HOMESTEADING IN 1909

By Eliza Denman Curry

For a long time I have thought that I would like to have known more about the lives of the people that dared the hardships of crossing these United States, to establish homes in the far west long before railroads and highway were even thought of, and anyone crossing the waste of land that lies between Middle West and the Pacific Coast, can't help but wonder how it was ever accomplished in the most crude and the only way possible at that time, ox teams.

I am not surprised that they didn't write more of their experiences when their time was so filled up with the work they had to do, and I don't imagine they thought they were doing any thing out of the ordinary.

My pioneering has been very ordinary compared with those of 1849, and yet I thought possibly it might be of interest to those who have never gone into a new country to hear something of the work that had to be done as late as 1909.

Chapter I

How We Came To Leave The East And Preparing For The Journey

DR. DENMAN

In the fall of 1908 my brother, who had been living in South Dakota visited us and gave a glowing account of the interior of Eastern Oregon, soon to be opened to homesteaders. He had heard of the possibilities there and had visited the country the Spring before, it being an exceptionally good Spring and the land sharks exceptionally good talkers, made everything look very promising. Well the outcome being that he sold out in South Dakota and in late fall and early winter of 1908 he took his family and came to make his home here.

Albie and I had been rather unsettled for sometime before he visited us, and after that the main topic of conversation was homesteading in Eastern Oregon. We sent to Burns, Oregon for literature, little knowing that it would be impossible to get the bad side of a country that was anxious to be settled and developed. Our parents talked and tried to tell us that had that country been desirable it would have been settled long before. They even looked up facts concerning it in the encyclopedia, but do you suppose that encyclopedia knew half as much about it as we did? I should say not, especially in our estimation.

Albie had left it up to me to say whether or not he should go. We had decided that it would be best for him to come first and locate before the children and I came, and for two months it was continuously before me. Finally I gave my consent and inside of a week he was on his way leaving there the 3rd of December, 1908.

The three oldest boys were in school, Denman age 12, Raymond 9 and Austin 6. The afternoon that Albie left he stopped at the school and took Denman and Raymond to the railroad with him to bring the horses and wagon home, a distance of 10 miles. I was left on a farm of 160 acres with 19 head of cattle, team of horses, hogs and chickens to care for and five boys, the three oldest I have told their names and ages, the other two are Marvin age 4 and Philip 9 months. I had one of the neighbors engaged to come twice a week to clean stables, other than that the boys and I did the work. As I look back I can't help but wonder how we ever did it. I will say this the boys were exceptionally good to help with the chores. They had been taught to do all kinds of work and in the morning while I was getting breakfast and putting up lunches and doing various other things, they would feed the stock and get things ready for me as much as they could to finish the chores. They had over a mile to walk to school and not a very desirable road either, so had to start early. Austin didn't go very much after his father left, it was hard on him to go so far and I needed him so much at home. I used to leave him with Philip when I went to the barn to let the cattle out for water and to do various things. I took Marvin with me, knowing the baby would get better

attention if only one of them were there. Invariably Austin would rock Philip to sleep and here he would come, happy to think he too was helping mother.

The winter passed very rapidly as time always does when one is well employed. Christmas time was rather lonesome but a neighbor boy brought us a tree and helped us decorate making Christmas Eve rather a joyful event. Christmas Day we spent with my father and mother and as many of my brothers and sisters as were available. Here I will give you a picture of our principal mode of transportation. We had a yoke or team of young oxen that the boys and their father had broken the winter before and these the boys would hitch to a wood shod sleigh put plenty of hay and blankets in the box, the little ones and myself would get in and wrap up and away we would go through the snow, Denman sitting on the dashboard of the sleigh driving the team with nothing but a whip when they were to go to the right he would say "Haw", to the left, "Gee", to stop, "Whoa", to start "Git up", to go slower or backup the work, "Back" was used. A whip stalk about four or five feet long was used with a lash about the same length but after the oxen were broken the whip was seldom used only to tap them with, as when going down hill and they went to fast and the one who was driving was riding, he would reach over with the whip and tap them on the nose and say "Back" and they would slow up. It is really surprising how quickly they learn to obey.

We liked to drive the oxen better than the horses as the horses became all together too frisky after going without work for a few weeks. Albie's father finally took them and we had that much less to care for. In the spring after the snow was gone we brought one horse home. We had had her since a little colt. Father Curry had given her to us first spring after we were married and when we drove her by herself she was very gentle, and after the snow was gone the horse and wagon was our best way of getting around.

As I said before, the winter passed by very quickly and at least every week a letter came from Oregon still aglow with interest. Albie said to have a sale and get ready to come west sometime during the summer of 1909. He had firmly made up his mind to locate somewhere in the West, would wait until the first of August and if the homestead land didn't open by that time, would go elsewhere to look for a location.

Can you imagine what it meant for me to get ready and have a sale with the accumulation of equipment for twelve years to run a farm of 160 acres. And I wanted to make the most of everything for every dollar was going to mean a lot to us going into a new country. I arranged everything in groups for handbills for the auction sale and had the bills printed. Albie's brother volunteered to be the auctioneer and my brother the clerk for which I was very grateful. March the first was set for day of sale and handbills were posted in every public place for miles around. How I worked to have everything show up to the best advantage. March first dawned bright and beautiful for which I was very thankful as the weather isn't always desirable at this time of year in the Catskill Mountains of New York. With Mother Curry's help I had arranged to give everyone a sandwich, cookies and cup of coffee as most of the people had come quite some distance and at that time they traveled with horses.

At an early hour they commenced to arrive and I was told by a good many that it was one of the largest auction sales they had ever been near there and everything brought a good price except the cattle. There was a shortage of hay that year and it was two months before there was any pasture so people were slow about buying. I told David not to sell them as I had plenty of hay and would wait until pasture in May at which time I received a very good price for them.

A little incident comes to my mind at this time that was rather amusing. We had a maple syrup evaporator that we bought second hand for something like $20.00. We had used it for a number of years. One of my neighbors wanted it quite badly and asked me what I would take for it before the sale and I told him $10.00. He thought it was too much and said he would wait for the sale. The day of sale there were so many things to sell that one couldn't seem to get to everything and Father Curry came to me and said there were two or three different ones wanted a chance to buy the evaporator and what was he to do. I said, " I will auction it off myself." With some of the women with me away we went to the store house to have some fun. They were waiting and I started out in good old auctioneer fashion. Well the outcome of it was I sold the evaporator for $15.00 instead of $10.00 to the same neighbor. At first he was inclined

to be rather put out but then saw the joke and laughed with the rest of us when I told what had happened. All together the sale was a grand success and I felt well repaid for the hard work. Next day was almost as busy as that one had been with people coming after different purchases. My sister-in-law was with me that day and about noon I said, "Carrie you will have to look after things and children too for awhile. I am so tired that I will have to rest and sleep for a few hours." When I was able to take hold and go ahead again and more than glad to have the sale over. I had to keep enough household goods, etc. to keep house until we were nearly ready to go then had another sale and finished up keeping only the things I wanted to take with me such as sewing machine, bedding, clothing, pictures and a few dishes.

One thing happened in February a few weeks before the sale that gave me quite a fright. One morning between three and four o'clock some one rapped on the kitchen door. I kept a night lamp burning to have handy when caring for the children. At first I thought it was one of the neighbors. A big dog we had slept in the house and he stood by the window and barked and growled furiously. I asked who was at the door. He answered, "I am a stranger and have lost my way and am about to freeze to death. I want to come in." I said, "You can't come in, I am here alone with the children and you just can't." The dog I think backed me up considerable. I finally told him he could go down in the basement of the barn where we kept the cattle and lie down there in the hay. It was warm there. He said, "alright, that would be fine", but as soon as he was gone I had Denman and Raymond get up and dress and we took the dog and went after him. I was afraid he might set the barn afire. When I opened the barn door I called to him and said, "I have a good fire in the house and I think you better come up there". He said "alright I have been drinking some but am all right now". He could scarcely stand then. I have often wondered how he ever walked up over that mountain with the ground covered with snow and ice and wind blowing bitter cold. He said he had come from Neversink, a distance of six miles, had seen the light in the window and came there. He lay down on an old couch in the kitchen and slept awhile. I fixed him a good breakfast and plenty of strong coffee, was anxious to have him on his way before the boys went to school. He wanted to stay and cut some wood and do chores for me, but I said, "No, I didn't need any help but I thought my father did", and directed him there. He left about eight o'clock but didn't go near my father's place nor any other place that had any work. I heard of him afterwards. He was a professional tramp and had gotten a little money and spent it for drink.

In our twelve years that we had lived on this place he was the first tramp that had ever been there, possibly my light in the window had saved his life. We never know. Anyway I didn't want any more visitors like that.

A few days after the sale Raymond became quite sick, sore throat and high fever. I took down my big old doctor book, Dr. Gunn's, Mother Curry had had it for years and had loaned it to me, and I used to enjoy very much diagnosing the different cases of sickness that came up in the family and I had been very successful so far as I had never had the doctor for one of the children at this time. I found Raymond had scarlet fever, learned afterward there had been a mild case in the neighborhood and expect he picked up the germ at the sale. Denman had been staying with his grandfather for a few days and I let him stay. A neighbor boy came to help with chores and run errands for me. I sent to the drug store and bought the medicine I needed as preventative for the other children and disinfectant for Raymond and we quarantined ourselves. He was a very sick boy but came through all right and none of the others took it. Such a time as I had cleaning up afterwards, but did a good job.

It was the first of May before we were free to go agin and time seemed to rush by with planting a garden and keeping enough on the place to help out in feeding a family of six, kept me rather busy. Our parents helped me what they could but they had their own work to do and my youngest sister had been very sick with muscular rheumatism all winter and was only able to be about in late spring so we all had our own work.

The summer passed as fast as the winter had. About the 15th of July, as I remember, I received a letter from Albie saying he had taken a homestead and for me to come as soon as possible as he wanted to get

settled before winter set in. I had another sale sometime the first of August and with packing, farewell visits and various other things to attend to, the time flew by. Everyone was good to help and on the evening of the 16th of August we left our home and the ones dear to us to take up our new home in the west.

Up until about three weeks before coming I had planned on making the trip with the boys by myself. At this time, Minnie, my youngest sister, decided it would be good for her health to have a change of climate and said she was coming too. I was delighted to have her company, but somewhat afraid the journey might prove too much, for she was so frail looking. Nevertheless she came.

The night we left I will never forget. It had rained hard all day. The children and I were with Albie's folks putting the finishing touches on the packing. Each one was taking all the luggage they could in the way of trunks, etc. I had to pay full fare for Denman and myself, half fare for Raymond and Austin, the other two came free. At about half past nine we meet in the depot at Fallsburgh, my father and mother came to bring Minnie and her baggage. Father and mother taking my baggage and family. The rain storm hadn't slackened in the least and the tears that were flowing by this time made things still more damp. A few minutes before train time David came, was going as far as Roscoe to his home with us. My youngest brother, Arthur, and sister, Fannie also came about this time, saw that we needed to be cheered up and when the train pulled in the shower of tears had passed and goodbyes were said and we were off.

Chapter II
Our Journey

We left Fallsburgh, New York, 10:00 P.M., August 16th, 1909. First night the children rested as well as could be expected with all the excitement and change. The morning of August 17th we awoke along the shores of Lake Ontario and the first words from Austin as he looked from the window, were "Oh Mama!, see the big ship swim".

We had been told at Fallsburgh that we wouldn't have to change cars until we reached Chicago, for which we felt very thankful, you can imagine our surprise at about 9:00 A.M.being told that the train we were on was going to Niagara Falls and that we would have to change cars at Suspension Bridge at 9:30. Our parents had been exceptionally good to us in fixing all good things to eat, enough to more than last us until we passed Chicago, but now, what were we to do? We hated to leave any on the train and with our grip it was almost too much, but someway we managed when the time came and we made the exchange without any great mishap.

