

## Lafayette Oldtimers Blame Gypsy's Curse For Loss Of County Seat, Disastrous Fire

(Continued from page 1)

the jury will stay around," judge A. A. Skinner was reported to have instructed the sheriff.

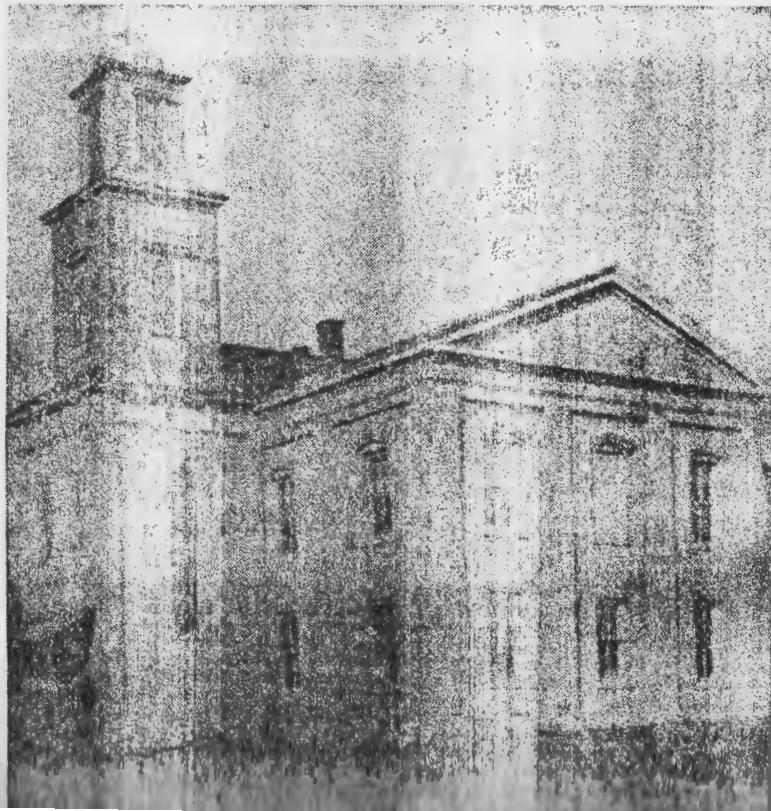
That was in 1846, but even at the time of the Corker murder 40 years later, processes of law still were relatively simple.

"My father had pointed Marple out to me a day or two before the killing and warned me to stay away from him because he was a bad man. Marple, at the time, was making a living doing odd jobs, trapping, and was suspected of several thefts although it wasn't proved," Laman recalled.

The gypsy curse entered the picture when Marple's mother—herself thought by many to have accompanied her son to the murder scene—screamed it at the executioners as they hauled Marple to the gallows.

Clint Hembree, now a resident of McMinnville, was 11 years old at the time, and sneaked in under adults legs and through a hole in the gallows enclosure fence to see the hanging.

"It was the last hanging in Lafayette. Marple was an ordinary looking man, about five feet eight. They brought him out a window in the courthouse to the gallows, without a struggle as far as I could



Another Lafayette old-timer, Curt Jones, 81, says that even up to the last second both the sheriff and his deputy were reluctant to take Marple's life, because of his conviction on circumstantial evidence.

"Deputy Ben Collard told me later that he flatly refused when sheriff Harris asked him to drop the trap. Harris himself didn't want to do it, but Marple made a mistake. At the very last he accused the sheriff of killing Corker himself and planning Marple's execution as a cover-up," Jones recalled.

"That made the sheriff mad, and he sprang the trap," Jones said.

Then Lafayette's trouble began—just as predicted by the gypsy woman.

In 1888 McMinnville literally stole the county courthouse from Lafayette, ending the town's position as county seat.

"A bunch came down from McMinnville one night, entered the courthouse and walked off with the records. It was just a plain steal. And from that time to this McMinnville has been the county seat," Mrs. Lunger said.

Oldtimers feel that the move had support in Lafayette by land-owners who feared their taxes would go up if courthouse activities boosted the size of the town.

Then followed two disastrous fires.

Hembree recalls that the first one wiped out the murder victim's store and six other buildings along one side of Lafayette's main street. The second hit the other side and destroyed buildings for a distance

blocks. Marple, meantime, had been buried in an unmarked grave in the now abandoned Oddfellows cemetery. Corker's headstone now is almost obscured by undergrowth in the Masonic cemetery. No trace of Marple's grave can be found today.

In 1899 Jones' family bought Marple's old house and in it discovered further evidence that the right man had been hanged despite his protests of innocence. Spoons and shears which Jones is sure were stolen from the hardware store were found hidden away.

About seven years ago some previous property owner cut down the old hanging tree, and this year the present owners blasted out the stumps that remained.

No further disasters have occurred in Lafayette, and oldtimers feel that the gypsy curse—for whatever it was worth—has finally run its course.

State Properties



**STOLEN COURTHOUSE**—Shown above is the old Lafayette courthouse from which McMinnville raiders stole official records to switch the county seat to the latter city. The last man hanged in Lafayette was led to the gallows from a window in the building above. (Photo by Della Lunger)

## Ridgway To Make Inspection Trip

WASHINGTON (UP) — Gen. Matthew Ridgway, Army Chief of Staff, will leave Sunday for the Far East to make a "routine inspection trip," the Army announced today.

On the same day, Adm. Arthur W. Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will leave for a tour of Europe.

## Swedes Charge Israelis With Downing Airplane

BEIRUT, Lebanon (UP) — The Swedish consul charged today Israeli air force planes shot down a Swedish aircraft near the Lebanon-Israel border.

Jean Fattal, the consul, said the Israelis sent the Swedish tourist plane crashing in flames, killing the passengers and crew, near Mount Hermon yesterday.

Fattal said at least two Swedish passengers were known to be in the plane.

**RECLAMATION MEET SET BAKER (UP)**—The Oregon Reclamation Congress will hold its annual meeting here Monday and Tuesday

It's ? Free!  
Dielschneider's Jewelers  
Bill's Market

**IVAN'S HEATING SERVICE**

**WESCO**  
PERIMETER HEATING  
Oil Stoves, Carburetors  
Cleaned.

Furnaces, Conversion Burners,  
Wesco 10-Yr. Guarantee

**IVAN NEUSCHWANGER**  
243 E. 8th Phone 1321

# Expert TV Service

by Jack Mabry

If you're not receiving channel 6 satisfactorily, give us a call.

We're equipped to do everything from antenna installation to major TV set repairs.

ALL OUR WORK IS GUARANTEED