

The Master Craftsman of Boones Ferry Road

BY LOYCE MARTINAZZI

Charles Sherburn has long since passed to his great reward, but several of the fine structures he built remain along Boones Ferry Road. These buildings stand as enduring testimony to his skill as a craftsman.

Born in 1863, nobody remembers when he came to Tualatin, but everyone knew if you wanted a good carpenter, Charles Sherburn was your man.

His own home, a craftsman style bungalow, may have been built before the 1920s. Jean Kurtz Graham, who lived in the house in the late 1940s and early 50s claimed he also built the three story 1917 Logan house next door. Logan was a station master for the Oregon Electric Railway, (now WES), and it is said he could see the station from the upstairs window that Sherburn had carefully crafted to exacting specifications.

Further north on Boones Ferry Road, Sherburn erected a city hall for Tualatin in 1923. Helping were a crew of local men, Ed Robinson, Irvin Mellot, William Moore and Fred Sagert. The modest square building, heated by a pot-bellied stove, and complete with a jail cell in the back, was to serve the city for 47 years.

When the 1910 Methodist Church burned down in 1925, Sherburn was again called on to supervise the construction of the new craftsman style church. The church was built just north of the City Hall, and the two buildings shared part of a driveway.

Then with funds from the Public Works Administration, and the sale of bonds, the new brick Tualatin Elementary School, with Charles

Sherburn as building superintendent, opened its doors in the fall of 1939.

But all things change and in 1974 the old city hall was razed to make way for the Tualatin-Sherwood Road extension. Sad for some of us who learned the “three Rs” there, the old school, (we used to call it the new school) is currently being torn down so that a senior living facility can be built. How well we remember the fine maple gym floor, the clanging lockers in the hall and the spacious stage. (The classrooms not so much).

Charles Sherburn’s home and the Logan house still stand stately where they were built, but the 1926 Community Methodist Church has been moved over to Sweek Drive. The church, with its graceful arched windows, now serves the community as a heritage center, and is the home of the Tualatin Historical Society. I think Sherburn would have been pleased that his legacy is the repository for so much of Tualatin’s heritage.

“Charlie was a nice old guy,” said Jean Graham. “The cabinetry in his house was beautiful, and even as a child I loved to look at the smooth



Tualatin's pride—the new brick elementary school ready for students in the fall of 1939.



The 1917 Logan house. Now new homes block the full view.

wood. He grew a vegetable garden in the back yard behind the house, and every plant was laid out so nicely.”

Charles Sherburn rests from his labors in Winona Cemetery, under a holly tree.



Tualatin Methodist Church, built in 1926. Many called it “The Little Brown Church in the Vale”



Charles Sherburn's home fronting Boones Ferry Road. A fence currently obscures the view.



Old City Hall stood just south of the Methodist church. A siren on top rang out curfew during world War II. The lean-to was added to house the Fire Department's trucks.

Photos courtesy Tualatin Historical Society.