Our delay here was short and we were soon on our way again, catching a glimpse of Niagara Falls as we passed. From Suspension Bridge to Detroit we traveled through Canada. Very nice farming country. At Detroit we changed cars again. Didn't mind it so much this time as we didn't have to hurry. It was now a little after 4:00 P.M. and we were due in Chicago at 10:00 that evening, and with the children all asleep by that time, we had quite a struggle getting them woke up and ready to make the change. I was afraid we might make a mistake in being transferred across the city, so was careful to show the ticket to the bus driver, but even then they took us to Rock Island instead of North Western. The mistake was discovered at once and we were put in a bus and rushed to the right depot, the horses running a good share of the way and in a wild rush down the long flight of stairs with porters helping me, we made the train all right.

I tried to get berths so the children could rest better but as there were none available we had to make the best of what we had. The train was loaded just out of Chicago, lots of people going home from the theater. A gentleman took Marvin on his lap and they were soon both asleep and slept that way until morning. Gradually the crowd thinned out and we were very comfortable, having chairs that we could stretch out and were almost as comfortable as a bed, especially for the children.

Morning of August 18th we were in Iowa and at this time of the year the fields of grain are immense, especially corn, and to one who had only seen a few acres in a field, one almost wondered how they could

ever harvest it. In the middle of the afternoon we stopped at Omaha for nearly an hour, giving us quite a rest.

We were glad to learn at this place, from a man who had been to Chicago with a carload of sheep that we would not have to change cars again until we got to Ontario, Oregon, where Albie was to meet us, that is if we went by the way of Granger. We looked at our ticket and found they were made out to go by Ogden, but we were careful to inform the conductor that we didn't want to go that way, as we had had enough of changing cars.

We left Omaha at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and as we traveled along through Eastern Nebraska, I thought how beautiful, immense fields of grain, fine shade trees and just enough mountains to make the scenery picturesque. What a change was to come during the night, from Eastern Nebraska to Eastern Wyoming, with its boundless waste of prairie, opened only a few months ago to homesteaders, and on this morning of August 19th, they all seemed to be on their way to Cheyenne to the Roundup or Frontier Day, and they were a jolly bunch and filled the car to overflowing. At about 11:00 o'clock we arrived there and were glad to be relieved of some of the crowd.

We were now crossing the Rocky Mountains. I had read and studied a lot about them and yet I had no idea of the immense barren desolate waste of land that it was. Away to the South could be seen peaks capped with snow. Now and then the train would halt at some lonely little village where you would scarcely see a green thing growing, and over and over again the thought would come to me, how did the pioneers of early days, with only ox teams and wagons as a mode of transportation, ever cross this barren waste. And another thought that came to me was could it ever be utilized to the good of mankind, and still after having crossed it numerous times, the magnitude of that barren waste still appalls me. There has been no improvement in the last twenty-seven years, only highway, a few lonely service stations, and possibly a few more buildings in the little railroad towns along the way. All along the railroad were immense snow sheds to keep the snow off the track and even at that, it was almost impossible to get through. Of course, it is quite some different now with modern snow plows, etc. to clear the track.

On August 20th we were in Idaho, having crossed Utah without much change of scenery. The young man who had been to Chicago with the sheep was all enthused to tell us all the good qualities of his own home state. We were glad to have someone to point out the places of interest. He showed us where he had unloaded the sheep so they might drink, as they were only allowed to be on the train thirty-six hours at a time, when they had to be fed and watered. At this place others were now caring too for their sheep and it was quite a sight to us at that time to see seven or eight carloads of sheep in one bunch.

I heard the remark made that it was a perfect Idaho morning in sunny Idaho. I came to know that most of the mornings in both Idaho and Eastern Oregon from March to October were sunny, and the one thing I have missed more than any other since I have been in the west has been the refreshing rains and the good old thunder showers in the summertime. Well back to Idaho. Rather early in the morning we crossed the Snake River and saw the American Falls and now we commenced to see the work of irrigation, the immense crops of grain and stacks and stacks of alfalfa hay, proving that the land is very fertile and productive when watered, but there was so much uncultivated, that to me the cultivated and watered place made me think of what I had read of an oasis in a desert.

We will turn our attention for a few minutes to the home life of five healthy boys used to outdoor life, but now confined to eight seats in one corner of a day coach, and had been for four days. It kept us guessing to know how to entertain them and sometimes I thought they gave free entertainment for the whole car. There was a family of four children in the other end of the car and they spent plenty of time visiting back and forth, which helped a whole lot.

The train was due at Ontario, Oregon at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and we were more than happy to meet Albie and to be all together again. He was greatly surprised to see Minnie as I hadn't written him

that she was coming. We stayed all night here and was glad to sleep in a real bed again and have an honest –to –goodness bath.

Morning of August 21st we only had a short distance of fifteen miles to go to Vale by railroad and were then planning on starting that day with horses to the interior of Oregon, but you can imagine our surprise when we presented our check for our trunks to find they had been sent on to Portland by mistake and we would have to wait until they came back.

We concluded now would be the time to commence real pioneer life. Albie had a tent with him and with covered wagon we were able to fix up real comfortable and by buying a few more cooking utensils were able to get along very nicely until we reached our destination, a distance of one hundred and twenty-five miles, as we would have to camp, there were no accommodations for travelers along the way. We were at Vale just a week before our trunks came and during this time my cousin, Homer Denman from Iowa, had joined us, and there were now nine of us to make the trip, and I want to tell you right here that anytime you are real enthusiastic about camping out and cooking in the open, you want to try doing it for two weeks for five healthy boys and four grown people, and see if your enthusiasm hasn't diminished a whole lot. It did with me until if anyone says "camping", I am ready to stay at home.

On August 28th we set out on what proved to be the most eventful journey in our lives thus far. At this time it would be well to describe our "caravan" or whatever you might call it. Four horses, two little colts trotting along with their mothers, a heavy wagon with white canvas cover and spring seat, loaded with trunks, suit cases, camp beds, rolled up canvas, provisions and some furniture. I remember one thing in particular was a large couch which was fastened across the middle of the wagon box and made a very comfortable bed for the baby when he took his naps, and also served as a very good seat. We had only gone about three miles when Minnie and I thought we would walk. When we jumped off the wagon we landed in dust up to our shoe tops, and they weren't oxfords either, but after we stepped out of the road the walking was good through the sage brush. What grass there is grows up around the roots of the brush and at this time of the year is pretty well pastured off by the cattle that roam around on the open range.

Cousin Homer and the older boys walked and hunted most of the time as there were plenty of cotton tail rabbits, wild dove and quail, and at this time there was no law against shooting them.

First night we had a very nice place to camp. People who owned the place said we could camp in the yard on green grass, in the shade of locust and poplar trees. The place was well irrigated having a large fruit orchard besides lots of hay and grain. Seemed most like home of any place we had seen. The water was naturally warm and they kept water bags full of water hanging under the trees to be cool for drinking.

We camped this afternoon about three o'clock having had only a lunch at noon time and we had plenty of time to prepare a good meal for evening, having stewed doves and dumplings and fried rabbit, and of course had plenty of canned vegetables whenever we wanted them, and the good appetite we all had made everything taste good. The only thing to mar our stay at this place was the thought of rattle snakes, the people said they had killed fourteen there that summer.

Sunday morning, August 29th we were up and moving as soon as possible. Had pancakes for breakfast. The people here had given us the bottom out of an old oven, which made an excellent griddle by putting an empty can under each corner and having a nice bed of coals, and that left us the frying pans for meat, eggs, etc. One thing I missed more than anything else was butter. So far we had had some but it soon became unobtainable and until we were located and had a cow of our own, we went without most of the time.

We only went a short distance this morning when we passed a public house with natural hot and cold water all through it, could see the steam rising from the water in the rear of the house. There seemed to be a number of hot springs and we found later that Eastern Oregon had plenty of them. We passed through a canyon soon after leaving the hot springs and the ruggedness of these is hard to describe with their perpendicular walls and lack of vegetation made it anything but desirable, and the road was plenty

rough too. When about half way through had the misfortune to break the wagon tongue enough so Albie had to bind it up as best he could until he could get to a blacksmith shop and have it repaired. While he was busy fixing that Minnie and I prepared dinner so as not to waste any time. I want to say that it was plenty warm down in that canyon just at noontime without any shade only the wagon, and we were glad when the word came to move on. To get out of that canyon was another relief but after all, it was about as good as climbing mountains with that heavy load and it seemed to me that that was what the journey was made up of, through canyons and over mountains, with very little level and desirable roads.

And when I say canyons and mountains please don't think of the gullies and hills in New York as anything in comparison.

At five o'clock this afternoon we came to another very nice camping place. I might say an oasis, anyway it was a friendly spot in the desert and such hospitality as we were shown all the way. Here the people told us to help ourselves to all the fruit we wanted, said it was going to waste.

Monday, August 30th, the morning was rather uneventful, only seeing a large drove of cattle in the distance at about eleven o'clock we arrived at Westfall. Now don't think of this as much of a town, just a wide place in the road, the same as all the towns are in this interior country, but it answered our purpose just fine, having a blacksmith shop, so were able to have the wagon tongue fixed properly, replenish our lunch box at the little store, and spread our lunch under a nice shady tree, and what more could one ask for. The roads were very good today and at evening we camped where a house had burned only two days before, and it certainly looked desolate without another house in sight. In the evening a boy came to feed chickens, etc. There was a dog that stayed there to keep thieving coyotes away we were told. I felt sorry for the poor thing, he seemed so lonesome when the boy left and told him to stay there. He made friends with us and slept close by, only leaving to chase the coyotes away when they came too near the chickens. At this place the water was terrible and we had to boil all we used.

Tuesday, August 31st (Austin's seventh birthday) – This morning we had only traveled a short distance when we came to a large cattle ranch. I had always been interested in cattle and this ranch made a real impression as it was the first real large ranch I had ever seen and the cattle were beautiful, all of a dark red color and so fat and sleek.

We ate our dinner today at the stage station where Eugene Cross, a neighbor of ours in the East, turned back when he had started to settle in the new country, only a year before, possibly he was wise, but I have never regretted coming west, anyone can live in a country that is settled and has the conveniences of the times to enjoy, but to overcome difficulties and to be able to help, gives one a great sense of satisfaction.

We have now traveled fifty miles of the one hundred and twenty-five that lay before us when we left Vale. This afternoon we had a hard drive ahead of us over Bendeer Mountain. It proved too much as the horses became so tired before we reached the top that Albie concluded it would be best to leave us there and he and Denman would go on with the horses to where he could get feed and water for them, some three or four miles ahead. Let me picture if I can our camping place this time. Well up on the side of the mountain with not one building in sight and we could look for miles and miles to the east and southeast, only the wide waste of sage brush, and this didn't grow very high, the highest scarcely coming up to the knee, a few willows growing against the mountain side some half mile or so away, were the only thing that looked like a tree in sight.

Having plenty of canned goods, crackers, etc. with us, didn't take long to prepare our supper. We had to use water very sparingly, not for cooking and washing dishes, as we only had four quarts with us. Each seemed to think it was his or her duty to keep up the spirits, so there were plenty of jokes passed around and altogether, rather a pleasant time was enjoyed. Austin went without his birthday cake, but didn't seem to mind.

