Benjamin Franklin Yantis

Pioneer of 1852

compiled by Stephenie Flora
from information supplied by Descendant Colin O'Neill
oregonpioneers.com

Benjamin Franklin Yantis
b. 19 Mar 1807 Garrard County, Kentucky
d. 08 Feb 1879 Olympia, Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington
s/o John Yantis and Priscilla Catherine Lapsley

m. 23 Oct 1828 Lincoln County, Kentucky
Ann J. Hall
b. 1810 Kentucky
d. 28 Jul 1852 Salmon Falls, Idaho on Oregon Trail
buried in Idaho on the Oregon Trail

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

1858: Special Indian Agent for tribes around Ft. Colville

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston County, Washington Territory, July 3, 1860; B.F. Yantis, 53, farmer, $2500 $700, KY; W.B., 20, m, student, MO; Robert L., 17, student, MO; Jno V., 15, MO; Frank A., 11, MO

1870: First Election Pct, Shoshone County, Idaho Territory, July 27-Aug 17, 1870; B.F. Yantis, 63, trader, Kentucky; R.L., 27, trader, $0 $4000, MO; W.B., 30, probate judge, MO

Judge B. F. Yantis, a prominent citizen of Washington territory, died on Saturday last at Olympia. Judge Yantis was the first man who ever carried the U. S. mails between Puget Sound and the Columbia river.

[Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, Thursday, February 13, 1879 p.2]

Children of Benjamin F. Yantis and Ann Hall:

1. Maria Barnes Yantis
b. Sep 1829 Kentucky
d. 13 Dec 1905 Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m1. 03 May 1848 Saline County, Missouri
William H. Pullen
b. 1827 Kentucky
d. c 1855

m2. 31 Aug 1860
James Richard Wood
b. Jan 1825 Dutchess County, New York
d. 03 Nov 1905 Olympia, Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington
s/o Isaac Wood and Catherine Murray

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullen, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B. Pullen, 22, KY; Sarah L. Pullen, 2, MO

JAMES R. WOOD, ONE OF THURSTON'S OLDEST PIONEERS, PASSES AWAY

CONTINUOUS RESIDENT 54 YEARS

Came Across Plains in 1848 and Reached Olympia in 1851—Owned First Brewery in State

James Richard Wood, known to pioneers of Olympia and the state as "Dick Wood, is dead. The end came peacefully for the aged pioneer last night at a few minutes after 12 o'clock, with the members of his family, consisting of his wife and daughter, at his bedside.

Old age had been creeping on him for a long time and of late he had been all but helpless. At the time of his death Mr. Wood was one of the oldest living pioneers of Olympia, W. O. Bush, of Bush prairie, probably being the only one living who came to the territory prior to Mr. Wood. For more than half a century he had made Olympia and Thurston county his home.

Arrangements for the funeral have not yet been completed.

Sketch of His Life.

James Richard Wood was born at Hueston, Dutchess county, New York, in 1825. His boyhood was spent at home with his parents, learning the cooperage trade from his father. At the age of 21 and shortly after his first marriage he moved to Wisconsin, and a year later, in 1848, in company with his father and mother he started across the plains in an ox team for California. His young wife died shortly before the journey. After prospecting through Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, they finally reached Southern California in 1849, but it was not until the spring of 1850 that they landed in San Francisco. After a few months in the mines the party again was on the move, coming north to Astoria, Oregon, and later to Olympia, reaching this city in December, 1851.

Continuous Residence of 54 Years.

Mr. Wood had lived in this city and county continuously since then. Shortly after coming here he took up a donation claim, but later when Olympia was platted, secured two lots at Fifth and Columbia streets, which place has been his home for a half-century. One of the buildings on his place, the long low carpenter shed in the rear, is the oldest standing building in the state of Washington.

Mr. Wood served with distinction during the Indian wars of 1855-6. He was one of the first to respond to the call for volunteers and served in Captain Hays' famous company until after the close of the war.

In the affairs of the old territorial community Mr. Wood was always a prominent factor, although he never held public office.

Mr. Wood, in company with his father, built the first brewery in Thurston county, and mouths of old pioneers still water for a draught of the good old-fashioned cream-ale that was brewed for them in the pioneer days in the old hewed-timber brewery at Fifth and Columbia streets, a part of which building still stands. The establishment was in successful operation for 20 years.

Mr. Wood also engaged in contracting and building, and many of the staunch old pioneer buildings standing in the city today, were built by him.

Of Interest to Historians.

His long eventful life was filled with incidents interesting and exciting and his stories of pioneer days were eagerly sought after by territorial historians. For many years he had lived in retirement in his little home on Fifth street, tenderly cared for by his daughter, and enjoying in quiet contemplation the strenuous days of the past.

Mr. Wood was married in this city in 1859 to Mrs. Elizabeth Pullen, who still survives him, with their two children, Oscar I. Wood and Miss Frances Addie Wood, both of this city.

[Olympia Daily Recorder, Olympia, Washington, Friday, November 3, 1905]

2. John Lapsley Yantis
b. c 1832 Missouri
d. c 1832 Missouri

3. Sarah Jane Yantis
b. 13 Feb 1835 Saline County, Missouri
d. 09 Mar 1894 Olympia, Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m1. 24 Mar 1855 Washington
Col. Abram Benton Moses
b.
d. 31 Oct 1855 Connell's Prairie, Pierce County, Washington
buried Union Cemetery, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m2. 22 May 1857 Thurston County, Washington
George C. Blankenship
b. 18 Sep 1825 Cattaraugus, New York
d. 10 Jul 1888 Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

"The Death of Abram Benton Moses: The single killing for which [Nisqually Chief] Leschi was indicted and convicted occurred on October 31, 1855. A small group of volunteer militiamen was passing through a swampy area near Connell's Prairie in Pierce County. Two of the men, Antonio B. Rabbeson (1825-1891) and Abram Benton Moses (d. 1855) were, respectively, the sheriff and former sheriff of Thurston County. They were attacked, and Moses and militiaman Joseph Miles shot dead. More than a year later, Leschi would be indicted for the killing of Moses." [https://historylink.org/File/21195]

DEATH OF MRS. BLANKENSHIP.

