

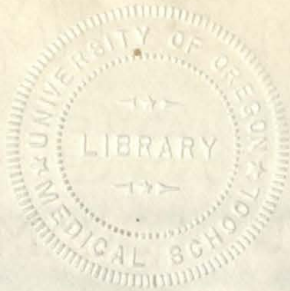
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**A HISTORY OF MEDICINE  
AND DOCTORS  
IN  
COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON, FROM  
1829-1910**

by

**John M. Ross**

Read before Medical History Club of University of Oregon Medical  
School on May 27, 1940 at the home of Dr. Olof Larsell.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Without the hearty cooperation of the following people, most of whom are personal friends, this paper could never have been written:

I. Primitive Medicine

1. Mr. George Perry of St. Helens, Oregon.
2. Mr. James Perry of St. Helens, Oregon.
3. Mr. William Fullerton of Warren, Oregon -- born near present home in 1859.
4. Mr. Carl Huston of St. Helens, Oregon.
5. Dr. A. W. Moore
6. Dr. Edwin Ross.
7. Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Deming.
8. Mr. Harry Houser, Chief of Police of St. Helens, Oregon.
9. Mr. Eli Beeler, City Recorder of St. Helens, Oregon.
10. Mr. James Hunt, Clerk of Columbia County.
11. Mr. Fred Watkins, Columbia County Assessor.
12. Miss Dora Shaffer of St. Helens, Oregon
13. Mrs. L. G. Ross of St. Helens, Oregon.
14. St. Helens' Sentinel-Mist publishers.
15. Miss Pipes of the Oregon State Historical Society at Portland, Oregon.
16. Frank Nau - Frank Nau's Pharmacy, Portland, Oregon.

11. Dr. A. W. Moore

12. Dr. H. E. Cliff

13. Dr. J. B. Hall

14. Dr. Blanchard

15. Dr. O. J. West

16. Dr. W. C. Belt

17. Dr. Edwin Ross

18. Dr. Chalmers

19. Dr. C. H. Hewth

20. Dr. L. G. Ross

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## III. Practice of Medicine between 1890 and 1910.

## INTRODUCTION

Columbia County, Oregon, is bounded on the east and north by the Columbia River, lying in the curve produced by a sharp bend in the river. The presence of the river is responsible for the growth and development of the county, acting as a source of food and as a means of transportation and communication. Linked with the story of the county's early history are the men and women who represented the medical profession. This paper is of necessity brief because of absence of early records. Most of the facts are based on interviews with sons and daughters of the earliest settlers and with some of the oldsters who are still living. These old inhabitants were careful to ask that they not be quoted concerning exact dates which have become hazy, but in the absence of other records their statements are as authentic as possible.

The first evidence we have of medicine being practiced in the county is in the form of flint knives and arrow heads and stone bowls resembling mortars, found along the river shore near Warrior Rock which is on the northern end of Sauvie Island. This landmark was used as a meeting place for many of the tribes of Indians along the Columbia River. Beyond a doubt the early medicine man had much to do at some of these conclaves since there are many stories of bloody settlements of inter-tribal disputes.

From the History of Columbia River from The Dalles to the Sea is an excerpt of an article by Frances Fuller Victor published in the Oregon Historical Quarterly (date not given). It tells of the ship Owyhee which was to sail from Boston for the Columbia River to trade with the Indians. Coming up the river the vessel ran aground at Deer Island a

few miles below Saint Helens. She was compelled to send a boat to Ft. Vancouver, the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Oregon Territory, for aid. Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin not only sent down a crew of Kanakas with a Mackinaw boat to help the vessel off, but with them a present of potatoes and a quarter of fresh beef, as a mark of peculiar favor--beef cattle being too few and too precious at that period to be slaughtered except upon rare occasions, and regarded as a luxury even by the gentlemen of the company, who commonly lived on salmon. Wishing to make some return for Doctor McLoughlin's hospitality, Lemont, one of the sailors who later became a resident at St. Helens, presented him with three young peach trees which he had brought from San Juan Fernandez, and which being planted at Vancouver, bore the first peaches ever grown on the Columbia River.