Awhile before dark it commenced to look very much like showers with every now and then a flash of lightning, so we concluded the thing for us to do would be to fix our beds as best we could in the wagon,

Cousin Homer making his on the ground under the wagon. We were nicely settled when we had quite a shower, thankful that it soon passed away, and before Minnie and I slept, we had to talk over our predicament, and we concluded it was just as well that our parents didn't know of our situation there on that lonely mountain top. There was nothing to disturb us only the howl of the prowling coyotes and they came close enough to pick up the empty fish cans that we had thrown away when we ate supper, but we had no fear of them. Comparing our lot with that of the early settlers it was very tame, and anyway it was quite an experience for us.

Along about midnight the stage going west passed and not long after one going east came along, stopped and called to us. Albie had sent us another water bag of water, so now we had plenty.

Morning of September 1st dawned bright and beautiful after the rain of the night before. We were up early had breakfast, made everything ready to start as soon as Albie returned. While waiting Homer scaled the top of old Bender Mountain about one and a half miles distant. Around the top is a formation called rim rock and looks very much like a stone wall. He went over this and inside he said there were two or three acres covered with wild cherry trees loaded with as nice cherries as I ever saw. He cut a branch and brought to us. We couldn't help but wonder where they had obtained enough moisture to grow there in that extinct volcano.

About ten o'clock Albie and Mr. Wilson came with Mr. Wilson's horses and we only traveled four miles this day, and were glad to have a rest, as well as the horses. Mrs. Wilson gave me some yeast and said I could use her oven to bake bread, so got busy and made five loaves of bread and enough biscuit for supper. Don't think I ever made poorer bread, and I am sure that I never made any that was more thoroughly enjoyed, good to the last crumb. That is what a good appetite does for one.

Thursday, September 2nd, we only went a short distance today hoping the horses would be rested enough to finish the journey. We camped at a place by the name of Beulah at the foot of Agency Mountain. Our journey today had been through a very productive valley, stacks and stacks of alfalfa hay, beautiful shade trees, also large fruit orchards. We met large droves of beef cattle being driven through to Ontario to market. Directly north of us is Castle Rock Mountain. The top of the mountain looks very much like a castle, three hundred feet of perpendicular rock forming the crown. It was visible to us for over one hundred miles and at no time did it seem far distant. As we were camping today it commenced to rain, so had to put up the tent.

On September 3rd the sun was again shining, much to our delight as we had to climb Agency Mountain and it was over five miles to the top, but roads were good and no dust, so didn't mind. Near the top of the mountain we went through a gap in the rim rock called "Robbers Roost". A number of stage coaches had been robbed here. It made an ideal place for such work. Here we stopped long enough to feed the horses and eat our lunch and were soon on our way.

It now commenced to threaten rain and by three o'clock good heavy showers had set in with plenty of thunder and lightning and for four miles we toiled along through the mud before we found shelter, and once as we were going up a slight grade the horses slipped so badly it was necessary for all hands to get off so as to lighten the load as much as possible, and the ones who were able helped to lift. This experience afforded quite some fun and excitement as it was our first dealing with Oregon mud and we soon had a load on each foot. This afternoon as we were riding along we saw a couple of cowboys riding along on the side of the mountain and soon one of them came down to us and asked if we had a rifle as a cow had slipped and broken her leg and they wanted to put her out of her misery. We loaned them one.

We found shelter this night under a shed, open on all sides but north. It stopped raining soon after camping, so we built our fire and cooked supper. This was a stage station where the stage made a change of horses and the driver and any passengers he might have were supposed to get their meals. Albie thought we might be able to get our supper here and at least part of us sleep in the house, although from appearance there wasn't much chance. Anyway he asked and was told it would be impossible. There was

some lumber at hand and we laid that down under the shed and made our beds on them, and all awoke on the morning of Spetember 4th feeling none the worse for our ride in the rain.

We resumed our journey again, about ten o'clock passed through the town of Drewsey where we replenished our lunch box. Camped early making an easy day of it as the next day was necessarily a hard one.

Sunday, September 5th, we made as early a start as possible, having to cross Stinking Water Mountain (named from stream of water that had lots of sulphur in it). We reached the top at about noon, ate our lunch, cared for the horses, and were soon moving again. For over three miles we traveled over nearly level land on top of the mountain. Reached our camping place at five o'clock, rather tired and anxious to have the journey over. I kept thinking all the time surely Harney Valley must be a great place for people to travel over such mountainous roads for so many years. Here I think it would be well to say that on that long journey we only saw one car, a Ford Roadster. I often wonder what it would be like now after twenty-seven years and this road is now being made into the Yellowstone Cutoff, a most direct route from California to Yellowstone Park.

Morning of September 6th, after traveling about three miles we came out in full view of the wonderful valley, but won't stop now to give you my first impression, but will take that up later, as we are anxious to reach our journeys end and hope to today, but on account of bad weather we camped four miles away. Next morning, September 7th, we were up bright and early, gave the children a little lunch and at nine o'clock drove in to Harriman, where my brother and his family were now living, happy to think that long trip was over and to be able to clean up and have a good rest, a little knowing what was ahead of us and not much rest for me especially.

Chapter III
Harney Valley And My First Few Months There

I will try and give a description of the valley that was to be my home for the next fourteen years. It is an immense oblong basin, about fifty miles long by thirty wide, over four thousand feet above sea level, on the north is the Blue Mountains covered with fine timber from which was obtained nearly all the lumber used for building in the valley. The Strawberry Mountains a little farther east than these on the north side were much higher and were capped with snow nearly the year around. On the east was Stinking Water Mountain and others, and on the south the Steens Moutains. This range was higher than any of the others and extended north and south and from the valley we were only able to see the north and with its numerous gorges, the principal one being Kiger Gorge. Snow was visible here the year around. Two rivers, the Dunder and Blitzen, had their head waters in these gorges and certain times of the year they were as wild as their names. To the west of the valley was Iron Mountain, rather inferior looking compared with the others.

The Silvia River flowed from the Blue Mountains into Malheur Lake on the north the Dunder and Blitzen on the south, helping to form a lake fifteen miles long and four miles wide. This lake flowed into Harney Lake which had no outlet and was very salt.

There were no trees in the valley only the ones that were planted and these didn't seem to thrive any too good. As I said before the mountains on the north had fine timber, the other mountains had a scattered growth of Juniper, which made good wood, also fence posts and corral fences, of which there was a great demand at this time.

There were several small Buttes on the floor of the valley, the principal one being Saddle Butte, named from its shape, and Warm Spring Butte, getting its name from warm or hot springs that were just north of it. The last named buttes were triangle in shape running from south to north and then east, the top of the ridge being something like two miles long. The cover that was formed on the southeast made a very nice setting for the new town that my brother, Dr. Homer Denman, and some others had had surveyed and laid

out, and named Harriman, in honor of the great railroad magnate who had surveyed the road through the valley and which touched the town site on the south. The town never materialized, one was built three miles east of there in what is known as Crane Creek Gap, this gap was a most natural outlet to the valley, but the most undesirable place for a town as it lay between two steep mountains and seemed to act as a chimney for the valley, a draft always passing through it. In the wintertime when the fog used to come up the rivers, I have seen it lay like a pall over the town for days, when the sun would be shining less than a mile away, but in a new country, as well as others, it is money and influence that counts.

The soil in the valley is the finest kind of volcanic ash, covered with sage brush, most of it growing to enormous size. Lots of it I have seen so tall that a man riding through it on horseback could scarcely be seen. It grows quite a few feet apart and made traveling through it fairly easy. In the springtime the bunch and rye grass grew up in abundance and made marvelous pasture for the thousands of head of cattle and horses that roamed at large on the open range until the homesteaders came and put up fences. I don't wonder the old stockmen who had been there for so many years, hated to see us come, but they were very gracious and kind. I think they realized they would have it back in time, and so they have.

The first day of our arrival was a very happy, as well as busy one. My brother, Dr. Homer, his wife and two children, Eva and Melvin, were here. Also another brother, Dr. Austin Denman, who had only graduated from college the June before, and not being in the best of health, had decided it would be well to rough it awhile in the open, and he certainly chose a good place. All of us made quite a party of our own home folks which helped a lot. There was an empty house of five rooms, partly furnished, quite near, in which my brother and his family had lived while building, so we decided to live there too while we were building our homestead house or cabin as they were called there, and the afternoon of the first day was spent very busily getting settled, as we thought, but about midnight the first night Philip was taken very sick with bowel trouble, a disease that children are afflicted with in this country and which takes a large toll. He was so bad by morning that my brothers decided it would be best for me to come to the hotel with him where one of them could be with and help me, and where my sister and sister-in-law could care for the other children. For over two weeks I was with him constantly and for several days it was hard to tell whether he would live or not. I heard my brothers talking when they didn't think I did, and I knew they had little hope, but thanks to their untiring efforts, and my earnest prayers, he was saved, but it was sometime before he was able to walk again, but how good it seemed to be back together and take up the old routine of life.

They hadn't hired a teacher so my sister put in her application, had her New York license endorsed, was hired, and commenced teaching sometime in September. Eva and Melvin had a pair of Shetland ponies and a little buggy and they went back and forth to school with them and took my sister. The boys had a horse and buggy. They had to drive four miles as school was held in the cabin where we stayed the last night of our journey.

About the middle of October one morning, about eight o'clock, I heard cattle bawling away in the distance, could see down in Crane Creek Gap about three miles away where the sound seemed to come from, and I saw a great fog of dust rising. The sound kept coming closer and about ten o'clock in the morning until after four in the afternoon, that bawling drove of cattle and those singing cowboys were passing. I can't begin to tell how many head there were, but found that it was a general roundup of all the cattle in the country, being driven through to feeding ground for the winter along the shore of Malheur Lake, where thousands of tons of wild hay had been put up in stacks in the summertime for winter use, and each rancher had his part fenced off. When the cattle were brought in for winter they were separated according to brand, each man taking the cattle that wore his brand and caring for them, that is feeding and watering them. Other than that, they have no care. That was one of the hard things for me, to see the cattle, horses and sheep out in the cold and storms all winter, after having lived in a country where stock was kept in warm barns. To me it seemed terrible and I never became reconciled to it. I have seen horse and cattle come in off of the range in the fall, fat and sleek, and in the spring by the time to turn them out to pasture, they would be so poor they would stagger and many of them lost their lives through exposure.

I remember so well one year while we were on the homestead after the railroad came in, the Eastern Oregon Livestock Co. had exchanged hands and a bunch of cowboys were brought in there from Texas to care for the cattle. Hay was scarce and they weren't used to feeding stock in a cold country. Hay had to be shipped in. The feeding ground was a mile east of us and instead of feeding the cattle in a circle, that is, throwing the hay off of the wagon as the driver drove round in a big circle, they fed them in a straight line. The strong cattle will always follow the wagon and when they drove straight, the hay was all tromped in the snow, so the weak and smaller cattle only obtained a small amount, and consequently they died by the hundreds, were piled up in rows, oil poured over them and burned. The odor was something dreadful from that burning mass.

I will go back to the fall of 1909, after my baby had regained his normal health I used to spend as much of my time as possible helping Bertha, my sister-in-law. We had grown up together so had much in common, consequently lots of our time when we were supposed to be working was spent in visiting, not to a disadvantage either, as I think it helped to brighten many of our days. All fourteen years we spent so close together there was never one unkind word passed between us, and the children loved her just as well and were always teasing to go visiting to Uncle Homers.

