

Douglas

July 8, 1915

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Extension Division

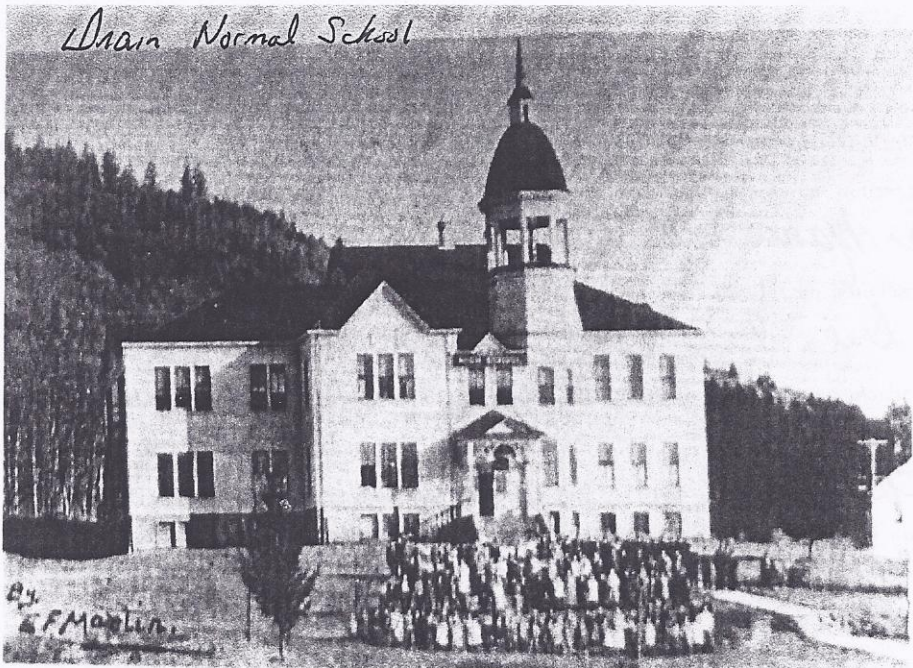
T H I S I S T O C E R T I F Y T H A T

Miss Mamie Langdon, of Elkhead

has completed the required Teachers Reading Circle work for the  
year 1914-1915 by submitting a satisfactory paper on  
Charters: "Teaching the Common Branches"

*W. M. Hain*  
Secretary, Extension Division

*A. D. Sheldon*  
Department of Education



# Oregon State Teacher's Certificate

Department of  Public Instruction

This is to Certify That Mamie E. Langdon  
having filed the statutory evidence relative to qualifications, which  
evidence is now open to public inspection in this department, is hereby  
licensed for a period of one year to teach in the Public Elementary and  
the Public One-Year, Two-Year and Three-Year High Schools of this  
State, or to act as City Superintendent of any school district in Oregon.

Issued this the 25th day of May, 1915.

Valid for one year.

Expires May 25, 1916.

Not valid unless registered annually. Before  
registering certificate, superintendent must  
be satisfied that reading circle work has been  
done. See Sections 24 and 83, School Laws of 1913

J. J. Chandler  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

(PUBLISHED) This contract must be signed by the chairman of the board and the district clerk, or by a majority of the directors, as may be determined by the board, and should be sent at once to the county superintendent for registration.

## TEACHER'S CONTRACT

District No. 104

It is hereby agreed between the directors of School District No. 104, of Douglas County,  
and State of Oregon, as shown by the records of a legal board meeting held June 21, 1915,  
and Miss Mamie E. Langdon who holds a valid certificate to teach in the grades  
of Oregon, described as follows: A One year certificate based  
on Dec. 18-1915, and dated May 25-1915  
(Examination and Date, or Graduation and School) (Give Date of Certificate first)  
that the said teacher is to teach in the grades of the above district for a period of 6 months,  
for the sum of Fifty Dollars per month, commencing on the 4 day  
of October, 1915, and for such services lawfully and properly rendered, the directors of said district are to pay the said teacher the amount that may be due according to this contract on the last day of each school month, upon proof that the said teacher has made the proper reports required by law.

