

# **An illustrated history of Walla Walla County, state of Washington**

**By Professor W.D. Lyman**

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## **Prologue**

This document contains a few selected pages from Professor Lyman's encyclopedic history of early Walla Walla, County.

The purpose of this document is to call out the sections that reference Supplina Hamilton. Supplina Hamilton and his wife Sarah Jane (Sumpter) Hamilton were pioneers in Walla Walla, County living near Waitsburg, Wa for many years in the late 1800's.

Supplina was a Christian Church preacher in these years and influenced the Christian Church movement throughout Walla Walla County and into Umatilla County. Supplina and his family later settled in Whitman County, Washington. Supplina died in 1905 and is buried in St John, WA. Supplina often went by S. Hamilton in print and was sometimes referenced as Elder Hamilton in contemporary writings.

Pages 134 to 138 deal with the towns of Waitsburg and Dixie, Washington, both north of Walla Walla. Supplina is mentioned as the 'Hamilton' referenced on page 137 in conjunction with preachers active in Dixie.

Also included are pages 204 and 205. These pages deal with the founding of the Christian Church in Walla Walla. It is mentioned that in the early days the church was occasionally visited by the pastor from Waitsburg. Supplina Hamilton was active with the Christian Church in Waitsburg in this era and it is likely that he ministered occasionally to the early Walla Walla congregation as well.

AN ILLUSTRATED

HISTORY

OF

WALLA WALLA COUNTY

STATE OF WASHINGTON

BY

PROFESSOR W. D. LYMAN

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W. H. LEVER, PUBLISHER

1901

EPB

# DEDICATED

TO THE

## PIONEERS OF WALLA WALLA COUNTY

THE BRAVE MEN AND DEVOTED WOMEN

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE AND

THOSE WHO REMAIN

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*“Yet never a doubt, nay, never a fear  
Of old, or now, knew the pioneer.”*

## WAITSBURG.

Leaving the main line at Bolles Junction, we proceed by the Waitsburg and Dayton branch, and after riding about two miles find ourselves approaching a beautiful little city occupying a level tract of land along the junction of the Touchet and Coppei creeks. But before proceeding to speak of the attractive and beautiful surroundings of the place and adjoining country, let us remember that our quest is not only descriptive but historical, and that we shall therefore desire to turn our glass backward for a few moments upon the period of earliest settlement in this part of Walla Walla county. Claims were made substantially as early in the present vicinity of Waitsburg as of Walla Walla. In 1859 Robert Kennedy settled at the junction of the Touchet and the Coppei. Above him on the creek were Abner T. Lloyd, George Pollard, Joseph Star and Samuel Galbreath. A string of claims were laid out up the Coppei by Messrs. Patten, Morgan, Paine, Doolittle, Bateman and Cox. On the Touchet below the mouth of the Coppei were James Woodruff, Edward Kenton, Jonathan Kenny, Martin Hober, Luke Henshaw, Andrew Warren and John Foster.

The universal impression throughout the country at that time was that none but the bottom lands were worth cultivating, and inasmuch as the area of bottom land in that portion of the county is very small the population remained scanty. A faint attempt at a town was started on the Coppei about five miles from the present site of Waitsburg. In January, 1863, this became a postoffice by the name of Coppei, Luke Henshaw being the first postmaster. Coppei apparently was in a fair way to become a town, when in 1865 the start-

ing of Waitsburg undermined it, and the prospective city of Coppei died a natural death.

