

# Congregational Church Has Active Part in Governmental Affairs in Early History of Tualatin Valley

## CHAPTER II

### Breaking of the Frontier—The Congregational Church

Unlike the European sense of the word, the American application of the word frontier involves a clearing away of forests, underbrush, and the eventual disappearance of wild animals. A highly developed civilization within a short period replaces the savage life of the native Indians. Instead of marking a definite border between countries dotted with military posts and fortifications as is the case in Europe, the American frontier marks the pushing back of the wild life by the westward moving civilization. While this frontier was moving westward from along the Atlantic seaboard, and gradually climbing towards the summit of the Rockies, like a spark from a rapidly moving fire that shoots out and starts new blazes in another spot, there sprung up on the Pacific coast a new frontier. Among the earliest of settlements to spring up along the Pacific was in the Tualatin Plains. The very earliest among the settlers to this region was the Congregationalist, under the leadership of such men as the Rev. John Smith Griffin and the Rev. Harvey Clark. They settled on the plains even before there was

any form of government in the Oregon country. Fort Vancouver was the important trading center of the entire Pacific Northwest. The Methodist under Jason Lee had come in the thirties and had started mission work at what is now Salem. Whitman was actively engaged in missionary work at Walla Walla. Oregon City was the important point along the banks of the Willamette. Astoria had been an American outpost for nearly thirty years when the Rev. Griffin, first representing the vanguard of white man, came to the Tualatin Plains region in 1841.

William Doughty and his Indian squaw, Pigeon Doughty, were the earliest of settlers to the Plains. "This family were the first family of settlers in these Plains and for a time (although Mr. Walker's family came in at the time and also George Davis) were entirely alone and under great embarrassments in getting provisions. The fact of the family's having held on and having become a permanent settled family speaks much for them, as also many other things I might also name for them," writes Rev. Griffin in his records on file at Pacific university. Mrs. Desire C. Smith-Griffin, wife of Rev.

(Continued on page six)

to assist in Brother Clark's support in professional labors.

"Brother Clark admits in getting up houses and some of the necessities in the beginning, he always expected to labor with his hands. They agree that Brother Clark spoke of putting all he had and all he should get into the mission and that Brother Smith said he regarded himself and all he had as belonging to the Lord.

"On this point they disagree as follows: Brother Clark supposed Brother Smith meant the same as to his property belonging to the Lord as himself did in putting all he had and could get into the mission.

"Brother Smith meant by it what he often does in the use of the same phrase, not supposing himself giving up the stewardship of his property. Brother Smith also knew that Brother Clark was sent out by the churches and was still collecting money from them, did not suppose him putting in any private funds.

"Both agree that the mission was acquainted with the fact of Brother Smith having left a property behind respecting the use and disposal of which he was questioned at least in the early part of their journey. Of this last fact Brother Smith thought at the time very strange, rather meddling.

"Both agree that he was several times questioned as to this profession.

"Brother Smith maintains it was even commenced before leaving Quincy, and Brother Clark does not remember but he did ask him about it before leaving.

"Both agree that the conversation in which Brother Clark spoke of putting all he had into the mission and Brother Smith spoke of all he had as belonging to the Lord, as taking place previous to the time of conversation when Brother Smith agreed to come.

"Both agree that Brother Smith principally fitted himself out, that before leaving the last settlements in the states many things were purchased in common, and that Brother Smith received some assistance.

"Brother Smith always thought his interest in behalf of the mission worthy of some assistance on the way. The examination has now been had to Sweet Water and the parties ask a decision.

"On Sweet Water Brother Smith thinks he gave Brother Clark to understand that he had private property in the company. Brother Clark says he obtained hints to that effect from Brother Smith and from the company along in that region.

"From that section to Whitmans, the examination shows Brother Smith to have been slow to take advice in relation to his procedures which Brother Clark feared as an indication of stubbornness; but which Brother Smith thought ought to have settled Brother Clark's mind as to his (Brother Smith's) understanding of their relations.

