Ferry. We camped there two days to let the horses rest and feed, as grass was plentiful. The women washed and did some baking. My mother could make the best sourdough bread and bake it in the old Dutch oven.

I'll never forget when cleaning out the wagon I rode in, Mother came across a lot of very choice rocks I had been gathering along the way. My father said, "Maggie, we can't haul rocks". Our horses were overloaded. Everyone had to walk up the hills to save the horses. Well, all my rocks were left along the road, and wasn't I sick! This must have been one of my hobbies, which I have never outgrown.

We passed through Hodson and Milton, out of our way a little, as the Sacramento Valley was mostly under water. Here's where we had to detour and follow the foothills. The ground was very soft from so much rain and everybody worked building roads. One day, I remember well, we traveled some three miles. The men would cut brush and everyone was pressed into service to

carry it where the men built a corduroy road. One place the hill was so steep we had to go around. The men tied ropes to the upper side of the wagons, one at a time, and would hold on to the ropes to keep the wagons from turning over. We didn't dance much around here. Everyone was ready to go to bed when our day's work was done.

From Sutter Creek we pulled toward Sacramento, where we stocked up with groceries. Our next real stop was at Marysville. Everything looked prosperous for a new country. Small farms, houses and barns to correspond, and occasionally we would pass a one-room schoolhouse. Marysville was located where the Yuba and Feather Rivers meet, the country being pretty level, with not much banks to the rivers. The country, and Marysville was protected by levies that in many places were used for roads.

We camped three miles north of town, where the feed was unusually good. We stopped over a day to rest our horses, wash, etc. In the afternoon the young folks gathered around a clump of trees to have a little chat. I borrowed my brother Thom's knife and began whittling and chewing on some small branches when he said to me, "Do you know what you are chewing on? You have Poison Oak." Too late then! That evening my neck began to itch and by morning I couldn't see. Everyone thought best to move on where I could get relief. It was beginning to rain. Our first little town was Biggs, where a very lovely lady, Mrs. Kellogg, insisted on mother bringing me in her house so they could give me every care. By this time, I was past talking. My tongue filled my mouth.

Next day came the news that the levy along the Feather River had given way and the whole country was under water. At the spot where we camped three days before, the water was fifteen or more feet deep. My little brother, Ed, said to me, "I am glad that you got poisoned. If you hadn't the men said we would have all been drowned."

The fourth day we said goodbye to Mrs. Kellogg but I kept her address and we corresponded for several years. Then one day a letter came telling me that she had gone to sleep, to awaken on Resurrection Morn. I have always cherished the kindness she showed me, when I was so distressed. Things like this make me feel like singing,

"Through this changing world below,

Lead me gently, gently as I go;

Trusting Thee, I cannot stray,

I can never, never lose my way."

We passed through Butte City, a small place, and Durham, on to Chico, a lively little town, where we had a very pretty place to camp under a hill. As usual the young folks were sight seeing every opportunity. We wanted to see what was on this hill as there were steps leading up

on it. To our surprise it was a cemetery, which I must say was most beautiful, being so well kept and laid out differently from any I had ever seen. We spent much time here.

Out north of Red Bluffs we passed through a mine of pumice and everyone picked some up and stored it away in their wagons. It proved useful in cleaning camp utensils, and being very light we could carry a lot without over-burdening our horses.

We crossed the Sacramento at Redding and followed the mountain range. One place we crossed was Rock Creek, and the men hesitated quite a while wondering just what to do. It was very high, about 75 or 100 feet across and swift and deep. Finally they swam the horses across, braced the tongue of the wagon up out of the way, put chains around the front axle, then fastened to rope over the creek to doubletrees where the horses had good footing, then rushed the wagons across. Water was over the front wheels and almost over the top of the wagon beds. Had it not been for the overloaded wagon bed they would have floated off down-stream. One horse was drowned and everything in the wagons was soaked with water.

The next problem was to get the people over. A big tree was felled and a rope for a guide was put on either side. By walking the tree, which was several feet above water, and holding on to the rope, everything went fine.

That afternoon we went down the mountains, not too far, as we had to have wood to dry our belongings. By making a big bonfire, and stretching ropes from a few trees and the wagons, everything was put out to dry and we managed to get enough bedding dry to sleep in. The men worked all night, keeping fire and looking after everything in general.

