

# Ruminations on Appellations



The depot and Congregational church in old town. Church was built in 1893 and burned down in 1910.

BY **LOYCE MARTINAZZI**

So how did our lovely little community get the name Tualatin? From the hunting and gathering natives who occupied the valley for thousands of years and called the meandering river Atfalati? Close, but no cigar. Not yet anyway. The Atfalati called this area “Chachimahiluk” meaning “place of aromatic herb” possibly mint.

When the settlers arrived at the end of the Oregon Trail, circa 1852, they filed for their land claim in Township No. 2 South, Range No. 1 West, on the west of the Meridian Line, or Township No. 2 South, Range No 1 East on the east side.

As the area was developing a road system, ferries were put on rivers, and our area was no exception. John Taylor set up a toll ferry on the Tualatin River and developed a road from Dayton to Portland. Downstream Sam Galbreath set up a ferry on the road connecting Boones Ferry to Oregon City. Galbreath ferry was right where the bridge crosses the river now. So the area was called, guess what? Galbreath. Clustered around the ferry was Billy Greenwood’s blacksmith shop and Fanny Walker, whose daughter married George Galbreath, set up a store and boarding house where residents could pick up their mail.



Erastus Mack built this house in 1890 and now serves as a vet clinic.

In a few years local folks built a bridge, later the county tore it down and put in a sturdier bridge and the area became known as Bridgeport. Hence Bridgeport Road, Bridgeport School, and Bridgeport Village.

Early census records call this precinct East Cedar Creek. Strangely enough, the Stafford area, in Clackamas County was called Tualatin precinct.

Actually, this area was not called Tualatin until 1887. That’s when John Sweek realized the railroad would be coming through his Donation Land Claim and platted out a town grid around the new depot, naming the new town “Tualatin.”

It wasn’t long before Ben Cummins, who now ran the store at Bridgeport, moved up to the new town. (We now call it Old Town) Cummins purchased land from Sweek and built a house and store close to the railroad. A hotel, two saloons, several homes, and a church sprang up around the new depot. John L. Smith came to town and purchased sawmill machinery from Erastus Savage who cut the ties for the railroad. Smith bought up a lot of land, set up a sawmill at the site of the current community park and cut lumber for many of the new buildings. Previously, lumber had come from Durham’s or Saum’s mill.

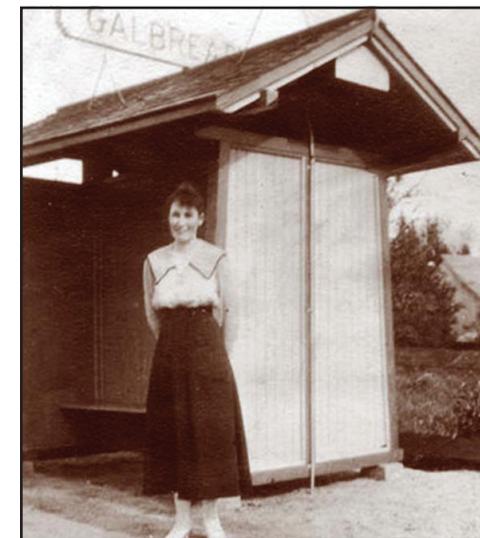
Smith also developed a brick factory close to McDonald’s eatery on Boones Ferry. Bricks from his factory built Robinsons’ store. The Oregon Electric Railroad, running from Portland to Eugene built a depot close to the current location of the WES station, and named it Tualatin also. Two railroads ran through this small village, and operate still. Slowly businesses moved from the old New Town to form a new New Town around the new depot and the brick store. A row of houses were built for John L.’s family; his parents, brothers and sisters.

So the little village now stretched from Bridgeport to the east, to the old New Town of Tualatin on the west, and New Town, to the south. But the name for the natives that lived here for thousands of years, which was also the name of the river, Atfalati stuck. There are many early spellings of the word: Quallity, Falatine, Tuality; ethnologists are not certain of the pronunciation. On surveyor John B. Preston’s 1852 map, “Tualatin River” was printed along the meandering stream.

*Read more about Tualatin’s unique history in “Tualatin...From the Beginning” which can be purchased at the Tualatin Heritage Center, 10 am to 2 pm week days.*



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Galbreath Station on Boones Ferry Road on the north side of the river.



Smith sawmill in community park—the first payroll in the area.



Cummins’ house and store on the south side of the railroad tracks in Old Town.



Sam Galbreath Jr. house on the south side of the bridge. Sam married Janey McE Graham of the Graham’s Ferry family. Later the Jeffcott house, it was demolished in the 1960s.