It was while the Owyhee was lying in the river in 1829 that a devastating epidemic broke out among the Oregon Indians, and spread down the coast as far as the Bay of San Francisco. It seemed to originate with the Indians about the ship. The sickness became epidemic and malignant, so that whole villages died, and there were not enough well persons to care for the sick. This state of affairs was, by the superstitious savages, believed to be intentionally brought about by Captain Dominis, who, they said, had emptied a vial of bad 'medicine' into the Columbia River with the design to destroy them, and it probably would have gone hard with the Owyhee's crew but for the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the attentions of Doctor McLoughlin, who labored faithfully, but in vain, to arrest the disease. It is stated

that this epidemic carried off about thirty thousand Indians on the Pacific Coast." (1)

In 1848 another epidemic, supposedly measles, broke out among the Indians on the coast in this region. Dr. William Geiger, who had first arrived in Oregon in 1839 at Salem, later moving to Hillsboro in 1848, was called for help. Nothing of his mode of treatment or of his medical education is known, but it is probable that he was the first white man to practice medicine in Columbia County. (2)

The story of the first resident medical practitioner in Columbia County is also the story of the development of the Oregon Country. The following account was the result of an interview with Mr. George Perry, now residing in St. Helens, Oregon.

"In the fall of 1844 the United States Government sent out a man, a foot and with only one gun apiece, powder, a supply of food and a blanket roll. The purpose of the expedition was to have these men scout the Oregon Country for prospective home sites for future settlers. Early the next spring they returned, having reached the Pacific Coast. They reported a long hard trip, but were enthusiastic about the country along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. They reported that the Columbia was thick with duck, geese, and swan. They had met many Indians along the banks of the Columbia and by much bartering had persuaded the natives to take them down the river in big canoes to Fort Vancouver. As a result of their report the government offered donation land claims to people who would settle the new country. Six hundred acres were to be given to a man and wife while 320 acres were to be given to single

men. It was strongly advised, because of the difficulty of the overland journey, that only the young and robust plan on going. On Monday, April 12, 1845, a long string of wagons set out from Muscatine City, Iowa, to the Oregon Country." (Among those who started were Mr. Perry and his seventeen year old bride. Mr. Perry had two Red Durham oxen and two cows. He had built a strong wagon and had disposed of all his property and all belongings which he could not carry. While taking leave of her family, Mrs. Perry was given the family Bible by her father who was an Iowa circuit rider. He asked that she make it her responsibility to hold Sunday School for the band of home-makers. Subsequently on the first Sunday of the trip, Mrs. Perry went ahead with her father's instructions and although she met with many objections, she finally won out. She must have had remarkable diplomatic powers. Because there was no doctor with them this girl also took it upon herself to take charge of any nursing or medical emergencies. While several children were born on the way, this self-appointed guardian and mid-wife lost but one mother and a child. "The company arrived at Dayton, Oregon on November 11, 1845. The Perrys spent the next winter at Yamhill, Oregon, then in 1847 moved to the mouth of a creek now at the site of West St. Helens. They named it Milton Creek and on it Mr. Perry and Mr. Williams strated a saw-mill. This venture was unsuccessful and Perry took a donation land claim and started farming. Mrs. Perry then began her "doctoring" in earnest. This was in 1849. She kept no records and none of her early methods



are remembered except that she would gather herbs in the woods and make her own supply of medicines. In the county was Dr. Charles G.

"She continued her practice, also managing to raise a large family. She took care of all illnesses and did almost all the obstetrical work. She was never too busy at home to fail to respond to a call for help. Her territory ranged from Rocky Point, 13 miles up the Willamette slough, to Clatskanie, 36 miles down the Columbia river. Many of her calls were made by boat. It is notable that she would often go alone, and there are several instances where she crossed the river in a canoe in the dead of night in a driving rain when some Indians sought her aid. Between visits she would prepare her medicines. Perhaps one of the chief factors in her success was that she would not only give medicine and advice, but in severe cases would stay in the home and nurse the patient, often staying one or two weeks."