"Both agree that Brother Clark held earnestly to this effect: 'The waggon belongs to Brother Smith and he will sell it or do as he chooses with it,' Brother Clark

speaks of this as said in a moment of disheartened feeling, rather than as evidence of any other than a conviction of common stock principles. Both agree they took up the subject in close and prayerful examination and they disagreed as to the principles of their relation.

"Both agree they could not regard each others view as correct and left the question.

"They also agree that they entered upon a discussion for an agreement or constitution to be in writing as to their future operations; that they changed some of the articles from time to time as they advanced towards a mutual understanding as to the principles upon which they would proceed, such as Brother Clark's support, holding private property, etc. Brother Clark testifies that they made an agreement and put it in writing, and knows no reason why it was not signed; admits he had added some things before its last reading, such as they had agreed upon; that he took it into a room at Whitman's, where the three families were gathered as he supposed to sign it at once.

"Brother Smith had no other view than a discussion from time to time for the purpose of forming an agreement or constitution, that he had objections to the articles and never signed it on that account, that he made no objection at the time, chose to let it go by without signing it rather than make objections; that he regarded it as a constitution forming rather than an agreement made.

"All agree that Sister Littlejohn raised an objection without appearing to make much of it, appeared rather to move it. Brother Clark asked for objections at the time, and as Brother Smith made none, thought of course there were no objections on his mind. Sister Smith thought her husband appeared to hesitate as to his being ready to sign it. She thinks they were suddenly called out of Dr. Whitman's large pantry, but agree as to not knowing the occasion of suddenly breaking up the session.

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in having an agreement in was that he purposed not accept of Brother Smith's as giving consent; that he now why he had not held purpose and have it signed." (Continued next week)

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HAS PART IN EARLY HISTORY**

(Continued from page one)

Griffin, was the first white woman in the settlement of the Tualatin Plains, according to "The History of the Willamette Valley," edited by H. O. Lang.

Following this vanguard of American civilization in the Plains came the tide of immigration which brought American citizens to people the rich prairie lands. In breaking down the wilderness, religious institutions and schools were established. Civilization began to break ground out of the Tualatin valley wilds even before the formation of the Provisional government at Champoeg in 1843. The Congregational church for a while acted as an extra governmental institution recording marriages and births, and acting in other political capacities. Before courts were thought of third parties were called upon to act in the capacity of a judge. In the Tualatin Mission case, Rev. Griffin filled the post of a jurist.

The following is a record of the Dissolution of the Mission in South Tualatin, made December 26, 1842:

"Members of an interview with Brother Clark and Brother Smith (Rev. Harvey Clark and Alvin T. Smith) respecting their Missionary relations. These brethren have requested this interview for the purpose of referring certain questions to me (J. S. Griffin) respecting their relations upon which they find it difficult to agree in judgment and agree to abide by my judgment respecting them.

"The said Smith and Clark agree that if any question comes up upon which they differ as to the propriety of referring the said Griffin shall say as to its connection with the main questions and whether or not it shall be referred.

"Question: As to their relation when leaving the states. Brother Clark regarded it as a relation of common stock and common interest, to be governed by vote of the whole, himself having casting vote, supposed it so understood, though not positively agreed.

"Brother Smith always regarded it as a very loose relation that he came to assist the mission, but not to put his funds out of his own hands, that they were to consult together for successful effort in behalf of the Indians, that for an indefinite time all were to labor with

to assist in Brother Clark's support in professional labors.

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**First Congregational Church Was  
Organized in Tualatin Valley in  
1842; Probate Matters Interest**

CHAPTER II (Continued)

Handling of probate matters in pre-governmental times is illustrated by the following:

"Know all men by these presents, that whereas, I, Jacob Green, of Southerland county of Basel, being about to take a trip to California for cattle, and knowing the dangers of the way do hereby, in the person of J. S. Griffin, make my last will and testament.

"And be it known farther, that in case of my death on the above named intended trip, I do hereby of my own voluntary free will, give and bequeath all the property of every description belonging to me in America left after my decease and burial, to the now unmarried children of Mr. Williams, a near neighbour of Mr. Griffin's, to be equally divided among them as divided by law in such cases.

