

[People and Places in Oregon]

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Folklore Collection (or Type)

Library of Congress

Title People and places in Oregon

Place of origin Portland, Oregon Date 2/10/39

Project worker Sara B. Wrenn

Project editor

Remarks

Form A

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 10, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Subject People and Places in Oregon. Contents of paper published by young ladies of Oregon City Seminary in 1867.

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. M. Lawrence 1417 Thompson St., N. E., Portland, Oregon.

Date and time of interview February 8, 1939; 2:00 to 3:30 P.M.

Place of interview Above address, home of informant

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Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant —

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you —

Description of roams houses surroundings, etc.

Upper one of four-flats, in stucco building. A charming living room of much individuality, furnished in early American manner, with books and pictures "off the beaten path." An item of special interest was the collection of cook books, old and rare and from foreign lands, owned by the informant's daughter, who is employed in the Portland Public Library. A limited garden surrounds the building, which is situated in a good residential district.

Form B

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

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Subject People and Places in Oregon. Contents of paper published by young ladies of Oregon City Seminary in 1867.

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. M. Lawrence 1417 Thompson St., N. E., Portland, Oregon.

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

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1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities
9. Description of informant
10. Other points gained in interview

1. English and Welsh.

2. Oregon City, Oregon, January, 1871.

3. Father, C. O. T. Williams; Mother, Mary Warren. A widow, with one daughter, Marian. "Father came to Oregon in 1852. Added "T" to his initials to distinguish him from other Williams, and was always known as "C.O.T. Williams.

4. Oregon City, until 1893; Salem, '93-'94; Oregon City, '94-'96; Portland, '96-'03; Bend '03-'06; Roseburg, '06-'10; Bend, '10-'36; Portland '36 to date.

5. Public Schools, Oregon City.

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6. Clerk in Post Office; housewife.

7. Housekeeping only.

8. In Bend was member of County Health Association, Civic Club, Federated Study Club, Baptist Church.

9. "Motherly" type of person, well-dressed, and apparently well balanced intellectually. Pleasant and affable and much interested in this folklore research.

10. No old or very interesting matter obtainable, aside from the "Newspaper published by young ladies of Oregon City Seminary."

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 10, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject People and Places in Oregon. Contents of paper published by young ladies of Oregon City Seminary in 1867.

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. M. Lawrence 1417 Thompson St., N. E., Portland, Oregon.

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Text:

My grandfather, Warren, was the first sheriff of Yamhill County. His donation land claim was some eight miles south of McMinnville, where my mother was born. The Grande Ronde Indians were pretty numerous in those days, and I remember my mother telling of how the settlers were tipped off that the Indians were going on the warpath and massacre them all on a certain night. So the women and children of the country roundabout were gathered into the largest and strongest house, while the men went on guard. But no Indians showed up. A joke on one of my great-uncles was that he forgot all about the night the killing was to take place, he and his family sleeping peacefully at home, while everybody else was in a panic of fear. He always said, however, that the joke was on the rest of them, as I guess it was.

Grandfather Warren was not only first sheriff of Yamhill County, but the first mayor of McMinnville, an office he occupied until his death. He was representative in the State Legislature in 1864, where he was afterward senator for a number of years. From 1865 till 1875 he was in the land office at Oregon City.

My father, C.O.T. Williams, came to Oregon across the plains in 1852. Not long after he went to the gold mines in California, returning later to Oregon City, where he died in 1904.

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Mother taught in the Young Ladies' Seminary of Oregon City. While a pupil in this school, in 1867, she was "editress" of the young ladies' newspaper, the "Magnolia", (copy attached). This was published weekly, being written all in longhand, which was quite a job in itself. Judging from various editorials appearing in this paper, there must have been a similar paper published by the young men of the Oregon City Seminary, referred to as the "Gazette."

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I'm afraid I don't know very much in folklore stories. Another Indian story I recall was that of an Indian who for some reason became enamoured of a woman named Mrs. Majors. He was always hanging about and walking into the house suddenly, without so much as knocking — a habit of the Indians in the early days, I believe. I don't know what he finally did, but Mrs. Majors became very much frightened. She kept her doors locked and even then was in fear, and as he hung about the back door one day, she took a five-gallon pail of water upstairs and from a window above poured the contents down on Crazy John, in an effort to drive him away. But that only made him worse; only, instead of being enamoured, he was now angry, and finally matters got to such a pass that she called for help, with the final result that the men got together and drove Crazy John out of the community. I think they had him locked up.

