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REMINISCENCES OF MRS. FRANK COLLINS, NEE MARTHA ELIZABETH GILLIAM.

By FRED LOCKLEY.

"My maiden name was Martha Elizabeth Gilliam," said Mrs. Frank Collins, when I visited her recently at her home in Dallas. "My father was General Cornelius Gilliam, tho' they generally called him 'Uncle Neal.' Father was born at Mt. Pisgah, in Florida. My mother's maiden name was Mary Crawford. She was born in Tennessee. I was born in Andrew county, Missouri, the day before the Fourth of July in the year 1839. Father and mother were married in Missouri. I don't know the day nor the year. Missouri was the jumping-off place back in those days and they didn't have courts and court records and licenses like they do now-a-days. Any circuit rider or justice of the peace could marry a couple and no records were kept except in the memory of the bride. Father met mother in Tennessee when she was a girl; fact is she would be considered only a girl when father married her, by people of today, but in those days she was considered a woman grown.

"The women worked hard when mother was a girl back in Tennessee and they had a lot of danger and excitement thrown in with their hard work. My mother lived with her aunt. When I was a little thing I used to get mother to tell me about when she was a girl. When she was betwixt and between a girl and a woman she and her aunt were busy with the house work one forenoon when some Indians came to the house. My mother's aunt shut and barred the door. The Indians began hacking at the door with their tomahawks. They cut thro' one board and had splintered another when my mother's aunt fired thro' the broken panel of the door and shot one of the Indians thro' the chest. While mother's aunt was busy loading the gun my mother boosted one of the

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children thro' the back window and told him to run to the woods where the men were getting out timbers for a cabin and give the alarm. After quite a spell of hacking the Indians finally cut thro' the door and crowded into the cabin. My mother and her aunt had crawled under the four-poster bed and before the Indians could pull them out the men came on the run. The Indians heard them coming and ran away, all but the one mother's aunt had wounded. Just as he was going out of the door the men shot him and he laid down and died on the door step.

"Nowadays a man most generally has only one job, like being a lawyer, or a preacher, or a politician, or a farmer, but when my father was a young man the men folks had to whatever came to hand. When my father was in his 'teens he was a man grown and a good shot and was good at tracking game, so he naturally took up tracking runaway slaves. They used to send for him all 'round the country, for a heap of slaves used to take to the swamps. He made good money at the business. He was so good at tracking them and bringing them back to their owners that when he ran for sheriff the people said, 'He is so successful catching runaway niggers, he will be good at catching criminals,' so he was voted in as sheriff.

"When the Black Hawk war came on father enlisted and served thro' it, and when the Seminole war broke out in Florida where he was born they made him a captain and he fought thro' that war. When he had finished fighting he went back to the frontier in Missouri, for everything west of Missouri in those days was Indian country. He was a great man to make friends and so they elected him to the legislature in Missouri. He got interested in religion and was ordained a preacher. He was one of the Old Testament style of preachers. He wasn't very strong on turning the other cheek. If a man hit him on one cheek he would think he was struck by an earthquake or a cyclone before he got time to hit father on the other cheek. Father believed the Bible, particularly where it

said smite the Philistines, and he figured the Philistines was a misprint for the Mormons and he believed it was his religious duty to smite them. He believed they should be exterminated root and branch. He was a great hand to practice what he preached so he helped exterminate quite a considerable few of them. The Mormons had burned the houses and barns of some of father's folks. One of father's relatives was alone with her little baby when the Mormons came and she crept out of the window in her nightgown and had to walk through the snow four miles to a neighbor's while the Mormons burned her house and barn. That didn't make father feel any too friendly to the Mormons, so they run them out of Missouri and it wasn't long till they moved on and settled on the shores of the Great Salt Lake a thousand miles from anybody.

