

(See footnote on page 5.)

History of Stayton, by Mathilda Siegmund-Jones, 1955

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Stayton is located on the north side of the North Santiam River, on Highway 22, in Marion County, seventeen miles from Salem and is the largest town between Salem and Detroit Dam. It has grown from a nucleus of one house, one shop and one mill in 1866, to a population of approximately 1900. Stayton is an attractive community with good schools and churches, well equipped shops, a diversity of industries and ample and attractive recreational areas.

Our first visitors to the Stayton area were impressed with its economic possibilities. Doctor W. H. Willson and Lewis Judson were members of the Methodist Mission which laid the foundation for the American settlement in the Oregon Territory. At the site of Stayton, they found a place where they could divert the water of the North Santiam River along a natural depression to Mill Creek, which flows into the city of Salem. The Mission mill which had been built on that creek at Salem in 1840, had an inadequate supply of water and they were looking for a means of bringing more water to their mill. In 1844 they applied to the infant Territorial Government, which had been founded the previous year, for the right to divert the water of the North Santiam down this course to Salem. In 1849, they reapplied for an extension of their rights since they had not been able to accomplish their desired end. In 1856, the Willamette Manufacturing Company, which had been established in Salem, completed the project which they had envisioned and under the direction of Joseph Watt, the water from the Santiam was first brought to the mills down the Salem ditch or canal. Watt is famous in Oregon history not only for having introduced the sheep industry, but for his share in the development of this early woolen mill.

T. C. Sloper is said to have built a small grist and sawmill in 1856 near the east end of this ditch and directly north west of the Stayton Cannery. It was known as the "Little Red Mill" and was the first industry in this vicinity where Stayton developed. Using the water power of the ditch, this mill survived into the present century, although it did not operate in 1860 or 1870.

The land in the Stayton area was taken in three donation land claims, by James T. Linch, Stephen Porter, and David Kirkpatrick. In 1866, Drury Smith Stayton and his wife, the former Rachel King, bought from James Linch, forty-one acres, part of which became the town site of Stayton. Stayton began building a carding mill, and then a sawmill, which were completed about the same time. However, the carding mill was Stayton's first industry within the original town site. The machinery came from Springfield, Oregon, and the power for both mills was supplied from a natural waterway formed by a wash of the North Santiam River. Moses and Drury E. Stayton, sons of Drury Smith Stayton, worked with shovels three years, moving tons of earth and gravel from the waterway. The lumber for these first mills came from Allen Davie's mill near Aumsville. The wooden water wheel was made by Gabriel Stayton, Stayton's oldest son. Together with his sons, these mills were operated by the family. With one saw and one planer, the sawmill used twenty horsepower, and in 1870 cut 500,000 board-feet of lumber and dressed 20,000. The carding machine took eight horsepower and produced 10,000 rolls of wool a year.

By 1870, an additional business had been added to the town. C. M. and J. W. Thomas had established a cabinet factory, using native maple, alder and fir. In one year they manufactured forty bedsteads, twenty dozen chairs, and forty safes. These cabinets were designed for storing food and keeping it cool. On the door and at the sides, there were panels of tin, which were punched with ornamental designs, to let in the air. A beautiful example is on display in the kitchen of the Bush Museum at Salem.

By 1876 the chair factory was run by Leigh, Neff and Company and the Stayton mill by Queener and

Stayton's sons. A sash and blind factory was run by Clark and Brothers and a tannery by Ritenour and Watson. The wool carding business had passed to D. F. Campbell. The town boasted wagonmakers, Powell and Hoeys; blacksmiths, Crabtree and Bonham; a boot and saddlemaker, George Ritenour; and a gunsmith, E. S. Burson. Of these early settlers who built the basic industries for Stayton, perhaps Drury Smith Stayton, for whom the town is named, is the most important. He was born in Kentucky in 1818, and his wife, Rachel King, was born in Missouri, in 1820. In 1852, the year of the greatest migration, they crossed the plains from Missouri to Oregon, with five children. Stayton was captain of the train. They took up a donation land claim about halfway between Stayton and Sublimity, on the west side of Highway 22.

