

Learned, Grace EDMUNDS -

## **A Long History of Living in Tillamook County**

*Typed by Dean Bones in 2023*

In August of 1863 my great-grandfather, Charles Westley Smith, a widower and a native of Iowa, came from California to Tillamook for a visit with his brother Hiram Smith and family who had been Tillamook residents since 1854. He stayed, homesteaded near his brother at Fairview, and farmed until his death in 1898.

One year after his arrival in August 1864, he was joined by his only daughter Amanda and her husband Joseph G. Donaldson, my grandparents, and their infant daughter Margaret. They also homesteaded at Fairview.

My mother, Cordelia Florence Donaldson, born October 5, 1869, was the third of the fourteen children born to them after their arrival in Tillamook.

My father, Dwight Thompson Edmunds, born on June 4, 1855, in Michigan moved with his brother, George Edmunds, from Iowa to Yamhill, Oregon, in 1884 and then to Tillamook in 1887. They taught school in Yamhill and in Tillamook. My father was teaching in the Fairview School when he met my mother who was one of his pupils. They were married on March 4, 1890, in Tillamook.

I was born on August 27, 1898, the fourth of their nine children all born in Tillamook. My brothers and sisters were Arthur, Mabel, Ernest, Ruth, Persis, Paul, Charles and Mark.

Shortly after my father and mother were married my father went into the mercantile business. Later he and his brother, George, built and operated the Tillamook Mercantile Store on First Street where Kimmel's store is now located. I remember hearing them say once that they had \$50,000.00 "on the books". That seemed like quite a lot in those days. The farmers always paid in the spring.

In 1907 the Claude Thayer bank closed down, so several of the businessmen organized the First National Bank with Charles Lamb, Sr. as its first president and my father its vice president. Directors whose names I remember were Beals, Eddy and Todd. My father was also one of seven men who organized the Port of Tillamook in 1889.

Our first home was across the street from the present Tillamook hospital. My brothers and sisters and I enjoyed playing with the children of the neighboring families. To the west of us across the river were the Stanleys. Mr. Stanley was our county judge. Next were the Andersons, the parents of Bill, our late county surveyor, the Cases, Mr. Case was the town machinist, and then our home. Next

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were the Stewarts and then the Cohn house where the path to the flower house was made of pretty bottles, the ones that were dug in 1968 and sold as antiques. Rosa BAKER Cohn and her husband made the walk.

Mr. Cohn also had a store on First Street. I remember Dorothy Cohn and I would ride our stick horses to our fathers' stores together.

The Bake, Chase, McGee, Leach and Wyss families lived on the street to the north of us.

When I was five years old I had a frightening experience. Before school started one morning we were standing by the red hot wood stove in Mrs. Hay's one-room schoolhouse which was next door to her big farmhouse when my dress caught on fire. We children all ran to her house where she and her son Blain quickly rolled me in a long rag rug. I was burned some, but it could have been worse.

In 1904 our family moved from Tillamook to Oregon City where my father had the business of selling cheese and butter to Portland for the Tillamook Cheese Association. We children were happy about that as we were able to attend the Lewis and Clark Exposition quite frequently. Then, in late 1905 we came back home to Tillamook.

In 1907 my father bought a farm on the Wilson River. The Tillamook Cheese factory now stands on part of the farm. Some of my brothers, my sisters and I went to the school near the Maple Leaf cheese factory. I remember the fun we had running down to the railroad track from school at noon to take the railroad workers' hand car for a ride to town and back for them by one o'clock.

In 1909 when the railroad was finished and before the train made its first trip to Portland the Tillamook Sunday School classes had the first ride on the train. We went to Barview for a picnic and back to Tillamook. Our church was the Wesleyan Methodist, and our parents and grandparents were charter members of this little church on First Street.

In 1910 my father sold his farm and also sold his half of the Tillamook Mercantile Store to his partner, his brother George. He then bought a large portion of Pacific City from Albert Malaney. This included a campground, general merchandise store, post office and a dairy farm. My father ran the store and was the postmaster, and my brothers ran the farm.

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Our little sister, Ruth, died of spinal meningitis at the age of ten in November after we came to Pacific City.

In 1911 my parents purchased the Dunstan, formerly Magerell, Hotel for our home, but the tourists insisted on staying with us. As they could eat at the two restaurants in the town, they got their wishes. The next year they talked my mother into getting their meals too. I was fifteen years old when I started waiting on tables with my sister, Mabel.

Edmunds Hotel became well-known for my mother's clam dinners. People would call from Portland, Salem and other places to be sure of getting clam fritters for dinner. The recipe for the fritters came from a hotel in San Francisco. My brothers dug the clams on the Nestucca clam flats for us. Fresh strawberries and raspberries grown and delivered by Frank Wilehart were a special treat at the hotel in the summer time.

Pacific City became a popular resort in 1910 with celebrations of all kinds all summer especially on the fourth of July with parades, ball games, bowling alleys, shooting galleries and airplane rides. Another attraction for Pacific City tourists was the Elmore fish cannery on the Nestucca Bay.

Most of the houses in Pacific City were summer homes. Because so many families from McMinnville had summer homes on the hill above the town it was called "McMinnville Heights". At the southern end of the town was "Little Mexico" where about 35 Mexicans lived who were brought from Mexico by Albert Malaney to work for him digging ditches, making roads, raising vegetables and building and working in his lumber mill. Later he took them back to Mexico.

I enjoyed it in the summer. In the fall I went to high schools in Amity and McMinnville.

There was a small school in Pacific City in 1910. It was attended by about twelve children including my younger brothers and my sister Persis. At age 17 my sister, Mabel, taught school for one year and then went to Portland to finish piano studies and attend business school.

As there was no church, my parents had Sunday School in our hotel. We had plenty of music as we had a piano in the living room and another one in the

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parlor. They discontinued the Sunday School in 1915 when Mr. Northrup and Mr. Montgomery came to Woods and built a church which had quite a large attendance. When the men left in 1919 Mrs. Charles Blum carried on the Sunday School.

On March 12, 1918, at Vancouver, Washington, I was married to Victor Learned while he was stationed at Fort Columbia, Washington, training with the Tillamook men in the 10th Company Coast Artillery. To be near my husband I worked for and lived with the family of Henry McGowan, one of the three brothers who founded Columbia River Packing Company at the little town of McGowan near the fort.

My father passed away in 1925 in Pacific City. Mother continued to run the hotel for about fifteen years after the death of my father. Many of the Edmunds grandchildren were born in the Edmunds Hotel. My mother died in 1945 in the Tillamook Hospital.

After living in Cloverdale for a short time after the end of World War my husband and I lived and raised our three children, Victor Jr., Shirley, and Edmond, on our farm between Cloverdale and Woods. In 1949 we moved into our present home built for us by my brother Ernest behind the Edmunds Hotel which has since been torn down.

My sister, Persis, after living in California for many years returned to Pacific City in 1969 with her husband Fred Kopping. Three years ago my brother, Charles, moved from Pacific City to Lincoln City after making his home in Tillamook County for many years.

The others, Arthur, Mabel, Ernest, Ruth, Paul and Mark, have passed away. All died in Tillamook County with the exception of Arthur, a retired longshoreman who died in Portland. At the time of their deaths, Mabel EDMUNDS Weiss was a housewife in Pacific City. Ernest was a dairy farmer also in Pacific City. Paul was a dairy farmer at Meda, and Mark was a businessman and commercial fisherman in Garibaldi.

I now have grandchildren and great-grandchildren born in Tillamook County. The great-grandchildren are the fifth generation of my family to be born in Tillamook County and the seventh generation to live in our county.