In talking with others of the earliest inhabitants I found that she was regarded highly for her skill, especially as a midwife. Even after several doctors were established in the county, by 1890, she was doing well over half of all the obstetrics. She is affectionally remembered as Grandma Perry or Auntie Perry, depending on the age of the person speaking. If his first contact with her was in her 30's or 40's she was "auntie", but if they first saw her 10 or 15 years later she was "grandma". In 1890 when the Oregon State Board of Medical Examiners was organized, she would have been forced to quit, but through the efforts of Dr. H. R. Cliff she was given a special license allowing her to continue. Mrs. Perry died in 1910 at the age of 82, having

practiced medicine and midwifery well over 40 years.<sup>(3)</sup>

The next doctor to practice in the county was Dr. Charles G. Caples. The following excerpt is taken from the History of the Columbia River Valley from the Dalles to the Sea.<sup>(4)</sup>

"Among the pioneer families of Columbia County, none had more influence in their respective communities or performed more distinctive service for their fellowmen than the Caples family, a worthy representative of which was the late Dr. Charles G. Caples, who, as an able, devoted and successful physician and loyal and public-spirited citizen, was for a long period one of the conspicuous figures of his section of the county.

"The Doctor was born in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, on the 22nd of May, 1832, a son of Joseph and Mary (Laffer) Caples.

"Dr. Caples lived in his native county until twelve years of age and in 1844 accompanied his parents on their journey across the plains to Oregon. He attended the public schools of Ohio and Salem, Oregon, also Tualatin Academy near Forest Grove, now known as Pacific University. In 1848, when seventeen years of age, he joined the gold rush to California, where he was engaged in mining about one year, making enough money to pay the tuition and expenses of his sister and himself at Tualatin Academy. On leaving that institution he returned to Columbia City, and took a donation land claim of 320 acres, a portion of which on the high land was heavily timbered, while the remainder was mainly rich bottom land. He gave his attention to clearing this place, which Philip and Mary Laffer. This was dated June 27, 1870 and Mary Laffer's

he developed into a good farm, there spending the remainder of his life. After his marriage in 1855 he went to Portland and took up the study of medicine under the direction of Dr. Giltner, one of the ablest physicians of that city, and in the course of time passed the examination before the board of physicians and was granted the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

"In 1868 he was appointed state medical examiner for the insane at Monticello, Washington, in which capacity he rendered effective service for three years, after which he returned to his farm at Columbia City, where he practiced medicine for many years. He possessed high qualifications as a physician, for which profession he was naturally fitted. In those early days the practice of medicine in this sparsely settled country meant long and tiresome trips, day and night, over often almost impassable roads, in fair weather and foul, to reach those who required his services. The record of Dr. Caples was replete with faithful service, as he spared not himself that he might relieve the suffering of the sick, and he commanded the unqualified confidence, esteem and gratitude of the people of his community. After many years of practice, he retired and lived quietly on his farm until his death, which occurred April 3, 1906, when he was seventy-four years of age."

The earliest original record concerning any doctor in the county was found in the Columbia County Recorder's files for the year 1870 in which there is a Warranty Deed, from Mary Laffer to (Dr.) Thomas Stewart regarding the sale of part of a donation land claim issued to Philip and Mary Laffer. This was dated June 27, 1870 and Mary Laffer's

wavering X-mark signs the deed. Witnesses were Thomas A McBride and (Dr.) C. G. Caples of Columbia City. Fifteen hundred dollars was paid for the land.

Dr. Thomas Stewart was an ex-army doctor and arrived in Columbia County some time in 1870. The land which he bought is now bordering U.S. Highway #30, about 5 miles south of St. Helens. I was privileged to see a photograph taken in the 70's, which showed the doctor with a group of other men standing in front of a new frame building in St. Helens. He appeared tall, standing erect, and he wore a bushy beard which well covered his collar. Although he wore a derby hat and short dark coat, his trousers were as baggy as the carpenter's who stood nearby. Nothing of his training could be found and very little about his ability. It is told that in 1878 the doctor had been troubled by aching teeth so a dentist from Portland was called. When the dentist arrived he found his patient very nervous so he sent for a neighbor for help. This neighbor told me the story.<sup>(5)</sup> "Every time the dentist would get set Doc would have a "convulsion". Finally he cried, 'I can use two guns and fight all the Indians, but, by God, I can't stand this!' The dentist gave up in disgust and the condition of the teeth remained intact." In 1884 Dr. Stewart moved to eastern Oregon<sup>(6)</sup> and I have been unable to locate any further information concerning him. From the Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Oregon State Medical Society in 1879 there is registered as a member from St. Helens, Mrs. E. L. Yeargain who graduated from Willamette University

Medical Department in 1879. I could find no record of her, nor could I find anyone who remembered her. The next year, 1880, she was registered from Walla Walla, Washington.