One day I remember as I was going over there I looked across towards Malheur Lake and thought to myself, at last we are going to have a shower. It was along in October and I commenced to think that we should have rain soon, only had a little sprinkle since our arrival. When I reached the house I made the remark that I thought we would have a shower. Bertha, who had had more experience with the country than I, laughed and said, "Just wait, it will be a shower of dust instead of water, we better close the doors and windows to keep as much of it out as possible". By the time we had this done the storm was there, but as she said, "not rain", and anyone that hasn't experienced a dust storm just can't imagine what it is like. The visibility at most is only a few feet, and in the best built houses it would be like a mist filling the rooms. As a rule these storms only lasted a short time but have seen them last an hour and longer. So many times when living on the homestead I have looked out and seen a storm coming when I had a meal almost ready to serve. Every plate was turned upside down, every dish with food in was covered until everyone was ready to eat, and then before the meal was over you would feel the dust in your teeth. Anyway I guess it wasn't any worse to eat it than it was to breath it, and that we couldn't help doing. I have swept the dust up by the panfull after a storm was over, and I always made the beds in the mornings with the pillows inside in case of a storm, only had to shake the spread or top quilt to have the bed clean, and in washing, if clothes were caught on the line when real damp, would have to wash and rinse them over four and five times, the dust seemed to beat in so bad.

Albie had hauled one load of lumber for the house before he left to go to the railroad for us, so was plenty busy that fall with hauling lumber, building, digging well, and so many other things. One in particular was going to John Day Valley after a load of apples, a distance of over one hundred miles over the Blue Mountains in to Grant County. He brought back enough to last us through the winter and some for my brother and others.

Will give a description of our house. It was story and a half high, about twenty-four feet long, by sixteen wide, double boarded with building paper between, except in the peak of the roof, where batting was used. There were two bedrooms upstairs, a living room, also used for bedroom, and kitchen downstairs. After my sister proved up on her homestead we moved her cabin and used that for a kitchen, so gave us plenty of room. We thought the house was built on our claim but next spring when the road was surveyed through, found that about half of it stood in the road. It wasn't so hard to move as there was no cellar under it, having built a dug cellar to store things in.

We had a very good well, dug down about ten feet then drilled with a hand drill about twenty feet more. There were no rocks to bother so made drilling easy. We had plenty of water but very strong with sulphur. At first I wondered how I would ever be able to drink it, but found by pumping and letting it stand over night, it lost much of the strong taste and finally we began to like it so well, we wanted it right

from the well, and horses liked it just as good, having a large watering trough for our range horses outside of fences, horses for miles would come there to drink.

Work progressed very good and on December 5th we moved into our new home, everything was new and fresh and comfortable, if not so elaborate. We had two new stoves, a very nice kitchen range and a sheet iron heater, and plenty of sage brush to burn, so were bound to keep warm. Our other furniture was mostly home made, and not very fancy. Had a long kitchen table made to accommodate ten people, but many times have seated fourteen and fifteen. The boys used to call it our extension table, a long home made bench on either side and chair of the same make at either end, made up the furniture of our dining room, only was a kitchen instead. Our bed steads, couch, library table and chairs were all made by the same company.

We were more than glad to get settled before Christmas. That day we were invited to spend at my brother's. We have often laughed about our Christmas tree that year. It was a Juniper. They are an evergreen tree, but not very graceful in appearance, but the spirit of the day was the main thing and that was shown by all. There were fifteen of our own home folks and made a merry bunch.

Chapter IV
The People Who were There and The Ones Who Came

I think the Indians should come first, as they were the ones who inhabited the country long before any white settlers came. From things I have heard the ones that were there when we came were much more peaceable that the ones of early days, and yet I wonder sometimes, would we have been as peaceable as they had we been in their places.

There is an Indian Reservation at Burns, the county seat of Harney County. The name of the Indians there are the Piutes. They aren't a very progressive tribe, although some of the younger ones are quite well educated. The Indian women work a lot around town, washing, cleaning and various things, even piling wood. I was told a very funny thing by a friend who lives in Burns and had the Indians help her. She said she had noticed that the squaw who was helping her wore so many skirts and the outside ones were shorter than the ones worn underneath and would show sometimes a half dozen or more. So one day she asked her why she wore so many and this was her answer. "Me heap rich, more than other squaw." Then my friend figured that they were lording it over one another by wearing all their clothes at one time, and they had so many given to them they could show off to a pretty good advantage.

This makes me think of a little incident that happened to my daughter-in-law and me a few years before we left Oregon. Denman's wife was with us and she had a coat and I had a suit that we thought we might as well let go, so gave them to an Indian family living just out of town in a little tepee. They were known as Blind Jim and his family. He was a man from what old settlers said must have been nearly a hundred years old. His wife and daughter and little grandson made up the family. The daughter had married an Indian from the Warm Spring tribe that lived near Vale and he had left her and gone back to his tribe and she considered herself disgraced and never looked up. As much as she was at my place and helped, I never saw her eyes. Well not long after we gave them the clothes we looked out one morning and here they were going to Burns to the Fair. Blind Jim was in the lead and next came his wife, wearing the suit I had given her, and then the daughter, wearing the coat and carrying the papoose. We had a good laugh. They had a long hike ahead of them, it being thirty-two miles to Burns. We heard from them and found some one had given them a ride so they didn't have to walk all the way.

One other time I went to the back door and there stood Jim looking very downcast, and I said, "Jim what is the matter?" He said, "heap sore eyes". He was already blind in one eye and the other was terribly inflamed and swollen. I had him come in the kitchen and sit down and ropped some argyrol in it and gave him some in a bottle to take home with him. Next morning I went to the door and there he was again (would never hear one of them come). This time he looked much better and said, "Eye heap good, good medicine, want more". I didn't have more for him but directed him to my brother where he could get it.

One other time not so long before we left Oregon, there were a number of Indians from Burns going out to shear sheep in the spring of the year, and some of them took their families with them. This time they camped there at Crane for awhile and had gotten ahold of a lot of whiskey and when they started on from there, they were anything but sober. One family had several children, the smallest about six months old. The mother was carrying it on her lap, when about ten miles from Crane, she let it roll from her lap out of the wagon and wagon ran over it. Someone set at once to Burns for the doctor who took care of the Indians (he is appointed by the Government). He came and couldn't decide whether the child had internal injuries or not, thought it best to go back to Burns. About this time, Marvin, who was driving the stage came along and they sent the mother and baby back to Crane with him, the father and other children coming back with horses and wagon.

I saw Marvin drive in the garage with them and ran out to see what the matter was. He said, "Mother, take the baby, I think it is dead." I picked it up in my arms and carried it in the house, the mother stumbling along in drunken stupor. I sat down with the baby, saw it wasn't dead. Marvin told me what had happened. I thought it must be in an unconscious state. I was wondering what to do, when I looked down again, it was looking right at me with the most beautiful eyes I ever saw. The little thing hadn't moved a muscle, nor did it show any fear. I sat quite awhile with it in my arms. It didn't act as if it was hurt. I finally examined the little body and could see the marks of the wagon wheel, but other than that there was nothing the matter apparently. The mother took it on her lap and she and baby both slept. She would almost let it fall again and again until I motioned to her to sit on the floor where they were both more at home. The father came after awhile and took them away. Next morning he came for more milk for the baby, and near as I could make out, it was just fine. He said "Take squaw back to Burns, not bother with her no more". Guess he thought too he would have double the whiskey to drink, although they are not bad if white men would leave them alone and not see them the stuff.

The habits of the Indian, especially the Piutes, have changed very little. They never seem to show emotion, nor express fear, and their conversation is very abrupt.

The early white settlers, most of them, had been there a long time and occupied all the desirable places. They had located back in the hills or where a spring came down. As a rule these were sheltered places and nearly anything would grow. It seems that the rocks on the mountains surrounding these places retained the heat and it scarcely ever froze in summer, while out in the valley I have known it to freeze every month in the year, and they didn't have the dust storms as bad there either.

I remember once going with one of my nearest neighbors up in the hills about fifteen miles from where we lived. A family by the name of George lived there and we had heard that they had lots of fruit, so thought we would get some to can. One afternoon away we went with old horse and buggy. We arrived there about five o'clock in the afternoon. Everyone had gone to the Fair except Mrs. George and two youngest boys, and one of them had been that day and had gotten back, and the other was going the next day. They wouldn't leave their mother alone, her health was very bad and she was more than glad to see us. We prepared the meals for everyone and stayed all night. There was so much fruit, peaches, plums of so many different varities, and necatrines – the first I had ever tasted, and they are certainly delicious. Also early apples. We went home the next day with the buggy loaded at very low cost.

We were very much better satisfied with our station in life after hearing the trials that Mrs. George had undergone on that frontier, raising that large family away from medical attention and under the most trying circumstances. One is amazed to know what trials the human being can undergo and still survive, and it is the women who suffer the most on the frontier, away from social life, the business of the men call them together more.

As a rule the men who had the most stock had two or three ranches. The main one was called the home ranch. There were two large companies, the largest was Pacific Live Stock Co., spoken of as the P.L.S. and was owned by Miller & Lux whose headquarters were near San Francisco. Their brand in Oregon was called the wrench. It was said that they could drive their cattle from Harney Valley, Eastern

Oregon, to San Francisco and camp every night except one on their own land. I will name a few of their ranches – Island Ranch on Silvia River north of Malheur Lake – Anderson Ranch at foot of Steens Mountains on the north – Juniper Ranch at foot of Steens Mountains on the south. It was twenty miles between those two ranches and was a hard days drive but had to be made as there was no place between to stop. Next drive was much shorter over level land on east side of Steens Mountains is Mann Lake Ranch. Next drive was to Shranna Point Ranch. This was quite a long drive over level country. Next stop was White Horse Ranch and then on to Quinn River Ranch. This is quite near the Nevada line.

The other large company was the Eastern Oregon Livestock Co. and was owned for some time before we left there by a company from Texas, of which I have spoken of some of their trials before they were well established, but later made a success of their business.

The cowboys love to play jokes on one another and this one I think is exceptionally good. A bunch of the boys were out in the mountains working with the stock and one of them, a strapping big fellow over six feet tall, was in need of a pair of boots, and one of the other boys was going to town so he sent for a pair of No. 12 boots. The store keeper didn't have a pair of No. 12, so the boy says, "Give me two pairs of No. 6, I'll take them", and he did.

A good many of the new comers thought the old settlers were very much against them, but I think as a whole they were very truthful about conditions. I remember talking with the owner of the O Circle Bar Ranch shortly after we settled and I found everything he told me was so. He said some years one can raise anything they wish to out here in this valley and other years will be so cold and so little moisture that it will be hard to raise rye hay, and that is considered the most hardy of anything. I found it exactly as he said.

There were some little places in the valley that had been open to homesteaders a few years before we came. I remember one family in particular who lived nine miles directly north of us, along the road we came in to the valley on. We became very good friends afterwards. Their claim was just one-half mile east of my sister's and they had a code of signals in case my sister was taken suddenly sick. In daytime she was to hang out a red flag and at night a lamp was to be set in the window. As far as I know she never had to use them. We found Mr.and Mrs. Biddle very sincere and kind people. They had gone through lots of hardships, having lived in Oklahoma at the time of the opening of the Cherokee Strip. Mrs. Biddle had father and brothers in the run besides Mr. Biddle. Those were exciting times. They had three children about the age of our oldest ones and many were the good times they had visiting back and forth, also parties. Mrs. Biddle saw us the day we came down the valley and she said to herself, "little do they know what they have come to", and how right she was.

The boys often laughed about seeing Mr. and Mrs. Biddle's youngest daughter, Alma going after the cows on horseback, and how they envied her. She rode bareback so easy. One thing everyone did was to ride horseback. I had never been on a horses back until I came west and I too learned to ride, but not very gracefully. I don't think anyone ever said of me, "isn't she a picture on horseback", unless it was a funny one, for it always seemed to me that I was going up when I should go down, and down when I should go up. Anyway I managed to get about some but never thought it an easy way of transportation. The boys all loved it, especially the three oldest, and were never happier than when they had some wild bronco to tame, and used to think lots of time they would get their necks broken before they tamed them.

One of the pastimes that a bunch of boys would enjoy was to run horses through a chute, have a pole across the top with a boy hanging from it and when the horse went through he would drop on its back and see how far he could ride him. Some dangerous business, of course we mothers never witnessed that procedure.