"In the spring of 1843 the first party of emigrants started from Missouri for the Willamette Valley in the Oregon country. Next spring a lot more met at ^{CAPPLES} ~~Capless~~ Landing, near ~~St. Joseph~~ ^{St. Joseph}, Missouri, and organized to cross the plains. Because father had been a captain in the Florida Indian war and because he had been a sheriff and had been in the legislature, and was a preacher, and because he was used to having people do what he wanted, they elected him the head officer.

"They organized like a regular military expedition. Father was made general and Michael T. Simmons was made colonel and four captains were elected—R. W. Morrison, Elijah Barton, Wm. Shaw and Richard Woodcock. Ben Nichols was chosen to act as judge and Joseph Gage and Theophilus McGruder were to serve as judges with him. Charley Saxton was the secretary. Sublette, a trader among the Indians, and Black Harris, a mountain man, acted as guides as far as Fort Laramie. From Fort Laramie to Fort Bridger the train was guided by Jo Walker. I was five years old and I remember lots of incidents of the trip.

"There were two other emigrant trains came across the plains that same season, one commanded by Nathaniel Ford and the other by John Thorpe. From the Blue Mountains

^{ANDREW} ~~WALKER~~ SUBLETTE & ~~BECK~~ MOSES "BLACK" HARRIS
GUIDED NATHANIEL FORD'S PARTY FROM INDEPENDENCE
GILLIAM'S PARTY FOLLOWED THEIR TRACE FROM THE
BLACK VERMILLION.

to the Willamette Valley we had a pretty hard time as we had been delayed till the fall storms overtook us. At Burnt River we were met by an old-time friend of father's, James Waters. They generally called him General Waters. He took us to his cabin on Tualatin Plains where we stayed while father traveled over the valley looking for a land claim. Father found a place that suited him near what is now the city of Dallas, in fact the western part of Dallas is built on our donation land claim. I guess there is no doubt of my being the oldest living settler in Dallas for I settled here more than 70 years ago.

"After we had moved to our place in Polk county, Colonel Waters came and stopped with us for a while. I remember his visit because while he was staying with us he hunted up a broad smooth-grained shake, as we used to call the hand-made shingles, and whittling it perfectly smooth with his jack knife he printed the letters of the alphabet on it and taught me my letters. As we had no pencils in those days they generally melted some bar lead or a bullet and ran it in a crack and used that for a pencil, but he had a better scheme than that.

"In the creek near our house there were chunks of soft red rock called keel. He found a long splinter of keel and printed the letters on the shake and I had a mighty good substitute for a hornbook and in no time I could read my letters, and he didn't stop 'till he had taught me to make them for myself and name every one of them.

"Eugene Skinner stopped with us for a while. He took up a place at what is now Eugene. Skinner's Butte at Eugene was named for him and because he was the first settler there they named the town after his first name—Eugene. He had the first house there. He hired father to build it for him. You see he went back in the spring of 1845 to get his family. They came out the following year and Mrs. Skinner stayed at our house. Mrs. Skinner gave me the only school book I ever owned. It was an A, B, C book. She called it a primer. I went to school altogether three months. I went for a month

to Mr. Green's school. His school house was on our place and for two months I went to Alex. McCarty's log school on Rickreall creek. I learned my reading from a page torn from the Bible. He didn't have any sure enough readers, so he tore up a Bible and gave each scholar a page or so. Mrs. Skinner helped me to learn to read, for I took my pages home with me every night so I would have my lesson next day.

"There were six girls and two boys in our family. I was the next to youngest child and I am the only one of the family now alive.

"When we settled here our neighbors were Solomon Shelton, Uncle Mitchell Gilliam, Ben. F. Nichols and Uncle John Nichols.

