About the author: Jean Hilts Bluhm taught school in Chehalis and Centralia, Washington for 30 years before retiring. She has written eight family histories and has hosted many reunions. She likes to sew, visit family, entertain, work in the church and finds time for many projects just waiting to be done. Her husband built her a computer room so he could see the table again and she makes good use of the office. She and her husband, Mel, have three children and 12 grandchildren and five great grandsons to enjoy.

My appreciation for their faith and support, for their interest in history and for their desire to see Mary’s story written, goes to the following people. Their donations made printing this book possible.

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The St. Helens Club, in Chehalis
The Altrusa Club of Centralia-Chehalis
The Lewis County Centennial Fund
Charles S. and Donna Kay Seel
Jane Tweed McCutcheon Scherer
Jan and Terry Taylor
Eleanor Petersen
Alice Hilts

~ The Borst Home as it appears today

~ Written by Jean Hilts Bluhm
care for it.

EPILOGUE

The Mary Borst Story

After Mary Borst left the farm for the final time and moved to Centralia, she rented it to several people before her death when the will divided the property among the heirs. In 1921 Allen, Mary and Joseph’s youngest child, gave the property to the city, the worth estimated at $10,000.

From this land emerged many baseball fields for Little League and the high school teams as well. The beautiful Fort Borst Park provides an attractive spot for local people and freeway traffic to stop, picnic and feed the ducks. The same fort that Mary and Joseph lived in is now located in the park. The Parks & Recreation buildings are on the grounds along with the beautiful arboretum and the Borst House itself.

The great barn stood until the October storm in 1962, but the house, still sturdy, has been renovated and stands as a living monument to this pioneer family. A walk through the house, along the river where the ferry crossed so many times, down to the fort is a walk through history. The city is fortunate the Borst Family gave the land, that the city fathers cared enough to buy the house and maintain it with people living in it until 1984 which helped preserve it. It is a chance for tourist and history buffs alike to recapture the past, providing a place for weddings, socials and meetings where they have taken place over 100 years ago.
Children of Joseph and Mary
Adeline Roundtree Borst

1. Eva 1855-1941 m. Crate McElfresh 1. son d. in inf.
   * Grace m. W.F. Beal, sons Willis and James
   * Willis F Beal and James Monroe Beal
   * James m Pearl Evalina Brown, Joann
     * Joann M. Beal MacLean
2. Harbin 1859-1918 m. Ollie Ready 1. Ray Hargin
   m. 1908 Mary Winship 2. Robert Allen 3. Frank
   James 4. Sylvia
3. Selucius 1861-1865
4. Celest 1864-1865
5. James Harrison 1866-1866
6. Clara Joana 1870-1870 (adopted)
7. Minetta Abigail 1871-1871
8. Allen Turner 1873-1923 m. Lucinda Overacker 1. Deborah Adeline 1898 m. Horace Rowley (no child)
   1918 m. Peggy Hill 4 children: Elizabeth 1951; Rick
   1954; Nancy 1955; and Leon 1957
9. Minetta Abigail 1871-1871

Prologue

During the Centennial year 1986, I was caught up in the celebration and the renewed enthusiasm Centralia was creating. One character from the past especially commanded my interest, and that was Mary Adeline Roundtree Borst.

I started research into her personality, her traits, her life and her influence on Centralia and found abundant material in Centralia: the First Fifty Years, by Herdon Smith. The article I drew most heavily on was Chapter VIII, “Mary Adeline and Joseph, the Story of the Borst Family”, by Donna Tesdale Taylor. As a student under Miss Smith, she worked closely for 4 years to help in the publication of the book. She then worked for The Daily Chronicle, the very paper so instrumental in backing and publishing the first copy in printed form. The Daily Chronicle screened the photographs for this book; it is still interested in promoting the history of the city.

I started giving programs impersonating Mary Borst, along with Jerry Davis, Parks & Recreation director then, and Nancy Piper, coordinator of the Borst Home restoration. We appealed for support to groups throughout the area. Wherever I went people had stories about Mary Borst. One had lived with her daughter, Eva McElfresh, or had attended the Christian Church with her, or had lived in the Borst house later. My interest and excitement in this woman grew as I read bills of sales, her personal letters, family letters to her, a myriad of correspondence all preserved by Walter Wuerth and on file at the Centralia Parks & Recreation office. I met members of her family who attended the first open house of the newly renovated Borst House, May 8, 1987, put on with the help of Jerry Davis, Nancy Piper, Kai Campbell, Carrie Johnson, Kathy
Wedin, Art Mock, the Ken Schoenfield Furniture and several antique dealers in the area.

Mary influenced her husband, her family, friends, the city of Centralia, her church and all people interested in history. In ever-widening circles her influence is even greater today. For these reasons, I have compiled a glimpse into the woman, Mary Borst, with the help of Donna Tesdale Taylor, the encouragement of Nancy Piper, Gordon and Carolyn Aadland, Brenda O’Conner, Marion Williamson, Janet Bluhm, the staff of Centralia Parks & Recreation Department, and those wonderful people who helped print this book. This fictional account based on historical facts is dedicated to her memory and to her home, which stands as a living monument to her dynamic personality, her abundant energy and her pioneer spirit.

Jean Hilts Bluhm pictured here as Mary Borst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borst Side</th>
<th>Roundtree Side</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hendrick Borst m.</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johan Martin Borst m.</td>
<td>Catherine Mattice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannes Borst m.</td>
<td>Catherine Rickert</td>
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<tr>
<td>1735-1810</td>
<td>1743-1809</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Martin 1813</td>
<td>2. David 1814</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Asenath 1823</td>
<td>8. Naomi 1825</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Eliza 1832</td>
<td>12. Daniel 1933</td>
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<td>15. Unnamed 1838 d. 1838</td>
<td>1. Mary Adeline Roundtree 1838-1920</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Jasper 1839</td>
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<td>3. Julina 1845</td>
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<td>4. Demaris 1854</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Mallie 1861</td>
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</tbody>
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The Borst Family Tree:
Lee Davidson was the next park attendant to live there. The last family to live in the home was Jerry and Tami Davis. Their two daughters were born while they lived there. It was Jerry's vision to restore the home as a living monument to the Borst family.

Richard Borst, the adopted son of Allen Borst, sold some of the original furniture to the home. Richard lived in the home when he graduated from Centralia High School. His father, Allen Borst, retired to the farm in his later years.

Hazel Borst Holm, who was married to Joseph Borst, Mary’s grandson, has also offered valuable information about the family. She met Joseph in the First Christian Church in Centralia. She was living on a farm near Eva and Crate McElfresh as a girl. When Allen died, Joseph inherited the farm which he sold because he was a mechanical engineer and worked too far away to

Picture: In the early 1950’s the city bought the Borst House and land to add to the Borst donation Allen had given many years earlier.

CHAPTERS

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Chapter 1

Mary’s Early Memories

Knitting and sitting—that’s what I’ve been used to lately. Time passes by so quickly, like a quiet stream one hardly notices, yet it never stops moving. I love sitting here in the house in town I built on West Main and seeing the changes. I only wish Joseph were here to share these precious memories. Thinking of the children and the grandchildren, I wonder which of their traits came from Joseph. I see both sides of our family in each child, like stripes from the two pieces of calico appearing again and again in one of the braided hit-and-miss rag rugs I made. Each piece so different, yet blending into the pattern of the whole. I wrote all this down when I was in my 80’s, and now I can’t find it. My cousin, Emma Roundtree, is coming over this afternoon; I’ll ask her to help me find those pages, so I can add some more. She’s a widow too, married Jack Salzer. We’ll take out those balls of woolen rags and look through them. Yes, that’s just what I’ll do.

It must be here somewhere; I never throw anything away. Why, I’ve got the attic and windmill full of things. There is my mother’s spinning wheel I promised Ada. Mama died November 27, 1892, visiting Jasper in Oregon. And my Dutch oven that I used before I got my cook stove with the high back. There are hanks of red carpet warp and parts of bolts of calico we bought from the Coat’s Store when the little Polish man sold out his stock in the early ‘60’s. Joseph’s buffalo skin shirt and his long Kentucky rifle, just short of five feet, now it’s taller than I am. There’s the tiny nightcap Eva wore at Fort Henness and the old pump organ which I played so many songs on as the children sang. Oh, there’s the white cotton dress with its full skirt and short puff sleeves that I wore

Mary Greisen

Mrs. Mary Rice Greisen who lived in the log house near the Borst Home recalled the last seven families that lived in the Borst Home before renovation.

Frances Moses and wife Josephine Bryden Moses lived there in the early 1940’s. The road was named after Josephine’s maiden name. Three long horse barns were located where the baseball fields are now.

Bert and Elvy Harman lived on the 25 acre Borst farm and had quarter horses in the barns. He ran a riding academy. Bert sold the home to the city for historical purposes.

The Rogers family lived there a short time.

Floyd Wilson, a logger, rented for a time. In 1956 the Centralia School System purchased part of the farm for future school construction.

In the 1960’s Bill Largen, the park attendant, moved his seven daughters and three sons into the home. They had cows and chickens and sold milk. They had a huge garden, canned and fixed up the house which had fallen into disrepair. Mrs. Largen cooked on the cast iron range and the front parlor was used as a bedroom.

In 1962 the October 12th storm demolished half of the old barn and the rest was dismantled. Borst Park was devastated. Old growth trees were uprooted and a car couldn’t drive through the park. Neighbors brought saws and helped clear away the debris.
as a girl of fifteen, when I led the grand march at the first governor’s ball in the new territory. The state museum in Tacoma asked for it and I really should give it to them. Even a lock of Allen’s long curly hair cut off just before he started school. I simply must find that story I wrote. It’s like I lost a part of myself, a part of Joseph. I wonder? How much do I still remember?

Let me start at the beginning. That’s what I’ll do. I think one of the first things I can remember is the big padded photo album resting on the little round table in our house in Knox County, Illinois. I was very short, but my mother would get it down so I could look at it, and I could keep interested for a long time while she tended my younger brother, Jasper Newton. Jasper was just a year younger than I was, and Mama had her hands full with cooking, making all the clothes, cleaning...no wonder I got to look at the album so much.

I wasn’t very old when I knew who those bearded men and serious-faced women were.

My father told it this way: “My father, Turner Richardson Roundtree, was born in Lexington, Kentucky January 11, 1796. He had two brothers, Samuel and Nathaniel, and three sisters named Mallie Turner, Nancy Hugo and Susan Man. Father’s mother’s name was Martha Richardson and his father’s and grandfather’s names were Dridley Roundtree. My grandfather, Dridley, had two brothers named Jesse and John. My father, Turner R. Roundtree, married Mary Adeline Ferguson, daughter of John Ferguson,
a native of Scotland, who came to America when he was young. John Ferguson married Francis Thompson a daughter of George Thompson of Virginia. She was first cousin to Patrick Henry. John had a full brother, Andrew, in Scotland and five half brothers and two sisters. His brothers, Alexander and John, were very wealthy, carrying on extensive factories in Glasco Scotland, and some of the boys were seamen on their father’s vessels.” Papa was proud of his family, and I was proud of them too. He talked of them often.

A woman not to be outdone, my mother would point out that her family fought in the Revolutionary War. Her great grandfather, James Davis, had been a British soldier, a drum major, who came over to fight the colonies. But after being taken prisoner, he had been won over to the side of the Americans, and refused to be exchanged back to the British. He married an American girl, Hope Cole. That’s where mother got her middle name, Emeline Cole Riddle. She married my father, James Roundtree, in Knox County, Illinois in 1837.

Mother was a good shot with a rifle; few could excel her. And that was a good thing, because Papa was talking of moving west lately.

I liked our home in Illinois, the only home I had known. The big room everyone crowded into each night had wooden walls, floors and ceiling. Hanging above the huge open fireplace were Ma’s pans and ladles, and over the fire was a big iron kettle. The Dutch oven rested nearby.

Mama made the prettiest rag rugs for the floor and she was teaching me to cut material and also to card and spin on the big wheel against the wall. When the yarn was spun, I would measure it in skeins on
Mary Adeline Roundtree Borst passed quietly away on February 20, 1920 in her home on West Main Street by the white-towered windmill. She was in her 83rd year.

Summers were different. I loved the garden and the animals. Papa’s big dark barn was a good place to be on a hot afternoon. Ever since Papa put me to be on one of his fine greys, I took to riding. Jasper and I would race down the lane to school, where we tied the horses till noon, when we went out and got them food and water at the creek. I had to hurry home from school in the fall to help make lye.

The barrel beside the house, filled with wood ashes, was resting on two flat stones. There was a hole in the bottom of the barrel, and when Mama poured water through, it worked its way down into a kettle and was lye. We used this to make soap, but this time Mama was making dye. She put lye into the brown earthen jar with the wooden cover; then she took a lump of indigo she had bought in Galesburg. We had gone there several months ago and Papa pointed out Knox College which had been established the year he and Mama were married. He also talked of Abraham Lincoln, who headed the delegation to Springfield that same year, 1837. Lincoln wanted Springfield to be capital of Illinois and he agreed to vote on improvements for other towns as well. Papa favored this view. Papa was a doctor and druggist and could talk about all subjects.

Well, Ma put the indigo powder in little bags of white cloth and dropped a few bags into the lye in the dye pot for a few days. I was anxious for the warm dye to be ready, because Mama was making me a new dress “for good”. My dress was brown and so were the dresses of all the girls at school.
It was nice being close to Grandpa and Grandma Roundtree. Grandfather had an imposing name, Turner Richardson Roundtree. Men called him T.R. I was named after Grandma Mary Adeline. I loved her very much. Grandma had other children besides Papa. There were J.H. Roundtree, Perry O. Roundtree, Betsy Roundtree Murphy, and the ones near my age, Polly and Martin. That was funny calling them Uncle and Aunt and not looking up to them at all.

Roundtrees and relatives lived on many farms nearby and we visited them often. Grandma’s house was an especially good place to be at the holidays. There were still wild turkeys in the woods, and Jasper had a desire to learn to shoot Papa’s gun. We’d both heard about Papa fighting in the Black Hawk War along with Grandpa, when Papa was only 16. After that war the settlers were free to develop land all over the state. The 1830’s brought the railroad, turnpikes and some other improvements; they also brought depression, and prices fell on all farm goods. Times were tight for us, so Jasper asked Pa if he could learn to shoot his gun and get a turkey for the holidays.

I teased Jasper, who was the kindest and most gentle of people, about wanting to shoot the gun. But he was determined. Papa took out his hollowed-out cow horn filled with powder. Jasper opened the small end, and Pa showed him how much gunpowder to use. He dropped this down the barrel of the gun and shook the gun to be sure it reached the bottom. He took out a bullet and put it on a little piece of greased cloth. Papa showed him how to use the ramrod to push the bullet and cloth down the barrel. Finally Pa lifted the hammer and we could see the little pan on the side of the gun under the hammer. When Jasper was ready to shoot the turkey, he would put powder into the pan. For once I was glad I couldn’t do everything Jasper could. And I’m kind of ashamed to admit that to the rear of the house I also found room to keep some of the grain I brought home from the farm at Bawfaw. It was the last good time Bob and I had together. We drove back through the pitchy blackness, and I gave the horses the reins and just sat back in the dark and thought about the harvest season that was over. The hot sun, the long tables out in the cool shade of the trees, the women bustling about preparing meats for the hungry threshers. And out in the field, the roaring machine throwing the yellow straw high in the air. The chaff flying in the wind, the men tossing the sheaves, the machine spewing out the grain. Yes, those were good days, but now they are gone like the chaff, gone with the winds of time.