Will tell something about our nearest neighbors. The claim on the north across the road was filed on by a man from Idaho. He had followed the frontier most of his life. He had one son with him, a boy a little over a year younger than Denman, and for years he made our home his, especially when his father was

gone. He remarked one time that he never saw one boy raised by himself that amounted to anything, so thought it best to adopt us. Anyway I have never been sorry that I took him in and did for him the same as I did for my own. He had lived with his aunt in Idaho before coming here and she had taught him to help with housework and he was very handy and neat, and a lot of help to me unless he felt contrary. He had a nature that liked to pout, but think a lot of that was taken out of him through constant companionship of five other boys, and now since he is married and has a family of his own, it gives one a thrill of pleasure at Christmas time to get a telegram saying, "Merry Christmas to Dad and Mother from Willard and Hazel", and when Mother's Day comes to receive a card and little gift, one can't help but think the work was not all in vain.

The man who had the claim on the east was from Virginia, a widower with two daughters, one daughter old enough to have a homestead which was located just across the road from her father's The other daughter was about Raymond's age and was sure a good pal, could ride horseback as good as any boy, and the races they used to have. When the boys had to bring the horses in off the range they would go by and call, "Come on Flossie and help get the horses", and away they would go, sure of a good time riding for miles over the mountains. The young people especially seemed to like the country, think it was the freedom they enjoyed in the big open spaces, and even with myself, the solitude and the magnitude of it all leaves a picture I am glad to retain.

The claim on the south was taken by my cousin from Iowa. He proved up on it as soon as he could and went back home, was gone a few years and came back with his wife, a dear little woman. She was a milliner by trade and so unused to such a life, she spent lots of her time with me. They finally built a little home about six miles from us on a little creek and here a little boy was born, I cared for her, letting my family look after themselves for a time.

The people on the west were from Texas, man and wife with six boys and two girls. When they were coming in the valley the oldest boy accidentally shot the foot off of another boy also coming with his parent to locate. It happened about thirty miles from their destination. They bound up his leg to stop bleeding and sent to Harriman for my brother to go after him. They had bound the leg so tight to stop the flow of blood, that the flesh was in a bad shape. They amputated his leg below the knee, but had to amputate again above the knee before it would heal. His suffering was terrible and my youngest brother acted both as nurse and doctor. One little knows what they can do until emergency calls. The old frontier life either makes or breaks the strength of mankind, and the operations I have seen performed there, far removed from modern equipped hospitals, would baffle many a doctor, but when it is a case of life or death, the best is usually given regardless of conditions.

There were people from Vermont, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Georgia, Illinois, Ohio, Washington, Missouria, and California, located within a few miles of us, and one of the first things that was asked when meeting a stranger was, "Where are you from?", and the nearer they were to your own home state the more you seemed to be acquainted with them. I remember one elderly gentleman near us who came from Vermont. He always seemed to enjoy coming to our place, especially if he wasn't well, we always told him to come and not to stay alone. He finally proved up on his claim and last I heard of him he was in the oil fields in Texas, still seeking his fortune. He was past seventy when he left.

One other family, a man, his wife and boy of twelve, (five years later a baby girl was born) came from Seattle. Had formerly lived in Chicago. He had been a professor in school there. He laughingly made the remark that he brought his high silk hat along to make a hen's nest. They had a very good claim and his wife's father was a stone mason by trade and built them a very nice little stone house, but the same as the rest, it came to naught. They both taught school while there, finally went to Washinton, where he taught school and while he was teaching their son, who had taken up aviation, was killed in an airplane wreck in Idaho. Soon after this they moved to Walla Walla, Washington, and here he passed away, leaving his wife and daughter. Later I heard his widow had met with quite a serious auto accident but recovered. The daughter had married and after all these years, just the other day I heard that the widow

was now residing in Nampa, Idaho. So very few of the ones that settled there the time we did have I been able to keep trace of.

A great number of those who came would stay fourteen months, prove up on their claim, and leave. Where they stayed only fourteen months they had to build a cabin, dig or drill a well, clear and fence twenty acres, stay there almost continuously, and pay out a dollar and a quarter an acre in order to get the deed.

My sister proved up on her claim twenty-six years ago and is still paying taxes on it. Says she expects to keep it as an investment as the taxes are only a little over four dollars a year, and there are good prospects that some day a big oil field will open. Others borrowed a thousand dollars on the land from the state and just let it go, considered they had received a good price for the land, and so they had, as far as the real value of the land is concerned under present conditions.

When the railroad was just about half way finished from Vale to the valley, there was a company organized to further colonize the valley. They were called the Eastern Oregon Colonization Co., and instead of having their headquarters in town, they built a good sized house right out in the valley. It was located about three-fourths of a mile from where we were. They would meet their patrons at the railroad, bring them direct to this house or hotel, and in that way some of the land sharks were with them continually, not having a chance to mingle with people already located.

It used to do me a lot of good when some of the home seekers would get up early in the morning and stroll over to our place, it being the closest one, and would ask what we thought of the country. First thing I would ask would be, "Are you married or single?". If they said they were married I would say, "If you care anything for your family don't bring them here". If they were single I would say "It will be a good experience if you wish to rough it for awhile".

There were quite a number of people bought land but it was the same with that as it was with the homesteading. They would try farming for awhile and meet with such difficulties that they would have to leave. There was one family I remember so well. They came from Utah, man and wife and several children. They worked so hard his wife was finally taken very sick, some kind of lameness. My brother doctored her and he said she was in very bad shape, but became well enough to be up and around before they left. It was pitiful to see people with large families come there and spend every dollar they had worked to save, and go away broke.

I heard the remark made so many times, that farming in Harney Valley was different from any other place. A dry land farming experiment station was established near Burns and there were sub-stations scattered all around over the valley to teach the homesteader how to farm. These stations were run by the State and had men who had graduated from the best agriculture colleges to run these places, and hold free courses in training. They really did a lot of good and it was surprising to see the crops that could be raised when handled scientifically, but the trouble was it took so much time and money too, that the new comers gave up in despair. And then there were other things that I will tell about later that helped to discourage the farmer or rancher as they are called here.

Chapter V

Animals and Birds of the Valley

When we first came here antelope were quite plentiful but not long after there was a heavy fine for killing them. Being of a very inquisitive nature, made it easy to get near them. If they saw anything out of the ordinary, instead of running away, they would keep coming nearer until they were right up to the object that attracted them. A red flag was especially attractive. There were plenty of deer in the mountains. The large variety called the mule-tail, but they seldom came down in the valley. Steens Mountains made an exceptionally good hunting ground, very few trees and plenty of feed there.

In the year 1916 there was an epidemic of rabid coyotes. They were very dangerous. Naturally they are very timid but when afflicted with the disease they would attack any living thing, horses, cattle, sheep, dogs and cats were bitten and people went armed to defend themselves. The children going to school either carried a gun or pitch fork. The boys thought it was quite a sport as the teacher paid them to come by and walk to school with her. Most of the dogs in the valley were killed. A rat is the worst of anything as they scratch and bite so fiercely. Horses and cattle when afflicted would break down in the back and couldn't get around. There were a few men who were bitten, not by the coyote but by horses when doctoring them, not knowing that they had the rabies until it was too late, and then had to take the Pastuer treatment but took it in time so there were no fatalities.

One Sunday morning in the winter Albie was gone. The four youngest boys were home. Raymond had taken his saddle horse and hand sleigh with rope wrapped around the saddle horn and was giving the other three boys a good ride up and down the road. All at once I heard them scream and call for the rifle. I knew at once what the trouble was. I grabbed the gun and ran out, down the road just a little way stood a big coyote with froth dripping from its mouth. The first shot Raymond fired he missed in his excitement. Next he broke the coyotes front leg and instead of its running as it would if not afflicted, it commenced to bite at its leg. The third shot killed it.

That same day in the afternoon as we came from Sunday school we saw one over in the field across the road fighting with the neighbor's dog. The neighbor girl who was riding horse back a little way ahead of us, seeing her dog being attacked, hurried home, grabbed the axe, cut the wire fence so she could ride over where they were, jumped off her horse, struck the coyote in the head, killing it.

Another incident was where a teacher rode horse back to school and under the shed where she kept her horse was a coyote nearly dead. She took a club and put it out of its misery. Everyone was afraid to go our after dark. So many times on opening the door there would stand one of those afflicted beasts.

One afternoon one of our neighbors who lived in a sheltered spot in the hills east of us, had a party and rabbit shoot. He had a field of wheat and was anxious to save it from the rabbits, so combined business with pleasure. Along rather late in the afternoon we women had the dinner all prepared and were watching the men come across the field, when all at once they started to run and call to us to get the children in the house. A mad dog was coming. We hustled them in and none to soon. It came and went right around the house. The man who had the place thought he had the yard around the house so tight that a dog couldn't get through, but it went under the fence as if it wasn't there, and out again, running as fast as it could go, bit at their dog as it passed and up a wood road they used when snow was on the ground. The road went up and made a circle around where the wood was and then back. It followed right on the road and on the way back the man who had followed after it, shot it. Then they came back and killed the dog there at the place. Couldn't take any chances. We also killed ours, were afraid it might too have been bitten. This was a very exciting afternoon and we were exceeding glad that no damage was done. It was such a relief when the epidemic died down and we were able to get back to normal, although it took quite some time before we were over being suspicious of animals, especially if they didn't act just right.

One of the worst pests that the rancher had to deal with was rabbits. They multiply so fast and it is almost impossible to fence against them. They burrow under unless the fence is buried quite deep and the gardens and rain, what little we had, was soon gone. I have ridden along by a field of grain just at twilight and to look across the field, it would seem to be moving, so many rabbits, and then to frighten them, it would sound like a drove of sheep. I have seen stacks of hay in the wintertime eaten into down near the ground two and three feet.

We finally made up our minds that something would have to be done, so called a meeting, organized, bought woven wire to build a pen about ten feet square and four or five feet high, with wings three or four feet high, also made of woven wire running out about two hundred yards from the pen. Then a day was appointed, usually Saturday, so school children could help, for a rabbit drive. We always had these drives in the wintertime when the snow was on the ground. Everyone was expected to go and take plenty of

lunch with them. We usually had two drives, one in the morning, then ate our lunch, and have another in the afternoon. Not later than ten o'clock everyone was expected to be at the appointed place where corral and pen had already been put up. As many as possible could come on horseback and each one carried a string of empty tin cans on a wire. No guns were allowed. When everyone was present two captains were appointed to take charge of the ones on horseback. They would then choose, first one captain and then the other, until all who rode horseback were chosen. Then one captain with his followers would go to the right and other would go to the left in a big circle, out three or four miles. The ones on foot were divided in the same way and went out from the ends of the wings to meet the ones on horseback. It took quite sometime to form the circle but when every body was in place the ones fartherest away started to come towards the pen very slowly and they too started the noise, shaking the cans on the wire and yelling anything to make a racket. At first they would be so far away that you couldn't hear the noise back where the pen was and you would see the rabbits commence to scurry through the sage brush and come up against the wire and then we knew the drive was on. The camp where we prepared the lunch was quite near the pen and everyone had to be real quiet so as not to turn the rabbits back. As the drivers closed in the noise was almost deafening and at the last, the ones on horseback would jump of and hang their string of cans on the saddle horn and take a short stout club and we were soon rid of that lot of pests. If we didn't get five or six hundred at a time we didn't think our drive had been a success. Usually got anywhere from one thousand to two thousand in one day. While this might seem cruel to some people, I think all sense of cruelty would be taken away had they lived there and seen the destructions these pests could cause.