In 1846 the Provisional Legislature authorized Tom McKay* to build a road for the emigrants across the Cascade mountains from what is now Albany, clear across the mountains to Fort Boise. He was to have it ready for travel by August, 1846, so the emigrants that year could use it. The day before the Fourth of July, it was on my seventh birthday, my father took out a party of men to pick out the route for the new road. My father's old friend, James Waters, was along, and so was T. C. Shaw, Joseph Gervais, Xavier Gervais, Antonio Delore, George Montour, J. B. Gardipie, S. P. Thornton, and Mr. McDonald and Mr. Thomas McKay. They couldn't find a good route over the mountains so a road was built over the Barlow trail instead, but they didn't have anything to do with that road.

"Next summer father headed a party to explore the Rogue River and Klamath River Valleys so emigrants could come in by that route.

Congress raised a regiment of riflemen for the Oregon country but the Mexican troubles caused them to send them down there so Oregon never saw a hide or hair of them.* At

* December 16, 1845, instead of 1846.—*Oregon Archives*, p. 145.—*Geo. H. Himes*.

The Mounted Rifles came to Oregon in 1849, arriving at Fort Vancouver on October 4, 1849. See page 227, *Report of Secretary of War*, Nov. 30, 1849.—*George H. Himes*.

the same time the Postmaster-General† was authorized to contract for a mail route to run from Charleston, South Carolina, to the mouth of the Columbia River. The boats were to come six times a year via the Isthmus of Panama. For bringing the mail to Oregon once every two months the contractor was to be paid \$100,000 a year. So as to make the service as near self-sustaining as possible Congress fixed the rate of postage on letters at forty cents an ounce. Father was appointed superintendent of postal matters for Oregon. Two postoffices were allowed for Oregon, one at Oregon City and one at Astoria. David Hill was appointed postmaster at Oregon City and John M. Shively at Astoria. Post routes were established from Oregon City by way of Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually to the mouth of Admiralty Inlet, and the other route ran from Oregon City up the Willamette Valley and thro' the Umpqua valley and on to Klamath river. The routes were to be in operation by July 1st, 1847. The mail bags came by ship around the Horn and were delivered at our house. The postal keys were sent in care of some people coming across the plains and they were delivered at our house also, as well as father's commission as Oregon's first postal agent. I still have his commission. I am a great hand to save things of that kind.

"Right after the Indians killed Doctor and Mrs. Whitman and the rest at Wai-il-at-pu the provisional legislature told Jesse Applegate, A. L. Lovejoy and George L. Curry to raise the money to buy arms and equipment for the settlers so they could go and punish the Indians for the massacre. The settlers enlisted as soldiers, but the committee couldn't raise the money to buy the guns and powder and lead and other things. Governor James Douglas, the Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver, who had recently succeeded Dr. John McLoughlin, who had moved to Oregon City, told Jesse Applegate that he would furnish all needed equipment and take the signatures of Gov-

† Cave Johnson.

ernor Abernethy, Jesse Applegate and A. L. Lovejoy as security, so that fixed that up.

"The legislature elected my father to be colonel of the regiment and his friend, James Waters, to be lieutenant colonel. H. A. G. Lee was made major and Joel Palmer was elected commissary general. They appointed Joe Meek to act as messenger to go back to Washington and ask for help to suppress the Indians. They issued an appeal to all the citizens to help equip additional troops to be raised.

"The day that Peter Skene Ogden reached Portland with the survivors of the Whitman massacre, whom he had bought for blankets and other trade goods from the Indians who held them captive, was the day that my father started with 50 men for eastern Oregon. The rest of the troops were to come as soon as they could get ready. At Cascade portage they established a fort which was named after father—Fort Gilliam. The stockade at The Dalles was named after Major H. A. G. Lee—Fort Lee.

"Right after father got to The Dalles he took what men he had and went up on the Deschutes and had a fight with the Indians. He killed some and captured a lot of their horses and some cattle. The rest of the troops soon reached The Dalles and they went out and had a fight with the Cayuse Indians and drove them before them. The troops went up into the Walla Walla country. Father with two companies visited Wai-il-at-pu Mission, where the Whitmans were killed. The wolves had dug up the bodies so the soldiers reburied them. The soldiers met the Indians, mostly Palouses and Cayuses, on the Tucannon and defeated them; after which the soldiers returned to Fort Waters.† The troops were short of ammunition and they were getting tired of eating horse meat, so the officers held a council and decided to send a strong escort to The Dalles to secure powder and lead and food.