My cousin, Emma Roundtree, now the widow of Jacob Salzer, is coming tomorrow to help wind rags into balls to make rugs next winter. We’ll talk about some of the old times, and that will be go good to have someone for company. Maybe we’ll look for that diary I wrote about my life. I misplace so many things now.

More and more I miss Joseph. I feel as if he’s waiting for me. Every night, sometimes it seems the whole night through, I’m sleeping less and less and my mind goes back over our life together. The first cabin, the children coming, the Indian scare, the big white house on the river, the animals, the trip across the Cascades; all the things Joseph and I did together. I lie there in the great walnut bed Joseph bought for me, and the good and bad seem to blend together.

I think of Joseph during the day as I’m knitting too. What a beautiful thing time seems when we have so little left. The other day I was counting as I cast off the stitches of the heel of a stocking and it was a stocking for Joseph. Yes, he must be waiting.
It was in 1914, I think, and I was 75 when I had the most trouble. I fell and broke my hip. I was pretty worried because the practice was to put the patient in a cast from the foot to the armpits. Being forced to lie in bed would have been pure torture for me. Besides being unable to move, most patients usually died of pneumonia within a few weeks.

I was in a quandary. I decided to visit Dr. Kennicott over in Chehalis. He had built the first hospital some years before, and I had heard good things about him.

He was very nice and discussed a new idea with me. He wanted to operate and nail the hip bones together. He preferred to use silver nails, but couldn’t find any available. He said he would try to operate with ordinary galvanized nails. I told him I would be willing to try anything.

He had another 80-year old woman who had recently fallen and he said she was walking after the operation. There were well-trained nurses and the doctor’s wife managed the hospital, seeing to all the details. Harbin and I signed a paper releasing the doctor of all blame, and I was ready.

I couldn’t believe it to be up walking again with only a cane. I asked the doctor if he’s written up this kind of operation for medical history. But he replied, “Too much like advertising; very unethical.” That was Dr. Guy William Kennicott for you.

I had remembered quite a bit of my life. I guess it’s because I like to sit and think of the children and grandchildren and wonder which of their traits and characteristics came from my side of the family and which from Joseph’s. I see so much of both of us in each. Like strips from two pieces of calico appearing again and again in one of my braided hit-and-miss rag rugs, distinct in itself, yet blending into the pattern of the whole.

Thanksgiving was to be at Grandma’s house, and we were busy getting ready. Mama and I made applesauce and apple pies. We chose our best jars of jelly and made a big pot of beans with juicy bits of meat on top. I asked if I could stay at Grandma’s house the week before to help and was I happy that Mama said I could! Grandma was the best cook, next to Mama, and we made dressing and stuffed Jasper’s turkey. We made lots of vegetables and mounds of mashed potatoes. When we gathered around the table and Grandpa gave the blessing, I knew we had a feast fit for a king, and was glad I had helped with it.

After dinner the men started talking about the same subject that had been on their minds for some time. Most of the best land was taken in Illinois; the prices were low, and thousands more people were crowding in each year. The Illinois-Michigan Canal had been completed in 1848 and taxes were high to pay for that. Papa had read about the free land and the opportunities in the West. He had heard about group after group leaving Council Bluffs for several years now. He felt the route was safe to take a family across. He had been 21 when he was married, and now that Julina Jane, the youngest, was 6, he was 36. He discussed the possibility with Mama that night and many other nights. They agreed that they would sell the house and many possessions that winter and by spring be ready to leave. Grandpa and Grandma decided to stay in Illinois with the rest of their children, and it was a very sad time after their decision. I knew I would miss them very much.

That was a busy year. Julina had just entered school and rode on the back of my horse. We were more interested in living history
than in studying it, and our teacher talked to our father about
Jasper and me talking less about leaving and more about passing
our grade. Jasper had always been a dreamer, and he was lost in
crossing the prairie with his gun. I liked school, but I’ll admit the
idea of no chores and just traveling did seem inviting.

Like all things, spring finally came. Papa was true to his word;
he was ready. We left April 10, 1852. I was 13, Jasper 12, and
Julina Jane was 7. We traveled down to Nauvoo, Illinois by wag-
on and from there the trail was well worn by pioneers across Io-
wa to Council Bluffs, later called Omaha, Nebraska.

We had one four-horse team, and in Council Bluffs Papa talked
to people while the prairie grass was growing, and he outfitted a
large provision wagon which was pulled by four yoke of oxen.
We had eight head of good milk cows. Pa figured the provisions
would last 6 months and get us across the prairie and to Oregon,
our destination, by fall. When about 60 wagons had assembled,
we started out. Two or three men would ride on horseback
ahead and find a good camping place. The first time we ferried a
river, we tied the wagon bed fast to the running gears of the
wagon and the men swam along side the oxen to drive them
over the water. We children rode inside and it was frightening.
We were to ford many more rivers on our way.

The wagons were numbered so each day a different one led, so
the same one didn’t end up in the dusty rear each day.

The Indians had been pushed further west, and we did not en-
counter them until we reached the North Platte River. Indians
had made an attack on a small train the day before and killed
and robbed most of them. There was a nervous meeting where
some wanted to turn back. Mama remained calm. We waited

Young Joseph wrote the other day to say he got his Red Cross
card and that when he goes to college, he’s going to attend the
University at Seattle. That would be nice and I could see him
more. Allen and Lucinda lived in Huntington Park, California,
and have been married almost 25 years. It doesn’t seem possible.

Sylvia, Harbin and Ollie’s youngest, has talent along the line of
creating things just like her father. She studied sculpture at the
University of Seattle. I guess the boys took after Harbin too. Ray
made a model of a steam engine when he was about 11, using the
foot-power lathe in his father’s shop in their barn, and even cast
some of the parts himself. Recently when I was in Seattle, Robert
showed me the long-handled lawn mower he rigged up so that
he could stand at the top and cut the grass on his steep terrace.
us all, and Bob left to live on the Harbor.

I rented out the farm and had my final sale, Saturday, May 26: 7 work horses, 17 cows with calves, 2 shorthorn bulls 5 years old, 30 head of young cattle, 100 sheep; a chapter in my life banged shut with finality. The Denny Blaine Land Company bought 78 acres of my land for $100 an acre, and I divided the money up 7 ways between the children and myself, and I moved back to the house I had built in town. It had a windmill and was on West Main. I built it in 1887 after Joseph’s death.

The attic and the windmill were full of things I had kept all my life. I never did like to throw anything away. There was mother’s spinning wheel I promised to Ada. Ada came back to live with me after John died. There was the Dutch oven I used before I got my cook stove with the high back. The hanks of red carpet and bolts of calico from the H. Coats store when the little Polish man sold out in the early ’60’s. There was Joseph’s buffalo skin shirt and his long Kentucky rifle, just short of five feet, now taller than I. I seemed to have gotten smaller somehow. There was the tiny nightcap that Eva wore at Fort Henness and the little organ on which I’d played “Joe Bowers,” and all the memories. Eva, Harbin and Ada had been considered among the best singers in Centerville and Eva went on with her music at Monmouth during college.

There was the white cotton dress with the full skirt and puffed sleeves Mama made me for the governor’s ball. The state museum at Tacoma had asked for it and I really intended to give it to them. There was a long lock of Allen’s curly hair. He made me cut it off when the boys at school made fun of him. He was my baby and I did hate to cut off his curls. Allen and Lucinda had a girl named after me, Deborah Adeline Borst, born September 24, until our number reached about 100 wagons before going on to the crossing. There were lots of Indians around in hiding, but only about 40 came up to council. The emigrants ahead of us had a rough bridge to cross on, and the Indians thought that they would compel the emigrants to pay a big toll for crossing on it. As they rode in with their paint and feathers, Julina Jane hid under Mama’s apron. I stayed very close too. They made a demand, but no threat. There were more white men than they were expecting, so they were content with what was given them, and we breathed a sign of relief and continued on.

The big train kept close together for a few days, fearing a night attack, but after we thought we were beyond danger, we divided up again into small companies to feed the stock, which had to be watched, fed and guarded each night.

I enjoyed traveling in the small groups better. Mama gave us more liberty and we found friends to walk along with and time passed quickly as we visited. There were still chores, but those mostly came in the morning and evening and the rest of the day I would walk or ride when I was tired, and Jasper and I even drove the wagon on safe afternoons. I could feel how much stronger I was getting each day. I missed racing along on horseback, but I could catch a ride of the back of one of our horses, if we were on even ground, some mornings before it got too hot.

The men had a regular system of standing guard each night. As we traveled further along, where the Indians were dangerous, the wagons were drawn in a large circle which formed a kind of stockade. There the cattle and horses could better be protected from the Indians or from being stampeded by the great hordes of buffalos. One day the buffalos ran past us and I was terrified. The ground trembled under my feet, like a great prairie storm.
We were grateful for the dry, plentiful prairie chips we gathered each night for hot fires.

After we had been on the trail about a month or two, the Indians stampeded our stock one night. We lost 4 cows and 2 horses. We hadn’t been careful enough, and a boy on guard fell asleep. That seemed to be the beginning of our misfortunes. One by one we lost our horses until we were compelled to leave one of the wagons by the trail, and a part of our clothing and bedding stayed too. I cried as I saw our things there on the prairie. We had seen remains of other wagon trains and graves before. But now it was our precious things being left behind.

It gave me bad dreams and I talked about it with Mama the next day. She told me she had many things in the past that made her feel sad. She had lost a baby between Jasper and Julina, and she said she thought she couldn’t go on, but she did. So she said she guessed leaving a few things weren’t as bad after all. I loved and admired my mother and hoped someday I’d be as brave and wise as she.

We had taken the Mormon Trail out of Council Bluffs dropping down to Fort Kearney. We started the slow climb northward, crossing the South Platte, Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff and Fort Laramie. Chimney Rock towered above the prairie and we could all spot that landmark. At Fort Laramie we saw the first snow-capped mountain so clear and beautiful in the distance.

It was at the North Platte that we encountered the Cheyenne Indians, and we broke back into smaller groups over South Pass and past Independence Rock. That was the biggest rock I had ever seen. It was covered with names carved and painted on it, and we stopped to add ours.
Chapter 8
Mary’s Later Life

After my long trip back home from California, I just sat looking out over the river. The ferry traffic was gone. The trees Joseph and I had planted were doing nicely. It was a pretty place; too big for me, though. So much had happened since the big boom when Allen was still in college. In 1892 Mama died visiting Jasper down in Oregon. Another part of my life seemed to slip away with her. Papa was so lost and lonely he moved his drug store back to Oakville for two years. Then he moved in with me on the farm till he died. Now he’s buried out there with Joseph. I had been thinking of Joseph again. This would have to stop.

The crash came in 1893. Eastern capital for growth was withdrawn and railroads ceased building. The mills shut down, and even though the population was up to 5,000, the people left as quickly as they had come. You couldn’t sell a town lot for $1.00. For about four years the town had been dead. Cattle were stabled in the first floor of the partially completed Hotel Centralia. Even in the fashionable residential section of the north end nothing was selling. Prices were low for crops and animals too.

In February of 1894, I sold a large bunch of hogs to A. H. Chambers and got 5 cents gross, so I looked around and sold T.J. Uhlman in Tacoma some for 6 ½ cents a pound. Yet when I ordered a sulky plow from the same company I had been doing business with in Elkart, Indiana, the price had not dropped from several years ago. It was hard times everywhere.

I realized I was relying more and more heavily on Bob McGee’s

We came to the northern cutoff over Wind River Range and headed north for Soda Springs and Fort Hall. The alkali here could be shoveled up and used for soda in baking. Fried bread was a staple; those dried biscuits Mama had made ahead were all gone by now.

Here we wound along the Snake River through Shoshone country to Fort Boise. The Oregon Trail took a sharp turn to the north over the Blue Mountains and into the Dalles on the Columbia River. This part of our journey was terrible. We had to pull the wagons over the mountains and through the muddy swamps. More people lost wagons and we shared the best we could, helping each other.

Following the river down, we spent one night at a farm on the Clackamas, where Oregon City now is, arriving September 30, 1852.

Chapter 2
Mary at the Harbor

We had arrived. The trail had been made first by the buffalos, later well worn by the Indians. Lewis and Clark had traveled parts of it and later trappers followed the same route and discovered better shortcuts. The first wagon train of emigrants headed out on the Oregon Trail in 1841. In 1849 gold turned the emigration into a mad dash, and now, in 1852, we had made the journey. We spent one night on the Clackamas before moving on to our first temporary home in Milwaukie, Oregon. Here Papa rented a small house five or six miles above Portland, where we slept under a roof for the first time in six months. It wasn’t much, but
mother settled in and made it seem comfortable after the perils and disappointments of the trail. We arrived with one light wagon, two cows, one yoke of oxen and one horse.

Milwaukie was a little sawmill town on the bank of the river. Farming people didn’t settle here, so Papa and Jasper took a scant supply of food and with an old German, who had fallen in with us, left to hunt for a new home for the family. Mama, Julina and I were left alone not knowing what to expect. We spent a few months in a makeshift school some of the people had started, and it was here we spent the winter of 1852-53.

Meanwhile Papa went down the Chehalis River to Gray’s Harbor, where he found a lonely white man on the harbor. It certainly wasn’t crowded nearby, and the little Frenchman lived in a small log cabin about eight by ten feet and six feet high. He had one opening to go in and let in daylight. He had them all stay with him. Papa and the German soon found land that satisfied them, and they put up a cabin on Papa’s land first as he was anxious to get us back together. By this time, the meager supply of food was growing slim, and Papa was planning on going up to Olympia to get supplies before going after Mama and us. It was a great surprise when two white men came along and stayed a few days. They felt the Harbor was desolate and the oldest man, Chapman, wanted to leave. The younger man wanted to go on to Shoal-Water Bay, so he hired some Indians to take him down to the seashore, where he could walk on down the beach. Mr. Chapman and Papa rolled up a little bedding and a few provisions, a few matches and an ax and started up the Chehalis River in a canoe to get supplies.

They made good time the first day going with a favorable tide, but after they got above the Satsop River their progress was

had to do that I didn’t like was the time I helped Bob McGee here, dig his grave out there on the prairie."

Oh, I didn’t need Ed to remind me of that day. And many times since I’ve gone there to visit the graves, especially the large one marked by the tall white monument.

I didn’t lack for money then either. I could order from the O’Neill and Company catalogue in New York, or I could go to Seattle or Portland and buy ready-made dresses and hats if I chose. But nothing ever took the place of the beautiful watch and gold chain that Joseph gave me long ago. I did get ready for Allen’s wedding with some new things. He married Lucinda Elizabeth Overacker in California. He was just 22, too young. Oh, I was only 16 when I married Joseph and I thought I was pretty capable. She was a nice girl, but I was afraid they would stay in California and I would miss Allen so much. January 4, 1896 they were married and it was a grand occasion. I saw how happy Allen was. All four children married. I know Joseph would have liked to see that day.
kept half a ton of salt in the old Windsor House for the cattle. I’ve stored 600 bushes of potatoes there in the blockhouse, and I’ve helped him put 3,000 bushels of wheat in the Windsor House. Joe Borst had a master mind.”