Now I will tell something about our camp and lunch. As soon as we came in the morning a little sheltered spot was selected, usually in a hollow behind some large sage brush. Ground was cleared, a big camp fire built on which was made a five gallon can of coffee or more, according to the crowd. Pots of beans and various other things were kept warm. Several large bed canvasses were spread out for the people to sit on, table cloths were spread to set the dishes on, also pans of sandwiches and salads and cakes and pies. I don't think I ever saw so many good things to eat at any picnic. We used to laugh and make the remark that for poor people we certainly lived well. We only had these drives one winter, then old mother nature took a hand in affairs. The rabbits became diseased and died by the hundreds, and then too, there came a heavy snow and then rained and froze, making a crust, so there was very little they could get to eat except from hay stacks and these were watched closely, so consequently they starved to death too.

Another pest we had as long as we were there was a little squirrel. While they didn't eat so much as a rabbit yet they would destroy plenty by cutting the roots off of the plants. The only way we could get rid of them was by poisoning and trapping, and that took lots of time and money. That was where the experiment stations had the advantage. The state furnished everything to work with. There was a sub-experiment station of ten acres right across the road from us. It was well fenced and cared for. I remember once they had put in an acre or more of peas. They were all in blossom and looked fine. The tenth of June there came a heavy snow and then turned cold and froze ice at least two inches thick. The blanket of snow saved them pretty well, all the leaves that came through the snow turned yellow. Some years they raised the nicest kind of sugar beets, turnips, carrots and celery, but it kept someone busy all the time fighting squirrels, and then along in the fall when you thought the danger of them had passed, lo and behold, the rabbits had dug under the fence and were eating right into the nice big vegetables. Then the fun began – all the children in the neighborhood would collect, especially on moonlight nights. They would locate where the rabbits had gone under the fence, first thing they would do on going out would be to run and close up the hole under the fence. Usually Flossie, the neighbor girl, would be on horseback and with a couple of dogs up and down the field they would go until the last rabbit was killed. That was the only way to save any of the crop and even at that it was seldom one found a beet, turnip or carrot that hadn't been nibbled on.

The birds that lived in the valley were much more interesting to me than the animals. The song birds were not very plentiful except in early spring, then there were plenty of them. The lark was especially attractive and seemed to sing much more than any place I ever was. In the springtime when men were plowing, the seagull would come in immense droves and follow right close to the plow after bugs and worms. It seemed so strange to see them so far from the ocean, but after visiting Salt Lake and hearing about the way they came there, they weren't so far from the ocean after all.

The birds of most interest were the water birds, such as swan, geese and ducks. The swan stops here twice a year, in the fall and spring, along the last of September and first of October if it happens to be a late fall. They will come in from the north even after the middle of October and stop on Malheur Lake. If the weather stays nice they will remain there for some time. Many times I have heard them honk and have had to watch for a long time before I could see their white wings in the sunlight, they would be so high in the sky and then to watch them come lower and lower until finally they would come down on the lake with a great roar. It was estimated that there were four and five hundred in one flock. They always flew in V formation and changed leadership real often. All of the strongest flew in the lead to break air resistance. We could see the lake from where we lived and many times I have seen it so covered with swan that it looked like snow in the distance. I enjoyed them much more in the springtime than in the fall, they never seemed to be in a hurry then. Would start coming to the lake before the middle of March and every evening just about sunset they seemed to take their flying lessons. A drove of several hundred would go out at a time, circle around and go back to the lake, keep this up sometimes for three or four weeks, and then when weather seemed to be just right, we would hear them going all night, leaving for their long journey north to the Artic Circle. In four or five days they would all be gone. I used to say they made me home sick to see their freedom and the swiftness of their flight. I felt as if I too would like to be up and away.

When we first came in to the valley there wasn't any fine on shooting the swan and it was terrible the way they were slaughtered and wasted, and then a fine of fifty dollars was put on killing them, and now it is five hudnred, and I was certainly glad to see them protected. As far as I know they never did any damage and the only thing I ever found in their craws were the bulbous root of the tule that grew in abundance along the shore of the lake.

The first one I ever ate was the fall of 1909. Albie was over to the Warm Springs and there was just one on the little lake that was damned up for drinking for the stock. He shot it and brought it home, said "You will have to cook it for a long time", so I prepared it to have Sunday evening and thought I would start cooking it Sunday morning. I had first bought a new wash boiler, and swan are so immense, cooked it in that. About half past ten went to look at it and found it just as done as could be, so set it aside until evening when I put the dressing in and baked it. The oven was full. It is very delicious meat, the best of any wild bird I ever ate, that is if it is young, and this one was. We found out later how we could tell. If the feathers around the beak and eyes were a little gray, they were young, if pure white with yellow rings around eyes and beak, they were old. Hard to tell just how old, for they live to be seventy-five and a hundred years and I have cooked them for days and they wouldn't begin to be tender. Finally found the only way to do was to cut the meat off the bones, grind it up and fix it the same as hamburg, couldn't tell the difference. I used to pick the coarse feathers off of them, then skin and tan the hides and gave them away for girls to have hats made. They were beautiful.

They are a very large framed bird, but not as heavy as one would expect, twenty pounds being an average weight. A man near six feet tall could take one by the bill and let it hang over his shoulder and its feet would drag the ground. The first one I cooked found after we had eaten it that I had only taken part of the windpipe out. Instead of being like any other bird I dressed, the windpipe going direct into the lungs. It goes to the very back end of the breast bone, with bone on either side. Expect it is this way so as to warm the air before it goes into the lungs, where they fly so high and go so far north. I measured the windpipe of one, being very careful in getting it out, and from the bill to the lungs was just four feet.

They are the most graceful bird I ever saw and to see hundred of them swimming together over the lake is a picture worth seeing. Hope the government protects them well so they are never extinct.

There are also lots of wild geese here of a great many different varieties, but most of them also migrate to the north for nesting and they destroy lots of grain, but as a rule they came in the fall after grain had been harvested and grain fields made a good place for hunting. Hunters would put up a bunch of sage brush in one corner of the field and early in the morning would hide there and when the geese came would get several before they become frightened away. The first fall we were there Denman went with his father after a load of hay, took the gun with him and he shot two large honker geese with one shot. He was certainly proud.

There were any quantity of ducks there. They stayed the year round and nested. Out in Malheur Lake was a small island called Pelican Island. It wasn't very large and the sides were rather sloping, just the place for nesting. There were just tiers of nests, one row above the other. It wasn't a very pleasant place to visit, especially in spring of the year when the little ones were just being hatched out. The old ones were fighting and the odor was something terrible, with all the broken and spoiled eggs besides the other filth. You would wonder how any of them could possibly survive, not much of anything for the little ones to live on until they were able to swim over to the mainland, which wasn't very far, but I guess the same with them as all other wild game, Mother Nature looks after and provides for them, as there always seem to be an abundance of them. They never had a closed season on any kind of game when we first came in the valley, but not long after, fines were imposed and only had open season certain times of the year, which I think was a very good thing. I understand they are establishing an immense bird reserve on the Dunder and Blitzen Rivers, not allowing the water to be used for irrigation, but allowing it to flow into the lake so it would fill up. So much water was being used for irrigation that the lake was drying up so fast.

The ducks fly more at night than in the day. The air seemed to be alive with them at times. The only noise they made was the whir of their wings as they flew so low. We had lots of game to eat the first few years we were there and it helped out a lot in more ways than one. I was very careful to save all the feathers and made a nice lot of pillows, enough so when the boys married was able to give them at least each a pair. Ducks and geese were so plentiful in the fall that it was no uncommon thing to have Albie and the boys go out and in a few hours bring in three dozen. They would draw them and sprinkle inside with plenty of salt, hang them out on shady side of the house, let them freeze and as they wanted them would bring them in, pick feathers and have a good dinner prepared. All kinds of meat kept well in the arid climate even in the summertime, you hang meat out in the air at night and in early morning take it down, wrap in canvas and if possible, cover with plenty of good hay, and there was no trouble to keep it.

The other birds of the valley were rather useless, but will mention them. There were plenty of ravens, very much like the crow of the east, only larger with a coarser voice. Their principal occupation, as far as I knew was to fly from the mountains where they roosted in the juniper trees at night, to the shores of the lake where they seemed to get their living.

Bussards too were quite common and their principal business seemed to be to rid the valley of any animal that had died, anything from a rabbit to a horse or cow. You would see the big black ugly things flying in circles up in the sky and would know at once that something had just died or soon would, and they would have their feast. Such is the law of nature, so hard for me to get used to the having of so much stock that would suffer and die, without any care, and pass by that way later with only bleached bones to tell the tragedy that had been enacted.

A famous bird is the pelican

It's bill hold more than belly-can

It can store in its beak

What it can eat in a week

And I don't see how in the Hell-It-Can.

There is one other pest that I must write about and that is the rattlesnake. It infests both the valley and the mountains and is anything but agreeable to have around, although as long as we lived there, I never heard of only one fatality, and that wasn't in the valley but in Eastern Oregon. When we know we are surrounded by things like that, all precaution is taken and of course, that makes it less dangerous. Dr. Austin was out walking one morning in spring over Warm Spring Butte, had taken his gun with him in case he saw a rabbit, which he was very apt to do. All at once he looked down and saw a rattlesnake, and lo-and-behold, he had walked into a den of them, was surrounded. He shot several and got out as fast as he could. They hadn't been out in the sun long enough to be really warmed up and dangerous. It would be enough for me just to see the creatures. In the summertime they were the most dangerous. In the morning would crawl up in the sage brush to get warm and anyone walking through the brush or chopping it down for wood, was apt to be bitten. I said I only knew of one fatality but will have to tell of another, although this one I might say was a case of suicide. The man heard one rattle in a pile of sage brush he had hauled for wood and instead of taking a stick to look for it, he took his hands to part the brush and it struck him between the thumb and finger. He had to pull it loose. He laughed and said "It won't bother me." They begged him to do something, but not until there was no help for him would he give his consent, and then his suffering was terrible. His arm was swollen until it burst open before he died.

We had a horse that was bitten in the breast. He lived for a long time but the wound never healed and he finally died from the effect of it. As a rule a horse will smell them and won't go near where they are. The boys had a lot of close calls and it seemed if there was one anywhere around Austin was sure to find it. One time he was helping a lady where he was staying, do the chores, and as they were gathering the eggs he found one in the hen's nest.

The sage tick too took its toll, both in people and animals. The first few years we were there they didn't seeme to be poisonous to people, but later when rabbits became diseased, they carried the infection from rabbits to people and they had spotted fever, which was a very serious disease, although not always fatal, but often leaving the patient in a very weakened condition. The last few years they have found it best to vaccinate every year against any bite that might cause the disease. The only way they ever seemed to affect horses was the number of them that would get on to the horses and colts when running on the range in the sage brush. I have seen them on the lower jaw and throat of colts so thick that there wouldn't be room for any more. They fasten themselves fast and never seem to let go. They draw all the red corpuscles from the blood of the victim and of course that means death unless found and ticks removed before it is too late.

Chapter VI

Mail and Freight in Harney Valley

Mail was brought into Harney Valley from the north over the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the summertime it was a comparatively easy matter, but in the winter time it was a struggle. The route out of Burns went to John Day in Grant County, a distance of about one hundred miles over those mountains. One can scarcely imagine the hardships that were undergone by both drivers and horses. I remember being in Burns one fall shortly after our arrival in the valley, and seeing the stage coach come in drawn by four fine horses. They came down Main Street on a keen gallop, pulled up in front of the Post Office where mail was unloaded. From there passed the main hotel where passengers were left. The horses were then hurried to the stables to be cared for. They were wet with sweat and white with foam and frost too when the weather was cold. There were stage stations all along the way just about twenty-five miles apart where fresh horses took the place of the tired ones and new drivers too were exchanged, but not as often as the horses. There is something fascinating about watching the horses. They seem to know and

understand so much about what is wanted of them, especially if they had the right kind of a driver, and usually the driver didn't stay long if he didn't understand and care for his horses like he should. To watch them go out with the mail all full of fire and energy, waiting for the last passenger to be tucked in, and just one word and touch of the whip they were up and away, each one knowing just what was demanded of them and willing to go, knowing just where every stop was made, would pull in to a mail box and stop without a word, always anxious to be on the way again, eager for the stop where the exchange was made. They would get a good feed and rub down and if cold weather, a warm blanket was well strapped down on them.