When we reached Antler, a post office, we came across a man and his family, which consisted of Mr. And Mrs. Kinney and three daughters. Mrs. Kinney was sick. We invited them to join our little train of 22 wagons. Our captain asked Mr. Kinney where he was bound for, to which he replied that he didn't know; his wife being sick he thought the trip might restore her health. To make a long story short, the Kinney family came all the way to Walla Walla. A daughter, Mrs Kathlyn Jones of 711 North 4th, and another daughter, Mrs. Tom Boylan of Pendleton are survivors.

Our experiences on up to Mt Shasta were many. This was a farming country; also stock. We camped here in the middle of the afternoon. Soon a company of young people called on us, saying they were going to dedicate a new barn that night and if any of us danced they wanted to extend a cordial invitation to us to attend. We accepted, and what a good time we had! Oh me, oh my, the eats! We had a feast.

I must not overlook mentioning the beautiful wild flowers – so many different kinds and colors. I never saw quite so many tiger lilies as there were in the mountains.

There were a good many mountains in this part of the country. One place, we came across a typical old mountaineer. He certainly was a scream. He was asked how far it was to the next

town, to which he replied, "As far again as half". How long had he lived there? He said when Adam moved out he came in. There were a lot of gnats in the air and when asked what he called them he said, "I never called them. They just come without calling."

Around here somewhere before reaching Mt. Hoffman, we traveled all day through desert. It was so beautiful! Covered with all kinds of cactus, both great and small, some of the smaller ones, red with blossoms, while others were yellow. Wish that I had the words to describe the tree cactus. Looking from a distance, one could imagine seeing people in all shapes, while other looked like animals. Everyone seemed to enjoy this particular day beyond words to express.

At Mt. Hoffman we were told that we would soon enter the Modoc country and to stock up on water, as we wouldn't get any more until we reached Bald Butte. There was a man here called Joe, about sixty, I think. Seems as though his business was to pilot people through the lava beds. He hired out to join our train and all went well until my father's wagon broke down and we had to camp for the night, close to a slough of stagnant water. I was helping with the supper. The mosquitoes were so thick that I thought I would fix a few of them. There was a big greasewood close to my fire and I set fire to it. What might have happened, was soon checked by our men being close by as the old greasewood was practically alone. The entire country was covered with greasewood.

Next morning while the men were fixing the wagon Joe said, "There is a cave over here about three miles worth seeing; a big cave in the side of a mountain with stone steps leading down some distance. There was a spring in the center with a layer of rocks all around, but where we went in, it looked like someone had built it. However, Joe said it was a natural formation. This cave was called Madam Jack's Milk House.

We saw the tracks of many Indians, but no Indians. We wanted to explore a little in the lava beds but Joe refused to let us. He said that they were full of Indians and we might come upon them when we least expected.

When we returned to camp everyone was ready to pull out, as the horses need water. We passed Clear Lake and on to Goose Lake. The immigrants were about out of grub so we hurried on the Lakeview, thinking we could replenish our mess box, but to our sorrow the store was just about out of everything. No flour, sugar or meat, but they had some course ground corn meal for horse feed, and everyone laid in a supply. Mother soaked this meal, then cooked it in the Dutch oven, and we ate it as it was this – or nothing. This was about all anyone had for a week. To say we were glad to get some good old sourdough bread was putting it mildly.

Around Lakeview and Goose Lake, was a decidedly new un-kept country. We wondered how the few people who lived around there existed at all. We saw no grain growing, and no fruit or garden land. The entire country for miles around was swampy. About the only thing that grew was rye grass, and there was plenty of that. The store keeper said it was stock country, but we failed to see the stock. Anyway, they couldn't live or eat rye grass. There may have been bunch grass somewhere, but not along our trail.

We had a long hard pull up to Lake Albert. It was cold. Feed was scarce and very few farm houses – just now and then, a cabin.

The next place of interest was Summer Lake. It was anything but summer for us. It was at the foot of a mountain. We arrived here soon after noon in a snow storm and had to camp along the road. It snowed so hard we couldn't see anything. I am sure it was the heaviest and wettest snow I ever saw. In a short time the snow was almost a foot deep. And this isn't a fish story. The men were kept busy cleaning snow off our wagon sheet. Being so wet it leaked through. The horses were fed grain in their nosebags, but everyone went to bed that night supper-less. There was no place to build a fire, and anyway the wood we might have been able to pick up was all under snow. This was the 9th of June 1880.