Ed would go on and on and I would listen and silently agree: “Why, he had a hog house when other folks had just a pig pen. Remember how he fed his hogs, boiled potatoes and soured barley? That was because he knew what fattened them best. He’d say to me, ‘Eddie, go put the barley in the kegs and sour it.’ And those boiled potatoes were just the thing. They acted as sort of a tonic for the hogs. And then in the late summer the sows and the pigs were put on the wheat stubble and then in the artichokes. The mother hogs he’d leave there until spring with a little feed, mostly wheat. They rooted in the artichokes all winter, but the young pigs put in the hog house to fatten where they were kept clean and dry. The sows would root holes as deep as two feet. But they never destroyed all them and they’d grow again in the spring. I’ve seen ‘em as high as four feet and all sticky when it got hot. Yes, Joe had a master mind. Why he was the most progressive of all the old-growers; even Sargent, who had plenty of money to back him, couldn’t beat Joe.”

“Don’t forget he was the first to introduce Poland China hogs and pure-bred Durham cattle. D’ya remember his bull, a three year-old Durham?” Ed would ask suddenly, his face alight, his eyes catching mine in a habit he had. “I’d been forbidden to lead the bull unless I used a staff in his nose. But I saw he was gentle and I used to lead him with a rope, at my own risk. I’d lead him to the river for water and stroke his neck. And Joe’s horses always took the lead too in this part of the country.” Then Ed’s face would lengthen and as I waited for the end, he looked away and said, “In all the time I worked for Joe Borst, the only job I slower. They lost control of their craft, were upset, and lost everything but their lives. They had a hard struggle to reach land again. This was in December, and the ground was covered with snow from two to four feet deep, and it was very cold.

They waded through the brush and snow all the rest of that day while they could see their way. Then they beat a track around a large tree, where they ran around all night to keep from freezing. The next morning, as soon as daylight dawned, they started out on their journey. After several hours they came to a stream, Cedar Creek, which they had to wade because the ice was not strong enough to bear their weight. They traveled on until they reached the Black River where again they had to do much wading in the icy cold water, almost waist deep.

By this time Papa had become exhausted from cold, hunger and fatigue and could hardly walk. Finally he told Mr. Chapman to go on and save himself as he did not think he could go any farther. Mr. Chapman would not leave him, but took him by the arm and helped him along until he could see a house, the first and only house on Mound Prairie. Mr. James and his family had just recently settled there. Papa again told Mr. Chapman to leave him as he could not go any further, so Mr. Chapman laid Papa down, covered him with snow and went on to the house and told them his distressing story.

It was almost dark, but Mr. James and his oldest son started out to bring Papa in. They scratched off the snow and pulled and dragged and carried Papa along as best they could until they got him to their home. He was entirely unconscious, but with warm nourishment and Mother James’s good care, they saved his life, but not his feet. He lost three toes from one foot and two from the other, and he was not able to walk without crutches for over
six months. Fortunately for Mr. Chapman, he was a younger and stouter man, and after a day or two of rest and a few hearty meals, he went on his way.

While Papa was with the James Family, their youngest son Allen, age 5, died. It was a sad funeral for all of them. Papa wondered how his own little family was so far away.

It had been over two months since there had been any communication between Papa and us. There was a rural mail route from Monticello, on the Columbia River, about once a week. The mail was carried on a “Siwash Kuitan’s” (Indian pony) back. We had given Papa up as lost or drowned or perhaps killed. Finally a man who had traveled half way across the plains as one of Papa’s teamsters started out to find the missing ones, if possible. When he reached Fords Prairie on the Chehalis River, he found a poor cripple. It was a joyful meeting for Papa and his old friend. The teamster then returned to Milwaukie to help Mama and Julina Jane and me to join our father.

We came up from Portland to St. Helen’s landing, on the west side of the Columbia, which flowed north here. We were on a good-sized boat, called the “Lot Whitcom”. Then we crossed over the Columbia in a canoe paddled by Indians. We stopped overnight with Mr. Huntington, and the next day started up the Cowlitz River in a canoe with the Indians, reaching the first old Cowlitz Landing, later called Toledo, after several portages. We stayed with Thomas Carter three days later.

We went from there to Ford’s Prairie with an ox team. We stayed over one night with Mr. Jackson on Jackson Prairie. He and his wife Matilda were very gracious people. They had an interesting story of their own crossing that they shared with us.

There was no fire in the men’s sleeping quarter, so after supper they would warm and dry themselves by Joseph’s soapstone fireplace in the dining room. We always seemed to get talking of Joseph, and it comforted me to talk about him and when he first settled the land.

Ed Young said that Joe talked to him like a father: “He’d call me to him and say, ‘Eddie’, he always called me that; me and my brother Herman worked for Joe ever since we were kids and were called the long-legged Young boys. We’d help out at threshing and would get a wagon box of straw for our troubles. Joe used to say to me, ‘Go down to the river’; the pasture extended almost to the Whealdon Place, and I’d count the cattle and report back that they were all there. No sir, Joe never did things in a small way. You can tell that by lookin’ at the big plow and the woodshed built so a wagon could be driven in and unloaded at his convenience. He
Dear Allen, he had been so lonesome in California. Coming from a small community and going to a large city had been hard. He had written many letters to everyone, and they all shared his feelings with me.

While Allen was home, Eva wrote to say the mares they had bred to Mr. Spuriosk’s stallion had had their colts, and I could buy some. I called Mr. Coffman again in Chehalis at the bank and had the money ready for her when Crate came to town.

I also offered to buy some unimproved land from Mr. Espey, down in Oysterville, near the ocean, so Mr. Coffman could arrange for that at the same time, if the price was fair. I was happy to be so busy those days. It took my mind off Joseph.

When Crate came in, I gave him that Orange Blossom medicine I ordered from Indiana for Eva. She hadn’t looked too well. I knew she still was thinking about the little boy she and Crate had lost. I also sent some of the peaches I had just ordered from Charles Fraser’s fancy grocery in Seattle. She always liked peaches. Just imagine 22 ½ lbs. of coffee cost me $4.52. The men drank that up pretty fast.

Letter to Mr. Coffman

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We finally reached old Judge Ford’s house February 12 and met our dear, crippled father with rejoicing, thankful hearts. The next anxious thought was to find Jasper and the old German at the Harbor.

It took a whole day of parleying to get the Indians to consent to take us down to Grays Harbor. February 14th, with four Indians and two canoes, we started for Grays Harbor, reaching our destination the 17th. Here we had another joyous, thankful meeting with the old German and Jasper, who were almost famished for something fit to eat. All they had to eat was dried peas. Sometimes they caught some fish to lean up beside the fire to cook and eat without salt, or when the tide would go out they could find some crabs. They had not seen bread of any kind for months. Two happier mortals I never saw. Mama and I began a batch of Indian fry bread and had it sputtering in the pan over an open fire in no time. There were quite a number of Indians at that time, scattered about on both sides of the Harbor, and when our arrival was announced among them, we awakened their curiosity. They seemed quite anxious to make our acquaintance, no doubt thinking that they would have quite a picture frightening a white woman and her children. It took only three trials to convince them that they had found a woman who did not scare.
worth a cent. The first Indian Mama ran off carrying two heavy stripes on his body, by using Papa’s big whip.

The next one she sent home with a broken arm. He came to the house when she and Papa were both gone to get some board timber. They left the old German and us children at home. This Indian took advantage of the occasion to get into the house, which was strictly against Mama’s orders. They kept up such a racket trying to get in that we were terribly frightened by the time Mama returned. We told her of our excitement.

An hour or two later the same Indian came back as pleasant and sociable as if he had never thought of an evil thing in his life. Mother asked him why he had done such a mean thing to frighten her children when he knew she was gone. He put on a very innocent face and told her he could not understand what she meant. “Well,” she said, “I will make you understand”. She took down her crabapple club and he started to run. She was right after him, striking him at every jump, and broke his arm. In a few minutes he and his brother came back on the war path. She stood up to him saying that he was the transgressor and she would not offer any apology.

Father felt sorry that the arm was broken. He was working nearby and called to the Indian and told him he could mend it. Papa went into the house and brought out material for bandages and liniment, and made some splints. He set the arm and gave them some medicine to bathe it with. He gave the Indian a silver dollar, which made peace, and after that he was a good Indian and often talked of Mama’s bravery.

Their “Hyas Tyee” (big chief) ridiculed his braves for being afraid of a woman. He bragged that he would go up and give

lia. By 1886 the population had grown to 325, and town government had been established in the form of a board of trustees. I wished Joseph had lived; at 65 he would have been a very vital and experienced person to help run our city. He should have given up that hard work sooner.

I considered all the good years we would have had together, and I couldn’t help shedding tears.

Back at the farm, so many things needed to be done. The renters had let the place run down.

We were still fixing and mending when Allen got home. He was surprised—1889 and statehood. There was a regular boom in Centralia. The residents had increased from 700 to 3,200. The coal mines were being developed, and more than 10 lumber mills and a score or so of shingle mills were in operation in the immediate vicinity. Prices of local real estate had soared, and new additions were being plotted and added to the city. Why, a hundred buildings were under construction right at the very same time. The municipal improvements included a sewer system, water works, telephone service and a street car line. The two large schools and the Grace Seminary were being finished. It looked like a real city to Allen.
initials, so they thought they were dealing with a man.

Eva and Crate stayed over in Allensburg for a couple of years. It was a funny thing, but people started calling it Ellensburg. Gradually all of the cattle business slipped away from them. It required the strength and foresight of a man like Joseph to hold it together.

But I still had the farms, and I moved back to the big white house and took over again. It was good to be responsible for chores, sowing and harvesting again. I found Joseph’s tools, but there was no Joseph to use them. So I hired Bob McGee, the man Joseph brought from east of the mountains to run the farm, and Ed, one of Joe Young’s boys. I hoped it would all work out.

Allen chose to attend Washington College in Irvington, Alameda County, California. He was there in 1889 when Washington became a state. He wrote that he was applying himself and I just knew he would amount to something. He had always had the sweetest disposition. He wanted a bicycle to ride because he missed the horses so much. When he came home that first summer, he was so surprised by the changes. By 1883 the name of Centerville had been changed to Centra-

The next exciting time we ever had with the Indians was when a lot of them were over from Shool-Water Bay, where they had been together to gather oysters. A schooner had landed from San Francisco, and they had received a bountiful supply of whiskey. Long before dark they were drinking, fighting, cutting and slashing in a great shape.

Papa had gone up the river to get some supplies. The poor old German was no protector whatever. He feared an Indian almost as much as death. Mama told him and Jasper to take Julina Jane and go to bed and she would take the gun and go outside and stand guard. My being the oldest, she asked me to stand guard. That was an easy task. There was no danger of going to sleep when I was expecting every minute to be murdered. The air was filled with hideous fighting, screaming and yelling. I often wondered what my mother’s feelings and thoughts were, but I will never forget my own. Just before dark a poor, bloody, cut-up
victim came on the run, begging Mama for protection. She told him to keep on running into the woods. In a few minutes there came three more after him. Mother told them she did not know where he was and that they better go back to camp. I guess they thought the same thing, as they saw she was likewise prepared for battle. No more of them put in an appearance that night.

Grays Harbor was the most lonely, desolate place on earth. The privations and hardships which we had to endure were too disheartening to think of putting in another three years with no assurance of anything better.

In November, we bid goodbye to all of the homestead we had. Papa made a bargain with the Indians to take us up the river to Mill Creek, where two men were making an attempt to build a lumber mill, but we never completed it. Papa worked two months for them. They had four other hired men, making seven men. Mama cooked for them for our board.

About the first of February, we started out on foot, on a miserable, old, muddy, Indian trail. Each one of us had a pack to carry as we knew that we would be compelled to camp one night at least. We all walked single file through the mud until almost dark. Father thought we had a good camping place. He started up a great fire to get warm by, and nearby he prepared for us a bed of fir boughs under a big cedar with long heavy limbs hanging low. Then we ate our little lunch and retired for rest.

Snow fell during the night and we found ourselves under an extra white blanket the next morning. The prospect did not look very inviting under the present circumstances, but it was no use to whine. We just had to face the music. Father soon kindled a great hot fire to warm by while we ate our lunch. Then he ar-

Harbin Borst first, then Robert Allen, then Frank James and finally the little girl, Sylvia. Harbin had a big responsibility.

First, Ada and John and daughter, Grace, moved to New York for a time. Then in 1886, Crate decided to move east of the mountains and try his luck there. They shipped their things over by train to Yakima, but it was a day and a half more to get them to Allensburg. Eva said that Joseph had been having liver trouble and had lifted too much helping them move their household articles. He hadn’t felt well for two weeks, but wouldn’t quit working. Then the telegram came. October 25, 1886. It was as if every ounce of blood had leaped to my head. Joseph dead! It couldn’t be true. Even later after Crate and Eva tried to tell me again, I just couldn’t comprehend. I took on something terrible. I couldn’t help it. A part of me had died too.

It was the hardest thing I ever had to do, burying Joseph north of the house by the river. He was there with the four babies I missed so much. I ordered him a big white monument from San Francisco. And I did have a time with something that seemed so simple.

The letters I had to send back and forth to get the directions straight. I started doing business with James Linforth, the owner, himself, but it was still a long and frustrating process. Finally it came, and it does look majestic, like what Joseph would have wanted. I also learned something else in my business dealings. From then on when I ordered or bought things, I used just my

Monument Mary purchased for Joseph’s gravesite as it appears today.
didn’t. True, I was 42, but my hair wasn’t grey, and Allen was just 7. No, I wasn’t old, but an incident like the one I had just been through made me wish I would have stepped off several feet from myself and taken stock.

How different I was from the girl who married Joseph 26 years before! And what was the difference? Joseph had enough money, yet he kept working harder than ever. I really had a premonition about the land east of the mountains. Ever since my accident, I hadn’t gone with Joseph and I didn’t want Joseph to go either. I had friends, yet I missed Joseph’s quiet, comfortable companionship. I liked visiting Crate and Eva, but they had their busy life, and they had been talking about moving over east of the mountains to help Joseph. Eva liked horses too. To cheer her up, I wrote Mr. N. B. Coffman to give Crate $400 for some new animals. Crate was such a dreamer.

Harbin was interested in mechanics. I was right about him after all. He got the land he’d always liked on Scammon Creek, and while the family lived in town all one winter, he stayed in his small house on the creek where he set up a little water-powered grist mill and ground the flour he sent in for Ollie to use. He liked to tinker with things and to invent contraptions. There was an impractical side about Harbin I could never understand. For instance, he killed his cow and tanned the hide to make bands to operate the little mill. Odd looking bands they were too, with the hair still on the outside. There was an idealism about him too, a desire to make things perfect and exact. The builders in town said that his carpenter work was just perfect, but he was so slow that it would break them up to take him on contract labor. He was never satisfied unless the job was perfectly done.

And it was Harbin and Ollie who had the family. They had Ray ranged our packs and we again set out along the muddy trail through snow and rain all day.

We reached the Black River about the middle of the afternoon, but there was no way to get across, and the water was high. Father had sent our goods around up the Chehalis, then up the Black River by the Indians in a canoe. They did not reach us until dark and everything was as wet as water and snow could make them. They unloaded their craft on the opposite side and then set us over.

There was not a dry spot to be found on which to sleep. We all had to sit as close as possible to a tree, without anything to eat, while the rain simply poured down.