When I went out to Bend in 1903, Central Oregon was still pretty wild and woolly. At least it seemed so to me. The roads were such that it took seven hours to reach Prineville, the nearest town. I remember one night when I was alone, a boy with a lantern came, asking me to go to a neighbor, who was ill. It was a very cold night, and as he didn't seem disturbed in any way, I took my time in getting warmly dressed. Finally we were off. As we made our way along the rough, shadowy path, I asked, "Is Mrs. W— very sick?" "Yes," he drawled in reply, "they - thought - she - was - dying - when I - left." You may imagine with what speed we hurried over the rocky trail the rest of the way.

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Fortunately another woman had arrived in the meantime, and, between us, we pulled our neighbor through to recovery.

My husband was in the land office at Bend, and often he was detained until late at night, after a period when settlers came in to make their land payments. I would sit there in my shack, imagining all sorts of things happening to him, particularly when a roistering bunch of Warm Springs Indians or drunken cowboys would be having a night of it, yelling and shooting and making the night hideous with noise. One night in particular, I sat shivering

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in the dark, awaiting my husband's return. Very early I had heard soft thump-thumps about the house, and I was sure someone was slipping around. Steps would go off, and then come back, thump — thump — thump. It occurred to me my husband was bringing home money for safekeeping, and he or they were waiting to waylay him. I had no gun or arms of any kind. There was just nothing to do but sit there in the darkness and wait until at last my husband came, all safe and sound. Well, you may be able to imagine my feeling of relief.

A story a little more amusing is that of an artist, who was spending a few weeks out there. One day a herder in “chaps” attracted her attention. He was rather a good-looking young fellow, and somewhat picturesque, what with his leather “chaps” broadbrimmed hat, and colored kerchief, despite the fact that he was none too clean and needed a shave. Anyway, this artist wanted to sketch him, and finally screwed up courage to ask him to pose for her. He demurred at first, but finally consented, and after a few minutes of blocking in she offered him two-bits in payment. Rather indignantly he refused the money. Then she asked him if he smoked, and when he answered that he did, she went into a cigar store and bought him the most expensive cigar she could find. Later, when she learned, amid loud guffaws from his friends, that her “model” was the son of one of the richest sheep men in all the country, she was a bit chagrined. But she was no less intrigued, trying vainly for the rest of her visit to see again her “typical man of the open spaces.” He probably had a girl already.

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(Exact copy as to spelling, punctuation, etc.)

MAGNOLIA

Published weekly by the young ladies of Oregon City Seminary.

February 15th, 1867

No. 2

Library of Congress

Miss Mary Warren, Editress.

The late editress presents her compliments to the late editor, Mr. T — for his high opinion of her, in stating he thought she would do all in her power to excel and have an interesting paper. But advises him in future to be more careful in his remarks about her sex, and as for the name of our paper, it certainly has more euphony in pronunciation than the Gazette, and is something new, and the novelty of an object always adds to its pleasure. She also entreats that he will let no stinging pains rack the composure of his mind in consequence of the Magnolia casting a shade over the minds of the young ladies, and prevent them from contributing. She assures him their minds are not affected by such insignificant things as merely the name of a paper, but thinks he judges from experience with his own sex. Our desire is not merely to excel but to produce something that will be of honor to us, therefore we did not endeavor to make such a display of wit. Our paper is like a Bark which at first glides gently into the water then goes deeper and swifter.

Our friend on the other side of the house, who has written (missing word) about the behavior of the girls is without doubt (missing) relation of lord Chesterfield. He writes with (missing) and in such a flowery manner that we can (missing) understand what he means. He is never at a loss (?) for language but is without 5 doubt in want of (missing) understand that he has the impression that (missing) for his parents told him so. We would (missing) he would use a little if he has any left (missing) New York has examined his head and (missing) it very long but upon close examination —— the astonishing fact that the length had ——

Editing a Newspaper

There are people who think it is an easy matter to edit a paper; some who think that any person of education, can succeed in the profession. But the truth is there are very few persons who succeed in it and for the reason that they do not regard it as a profession.

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It is, more over a laborious profession when pursued with industry sufficient to insure success.

You might find any number of men of genius to write for a paper but very few who could edit one. To write for a paper is one thing and to edit a paper is another.

Enigma. I am composed of 18 letters.

My 7, 16, 2 is a Public conveyance

My 14, 7, 12, 7, 17, 3, 16, 13, is a dessert

My 9, 12, 16 is something we drink

My 3, 18, 15 is something we wear

My 1, 16, 2 is very valuable

My 11, 9, 13, 16, 2, 10, is river in U. S.

My 16, 6, 18, is an adjective

My 5 denotes nothing

My whole is the name of a large building in Oregon City

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Intemperance

Intemperance is one of the worst evils of our nature. A man will first take a glass of wine and then something a little stronger and so on until they become intoxicated and are abusive at home if they have any and often go to jail. Frequently they commit murder and end their day on the gallows. All comes from that first glass of wine.

