

CFR 0431

Grant Bolton

(Application missing)



MEMBERS OF THE GRANT BOLTON family whose farm has been in the family for a hundred years are from left to right, back row; Patricia Lynnette Bolton, Wm. Lynn Bolton, Wilma (Mrs. Lynn), Janet (Mrs. Grant Bolton), Grant Bolton, Judith Lee Bolton; and front row, left to right; Daniel, Susan, Carol Anne, and Terry Garie Bolton.

Bolton Family to Be Honored for 100-Year Ownership Of Same Wasco County Farm; Early History Recalled

By William H. McNeal
Wasco County Historian

The Absalom D. Bolton family is one of the pioneer centennial families of Wasco County, the members of which have owned and operated their farm continuously for more than 100 years. This year, the Oregon State Historical Society will bestow upon them a Century Ownership Document at a colorful ceremony presided over by Governor Robert Holmes at the Oregon State Fair this fall. Besides the governor's signature the document will bear the signatures of the president of the Oregon State Historical Society, the director of the Oregon State Agricultural Department, the Chairman of the Oregon State Fair Commission and County Judge James Hunt.

Absalom D. Bolton (1821-1903) and his family, and those of his brother Daniel Bolton, and that of his niece Elizabeth J. Bolton (Mrs. Horace Rice) daughter of his brother George (1802-1843) and Margaret (Duncan) Bolton (1800-1880), came west across the plains from Iowa by ox-team in 1851. The Bolton-Rice emigrant train used ox teams until they reached Fort Brigs-

sawmill and yards and hauling lumber. Gambling was wide open in the tent saloons. William Gibson operated the post office and trading post in the old Nathan Olney log store near 2nd and Union. Many abandoned emigrant wagons were to be seen and thin weary stock roamed the hills.

The old log structures at Old Fort Dalles were gradually being replaced by sawed lumber buildings at 14th and Trevitt streets in 1851 when the Boltons arrived in The Dalles. Military authorities had proclaimed the reservation of 10 square miles which prevented settlement in The Dalles until the next year in 1852 when the size of the reservation was cut down to one square mile.

Families Go Downriver

So the Bolton and Rice families moved on. They abandoned their wagons at The Dalles Landing, the men driving the livestock down the Lost Lake-Bull Run cattle trail to Milwaukie. The women and children accompanied their personal belongings on the steamer Flint to the Cascades. From there to the Sandy river the trip was made by batteau. Judge Taylor drove

the Oregon State Historical Society, the director of the Oregon State Agricultural Department, the Chairman of the Oregon State Fair Commission and County Judge James Hunt.

Absalom D. Bolton (1821-1903) and his family, and those of his brother Daniel Bolton and that of his niece Elizabeth J. Bolton (Mrs. Horace Rice) daughter of his brother George (1802-1848) and Margaret (Duncan) Bolton (1800-1880), came west across the plains from Iowa by ox-team in 1851. The Bolton-Rice emigrant train used ox teams until they reached Fort Bridger where they traded their oxen for horses, with Jim Bridger. The trip was continued with much hardship and suffering. Their food became exhausted by the time they reached Fort Boise and they had to trade parts of their bedding and clothing to the Indians for dried salmon skins. They were also obliged to dig roots, eat hazel brush and rose balls to keep themselves alive when game was scarce.

At Umatilla they assisted some Indians in butchering and dressing a steer which gave them a feast of several days duration. At the Deschutes river they had to drive out into the Columbia to ford around the Deschutes.

Early Day Buildings

The Dalles was called The Dalles Landing in 1851. Allen and McKinley operated a store on First street with Perrin Whitman, nephew of Marcus Whitman who was massacred at Walla Walla in 1847, as clerk. W. D. Biglow operated a small store here in a tent. Milo M. Cushing opened a small store in a sawed lumber building, the lumber coming from the military mill at 9th and Mill creek.

Nathan Olney operated a store on Olney (Chenoweth) creek trading with the Indians, soldiers and emigrants. Around 100 men worked at the military

settlement in the Dalles the next year in 1852 when the size of the reservation was cut down to one square mile.

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Typhoid fever attacked some of the members of the families before they journeyed on down to Lane county where they took Donation Land Claims. But the weather proved to be too much like that at Milwaukie, so they all sold out and returned to Wasco county in 1858.

On April 12, 1858 Absalom Bolton bought the 1852 water rights and land from an early settler below Boyd in what is now known as Bolton Canyon. At that time the "bottom land" for hay purposes was the only land of much value. The side-hills were considered pasture land for their livestock. As Absalom Bolton's herd increased he bought more land from settlers and the railroad, until by the time he died in 1903 he had accumulated more than 2500 acres, leaving 700 acres to his widow and 320 acres to each of his sons.

Pioneered Wheat

It is of special interest to note that the Bolton-Rice families were the first to grow wheat on the "uplands" of 15-Mile creek in Wasco county. Wheat had been previously grown along the irrigated creek bottoms, but no one had thought that the grassy hillsides were suitable for raising anything but livestock. Their neighbors laughed at them for planting wheat above the creek land, but when they saw them harvesting the crops and hauling the golden grain to the Rev. Washington Walker's grist mill at Dufur and later to his mill in The Dalles, then they too raised wheat. The Absalom Bolton ranch became one of the best wheat ranches in Wasco county and still is.

In 1858, when Absalom Bolton returned to The Dalles, the city had just been incorporated as Dalles City although the post office was still Wasco and remained so until 1860 when it was changed to The Dalles. The first Umatilla House was under construction by Nixon Bros. at First and
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