Since St. Helens was the leading city in the county the majority of the medical men resided in or near its limits. However, about 1878 or 1880, Dr. A. P. McLaren, a graduate of McGill University came to Rainier, Oregon, where he practiced until he died about 1910. For many years, during the 90's at least, he owned and operated the only drug store in the county except for the one at St. Helens.

Another doctor came to Rainier shortly after Dr. McLaren, but stayed only a year or two, moving to La Grande, Oregon, then later to Portland. He was Dr. M. K. Hall.<sup>(7)</sup> Again nothing could be found of his schooling or of his past experience.

In the early 80's Dr. Meserve<sup>(5)</sup> is believed to have come to Delano, Oregon which is still a small settlement between Clatskanie and Rainier. Only one reference was found of him. This was in the Oregon Mist of 1891, in which it stated that Mrs., Dr. Meserve and daughter would make a trip to Portland for an extended visit while Dr. Meserve would stay at home to maintain his practice.

In 1882, Dr. Stone<sup>(7)</sup> appeared in St. Helens during an epidemic of measles, then mysteriously disappeared.

In 1883, Dr. A. W. Moore graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Burlington in Burlington, Vermont. At that time he had a brother, an attorney, who was living in St. Helens, so he was easily persuaded to take up the practice of medicine there.<sup>(5)</sup> At that

time Mrs. Perry was in her prime, but he was the only M.D. in or around St. Helens. He recalls one case where he was summoned by a man on horseback who had ridden into St. Helens from Scappoose in search of a doctor. The man stopped just long enough to say that a man was bleeding to death, then rode off. Dr. Moore packed his surgical bag, rode horseback the nine miles to Scappoose and found a man had cut an artery in his foot while chopping wood. He ligated the artery with silk, dressed the wound, and then started back to town. About half way back a farmer rushed out to meet him and asked the condition of the patient. The doctor told him all was well and what had happened. Anxiously the fellow asked if the axe had been buried because if it had not the foot would never heal. (6) This reminds one of Prissy, the slave girl in Gone With The Wind who advised putting a knife under the bed of a woman in labor--to cut the pain.

Dr. Moore says that Mrs. Perry was doing most of the obstetrical work, but that the major part of her care was as a nurse.

During the time he was at St. Helens, typhoid fever was the most common and most serious disease, the county never being completely free of a case.

In 1885 Dr. Moore sold his practice to Dr. Harry R. Cliff and went to Bar Harbor, Maine, where he spent 2 years. He then returned to Portland where he has practiced since. He now has an office with his son, Dr. Harry Moore, in the Medical-Dental Building.

Dr. Harry R. Cliff, now director of Multnomah County Hospital, was born on December 8, 1860, and graduated from Darlington Medical

College in Australia in 1881. After serving with Medical Corps of the British Navy<sup>(4)</sup> for two years, being assigned to the Australian station, he came to St. Helens in 1885. Here he bought the practice of Dr. A. W. Moore. He established the first drug store in the county and ran this in addition to his medical practice. Dr. Cliff remained at St. Helens 25 years until 1910--during which time he held office of county coroner for 6 years.<sup>(8)</sup> It was while he was serving as coroner that there came before his jurisdiction a case involving the death of a longshoreman. The man had been killed by the alleged negligence of a large corporation. His widow and children were left penniless and the man's friends, believing the corporation was to blame, were greatly angered by Dr. Cliff's decision, as coroner at the inquest, to bring no judgment against the corporation. In 1938, a patient in the Multnomah County Hospital told a junior medical student (H.E. Emmel) that he had been offered \$100 to kill a Dr. Cliff who was coroner of Columbia County--about 40 years previously. The patient asked if this could be the same Dr. Cliff. He said he made several attempts but that the doctor was always well escorted and he had no opportunity present itself.<sup>(9)</sup> In 1910 Dr. Cliff sold his practice to Dr. L. G. Ross, and moved to Portland. In 1920 he became county physician and director of the Multnomah County Hospital, in which position I interviewed him in November, 1939.