The founder of Waitsburg was Sylvester M. Wait. Mr. Wait was a pioneer of the pioneers in this country, having lived for some years in southern Oregon and then at Lewiston. Having learned in 1864 that a quantity of wheat could be purchased for one dollar and a half per bushel on the Touchet, he formed the project of putting up a grist mill and transforming this wheat into flour. This would evidently be good business, as flour was worth fourteen dollars per barrel. The farmers very enthusiastically accepted Mr. Wait's plans. Mr. Bruce and Mr. Willard, who then owned most of what became the town site of Waitsburg, gave ten acres of ground for a mill and a residence and a right of way for the mill-race. The farmers contracted to sell all their grain to the mill at the rate of one dollar and a half per bushel. With this basis of operations Mr. Wait proceeded to get machinery from San Francisco and lumber from whatever source he might obtain it, mainly at a very high price. The mill cost about fourteen thousand dollars, which was a heavy debt to carry in that condition of the country. But it proved an excellent investment, as Mr. Wait rapidly discharged the debt and laid the foundation of quite a fortune.

William N. Smith, a teacher by profession, came to the new town in the spring of 1865 and decided to open a school on the Touchet. This was the first school ever held in that portion of Walla Walla county, being opened on the first Monday in April, 1865. School district Number 3 was organized in the fall of that year.

In the fall of 1866 a postoffice was established, with Mr. Smith as postmaster. Up to

this time the place had been variously known as Wait's Mill, Waitsburg and Horsehead City, but when it became a postoffice it was necessary to select some definite name. Mr. Smith suggested the name of Delta, by which the place was known until 1868, when by vote of the people the name was changed to Waitsburg.

Up to this time there had been no attempt to lay out a town. Mr. W. P. Bruce, the chief owner of the location, had seemed disinclined to encourage the building of a town on his farm. But as it had become evident that the place was destined to become a business center, he made a survey and a plat of the beginning of the town, which was recorded on the 23d of February, 1869.

The town grew slowly but steadily during the years that followed. The census of 1870 gave a population of 109. In that same year a notable event occurred in the arrival in Waitsburg of P. A. and W. G. Preston. They, in connection with Paine Brothers and Moore, bought out Mr. Wait's mill, of which they became and are still the sole owners. The first newspaper of Waitsburg, the Weekly Times, was first published in March, 1878.

The year 1881 was a notable one in the history of Waitsburg. For in that year a city government was organized, the railroad was constructed, and the greater portion of the business part of the town was destroyed by fire. The first town government was organized in February of that year. The first election resulted in the choice of George W. Kellicut, William Fudge, Alfred Brouillet, M. J. Harkness and E. L. Powell for trustees; W. H. George for marshal; J. W. Morgan for treasurer; and J. C. Swash for clerk. According to the census of 1880, Waitsburg had a population of 248. It will give the traveler

of the present time some impression of the growth of the town to be informed that it then contained two hotels, four saloons, four general merchandise stores, one furniture store, two drug stores, one hardware store, one variety store, one brewery, one harness and saddlery shop, two livery stables, two blacksmith shops, one jewelry store, one meat market, one flour mill, one planing mill, one castor mill, one corn meal mill, besides a Masonic hall, postoffice, telegraph office, express office, railway station, school house and two churches.

The first pioneer church of Waitsburg was of the Methodist denomination. This was established in 1859 by Rev. George M. Berry. Like most pioneer churches it held its meetings in school houses for some time, but an excellent church edifice was built in 1871. A Presbyterian church was established by Rev. T. M. Boyd in 1877. The Christian church established itself in Spring Valley, four miles from Waitsburg, in 1876. The first pastor was Rev. Neil Cheatham, who has since become quite noted in connection with Populist politics. In 1880 a Christian church was established in Waitsburg itself. Still later a United Presbyterian church was founded, so that there are now four churches.

Waitsburg, like most of our pioneer towns, has been well equipped with fraternal organizations. The pioneer fraternities were Waitsburg Lodge, No. 16, A. F. & A. M., organized March 23, 1870; Touchet Lodge, No. 5, I. O. O. F., organized September 12, 1871; Pioneer Lodge, No. 16, I. O. G. T., organized July 20, 1867; and Occidental Lodge, No. 46, A. O. U. W.

