

HONOR (MARKS) WHITLOCK

The following letter is held by the British Columbia Archives and was sent in by Pat Kelly of Victoria.

Oregon City, Oregon, dec.11,1902

Dear Mr.Gasnbell,- I am sending you by this mail a copy of the last Pacific Monthly, containing a sketch of James Douglas that may interest you, not because it contains perhaps anything new to you, but as an expression of the estimation in which he is held here.

A dear old lady who died recently told me a story of Douglas that perhaps belongs to the history of Victoria. As an old lady she was fair, as a girl she told me left England as a bride, blue eyed, rosy-cheeked and golden haired, on a sailing vessel for Victoria. The voyage was a long one. When at last they reached Fort Victoria no settlements were there, but temperarily they sojourned with Douglas as the fort. This was in 1849. Soon after their arrival her child was born. My recollection is that the fort physician was absent, her husband was young and inexperienced. For a long, long time she was sick, Douglas was called in, and at her bedside he wept st the suffering of the fair young English girl. All this was changed to joy when a beautiful boy was born and taking her hand Douglas said " You are the mother of the first white child born in Victoria". She told me how kind and helpful the Indian women were, they had never seen many if any white women, and had never heard of such distress in child-birth. As there were no settlements in British Columbia the Whitlocks sailed down to the mouth of the Columbia, and settled soon after at Oregon City, then the most considerable town in Oregon. I passed the old house yesterday, moss-covered and decaying where they lived so many years, upbuilders in all good work in the young settlement.

On their arrival it became noised abroad that the Whitlocks had clothing, many trucks of it. Now clothing was in great demand at this time, and all their spare garments were solicited by the American emigrants and readily sold at good prices. A young missionary from Vermont had located here, Mr. Atkinson, and to his church the Whitlocks attached themselves and for years were the main support. "How often have I run over these hills" said Grandma Whitlock, "visiting the strangers who had arrived and looking after the sick." Dr. Atkinson founded the Congregational church here, the first on the coast, and not second to his efforts were those of Whitlock and his wife. Mr. Whitlock was a fine penman and as clerk in town and church was in great demand. To the day of her death Grandma Whitlock was a true missionary, sending religious papers and magazines all over the town, and sustaing to the last the religious work of this community. I have forgotten how many years she taught in the Sunday School, something like 25 or 30 years, until she became so old and lame she cd not go.

That son born, William T. Whitlock, is still living, at present I believe in Portland.

This is only one of many examples of the old ties of Victoria and Oregon City.

Yours truly,

Eva Emery Dye

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