

Union Mills

By Alvin Friedrich

In order to tell about the community of Union Mills, I must go back to the Trullinger family. They came to Oregon from Iowa over the Oregon Trail, Barlow Route, in three covered wagons pulled by oxen. They left for Oregon on the 6th of April and arrived at Oregon City on September 14th of 1848. They were on the trail for 162 days. The history of the Trullinger family is well documented but too lengthy to get into now. Daniel and Elizabeth Trullinger with their 10 children came West.

In 1849 Gabriel and John went to California on horseback when they heard of the Gold rush near Sacramento. They both came back with quite a lot of money.

John went to Astoria and started the West Shore Sawmill, a logging operation and a electric light plant in 1885. He also invented the turbine water wheel and the double bladed ax. Until that time, axes had only one blade. He was also instrumental in the development of Oswego.

Gabriel took up a land claim of 320 acres that was late to become the community of Union Mills. Actually it grew to 640 acres after he became married. Gabriel built a dam on Milk Creek and a sawmill in 1855 and logging operations started at that time. There was lots of timber on his property. A planning mill was installed in 1869. It came from England and was the first one on the West Coast.

A wool carding mill was started about 1870. Wool from local sheep was carded into yarn, which every pioneer family needed.

The Flour mill was built about 1877 and it contained modern machinery that used steel rolls and a six section swinging sifter. The machinery was all imported from England. It never was a stone mill. Flour mills were many and close together. Every pioneer family needed flour and transportation was only by wagon.

Now, with 3 mills in operation, Gabriel came up with the name of Union Mills. The lumber to build the flour mill was made in the sawmill. It furnished finish lumber for many of the houses and buildings for miles around.

Union Mills had a post office for sever years, until 1903 when Mulino Rt #1 came that way. Gabriel Trullinger was the postmaster and the local people came to his office for their mail.

Dellozoh Trullinger, was one of Gabriel's sons, married Maude Paine and they lived their lives in the Union Mills vicinity. They were my grandparents. Gabriel was my great grandfather. After Gabriel's death in 1905, my grandfather Dell took over the operation of the sawmill and flour mill. The wool carding mill was no longer in operation. In the early days, most of all mills were water powered. There was no electric power and very little steam power, however, there was some steam power being used.

Dell and Maude had 4 children. One boy, Grant, was drowned in the mill pond at the age of 14. Three girls Pauline, Maude and Blanche. Maude was my mother. The girls were all of school age so Dell built a school house and hired a school teacher for them and a few other children in the neighborhood. They would all have to walk to Meadowbrook otherwise. The school was called the Lake Shore School.

When Dell passed away in 1935, my father Otto Friedrich and my older brother, Kenneth, operated the flour mill and sawmill. The sawmill ceased operation in about 1938. We just ran out of timber for logs.

About 1939, Otto's two sons, Kenneth and Alvin took over the operation of the flour mill. We were mixing some animal and poultry feeds at that time as well as flour. By 1940, the flour mill operation was discontinued and the Mill just concentrated on feeds for animals and poultry.

The feed mill machinery become electric powered about 1950. Union Mills, today, still has the feed mill in operation and has taken on the sale of farm equipment that is needed by farm animals. Pet foods are a large portion of their business. The Mill is operated by Kenneth's son, Robert and his granddaughter Connie DeAngelis.

The mill is still in operation after much modification, since 1877, about 127 years, same family.

From 1920 to 1980 there were many feed mills in operation in Oregon. Most all of them are out of business. Union Mills is still manufacturing feeds for animals and poultry. Only one other small mill such as ours is the Kropf mill at Harrisburg. The big Coop's have just taken over. Many large animal and poultry growers now make their own feeds.

Union Mills Grade School Dist #98 no longer operates. We all went to Molalla High School.