"On March 20th, *Captain McKay's company with Captain

† This was at the site of the Whitman Mission, all buildings there having been destroyed.

Maxon's company started for The Dalles. My father was with them, as he was going to the Willamette Valley to confer with Governor Abernethy. While they were camped at Wells Springs near the Umatilla river, my father went to the wagon to get his picket rope to stake out his horse. My father had given strict orders to the men not to put their loaded guns in the wagon on account of the danger of accidents, but one of the men had disobeyed the orders. When father pulled his picket rope out it caught on the hammer of the gun drawing the hammer back and then releasing it, discharging the gun. The bullet struck father in the center of the forehead and killed him instantly.

"Captain McKay brought father's body to our home here on the Rickreall and the whole country turned out to his funeral. The following June special services were held for him by the Masonic order. Masons came from all over the Oregon country to do honor to him.

"Father had come to Oregon not only to make a home but to help hold Oregon for the United States. Each family that came were promised a section of land. The husband was given a right to take up 320 acres and the wife had a right to take up 320 acres. Father and mother took up a section, but because father went out in the defense of Oregon's settlers and was killed while in command of the troops fighting the Indians, he was not allowed to hold his 320 acres. When mother came to prove up she was only allowed to hold her half of our place. Father was not there in person to prove up on his half, so we lost it. She told them why he couldn't be there because he was killed, but they would only let her have her half of our farm. Mother always felt that father was not proved right, as he was punished for his patriotism by having his half section of land taken away and then he was killed before the money was available to pay the troops and he never received a cent for his services either from the Provisional government or a cent for his services from the government at Wash-

"I have always saved father's commission as Special Postal Agent of Oregon, and I also have the glasses President Monroe gave him. Mr. Monroe and father had been good friends long before Monroe ever thought of being president. When father told President Monroe he was coming out to Oregon Mr. Monroe gave him a pair of spectacles and said 'Take these glasses with you, Neal. You don't need them now, but if the time comes when you do need them and you can't get any out there in Oregon they will come in handy.' Father and President Polk had worked together in politics and Polk was very friendly toward father.

"Father was killed in the spring of 1848 and we had a pretty hard time to make out for a while, but mother was a hard worker and a good planner and we managed to get along. My oldest brother, Smith Gilliam, thought he could help most by going to the California gold mines, so as pretty near every man in the whole country was either there or on the way, he pulled out for the gold diggings in the spring of '49. My brother Marcus and I had to do the farming. I was going on ten years old so I was plenty old enough to do my share of supporting the family. I drove the oxen and Mark held the plow. When the wheat was harvested we put the shocks in the corral and turned the calves and young stock in to tramp it out. We had to keep them moving or they would eat it instead of tramping out the grain. I enjoyed threshing the wheat out. I would go into the corral, catch a young heifer by the tail and while she would bawl and try to get away I would hold on like grim death and as she sailed around the corral trying to escape I would be taking steps ten feet long. This would start all the rest of the stock going full tilt so the grain got well trampled.

"We cut the wheat with a reap hook, tramped it out with the cattle and cleaned it by throwing it up in the air and letting the afternoon sea-breeze blow away the chaff. We had a big coffee mill fastened to a tree and it was my job to grind all the wheat for the bread mother baked. It took a lot of grinding to keep us in whole wheat flour.

"The summer I was fourteen we were milking 24 cows. We didn't have the money to buy American cows, so we broke the half-wild Spanish cows to milk. Many and many is the time they would tree me while I was trying to break them to be milked. They were thin-flanked, long-legged and long-horned and wild as deer, but night and morning I milked my string of twelve of them. We sold the butter for 50 cents a pound and it was sent to the California mines. We got 50 cents a pound for all the bacon we cured. We saved from our butter and bacon that summer better than \$800.