The next morning we started out early for another long walk until we found a shanty to go in for a rest and shelter while Papa went on to Mr. James to get them to go out with him after our goods. This same Mr. James had saved Papa’s life over a year before and he again came to our rescue. After we got our goods dried out, we went on to Olympia and stayed there until the next spring.

Chapter 3

Oakville

The winter in Olympia was far different from the previous winter. We had been lonely, among strangers, and afraid, with hundreds of settlers streaming in each day to Milwaukie, not knowing what had happened to Papa and Jasper or what would happen to us. Food and money were
running low and we had no promise of a home to go to. Even the spring and summer at Grays Harbor were bleak. There were Indian scares, poor conditions and little hope. Julina Jane and I were the first white girls at the Harbor. So when Papa became doorkeeper of the house of representatives at the first session of the territorial legislature the spring of 1854, I was excited and overjoyed. I was fifteen that winter and Mama made me a pretty white dress.

It was made of cotton with a very full skirt. It had short puff sleeves with longer gathered sleeves below. It looked real stylish. Mama sewed small pearl buttons down the front and I was very happy with the effect. There was a round of balls, parties and receptions when Mr. Stevens arrived to be the first territorial governor.

Washington had been part of the Oregon territory since 1848. So this year when President Fillmore signed the bill creating the Washington territory, including northern Idaho and western Montana, and appointed Isaac Ingalls Stevens governor, it was cause for celebration.

Washington territory, including northern Idaho and western Montana, and appointed Isaac Ingalls Stevens governor, it was cause for celebration.

I met several other girls my age and it was pleasant going to their homes for tea. Excitement was running high about the Governor’s ball and we talked about the Governor’s ball and we talked

cades and I was following Joseph. We had to go by a fallen tree and Allen who was along, cleared it easily. Joseph being a fine horseman, sized the distance and bent forward, easily passing under it too. But I was riding side-saddle and when I leaned forward, it was not enough and I was crushed between the pommel of my saddle and the log above. My beautiful, pampered horse kept on going and I was brushed off into the mud. Joseph did not know anything about what had happened. Suddenly he turned to speak to me and Bert’s saddle was empty. He rushed back along the trail and found me unconscious, lying crumpled in the mud and water.

“Oh, have I brought you here to kill you?” he cried. He built a fire and warmed me and dried my clothing. It was a long time before I recovered. I know it wouldn’t have happened if I hadn’t been riding one of those accursed side saddles or if I hadn’t pampered my horse so much, but I have always been that way with animals. I have never struck one in my life.

When I came to and Joseph recovered from his fright, he reminded me of the warm day when I made the men sweat to save the horses. We were bringing grain home from Baw Faw. When we came to the hill, I thought the load was too heavy for the team. So I insisted that Joseph have the men make two trips. Joseph said, “By gory, Mary, that’s a lot of foolishness, making the men sweat to save the horses.” But he’d given in, in a magnificent way. He also remembered the time when I’d never been able to strike Doll and Gyp, my white and bay pair, who had been so pampered that they backed the wagon over a bank with me when I told them to “Whoa.” I recalled both times and I suppose I have been foolish over horses. Joseph saw my contrite expression and added, “But I wouldn’t have you any other way.” He did surprise me at times.

Having 3 married children should have made me feel old. But it
but in justice to him, I always have to say that perhaps it was a bit of jealousy down deep in my own soul that caused the trouble. I am still petty about certain things. And Joseph, well, Joseph is still about as understandable as he was the night of our marriage. Joseph had suggested that I go east of the mountains with him more now that Allen was in school. I was lonesome. Time had caused so many changes. Sister Julina Jane married Samuel Weaver, Demaris Edna married William Goodman, and Mallie Angeline married Gilbert Ward. Demaris and Mallie, the age of my own Eva and Harbin; all of them married, it didn’t seem possible. Jasper Newton was living in Oregon. They were all so scattered.

I missed the old times, gathered around the organ in the big white house.

Ada, stately Ada, married when she finished nurses training. She married John Blackwell who was a constable in town. They adopted a girl, Grace, and were busy in their own life. Poor Eva and Crate! Their only child, a boy, died shortly after he was born. My mother lost children, I lost children and now my little Eva lost her only child. Life didn’t get any better in that respect.

So finally after Joseph asked me so many times, I decided to accompany him on one of the trips. We were on horseback, and I had Bert, my brightly colored bay, a pretty but spoiled animal. We were nearing the summit of the Cas-

Picture: Joseph Borst

about little else. We were anxious to receive an invitation. Papa’s position didn’t hurt my chances, and I was wildly excited to be chosen to lead the grand march at the ball given in honor of the first Legislative Assembly. It was the largest ball ever given in the town of Olympia, and I pressed my dress carefully with Mama’s flat iron heated on the stove, and took great care to look my best. How I sashayed down the big hall at the Pacific Hotel, swinging along on the arm of Aaron Webster from up the Skookumchuck! Mama and Papa could look on, and Mama said it made tears come to her eyes, it was so beautiful.

I was noticing some of the boys around Olympia when Papa said he had been granted a donation claim of 320 acres on the Black River and we were moving in. As we packed our possessions, I wondered what the next year would bring. It certainly couldn’t be as wonderful as this one had been.

We moved to a small settlement called Union. Papa had a house built for us with three main rooms. We cooked over a fireplace, and with some of our few pieces of furniture and what he had built, we made a home. It was spring of 1854 and Mama was going to have another baby. Things certainly hadn’t been easy for her. She had made the trip across the plains, spent the winter worried and alone. She had worked hard on the Harbor, protected her cabin and saw it all turn into nothing as we left with little. She worked from dawn to dark at the logging camp, trying to raise us children in a Christian manner. Her only diversion had been the previous winter in Olympia where I could help with the work, and Julina Jane, nine, could take care of herself. But Mama was always cheerful and happy to be useful and well. That’s how she put it. And one of the things she looked forward to was that Grandpa and Grandma Roundtree were going to leave Illinois and come to the territory soon.
Papa became the first postmaster, the first justice of the peace and probate judge of Chehalis County. He also owned a saw mill on the Black River. He was educated and a pretty important man in town. We lived near the Oakville Indian Reservation and Papa didn’t call on the Indians professionally, but rather as a friend who might be of service to them. He knew they had their own methods of attempting to cure themselves and he declined to interfere with them.

Nevertheless, if they sent for him, he would prescribe for them. The tribal medicine man had also been called on one occasion, and while Papa made his examination, the old medicine man continued his attempt to try to overcome the evil spirits that he believed possessed the small boy and caused his illness. He ran his hand slowly across the child’s body, then he quickly closed his hand in an attempt to catch the evil spirit. Father was the only doctor the Indians ever called, for he also believed in the wonder of nature herbs and they liked him to prescribe for them.

In December, the baby was close to being born. Mama had relied on Papa to deliver the other children. Back in Illinois, a neighbor came over to help. But I was going on sixteen and so when Demaris Edna Roundtree was born, I learned to respect my father’s ways even more. He was so confident and Mama felt calm with him. I was allowed to wash the baby and wrap her up warmly before tucking her in with Mama. How soft and small, and the feeling went through my body that this could have been my child. I was as old as girls who were already married. Jasper, Julina and I were so much older, so Demaris was kept a baby longer. We carried her around and made over her. Mama still had so many chores she had to do, she was content to let us take over. Demaris went many places with Papa too.

Wedded couples didn’t stop for congratulations, but the men, recovering their hats from Sunny Ford, who stood at the door holding them ready, escorted their brides back to our home, where the grand celebration began.

I was very tired after Crate and Eva left for their new home west of the big white farm house on the river. I picked up my Godey Lady Book and sat by the big bay window and looked at the pictures and thought about how lovely everything had been. I hoped they would be as happy as I’ve been.

They said if a bride wears out her wedding dress, it will be a long and good marriage. Eva will get a lot of wear out of hers.

We’d rented the farm and the white house and I missed the activity of cooking for the hired men, smoking the hams, curing the bacon, gathering the eggs, feeding my chickens and the many tasks and chores that had been a part of my existence all my married life. Joseph was away most of the time and Ada was still in Seattle so with Harbin married there was only Allen at home to care for. Even Allen was away most of the day at school.

Joseph had been home just in time for the wedding, but all fall he had driven immense herds over the mountains to fatten them on the bunch grass that grew so abundantly on his acres near Allensburg. He was in partnership with the Smith Brothers, wholesale meat dealers, who got 17 cents a pound on the hoof for Joseph’s cattle. He took care of the herds and the Smith Brothers did the butchering and marketing.

Joseph had always been awfully good about money; in fact, he had been awfully good about everything. Sometimes I would like to blame him for the little differences that arose between us,
Then I dampened the cloth and pressed down hard as I set them with my iron.

Chapter 7

The Family

It was to be a triple wedding Christmas Day, 1880; Eva and Crate, Sophia or Phi, as Joseph called her, and Ben Wiley from up at Shelton, and Phi’s younger sister, Ollie Ready, and Harbin Borst, our son. But Harbin and Ollie had given the others the slip and had been married several months before. So my best laid plans didn’t work out: Eva wasn’t married first after all. I couldn’t imagine Eva married. She was having trouble comprehending the change herself.

That morning a neighbor came to our house and handed her a nicely-wrapped package for Mrs. McElfresh, and Eva said, “Oh, she’s gone home,” thinking they meant Crates’ mother. We laughed over it, because she would be Mrs. McElfresh too.

We were living in our house in town, and I could look over and see the Christian Church on Gold Street. Mama and Papa lived on East Pine just behind the church now. They leased their holding at Oakville and ran a small drug store here in town. Not too many people knew in advance about the double wedding. The wedding party, made up of the two couples and their four attendants, marched from our house down to the church. We went in our regular manner. At the close of the services that morning, the marriage began. I couldn’t help crying. Whether it was because Harbin and Ollie weren’t up there too, or because Eva and Phi were married women now, I’m not sure, but a part of me seemed to grow older that day. At the close of the service the

When she was just starting to talk pretty well, Papa took her to an Indian burial. She told me what she saw. She and Papa walked up to the long “Kleesh-wh,” or winter house, and she heard a deafening sound. The Indians were attempting to drive away the evil spirits by noise and clatter. They were beating on boards and rattling pans and pounding on the rafters of the “kleesh-wh” until the split cedar boards that formed the roof and walls vibrated, each an individual sounding board. Then the noise stopped. The tribal medicine man came out of a nearby hut covered with “klus-kwis” mats and made the sign indicating that the old woman would soon die. The evil spirits could not be driven away. As was the usual custom, she had been left alone in the little shelter with food and water by her side. Sometime later an old “klootchman” went to the hut. When she returned, she gave the sign which signified that the old woman was dead. Then loud wails arose and recurred periodically. In the meantime, a large box had been placed before the “klus-kwis” hut. While the men of the tribe damaged the utensils of the deceased, the women gathered some of her blankets and trinkets and put them in the box. Then they dressed her in many garments, so many that the sleeves had to be cut from some to enable a maximum number to be pulled on. After placing her body in the box, more clothing and blankets were laid over it. But before the boards could be nailed down over the top, a fat old Indian had to sit on them to weigh down the lid. All the Indians had been very jolly during this time. But suddenly the mourners, for the most part paid ones, father said, began to wail loudly and they continued their lamentations as they followed the box to the burial place. There it was put in a shallow grave, over which several of the men of the tribe had erected a framework. On this they had hung pots, pans, baskets and mats, all damaged so as to be in a spiritual condition like the deceased and also to prevent their
being stolen by wicked whites. Previously, the Indians had placed their dead in trees or had set them afloat in canoes, often left to drift with the flood waters. Many other settlers told father that they remembered Indian burials and recalled that long afterward the sad laments of the mourners continued to linger in their ears.

I remember that Governor Stevens had been chosen to make Indian treaties and he was already working on them, as we read in the weekly paper, but the friendly Chehalis Indians, depleted in number by smallpox, were already on the Oakville Reservation by this time. The Indians living close by us still kept their customs, but had already adopted many of the white man’s ways, such as clothing, food and even wearing hats like white men who covered their heads. Yet they would also wet a piece of charcoal and smear it across their forehead before hunting. “Mamook poh, help shoot,” they would say.

Members of the tribe returned annually to their old camping grounds, which now had been claimed by white men and converted into homesteads. The “Klootchmen” (Indian women) would many times work for the homesteader right alongside the Indian men clearing the land and harvesting crops. One “Klootchmen” was walking by the cabin and noticed the baby had been left inside alone and was crying. She found the baby’s mother and cried and rubbed her eyes, pointing to the house to make the mother understand her baby needed her.

Mallie Angeline Roundtree was born March 14, 1861, several years after I had been gone from home. She went the rounds with Papa and knew a great deal about the Indians who lived near where she was born. She broke her leg when she was quite small and she told me how an old Indian klootchman, Susy, showed sympathy for her. Father tied a rope to her leg, and
white fir trees. He dug and dug and never found it. Oh yes, I thought of all the things that money would buy, but I can’t blame Joseph too much, for I am always hiding things myself and then spending weeks looking for them.

Since we had bought the old Windsor House, after it was vacant, Joseph had it torn down for lumber. He rebuilt it at the location of East Maple and East Front Street in Centerville. Even though it wasn’t complete, the children spoke of it as “Ma’s house in town.” There was an alcove formed by the double bay windows. That had been Joseph’s special idea. Joseph who always had everything twice as large as anyone else’s. Others in town had bay windows, but he decided that ours would extend on up through the second story too. Folks were already designating our house as the one with the double bay windows.

The Ready Family, Jim and Sarah, had been neighbors and friends for years. They had had the Old Windsor House while it was still located on the Borst place, and Jim Ready had helped Joseph manage the farm. Joseph had known Sophia or Phi as they called their oldest daughter since she was a child, and Joseph teased her and she blushed crimson and tried to hide her face. Joseph loved to kiss the shy child just to plague her, and it became one of his little jokes that Phi never heard the last of. The Ready’s had afterwards lived across on the old Scammon Place and ran the ferry back and forth. It seemed that Harbin was forever finding an excuse to go across. True, he always had a preference for a piece of land Joseph owned over there by Scammon Creek, but evidently Ollie Ready, Jim and Sarah’s daughter, caused him to make so many trips on the old ferry. The whole family ran the ferry during storms and floods.

In 1880 the flood waters were so high that the ferry cable dragged in the current. Soon a huge tree floated down and caught the cable. The tension became so great that it snapped on the north side, and the blocks and rigging pulled loose and the

weighed it down by hanging a rock-filled pail over the foot of the bed on the end of the rope. Susy came to visit often and brought gifts of tender camas shoots, roasted Indian fashion in a fern-lined pit full of heated rocks. She would stand by the bed and shake her head and look at the weight. “He bad one, Boston man, tie up to rock on bed,” she would say. At times she even pulled on the rope in an attempt to relieve Mallie’s pain.

Mallie said she attended an Indian Fourth of July celebration at the Reservation. Improvised seats were made especially for the white guests. They bowed their heads while an old Indian gave a prayer; then they sang, “Oh Where, Oh, Where Are the Hebrew Children?” in Chinook jargon. While the white neighbors sang “America”, the Indians hummed along. They were fine singers. After the service, a feast of barbecued meat was served, and a large box of crackers for the guests. There were berry pies, which were good even though the crust had been shortened with beef suet and was a bit tough. Dried salmon and roasted camas were served. Camas was as sweet as any dessert. In an assortment of pans coffee and native tea were served. After dinner there was horse racing, native gambling or “chil-chid”, and other Indian games played with bones and beaver teeth.