Stayton liked to read, and we are told that he had a library of three hundred books. His oldest granddaughter, Nell Stayton, still treasures the kerosene lamp her father, Moses, bought for her grandfather's use. It is about twenty inches high, with ruby-colored cut-glass bowl, which holds about a quart of coal oil. The lamp stands on a marble base with a brass stem and the chimney is of clear glass.

After the death of Drury Smith Stayton, his widow lived with her daughter Frankie, Mrs. Jim Queener, on Bodeker's Mountain, southeast of Lyons, Oregon. At that time Mrs. Stayton had a gunny sack full of her husband's books, but the granddaughter, Nell, doesn't know what became of them. Nell does have four books, including a copy of the Life of Christ, printed in 1819, which belonged to her maternal grandmother, Mrs. C. W. Thomas.

Besides being a farmer, Drury Smith Stayton had been a Baptist minister, a justice of the peace and a sawmill man. In 1854, he became postmaster of Sublimity, and he was chairman of the Mill Creek precinct Democratic Convention held at Sublimity on April 10, 1855. At that time slavery was a major issue, the delegates were instructed not to vote for a member of the Know Nothing Party, and if they found that any of those for whom they had been instructed to vote were members of that party, they were requested to "drop them like a hot potato and select some other person."

Stayton was a trustee of Sublimity College in 1858, an institution sponsored by the United Brethren. He was a candidate for representative for Marion County at the Secession State Convention held at Corvallis on April 15, 1862. During this period he was a justice of the peace and performed at least four marriages. By reputation, he never had much money ahead at a time, but he was worth \$6,947.31 when he died in 1875. In the various tax rolls of the period he is generally listed as having from a thousand to two thousand dollar's worth of property, and in 1858 he apparently sold land near Sublimity at auction, in five acre lots. In 1865, he raised sixty-five acres of wheat, one hundred forty acres of oats, and he produced not only livestock, but hay, wool, and four hundred pounds of tobacco, a curious crop for a Baptist minister to raise.

The first plat for Stayton was signed on September 27, 1872. The site consisted of six blocks, now the business district. Stayton wanted to call the town Florence, after his youngest daughter, but since there was already one town in Oregon by that name, he settled for a street named in her honor. It was suggested that the town be named after himself, as founder, and thus Stayton was so named. The four east and west streets were 'name' streets - Water, Florence, High and Ida, the latter being for Stayton's granddaughter, Ida Cusick. The north and south streets were 'number' streets - First, Second, and Third. The post-office was established on May 7, 1872, with Dr. Samuel D. McCauley as postmaster. Up to this time, mail was brought from Oregon City on horseback and dumped in wooden tubs in front of two village stores and patrons shuffled through them and discovered their own mail.

The first store in the community was evidently maintained by C. B. Swartz, and in 1871, William H. Hobson opened the second. Hobson later took into partnership Uriah Whitney and together they built the flour mill which has already been mentioned.

The Hobson family was particularly important to the economic life of the town and the area. Hadley Hobson, the father and a pioneer of 1847, was the first white settler to take out a donation land claim as far east of Salem as the Sublimity-Stayton land site. His place was across Highway 22 from that of Drury Stayton's. The road was the old North-South Indian highway to the Klamath Falls country.

Hadley Hobson followed the lure of gold and went to California in 1849. Upon his return he began to extend his land which evidently reached into the heart of Stayton, totaling 1500 acres.

The Hobson sons achieved initial notoriety by finding large bones in the swamp between Stayton and Sublimity. Their father thought them to be those of a prehistoric animal. One large joint was kept in the woodshed until it was identified by an archaeologist as a piece of the neck of a dinosaur.