The pioneer newspaper of Waitsburg was the Times, established in 1878. The very important educational institution, Waitsburg

Academy, was established in 1886, though the name was first employed in 1869. Of many of these features of Waitsburg thus briefly referred to we speak at length elsewhere.

Such is a general view of the pioneer life of Waitsburg. Having it in mind we are prepared to compare the present city with the past. We find as we stroll through the pleasant town that it has become an exceptionally well-built and well-equipped place of (according to United States census of 1900) 1,059 inhabitants. We discover a \$16,000 public school building of brick, in which seven teachers are employed, and there is an enrollment of 345 students. There is a high school department in connection with the common school work. The school also possesses a library of over two hundred volumes and an excellent equipment of physical apparatus.

We visit Waitsburg Academy and find it equipped with an elegant new building, erected in 1899 at a cost of \$20,000. The academy is provided with an efficient and devoted faculty. We discover also four commodious and well-furnished churches, and these organizations are usually influential in Waitsburg and vicinity.

We discover the fraternal orders to have developed at equal pace with the rest of the town, the Masons and Odd Fellows each owning a fine two-story brick building.

We see also an excellent system of water works owned by the town, which derives its supply of water from the Coppei creek, and which, being a gravity system, furnishes the town perfect protection against fire and a bountiful supply for domestic use.

Telephones and electric lights are among the more recent acquisitions of Waitsburg.

Waitsburg, for its population, is a very heavy railroad shipper. During a period of

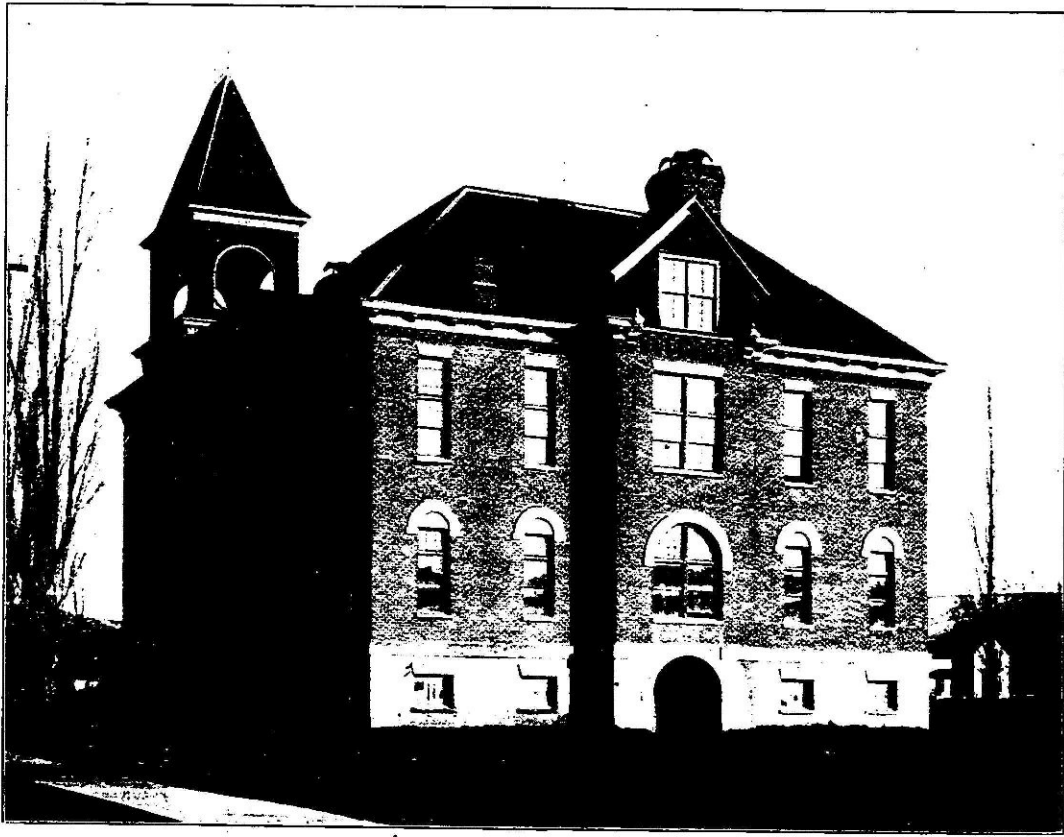
six months in 1895 there were shipped from the town 10,168 tons of freight, and there were shipped in 637 tons. This shows a far more remarkable disparity between exports and imports even than in the case of Walla Walla itself.