In the rainy weather of early spring, Mallie watched an old white-haired Indian stooped with age hew out his own canoe from a wind-blown tree near the school she attended. The man was called Arab. He used fire in making the log the right length and in burning out the interior. Piling small chunks about the tree, he burned out the interior, deeper and deeper. To confine the blaze to a narrow spot, he kept water in a woven basket. He was fortunate to have an ax, so he scored the top of the log and chopped out a trench-like space. Then he dug out and burned until, in crude design, he had fashioned a craft for himself. She
watched till she saw the canoe scraped clean and the outside trimmed and pitched ready to be set afloat.

Father had many sheep on our farm there and Jasper used to care for them. The Indians never felt they had too many dogs, but the settlers were constantly losing their stock. On one occasion Papa and Jasper found a number of our sheep slain, and Papa took his gun and went to the reservation. He ordered the Indians to surrender their dogs, and he shot as many as came in sight. One old Indian concealed his, the most destructive killer of all. Father and Jasper finally located where he had it hidden. As Jasper raised his gun the old Indian said sadly, “Klahowya, dog” meaning “Goodbye, dog”. My father was so touched, he asked the old man to come to our place and gave him all the fruit and potatoes he could carry home. But for years, the plaintive tone of the old Indian’s farewell stayed with him, “Goodbye, dog.”

Jasper was just a year younger than I was, and we had many merry times. I was quick and talkative and he was quiet and deliberate. He smiled and spoke in a slow drawling speech. One time Sam Williams invited him to breakfast. He lived there on the Black River. Jasper was so intent on his hotcakes that when someone asked his name, in one long drawl he replied, “My name is Jasper Newton, pass the ‘lasses, Roundtree.”

How the family teased Jasper about his first experience with a train when the railroad came through. Papa and Jasper were driving sheep to Tenino. The town named 10-9-0. It was toward dusk and Papa told Jasper to watch the animals while he looked for a good place to camp. As Jasper drove the sheep slowly along the road, a train came along the track puffing laboriously at a slow gait. Jasper, open-mouthed, walked right along beside it, leaving his sheep far behind. Papa met him trying to keep up

house held my other babies.

Perhaps Joseph noticed my despair, because he suggested that he and I be together more. I never had to worry about money; that wasn’t it. Joseph seemed to be able to make money in the same big way he did everything else. The land he’d settled on in 1846 and had taken out later as 320 acres of a donation claim, he had doubled since our marriage, filing on a homestead of 160 acres and getting equal amount by a preemption purchased at $1.25 an acre. Then there was the farm across the Chehalis at Scammon Creek that Harbin liked. And the two farms he’d bought at Adna besides the one in the valley at Bawfaw below the sudden rise of Bawfaw Mountain, which folks call Boistfort. My grandparents used to live there.

All this, to say nothing of his large holdings over the Cascades, at what he likes to call Allenburg, for our younger son. It is really this land that Joseph considers most valuable. He never cared for crop farming, but he always liked to deal in cattle. Even early in our marriage, he had the prairie full of beef herds, long-horned cattle he bought in southern Oregon and fattened for the markets in Seattle and British Columbia.

No, he made lots of money and was always generous to me. He bought me a beautiful gold chain made from solid gold pieces. It reminded him of his gold rush days. Of course, it may have been because of a problem of his that he bought it.

Joseph had been up on the Puyallup River chasing cattle through the brush, trying to round up his herd. He was carrying $500 in gold in a beef can. How typical of him that when the money grew heavy, he buried it by a white fir tree. When he returned for the gold, he wondered how one area could have so many
Halfway House. John Buchanan took over the hotel business with his halfway house by the big cherry tree at the old Van Wormer place on Fords Prairie and the Windsor House across the river was empty.

In fact, since 1872 when the railroad came, attention had become focused on the George Washington claim, and the community across the river was getting less and less business. Even the post office as early as 1867 moved to James Tullis over at the Holmes donation claim. After the railroad, Isaac Wingard was appointed postmaster in 1873, and the office was located in the front part of his combination store, residence and hotel. This small frame building, the first in the community that soon became Centerville, was located where the new railroad line crossed Black George Prairie. Clanrick Crosby Jr. established a store to the south, while in the next year, the Joseph Young family bought lots diagonally across from Wingards and built the Pioneer House, a larger hotel, accommodating more travelers. These three buildings were clustered around the intersection of Tower and Main.

George Washington laid out a town known as Centerville around this nucleus. It was four blocks square, extending north and south from Locust to Magnolia and east and west from Pearl to Diamond. The five streets running in the last named direction paralleled the railroad. In a year the population was 50 people, and by 1880, 78 had located in the town limits.

Ada had also left home, probably at Joseph’s suggestion, to take up nursing in Seattle. Now there were no differences over beaus, but the house seemed empty with just the two boys. Harbin, always quiet and occupied, was 16 now and Baby Allen was almost 2. The 4 little graves with the white picket fence behind the

with the train, his expression full of wonder. When father asked him about the sheep, he drawled in an air of unconcern, “The sheep, I guess I must have lost them, Father”.

There were lots of stories about Jasper. Like the time he was helping the men harvest hay. Jasper was sitting on top of a huge load of fragrant freshly-cut timothy, chewing a piece of grass and looking straight ahead. Little Eddie, one of the neighbor boys, was riding on the back of the load. Suddenly Jasper ducked a low-hanging branch, but Eddie who was riding backwards did not see it. It knocked him off and he landed on the ground with a thud. Jasper heard it. He turned and peered over the load of hay at the boy sitting on the hard ground. “You’d better be careful there, Eddie, you might hurt yourself,” he said, and once more resumed his intent inspection of the road ahead.

There were good memories of those years in Union, later called Oakville after the reservation. But I was growing up, sixteen just, and Papa and Mama wanted me to marry a man who had come over the plains with us. He was a nice man, but was three times my age and I didn’t love him one bit.

One day I was down at Papa’s saw mill and I did see someone who caught my eye. The thing I noticed first was his size. His back was to me, but he must have been well over six feet tall. I was under five feet and his size fascinated me. He was strong, too, and as he picked up the heavy boards and looked them over carefully before buying them, I knew he was a calculating man. I thought of as many excuses to stay at the mill that afternoon as I could, and it was with a heavy heart that I walked slowly on home.

I did make it my business to find out his name. It was Joseph Borst and he had a claim on the Chehalis River. But that was a
long way away and I might never see him again. I was dreaming about him, and wondering if he was married as I helped with supper. Mama tried to keep up a conversation with me, but I had to ask her “What?” so often, she finally just gave up and left me to thinking. We were always prepared for company because Papa brought people home often and some just dropped in when passing. I wasn’t dressed any different from usual and as I looked up, I caught my breath, for there walking in the door and stooping slightly, was the same man I had seen at the mill this very afternoon. My face got red and I tried to straighten my hair.

He didn’t seem to notice. He seemed quiet like Jasper, and he spoke in a deliberate manner. Mama was pleased to have a young man visit, and she chattered during preparation of dinner, trying to find out the news of his area.

During dinner, by questions from Papa and Mama, I found out he wasn’t married and that he had a 320 acre claim on the Chehalis River. He also said he had come across the prairie in 1845 with the Fords, the first family in the area.

Papa was impressed by that information and asked him all sorts of questions about the early times, Indians and the land. Joseph was polite. I smiled at him over my glass, and before he left that night, he promised to come back and visit our family again.

My feet barely hit the rungs on the ladder as I headed for bed in the loft that night. I had just met this man, yet I knew I liked him and wanted to know more about him.

During the long evenings when he visited, I pieced together this story. Joseph was born October 15, 1820 in the Schoharie Valley, They had the same print only in different colors. There had always been dissimilarities between the two girls. Eva was so pretty in her yards and yards of ruffles, her great dark eyes. She was tiny and dainty, no taller than I. I was still slender and young-looking for my age. At times when Eva and I accompanied Joseph to Port Townsend where he often went to transact business connected with the sale of his large herd of beef cattle, people sometimes mistook Eva and me for sisters and refused to believe that I was old enough to have a grown daughter.

But I was proud of Ada, too, who had grown into a tall, statuesque, almost queenly girl, very pretty in a striking sort of way. Perhaps the misunderstanding that had arisen between the girls was my fault for I have always felt that Eva, who was older, should have been married first. When young men came to call, I saw to it that Eva greeted them and showed them into the parlor, and that Ada didn’t put in an appearance. I know it hardly seemed fair to Ada, but I was right, of course. Whenever I tried to talk to Joseph about the strain, he’d say, “Bunch grass’s growing pretty good this year, Mary.” Or “Wheat’s coming along first rate in the west forty.” Then he’d walk off. Maybe even Joseph and I were growing farther apart.

It was then that I took Eva to Portland on the steamer and to Monmouth, the Christian College. But her letters sounded so lonesome. She took music and did very well, too. At least she got to see cousins Allen and Turner Roundtree, who lived nearby. Even with Eva going to college, I still didn’t feel so old. A baby was in the nursery off our bedroom for me to love and hold again. Allen Turner Borst was born January 24, 1873. Things were so much easier with the care of this baby. When Mallie, my sister, visited then, she’d ride the stage line right by our door. She would ride up with the driver, Ben Benson, to the Buchanan
Harbin especially enjoyed running his finger along the edge of the yard-long steel colter, the knifelike blade that severed the ground so that the share could turn the furrow. When I warned him it might cut off his finger, he would smile and say, “If the Indians ever go on the warpath, I could use the cutter for a bowie knife, couldn’t I, Ma?” He’d try to lift the huge blade, but he’d scarcely be able to move it back and forth. The cattle and stock didn’t appeal to Harbin, even though Joseph was anxious for him to follow in his footsteps; maybe he would work with mechanical things, wheels and tools with sharp edges.

Ada, on the other hand, spent her time braiding rushes and sedges together in an attempt to make a long whip in imitation of John Mill’s buckskin one. She used it to drive her imaginary animals and wagons. John had a special kind of whip to drive the oxen to plow. He cut his buckskin into strips about as wide as his finger, tied them to the fence rail, and while the children formed an eager circle around him, he wove it into a round braid about the size of his little finger, attaching it to a handle about a foot long and making the opposite end slim and supple. “This is so the cracker will crack with a crack,” he winked and told his audience.

Ada also came by her love of swinging her whip from my father. Many times I’ve seen him walking along driving his oxen and killing a ground squirrel or a field mouse with the deadly aim of his long whip. I have seen him flick flies off the cattle without the patient, plodding animals even being aware that he had relieved them of their tormentors. Yes, Ada came by it naturally. Ada was already larger than her sister. I had to use more material for the blue dress than for the red one I had finished for Eva.

New York. His ancestors came from Amsterdam about 1700 and had fought in the Revolutionary War. His father William M. Borst also was born in Schoharie County. He married Nancy Buckhout, the daughter of James and Margaret Buckhout. Joseph could trace his family back four more generations. His father’s father, Martinies Borst, married Elizabeth Lamb, and his father, Johannes Borst, married Catherine Rickert, and his father, Johan Martin Borst, married Catherine Mattice, and his father, Hendrick Borst, married Maria. Joseph was proud of his family. He was the 6th of 15 children. The Borsts moved to Sheffield, Iowa and Joseph at 24 decided to move west with the Ford wagons in 1845, some of the first to cross the prairies.

There were great herds of buffalo which the group passed frequently along the way. After seeing one great herd, several young men decided to kill one of the animals. Joseph told about riding dangerously close to the herd to pick out the one he liked best. He brought it down, skinned it and had an Indian woman cure the hide and make it into a buffalo skin shirt. He remembered there had been times when that shirt was the only one he had to his name. Many men wore buckskin shirts, but only Joseph had a buffalo skin one.

Judge Ford liked to tell the story of Joseph’s fight. He’d start out by saying that Joseph would always fight with his head and then he’d laugh. On their journey across the plains, a big burly fellow started to get nasty with Joseph, who was very easy going. Of course, Joseph did not want to start trouble in camp, so he didn’t pay any attention at first. But the fellow kept up and challenged Joseph to a fight. No self-respecting man can let a trouble maker get by with that, so Joseph accepted. “I’ll fight you,” he said, “but on my terms.”
The fellow was delighted and said, “Name them.” Joseph pointed to the middle of the river. Well, the fellow started out splashing and cussing fit to make all the men send their women out of hearing. At the middle Joseph was waiting and laughing. About halfway out, the fellow decided he wasn’t so mad, and he waded back to shore feeling mighty silly. Joseph won the round by cooling off the fellow. Joseph was kind and brave, and I did admire him more and more.

As he talked, I noticed how handsome he was with a clean-cut face and piercing blue eyes that crinkled at the edges. He could say more with those eyes than most men do with their lips.

After they arrived in Portland, the Ford party decided to spend the winter there to decide where they wanted to settle. Indian trails first were the only routes to this part of the territory. Charles Wilkes, an American naval officer and surveyor, climbed the southern slope of what later was Seminary Hill in 1841 and determined it was too steep for wagons. It took Sir James Douglas in 1841 and six men to remove the fallen trees from the narrow trail. George Waunch was the first settler in 1845. He came with the Colonel Michael T. Simmons party which went on to Tumwater. The next spring, 1846, the Sidney S. Ford party which Joseph was a part of followed the wagon road of the name of Baldwin in Olympia. It had come by boat around the Horn by way of San Francisco. Baldwin cut out the pattern of the moldboard, and Joe Remley, the neighbor blacksmith, who had helped Joseph build the barn, had beaten out the land shearer on his anvil and welded the two together. The twelve-foot beam and wooden handles had been shaped from an oak that grew a mile or so away on Waunch Prairie.

When the steel share was resting under the lean-to beside the blockhouse, tilted over so that the wheels on the front end of the beam were free, Harbin would play with them, turning them around and around with his hands. He liked to have Joe Remley, who made the plow, explain how, since it was so large that no living man could have held it in the ground, the wheels of uneven size had been attached by a bolt through the axle to keep it from running too deep into the ground. He’d show Harbin that the wheel 30 inches in diameter on one side, balanced by one eight inches smaller on the moldboard side, enabled it to run on the level and plow a furrow eight inches deep.

When John Mills, the hired man, was in a particularly affable mood, he’d let Harbin sit on the edge of the beam, holding a stick and hanging his feet over the moldboard. Then when the dirt stuck in the share, Harbin would push it off. But when the share failed to uproot the small oak stumps and stuck fast, then John would unhitch a pair of oxen, and Harbin would leave his seat on the beam to watch him attach a chain around the upright post and drive the cattle in the opposite direction pulling the huge plow loose. This large plow paid for itself in the abundance of grain threshed each autumn. Even the girls loved to run along in the dark, moist soil in the two-foot furrow that it turned over, following after John as he swung his long buckskin whip over his head and snapped the
see its handiwork in the changes it has made in us all. It was only on rare occasions that I wondered what it would have been like had I married the happy, carefree talkative Daniel Borst.

The second teacher we had, after Annie Stevens got married and left, was Miss Lord, and then the little school had started up in the log cabin by the Chehalis River, where George Washington, our colored neighbor, had lived. A few years later, Mallie came to live with us again while attending the first regular school in the vicinity, the board one built at the end of Washington’s Lane.