In 1889 another easterner, Dr. J. E. Hall, recently graduated from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia,<sup>(10)</sup> came to Clatskanie. He practiced medicine there about 25 years, moving to Portland in 1914

or thereabouts. Nothing could be learned about the type of medicine Dr. Hall practiced although he was the only practitioner to consistently have his professional card in the Oregon Mist over a period of years.

Dr. O. J. West, a graduate of Willamette University Medical School in 1889, came to St. Helens for two years, 1890-1892. Although he was a good friend of Dr. Edwin Ross, who was then a pharmacist at St. Helens, very little information could be obtained about him. In 1892 he moved to Ft. Lapwing Indian Reservation in Idaho.

About this same time there was a Dr. Blanchard residing somewhere in the vicinity of Mist or Jewell, Oregon. Just one reference concerning him was found. This was in the Oregon Mist of August 21, 1891: "Dr. and Mrs. Blanchard will start for the doctor's brother's who reside about seven miles west of Portland next Saturday for the purpose of benefitting the doctor's health. They expect to remain there a few days, then Dr. Blanchard will go on to Hillsboro to consult with Dr. Bailey who has been treating him. It is their intention to travel until they find a climate more suitable to the doctor's present feeble constitution, which we hope will be found without going too far away."

On June 17, 1892, the Oregon Mist announced in its "Local and General" column the following: "Rainier, Ore.: Dr. W. C. Belt, a graduate of Trinity University of Toronto, Canada, is now permanently located here, and is able to attend to all business pertaining to his line of profession. The doctor was formerly medical assistant in the City Hospital at Hamilton, Ontario. We wish him success and welcome him among us." In the July 22, 1892 issue of the Oregon Mist appeared



Dr. Belt's first professional card, which appeared in every issue until March 24, 1893. In the September 7, 1894 issue we read: Dr. W. C. Belt, formerly of this place (Rainier), was in town this week shaking hands with old acquaintances." No notice of his moving could be found.

In 1894 Dr. Edwin Ross became established as a physician in St. Helens. His story, however, can be traced with good authority, because, being his great-nephew, I was able to talk with him on many occasions. Born in Iowa in 1864, he moved to Wisconsin at the age of one year, and after a few years, to Tennessee. In 1887 he came to Pendleton, Oregon, and in the fall of 1888 entered Willamette University College of Pharmacy at 14th and Couch Streets in Portland. Graduating in 1890 he came to St. Helens in July where he bought Dr. Cliff's drug store. Contact with the medical profession excited his interest and after a year or two in business he entered the University of Oregon Medical School, then situated at 23rd and Lovejoy, across the street from the Good Samaritan Hospital. Because of his degree in pharmacy he was given a year's credit at medical school and was graduated on April 2, 1894. The Oregon Mist of November 2, 1894 has this to say: "Hospital Surgery. Dr. Ross will leave on Monday next for Portland where he has been engaged as surgeon in St. Vincent Hospital for several months. This institution employs two surgeons all the time, and in their selection of Dr. Ross the management have, in our opinion, shown good judgement". During his medical course he had someone operate his store for him and on graduating and returning he came to St. Helens to practice, still operating the store. This store managed, from its income to pay all his tuition and buy his

books. Its records would have been invaluable to a paper such as this but in 1910 a fire destroyed the entire city block and all the records were lost.

In 1890 when Dr. Ross first came to St. Helens the town boasted a population of 254 while Portland was referred to as a metropolis of 45,000. At that time Portland was, in truth, three combined cities, East Portland, and Albina, and Portland. Dr. Edwin Ross is still practicing medicine in St. Helens, but at present is also devoting much time to the operation of his country estate at the edge of the city limits.

Sometime in 1894, Dr. J. M. P. Chalmers came to St. Helens from Hillsboro. His first professional card in the Oregon Mist appeared in the issue of September 7, 1894. He stayed in St. Helens about six years, leaving in 1900 for Vancouver, Washington. Recently Frank Nau, Portland pharmacist, had in his display window the first prescription written on his prescription blank in his store. It was dated February 25, 1890 and was signed by J. M. P. Chalmers, M.D. The prescription is as follows:

Rx Syr. Ferric Iodine  $\frac{oz}{j}$   
aqual Cinnamomi  $\frac{oz}{iii}$   
Tret Six one teaspoon  
ful in water after  
eating  
Chalmers

of the north and last report of Dr. Heath was found in the Oregon Mist of November 3, 1894 from Vancouver, where he was recalled by Charles, Wingo, and Jay, last of the family. He attended a visit to relatives in Kan. He then moved to Vancouver, Portland, Dr. Hatfield came to St. Helens in 1892 where he practiced until 1900 when he moved to Vancouver, Oregon, where he died a few years later.