The following morning the snow was melting fast, which made it disagreeable to travel. All the small streams were quite full. When we were a little uncertain as to the depth of the water, a man would ride horse back across the creeks to make sure of the wagons crossing in safety.

When we arrived at Silver Lake the road was under water. There was a trail around the upper part of it that we could see was used in case of emergency. The men thought they might take the wagons through this road by taking the horses off and pulling the wagons by hand a short distance, where the boulders were almost as high as the wagons. Therefore the wagons had to be taken zigzag through, which wasn't a snap. It took two days to go around the lake, a short distance.

We passed Christmas Lakes, which were very small, and through the lava beds. No one lived around here.

In the Paulina Mountains everything was so beautiful. Going through a canyon the young folk discovered what they thought were wild currants. We made a dash for them as we were starved for fruits and vegetables. Several walked, eating these berries and breaking off limbs and throwing them in the woods we camped, just out of the canyon. A short distance off the road was a farmhouse. The men led their horses here for water and I went along with a pail to buy some milk, but to our sorrow no one was living here. On our way back to camp I was taken violently sick, as were also some of the men. We managed to make camp only to find ten of our young folks on quilts on the ground, and we soon followed suit. Mother gave us all a big dose of salts, and said we were all poisoned from eating those berries. Mother and others thought we would die before morning, but we all survived. We had to move on to get relief, but there were barely well ones enough to drive the teams. We finally reached a farmhouse where we bought all the milk we could get at 25 cents per quart. It was a holdup. We could take it or leave it, but this was all we could take for several days. Here we were informed that the berry we ate was rank poison. No one was known to live who had ever eaten them. The wild currant has a blossom, and this poison berry was smooth.

The road was unusually rocky and rough, which was hard on the sick. We were all so sore that our flesh felt like we had been beaten.

In going through Bear Creek Butte there was a canyon called Buttermilk Canyon. It was well named, so rough and rocky. One place, we came to the end of the road. I have never been able to figure out how a road would drop straight down 10 or 15 feet. However, there was a corduroy bridge built (hard to explain it.) One end of the bridge was attached to the main road, and the other end was down in this hole. It was so steep we couldn't drive over it. The men led the horses down, and then took the wagons down by hand, putting ropes around the hind axle and several men holding the wagon back to keep it from going down too fast. They were unable to use the brakes for fear of tearing out the logs. Many thought this was the jumping off place.

The story went like this. Someone going through this canyon had a churn of cream. When they camped they had buttermilk. We didn't doubt the story.

We traveled north through Powell Butte and Redmond, but at this time there were no such places – just barren desolate country.

Now we are going down a very steep, long, narrow grade into Prineville, Oregon; a small but nice little town. Everything looked thrifty. At this time it was stock country.

I have failed to mention that our train is growing smaller the last few hundred miles. We have joined many others, but they too are selecting new homes, may I call it? At this time there are 13 wagons. This morning a man and his family, who started out with us from Los Angeles, was asked to move on. He was Mr. Snerly, the man whom many called Mr. Grouch. In fact, he was the only man of many who wasn't very agreeable all of the way about everything. At one of the stores in Prineville he was seen putting various little things in his pockets, and as our captain had pulled out for the coast some time ago, it was up to the men to politely ask Mr. Snerly to pull out. The road was ahead of him and for him to keep going, which he did.

We traveled north through a desolate country, going miles without seeing any house or anything worth mentioning, but we couldn't complain about feed for our horses as for the first time we saw bunch grass.

When we reached the John Day River there was a small ferry. To our surprise, after crossing the river and paying the bill our company, I may call them, were informed that we owed for two wagons just ahead. Seemed like Mr. Snerly told the ferryman he was going ahead to locate a campground for an immigrant train back a few miles, and to collect from us.

Our next town was Hepner, a very small place, dry and dusty. We wondered how the people lived there. That awful long hill just after leaving Hepner was a hard old pull for our horses.

There was nothing worth mentioning until we reached Pendleton. As nearly as I can remember, there were two streets of interest; a typical frontier village. There were many Indians, all dressed in blankets, which were interesting, as we hadn't seen very many along our route.

We camped just this side of the town, and next day crossed the reservation to Centreville, now Athena, then on to Dry Creek, where we stayed all night. The next morning we pulled over to Milton. At this time Milton was wide open, plenty of saloons and gambling for a small town.

