

# 1851 Tualatin Oregon Trail Pioneers: John E. & Catherine Hedges

BY LOYCE MARTINAZZI

John and Catherine Hedges arrived in Oregon in 1851, after a harrowing trek across the mountains and plains. After two years' employment as on-site managers of an Oregon City boarding house, they filed a 281 acre Tualatin land claim and moved into the log cabin they built on site. Their property straddled what is now Tualatin-Sherwood Road. John then began work in Portland as a blacksmith, using Shank's mare to "commute" from Tualatin to Portland every Monday, and from Portland to Tualatin every Friday night (with a sack of store-bought provisions strapped to his back!) John and Catherine were civic minded, and allowed Tualatin's pioneers to build the first local school (one-room log) and create the area's first cemetery. Earl Itel said he remembered seeing as a child a picket fence around the "necropolis." John and Catherine Hedges were buried there. (Later the Hedges family moved their ancestors' remains a few miles to Winona Cemetery.)



John and Catherine Hedges

John and Catherine had six children. John Jr. inherited the farm, and with his wife Mary in 1875 replaced his parents' log cabin with a farmhouse that came to be known as "the Hedges House." Third generation Hedges Clyde and Ralph finished out their lives in that house. In 1959, Clyde showed his pride in his family's heritage by leading on foot the Tualatin Crawfish Festival Parade in celebration of the State's Centennial year. Many of Tualatin's pioneer families were represented in the parade (the Cimino's built a log cabin on a trailer and the Jurgens family rode on a tractor-pulled wagon), McLaren's boys reformatory school supplied a marching band, and many locals rode their horses. No one enjoyed the parade more than Tualatin's old timers, who loved sharing their memories of "the olden days."

By 1990 the Select Sales Company owned the Hedges' land but had no use for the 1875 Hedges

House. The company asked the Tualatin Historical Society if they wanted the old building. Eager to preserve the Hedges House, members of the Society personally dismantled the house, numbered each board, and stored the boards in a local barn. With the hope of re-erecting the Hedges House, the Society raised money by selling the local history book "Tualatin...From the Beginning." The city was lukewarm about providing the requested building site, so the boards moldered for decades. But the Society

found another opportunity for preservation when one day I got a call from a pastor offering the 1926 Methodist Church building to the Tualatin Historical Society. On behalf of the Society, I immediately said "Yes!"

With the charming craftsman-style church "in hand," the historical society raised large donations to add to the funds already raised. The historical society

again asked the City to donate property for a site. This time the City agreed, and the Historical Society had the church moved onto City property. In 2006 the Historical Society opened their Heritage Center in the old Methodist Church building, now owned by the City and located at the intersection of Tualatin Road & Sweet Drive. The Hedges House was never re-erected, but in a sense it lives on: Art Barry built a sound system cabinet for the Heritage Center with lumber from the Hedges House and the remaining boards were donated to a Tualatin carpenter to renovate local buildings. And a beautiful walnut tree planted by one of the Hedges still stands at the south side of Tualatin-Sherwood Road, where the Hedges House was first built.



Loyce Martinazzi was born and raised in Tualatin and is passionate about Tualatin History. She is currently Lecturer of the Winona Grange, Co-Founder of the Tualatin Historical Society and Co-Author of *Tualatin...From the Beginning*.



The Hedges house about to be dismantled.



John Bowles made this model of the Hedges House. This is a side view. Colors are original.



Dismantling the Hedges house and numbering every board



Old Isaac Ball, the log school's first teacher in 1855, standing by the last remaining log of the 1855 log school on Herman Road. The school was on the Hedges property.  
Photo taken by the Oregon Historical Society in 1900.