

May 22-23, 1981 Pioneer Queen and Grand Marshal

Marion Culley

Queen Martha Howard of Milton-Freewater is truly a descendent of local area pioneers. One great-Grandfather, J.P. Hastings arrived at Cowl's Crossing in 1862. Cowl's crossing was a stage stop near the present Price Plaza between Pendleton and Walla Walla.



Queen Martha Howard

Reverend Hastings homesteaded at Valley Chapel, one mile west of Whitman Mission. He was a Pioneer Preacher for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who rode on horseback, giving sermons to the local pioneers. Queen Martha related a story concerning her Great Grandfather in the mid-1860's. Apparently there was a shortage of barbed wire so he and his oldest son dug deep trenches around the field to contain his cattle. These trenches are still visible on a hill in the Valley Chapel area.

In 1861, her Grandfather, Nathan Sams arrived by wagon train from Iowa. In 1877, her Great-Grandfather Peter Sams arrived from Iowa and purchased the family's present "Century Farm" from Dan and Susan Drumheller. When her father, Jasper Sams was a young man he helped break the "Roberts Field" west of Couse Creek out of bunchgrass. Billy McQueen owned the field at that time. Della Sams was a local schoolteacher whom Queen Martha credits with helping save their Century Farm during the depression. Wheat was selling for 25 cents a bushel and her mother's salary helped pay the land taxes.

Queen Martha remembered as a young child how she would help her father cut poles near Cold Springs. Then she would ride back to the ranch with him on a two-horse farm wagon down the rugged stage road on Basket Mountain. She also rode on the horse-drawn "Header Boxes" in wheat harvest to the separator machine. She graduated from McLoughlin High School in 1936 and attended Whitman College and Walla Walla Business College. On December 16, 1939 she married Bob Howard, childhood neighbor on Couse Creek. They lived on the Century Farm for 36 years. Martha and Bob had two children: Donald Howard and Joan Howard George, both of Milton-Freewater. Queen Martha has one granddaughter, Sara Catherine George.

Mrs. Howard is a very active lady in local church and community activities. She is a Past Queen mother of the Pea Festival and board member of the Umatilla County Historical Society. She helped recently when they compiled the popular book, "Umatilla County, A Backward Glance."

Queen Martha has many interesting stories relating to her early pioneer origins. When her Grandfather, Nathan Sams, left Iowa in 1861 he suffered from a congestive lung disorder. His doctor had stated that he wouldn't live much longer so he decided to see the West. Since he was an excellent rifle shot, he became the camp hunter. Enroute he struck a bargain with a widow whereby he would provide her with fresh buffalo meat if she would give him fresh milk and herbs to cure his malady. The cure must have been effective as he lived to be an old man and was 75 years old when he died.

Enroute they saw a huge herd of buffalo, numbering possibly 3,000 or 4,000 animals. The wagon train waited two or three days for the herd to pass as they were concerned that the buffalo would stampede over the wagons. At this time there were four men who wanted to leave the wagon train to go hunting. The scouts warned them of the local Indians but they decided to go anyway and were never heard from again. Nathan learned to set a very good antelope trap. While remaining hidden in the rocks he

would wave a white cloth or hold it still up above the rock as the curious antelope approached. He insured the camp had fresh meat that night.

The Bannock Wars of 1875 was an Indian uprising in the Ukiah area. The war was caused by the white men's encroachment and the BNNOCKS, Paiutes, and Snake River Indians decided to weep out of Idaho through Eastern Oregon and into the Blue Mountains. The decisive battle was fought on Battle Mountain near Ukiah. Although Nathan Sams always had good relations with the local Indians, during this time he and his other neighbors maintained a watch from "A Yellow Pine Tree" on Basket Mountain. The tree was located on the Dave Diggins place and was the tallest in the area. If the Indians were to approach the house the children were told to hide in a cave along the creek. Fortunately that was never necessary.

Queen Martha also related the original naming of Couse Creek. In this area, even today, there grows a yellow flowered plan called "Kouse-Biscuit Root," in the early days the Indians would collect the edible roots of the plan and pound them into large cakes. The cakes were then sun dired and stored as a winter food supply.

Queen Martha feels a great deal of satisfaction to watch her Granddaughter, Sarah Catherine George grow up on the same ranch on which she was raised. Sarah is the 6th generation to live on the Century Farm starting with Peter Sams in 1877.

Queen Martha Howard certainly is pioneer in her own respect and welcomes all to the Pioneer Days with a hearty smile.

Otis Gould

Otis O. Gould, of Weston, was born June 6, 1900 on Weston Mountain, the son of area pioneers, William and Mary Gould.



**Grand Marshal
Otis Gould**

He attended Elementary school on Weston Mountain and in 1909 when the family moved into Weston, began schooling there.

Mr. Gould served in World War I in the U.S. Army in 1918, and then completed High School in 1919. After one year at Oregon State College (Corvallis), in 1921 began working for the General Land office while surveying in Arizona and California. In 1924 he took the Civil Service examination and received a professional appointment in charge of his own survey crew in Oregon in 1925.

Mr. Gould worked as a field man until 1945 when he was placed in charge of the Public Survey Office in Olympia, Washington. In 1949 with the consolidation of the Bureau of Land Management he was transferred to Portland, Oregon. In 1958, Mr. Gould retired from public service with 36 years credit and the title of Office Casastral Engineer.

He is the father of two daughters and a son, Mrs. Zolla Liullen (Salem), Mrs. Jennifer Lukehart (Gooding, Idaho), and Mr. Zane Gould (Pendleton).

Mr. Gould has been a member of the Masonic Lodge for 57 years and has served as Past master. He is a Scottish Rite Mason and is a member of the Shrine. Mr. Gould is being sponsored by the Shrine under the direction of Clifford Price.