"And be it known farther, that this my last will and testament, is to stand as such, unless I may hereafter of my own free will and in sane mind make other and find dispositions of the property belonging to me in America.

"And be it known farther, that for the purpose of carrying with effect this my last will and testament, I do hereby appoint J. S. Griffin as the executor of the same.

"In testimony hereof, I do solemnly affirm the above to be my last will and testament made of voluntary free will and in sane mind in the presence of J. S. Griffin this

thirtieth day of May in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-four. Signed, Jacob Green."

In this document which follows is an example of early contract labor:

"In consideration of the above years labor and careful interests in my behalf, realized as specified above, I, J. S. Griffin, agree to pay the said James Belien, two hundred and twenty-five dollars as follows, viz: eight dollars on the merchants and otherwise equally acceptable to him and within the year and as his circumstances requires. Also three tame cows, free from bad habits, and easily managed by those acquainted with them, and averaging with the present values of a brown cow, and red cow known to John Nickols and now in my band; the three cows to be delivered at the order of the said Belien within three months after the expiration of the years labor as specified above, and with their calves a week old and in good plights for family use for thirty-five dollars per cow and calf. Also one young bay tame mare known to John Nickols, for forty dollars, and to be delivered or before or one adjudged of equal value. Also the said James Belien is to have included his board and washing as a member of my family.

"It is also understood that the said James is to be worthy of kindness and respect and to receive the same in his relation with me. Done

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agreeing to refer anything which may hereafter give rise to discussion as solving other principles or not.

"To all concerned: Be it known to these present that I, Harvey Clark, agent for certain missionary funds and responsibilities jointly concerned with Alvin E. Smith in making the improvements in South Tualatin in the years of 1841 and 1842, to this day quit all claims, rights and titles to the said improvements as specified in the late appraisal of J. S. Griffin and make them over to the said Alvin T. Smith, his heirs and assigns forever, for the consideration of \$170 in notes on the said Alvin T. Smith this day received. Dated, South Tualatin, December 31, 1842."

The Rev. Griffin's record of early marriages on the Plains contains much interest:

"August 7, 1842—Henry Black of the U. S. to Lisette Warfield of this territory.

"October 23, 1842—William Doughty to Pigeon Shorhone of Green River Valley, Rocky. Mrs. Doughty of Mo.

"November 6, 1842 — Richard Ough of Cornwall, England, to Betsy Slahuts of Columbia, Cascades.

"December 23, 1842—Wakefield King of London, England, to Mary Ann of Clickatats of Columbia River, Oregon Territory.

"April 6, 1843—Henry Buxton of England to Elisa Munger of the United States.

"December 12, 1843 — William Fonler to Rebeca Kelsey, both of Mo.

"May 10, 1844—William Bussell of Cal. to Francis Kelsey, Mo.

"May 23, 1844—Mr. Richard Arthur of Mo. to L. Jane Mills of Arkansasaw.

September 5, 1844—Mr. Jacob T. Reed to Miss Patsy Williams, both of Mo.

"March 29, 1846 — Mr. Henry Sewell of Oregon City to Mary Ann Jones Gerrish of Tualatin Plains.

"May 10, 1846—Henry Martin to Mrs. Emely Hips, both of Iowa.

"June 7, 1846—David Hill, Esq., of Columbia (Hillsboro), to Mrs. Lucinda Wilson of Mo.

"June 17, 1846 — Alanson Hinman, formerly of the State of New York, and now a teacher in the Oregon Institute, to Martha Elizabeth Jones Gerrish at her father's residence in Tualatin Plains.

"September 26, 1846—Mr. Henry Buxton, Jr., to Rosannah Wobly, formerly of Pa.

"March 28, 1841—Mr. Caleb Wilkins to Mrs. Mirriam Enyart, all of Washington county."

The following births are taken from the Griffin Records:

"George Homer Griffin was born to his parents, J. S. Griffin and Desire Griffin, November 9 (at three o'clock in p. m.), 1852, being the first white child born in the settlement of Tualatin Plains.