While taking in the town a man came to our wagon, asked a few questions of father then said, "My friend you have all gone far enough. Stop right here. This is the best country in the world." This man was none other than the late William Nichols. Afterward we all grew to be very good friends.

It was rather early in the forenoon when we started for Walla Walla. The roads were dusty and chunky and didn't look any too good to us. There was no bridge over the Tum-a-Lum River.

We reached Walla Walla a little after noon. Mother said, "Well Pa, what do you think of the town you came so far to see, and to make a home?" Father wouldn't admit but what he liked it, neither would Mr. Chastain. The rest of us weren't slow in expressing our views, which were that if ever there was a jumping off place, it was surely here.

Father sized things up a little on Main Street, and seeing a little grocery situated between two buildings; about 15 feet across, a counter with a few shelves, said, "I believe those men are poor like myself. Guess I'll see what they have." When he walked into the store he thought one of the men's face was familiar. Finally this man asked where we came from and to this father replied, "Seems like I've met you somewhere." The man said that he lived in Los Angeles once upon a time; come to find out it was the Pearson Brothers, Pete and Sandy. Father had met them in California and as long as they had a store here, father patronized it.

We left Los Angeles on April 5th (Monday) and arrived in Walla Walla, Monday, July 5th, 1880, just three months on the way. The 4th coming on Sunday, Walla Walla had a celebration on the 5th.

We camped on 9th Street, on Garrison Creek. Just got settled and dinner over when a most severe dust storm started. The men had to tie the wagon sheets down tight, put on the brakes, then tie wagons to a few scattered trees. And weren't we homesick! Father promised us if we would stay and make the best of our fate for one year, then if we still wanted to return to California he would take us back.

Our first winter here was a long hard one for us. No fruit, vegetables, very little money, and no work, but we were all well – the best of all. Our neighbors were few and far between, and consisted mostly of Frenchmen with squaw wives. Those were the days when everyone was poor – but happy.

Who calls these the good old days of long ago?

I have grown up with the country and lived to see many wonderful improvements, and believe I like the new way best, with automobiles, electricity and other improvements too numerous to be proud of.

The Lewis and Chastain families have lived as neighbors all these years and never had a word – something else to be proud of.

CHAPTER TWO

Oregon

We had a long hard trip, as the roads in many places were just mere trails. It was hard on our mothers but the young folks seemed to enjoy everything as it came along.

Our train camped on Dry Creek, Oregon, five miles from Milton, Oregon, on July 4th. The next day, July 5th, coming on Monday, was a holiday. Milton was just a mere station with very few buildings but several saloons. It was considered a wide, open town with plenty of desperados, etc. One man asked us where we were from and our destination, to which he said "Gentlemen, you have gone far enough. Just stop right here. This is the best place in the Northwest". This man was William Nichols, and afterwards we were the best of friends as long as they lived, which was many years. But our train was bound for Walla Walla and nothing could prevent our pushing on and on.

We arrived at Walla Walla about noon. I remember well father saying we would have to buy a few groceries, and seeing a small store with about fifteen feet frontage, he said "I guess I'll try here. They look rather poverty stricken like myself." To his surprise when he entered the store, whom should he meet but the Pearson brothers, Andrew and Peter. He had met them in Los Angeles. To make a long story short, father always traded with them for many years.

Next we drove back almost a mile to Garrison Creek, and camped. We had no more that finished our dinner when a most terrible dust storm came without any warning. In fact, it was about the worst dust storm ever to hit the Valley, and to this day the newspapers never fail to mention it every year on the 5th of July.

My mother said, "Well Pa, we came a long way to such a country. It sure looks like the jumping off place." Oh, what a homesick crowd. This one had them all guessing. Father said "Well, we are here and will have to stay as we haven't money enough to return, but he promised if we would make the best of it for one year and we still wanted to go back to Los Angeles, he would take us back.

Mr. Chastain and father asked how about work here. Someone told them that Dr. Blalock had a sawmill in the mountains where we could all get work. Next day we broke camp. Everyone went his way, but Mr. Chastain and father decided to stay together and to go to the Mill. The men went south to the Walla Walla River and crossed it at the DeHaven Schoolhouse, four miles above Milton, Oregon. We crossed the river fourteen times. There were no bridges, just a swift mountain stream with so many big rocks, which made it very hard on our poor horses. We traveled up the canyon to within four miles of the mill, when to our surprise, we came to the end of the road. We camped on the road, as the canyon was very narrow. Next day our men folks walked to the mill, to find that they didn't need any help.