In 1910, Dr. L. G. Ross, a nephew of Dr. Edwin Ross, and my father,

Vernonia first boasted a doctor in 1894. Our first knowledge of his presence came by reading in the Medical Sentinel, a medical journal of the Pacific Northwest, a letter to the editor from C. H. Newth, M.D. of Vernonia, Oregon. The letter is headed--"Murdered by Quacks" and its contents describes a case of a woman who came to be examined because of a blood-tinged, watery, vaginal discharge. On examination a Stage I carcinoma of the cervix was discovered and appropriate treatment advised (although the treatment advised was not mentioned). About a month later, however, a woman came to the town selling a salve, which used vaginally, was a sure cure for cancer, and for practically everything else except pregnancy. Two years later the patient, who had been using this ointment, returned to Dr. Newth who this time found that her carcinoma had become wide-spread with "freezing" of the entire pelvis. Dr. Newth's letter is full of righteous indignation concerning the laws allowing the existence of quacks. This letter was dated June 10, 1894.

Our next and last report of Dr. Newth was found in the Oregon Mist of November 23, 1894: "From Vernonia, Mrs. Newth, accompanied by Charlie, Winnie, and Fay, left Vernonia Sunday for an extended visit to relatives in Kansas. The doctor accompanied them as far as Portland."

Dr. Hatfield came to Vernonia in 1900, then moved to Scappoose in 1912 where he practiced until 1918. He then moved to Orinco, Oregon, where he died a few years later.

In 1910, Dr. L. G. Ross, a nephew of Dr. Edwin Ross, and my father,

came to St. Helens, and as mentioned above, bought out Dr. Harry Cliff. This sale included Dr. Cliff's house, barn, horse, buggy, practice, position of county health officer, and good will. Dr. "L. G." or "the young Dr. Ross" as he was thereafter called, graduated from Northwestern University Medical School in 1907 and interned a year at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland. He then spent about two years at Huntington, Oregon as doctor for a mining camp, working with Dr. William Spencer. Following this he came to St. Helens where he practiced medicine until shortly before his death in May, 1939. In 1925 he established the St. Helen's General Hospital, the first hospital in the county.

Since 1910 many doctors have come and gone to Columbia County, but since this is practically within the memory of most of us, I have passed along the task of compiling this contemporary history to some one two or three generations from now.

Most of the information concerning these doctors was obtained through laymen so it was difficult to form much of an idea of the amount of actual practice of medicine. However, I picked a period between 1890 and 1910 and was able to learn a little more of the mode of treatment and of the medicines used from Dr. Edwin Ross, as well as from a few notices in the Oregon Mist.

During this period of the "nineties" the most prevalent disease was typhoid fever which was never eliminated till well after the turn of the century. At Good Samaritan Hospital there was one entire ward

No operative procedures were done on any patients in the county during

of typhoid patients, called Saylor's ward--after Dr. Saylor, then teaching at the medical school. The prescribed treatment consisted of bed rest, one glass of milk every three hours, and Quinine--grains 3 every 3 hours. This regime was kept up for nearly a month during which time many of the patients got well, but had suffered greatly from malnutrition. As far as prophylaxis was concerned little was done. When the wells would go dry as they often would, in mid-summer, the people would haul barrels of creek-water and dump it into the wells. The water was never treated. A notice in the Oregon Mist on December 21, 1894 indicates that the diagnosis was not always simple: "Peris Pointers. Dell Fowler's son is suffering from an attack of something very much like typhoid fever."

Every winter malaria, or chills and ague, was a matter of course to most of the people in the Warren district. These patients were treated with Quinine--the first day receiving 10 grains b.i.d. and thereafter 3 grains every 3 hours till the chills and fever abated.