Dated this 2 day of August, 1915.

Miss Mamie Langdon  
TEACHER.  
Elkhart, Ore.  
ADDRESS.

Geo. Henryson  
CHAIRMAN.  
August Klumb  
CLERK.

NOTE—The teacher's certificate and contract must be registered by the county superintendent before the school begins.



## MAMIE LANGDON LEE'S FAMILY HISTORY AND OTHER LOCAL HISTORY

My father Oscar Langdon was born in Wisconsin and came from South Dakota to Yoncalla, Oregon in 1892. He brought his stock and furniture with him in a box car. He took up a homestead of 160 acres on Dickinson Mountain.

My mother, Minnie Thompson, was the daughter of George Washington Thompson who was born on the plains in 1850.

Her mother was Mary Amelia Thiele who was also born on the plains in 1853. The Thiele's settled in Rice Valley.

My father and mother were married December 9, 1895.

I was born on Dickinson Mountain January 9, 1897. They lived on Dickinson mountain until I was three months old and moved to the Emile Chevigney place on Red Hill. They made several moves while I was growing up. I attended Shoestring, Elkhead, and Red Hill, and Yoncalla Schools.

There was a church at Shoestring where I attended Sunday School and church services while living in Shoestring and Elkhead communities.

I had four brothers Leland, Delbert, Percy and George Langdon; and two sisters: Beulah Aldropp and Ruby Couch. Leland and George have passed away.

I was married to Winfred Leroy Lee, October 18, 1916. We had four children: Martha Rogers, Eldon Lee, Esther Dusenberry and Lyle Lee. Both Eldon and Lyle Lee have passed away and also my husband Winfred Leroy Lee.

I have ten grandchildren and a large number of great-grandchildren; and one great great granddaughter.

Winfred's parents were Andrew Jackson Lee who came to Portland, Oregon in 1847 with his parents when five years old; his mother was Martha Lakin Lee who came to Eugene in 1852 and with her parents when she was five years old. After his father and mother were married a few years they came to the Scotts Valley community where he took up a homestead. in the 1860's. They were parents of twelve children but only six lived to be grown. There were Alvin, Lincoln, Tessie Lee Jones, Grace Lee Stock, Charlie Lee and Winfred Lee.

I have written news for weekly newspapers for nearly fifty years. First Oakland Tribune; Eugene Register Guard, Roseburg Chiefton, Roseburg News Review, Sutherlin Paper, Umpqua Courier, Drain Enterprise and

Cottage Grove Sentinel. Worked on the elections boards for forty years. And before I started raising my family I taught school.

I can remember when there was a depot and a small store and post office at Rice Hill. Also a section house and bunk houses. I lived in the section house when my husband was section foreman at Rice Hill during World War II. At that time the store and Post Office had been gone for many years. When I lived there, there was a turntable where engines pulling heavy loads up Rice Hill were taken off the main trains and sent back north. A large number of passenger trains were going through each day and night. To get on a passenger train at Rice Hill you had to flag it down.

I can also remember when Yoncalla was a real small town. No telephones or electric lights. The marshal lit lights on street corners each evening and put them out in the morning. There was a city dray to deliver things to the stores. The stores carried both groceries, clothing and yardage.

Pickles were in barrels, rice and beans in sacks and the store keepers took out the amount you wanted. Coffee was unground in bags. They weighed out the coffee and ground it in a large coffee grinder. For most of the farmers it was an all days trip to town. In winter roads were so muddy they put in corduroy in some places to drive over. The men would sit around the large heater in the store and discuss various things about their farming, etc. There was always a spittoon by the stove as a lot of the men chewed tobacco. The women with their small children would go to a relative or neighbors houses. Most of the time in the winter the women didn't come to town.

Mamie Lee

From: *Historic Douglas County, Oregon 1982*, Published by the Douglas County Historical Society.