The following day Mr. Chastain and father unloaded one wagon and then came back in the Valley to see if they could find a house or someplace to rent, returning in three days to move us down to the State Line. Father rented a place and Mr. Chastain moved to Valley Chapel.

Our place was half a mile from State Line on the Oregon side, consisting of forty acres, with five acres under fence. There was a three-room house for eight of us, with a cave cellar, a barn, and a small orchard. One thing worth mentioning was that the house faced the barn, and the woodpile, for convenience, I suppose, was at the front door. In fact I can't recall any place with a woodpile anywhere but at the front door.

Father and mother made a trip to Walla Walla to see what they could get to furnish a home with, for \$30. They bought a cook stove for \$8. It didn't have a lid that wasn't cracked, and it had only two legs, the other two were brick. One pine bedstead and some ticking for our straw beds and we slept on the floor. A few big wooden boxes that mother made into cupboards and we had two folding chairs that father and mother used. The rest of us sat on boxes for one year. We also bought some oilcloth for a workbench that we found in the yard.

The winter of 1880-81 was very cold, with lots of snow. There was no underpinning around our house, which had single floors. Also the house was a box type. Mother filled many cracks with cloth punched in with a knife. We came from a warm climate, which made it all the harder for us. The neighbors informed father that he would have to haul his winter wood from the mountains, which he did. It took two days to make a trip. He hauled log wood and worked it into stove wood during the winter. Occasionally he would take a load to Walla Walla to sell (just like everyone else) and get in the neighborhood of \$8 per load. This would have to be spent for eats. We certainly didn't know what luxuries were, that winter. Our menu consisted of sourdough bread and potatoes boiled with the jackets. Potatoes were very scarce that winter and we couldn't waste them by peeling. Mother would buy beef tallow and render it, to make gravy to eat with our potatoes and bread, and this was our main standby. Occasionally we would have a little dried fruit or beans. No cow and chickens.

This sounds like a hard luck story. Nevertheless it is all true. We never complained. Not one of us was sick all winter and we were always ready for our meals and very happy. I hope whoever reads this won't think for one moment that the Lewis' were the only poverty stricken ones. No, not for one minute! There were many just like us. Of course people who had been here longer were pulling through just like we did. Hard work and good health are worth more than money, many times. We learned a good lesson and I have never forgotten mine. I surely have had a warm heart and 'oodles' of sympathy for anyone who gets up against a stone wall but still pushes with a determination to never give up. One thing that has always been a blessing to me is that I never undertook anything with the idea of failing.

I must not forget to mention that when we first came to Walla Walla Valley we had a few very fine neighbors; the Chastain's, Ballou's, Winter's, Crockett's, Goholson's and Ingal's. The Valley wasn't very thickly settled and there were many families of half-breeds. In early days it seems like many Frenchmen came to this part and married Indian girls. They were very good neighbors.

It is hard to tell all the interesting things which appealed mostly to me, therefore I will just try to answer a few of the ones most dear to me.

One great change has been country roads. In early days roads were a problem. In fact we would think so, today. I don't suppose any Pioneer would like to step back sixty years to the many

hardships endured in the early settlement of any Pioneer country. There were two roads leading from Milton, Oregon to Walla Walla Washington, in 1880. The upper road, as it was called, left Milton going east, following closely to the Walla Walla River by the McCoy home, on past John's property, where there was, as far as I know, the first country school house called Moore. I had a very dear friend, Augusta Ward Rees, of Walla Walla, who taught the first school there, in 1861. There is much I would like to tell about her experiences, but it may not be very interesting to the reader. Returning to the road, it traveled on to where it crossed the Walla Walla River at Pepper's Crossing, as was familiar to all. No bridge here for several years. Then on, where it passed, where the Yellow Hawk School building now stands. Here it passed what is known today as the County Farm east of the buildings, up the hill to the Garrison, then into town. The other road from Milton to Walla Walla came down the flat, as it was called, to the late Crockett home, from here ½ mile to the late M. Ford home, up a small hill, going by the oldest cemetery in this part of the country. Ninivy (Ninevah) Ford donated the ground, therefore it has always been called by his name. We leave here on another ½ mile, going down the hill in front of the late John Lewis home, out across country about a mile, passing the Ingle farm, then on to the Walla Walla River, known today as the Tum-A-Lum. Here there was a bridge. In fact, I can't recall any other bridge in this part of the country. Here the road cut across country, running into the other Milton and Walla Walla road, where the Yellow Hawk School building stands, then onto Walla Walla. One thing not forgotten was the many roads, side by side, made by the people to escape the awful dust.