In those days, wild hogs were abundant in the-Sublimity area, and settlers put up a corral around an oak grove on the Hobson property. The hogs came and went at will in the grove, eating acorns, and when they were fat enough to kill, the corral was closed and the neighbors helped with the annual butchering of about thirty hogs. It was a day's work for all the families, and the women spent their time making sausage, headcheese, rendering the lard, and preparing the meat for smoking. The meat and the products were divided among those who helped.

A letter written in 1853 by Hadley Hobson to his father in North Carolina has survived. By that time he had 640 acres of land, which he estimated to be worth \$7,000, some \$5,000 worth of stock, and he had loaned out about \$9,000 at ten per cent interest. He estimated his annual income at \$2,500. Two hundred acres of this land were fenced and he had an orchard ready to bear. He had just begun to build his family a frame house. At the time the letter was written, mechanics received \$3 to \$5 a day, laborers \$1 to \$1.50, wheat was \$2 a bushel, oats \$1 a bushel, beef ten cents a pound, and coffee the "unheard of price" of twenty cents a pound. The fact that Hadley Hobson's son, William, had become co-partner in a general store and flooring mill at Stayton by 1876, is adequate evidence as to their financial importance. An article in the Oregonian of the previous year describes the mill as four and one-half stories high, thirty-six by forty-five feet, with turbine water power, and two sets of burrs.

Other early stores in the community in 1876, were those of A. D. Gardner, druggist and postmaster; A. McKinsey, butcher; J. W. Thomas, furniture dealer; J. M. Jones, general store; and Mrs. S. G. Stayton, milliner. She became Mrs. Isaiah Crabtree and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Anna Jeter-Stayton, is better remembered as the town's milliner. The first professional men of the community were J. Brudie and George Downing, lawyers; William McCauley, dentist; J. M. Kitchen and George Kohler, doctors; J. Brudie and George S. Geoffrey were the town painters. The officers of the town were W. H. Powell, justice of the peace; W. Gibson, constable; and William Capps, notary public.

In 1876, the ferry across the Santiam was run by Frank Henline. The ferry had originally been operated by James Linch, and was later taken over by a man named Grier. It was not until 1888 that the first bridge was built across the river, and it was washed out in 1906.

The earliest church in the area was the Mill Creek Church of God, organized in 1855, with nineteen members. Where it met we do not know. By 1880, additional businesses in the town included a wash-house operated by two Chinamen, Kee Sing and Tom; two hotels, one run by Drew Richardson and one by James P. Queener, son-in-law of Drury Stayton; a photographer, Lorenzo P. Smith; and a barber, Sanford McFern.

The earliest teacher in the community of whom we have record, was William Privitt, a native of Oregon. The sawmill was run by John A. Shaw, the carding mill by David Grier, and furniture was being manufactured by Hiram and David Hoeye, and by John Grier and Daniel Neff. It is interesting to note that Uriah Whitney and William Hobson were listed in the 1880 census as retired merchants,

ages forty-six and thirty-three respectively. William Hobson served as Senator from Marion County in the 1895 -97 legislature, and as Senator from Linn and Marion counties in the 1903-05 legislature. In 1874, my family settled on Fern Ridge, seven and one-half miles northeast of Stayton. My parents, Jacob and Mary Klumb-Siegmund, were not pioneers of Stayton, but that village was the trading center. The wheat grown on our farm was taken to the grist mill, there to be ground into flour for family use. My earliest dated memory of the community was of a cold winter day when, at the age four and a half, I came down to the town on a rough handsled drawn by my older brother over a crust on the snow, he and mother walking the seven and one half miles. I accompanied my mother on the way to Salem, where a nephew was to be born. We took the stage from Stayton to Turner where we spent the night and went by train to Salem. Since my brother didn't want to pull the sled back from Stayton to Fern Ridge, he pitched it into the Salem ditch at Stayton, and I can still remember that spot with regret over the loss of my sled, for my heart sank as it splashed into the sullen water and disappeared.