YONCALLA STILL 'A FRIENDLY TOWN'  
Douglas County Diary

As a reporter, her big stories were a plane crash and a caesarean calf. By Marjorie Nason of The News Review

In nearly 87 years of living in the Yoncalla area, Mamie Langdon Lee has seen a lot of changes. "And they're not all for the better," she says firmly. "Years ago Yoncalla was kind of a home town. Now everything is modernized and different. It's not the same. Years ago I would sleep out on the porch when my husband (the late Fred Lee) was away. Now you have to lock your doors every night and you would'nt dare do that."

There are some changes however, that she feels are improvements over the old ways. "I suppose the city water system and the electric lights are the most important changes, the most necessary, she says."

"We used to have wells and springs before - there were several wells that had sulfur water. Some people would 'nt drink the water because they said it came from the cemetery, but I liked it."

Yoncalla had more stores in the older days than it does now. "People could'nt run to Roseburg or Eugene like they do now," she points out. And the stores had all the essentials for living. "One of the stores had overalls, shirts, socks, they carried everything," she says.

She smiles as she recalls the old pickle barrels and cracker barrels. "Everything came in bulk - the pickles came in 10 gallon barrels and people would just reach in and take what they wanted to buy. It was the same way with cookies. a But nobody ever got poisoned from them, so I guess it didn't hurt them. The pickles were in open barrels and they never killed anyone."

Mrs Lee, who will be 87 years old next January, was born on a homestead on Dickinson Mountain near Yoncalla. I'm about the oldest pioneer around here", she says. "There might be some people older, but they weren't born here."

After her family left the homestead they live at Red Hill, then upper Scotts Valley, Shoestring, Elkhead, Red Hill, then back to Elkhead, she recalls.

After she finished high school and took an examination in Roseburg to get her teacher's certificate, she taught at the old Chenoweth Park School near Oakland. "I taught there for six months, did my own janitor work and got \$40 a month and paid \$13 a month board," she recalls. Rural schools, she says were in session for only six months a year, while town schools had nine monath school years.



Elkhead was where the old quicksilver mine was, she says. "My father worked in the quicksilver mine in the early days. And the red cinnabar rock that the quicksilver was in was used for roads. I remember those old corduroy roads, too. One woman said she could start out with cream and eggs and after she went over those roads she'd have scrambled eggs and butter.

"The main thing in the area in those days were prunes and hops, mainly prunes. They dried locally. The fields had a hopyard and a dryer and the local people would pick them. I didn't like picking hops too well, they made my hands kinda sore. The older people would pick hops and the children would pick prunes."

Mrs Lee's home in Yoncalla was first used as an Adventist Church. Then a doctor used it for a garage and storage and then my husband rented it out to store baled hay. We lived in the apartment house (that they owned) and it finally got on my nerves the way the children would run up and down the stairs so we moved in here she says."

The apartment house was originally built as a large two family house, she says. Then it became a hospital, then the doctors- there were three of them- all left, so it was used as a hotel for a long time. Then we bought it and turned it into an apartment building. It had thirty rooms and we bought it for \$600.

Of course, it needed lots of repairs. Then I think it was 1952, a single man had been out in the evening and came back to the apartment and then he left again early in the morning to go fishing. I think he left something burning and the apartment building burnt down."

She doesn't have a car now. "I never did drive too much. I'm farsighted for one thing. And my husband used to say I'd turn a corner before I even got to it. But I got my license all aright. The first license I didn't have to take an examination. You just sent the money in, she says." But when she did have to take a test, she says they questioned her about why she wore glasses. "You can get by with quite a few things she says. "I didn't lie to them, I just told them I had headaches with out them. I try not to lie, but I didn't go into details about everything."

A Methodist, Mrs Lee goes to church whenever someone stops by and takes her. But hers is not just a Sunday religion. "Years ago I could remember most anything that came up. But there are times now when I can't remember even local people's names, and then it'll come to me. A lot of things I just sit down and pray about and ask the Lord to help me if I've mislaid something. And usually it'll come to me. I have a lot of faith in my prayers, she says."