The late Potter of Walla Walla ran a stage line from Walla Walla to Pendleton for many years. He used the road passing our home, and was very accommodating, giving me as well as many other neighbors, a lift many times. He made two trips a week to Pendleton, and drove four very fine horses, changing horses going and coming at Centerville, now Athena, Oregon.

Before leaving the road question, I must not overlook the opening of the Winesap Avenue, a much needed road. To make a long story short, the men along this part of the country got up a petition, in fact many men set in with a will to open this road. When things were coming right along they thought Ninivy (Ninevah) Ford would knock everything. Finally after the fourteenth petition, when Mr. Ford stopped it again, father said to Mr. Ford "I wish you would get up a petition. Then we will all sign it. You need this road. Why do you kill it ever time?" To this Mr. Ford replied, "Yes I do need it, and want it, but I just want to show you men that you don't know much about law." How can anyone be very happy with a disposition line Ninivy (Ninevah) Ford?

Another change which has proved very much appreciated is the straightening of the road from Ferndale to the Stateline. Mr. O.R. Ballou bought the Teal property without any outlet, and he got up a petition to open this road. Many predicted it could never be done; too many springs; the road could be used only in summer, as people would mire down during wet weather. This is one of the many things that couldn't be done.

When I first heard Mr. Ballou talk about a car running between Milton and Walla Walla without an engine I wasn't alone. Many said, "It can't be done, in our day anyway." I am happy to say that the Interurban proved all that Mr. Ballou prophesied it to be, and he lived to see it come true.

In 1880, I cannot recall one farm with a bluegrass lawn. In fact, few homes had flowers. My mother was very fond of flowers and it wasn't long until she had many beautiful flowers. Mrs. Rees gave her a nice variety of plants in 1885, among which were three beautiful peonies. I still have two from her collection. We lived little better than ½ mile from the Ford Cemetery. Many times when there was a burial here, whether mother knew the people or not, she would send flowers, mostly beautiful wreaths, as she was especially fond of making them.

Where the Chastain property now is, south of the Winesap Road with the Umapine Road on the east, was formerly owned by a man by the name of Ferguson, a bachelor. It was never put under cultivation – just a beautiful tract of land covered mostly by native trees and brush. When Mr. Ferguson died this land was sold at an auction sale; Mr. Chastain bidding on it. The writer attended the sale in March 1885. This land joined the J.H. Lewis ranch. The Lewis family have all been called (died) but Maggie, and she still owns ten acres across the road from the Chastain's. The two families have always been the best of friends, I am very proud to say, something unusual and worthwhile mentioning.

One more interesting thing I want to mention is this. O.R. Ballou came to the valley in 1878, from Santa Rosa, California; coming by water to Portland, then on up the Columbia River to Wallula. On arrival there he was informed that he would have to send for a train to bring his family on to Walla Walla He did; sending a man by horseback to Walla Walla asking Mr. Baker to send down the train to Wallula to bring his family and possessions on to their destination.

The Indian scare of 1876-78 was practically over, but living where we did, we saw many Indians passing by, in the summer, to and from the Indian Reservation to the Snake River where they often went fishing. They were very friendly, often stopping for a visit, especially if we had fruit or a garden. They were great on begging and it wasn't best to be too liberal, we found out to our sorrow, as in a few days, here would come the whole tribe, asking for more "Muck-a-Muck" for their cousins.

We never really had but one scare by them, and luckily our men folks were all home that night. We had retired when we heard a great pow-wow in our field, and we knew it was Indians. It sounded like a dozen or more, but proved to be only three young "bucks" as they were called. They were full of firewater and somehow they were lost and got into our field. No one slept that night. All were dressed and waiting for the worst, but it never happened. The next morning, brother Thom and Dave Bowman went down to our spring brook and found them asleep. They said to our boys, "You want a little fight?" The reply was "No, they were looking for a cow". The Indians said to Thom, "You get me some coffee." Mother sent a generous pot full to them, good and strong, with some biscuits, but they just wanted coffee. In a little while they came by the house on horseback calling "Goodbye".

This is just a reminder of how an Indian scare might affect one.