We find in Waitsburg the following list of stores and other business establishments: Three general merchandise stores, two grocery stores, two hardware stores, one furniture store, two jewelry stores, two drug stores, two saloons, two newspapers, one bank, a planing mill, two lumber yards, one bakery, two livery stables, three blacksmith shops, and two hotels.

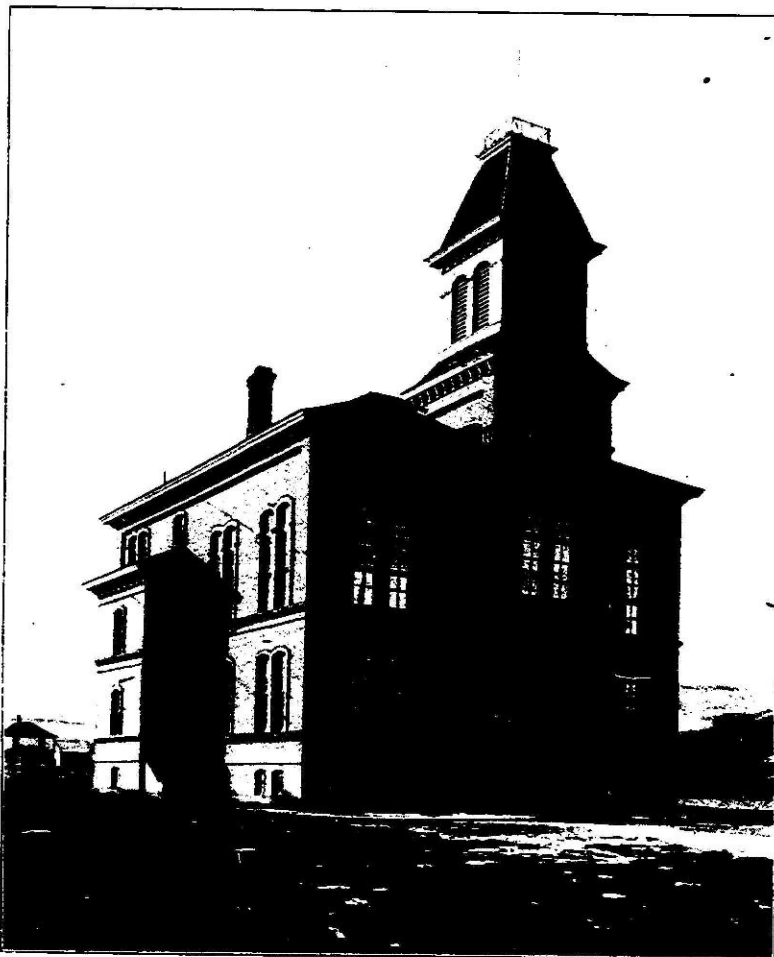
The city government of Waitsburg consists of a mayor and five councilmen, who are elected annually on the first Monday in April. The present incumbents of these positions are as follows: Mayor, J. H. Morrow; councilmen, J. L. Harper, B. M. Kent, J. B. Caldwell, W. J. Honeycutt, C. M. Taylor; attorney and city clerk, R. H. Ormsbee; treasurer, L. E. Johnson.

One especially attractive feature of Waitsburg is the profusion of flowers and trees throughout the town. Especially to one having come across the dry and treeless plains to the north, the freshness and luxuriance of the town on the Coppei presents a striking and attractive contrast.