She doesn't get around as well as she used to, she admits. "Maybe I can't walk so well as some women my age, but one thing I'm thankful for is that my brain is better than some of theirs. It's just a wonder I've got much brains as I do have left. I just wonder why the good Lord keeps me as long as He has."

Aside from hiring a man to do some of the outside chores, Mrs Lee says she takes care of her own house. "I do what's done which isn't much, she says."

"I never use my radio & I don't have time for television." she says. I entertain myself by looking out the window she says, pointing to a chair strategically placed to look out on to the street. And she keeps up with what's going on in her town from that window, she says. "

"But I don't know what's going in down at the corner by the gas station. I've heard all kinds of things-an eating place maybe. But they're working it over, she says thoughtfully."

"Yes, Yoncalla has changed a lot since her childhood, she says, and it is still changing. "But I think Yoncalla is still a pretty friendly town., she says." And she is content to be there, looking out her window to see what's going to happen next.



# '50 years is long enough'

by Dave Bemis  
Sentinel News Editor

"I'm just too darn old!"

That was Mamie Lee's simple explanation recently as she reluctantly resigned from writing tidbits of Yoncalla news for The Sentinel and its companion publication, The Advantage.

"I started writing for the newspapers in the '30s and I've been writing ever since," she says. "Then I could hotfoot it all around...we could run all around the country."

"I'm almost 86 years old," she adds. "I can't get around to hunt up news. I can only walk a block with my cane."

And, she adds with a trace of frustration, she can't remember names and other essential information as well as she used to.

At 85, she says, "Your brain don't work as good as it should."

She also said something else quite plainly in a recent interview:

"I don't want too much of a write-up about me."

But to a certain extent the story of Mamie Lee, born in January 1897 in the hills near Yoncalla, tells the story of the town itself, so at least a little writing seems appropriate on the occasion of her "retirement."

(She considers herself retired, but allows that some people have long been in the habit of sending her things to "put in the paper." So, she says, she may be sending a few more things along as they are sent to her.)

She was born Mamie Langdon, "up on top of Dixon Mountain," where her parents were homesteaders from South Dakota, she says. The family moved down to Red Hill after a few years, then to Elkhead, where she married Fred Lee in 1916.

She and Fred then moved in to Yoncalla, and she still lives in their home on 3rd Avenue. Fred died in June 1972.

She first corresponded for the Oakland Tribune, beginning about 1930 to send them what she calls "little local items," such as who had had visitors and who had done some traveling.

"Of course, in those days there weren't many cars," she says, so trips that are commonplace now were genuinely newsworthy then.

"It was a whole day's drive to Roseburg," she adds, when automobiles were young. And she remembers the time her family made a trip to Eugene to see a circus when she was 12 years old or so.