The snow over these mountains in Grant County is very deep in winter time. Lots of times four and five feet on the level and cold extremes going as low as thirty and forty degrees below zero. At these times is where it tires the strength of men and horses, and any way to get the mail through, horseback, and sometimes even that is impossible and the lock sack or main mail sack, was carried by men wearing snow shoes. The days of these hardships are gone, especially from this part of the country. The railroad now runs up in these mountains to within a few miles of John Day and compete with auto stage and horses aren't needed anymore. It is surprising to know how few boys there are in this generation who know the first thing about driving and caring for horses.

Back to mail, the route to the east was Burns to Vale, a distance of one hundred and thirty-five miles, over just as mountainous roads as the one to the north, but not so much snow, and possibly not as cold, but still anything but pleasant especially in winter.

The route to the south out of the valley when we first went there, extended from Harriman to Andrews, a distance of ninety miles. The second year after arrival there, Albie bought the route from another man who had contracted the line and for some reason wanted to get rid of it. It proved to be a great blessing to us with our family to be assured of a definite income every month meant a lot. The one thing that made it hard at first was that the way it was run Albie had to be away from home ever Sunday. He conceived the idea of petitioning the patrons along the line to have it changed. It was no trouble to get the signatures. The petition was sent into headquarters in Washington D. C. and meet with approval, and he was able to leave home Monday morning, arrive home again Wednesday evening, leaving Thursday morning and home again Saturday evening, giving him all day at home Sunday, which made it very satisfactory. He ran the route all alone for quite sometime, but passengers and luggage became so heavy he had to put on extra teams. At first he had to hire help but before the contract was over Denman was old enough to drive and they got along very nicely. I will never forget the first trip Denman ever made. It was April 21st. His father had to set on the primary election board, the weather had been fine for some time. Denman was in high school but was rather anxious for an excuse to get out in the open for a few days, so when this opportunity came, he was ready to grasp it. The morning he left home the weather wasn't as nice as usual and before night we were in the midst of a good snow storm, and it was growing colder every hour. Denman wasn't dressed as he should have been for such weather and you can imagine a Mother's anxiety with him out over that old long road, that he had never traveled before, and all the direction he had was what his father gave him. He should have gotten in home Saturday night. We hardly expected him that night but when Sunday night came and he hadn't arrived, there was little sleep for me. Bright and early Albie was up, took another team and wagon with mail and started to meet him, met him about six miles from home. He had gotten into the post office at Waverly, about eleven o'clock Sunday night. He was so sick the post master wouldn't let him come on home, helped him unhook the horses from the wagon, had to use an ax to chop the ice and mud off of the whiffle tree to unhook the traces, the ice and mud was so packed and frozen on wheels that you couldn't see between the spokes. Next morning, Mr. Brakeman, the post master, helped him to get started and he arrived home about ten o'clock, one sick boy, was scarcely able to care for the horses with my help. He had the grippe in the worst form and it was sometime before he was able to be out of bed. One of his favorite expressions was "it don't matter how sick you are, just get in Mothers's bed and have her take care of you and you will soon be well". Well, I guess lots of love and good care does work wonders with us all.

It was at this primary election that it came to me very forcefully that woman suffrage was just the thing. Here Albie was sitting at the election, having a jolly good time visiting and joking with the other men on the board, sitting by a nice warm fire. I was at home alone, boys all in school except Denman, weather cold and stormy, snow falling faster all the time, stock had to be cared for, fed, etc., also chickens, wood carried in. I was dressed in man's woolen socks and high topped boots, sheepskin lined coat and cap and mitten and was outside taking care of things, and as soon as I was through there, went in the house and prepared an evening meal for at least a half dozen hungry people, also have material ready to put up lunches for next day.

We had always heard it said by ones who objected to womans suffrage that women would neglect her work and impose too much on the man. Now I don't infer in any way that Albie or the other men were neglecting their work, but do say that I believe we women could have handled the primary election just as intelligently as the men did, and would have been much more comfortable.

Oregon was one of the first states to have woman's suffrage and how well I remember the first time I went to the polls to vote. One of our neighbors, a great josher, was acting on the election board and when I asked for a ballot he looked up very seriously and said, "Mrs. Curry, do you understand that you have to be a freeholder in order to vote." I answered in just as serious a tone, "Mr. Gray, I have freehold on a husband and five boys, may I have the ballot". Everyone laughed and he said, "You win", and handed me the ballot.

I visited the east after woman's suffrage had been adopted in Oregon and before it had been adopted in New York. Went to the town fair with my mother-in-law, who was a great suffragette. How proud she was to introduce me as her daughter-in-law from Oregon, who had voted, and to please her, I did my best to uphold the honor and privilege that had been mine and was soon to be theirs.

I know you will excuse me if I wander away from my main subjects, when little incidents come to mind. I regret very much now that I didn't keep a diary of the time spent in homesteading so as to have exact dates to refer to, but I had no idea of ever trying to write a story of my experiences and will have to make the best of it.

I think it would be well to give an outline of the mail route Albie had to travel. He left Harriman Monday morning, delivered mail in individual mail sacks all along the route, each post office making up mail along the route. First post office was about nine miles from Harriman, the name was Waverly, and for awhile, like Harriman, was quite prosperous, but after homesteaders commenced to leave, it kept dwindling and was finally abandoned. The next post office was Princeton, six miles farther, and that is still running, being a subdivision for another part of the valley, made it necessary, after leaving this office there were no more for twenty five or thirty miles. Mail was delivered at all ranches along the way, the largest being Mahon's, this being a stage station where horses were changed for fresh ones, and where the drivers had their meals. Mrs. Mahon was a wonder-woman and night or day she was always there to see that the best was provided, house warm, etc. Denman and Raymond were especially prime favorites with her and if she wanted little errands done that she would rather Mr. Mahon didn't know about, they were only too glad to do them for her. This ranch was in Anderson Valley at the foot of Steens Mountains on the north and the long drive across this mountain was especially tedious in winter time, through the snow and cold. It was fifteen miles without passing a ranch or dwelling of any kind and with horses, the distance seemed almost endless, especially in a snow storm when visibility was only a few yards ahead, and wind blowing. The mountain was very steep on both sides, on the north was mostly through a canyon and more protected than on the top. On the top of the mountain there was what was called Burnt Flat, three miles across, and in a storm the road was very hard to follow, especially when the storm came in the horses faces, they wanted to turn all the time so as not to face it. The road on the south side of the mountain was even steeper then the north, and was graded. The snow in winter would drift over the cliff on the one side and fill the road until there was danger of going over the grade, and that was when there had to be lots of shoveling done, the horses following close on the heels of the one who was clearing the

road. And so most of the way for three long miles down or up that mountain side they would labor, harder of course going up.

The next office was Alberson and only a short ways beyond this was the stage station where they spent the night, giving the horses a night's rest. They drove the same team on in the morning to within fifteen miles of the destination at the Alvord Ranch. Drove for nine miles right along this one ranch, a beautiful spot. On the west of Steens Mountains stood like a great sentinal guarding it, a stream of water coming down the side of it, and five distinct waterfalls could be seen from the ranch. On the east a few miles distant could be seen the Alvord Desert, between fifteen and twenty miles long and six or seven wide, without one speck of vegetation on it. When it was wet it was as slick as soup, impossible for a horse to travel on it, and in the summer when dry it was as hard at stone. A horse with shoes on couldn't dent it. From this ranch to Andrews, the last office, was something like ten miles. The trip was made, horses changed again at Alvord Ranch, and back to stage station near Alberson, spend the night there, and then home again by Wednesday, having driven one hundred and eight miles in three days.

Denman had wanted me to make the trip with him before the contract was over, so along the first of June I planned to go, as the contract was up the first of July. So one Wednesday evening he came in, wanted to know if I would be ready to go the next morning I told him "Yes", so bright and early he was up to feed and care for the horses and then he came in for breakfast he said, "I don't (think) you should go Mother, it is so cold and looks so stormy". The sun was just coming in sight over the mountains and looked like a ball of fire through the clouds. I said, "You have stood the trip through all kinds of weather, and I can at least stand this one, will wrap up well, take plenty of blankets and canvas to cover over everything to keep dry". We had an open hack or wagon to travel in. A little after seven in the morning we left home, stopped at the Harriman post office for mail and were back on our way again. Between nine and ten o'clock it commenced to snow, great big wet flakes settled down and shortly after the storm commenced. We had the misfortune of breaking a whiffle tree and I sat there in the wagon while Denman ran over to a house not far away and borrowed something to fix up with. It seemed long to be out there in the storm just waiting. The storm continued all day and grew colder as night came on and by the time we reached the stage station we were glad to get in by the fire. The lady where we stopped had a very small house and wasn't able to furnish sleeping quarters for driver and passengers, so Albie had to put up a large tent with two beds and a stove in it, which made a very comfortable place for driver and any men passengers. When a lady happened to be on the stage Mrs. Alberson managed to fix up for her, but that was seldom. Well this night I occupied one bed and Denman the other and we were glad to be so comfortable. In the night the wind started to blow harder and harder, and if you have ever slept in a tent with that continual roar you will understand how it could be enjoyed. I had formed the habit of putting the lower set of my false teeth in a cup of water at night. Well, I did the same this night and low and behold, the next morning they were in cold storage. The cup of water was frozen solid, and the only thing for me to do was to wait until I could thaw them out before having breakfast.

That day wasn't nearly as stormy as the first one, but much colder, but we didn't mind that as we had good roads and a fine team of horses. They loved to run and often Denman would let them go at top speed for three or four miles at a stretch. I had made up my mind when I left home that I wouldn't say stop or don't to Denman on the whole trip, and I was glad I didn't. When I thought he was running the horses a little too long and too hard, I would say, "My this is fun, they seem to enjoy it as well as we do." It seemed to have the desired effect and he would slow them down until another good strip of road would show up and away we would go again. For about sixty miles we rode along the east side of Steens Mountains, and I don't think I ever enjoyed scenery more. The east side of the mountains is very abrupt, nearly straight up and down. In many places the valley isn't very wide and the hills or mountains on the east side of the valley one could almost see where they had broken away from the main mountain hundreds of years before at the great upheaval. Surveyors who came in there to see about putting an irrigation ditch, found that long before the time of any white settlers there had been an irrigation ditch

along the base of the mountain, truer than any ever made by an ordinary surveyor. By whom and when made was the great question.