Mallie and Harbin had an experience she will never forget. In the top of the large barn there was a chute which let bran down to the pigs when the trap door was open. Harbin and Mallie decided to use some of this bran to make cakes. They made great cakes, and the pigs squealed in hoggish delight when they ate them. The children opened the trap door a bit wider to increase the flow of bran, then couldn’t get it closed. The pigs were reveling in plenty within a few minutes, and the children were worried that they would be dreadfully punished for wrong doing. Harbin convinced Mallie to tell Joseph because she was a girl and wouldn’t get punished. Joseph could have lost all his hogs as a result of foundering from too much food, so it was two serious children who tried to tell him what had happened. At first Joseph looked anxious, then relieved after finding out the damage wasn’t as great as he had feared. Two children can think of twice as many ideas as one, but they did enjoy playing with each other.

Besides the barn, another of Joseph’s big creations was the gigantic plow. It was the largest plow ever seen in the territory, folks always said. Strangers traveling the Military Road would stop to look at it. The steel, Joseph ordered from a man by the

Simmons and settled on Ford’s Prairie. That year Joseph claimed his land on the Chehalis and Skookumchuck Rivers and started his claim shack.

We were better acquainted before he told me about his friendship with Harriet Jane Ford. Other neighbor ladies had already told me he was in love with her and they were engaged. She was the oldest daughter of Sidney Ford, his dear friend, and along the journey across the prairie, they had talked often, walked together and shared many of the hard adventures. They talked of marriage and all they would do on the new land. Joseph wanted to wait to marry Harriet until he had a home and cleared some land for their future. Times were very hard that first year. The winter was so long and Joseph had only a little land under cultivation. He had no seed to plant in the spring and nothing to eat, so he went to the Hudson Bay Farm at Cowlitz Prairie and split rails at 50 cents a hundred, in return for wheat at $4 a bushel. Then he carried it home and lived on part of it till spring when he planted the rest.

Tears came to my eyes as I thought about how hard he had tried. He had the backbone of an ox and the moral strength of a saint to survive.

Harriet Jane met George Waunch during this time. He had a newly-built log cabin, cattle, plowed ground sown with grain,
and he was a gunsmith. Joseph worked from morning to night and there was little time for courting after traveling the distance to the Fords. Whatever happened between the two of them, I’m awfully glad it did, because in 1847, Harriet married George Waunch, and people said Joseph’s heart was broken. But that was several years ago.

After the terrible Whitman Massacre, Joseph and every other able-bodied man in the territory enlisted in 1848 to avenge the deaths. His company of Oregon riflemen were stationed at Fort Waters at Waulatpu, the very place where the Massacre had taken place the previous fall. When the soldiers arrived, they found the bodies of the dead had been unearthed by the wolves and lay about half-devoured. Joseph’s face was ashen as he recalled those days. My quiet peaceful Joseph fighting Indians. I seemed to call him, “my” so naturally. I was falling in love with this many-sided man.

He had brought a long Kentucky rifle almost as tall as I was with him across the plains. In 1849 the gold in California caused him to go southward. He told of his many experiences, none of which made him rich. With a friend they drifted north to the British territory, still searching for gold. There he and his companions were captured by hostile Indians, who tortured the brave men and treated them so cruelly. He escaped and said that he had enough of get-rich schemes. After searching for gold and fighting in the Cayuse War, he was ready to settle back on his claim, add more to his log cabin and clear more land. Hyas Pete, the huge Indian, helped Joseph cut down the little oak trees and slash out the hazel brush. The huge ax would bring the little trees crashing down. Joseph wanted to buy more cattle too. He had so many good ideas.

One day while I was sewing and listening to the children’s happy laughter, the tone suddenly changed. They were screaming. As I ran out into the yard, I was screaming myself as I flew to the still form of Eva lying on the ground. She had been thrown from the back of a race horse which Joseph had left in the narrow lane. Even after I had her safely in her own clean white bed, she did not regain consciousness. Joseph, sick with worry, was pacing the floor by Eva’s bed. Poor darling Eva, Mama’s little girl. Finally the covers began to move. In an instant Joseph and I were at her side asked how she felt. “Better than I did the day before yesterday,” she replied. She was still half unconscious, but moving.

I turned to Joseph to punish Ada for coaxing Eva on to the horse and striking it to go faster. But Joseph’s eyes were just as determined that Ada would not be punished. It was always this way, and I turned my back on Joseph and bent over little Eva.

It is strange how I have lived every single moment of my life and scarcely realized it. I would walk along a path swinging my arms and feeling the air brushing my open palms; it assured me that something was there, even though I couldn’t see or hear it. Yet when I shut my hands, they closed on nothing. Like time, I
ready stepped off into nothingness. It was as if I had taken the plunge and could imagine how Eva felt, hesitating, waiting for enough nerve. When Eva struck the grain, her knees hit her a blow on the chin. Eva had a hurt and surprised look on her face. Why do children do such things? I couldn’t stay and watch any longer.

It was strange comparing the two girls. Ada was talkative, capable, while the older Eva was more silent and retiring. Most of the time Eva was the most considerate. Back when we lived in the old Coat’s Store Building, Eva had fallen ill and refused to eat. Mrs. Cornell had brought her a cup of hot coffee and some toast from the Windsor House. The browned crust looked so good that little Eva ate it crusts and all, almost ravenously, but paid no compliment other than, “Thank you, it was good”. When Mrs. Cornell left, I asked her why she didn’t tell Mrs. Cornell how delightful the coffee and toast was. “I know Ma, but I didn’t want to tell her how really good I thought it was. I was afraid I’d hurt your feelings.” I was totally surprised, but secretly wondered how such a little child could judge human nature so accurately. She takes after me, I think; Ada is more Joseph’s child.

Joseph even smiled indulgently at some of her capers. Ada was always pulling over young fir trees and bouncing up and down on the limber branches. Playing horse she called it. It was disquieting the way she galloped around on sticks and poles with Harbin.

Eva never played like that. She would rather persuade Harbin to let her dress him like a little girl, call me Mary, and play house in the old blockhouse. Ada would play house, too, but she’d cooperate only so long, then she would insist on riding her imaginary Joseph had been visiting us several times, and he seemed to enjoy telling me about his adventures. The family liked him and they crowded around him each time he came. On one of visits he brought someone with him. His younger brother, Daniel Borst, had come for a visit from the east. Joseph hadn’t seen the boy, who was 12 years younger than Joseph, for several years, nor any other member of his family. He was pleased to bring him to our house. How I laughed at Daniel’s stories! He was only 21 at the time, 6 years older than I was. He seemed so immature beside Joseph. He was a wanderer, and he had been in many places since he left home. In fact, he was talking of going north after leaving here. Joseph tried to warn him about the Indians and the rough mountainous land, but Daniel just laughed and said he led a charmed life; nothing would bother him.

As I looked at him, I could almost believe him. I had a strange feeling that night after the brothers left. I was seeing a younger Joseph, the Joseph who had fallen in love with Harriet Jane Ford crossing the prairie. Yet Daniel wasn’t anything like Joseph. He was brash, talkative, flighty; like me, I thought and it gave me a strange feeling.

While Joseph was working one day, Daniel came over to visit. Jasper, Julina and I were planning a trip to Grandfather’s house now that he lived on Bawfaw Prairie. He and Grandma came out in 1853 and claimed land, but they still were quite a few miles away. Grandpa’s 3 other sons and a daughter and their families also came and settled nearby. Perry and A.J. Roundtree took donation claims on Roundtree Prairie, later called PeEll. Grandpa had horses to ride and I still loved to be on one’s back with my hair streaming out in the wind. It was a rare treat to take time off from chores and be able to visit. Mama had packed some food to take, and we asked Daniel to ride as far as Joseph’s
Daniel offered to drive the wagon, and Jasper loved to sit and dream anyway, so he readily agreed. Julina Jane had brought along the doll an Indian had made her, and she was happy to be jouncing along with the sun hitting her back. Daniel talked on about his life and what he wanted to do with it. He left home early, being the 12th of 15 children, and he had traveled across the prairie in the hopes of finding riches. He didn’t like farming after working so hard as a child on his parents’ farm, and he wanted something better. He said his wife would never have to work like his mother did. He’d buy her fancy hats, store-bought clothes and she could have a maid if she wanted. I laughed almost all the time at his stories, yet they fascinated me. I had never heard someone carry on as he did.

I was almost sorry to see him jump off at Joseph’s claim. Joseph was in the field and we stopped to eat our lunch with him. Joseph didn’t get to say much because of the constant flow of Daniel’s talking. Joseph just smiled and his eyes twinkled as he saw we all were getting to know his brother better.

We had a fine visit with our grandparents. They were in their 70’s and still farming and gardening, and they were getting along, far away from neighbors and towns. Grandpa had 40 acres of land of wheat and 60 head of hogs. I could talk easily with Grandma, and as I helped her with dinner, I asked her what kind of man she thought I should marry. She really laughed and said, “Go on with you!” But when she saw I was serious, she said I should find someone to take care of me. She knew how much I liked to tease and talk, and she said I should get someone who would put up with my silly ways.

skeletons lying in the bottoms along the river where the animals had gone to escape the chilling winds. Well, there was no possibility of that happening again. Joseph had seen to that.

In the center of the barn was a huge grain bin, so large the children often jumped into it from the broad crossbeams high above it.

Once while getting grain for my chickens, I had seen Ada, Harbin and Eva playing a frightening game. Ada’s flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes were fascinated as she climbed to the highest beam and plunged whooping like a young Siwash, stiff-legged feet first into the grain. It made my stomach sick. They might kill themselves, I thought. After Ada, flew Harbin. And as I watched, Eva was posed on a lower beam motioning Harbin to get out of her way. I reached out to stop her, but Eva had al-
The cattle couldn’t reach the dry wild hay that lay close on the frozen prairie, and, of course, the new grass wouldn’t grow. I would go out and see the little new-born calves, poor bony things without the strength to live, and their exhausted mothers dying beside them. Joseph’s men would pull the dying cows to their feet, only to have them take a step or two, then fall on the snow with a low moaning sound, never to rise again. Poor Joseph! He was frantic.

He blamed himself for not storing enough hay for the winter season. I tried to soothe him by reminding him that no one ever laid in hay and grain for winter. And he couldn’t foresee that the snow wouldn’t leave the ground.

August Hilpert brought dozens of sheaves of oats across the river in his 16-foot Indian canoe, packed them up the hill to the new road, and sold them to Joseph who would have paid almost any price for them. In vain he tried to save his herd. He had a man go around and cut down the branches of young maple trees so that the cattle might eat the bark. But this wasn’t enough. It was almost like offering a hungry man a piece of the pitch gum I made for the children. It was enjoyable on a full stomach, but merely tantalized an empty one.

That spring when the ice on the river melted and the ground turned green again, more that 70 head of our cattle and 14 horses were dead. Carcasses covered the prairie. We still find the whitened

“How about someone as silly as I am?” I asked her.

She thought for a long time before she said, “You may get tired of that much silliness, girl.” It was my turn to laugh because I never thought of it like that. It was hard to leave when our visit was over. We promised them we would come soon, but Grandma knew how much work there always was and Mama having a new baby and she just smiled and said, “I hope so.” I kissed her soft wrinkled cheek and it was damp.

I had time to think on the long ride home. Picking a husband wasn’t as easy as I had thought. I decided to talk to Papa about it. He had a lot of good advice. He liked both Joseph and Daniel, and when I brought up the subject, he seemed very sure. “Marry Joseph,” he said. “He’s the real man of the two. That Daniel will never amount to anything much.” I was surprised by his reply. He was always so fair, and now he seemed to be condemning Daniel, and I didn’t think it was right.

It just made me more confused, rather than satisfied. So several days later, Mama and I were working in the large garden, and she said, “Mary, Papa tells me you’re having some trouble deciding between the two Borst boys.” Everyone was a boy to Mama.

I blushed and answered, “It’s funny now I think of it, but there really isn’t any problem at all. Neither Borst man has told me his intentions.”

Mama went on in her quiet unhurried way, “Why would you want to marry Daniel, even if he did ask you?”

“Oh, because everything would be so exciting, I guess,” I answered.
“I know you, Mary, and you’d want children of your own, and exciting doesn’t put food on the table. You need someone like Papa, steady and kind.” Mama was very serious. They both thought alike. They just didn’t see Daniel’s good points. He was so carefree, so sure of the future; he promised lots of good things. He could play just as good jokes as I could and appreciate my sense of humor. Could they be wrong?

If Joseph was going to come over this week, it would be on Saturday about supper time. I really worked fast all day and cleaned up special, doing my hair on top of my head, which made me look more grown up. I put on the beautiful white dress I’d worn to the ball just the year before in Olympia. I didn’t think anything would be as exciting as those months; yet this past month had made me feel the strangest I have ever felt.

A good supper was ready when I saw the two brothers walking down our lane. Papa and Jasper greeted them, and they were all in deep conversation when they entered. Joseph saw me first, and he seemed very pleased and surprised. He didn’t say anything and I was disappointed. Daniel, who was still telling his story, stopped right in the middle of his sentence and said, “Who’s this beautiful lady visiting the Roundtrees?” I blushed and just then Mama said supper was ready. I watched both men during the meal, and they watched me. Only Papa seemed unaffected and he talked on and on about people crowding into the country, Indian doings and the crops.

After supper Papa asked Joseph to take a look at a project he was working on in the barn. Daniel stayed and helped clean the table. As we were working side by side, he whispered, “Well, Mary, who’s it going to be? Joseph or me?”

It was the biggest barn in this part of the territory of Washington. A four-horse team and a wagon could come in one door, to be turned completely around and driven out the same door. The foundation was charred cedar posts five feet underground. The roof was thick shakes. Joseph said, “Mary, this barn will be just the same in 80 years.” But I was skeptical, and sure I wouldn’t be around to care. Still it did look terribly strong.

The beams in that barn were wider than my whole arm. And I respected all the work it had taken to build. Joseph cleared a road over the top of the hill to the west of the Waunch Place so that rough lumber he brought from Shead’s little mill at the falls of the Skookumchuck wouldn’t have to be taken across the river twice. Joseph considered everything.

It was impossible to think of the barn without remembering the terrible winter of 1861, when the structure was being built.

The snow had stayed on the ground from early fall until April.
of 15 in Olympia at the grand balls. The night before Joseph said, “Well, my dear, are we going to the dance?”

I replied, “Why, Joseph, you know you don’t dance.”

“Yes, Adeline,” he answered, “but I always like to watch you.”

How like Joseph, how unselfish he always was!

To make the party dress even more special, I took long strands of horsehair and wove them into an ornament for my hair. I wore my long pendant earrings, and put a white lace collar on the black silk dress. Joseph was very proud to take me.

I remember hurrying to make the black dress before the children got out of school. Joseph had brought Annie Stevens from Olympia to live with us and teach in our home since there was no school nearby. Why people even stayed on at Fort Henness three more years so their children could get more education, but that didn’t concern me then, when Eva was only a year old.

Annie was a Mercer girl. She had come from the East with Asa Mercer, the first president of the Territorial University at Seattle. He’d made 2 trips to get women who were made widows and orphans of the Civil War to come out and be school teachers in the new territory.

Anna Remley, our dear neighbor’s daughter, came over and stayed to attend school, and of course little Mallie, my sister lived with us too. It is funny that she is 20 years younger than I am. They made quite a group running and playing and I wanted to have everything put away when they were finished with lessons for the day.

Then there was supper to get for all the people. Before school in our home and the additional responsibilities started, I was free to

He was laughing and I burst out, “You can’t be serious about any thing. Is that a proposal, Daniel Borst?”