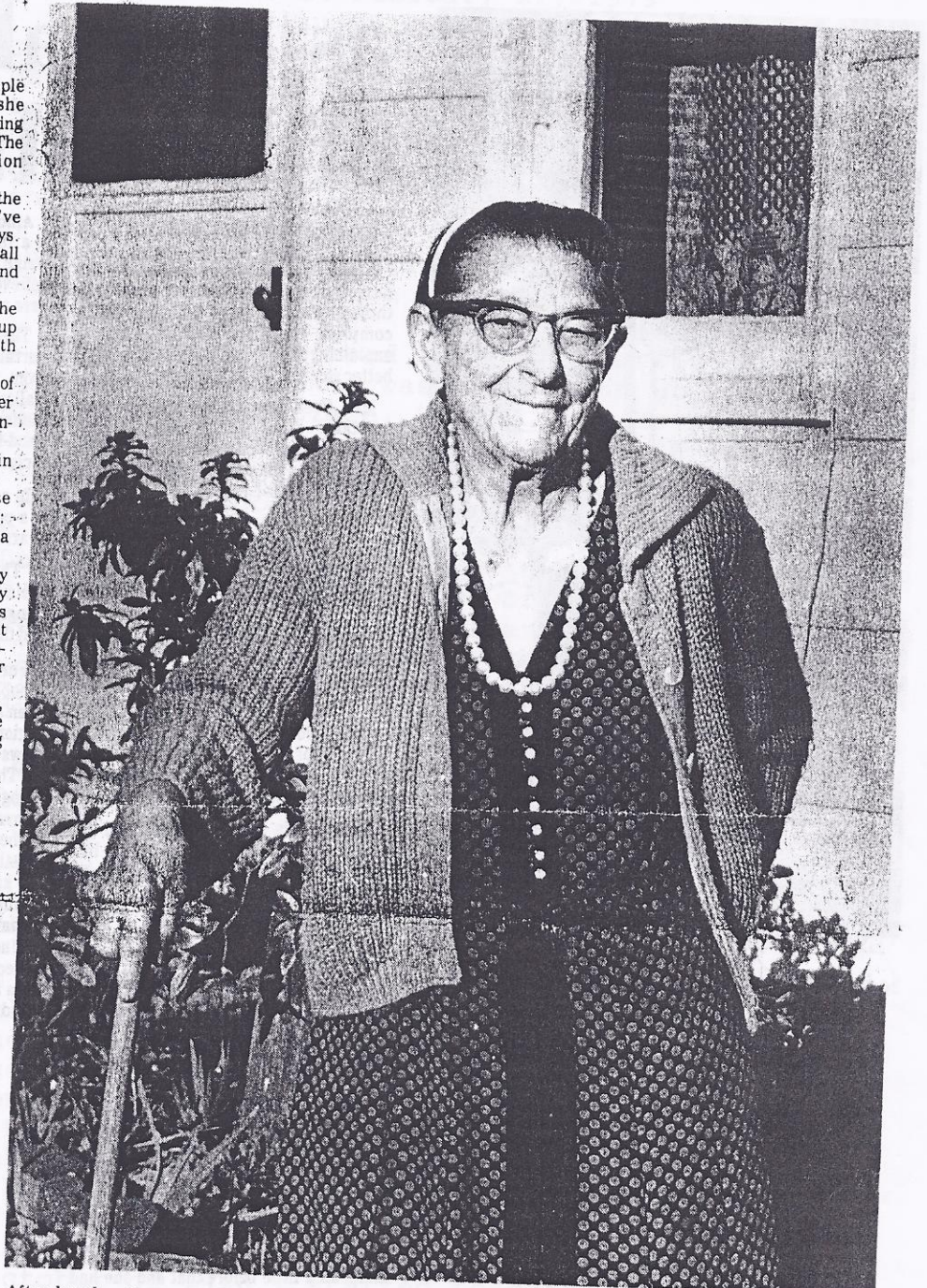
They traveled by horse and wagon, and had to camp at Goshen cause they couldn't make the 60-mile trip all in one day.

Newspapers these days "don't bite as much of the little stuff," she says. "Years ago, everybody asked for names. They tried to get your name in the paper, even if you just went to Drain."

But with cars and roads so much proved these days, she says with understanding chuckle, "You'd have a full paper if you had everybody who went to Eugene."

It's a far cry, she says, from the days when it was news when a family just got in to Yoncalla. They even got here to town once a week, (they) done well," she says.

But transportation improvements



After decades of corresponding with many newspapers, Mamie Lee has retired.

photo by Dave Bemis

aren't the only thing she's seen.

"I can remember when the telephones come in around here," she says. "The phone would ring in the house and everybody would come on the line to listen, to see if there was any news."

With a little advance planning, she adds, it could be arranged so that a person fortunate enough to have an Edison phonograph could play it into the telephone so everyone could listen.

When the Oakland Tribune sold out to a newspaper in Sutherlin, she quit newspaper writing until the 1950s. But over the years, she says, she has written for the old Roseburg Chieftain, the Umpqua Courier, the Roseburg News-Review, the Drain Enterprise, the Eugene Register-Guard and The Sentinel.

In those years she attended — and wrote about — countless school board and city council meetings, weddings, bridal showers and other parties and meetings. She wrote about births, deaths and events that might have been little noticed but were important to the people involved.

She also remembers rushing to the scene of an airplane crash, and giving an eyewitness account from the scene of a train derailment.

