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DR. JOHN M'LOUGHLIN

"Fa her of Oregon"

(Following was written by J. F. Finucane, aged 15 years, Graduate of St. John's Parochial School, this city)

As early as the latter part of the eighteenth century, expeditions were undertaken to explore the Northwest territory of the American Continent, and many fur trading posts were established by companies formed and maintained in England. Among these the Hudson Bay Company became the most powerful, and after having absorbed all other smaller companies and amalgamated its chief competitor, the North West Company, obtained virtually, in 1823, full control of all the country extending from the Great Lakes to the Pacific, and from the Arctic regions to the boundaries of California.

A country so extensive in trade required a man of rare qualities and character, and the officers, after long and deliberate meetings, weighing the merits of the different factors of the British dominion, concluded to appoint Dr. John McLoughlin, at that time in the service of the company at Fort Williams, near Lake Superior, chief factor and representative of the company.

It is my intention to review briefly the life and achievements of this great man. Though left to posterity very little in writing concerning himself, we can rightly say, with Horace Lyman in his history of Oregon, "McLoughlin wrote his life in deeds;" and again, "And Oregon's history from 1824 to

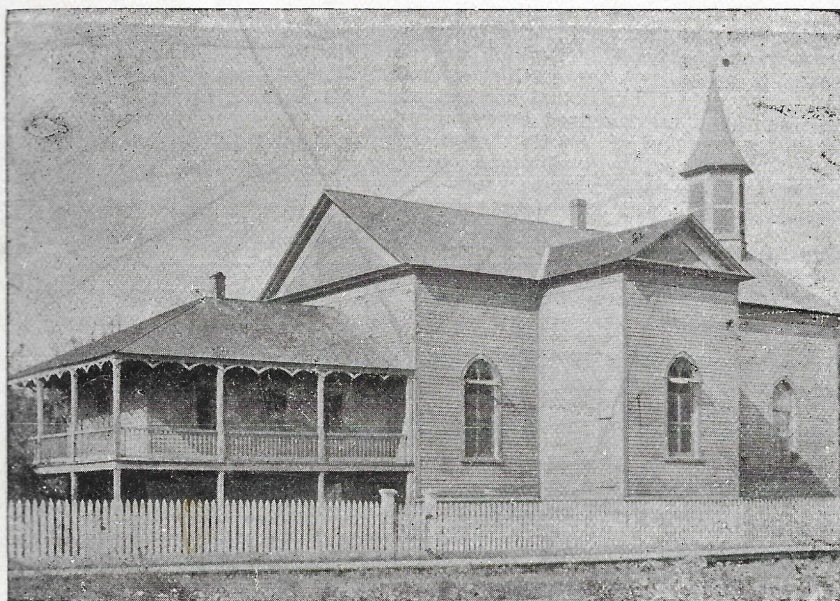
1844 was pre-eminently the age of McLoughlin."

Many erroneous statements have been made by all historians of Oregon in regard to Dr. McLoughlin's nationality and early creed. It was many years after his death that authentic facts were obtained relative to both. According to letters dated 1882 and written by some of his relatives and Rev. L. Blais, Curate of St. Patrice, Riviere du Loup, Canada, printed copies of which may be inspected in St. John's Parish records, we obtain the subjoined information:

Dr. John McLoughlin was born at Riviere du Loup, Canada, October 19, 1784. His father was of Irish, whilst his mother (nee Angelique Fraser) was of Scotch descent. She was born in the parish of Beaumont, below Quebec, and was the daughter of a lieutenant in the Canadian militia. Dr. John McLoughlin was the second child of this marriage, the others being, first, Marie Louise, afterward Sister St. Henri, an Ursuline nun, who died in Quebec, July 3, 1846; third, Dr. David McLoughlin, died in London, March 1, 1872; fourth, Julie Ann McLoughlin, wife of J. M. Michand, died in Riviere du Loup, July 4, 1885; fifth, Marguerite McLoughlin, wife of Simon Talbot, died at St. George of Cacouna about 1862; sixth, Honore Angele, afterward Mrs. Joseph De

Chene, died in Riviere du Loup, November 20, 1825; seventh Elizabeth, died while young.

We are also informed that the father of Dr. John McLoughlin was a good and practical Catholic as well as his lady wife, and



St. John's Church

that Dr. McLoughlin himself received private baptism in the Catholic Church and, there being no resident priest at Riviere du Loup, the baptismal ceremonies were supplied the month after his birth, viz.: November 3, 1784 at Kamouraska, 24 miles distant from his birthplace. Kamouraska could then be reached only by boat or on foot.

The father of Dr. John McLoughlin was accidentally drowned on the north side of the St. Lawrence River, at La Malbaie, and was buried in that parish. His wife had his body exhumed October 22, 1812, and transferred to the cemetery of St. Andre. Dr. John McLoughlin's mother died July 3, 1842 at the age of 83 years, and was buried at Riviere du Loup.

Of Dr. McLoughlin's youth very little is known. It is said that when but 16 years of age he entered the service of the North West Company, and that some time afterward he went to Scotland, and thence to Paris, France, for the purpose of obtaining a good education and also to apply himself especially to the study of medicine; and that he returned to America to re-enter the service of the North West Company with the intention, it seems, of becoming its official physician. However there was probably very little work for him in this profession and he afterward took great interest in