That seemed to stop him for awhile; then he said, “You just looked pretty enough to be married tonight, so I thought I’d ask.” He couldn’t say any more because the others entered and the rest of the evening we all talked pleasantly together.

Two weeks went by before I saw either Borst, and then only Joseph came. I have no idea if anything was said between them or not, for Joseph could be very quiet when he wanted to. He said that Daniel bid us good-bye and he left for Canada to seek his fortune. Joseph and I walked down the lane after the supper, and he was very withdrawn, it seemed. I tried to tease him into a good humor. “A penny for your thoughts,” I said.

“They are worth a great deal more, I think,” he replied. He started to tell me about all the improvements he had made on his cabin since I had seen it. He had a few head of cattle now and more land cleared for planting.

“But I’ve never been one to be coy and quiet so I said, “ Why, Jo-
Joseph Borst, are you asking me to be your wife?” And he nodded and kissed me. I was so glad Harriet Jane had married George Waunch and left Joseph all to me. Even Daniel’s cheerful smile seemed to fade as Joseph’s huge arms gathered me up in a tight hug.

I was so happy when we got home and told my parents, and they seemed very pleased as they welcomed Joseph to our family. As part of the engagement vows, I said, Yes, Joseph, I’ll marry you, but you’ll have to build me a new house.” Of course, I was going to marry him anyway, but it never hurts to plan ahead.

It wasn’t long before we were married, October 15, 1854 there in Union, Thurston County, Territory of Washington. At 16 I guess I was as determined and self-reliant as I’d ever be all my life. I felt sad leaving my parents’ home and going in Joseph’s wagon to his cabin. I had my chest full of the lovely things Mama had helped me make for our new home, and that gave me something pleasant to look forward to.

On my wedding night, I was excited at the prospect of playing a joke on Joseph. Tiptoeing and shaking with silent laughter, I hid beneath the feather tick on the bed. He couldn’t see me beneath the big covers. For several minutes I lay there scarcely breathing, with curiosity weighing heavier upon me than the pieced quilts. Joseph must be hunting frantically for me, I thought. At last, my need for air and knowledge caused me to poke my head out. Joseph was calmly removing his right boot. I couldn’t believe my eyes. He drew his foot from his boot and shook it. A tiny pebble fell out and rattled across the floor. I crept from beneath the bedding and said, “You couldn’t find me, could you?” as I walked around the bed to face Joseph.

Joseph had said he couldn’t wait, he would let me talk on and on as he listened with a perfectly serious face. Then suddenly his eyes would crinkle at the corners and he’d say, “Mary, remind me to tell the boys it’s time to turn the hogs into the artichokes.” At the time I would just hate him for it. But later I’d realize that the whole thing was very trivial and inconsequential and I would feel ashamed of even mentioning it to him. Yes, Joseph had a bigness about him that was larger than just his size or the amount of land or money he had.

It was very different sewing now in the new house. It seemed so long ago back in the three-room log house we first moved into. Time just slipped away. As I laid out the goods, a whole bolt of it, I loved to feel the rich material. I had bought it at Captain Crosby’s Store at Tumwater. I smoothed the wrinkles out and took the scissors, and enjoyed the “whrangie-whrangie” sound they made as they followed the edge of the pattern. I finished dresses for the girls, then made a new dress for myself to wear to the dance.

Joseph had said he would take me. I loved the rhythm and movement of dancing just as much as I had at the age...
I was pining after Celeste’s death. Joseph tried to cheer me up in many ways. He was pretty well off and encouraged me to buy lovely things to wear and for the house. But the babies buried out front in the little white picket fence occupied much of my thoughts.

Joseph suggested we adopt a child. Many mothers died in childbirth, and it would be a help to those fathers who could not raise the child alone. That is how we got Clara Joana Borst as we called her. We adopted her March 3, 1870, and the house once more had a baby to brighten our lives. We all loved her very much. I thought of her as my own. She seemed to flourish, but she got the summer sickness and died just after the 4th of July that same year. I felt that I couldn’t go on. Joseph in his quiet way seemed always to accept life.

My thoughts went back to my own mother and the child she lost and left buried in Illinois. I visited Mama and we had a long talk. “Mary Adeline,” she said, “You have been very lucky. You have two lovely girls and a fine boy to carry on the Borst name. God has been good to you.”

How could I explain to this very practical woman that I respected and loved that I wanted more? She learned to live with her disappointments and so should I. In March 23, 1871 Minetta Adeline, named after me, was born. But she too died shortly after birth.

Joseph’s slow deliberateness was even more difficult to understand. He was like, well, like a religion, something which the ordinary mind trusts blindly, but fails to comprehend. I somehow wondered if the pettiness in my nature matched my small stature.

Whenever I wanted to talk over something that I thought just

“Oh, have you been somewhere?” was his heartbreaking reply as he rose and towered over me. For a moment tears threatened to fall down my cheeks, but his blue eyes twinkled and I saw he had turned my joke back on me. We both had to laugh.

Chapter 4

Mary and Joseph

Our home was a long, low, unpainted log and shake cabin. I liked the exterior, weathered and sturdy looking, like Joseph. It had a big attic with a sloping roof and three main rooms downstairs. The floor was smoothed boards Joseph had bought from Papa’s mill. He had a Dutch oven near the fireplace, and it looked like the home I had left when we first moved into it. Mama was so proud I would be well taken care of. She worried because it was just far enough that she wouldn’t get to visit often. Our nearest neighbor was 2 miles away, so I had to entertain myself with chores while Joseph was working outside every day. If he was near enough to the cabin, he would come in at lunch and that was a pleasant time for us both. There was enough to keep me busy, goodness knows. I knit the long tubular wool stockings for Joseph, spun yarn from the sheep he sheared, cleaned and cooked. I made lye and our own soap, much the same way Grandma made it back in Illinois, as I remembered. When Joseph shot a bear, I would render bear oil so he might grease his tall boots. I would milk the cows while Joseph tended the stock so the work went faster in the evenings. I loved to gather wild strawberries and make the fragrant preserves Joseph loved to eat. I would place the preserves in my canning jars and pour hot wax around
the lid to seal them.

The strawberries grew so abundantly in great patches on the prairie that the horses and cattle would roll on them and it would dye their coats. If I caught up on the work, I’d slip away and put my saddle on the dyed back of one of the horses. In this way, I would fool Joseph, who objected to my riding alone across the open stretches of land. How the wind tried to loosen shorter strands of my tightly coiled hair as I rode! There were stretches of prairie, then about 3 miles of woods separating us from the big Mound Prairie.

One day Joseph called loudly for help. One of the cattle was swollen almost to bursting after eating the poisonous wild parsnips. I brought out warm lard and we worked together pouring it down the throat of the cow. We did many chores together and time passed quickly and pleasantly.

There was a sort of Stage Line that passed by our claim when we first married. It had been started in 1852 by saddle horse, and later the first freight and baggage were carried in a lumber wagon, forming the only commercial link between the Cowlitz River and Puget Sound. Sometimes it carried mail. A ride up the Military Road cost $10 and people had to walk through mud or push at times. Usually stumps were left cut off in the road and the stage ran right over them. It forded the Chehalis River right by our claim.

For some time now I felt the movement of life within, and Joseph was anxious for an heir. Mama and Papa visited occasionally on their way to Grandpa’s on the Bawfaw Prairie, and they would stay overnight when they could. Uncle Matt, Mama’s youngest brother, was now serving as Sheriff.

But neighbors were still far away, and I would sing and sew in the long evenings to keep occupied. When the time came, Joseph

There were many other verses. But finally the little man was exhausted.

“That’s all, “ he told those who urged him to continue. And he swept the floor with his hat as he bowed acknowledgement to their praises. But to everyone’s surprise, coils of hair lay about the little man’s head and he giggled, “Don’t you know me?” Then they all realized it was me. That had been such fun.

I did love to play jokes, but one day I even played one on myself, for it gave me a start whenever I climbed up the narrow ladder-like stairs and poked my head through the trap door into the attic on the third floor. There in the shadows sat a man with a rifle across his knee. It always took me a moment to realize that it was just a life-sized dummy I had stuffed and put there to scare the children from climbing the steep stairs and hurting themselves.

I wasn’t always in a rollicking mood. The beautiful little nursery had never been filled for very long because the next three babies died in infancy. Our little Salucius born in 1861 died March 27, 1863. Beautiful Celeste Mae, born September 25, 1864, lived only until October 6, 1865.

I remember when I was expecting Celeste, I took the girls to Portland. From Longview on, we went by steamer. There in a store I saw a beautiful ripe red tomato. It looked so delicious and I wanted one so badly, I asked the storekeeper for one. While we walked away, I ate it. Then Celeste Mae was born, she had a tiny scarlet tomato birthmark at the base of her throat. Ada was 7 at the time and I’ll never forget what she said: “Don’t worry Mama, it will make the perfect ornament. She’ll never need to wear a locket when she grows up. Just a velvet band around her neck.” That was just like Ada to talk like that.
Jasper and the German were down at the Harbor alone.

Jasper often would stay for months on end. He had a gentle, kindly nature and took things uncomplainingly. He liked music just as I did and anything connected with a boat or gun fascinated him. He had many rifles in his collection including the one father took from the body of White River Sam, after Papa killed the Indian in a running battle on the Green River. Jasper and I were only a year apart in age, and we had many memories we shared.

We had lots of company in the big white house. George Washington, who had a claim to the south of us, brought his adopted mother, Mrs. Cochran over to visit often. We were close friends at the fort, and she and many other ladies came to tea.

I have always been cheerful, rather talkative and with a sense of humor. One night we had a house full of company. The laughing, talking crowd suddenly became aware of a knocking at the door. Opening it they found a tiny man, a traveling entertainer.

"Would you like me to sing for you?" he asked. They all agreed. At the organ in the parlor he played a variety of songs and sang to his own accompaniment in a surprisingly high, but good voice. "And what would you like me to sing for my last number?" he concluded.

"Joe Bowers, Joe Bowers," chorused the guests. He began the variation of the familiar, "Sweet Betsy from Pike":

My name it is Joe Bowers,
I'm all the way from Pile,
I came from old Missouri,
Along with my brother, Ike.
church services each Sunday and how I had missed this!

Mrs. James Smith taught the primary department and Mr. Hubbard instructed the advanced students. He gave exhibitions at night, and spelling bees include young and old. I didn’t think it was possible to have so much fun at one. It was a sight indeed to see a bewhiskered corporal of the volunteer regiment sink his teeth into a word like “persimmon”. “Per-per-s-i-m-sim-mon”.

I enjoyed working with the women of the fort, leeching lye from hardwood ashes, quilting one another’s blocks, stirring the great iron kettle boiling on the large fire in the middle of the stockade until the lye ate up all the fat and then pouring the newly made soap into pans to harden. This was on a grand scale, not like the few bars I made at home.

There was the birth of Etta Yantis, right after we arrived at the stockade. I was glad Eva was 6 weeks old. There was also a simple military wedding when an older daughter, Ann Yantis, married a dashing young officer, Lieutenant William Martin, of the volunteer regiment. I remembered my wedding almost two years before. A lot had happened in that time.

George Washington did not leave his claim, but he brought his adopted parents, aging Mr. And Mrs. James C. Cochran, who had crossed the plains with him, and we became great friends.

From the southwest corner the names clockwise in order of lean-tos, were E. Baker, C.B. Baker, J. Biles, D. Byles, James, Kirley, Laws, Waddell, Remley, Yantis, Henness, Case, Roundtree, Hale, Hagan, Frost, Mills, Mize, Axtell, Tilley, Borst, Durgan, Sargent, Saylor, Goodell and C. Byles. My mother lived against the north wall and I hadn't seen her much for two years. I made the most of it by sewing and washing, mending and keeping our small crowded room immaculate and visiting Mama and baby De-

There was a large guest room because there were Mama and Papa, Julina, who was 17 now, Demaris, 8 and baby Mallie Angeline, who was born March 14, 1861 just a month before my own new baby boy. They liked to stay overnight on their trips to and from the farm on the upper edge of Bawfaw Prairie. Mama had so many relatives living there; nieces and nephews galore.

Mama had a new house too, and Mallie like to stand on the base-board and stretch on tiptoes to see the smoke and steam of the steamboat as it pushed up the Black River. Joseph had part interest in the steamer “Chehalis” that navigated the river from the “Blockhouse” to the Smiths at the mouth of the Black River. The Skookumchuck was too shallow for the craft.

The evenings we had guests, Mama Roundtree would sing, “Twinkle Little Star.” Joseph bought me a pump organ, and though I never had lessons, I loved to play. Father might be persuaded to join in with the words of his favorite gospel hymns. Jasper would give us the “Fisher’s Horn Pipe” on his fife or big jew’s-harp. Or he’d sing a sea chantey or his favorite song, “The Golden Vanitee,” the ballad of old England that Papa’s mother’s mother, who was first cousin to Patrick Henry, had brought with her to Virginia in the lowlands:

There was a ship that sailed to North Amerikee
Known by the name of the ‘Golden Vanitee’
As she sailed in the lowlands, lowlands low
As she sailed in the lowlands, lowlands low

Jasper would sing through the many verses, telling the story of the brave little cabin boy who saved his ship only to be drowned by its cruel captain. As he sang, I would remember the long time
first rocking chair. The vertical rows of buckskin thongs were shaped especially for my back. It was more comfortable than stiff caning. And each arm was carefully carved. It was such a happy day when we moved into the new house. The children gathered around me as I rocked.

My cook stove was the envy of all my women visitors. It had been brought around the Horn. All the years of cooking over the fireplace with heavy iron kettles and the Dutch oven I brought with me to my marriage were put behind me. I could fry meat and cook the rest of our meal on the high back part of the stove while the water for dishes was also heating. I only had to lift up the iron lid of the reservoir on the front portion and dip out pans full of scalding water.

One day Joseph had just returned from Olympia with the precious weekly newspaper, and while I stood by reading it to him, he fried hot cakes on the back part of the stove. He had set the batter on a chair, the only one in the kitchen. While I was reading I sat down right in the batter. How Joseph howled as he scraped and scraped the sticky pasty stuff from the folds of my new calico dress. It was always one of his favorite jokes, and he teased me often about it.

There were so many rooms. It seemed even more spacious and grand because of the year I spent between the tiny cedar partitions at fort Henness and the time in the blockhouse when Ada was born.

I loved looking out the tall windows, which went almost to the high ceilings. Right off the large bedroom Joseph and I shared was the nursery ready for our next baby boy. The first Borst born in the new house was Salucius Harlin born April 30, 1861.
“I’m leaving early tomorrow. Please keep my baby for me. I’ll be back in three days at the most.” I rushed. Then before Anna could say anything, I hurried away to complete my plans.

The next morning the chattering group of women who had gathered at the huge gate to watch their menfolk off, drew apart in shocked silence. They saw me riding in the center of the armed party. It makes no difference that I’m breaking the accepted rule that women must not share in the thrill and excitement of danger. Papa was fighting on the White River, Joseph was facing danger every day at home, and I was going to Tumwater.

It wasn’t until the second day on the trail, when I realized, “Oh mercy, mercy!” I would have used a stronger expression, but a lady never swears either. I shifted my weight from one aching

Fort Henness as it looked when Mary and the children lived there.

