

Back in The Olden Days

BY LOYCE MARTINAZZI

As sure as the sun comes up in the east each morning, spring has come to the Pacific Northwest. As I ready my garden for spring planting, I am reminded that farmers used to plow, disc and harrow their fields each spring. Before the advent of tractors, that meant harnessing the hay burners and hitching them to the plow. With a two-horse team, one would walk in the furrow. It was hard work for the farmer to hold the plow handles down so the plow would go deep enough. The horses were sweaty after a hard day's work and when the harness was removed, they would roll around on the ground, scratching their back.

Horses and oxen were used in the woods to pull logs and did much less damage to the ground than tractors. Joe IteI used to say he liked working with horses better than tractors because he didn't need to crank them until noon to get them started.

Logging was big business here in the early days. John L. Smith and his extended family set up the Tualatin Mill Company in the present city park in 1892. The crew would cut down trees, drag them to the river with horses or oxen, and float them downstream to the mill. Since the Tualatin River has a very slow flow, splash dams were set up on streams. When the logs were ready to go to the mill, the splash dams were lowered one at a time, sometimes with dynamite, and the extra water would propel the logs. Since the river was so crooked, a white fir log was embedded in the curvature as a "shear log," so the logs would then not get stuck on the banks. Oregon Iron and Steel Company in Oswego built a diversion dam on the Tualatin downstream from a canal they built to float logs to be burned into charcoal for the iron furnace. The diversion dam is still in place and directs Tualatin River water into Oswego Lake, which is now surrounded by luxury homes. The dam was to cause much trouble for upriver farmers.

Don Galbreath married John L.'s daughter Bessie and they built the house that still stands on Cipole Road. G for Galbreath is embedded into the brick chimney, and the bricks came from the Smith's brickyard in Tualatin. Rayborn Plumbing uses the house as an office now.

The photos this month are all connected, some by a thread, I admit. William Jurgens was deeply affected by the diversion dam on the Tualatin River. John Nyberg ran a log flume for Oregon Iron and Steel, the Sam Galbreath house was close to the river. Charles Casteel was injured in the Tualatin mill, and later in the Nyberg rock quarry. And Harvey Casteel married Rose Jurgens.

Such is life in a small town. Be careful who you talk about, because most people are related.

**Information about the splash dams came from Katherine Luttrell, whose father, Ed Seiffert managed some of the dams.*



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*.



William and Rosa Jurgens house on Shasta Trail. The house was built with lumber from trees that fell down in the 1880 wind storm. The house still stands.



Herb Elwert plowing his hop field with a horse.



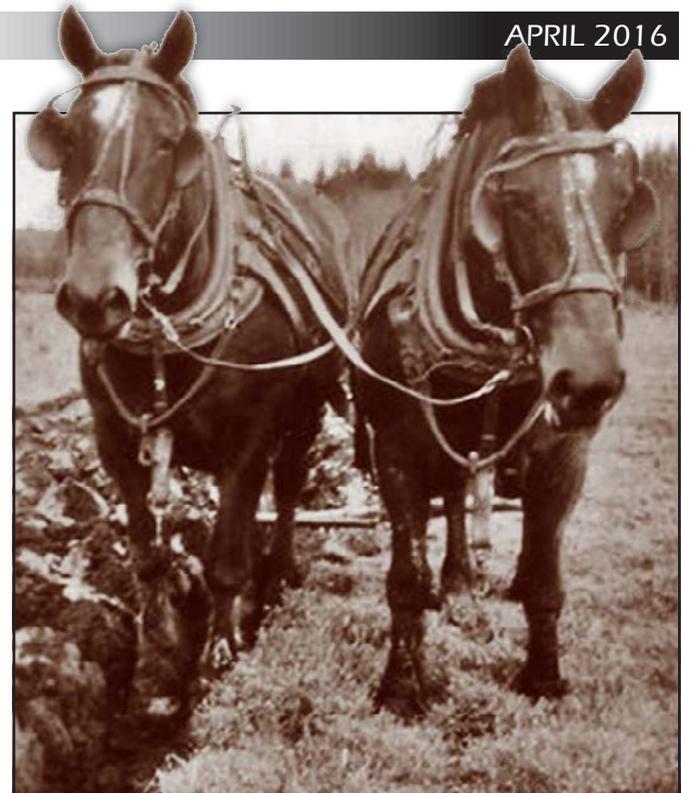
Logging with oxen. The men stood on spring boards.



Nyberg's onion barn during a flood.



Charles and Emma Casteel by their home on Boones Ferry Road. An apartment complex occupies the site now. Charles lost his arm while working for the Tualatin Mill Company. Later he lost some fingers on the other hand. He was able to do some farm work and always could be seen pushing the mail cart from the railroad depot to the post office. His wife was Emma Peters Casteel.



Spring plowing with a two horse team.



Don Galbreath and his wife Bessie Smith built this home on Cipole Road. Bessie was the daughter of John L. Smith, prominent Tualatin lumberman and his wife Sarah.



Tualatin Mill Company, owned by John L. Smith operated from 1892 till sometime in the teens. Charles Casteel lost his arm working in this mill.



The Sam Galbreath house was close to the Tualatin river on the south side. Sam was the son of Oregon Trail pioneers Samuel and Sarah Galbreath. Sam was married to Janie McE Graham of Grahams Ferry fame.