Next in frequency was lobar pneumonia. This was treated with rest, liquid diet, morphine for pain. Most of the doctors then used a "pneumonia mixture" which contained Tr. Digitalis, Aromatic spirits of Ammonia, and Paregoric or equivalent of  $1/24$  grain of morphine sulfate per teaspoon. This was administered in doses of 1 drachm every 3 hours (amounting to  $1/3$  grain of morphine sulfate per day).

Tuberculosis was not usually diagnosed until far advanced, largely because the patient would not present himself unless critically ill. No operative procedures were done on any patients in the county during

this period but the open air rest cure was carried out as well as possible. After 1904 the tuberculous patients were sent to Matson's Sanitarium at Milwaukie, Oregon.

Small pox was present practically every year and was not thoroughly wiped out until the institution of vaccinating all the school children was established.

Diphtheria was another curse. Although anti-toxin was on the market in the late nineties it had to be shipped to St. Helens by boat and did not usually arrive in time to give its best effects.

While obstetrics was pretty largely handled by "Grandma" Perry in the early years, the doctors gradually began to supplant her as more people came to the county. Dr. Edwin Ross tells of a baby being brought to him from across the river. It was bleeding from the umbilicus and on examination he found the cord had been pulled off at the skin level. Having been well instructed by Dr. Josephi, dean of the University of Oregon Medical School, he controlled the bleeding by thrusting 2 darning needles, at right angles to each other, through the patent cord. He then wound silk thread about the cord just proximal to the needles, thus securing effective hemostasis. Incidentally, the child lived.

Post-abortal infections were not infrequent due to ignorance on the part of the people who had the abortions, which were usually self-induced. Mrs. Perry managed to save a good percentage of these milder cases by using heat in the form of hot onions to the patient's feet, and hot salt wrapped in a blanket. She also prescribed her herb medicine.

For an ordinary delivery, the accoucheur took along forceps, scissors, knives, pliers, and silk for tying the cord. Rubber gloves were still to be made available. Chloroform was almost universally used for anesthesia, and episiotomies were never done until much later.

Toxemias of pregnancies were not unknown. In eclamptic convulsions chloroform was again used. I found no report of the mortality of these cases.

The field of surgery was limited to first aid and minor surgery. All surgical emergencies were sent to Portland by boat. Dr. Edwin Ross well remembers an emergency call he once had near Yankton, about four miles from his home. On arriving he found a man had a large knife wound in his abdominal wall with his intestines hanging out. Water was boiled in a wash boiler, the kitchen table was prepared and the patient was laid on the table. There was no evidence of perforation of the gut so the bowel was gently sponged and replaced. Luckily Mrs. Ross, who was a graduate nurse, was assisting, but she had great difficulty in keeping the man's wife from putting her hands in the sterile water. The woman was afraid her husband would be scalded so wanted to check the temperature of the water. After sewing up the abdomen Doctor Ross had the man carried 4 miles to St. Helens and sent to a Portland hospital by boat. He still wonders what strange good fortune allowed the man to recover uneventfully.

From the Oregon Mist several instances of local doctors calling in consultation are noted. Some rather peculiar treatments are described at times, but this may only prove that medical news was garbled

and yet he did not respond to the positive treatment. On the suggestion

in the nineties as easily as it is now, by the newspapers. From the issue of July 8, 1892: "Mrs. George Lamont is seriously ill with uremic convulsions. Dr. F. A. Cauthorn was down Monday in consultation with Dr. Harry R. Cliff and it was necessary to operate to save the life of Mrs. Lamont. The operation, though of a very serious nature, was successfully performed by the doctors, and the convulsions have since left. It is confidentially hoped that she will recover, having already gained consciousness."

The May 5, 1893 issue contained this note: "Rainier, Oregon. D. Simms, of Kalama, was called to town Tuesday to advise with Dr. McLaren in Mrs. Van Lew's case, she being quite low."

And on September 28, 1894 more surgical procedure was revealed: "ARM BROKEN. Mrs. E. Demarest, of Deer Island, was thrown from a horse Tuesday which resulted in breaking her left arm just above the wrist. Dr. Ross was in the neighborhood at the time and was called in. He being unable to dress the wound alone, the excited husband sent to St. Helens for assistance which was responded to by Drs. Cliff and Chalmers. Upon their arrival chloroform was administered and the fracture reduced. The patient is now under the care of Dr. Ross and is doing nicely."