Otherwise, the town made no impression upon me. The greatest problem in the development of Stayton has been the lack of a railroad. Service to the area was first established by the Oregonian Railway Company in 1880, with the building of a narrow-gauge line from Ray's Landing on the Willamette through St. Paul, West Woodburn, Silverton, and West Stayton, on to Scio, Brownsville and Coburg. The second railway constructed in the area was the extension of the old Corvallis and Eastern Railway, known as the Oregon Pacific, built by Colonel Egerton Hogg, between 1887 and 1890. It was designed to be a part of the transcontinental system originally envisioned by Wallis Nash. Colonel Hogg's enterprise went bankrupt before it got much farther than Gates. After 1894 it was completed by A. B. Hammond, who had bought the railroad. The line extended up the North Santiam Canyon but on the south side of the river through Kingston and Lyons, and crossed to the north side at Mill City, continuing to Gates and Idanha. The nearest railroad connections for the city of Stayton have continued to be at West Stayton. The old narrow gauge was transferred over to standard gauge in one day, and is now part of the Southern Pacific system. Dreams of a railroad directly into the city continued and as late as 1912, a franchise was given to J. F. Monroe to operate a locomotive through certain streets in Stayton, but the project did not materialize.

The major event in the development of Stayton, was the publication on November 21, 1889, of the first newspaper, *The Stayton Sun*, edited by T. H. McGill. It was succeeded in 1890 by *The Stayton Times*, published by Walter Lyon, which the latter sold to Horace Mann, and its name was changed to the *Stayton Mail* in 1894. It is still the major voice of the North Santiam Valley, under the editorship of Lawrence E. Spraker.

John Spaniol bought the old red mill in 1890 from Joel Sanford who had operated it as a sawmill. In 1899, George Spaniol bought the mill from his father, who had operated it as a grist mill, and George built the front part which consisted of four large storage bins with a capacity of 14,000 bushels of grain. Its walls were 2 x 6's, 2 x 5's, and 2 x 4's, laid flat, and were still in good condition when the mill was demolished in 1940, and the wood used in the construction of a barn. The mill was famous for its flour and received a gold medal at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland in 1901. It did a prosperous business in the days when the farmers could get forty pounds of flour for a bushel of wheat, and it took from five in the morning until ten o'clock at night for the round trip to Salem to ship the flour to outside points. Its most famous products were buckwheat flour, which drew premium prices wherever it was sold. The last flour was made shortly after the First World War when the price of wheat had dropped from \$2.25 to less than \$1.00 a bushel, and the government cancelled all of its flour contracts calling for \$11.50 a barrel.

After an initial attempt to incorporate in 1884, when Lee Brown was elected the first mayor of the city, the charter was adopted on February 18, 1891.

Stayton's two major industries now are the flour mill founded by the Hobsons in the 1870's, now operated by A. D. Gardner, son of A. D. Gardner who was one-time operator of the mill and pioneer postmaster and druggist; and **the Stayton Canning Company Co-op, established in 1924, managed by Fernando Smith, familiarly known as "Farmer Smith."** The cannery has an average payroll of forty-five and a peak pay roll of five hundred employees. The woolen mill is in a sense a successor to the woolen mill established by the Staytons about 1870, but actually traces back its history only to 1905. The present corporation, the Paris Woolen Mills, was established in 1933 and employs an average of sixty-five persons. Its principal products are blankets and woolen cloth.

Footnote to the preceding paragraph by Henry Strobel. This lady was a born historian. See how compactly, how orderly, she wrote. But I will digress: Yesterday, August 2014, my son happened on an estate sale in Stayton and acquired an old post card at the address shown. So he "googled" for "Fernando Smith Stayton," and up popped *The History of Stayton by Mathilda Siegmund Jones*. I would hardly have heard of him but for Mathilda! Maybe it's time for a little Smith history: Fernando "Farmer," Smith, 1910-1997, was founder of the substantial canning company, and his family continues in it. He may have been a man of few words, but his wife was not. Here is her obituary:

January 14, 1912 - May 23, 2012

STAYTON – Bula Grace (Weddle) Smith, 100, died Wednesday in Beaverton. She was born in Stayton and lived there all of her life, until moving to Beaverton 1½ years ago. Bula graduated from Stayton High School in 1930, and was a star on the girl's basketball team because she was so tall. She attended Oregon State University for two years before going to work in Portland as a comptroller for Portland Motor Stages and later in a bank. She married Fernando Martin "Farmer" Smith on May 19, 1940 in Portland. He preceded her in death on May 24, 1997. They met in high school, albeit Farmer was one year ahead of her. They took frequent trips around the U.S. by car, and also traveled internationally. She and Farmer enjoyed a dinner with former presidents Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon. They were charter members of both the Santiam Golf Club and Illahe Country Club, and also members of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Stayton. Bula was a voracious reader, a member of Santiam Bowling, and enjoyed playing cards, especially bridge. She also liked golfing, needlepoint, sewing, gardening, and entertaining, as well as cooking and canning. Her famous pumpkin pie recipe was featured on the label of the Santiam brand of canned pumpkin. She started making pickles - sweet, dill and bread and butter - when she was 28 and continued well into her 90s. In well over 60 years of pickle making, she canned and distributed roughly 10,000 quarts to her friends and family. Her secret to getting the cucumbers clean and smooth was to run them through the washing machine. Bula completed *The Oregonian* crossword puzzle daily and did her sit-up routine before she started her day. She and her sister, Gladys, could frequently be found at local garage and estates sales, looking for treasures. Bula is survived by her three children: Dean (JoAnn) Smith of Lake Oswego, Paul (Mary) Smith of Boulder, CO., and Susan (Tom) Kuczmariski of Chicago, IL.; 10 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by 1 brother and 4 sisters. Visitation will be Monday, May 28 from 3-8 pm at North Santiam Funeral Service in Stayton. Mass of Christian Burial will be Tuesday, May 29 at 10:00 am at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Stayton. Interment in St. Mary's Cemetery, Stayton. Contributions may be made to the Brown House Restoration c/o Santiam Heritage Foundation PO Box 161 Stayton, OR 97383 or St. Mary Elementary School 1066 N. 6th Ave. Stayton, OR

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The Stayton branch of the First National Bank of Portland was established in May, 1935, and it is the only bank that serves the lower Santiam Valley. Other businesses are the Western Batt and Bedding Company, founded in 1919, and the Korinek Remedy Company, manufacturing veterinarian supplies, founded in the same year. Others developed in the last twenty years relate to construction, the A. L. Murphy Lumber Company; Freres Building Supply; the Gold Penny Lumber Company; J. F. Fery; the Santiam Lock Block and Supply Company, furnishing concrete building blocks; the Kimsey Ready Mix Concrete Company; and the Marion County Ready Mix Concrete Company. An associate business is that of the late Jacob Spaniol, sheet metal products. The Santiam Farmers Coop handles livestock, feed and seeds; while Camp's Sporting Goods manufactures fishing lures; and Harry Rowe manufactures jewelry. At present, the community has one hotel and three motels, a library, three schools and six churches, a theater and a city park. Its most recent facility is the modern Santiam

Memorial Hospital designed to serve the entire North Santiam Valley. The city has its own volunteer fire protection and a Cooperative Switchboard Association which furnishes telephone communication. A sewage and waste disposal plant is projected, and its only water supply is derived from a spring well. Power for the Pacific Power and Light Company is secured from a canal developed from the North Santiam River about one and one-half miles east of Stayton. It also furnishes power to at least one mill in the city, and while the balance is used by the West Stayton Water Company, the Farmers Cooperative, for irrigation of approximately 1,700 acres west of the town, two private companies will be furnished water for irrigation purposes in the area, serving about 20,000 acres. There are one hundred twenty-seven retail and professional services offered in the community of Stayton. It is a far cry from Drury Smith Stayton's original one house, one shop, and one mill, of 1866.