"Stephen Wallace Doughty was born to his parents, William Doughty and Pigeon Doughty, September 8, 1842. This family were the first family of settlers in these plains, and for a time (although Mr. Walker's family came in at the time, and also George Davis) were entirely alone and under great embarrassments in getting provisions. The fact of the family's having held on and having become a permanent settled family speaks much for them as also many other things I might also name of them.

"A daughter, and their first born, was born to Zedikieh Kelsey and his wife, January 1, 1843. This family are from Missouri, and arrived and settled in these plains in the autumn of 1841. William Kelsey married his wife from the family of Mr. Williams when on their journey into the country.

"March 22, 1843, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Williams a daughter. This family was from Missouri and

settled in these plains in the autumn of 1841.

"April 1, 1843, a son was born to Mr. Henry Black and his wife. This

family were married on these plains in the summer of 1842. This son is Mr. Black's first born."

(Continued next week)

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**REV. GRIFFIN'S RECORD OF BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES**

(Continued from page one)

Brother Smith has not applied the full amount which he promised to the mission in its full value to the object he was promoting by means of the mission. I find him justified.

13th—I find what there is left of Brother Smith's labors, not yet consumed by the object of the mission, not to be demanded by the mission, as it has given up its object.

14th—I have found the labors in behalf of the improvement at this time equaled.

15th—I find it due to the parties to equal their expenses in behalf of the improvement when balancing their accounts.

16th—This being done, I find one-half of the value of the improvement belongs as private property to Brother Smith and the other half to the mission.

17th—The valuation of said improvements having been left to me, I find the houses, the farming improvements, together with the trucks (wagon), plow, yokes, harrow and cradle (irons excepted) to stand at \$400, one-half of which to be paid by the one who keeps the place, to the other party in three equal payments yearly due at Vancouver at wheat currency.

18th—I find the \$30, which Brother Clark agrees to take out of his claims for the purpose of equaling the mission labors in behalf of the improvements to those done by Brother Smith to be taken out of the first payment (since Brother Smith takes the place) as such labors have already become due.

"December 31, 1842. The above principles of relation and existing between Brother Smith and the mission have been settled during several sessions previous to this time and these brethren agree to their responsibilities and funds according to them; at the same time

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*Rev. Griffin's Record of Births  
and Marriages, Which Dates Back  
to 1842, Provides Much Interest*

CHAPTER II (Continued)

Last week facts of the case asking for the dissolution of the South Tualatin Mission were presented. The division follows:

"I do not find the said document to contain a constitution or an agreement.

"At this time Brother Clark would make no more effort to show any agreement whatsoever; but would submit the question for decision.

**As to What Relations Have Existed**

Both agree they have advanced with hopes and fears as to successful effort in behalf of the Indians; that they have of late come to a mutual decision to separate their interests and responsibilities in behalf of the Indians and to give up the Mission.

"Question submitted as to what relations have existed since leaving the states.

"Both agree their debts and credits stand as a firm up to the 16th instant.

**Decision**

1st—I find a mission existing previous to Brother Smith's efforts in its behalf.

2nd—Since Brother Smith left Quincy I find him devoting his labors, advice and the use of his property, took with him, to the aide and object of the mission.

3rd—I find him risking himself and property.

4th—At a time I find the Mission located on this ground and Brother

Smith taking the management of the property belonging to himself and the mission in behalf of the object of the mission.

5th—I find the losses and gains of all private property took from the states, private gains and losses.

6th—At this time I find the mission given up as to its object but existing in accountability to its property.

7th—I find the losses and gains of the mission, mission gains and losses.

8th—I find the loss of the mission property so endangering Brother Smith's property, as to give him the right, respecting the management of mission property, to give him advice in the strength of vote.

9th—I find Brother Smith faithful in his promises of aid to the object of the mission and see nothing but the same also may be said of all the members of the mission.

10th—Although I find Brother Smith risking himself and property, I find him doing it upon security of this object arising from the strength and force of the mission as with apparent honesty presented to him.

11th—I find a deduction from this security arising from more or less failure of one of its members from a growing disposition to melancholy.

12th—If, since the diminished size and value of the mission,

(Continued from Page Three)