

GEORGE TURNBULL FAMILY HISTORY

By Mortimer Lee Turnbull

Great Great-Grandfather William Turnbull from Bedrule County, came to Virginia in 1792. He killed a man for wife-beating, then he fled with his family to Kentucky where they lived on a farm.

Great-Grandfather John Turnbull was born on a farm in Kentucky, where he married and raised a family. One son married and moved to a farm in Tennessee.

Grandfather George Turnbull was born on August 30, 1846, on a farm near Knoxville, Tennessee.

When the Civil War began, George was only 15 years old, but he volunteered to fight on the Union side. He was not accepted because he was too young. Shortly after that, he volunteered a second time in another township, but this time he gave his name as George T. Bull and his age as 18 years; he was officially approved and served under General Sherman until the end of the War. Among his other duties as a soldier, George drove a 4-mule team with a platoon wagon, which proved to be good training for his future work.

Although the devastation of Georgia during Sherman's March to the Sea must have been a tragic experience for George and his fellow soldiers, it was the turning point of the Civil War. It also brought about their proudest hour when Sherman's men marched in review at the United States Capital before President Lincoln.

When the Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, George was honorably discharged from the Union Army. His Discharge Papers and his pension checks continued to be written to George T. Bull.

George traveled to Maine with his father and brothers to look for work and farm land. They decided not to stay there and went to Ohio, hoping to find the right place to settle. But George left his father and two brothers there and that was the last time he ever saw or heard from them.

In 1868, George was among the many who traveled by train through the Great Plains to make a new life. His most vivid memory of that trip was the indiscriminate shooting from open windows by so-called "sportsmen" as the train passed through herds of wild animals. George was not the only man there who had seen his share of guns or death. One angry fellow passenger finally "borrowed" the worst offender's gun, broke it, and threw it out of the window.

When George arrived in Vancouver, Washington, he took out a homestead near Brush Prairie. While building a log cabin and necessary outbuildings, he planted potatoes, vegetables and fruit.