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Feb. 18th

Dear Miss Editress

You have requested me to contribute something to your paper which I shall most willingly do provided I can bring my wandering ideas to rest on one subject for a sufficient length of time. I have just returned from a trip to the mountains, and shall endeavor to give you an idea of our enjoyment. We left the little village of M—— on the 15th ult. Our company was comprised of eight young ladies and eight gentlemen, all mounted on spirited horses, with two animals to carry the provisions. The first day we proceeded about thirty miles, and arriving at a clear running brook, thought it would be a pleasant place to remain for the night. We all dismounted and went to work to get something to eat. The gentlemen busied themselves getting wood and taking care of the horses, while we all endeavored to assist about setting the table (or rather tablecloth) and steeping the tea, giving the fire an occasional punch when it was not necessary, the tea was turned over twice causing great alarm, and brought the man running to render assistance, - finally after an hour or so the supper was ready and we all seated ourselves around the tablecloth for the cloth was spread on the ground, and partook of a hearty meal, the victuals tasting much better than at home, although cooked there. The evening passed off with pleasant jokes, plays and singing. At a late 7 hour we retired, with no roof above us but the pure blue sky, and arose next morning much refreshed but feeling a little fatigued from the previous days exertion. After breakfast which was prepared in a similar way to the supper, we proceeded on our journey, passing through deep streams over high mountains by roaring cataracts deep precipices, and the most enchanting and picturesque scenery ever beheld by mortal man — to be continued.

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We have no hesitation in saying that we regard the Magnolia as the most valuable paper published. It is prepared with particular reference to the wants of the community — and will also give much entertainment and instruction to the masculine part of humanity.

Conundrum.

What fruit does the two editors of the Gazette resemble?

Answer: A green pair.

Valentine

My dearest girl.

A feeling has taken possession of me since meeting the glances of thy soft eyes, which makes my heart palpitate and flutter like a trembling bird. What is it. This soft delicious ecstasy flowing through my veins every time you gaze across the schoolroom sending the blood from the ends of my toes to the roots of my hair. It must be love and you are the one an whom my fondest hopes are resting, you who, lovely as a now blown rose covered with dewdrops greet my 8 my enraptured vision. Morning after morning tripping up the steps with melodious laughter, or notes of warbling rippling from thy lips like the song of a robin in early spring. Oh thou daughter of Eve, fairest and loveliest, couldst thou respond and breathe to me a reciprocation of this happy longing which is drinking away my breath till sometimes it seems that gasps are all that escape from me. Ah loved one, give me one little word wherein my soul may hope to meet thine and be recognized as thine affinity.

Yours only and forever

Rodney

Rodney:

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The feeling you speak of as causing your heart to palpitate, can with perfect propriety be termed impudence and the glances emanating from what you term my “soft eyes” are only glances of contempt and scorn, of which I think you are peculiarly deserving. That which is drinking your life away must be gass instead of gasps. Shall I tell you what I really think of you. You are like an African marigold, who wears a narrow soul finding their affinity in something to please the appetite of the stomach rather than the heart.

You should wear a narcissus in your buttonhole which you know is expression of egotism. Your voice reminds me as you come lemboring up the stairs, of a frog assuming the vocal powers of a canary, your step is indicative of a heavy brain full of self esteem that it is hard to carry on your shoulders.

Hoping in the future you will seek your kindred spirit in a place where intellect is less cultivated, and animal instincts are the prevailing charm —

I remain yours with disdain

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The Sun

The sun is the great centre of the universe and around which all other bodies revolve. See with what regularity that oarb of heaven has performed its revolutions from the period when it was called into existence and still performs them without the least diminution of regularity. The Sun is sailing in greatness beyond the sympathies of those on whom its blessings rest. Happy in doing good without reward and shining through thousands of years an example and teacher for man. Man looks and thinks how peace and mercy shine in the beauty of that heavenly orb to engage the heart and delight the eye.

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The gentle influence of the sunshine on the earth like kindness and mirth on the human countenance reflects its own beauties everywhere.

Impudence

Impudence often arises from an over estimate of a persons qualities though it may frequently spring from ignorance. A species of impudence was published last week in the first issue of the Gazette which surpasses anything we can read of in history or conjure up in minds. Any young man that would publish girls have no brains shows not only the littleness of his own but that of his whole race. From Eve down to the present time weomen have always had minds of their own, and for his information I would refer him to the latest authoresses, namely Mrs. Southworth Mrs Stephens Mrs Woods and a host of others, he will find out by reading, but I will close hoping that in future he will be more carefull in his remarks about the female sex.