"My brother Marcus and I were chums. I thought anything he did was just right. We fought each other's battles and were very devoted to each other. When the Yakima Indian war came on they wanted recruits, so he volunteered. I didn't want him to go for father had been killed in the Cayuse war, and I thought our family had shown patriotism enough, but Mark felt that he should go, so I did all I could to help get him ready. The young folks came in to bid him good bye. I was feeling pretty bad about it, so he said 'Don't you feel bad, Lizzie, I'll bring you home an Indian's scalp.' Mark went and his company got into a pretty bad fight. A Klickitat warrior raised up from behind a rock and shot at Mark but missed him. The next time the Indian raised his head, Mark put a bullet thro' it and then ran down to get his scalp. The other Indians tried to keep him from scalping the Indian he had killed and they all fired at Mark. My brother-in-law, Judge Collins, was there, and he said the gravel and dust was just fairly boiling around Mark as he stooped over and scalped the Indian. The bullets hit all 'round him, but nary a one hit him, and he brought the scalp back to me when he came back from the war. I kept it for years, but the moths got in it and the hair began shedding, so I burned it up.

"I have always liked Indians. One of the prettiest Indian girls I ever saw was Frances, the Indian girl Lieutenant Philip H. Sheridan lived with. She was a Rogue River Indian girl. She was as graceful as a deer and as slender as a fawn. She

loved Sheridan devotedly. Her brother was a fine looking Indian, too. He was named Harney, after an army officer. He was a teamster for the troops. When the Civil War broke out and Sheridan was called east, Frances was almost broken hearted.

"After the war General Sheridan fixed it up for four of the Indians to come back at government expense and visit the 'Great White Father,' as they call the president. Frances, her brother Harney, and two other Indians went. Frances came and showed me all her clothes. She had a fine outfit for the trip. Years later she lived at Corvallis and did washing. Any of the old-timers at Corvallis can tell you all about her.

"When the soldiers would leave Fort Hoskins or Fort Yamhill their Indian wives would follow them to where they embarked for the east. Frequently they would have to say good-bye at Corvallis. The Indian women would feel awfully bad to have their soldier lovers leave, as they knew they would never see them again.

"When we came here in 1844 our claim was a great camping place for the Indians. There would be scores of tepees along the creek. It was like a big camp meeting, only they were Indians in place of white people and instead of meeting to sing and pray they had met to race horses and to gamble. We children used to love to go to their camp and watch them gamble. They would spread out a blanket and put the stakes on the blanket. They would stake everything they had on the game, staking their beads and blankets and stripping down to their breech clout. The most exciting time, tho', was when they were running their horses. First they would bet all the horses they had, then their guns and beads and blankets, and often an Indian would be stripped almost naked as the result of a close race.

"One Indian family had their tepee near our house. They stayed all summer. There was a little girl just my age, eight years old. We loved each other like sisters. Sid-na-yah used to come at milking time and I would give her a cup of warm

milk. We would drink from the same cup. She was my only playmate. She was near kin to the head chief. She was taken sick and they called in an Indian medicine man. They let my sister Henrietta and me in the tepee where he was beating sticks and hollering and trying to drive out the evil spirit. She died. The chief came and asked mother if my sister Rettie and I could go to her funeral. Mother let us go. The Indians took a milk pan full of beads and broke them up and scattered all over her. After their ceremonies were over they buried her on the hillside near our house. They shot her horse and placed it near the head of her grave and her favorite dog they killed and put at the foot of her grave. They put poles around her grave on which they fastened all of her buckskin dresses and other treasures. Next year when her mother came back and saw Rettie and me, she cried as if her heart would break. She went out often to Sid-na-yah's grave. People think Indians don't love or have any feelings because they do not wear their hearts on their sleeves; but I believe Indians feel as deeply and love as truly as white folks.