"If I do say so myself, I was a pretty active woman," she says without boasting.

Now her activities are limited mainly to some housework, taking her shopping cart back and forth to the grocery store and attending lunches at Yoncalla's United Methodist Church with other senior citizens two or three times a week.

She also attends the Methodist

Church every Sunday morning she's able, but has quit attending at night.

These days, she adds, "I read more."

As she sits in a big chair near a window of her home overlooking 3rd Avenue, she says she also "could pass my time away" just watching folks on the street.

"There's something going by most of the time," she says. "I don't get lonely. I can just look out all the time."

So, after decades of reporting snippets from other people's lives, she's living her own life basically alone, without a lot of sadness or regret.

"I'm just too darn old" to be a reporter, she says. "In January I'll be 86 years old, and I never expected to live that long, let alone be writing news."



MAMIE LEE

Written November 1978 to February 21, 1979

"I was born on Dickinson Mountain in a log cabin on January 09, 1897. The daughter of Oscar and Minnie (Thompson) Langdon. My folks moved to the Chivnegy place on Red Hill when I was three months old. This is where Leland was born on <sup>MARCH</sup> 17, 1899. We then moved to the Russell place in Scotts Valley when I was four years old in 1901. Several more moves took place, the Lane place, then the Churchill place. This is where Delbert was born on October 25, 1902 (Shoestring). The place sold and we moved to the Emerson place when he was 10 days old.

I went to school just across the road to the Shoestring School that was on our place. Our teacher was Mabel Mahn Helliwell. We then moved back to the Lane place. Here I went to school at Elkhead School and Emily Devore was my teacher. From here we moved to Red Hill, to the place where Delbert now lives. Here I attended Red Hill School. The first teacher we had was Lucy Hayes, then Gertrude Smith (Jones), Emma Applegate. Dehlia Ohleson, Alice Larkins and Golda Starr (Cockeram). We had to walk to school during the bad weather and wore leather or rubber boots or leggings on our feet and legs. The desks and benches were homemade. The water was carried from the creek or spring in a bucket. All the students used the same dipper to drink from. The building was heated with a wood heater ~~stove~~.

*On Red Hill*  
Beulah was born on Easter Sunday, April 23, 1905. Ruby was born June 16, 1908. In the fall of 1910 we moved to Elkhead again. During the move, Leland somehow got his foot caught in the disk and mangled it. After that he was always a cripple.

Percy was born April 10, 1911. George was born June 18, 1917, *AT ELKHEA*

By this time, we had a new teacher at Elkhead. Her name was Eunice Post. Lola Gray, Ethel Shields (Devine) and Adabel Kingston were the next teachers. I later went a short time to Ethel Siglinger at Milltown School where I took my eight grade examination. I went back to Elkhead for 3 months my freshman year. Bessie (Daugherty) Mulkey was my teacher. I finished my freshman year and part of my sophomore year at Yoncalla. From here I went to take my teachers examination at Roseburg. After completing it, I taught the fall and spring of 1915 - 1916 at Chenoweth Park School north of Oakland at Metz Hill. In October of 1916 I started teaching at Monticello School on Jordan Hill. I rode a horse to school. Then I went to the Institute at Roseburg. While there, I was married to Winfred Leroy Lee. Even after getting married, I finished teaching six months.

Winfred (Fred) and I were married on October 18, 1916 in Roseburg, Oregon. We were married one evening after I had been at the Institute all day. I had known Fred for some time. We met when he delivered mail from Yoncalla to Elkhead on the



star route, three times a week during 1909 - 1911. During the summer he drove a horse and buggy and in the winter he rode his horse. This trip was about 11 miles one way. One day he stopped to give me a lift on his way to the post office. We started to "keep company" after I came to Yoncalla to go to school. During the weekends he would make the trip out to Elkhead to see me. He would walk or ride his bicycle. My sisters would tease him and sing, "It's a long way to Oscar Langdon's."

