

1847 - 1895



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It was October, 1847. Morning frost carpeted the ground. Days were short, nights cold. Darker and colder winter months loomed ahead. Charles Hubbard, Jr. and his family had to choose between wintering over in the safety of the Whitman Mission, or pressing on to complete their cross country journey.

The family decided to push on toward Oregon City where they arrived in December. A fortunate decision it was. Twelve people who stayed at the Mission, along with its founders Narcissa and Marcus Whitman, were killed by a band of Cayuse braves in November.

An earlier choice the Hubbard family had to make is explained by one of their descendants. Leona Hubbard Erland, a current community resident whose great, great uncle was Charles Hubbard, Jr., says:

When they started out for Independence, Missouri, they didn't know whether they would go to the new state of Texas or the territory of Oregon.

Charles and Margaret chose Oregon. Crossing the Plains took eight months for the Hubbards, who left Pleasant Hill, Illinois, in April of 1847. Like many pioneering families, an adventurous spirit and the promise of free land compelled the Hubbards to head West. Like other pioneering families, they suffered hardships and heartache before arriving at their new home land. One child, Lewellen, was buried near Ft. Hall, Idaho.

Completing their long and difficult journey in December, the Hubbards began the new year, 1848, in Oregon City. Sometime that spring, Charles Hubbard visited an acquaintance of his, Maryann Hunt and her husband Thomas. Pioneer notes made by historian Clark Moor Will state that Thomas Hunt wanted to seek his fortune in California during the Gold Rush. He encouraged Charles Hubbard to rent and maintain his squatter's claim. The agreement made, Thomas Hunt left, never to be heard from again. Maryann Hunt eventually remarried, selling her cabin and improvements to Charles Hubbard for cash. In addition, Hubbard bought 400 acres of nearby land from a Frenchman for "three yoke of oxen and chains valued at \$25 each." The Hunt cabin

was located in the woods near Mill Creek, where Wolfer's Mineral Springs was eventually developed.

Charles Hubbard Jr. was a miller by trade. Shortly after purchasing the new claim, he returned to Oregon City where he erected and operated a grist mill. It was up to his son William, left behind to care for the claim, to fell the first giant firs, harvest the first garden, and bring home the first bride.

William Hubbard described his brief courtship to Clark Will, telling him, "I go to a dance and get married...I told my parents of my intentions of getting married and went to a dance at Parkersville. The dance continued till daylight. Miss Helen M. Cooley and I went from that dance hall across the way to the Congregational parsonage where we were married very early in the morning of November 18, 1859."

William and Helen picked out a homesite and built a cabin of logs and cedar slabs. Clark Will says the location of the newlywed's cabin was near 1st and G Streets.

In those 19th century days, dense forests surrounded the new community of Hubbard. William Hubbard says he planted a garden near his cabin in the only area not "infested" with trees.

Free land was the prize at the end of the trail for many people making the same westward journey the Hubbards made during the mid 1800's. Dreams of religious freedom moved others. Dr. William Keil led his followers from Bethel, Missouri to Willapa Bay, Washington, and finally Aurora, Oregon in 1856.

Keil named Aurora Colony after his daughter who, it is said, was named for the dawn. Aurora Colony was a new beginning for these hard working people who were regionally famous for their unusual brass band. Nondenominational, the colonists built a communal life based on Biblical scripture. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need," Act 2:44,45.

Aurora was a successful commune until Keil's death. The Colony formally dissolved in the 1880's. Many current Hubbard residents are descendants of Colony members. Velma Scholl is one. Tending her mother's flower garden and living in the same house where she grew up, Velma says: *My grandparents and great-grandparents were part of the Aurora Colony. As far as the history of our families in Aurora, the Wolfers, the Wills, the Scholls, the Warners, they all go back to towns in Germany. When they crossed the plains, my grandmother Wolfer was 10 and grandpa Wolfer was 20. They took part in Colony activities until they were married in 1873 and moved to Hubbard*

Velma's cousin, Lenore says: *All my four grandparents came to Aurora from Missouri in Dr. Keil's wagon train. Grandfather and Grandmother Scholl located on a farm which then was the White School area, until 1903. He was a farmer, raising hops.*

Aurora Colony descendant, Vera Kocher Yoder keeps the Hubbard Cemetery records in order, like her mother before her. Of her ancestors, Vera explains: My grandfather was six months old when he came across the plains in 1863 with the largest wagon train from Bethel, Missouri, to Aurora. He grew up in Aurora and married Matilda Stauffer, my grandmother. I believe they weremarried in 1889 and apparently lived in Hubbard right after they were married.