"The emigrants brought the measles to Oregon. The Indians didn't know how to doctor them. They would go in one of their sweat houses and then jump in a cold stream and it usually killed them. One season we heard frequent wailing from the Indian camp near us. Quatley, the chief, told my mother all their children were dying of the white man's disease. We children got the measles, but mother doctored us successfully. An Indian medicine man came to our house for protection. He said his patients all died so the Indians were going to kill him for claiming he could cure them and not doing so. When he thought the coast was clear he started off, but just then Quatley rode up. The Indian whipped his horse and started off at a keen run. Quatley took good aim and shot and the medicine man went over his horse headfirst and only lived a little while. When Quatley saw that we children all got well of the measles he came to mother and said. 'Your children get well, all our children die. Your medicine is

stronger than ours. My little girl is sick. I want you to cure her.' Mother said, 'No, I won't try. If she dies you will kill me like you killed your medicine man the other day.' Quatley said, 'If you don't treat her she will die, so I will let you do what you will. If she dies I will not blame you.' Mother had the chief's daughter come to our house. She kept her out of the draft and gave her herbs and teas and she soon was well. Quatley drove up his herd of horses and said, 'You have saved my little girl for me. Take all the horses you want.' Mother told him she didn't want any. He kept us supplied with game as long as he camped in that neighborhood. Anything he had he shared with us. He kept our loft full of hazel nuts and he had the squaws bring us all the huckleberries we could use. As long as Quatley was in the country we never lacked for deer meat.

"In 1848 Dave Lewis was elected sheriff of Polk county. In the fall of that same year, 1848, he resigned to go to the California gold mines. My brother, W. S. Gilliam, or Smith Gilliam, as he was usually called, was appointed in his place.

"In February, 1852, William Everman killed Seranas C. Hooker, a Polk county farmer. Hooker accused Everman of stealing his watch. My brother had the unpleasant duty of hanging Everman. His brother Hiram was tried for being an accomplice. He had helped his brother get away. Hiram was generally considered a good man. I believe that William Everman, who killed Hooker, was mentally unbalanced. Enoch Smith was sentenced to be hung for being an accessory to the crime, but was pardoned and David Coe, who was also tried for being an accomplice, secured a change of venue and was acquitted. Hiram Everman, the brother of the murderer, was sentenced to three years in the penitentiary; but as there was no penitentiary and they didn't want to build one for the exclusive benefit of Hiram Everman, they decided to sell him at auction. Dave Grant, who was a brother-in-law of Sheriff Smith Gilliam, was the auctioneer. They put him up for sale here in Dallas. Hiram was sold the day his brother was hung

Theodore Prather bought him. When he had worked out his three years Prather gave him a horse and saddle and twenty dollars. He went to Douglas county and raised a family and was a good citizen.

"Frank Nichols, who married my sister Sarah, was the next sheriff. One of his first jobs was hanging Adam E. Wimple. Wimple had stayed for a while at our house in 1845. He married a 13-year-old girl in 1850 and within a year killed her. They lived in Cooper Hollow, four or five miles from Dallas. My brother-in-law, Alec Gage, and his wife stopped at Wimple's house the morning he killed her. Mrs. Wimple's face was all swollen and her eyes were red from crying. Wimple saw they noticed it, so he said 'Mary isn't feeling very well this morning.' My brother-in-law and his wife had not gone over a mile and a half when they saw smoke rising from where the Wimple house was. They hurried back and found the house in flames. It was too late to save anything in the house. When the fire had burned out they found Mrs. Wimple under the floor partially burned. Wimple had disappeared. He was more than double her age. She was 14 and he was about 35. A posse captured him and brought him to Dallas. I knew Wimple well, so I asked him why he had killed Mary? He said, 'Well, I killed her. I don't really know why.'