In Pediatrics the problem of convulsions was routinely dealt with by giving the affected child a hot bath, and an enema followed by castor oil. This usually was successful--in stopping the convulsions. One case is remembered of an eight months old child who had had twenty-seven consecutive convulsions. When she arrived in town he was afebrile and yet he did not respond to the routine treatment. On the suggestion



of his wife the doctor gave the child some warm fresh cow's milk which he eagerly drank and immediately went to sleep. The child had no more convulsions but from then on, for about two months the doctor had to furnish the fresh milk for the family.

Very few quacks were about although Dr. Newth's letter mentioned above describes one menace. However, no chiropractors or Christian Scientist were present. The Oregon Mist carried a large number of advertisements for patent medicines, usually naming the local drug store as carrying whatever pill they were exploiting. I was startled by one advertisement appearing in Oregon Mist on August 14, 1891: "Dr. <sup>C</sup>Harter's Little Liver Pills--sure cure for sick headaches and all troubles arising from indigestion or constipation. Improves the complexion by purifying the blood. Dose can be nicely adjusted to suit the case as one pill can never be too large a dose. Easy to take as so much sugar. 42 pills put up in strong vial which can be put in vest pocket. A great convenience to travelers and business men. None genuine without crescent trade mark. 25¢ per bottle. Sample Dose and Dream Book for 2¢ in stamps."

Again from the sheets of the Oregon Mist we are able to find a little about the business of medicine and the social side of general practice during this period. On August 4, 1893: "Times are so blasted hard that salmon are a little pre cautious of going up the river. They are afraid the river will run out and they can't get back." In the same issue, however, this is present: "Mrs. H. R. Cliff and lady friends from Portland are rustivating at Dr. Cliff's place, near Bunker Hill." And a week later, "Mrs. H. R. Cliff and Mrs. H. C. Johns returned Monday from their camping trip at Bunker Hill." On September 1, 1893:

"Dr. H. R. Cliff has lately removed his office to the building on the corner, formerly used as the telegraph office. Calls made at that place will receive prompt attention."

1894 was not a peak year for the practice of medicine as evidenced by an item from the personal column: "Dr. E. Ross and A. Davis took a trip to the country yesterday. They will harvest crops on their farms while absent." And in November a new low was reached with this notice from Rainier: "Our M.D. extends best wishes to the fraternity in St. Helens, and while he knows that present is not valuable, hard times often force one to circumstances which they otherwise would not resort to. Salmon are plentiful and cheap, times are hard, Thanksgiving near at hand, so our doctor did the best he could."

The Columbia County Health Office was established in 1907 when Dr. Harry R. Cliff was appointed Health Officer. From 1911 until his death in 1939, Dr. L. G. Ross served in this office being the oldest health officer in the state, in point of service.

Thus we have a sketchy picture of the type of medicine practiced in Columbia County and of the men who devoted their lives to it.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Lockley, Fred, History of the Columbia River Valley, vol. I, pp. 1031-1032. S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago. (1928)
2. From a conversation with Mr. Carl Huston, grandson of Dr. William Geiger, on March 17, 1940 at St. Helens, Oregon.
3. From conversation with Mr. George Perry, son of Mrs. Perry, and with Mr. Jim Perry, her grandson, both of St. Helens, Oregon, living on the same property first held as a donation land claim by the Perry family in 1847.
4. See #1, vol. II, pp. 826-827.
5. From a conversation with Mr. William Fullerton on March 18, 1940, at his home in Warren, Oregon within sight of the place where incident occurred.
6. From a conversation with Dr. A. W. Moore in November, 1939, at his office in the Medical Dental Building in Portland, Oregon.
7. From a conversation with Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Deming on March 17, 1940 at their home in St. Helens, Oregon.
8. From a conversation with Dr. Harry R. Cliff in November, 1939 at his office in the Multnomah County Hospital.
9. From H. E. Emmel as heard from a patient in Multnomah County Hospital in November, 1938.
10. Oregon Mist, published at St. Helens, Oregon. Issue of June 17, 1892.
11. From conversations with Dr. Edwin Ross at my home in St. Helens, Oregon on March 17 and March 24, 1940 and at his home near St. Helens on April 28, 1940.