There are Hubbard residents who, though not Colony related, feel a kinship to Aurora Colonists. Like Lester Barrett, who jokes: The Wolfers, Stauffers and Spagles were all related. I was almost related to them, but not quite!

Many towns, Hubbard included, owe their existence and identity to the route of the railroad. Charles Hubbard Jr, apparently had visions of growth for this newly-settled hamlet. When plans for development of the Oregon-California Railroad were being made, he offered the right of way and every other block to railroad officials. The offer was accepted, the townsite of "Hubbard" platted, track laid. In 1871, the first train stopped in Hubbard. On that day, the little town became a part of the larger world.

The train's stopping in Hubbard was like sun and rain to a summer garden. Over the next twenty years, stores sprang up. Supplies arrived. A Methodist Church was constructed at 4th and D Streets where the "tot-lot" at city park is now located. School classes, temporarily held in the Methodist Church, then over the drug store, continued to outgrow their study space. Tin smiths and livery stables went into business. Agricultural produce was exported. And people began arriving from all over the country.

A second freedom-seeking religious group stepped off the train and settled east of Hubbard. Virgil Hostetler has ancestors who were among the arriving Mennonites.

My, grandad, John Egli, came here from Iowa. They bought the place at the end of Miller Road, the last place before it runs into Barlow Road at the east end. They got off the train in Hubbard, Thanksgiving week. My mom, Mary Ann, was six years old, right near her seventh birthday. There was snow on the ground. She told me she remembered going through the giant trees. She said the trees were so big she couldn't see around them and mud was up to the axle of the wagon in places.

They were Mennonites. Amos Troyer was a bishop of the Zion Church. It was the church of the neighborhood and Mom's family were charter members. Mennonites are conscientious objectors, raised on nonviolence. My mother told me the Mennonites had moved from Germany to Holland to Russia, looking for a country where they would not have to serve in the military. The United States government made an agreement with them that if they would come here and help establish farming, they wouldn't have to go to war, but could serve the country otherwise. They are some of the people who established wheat farming in Kansas, super farmers.

Louis Mishler's kin, also Mennonites, were craftsmen and business owners. He reminisces: *The Mishlers came from Indiana in 1889. My uncle Jim had a stock and butchering business. He lived in Hubbard Then my grandfather moved here about the same time. I also had an uncle, Jus Mishler, who was a carpenter. Dad got the meat market.*

Whatever the reasons for moving to Hubbard and calling the area "home," new families continued to arrive. The little town grew.

The Oregon Legislature voted to grant Hubbard a charter and the right to incorporate in February, 1891. Written in spidery script with fading black ink, minutes of the first city council meeting reveal issues needing resolution. At that first meeting, officers were elected, duties of officers were established, and a decision was made to hold meetings on Tuesday nights.

The first ordinances drawn up included:

1. regulation and licensing of liquor traffic.
2. outlawing disorderly conduct, drunkenness and "other offenses."
3. requiring licenses for shows, circuses, menageries, exhibitors, peddlers, hawkers, hucksters and other occupations.

A special council session held in July allowed G.W. Taylor to sell spirituous and malt liquors in quantities of less than one gallon. The license fee for a six month period: \$200. A similar license was issued to J.C. Milton in December, despite an opposition petition signed by "12 voters and numerous ladies."

Hubbard became a city with laws to uphold but no place to house lawbreakers. In February, three carpenters submitted bids to build a city jail. One was accepted. J. Illg was chosen to build the structure, on the condition that it be completed within twenty days. If builder Illg was to take longer finishing the project than twenty days, \$9 was to be deducted from the total fee of \$61. The date construction began is undocumented.

What is known is that on March 1, 1892, the city clerk was ordered to "post a Notice of Reward for \$25 for proof leading to the apprehension and conviction of the persons, who on the night of February 26th, removed the foundation blocks from under the city jail." Mr. Illg was eventually paid in full and given an additional \$1.25 for building two bunks in the jail and preparing it for occupancy.

Anxious to continue improvements within the new city, the first council members began awarding contracts to clear roads by grubbing out tree stumps, then tiling the new roads. Investigations were made into the costs of building boardwalks, putting in street lamps and constructing a city well. The list of ordinances grew. On April 4, 1892, horses were prohibited from running at large.