"There was no jail so Frank Nichols took Wimple to his house to stay. Frank swore in four guards, but Wimple got away and was gone four days before they found him and brought him back. They tracked him to the house where he had killed his wife. I went over to stay with my sister, Mrs. Nichols, while he was boarding there waiting to be hung and helped her cook for him. Frank hung him early in October, 1852. Wimple sat on his coffin in the wagon when they drove to the gallows where he was to be hung. They passed the sheriff's father, Uncle Ben Nichols, while they were on their way to the gallows. Wimple was afraid Uncle Ben would be there and miss the hanging, so he called out 'Uncle Ben, ain't you going to the hanging? Ain't you coming down to see me

hung?' Uncle Ben said, 'I have seen enough of you, Adam. No, I ain't going.' Uncle Ben was the only man in Polk county to receive a personal invitation and he was about the only one who didn't take a day off to see the hanging.

"Churches are plenty nowadays and folks don't seem to set much store by them; but when I was a girl we drove 25 miles to church and were mighty glad to get to go. The church I attended was held in a school house and the preacher was old Doctor R. C. Hill, a Baptist minister. I met my future husband there. I was fourteen and Frank was nineteen when we first met. The name he was christened by is Francis Marion Collins, but I always call him Frank. He went to the California mines in the fall of '54. He mined near Yreka. In 1858 he took a drove of cattle down to the mines and the following year we were married. We were married on August 29, 1859, by Justice of the Peace Isaac Staats.

"There is one thing I have always been glad about and that is that Gilliam county was named after father.

"Gilliam county was set off in 1885 with Alkali, now called Arlington, for its county seat. Two of my cousins, William Lewis and J. C. Nelson, were in the legislature that session. They were taking dinner with me one day and they began talking about cutting off a new county from Wasco county. W. W. Steiwer and Thomas Cartwright were lobbying to have the new county created. "Cy" said the new county was to be named after the man who had surveyed it. I spoke up and said, 'Why not call it after my father; he was killed up in this country while fighting for Oregon.' Lewis said, 'Your father was killed at Wells Springs, which is in Umatilla county; but I think it would be a good plan to name the new county after him.' Cy Nelson said, 'I'll introduce a motion to have the new county named Gilliam county.' He did so and so the new county was called after father."

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN DAY

Editorial Notes by T. C. ELLIOTT.

John Day was a member of the Wilson Price Hunt or Overland party of the Pacific Fur Company (Astorians) which assembled at the mouth of the "Nadowa" (near where the city of Saint Joseph, Mo., now stands) in the fall of 1810, crossed the plains and Rocky Mountains during 1811 and arrived at Astoria during the winter and spring of 1812. The itinerary and experiences of those "Earliest Travelers on the Oregon Trail" have been clearly told on pages 227-239 of Vol. 13 of this Quarterly. John Day was a "Kentucky hunter" engaged to act as one of the hunters of the party, and is thus described by Washington Irving at page 146 of Vol. 1 of his "Astoria":

"John Day, a hunter from the backwoods of Virginia, but who had been several years on the Missouri in the service of Mr. Crooks, and of other traders. He was about forty years of age, six feet two inches high, straight as an Indian; with an elastic step as if he trod on springs, and a handsome, open, manly countenance. It was his boast that, in his younger days, nothing could hurt or daunt him; but he had 'lived too fast' and injured his constitution by his excesses. Still he was strong of hand, bold of heart, a prime woodman, and an almost merrily shot."

John Day's early excesses evidently incapacitated him for extreme hardship, for in the final crisis of that journey, in December, 1811, along the banks of Snake river, he gave out and his life was saved only by the fact that Ramsay Crooks remained behind with him at some Indian camp near Weiser, Idaho. The following spring these two made their way across the Blue Mountains to the Columbia river, only to be attacked, robbed and left practically naked near the mouth of what has ever since been called the John Day river about thirty miles east of The Dalles. They were found by others of the fur traders and reached Astoria early in May.