We may leave Waitsburg by either one of two railroads, the Oregon & Columbia River Railroad by way of Dixie or the O. R. & N. R. R. by way of Prescott. We will, however, take our journey by way of Dixie. This route follows Coppei creek for several miles south and then climbs a high ridge which lies between that and Dry creek. This region contains some of the most magnificent farms in the state of Washington. Although



WAITSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOL.



WAITSBURG ACADEMY.

somewhat high and rolling and at first sight inconvenient to farm, the soil is of the most fertile quality, and the rainfall is heavier than in any other part of the county. Among the notable farms in this section may be mentioned those of Messrs. Cornwell, Phillips, Minnick and Connick. The Royce farm, which in 1900 had an undesirable notoriety by reason of the murder of the venerable owner by his grandson, is also in this general neighborhood.

From Summit station a magnificent view can be obtained looking down the winding valley of the Coppei to the north, and the hazy plains of the Walla Walla to the west. At our feet we see a pleasant little village situated in the narrow and fertile valley of Dry creek.

#### DIXIE.

The first settler in Dixie was Herman C. Actor, who located a homestead at this point. The name was derived from the following circumstance: Three brothers of the name of Kershaw had become noted as musicians in the emigrant train with which they crossed the plains. A great favorite among the people of the train was the song of "Dixie." Almost every night the Kershaw boys rendered this song, to the delight of the immigrants. As a consequence the boys became known as the Dixie boys. Having subsequently settled in the vicinity of where Dixie now is, the crossing of the creek first became known as Dixie crossing, then a school-house was built and styled as Dixie school-house, then a cemetery was laid out which was designated as the Dixie cemetery, then a postoffice was established which was called the Dixie postoffice, and finally Dr. Baker's railroad established Dixie station, and thus such has become its accepted name.

Dixie became a genuine American frontier village, true to the ideal of an early establishment of school, churches, postoffice and other elements of an American community. Among the pioneer preachers were Messrs. Granville Gholson, W. H. Robbins, Bailey, Hamilton and Hastings. There are at the present time three churches, Christian, Methodist and Baptist. The pioneer school-teacher was John Ross. Mr. Storey, now one of the substantial farmers of Dixie, was one of the standbys in the Dixie school-room. At the time of this publication the corps of teachers consists of J. E. Myers, Elmer Chase and Mrs. F. B. Faris. That Dixie also has an excellent spirit of fraternalism is shown by the fact that they have a number of lodges. The Odd Fellows' lodge is the strongest, having fifty-seven members. There are two well-equipped stores in Dixie, one conducted by C. L. Cochran and J. F. Jackson, and the other by M. E. Demaris & Company. The population of the place is about 250.

Leaving Dixie, we find immediately below it in the valley one of the largest fruit ranches in the county. It contains about sixty acres of trees, the great majority of which are prunes and apples. Mr. Clancy, one of the pioneer orchardists of the county, is the owner of this fine orchard. Unlike the large orchards in the near vicinity of Walla Walla, the Clancy orchard uses no water for irrigation. It is planted on a north hill slope of the richest, deepest soil, and thus far its development seems to justify the opinion held by many that the finest fruits of the valley will be found in the foot-hills, where there is a sufficient amount of rainfall to dispense with irrigation.

Below the Clancy place on Dry creek there extends a series of the finest farms of the county, among which may be named the Corn-



well, the Gillian, the Aldrich, the Yeend, and the Nelson places. As stated in another chapter, the place of Milton Aldrich has the distinction of producing the largest known crop of any place in Washington. One of the finest farms in the vicinity of Dixie is that of Hollon Parker, south of the town.