We finished our trip in the due time arriving home Saturday evening. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip, had taken pictures of different things along the way, and one that I enjoy more than any other is a picture of the mountains about ten o'clock in the morning. The sun was shining at the base and the top was covered in a heavy snow squall, the peak just visible. We had made the trip wrapped up like Eskimoes. I think I enjoyed it more than if it had been nice weather for I knew then first hand a little bit of the hardships that were endured. I used to think the hardships the boys had to go through at that early age was too much. Only a short time ago I heard Raymond telling about shoeing horses. He was only fourteen years old. His father had sent him with a four horse team load of parcel post to be delivered along the line. Some of the horses had to be shod on the way, so he obtained shoes and did it. The spring he was thirteen his father had him plowing with four horses and one of the horses was very balky. He tried so hard but couldn't get her to work right. His father said he would plow on Sunday, being the only day he was home, and get the team working together. The children and I went to Sunday school. They asked where Albie was and I told them. They laughed and said, "Your good neighbor, Mr. B. will be over to tell you how bad you are." I said, "Let him come." Now Mr. B. was a man who didn't seem to do much himself and was always ready to criticize anyone else who was doing the best they could. Well sure enough, one day the following week I saw Mr. B. coming. When he came to the door he asked for a drink of water. I gave it to him and invited him to come in the house. He said "No", but commenced talking as he stood there. Plowing was the subject of his conversation, as Raymond was then plowing near the house. He rambled along until he finally said, "I saw Mr. Curry plowing last Sunday." I thought to myself I must be one jump ahead of him, so spoke up and said, "Yes, Mr. B. I don't know as it was just right for him to do it, but you know the Good Book says, 'Six days shalt thou labor', before it says any thing about resting the seventh, and I believe we are committing more sin not to work the six days than we are to work the seventh". What do you think? His head fell, he finally looked up and said, "I know I haven't the name of not working much, but do you know I have very poor health." This was news to me but I very graciously said, "I am sorry, Mr. B.". Possibly what I said helped to clear a little rubbish out of his own back yard, before going to his neighbors. Anyway he never bothered me again.

The mail out of Harney Valley went from Burns to Bend, a distance of one hundred and eighty-five miles. I never knew anything about this route until only a few years ago, since I have been living in California. Marvin, who was still living there, was taken sick with small pox and I went back to nurse him and when I came home I came by way of Bend. The road at this time was practically a highway and the lovely big car that I rode in didn't give one much of an idea of what that route was when the same distance was made with horses and wagon. Will say this much, that the route was more direct with fewer mountains than any route out of the valley. Burns was the main post office and all mail in the valley went through it. There was one branch that went from Burns to Venator, a distance of about sixty miles. This route went through Harriman and left mail there for the south and at Andrews. It also went past our homestead delivering mail at every place. The stage driver on this line for years was a man near seventy years of age. We all used to feel so sorry for him, especially in the spring of the year when the frost was going out of the ground. There were lots of days that he wouldn't get more than three or four hours sleep out of twenty-four. He used to go by our place about five o'clock in the evening. The boys would see him coming and call to me to get a lunch for Mr. Hall, cup of coffee and sandwich, or doughnut, some little thing to warm him up. And I used to think sometimes to be remembered by the boys, did him as much good as what they gave him. He only lived a short time after giving up the work. He was a very kindly old gentleman, doing all errands that were asked of him in a very gracious manner, and one wonders how they can sometimes, so much is asked.

We can't help but wonder in all this great plan of life, why it is that some lives are filled to the brim with usefulness, always trying to make the load a little lighter for the other fellow, and never complaining

when it is heavy for them, and again you see others just drift along, never asked to give, never offering. Yet I feel that the life of sacrifice and service is the happy one.

Four years after the end of our first mail contract Albie put in a bid and it was accepted for the same route, only it extended thirty miles farther, making the length of the route one hundred and twenty miles, and now it ran from Crane, the town had been changed from Harriman. During the past four years there had been many changes. The railroad had been extended into the valley. The town of Crane established, post office at Harriman had been disbanded and moved to Crane, three miles east. Also nearly all the buildings. This made little difference to us as our homestead was located just half way between the two places. The post office at the south end of the route was now located at Denio on the state line between Oregon and Nevada. There was also a mail route from Denio to Winnemucca, the railroad town in Nevada. This line is operated pretty much the same as it was fourteen years ago when we left that country.

Our second contract was a whole lot different from the first one. Horses were only used in very bad weather across Steens Mountains, otherwise cars and trucks were used. Mail started from each end of the line the same morning, meet half way sometimes if weather was good would make through trip. If not, would stay all night and finish the trip next day. I remember the first fall we had the line Marvin, a lad thirteen years of age, was helping, when not in school, and on this one trip something went wrong and he had to make the last twenty five miles at night in a snow storm. The lights on the truck didn't work and the only way he had of following the road was that the sage brush on the sides was dark while the road was white. He reached home about eleven o'clock at night just about frozen. I said, "Marvin why didn't you stay at Mahon's?" He said, Well, the mail had to come through, didn't it Mother?" And I said, "Not at the expense of your life." And so it went for four long years. If it wasn't one of the boys it was another. The experiences they had would make a long story and well worth reading.

I will mention a few experiences they had. Once Austin was crossing the mountains with the car in the snow and cold. He had a young woman passenger who had been to Portland in the hospital and was on her way home. He also had a man passenger. It was getting dark, the car broke down. He sent the man ahead to a ranch some four or five miles to phone the girl's father to come for them. He took the lock mail sack and one of the girl's grips and they started down that mountain. The girl became exhausted and he had to find a sheltered spot in the ditch along the road, took his heavy coat off and wrapped it around her, built a fire made of sage brush, and kept from freezing until her father came several hours later and took them on. The last two winters they ran the line were very hard ones. Austin refused to take a woman on the stage in bad weather. He said he could make the men get off and walk or shovel snow to keep from freezing, but women were never dressed for such weather and he wouldn't take the chances of their freezing.

I remember one time a woman came in to Crane to go out on the stage. The weather was very bad and for six weeks she waited before he took her. Nearly every time he went out they had an argument. He said if she went, he didn't, and there wasn't anyone else that would take the chance if he wouldn't. He told her to send word to her people and let them come for her but he knew she would never do that, as only the best kind of a team could cross that mountain in such weather.

Freighting into the valley, especially after so many people had come, was a real business. To see two or three big freight wagons loaded with freight and anywhere from sixteen to twenty head of horses hitched to them, driven by one man, is quite a sight. I remember so well when we were going into the valley. We camped several times where there were a number of freight outfits. One place we were camped up on a raise, quite a little distance from the barn and from where the others were camped. My sister and I were sleeping together and we said to one another, how do those men ever manage to get dressed? So thought it would be quite some fun to watch, as we could be there in bed and they would never know we were awake. Well, it was a very simple matter, in nearly every case the first thing seemed to be to light a cigarette. Such things as pajamas and night-shirts didn't bother them, only the outside clothes were

removed and they were tucked under the bed canvas, or tarp as it was called, to be handy and dry. It only took a very few minutes from the time of the first stir until they stood up fully dressed, ready to start the days work. First thing the bed was taken care of, blankets all straightened, canvas covered over everything to keep out dirt, and the bed rolled and strapped up very tightly ready to be thrown on top of the freight when ready to start. To me there was always plenty of excitement connected with the freight teams. The grain for the horses was always loaded where they couldn't get to it, also nose bags.

After the bed was rolled and ready to load, little camp fires were started to make coffee, etc. While water was heating nose bags were arranged with each horse's portion of grain in it, and then came the real excitement. The horses were never put in a barn and one or two sometimes more, of the main leaders of the bunch would have their forefeet hobbled together so they couldn't stray too far away, and a bell was strapped on the neck of the main horse, or the one at least that showed herself to be a leader. They were turned loose in the sage brush to get what they could of what grew there. When they heard the grain rattle in the nose bags they knew feeding time had come and their idea of table manners were, "First come, first served", and you would be surprised to see how fast the hobbled ones could get over the ground. As they came up, the strap on the nose bag was slipped over their head and with a little satisfied nicker, they would each back up, put the bottom of the bag on the ground and commence eating. These bags were made of canvas with small air holes on either side for them to breath through. I have heard of horses drowning when they were where they could get to the water trough with the bags on. As soon as they get through eating they want to drink and the bags would fill with water and wouldn't drain fast enough. This seldom happened as the driver was always handy to take the bags off. Let me tell you he is one busy fellow, with feeding, harnessing and hitching the horses, getting his own breakfast over a little camp fire, then washing dishes and putting things away. On the side of each main wagon, usually the one next to the horses, could be seen what was called a grub box. This contained cooking utensils and food enough to last for several days. One of the main things in fixing up a grub or lunch box, was to have it built and lined so as to keep out the dust, as it is bad enough to ride and work in the dust without eating it.

I will try to give a little idea of harnessing and hitching a string of horses like this. Every horse knows his name. If a new horse is put in he is given a name and when they speak to him he is called by that name, and it only takes a few applications of the black snake whip to have him remember, and it is really surprising to know how fast they will learn. As a rule the drivers treat the horses very good, scarcely ever having to use the whip. The team of horses next to the wagon are called the wheelers. They are hitched to the tongue of the wagon, the same as any team. The horse on the left hand, or near-side, has a saddle on besides the harness, so the one who drives the team can ride, as it is much easier than riding the wagon. The next team fastened to the end of the wagon tongue are called the pointers. Their business is to point the wagon in the right direction in making turns, etc. If they wish to turn the wagon to the right, they call this team by name, tell them to "haw". The horse that is on the left hand side of the chain that is fastened to the tongue steps over this chain and the team pulls to the right until the turn is made, when they are told to step back in place, where they are in line with the rest of the team. The two horses in the lead are called the leaders. Their business is to direct the whole string of horses. The horse on the left has what is called a jockey stick fastened to its bit on the right side of its head or mouth, and is long enough to go to the bit of the horse on the right. A small rope about the size of a window sash cord is fastened to the bit of the left hand pointer and runs back through a ring in the hame of each left hand horse to the driver. This is all the way he has of guiding the team. When he wants them to turn to the left, he pulls steadily on the rope and calls them by name. If they are to go to the right, he will keep twitching on the rope and you would be surprised to see the near, or left, leader get her head up and push the right, or off, leader over, or rather guide her over where she is to go. When they are to go straight ahead they just let the rope lay quiet.

I used to wonder how they ever got the load anywhere near where it was wanted when they went to unload, and the first fall we were in the valley my brother, Dr. Homer, had a big two wagon load brought in to the store. When the man who took the job of hauling left the railroad at Vale with the load, he had

twelve horses and he thought he would make the trip in record time, but shortly after leaving the railroad it commenced to rain, and Oregon mud isn't an easy thing to deal with. Well, he had to wait until he could send home for more horses, and finally when he reached Harriman, about two weeks late, he had eighteen head of horses instead of twelve that he started with. It was then I had a chance to watch a big freight team work to put that load up to the warehouse to unload, and it was surprising to see how easily it seemed to be done, and to see how exact it was.

One thing I have forgotten to write about and it is of much importance to the work, and that is the bells that are used. Each one seems to try and have a little nicer string than the other. They are fastened to the harness in different ways, but are principally fastened to the hames or top of the collars, with the largest bell on top and about two or three on either side of that. The leaders usually have the honor of wearing these. They are worn so as to warn others on the road that they are coming, for sometimes on those mountainous roads it isn't easy to find a place to pass, and in this way anyone traveling can find a place and be ready when they come along.

Different freighters were known by the chiming of their bells and could be heard from a long distance.

Hauling and freighting was rather a dangerous business. Once Albie was hauling fence posts out of the mountains. He had Raymond, a lad of a boy about eleven years old, with him and as they were coming down the mountain the wheel horse he was riding fell, pinning him under her. He pulled on the brakes as he fell, stopping the wagon. He was only driving four horses, but they were not very well broken. The horse he was riding had in falling slipped under the wagon tongue and was unable to get up, so as he lay there fast, he directed Raymond what to do and he finally was able to get back on his feet, but with a very badly sprained knee. Someway they managed there on that side hill to get the team hooked up again and come on home.

Denman was especially fond of driving and was never happier than when he was out driving a team of six or eight horses with a jerk line, as it was called when driving with only one line. To sit up there with brake ropes in one hand, jerk line in the other, and blacksnake whip hanging around their neck, seemed to be quite an honor. I guess it was, or would be now, for a boy fifteen years old. I used to wonder how they ever managed to use a whip with their hands so full of other things.