One whole wall of the dining room was the huge soapstone fireplace. Joseph had found a special type of stone, which when quarried was pliable as hard clay and could be smoothed with a plane. The air and fire hardened it and it would never crack. The only fireplace at all like it was that of the Elkanah Mills family.

The house had to be finished just right, so we had a man on Chambers Prairie make the furniture. There were six beautiful maple spool beds with ropes stretching across the frames. I topped them with a straw mattress and an abundance of feather bedding. I was so proud of how they looked.

And Joseph surprised me by having the same man make me my
Before the post office was established by the Coats Store, Henry Windsor was the first regular mail carrier, as early as 1854. He made the journey by mule with the sack tied behind the saddle. Mail was interrupted only by the Indian Wars of 1855-56. He carried mail for 8 years, taking only 1 day off, the day he was married.

Henry arrived at the hotel in Monticello quite late on a stormy night and found an old-fashioned dance in full swing. During the course of the evening one of the girls, Eunice Huntington, stood up and challenged any man in the house to marry her, thinking a fake marriage would be performed. Henry stepped up and took the girl's hand and was legally married. They lived happily ever after.

Regular passengers stage carried the mail after 1860 along the newly established Military Road. William Donk bought the ferry from Joseph and was appointed postmaster May 22, 1863. I assisted him with those duties in my home.

Chapter 6

The New House

It took Joseph 2 years, but my magnificent dwelling was finished. It had a broad front porch and upper balcony, gleaming white walls and green shutters just like what I had dreamed of. People who traveled the stage line passed close by the veranda, and I heard some say it was the finest mansion between Vancouver and Steilacoom. Joseph had the ends of every board dipped in white lead, which hardened the wood and made the joints and corners water proof. Each board was held in place with wooden pegs.

Looking at Joseph's strong, broad back reminded me how hard he had worked to get us ahead. He now had cattle, which the neighbors fattened on shares, and several of the horses in this very volunteer company he had furnished. Finally the blockhouse and a group of buildings on the side of the hill showed us we had reached Tumwater. Enough of this daydreaming.

The journey did provide change, but I returned sore and weary from riding so far when I wasn't used to it. I didn't let on it bothered me, and in a short while it was just a memory.

One morning as I was caring for little Eva and rocking her gently, the bars of a bugle, the alarm signal, broke into my pleasant thought. Eva had fallen asleep, so I laid her down and rushed out into the open space in the middle of the stockade. I met other women also hurrying to find the cause of the bugle blast.
The gates were already swinging shut. The guard in the southeast bastion had reported an Indian man and woman were rapidly approaching, the latter in the lead. The woman rode swiftly to the south gate and begged the men in Chinook to admit her quickly. Her drunken husband was pursuing her and would kill her if he caught her. When the big south gate swung open enough for her to ride in, I saw how very bruised the poor Klootchman was.

With a groan the gates swung shut. A shout came from outside, and a pounding on the sawed timbers of the gate. Her husband had arrived, but the guard refused to admit the drunken man. Unintelligible curses rolled forth in an angry stream. The guard ordered the Indian to report to Judge Ford, who was the Indian agent.

We rushed the poor, badly beaten Klootchman into the shelter of the school building in the center of the stockade, where her husband’s threats were inaudible. Her eyes were swollen and blood poured down her cheek. I bathed her cut face in cold water. “Mercy, Mercy, that Siwash ought to be shot,” I muttered. As if the guard had heard my very thought, the report of a gun rang out hard and clear. I was the first to reach the transfixed group of men who had been watching the savage’s retreat through the rifle slits in a depression in the south road when the shot was heard. We waited while the five old men who were guarding the fort went out to investigate.

When they returned, one of the grey-whiskered men answered, “Someone got him with a shotgun.” For a minute I didn’t sense the full meaning of his words. Then I felt like someone had hit me from behind. The full significance hit me. It meant war.

At certain seasons the whole area of Saunder’s Flat was like one large lake about 4 miles across. The Skookumchuck means “swift water” in Chinook, and it lived up to its name many times. As early as 1845 people tried to build a bridge over it. The bridge was never built, and the next year Governor Steven’s nephew was drowned while attempting to ford it on his horse. Stevens commissioned survey to find a new road, but the completion of this route known as the Military Road was delayed until after the close of the Indian trouble and we returned from Fort Henness.

Joseph bought the Coats Store and had it moved close to the blockhouse on our side of the river. We moved into the store while Joseph started building the house. We took it over, wares and everything, odds and ends of stock, hanks of red carpet warp, bolts of shining calico, spools of thread and whole packages of needles. How I enjoyed having all this wealth around me.

Joseph backed Ferdinand Chable, and they built and Ferdinand operated the first ferry across the river right by our house. The Military Road led right to the ferry. It could carry a four-horse team and wagon or two two-horse teams and wagons. In case the ferry was on the wrong side of the river, someone had to row across in one of the boats and bring it over. It was operated by means of a winch and blocks and cable, so arranged that the nose of the ferry, when turned upstream, caused the current to force it across the river. On the south side, the cable was fastened to a tall fir tree, and on the north side to well-anchored log pilings. Emma Roundtree, my cousin, used to ride on the grain bags in the rear of her father’s wagon across the ferry and visit and stay over night on their way to Tumwater with the grist.
came. The whole family was excited as we packed them away.

More changes had taken place. Amos Tullis and his wife had taken over the Coats Store and took in travelers. Our family now included a son, Harbin David, born November 7, 1859. A boy for Joseph; my heart was full of God’s blessings.

The children loved the spring quilt cleaning. Joseph would help me carry out the big wooden wash tub into the yard. Then I’d fill it with buckets of hot soapy water. The quilts would be put in to soak. The children’s excitement grew as their part of the duties was near. They would jump in barefooted and stamp around on the quilts to clean them. Squeals of laughter showed me they considered this job fun. And out would come clean quilts and very wrinkled clean feet. There was still the problem of wringing those heavy pieces out by hand; one person on each end helped.

People counted distances accurately now. From Portland to Rainier via the Columbia it was 45 miles. From Rainier to Monticello on the Cowlitz, 2 miles, and from Monticello to the forks of the Cowlitz River, 19 miles. From the Forks to Warbassport or Cowlitz Landing, 12 miles, and to Esq. J. R. Jackson’s home, 10 more miles. From the Jackson Prairie to S.S. Ford’s it was 21 miles, and on to Olympia 30 miles, or a total of 84 miles from Rainier to Olympia. It was 129 miles from Portland to Olympia. The journey had changed considerably since 1852 when the first routes were established. Then rafts were poled up the river. Sometimes rafts were propelled by ropes several hundred feet long, which were fastened to a windlass on the scow. Indians went ahead along the shore and tied the ropes to trees. Then by winding the windlass, the boat was pulling forward. The barge trip from Portland to Thomas Carter’s on Cowlitz Landing took 9

I could picture the horror of the Whitman Massacre and the White River Raids. Joseph had told me enough so I could imagine the rest. I recalled last October how the messenger had roused Joseph and me and we rushed to the stockade. The Chehalis Indians had been friendly, but now they would storm the fort in a savage attempt to avenge this death. Pale-faced and tight lipped, the women one by one drifted away to their own shelters. In my own room I gazed by Eva. Her nightcap had slid over one eye. A tiny fist was pushed halfway into her little mouth. With a sob I clutched her to my breast and buried my head in the folds of her long gown. The baby, unused to the violent pressure of my arms, broke into a wail. But I scarcely noticed as I stared blankly toward the southwest. Joseph was out there. He was in danger. There was no one to run to for aid. Would anyone warn him? All I could do was wait and pray. I seated myself by the door and rocked Eva who was half-sleeping.

As I crooned softly to the baby, my mind wandered out of the pen-like fortifications to Joseph. Where was he? Could he be taking a supply train to one of the other military forts or doing his chores on the farm? Tears ran down my face and through the mist I could almost see him driving in the cows and milking them in the shed behind the law unpainted house. Poor Joseph, how hard he worked. He wasn’t like other people; he was bigger and finer; the most silent person I have ever known, but I loved him so. He could even be lying there dead, a scalpless corpse.

Big, strong Joseph dead? Joseph who had never harmed a person in his life? Well, the Siwashes wouldn’t get him without a struggle. There was a certain satisfaction in that thought. I remembered the tale that Judge Ford always chuckled over. “Joe
always fights with his head, “he’d tell again and again.

Recalling the familiar story of the fight in the middle of the river with the bully backing down only brought home more clearly how kind and brave Joseph was. What good was a head if it didn’t have hair on it?

Clutching baby Eva tightly I became determined to protect her always. If the Indians came I could stand beside my mother who feared neither man nor beast, and hold them off until the scalping knife pierced my brain. Suddenly my unpleasant thoughts were interrupted by excited shouts of the guard at the south gate ringing through the night air. The men were returning.

Could it be possible? Running as fast as I could I rushed out into the enclosure. Yes, the men were back. I watched each rider file through the opening. By now I was sobbing hysterically. Joseph wasn’t with them. Yes, there he was. I threw myself into his arms, and he looked astonished.

“Why, Adeline, what’s the matter?” he asked.

I could barely blurt out, “You’re not dead, Joseph. You’re all right?”

“They, of course I’m all right,” he replied in his slow, measured way.

The anxiety was over and I was myself again. My eyes took in all of my big husband. From the top of his shaggy head to his leather boots, there was not one scratch nor spot of blood. How dare he upset me so? “Joseph Borst, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You’re so inconsiderate. Why, I worried myself sick over you. I thought you were dead and the Indians had scalped you and here you are alive and smirking at me. Quit it! Do you hear?” By the time I ended I was shouting and backing toward the little one, I understood. Ada Twella was all Borst.

It was good to have a baby to take care of again. Eva was running all over the farm now. One day, I hunted for Eva everywhere; in the barn, under the stairs, in the garden, even along the dreaded river, where I peered in looking for her little red calico figure. Then I found her on the chopping block behind the shed, her pet chicken locked in her tiny arms. Both of them fast asleep. Eva was even a help inside and with the new one too. Two girls, I thought, I know Joseph would like a boy. But I’m still young and there will be lots more children. Whenever I could spare a minute, I would dream about my new house. Joseph said it wouldn’t be long now before he started on it. He bought the lumber in Tumwater and built long racks for it to dry and season. He ordered the casings and hardware from San Francisco and it had to be shipped up by boat. How typical of Joseph to plan everything out so carefully! He said it would be studding construction. Most houses in this section of the territory were merely box construction and had no solid foundation or sturdy framework.

Across the river, near the fording place on the banks of the Skookumchuck, a little Polish man built H. Coats Store and boarding place for travelers. Eventually a post office and the Windsor Hotel made up the community, along with a house or two. I used to go over to the Coats Store and marvel at all their merchandise. When I first moved to our cabin, if I lost a needle, I would have to walk several miles to borrow another or wait for Joseph to go to Tumwater for supplies. Now it was easier to sew for the girls and myself. Bolts of material were available. But I still climbed up on the cellar door and watched for Joseph or had one of the girls keep a lookout. The journey still took 2 days, 1 up and 1 back. It always seemed like Christmas when supplies
Black River before the Indian scare. Mrs. James taught the lower grades at the stockade school. So when they wanted to rent our cabin, we moved into the blockhouse. Joseph cut a door and windows in the side and fixed a hole for the chimney. But even so, living there made me feel as if I were in a dense forest.

I liked the smell of the pitchy fir walls, the coolness kept in by the heavy hewed logs, the yellowish, clean color that reminded me of the tender tips of the fir branches in spring, the dim light filtering through the gun slits like sunlight patterning a forest floor.

The time since we returned from Fort Henness went by very rapidly and with Eva a year and a half old, I was expecting my second child. I had been displeased by the service given by the neighbor woman who had brought Eva into the world, so I decided to have only Joseph present at the arrival of this child. I was in the upper room of the blockhouse when Ada was born, March 7, 1857.

Joseph bathed her and cared for us, and later when he brought the baby to me, he seemed almost reluctant to place her in my arms. There was a thoughtful expression around his eyes, and when I looked at my cabin, tears running down my face.

Joseph followed and turned me around to face him. “Well, now wait a minute, Mary Adeline, are you mad because I wasn’t killed?”

That stopped me. I started to laugh as his blue eyes sparkled. Then he smiled too. How silly I had been. “Oh, Joseph, I was so afraid for you.” I muttered against his broad chest.

But the affair wasn’t ended. One of the friendly Chehalis Indians had been murdered without sufficient cause. His tribesmen would demand revenge.

The next morning Captain Ford, at the head of a large band of his friendly Indian scouts, slowly approached the fort. In the blockhouse at opposite corners of the stockade, soldiers shifted uneasily. The men stood at their assigned posts, guns held ready. The women were gathered into several small groups. All our faces were turned toward the south.

My lower teeth bit deep into my upper lip. Suddenly I realized I must look like a bulldog and I glanced about hastily to be sure that no one had seen me. Everyone was as intent upon the southern gate. The deep voice of Captain Ford rang out: “We have kept our Indians at peace with you; one of you has murdered an innocent member of this tribe. If you are unable to no longer control these people, the blood of your women and children be on your own head.” Then there followed a long moment of suspense in which I breathed no more than twice. Where was Joseph? If only he had been here beside me. But he wasn’t; he was up there in the southeast blockhouse.
Yes, they would need him for he was an experienced Indian fighter. “Dear God,” I prayed, “please make the Indians go away. Don’t let Joseph or any of our group be hurt.” Captain Ford was talking. The Indians had decided to let the white men levy their own justice. A red man’s idea of punishment was death. Satisfied, the band turned back toward their encampment at Judge Ford’s.

Routine at the fort again settled down as before. I was nearly finished with my large rag rug for the cabin floor. Oh, thinking of the cabin brought back so many memories. I had not seen it for over a year. At first at the fort there was the thrill of danger, but there was not even the probability of an attack now. The Indian leader, Leschi, had remained far away, and the neighboring redmen were peacefully encamped at Judge Ford’s the Indian agent, more than 6 miles distant. The life within the fort had lost its novelty. Only a few old men and young boys were left to stand guard. The boys played Indian and ran in and out of the large open south gate at will. The blockhouse was full of grain on our claim, and even the soldiers had left our farm. Already several families were leaving Mound Prairie, and I was anxious to go home. Visitors were nice, but after awhile, privacy is the most important factor.

Chapter 5

Early Married Life

One day in the fall of 1856 Joseph came for us. What a homecoming it was! I insisted Joseph carry me across the threshold. It was like coming home that first time, I told him. He just smiled and picked up baby Eva and me.

I ran and looked at all my things. Little Eva was walking now, and I pushed the furniture to the walls and laid down the big rag rug I had been braiding so many months at the fort. It made the room so cheerful and bright. This wasn’t the mansion I wanted, but right now it looked wonderful. I grabbed Eva, and we danced in a circle on the new rug, singing, “Home, home, home.” Joseph came in for supper, and we were still looking at our things we’d missed so long.

That evening at supper I told Joseph how happy I was to be home, but the time at the fort was spent in harmony, I had to admit. There were so many different people, so close together, and because of common danger, they lived without quarreling. We had made lasting friends there.

Joseph bought the blockhouse from the government for $500. It stood there by the river with the upper part projecting 4 or 5 feet over the lower portion, which was 7 feet high and 24 feet square. The upper floor was puncheon; the lower one earth. I learned to know the blockhouse very well and this is how it happened.

We met the James family at Mount Prairie. They lived on

Picture: Living in the blockhouse.