Between the line of railroad which we are following westward and the flanks of the Blue mountains, lies a magnificent body of farming land, in a belt of about seven miles wide by ten long, lying along Mill creek and Russell creek. This is the oldest, wealthiest and most highly cultivated of the farming lands of the county or indeed of the state. In this belt may be found the places of the following well known farmers: Messrs. Thomas, P. Lyons, Kennedy, Kigler, Gilkerson, Patterson, Fields, Harbert, Riffle, Tash, Evans, Farrel, Yenney, Barnett, Maxson, McGuire, Russell, Maier, Copeland, Shelton, Reser, Toner, Ferguson, Delaney, and a number of others. It is safe to say that few bodies of grain land have yielded as much money to their owners as this extraordinary body of about seventy or eighty miles square.

Leaving this fair spot, in which days might be pleasantly and profitably spent, we proceed to Walla Walla city; but leaving this for the present, we retain our seats in the cars and pass on bound for the great wheat country of Eureka flat. This is a very large body of farming land coming into profitable cultivation between Walla Walla and Eureka flat. Though at first sight not so attractive in appearance as the region east and south of Walla Walla, it has surpassed all expectation within the past few years by the wheat yield of its fat acres.

#### EUREKA JUNCTION.

We reach Eureka Junction, thirty miles from Walla Walla, and here we pause for more careful observation of this most extensive grain region of the county. Eureka flat consists of a body of nearly level farming land, from two to five miles in width and about twenty-five miles in length. There are no towns in this region, though there are a number of stations, which are the home of considerable communities, and from which immense quantities of grain are shipped. The most important stations are Eureka Junction, Clyde, and Pleasant View. Even a cursory glance at Eureka flat will show the traveller that its history has been that of a canyon filled up with soil blown or washed from the surrounding volcanic hills. At some points soil has been found to extend unchanged to a depth of two hundred feet. It is of the most fertile description, but on account of the dryness of the climate and the frequent winds, together with the excessive dust, it bears a poor comparison as a home land to the verdant and well watered tract in the southern part of the county. Nevertheless the most extensive wheat ranches in the state are found in Eureka flat. Here is found the ten-thousand-acre ranch of W. H. Babcock, the "wheat king" of Walla Walla county. Here also may be seen a number of other ranches whose separate areas run into the thousands of acres, among which may be mentioned, the Puffer, the Blanchard, the Struthers, the Atkins, the Upton, the Fall, the Painter, and many other ranches. Lack of water has been a serious impediment in times past in carrying on farming operations in this region. Water was for-

is about two hundred. From the time of its organization the church has steadily grown not only in numbers but also in its influence for good. It has been signally awake to every moral and spiritual interest and its collateral organizations are active and beneficent, the same including the Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor, the Junior Endeavor and the Pilgrim and Missionary societies. The officers of the church at the present time are as follows: Elders, W. P. Winans, N. F. Butler, J. W. Armstrong, W. S. Offner, Dr. N. G. Blalock, G. H. Sutherland and A. M. Cation; deacons, H. E. Johnson, George Starrett, J. F. McLean, A. J. Evans, A. J. Beard, P. M. Winans, Sam McBride, Marvin Evans and M. E. Brewer.

Recapitulating the history of this prosperous organization, we may say that services were originally held in the old court house, which, at the expiration of a year, proved inadequate to accommodate the society, and the city hall was therefore brought into requisition. Recognizing the exigent demand for a permanent house of worship, the society purchased a lot on the southwest corner of Third and Poplar streets and erected thereon, in 1876, the present church edifice at a cost of six-thousand dollars. The building was dedicated on the 4th of January, 1880, being at the time free from indebtedness. It is worthy of note at this juncture, as indicative of the liberal and broad-minded attitude of the citizens of Walla Walla, that the sum demanded for the erection of the church building was secured by general subscriptions in the city and that these contributions were made without reference to religious affiliations, no aid from the missionary fund of the denomination being called for.

#### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

In the fall of 1878 the Christian church of this city had its beginning in the temporary organization of eight people, for the purpose of worshiping and teaching according to their belief. Then on March 31st of the following year a permanent organization of eleven members was effected. Judge N. T. Caton was chosen clerk of the congregation and within a year the number of members was increased to thirty-two persons. For some years the church had no regular minister, but was visited occasionally by the Waitsburg pastor and by other ministers who by chance came this way. Brother Neal Cheetem was frequently here and was very helpful to the struggling little band of disciples. For some years after the organization the meetings were held from time to time in several of the older church buildings, which were very kindly tendered by their congregations. Then the old opera house was used for a short period. Later Baumeister's hall was secured and used until the church moved into its own building, situated on Third street between Birch street and Stahl avenue. The organization was incorporated July 31, 1891, under the name of the First Christian church of Walla Walla, Washington, with S. C. Calvert, F. N. Bowman and William Preston as the first trustees. Previous to the building of the new church Neal Cheetem, J. H. Hollis, A. H. Foster, J. B. Johnson and R. H. Lotz served the congregation as pastors. After preaching his regular sermon on Lord's Day morning, September 20, 1891, Pastor Lotz announced that Judge J. H. Lasater offered the congregation a lot suitable for a church building, providing the congregation would at once

erect such a building. Steps were immediately taken to accept this liberal offer. A building committee composed of S. C. Calvert, chairman, and F. M. Bowman, E. W. Thornton, B. W. Schell and William Preston, was appointed, who were instructed to enter at once upon the work of raising funds and securing plans for the new church building.

A. C. Dickinson, of the Waitsburg congregation, very generously gave five hundred dollars in cash toward the fund, and the Church Extension Society of the Christian church gave a loan of one thousand dollars. These amounts with the liberal contributions of the members and friends of the church enabled the committee to commence the building soon after the offer made by Judge Lasater. The plans were successfully carried out and the building completed, and on April 2d of the following spring William F. Cowden, missionary in the northwest for the American Home Board of the Christian church, dedicated the commodious building now occupied by the congregation. Then with much enthusiasm the congregation began to increase its membership and repay the loan against its building. Again its friends and members were true to it and liberal in their gifts, so at this time the debt has all been paid and the building in a good state of repair. The membership has steadily increased until there are now over two hundred and seventy-five members in good standing and full fellowship. J. B. Daisley, C. P. Smith, J. F. Ghormley and O. J. Gist served as pastors in the order named since the dedication of the new building until January 1, 1897. Since that date the pulpit has been occupied by L. O. Herrold. The present board of trustees is composed of Messrs. C. I. Hall, Harry Lasater and D. W. Coward.

The church in its early years has endured

the usual struggles incident to starting and building a new work, but out of it all God has brought a strong and united church which looks forward with great hope for the future.

#### THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

Services according to the forms of the Baptist church were held in Walla Walla as early as 1870, by Rev. W. H. Pruett, but nearly a decade passed before a formal organization was effected. Of the genesis and growth of the First Baptist church of this city the historical edition of the Walla Walla Union of August, 1896, speaks as follows:

"To attempt to write a history of a church now in the zenith of its glory is like trying to write the biography of a great and good man while he is still alive and in the prime of his usefulness. The history of the First Baptist church of Walla Walla is a history of trials and triumphs. This church, like most of the western churches in early days, had a hard struggle for existence. The Baptists were late in effecting an organization in this city, which caused a great deal of hard work and patience to obtain a foothold. Many of the prominent families of the city were Baptists and had belonged to Baptist churches in the east, but on coming to Walla Walla found no Baptist church organization, so joined churches of other denominations.

"On May 11, 1879, the First Baptist church of Walla Walla was organized, with five members, and Rev. J. L. Blicht, of Dixon, California, became the first pastor and served the church for a year and a half. After remaining pastorless for several months the church extended a call to Rev. D. J. Pierce, of Laramie, Wyoming, which was accepted. Mr. Pierce was well known on the coast, having served