10

Wanted

Any one having a surplus number of apple sprouts is requested to give the seminary a call, as the trees near by is deprived of their limbs and many more are in demand as me have the most unruly set of boys in this establishment to be found in the state, not a day passes but what a number are severely castigated, the large ones not excepted.

I really think they are the most contemptible boys I ever saw, they never have their lessons and spend half their time gazing round the schoolroom, their mouths stretched ready to catch items and flies.

War

Of all the evils of mankind war is the most destructive. How sad it makes a person feel to take war for a subject to think of. To think that two nations must send armies against

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each other to fight. No one thinks that while they are standing in a line with their bayonets glittering in the sunbeams waiting silently for the charge that their lives may be taken that day. What a sad thing is now coming, the cannons roar in heard and each one is shivering at the sound. Half discouraged some fall to the ground as if dead, some leave the field unseen and other fight it out bravely. What a man to have such courage, one that is willing to give up his life for his country. How many wives have been made widows, children orphans by means of war.

Reading

There is much pleasure to be derived from reading. It serves to enlighten our minds and give us something to think of and talk about. It is a very pleasant way to spend leisure time. Every one should try to learn to read well. The most beautiful sentiments lose half their meaning by not being read correctly. How much nicer it sounds to hear one read well than to hear one read as if every word was the last they were going to say. Our reading does us little good unless we remember it. In order to remember what we read we must have our minds on what we are reading.

A Parody
There was a sound of merriment and noon
When the seminary youths had gathered there.
Her beauty and her loveliness, and soft
The Sun's rays peeped in through the windows,
And lighted up the spacious room.
A dozen hearts beat happily, and the
Play went merry as a marriage bell,
But hush! hark! methinks I hear a noise
What ominous sound is that? Did ye not hear?
No 'twas but the wind Or hungry swine petitioning for swill.
On with the play, for it will soon be one,
Let our joy be unconfined.
When youth and pleasure meet,
To chase the hours with flying feet,
But hark! that dreadful sound breaks
in once more Nearer, clearer and louder than before
Oh let's see, let's see what it is.
Then there was hurrying to and fro,
A sudden breaking up of our sport,
A knocking over chairs, a hopping over dishes,
A rushing down stairs,
All were trembling with distress,
But who can guess O Girls it is — it is the Singing of Dr. Straight.

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Speaking of ourselves

We would advise every one to be particularly careful not to speak of themselves more than is necessary. The less you say of yourself the more people will think of you. Whatever good qualities you may possess rest assured people will find them out soon enough. But whether they do or not they will think the less of you for praising yourself. It is hoped the Gazette will please take this advice as directed to it, study its meaning and perhaps it will do it good in time to come.

Connundrums.

Why is our late editor like a pine tree?

Answer: Because he is tall, straight and green.

Why is the Oregon City seminary like the Catholic church?

Answer: Because it contains crosses.

Home.

The very word home carries happiness to the hearts of many. How many are the pleasures of home, but we seldom realize them until we have no home to go to. Many people have homes which are unhappy. Some have husbands or fathers who are unkind and when at home are so scolding and cross that their children dread to hear their footsteps. How thankful we ought to be that we have comfortable homes and we should try and see how happy we can make them.

Answer to enigmas in the proceeding volume

No. 1 Sacramento

Library of Congress

No. 2 Milton

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'Tis winter, the trees are all stripped of their green leaves; and the birds have flown to a warmer climate. No music cheers the groves; no verdure clothes the plains. Cold winds arise and the rays of the sun are scarcely felt. The cold makes us shiver, and we gather around the cheerful fire, while the south winds whistle and the tempests roar. The chilling frost has bound the earth with its icy feathers, and the aspect of nature looks dreary and desolate. The rivers and lakes are covered with ice, and boys with skates under their feet, swiftly glide along the smooth surface. The snow descends and covers the earth with its white mantle, and the farmer feeds his flocks and shelters them from the storm. But soon as softer winds blow from the south the ice dissolves, the snow melts from the mountains, the surface of the earth appears and seems to promise the return of spring.

A.

Form D

Extra Comment

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date February 19, 1939

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject People and Places in Oregon. Contents of paper published by Young Ladies of Oregon City Seminary, 1857

Library of Congress

Name and address of informant Mrs. J. M. Lawrence 1417 Thompson St., N. E., Portland, Oregon

Comment:

As stated in Form B, the only item of particular interest derived from this interview is the copy of the 1867, hand-written "newspaper," compiled by the young ladies of the Oregon City Seminary; the various entries in which reflect much of the spirit of the times.