Our first home was where Fred's parents lived, on the corner of Birch and Fifth Street in Yoncalla. At this time Fred worked for the railroad as a section boss. Our first child was born in this house on January 25, 1918. We named her Martha May Lee after her grandmothers. Fred's mother was Martha Elizabeth Lakin Lee and my mother was Minnie May Thompson Langdon. Our second child, Eldon Leroy Lee was born there (one day before ~~my~~ 24th birthday) January 08, 1921. We sold that house and moved to a house on Fourth Street (Vian house). We sold it and moved to Alder Street to the oldest house in Yoncalla (~~1916~~). It had been moved down to it's location from Mathis Hill when the railroad came through in 1873. (This house was later owned by Eldon & Jeanne Lee and was torn down by their son in 1980)

I had received word that my brother, Leland had died of Spinal Meningitis on January 21, 1923. Esther was born February 16, 1923. After this we sold that property and moved to the former hospital, doctors office and hotel. We kept school teachers after we turned it into an apartment house. Lyle was born on February 07, 1929. Our apartment house burned down, but not before Eldon saved an Edison phonograph from one of the rooms. He gave it to the man, for which he had saved it. The man in turn gave it to him for saving it. Eldon's family still has it.

A few years before 1923, Fred bought a Model T Ford and started a trucking business called "Anywhere for Hire." While fred had his truck, Lyle was on it one day and fell. The Duel wheel ran over his right leg, mashing it off. Dr. McKaig fixed him into a box case and Fred took him in the panel to Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene. They cut out the mashed bone and put in a plate and a cow bone. He was there for 13 weeks. I stayed for the whole time and boarded across the street from the hospital. I never missed a visiting hour. I did what I could for him, feeding him at first because of his arm being hurt. After that they were able to put a cast on and we were able to take him home. He remained bedfast for awhile. While in bed, the school sent a teacher (Gertrude Daugherty Stout) every night, so he could make his grade. Then he could use crutches to get around. Within three months he could ride a bike. That leg was always short and the nerves damaged.

A few years later we were with Fred on a trucking job to Tillamook. On the way home we hit a slick spot on a bridge,



and took the corner off of it. Lyle was thrown into the windshield. The top of his nose was peeled off. We went to a first aid place and the doctor came from Cloverdale. He took Lyle in his car to his office where he sewed the skin back on his nose. Fred stayed with the truck until a wrecker came and towed it to a garage. We had to stay in Cloverdale for three days at a hotel until the parts came from Portland for the truck. Martha came from Empire and stayed part of the time with Eldon and Esther. Fred had the trucking business for 25 years.

Fred had an active life. He served as Mayor and councilman of Yoncalla. He also drove school bus after the trucking business for about 12 years. He then retired in 1955.

I have been a correspondent for several papers. Among them are the Oakland Tribune, Roseburg Cheiftain, Umpqua Courier, Eugene Register Guard, Drain Enterprise, Sutherlin Sun, Roseburg News Review, and the Cottage Grove Sentinel. During my time writing for the Register Guard, some of the stories that I covered were very interesting. Once a cow at the dairy had a Cesarean Section. Another time a plane went down on Parks Hill. We drove as far as we could and then waded into the brush and up to the plane.

Fred and I celebrated our golden wedding anniversary on October 18, 1966. We had a reception at the Methodist Church in Yoncalla. Over 175 people were there that day. Friends and relatives including our 4 grandchildren and 7 <sup>great</sup> grandchildren. We had a special surprise that day from our grandchildren: Cynthia, LeeAnn, Lila, Robert, Karl and Diana. They sang "It's a long way to Oscar Langdon's" and "Put on Your Old Gary Bonnet."

I have also worked on the grade school board until they consolidated with the high school. Then for the high school board. After an election on June 05, 1972, I came home and Fred had passed away in his chair. He had a heart attack over 6 years earlier, but had recovered and regained his health. Funeral services were held at the Yoncalla Methodist Church with burial in the Lee family plot at Yoncalla Pioneer Cemetery. Fred wore the same suit for his funeral that he was married in and wore at at ~~his~~ 50th wedding anniversary. "

our