Funeral Services From the Presbyterian Church This Afternoon.

At the request of friends the funeral of Mrs. Sarah Y. Blankenship who died at 4:30 yesterday morning, will take place at the Presbyterian church at 2 o'clock today, instead of at the residence as at first announced. All friends of the family are invited to be present.

Deceased was born February 13, 1834, in Saline county, Missouri, and emigrated to Olympia with her father, Judge B. F. Yantis, in 1852 and has resided in Thurston county ever since. Deceased was married May 22, 1857, to George C. Blankenship, whose death preceded her's several years.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Saturday, March 10, 1894 p.3]

4. James Hall Yantis
b. 12 Apr 1837 Missouri
d. 07 Aug 1852 Clark County, Washington
headstone in cemetery says 1852 [probably actually 1853 since they did not arrive until the latter part of September and it was a few months before he became Pony Express rider between Cowlitz Landing and Olympia. James died a few days after swimming in Barnes Lake after a hot and dusty ride
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

5. William Burton Yantis
b. 1839 Missouri
d. 19 Jul 1898 Walla Walla County, Washington
buried Mountain View Cemetery, Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston County, Washington Territory, July 3, 1860; B.F. Yantis, 53, farmer, $2500 $700, KY; W.B., 20, m, student, MO; Robert L., 17, student, MO; Jno V., 15, MO; Frank A., 11, MO

1870: First Election Pct, Shoshone County, Idaho Territory, July 27-Aug 17, 1870; B.F. Yantis, 63, trader, Kentucky; R.L., 27, trader, $0 $4000, MO; W.B., 30, probate judge, MO

6. Mary E. Yantis
b. 1842 Missouri
d. 1842 Missouri

7. Robert Lapsley Yantis
b. 27 Dec 1843 Saline County, Missouri
d. 28 Apr 1889 Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m. 16 Dec 1880 Nez Perce County, Idaho
Eva L. Kelly
b. 12 Jun 1862 Nez Perce County, Idaho
d. 31 Aug 1940 King County, Washington
burial location unknown
m2. Ebenezer Mounce 1895

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8. John Vivian Yantis
b. 16 Jan 1845 Saline County, Missouri
d. 16 Jul 1925 Olympia, Thurston County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m. 05 Nov 1879 Thurston County, Washington
Margaret M. Hume
b. 05 Jun 1856 Nova Scotia, Canada
d. 20 Jun 1929 Seattle, King County, Washington
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

MISS ALICE YANTIS PASSES AWAY

Alice Yantis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John V. Yantis, died yesterday morning at 2:55 o'clock at the family residence, Fifth and Washington streets, following an extended illness. Death was due to toxic poisoning.

Child of a pioneer family, graduate of the Olympia high school, a successful teacher in several of the country districts, Miss Yantis had a wide circle of friends who will sympathize with her parents and brothers and sisters in their loss. She was in her 27th year.

Her parents, her brother, Robert, pressman for the Recorder, and three sisters, Anne, Hope and Faith, were at her bedside when the end came. The other brother, George, is at Madison, where he is attending the law department of the University of Wisconsin.

Miss Yantis was compelled to abandon school work several years ago on account of failing health. She visited with friends in California and returned some months ago apparently in much better health. In recent weeks she has failed rapidly and for several days past death was expected at any hour.

The funeral will be held today at 2 o'clock at the First Presbyterian church, Rev. Dr. R. M. Hays officiating.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Friday, June 17, 1910 p.4]

COUNTY PIONEER, JOHN YANTIS, IS DEAD

Deceased Crossed Plains In 1852: Widow Returns to be at Bedside: Held Numerous Political Offices.

John V. Yantis, 80, one of Thurston county's earliest pioneers and a man who grew up as a part of this district, passed away yesterday afternoon following an illness of a week. Old age was attributed as the cause of death. The deceased came to this district in 1852, crossing the plains, when only six years old with his father, B. F. Yantis.

The Yantis family settled in the county where John was raised. He was a member of the territorial legislature before Washington became a state and for a number of years was city clerk here. His principle businesses were those of printer and photographer.

He was born in Missouri, January 16, 1845 and it was from that state that the ox-team which brought the Yantis family to the Pacific. He is survived by his widow, two sons, George F. and Robert of Olympia; three daughters, Mrs. Ann Houser, Longview; Mrs. Walter House, Seattle and Miss Faith Yantis at home.

Mrs. Yantis, who had been in California on a five-weeks' trip to regain her failing health, returned to Olympia in time to be at the bedside several hours before the end came. Other members of the family also were summoned and were present.

The deceased was a real son of Thurston county, having seen it grow from a small community to one of the leading centers of the territory and later the state of Washington. He was active in early-day politics of the county and city.

The remains were removed to the Mills funeral parlors from where services are to be held next Saturday morning at 10:30 o'clock. Rev T. H. Simpson will officiate. Interment will be in the Masonic cemetery.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Friday, July 17, 1925 p.1]

YANTIS FUNERAL TO BE HELD SATURDAY

Mrs. Margaret M. Yantis, 73, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Walter House, Seattle, early Thursday morning. She was born in Nova Scotia, June 5, 1856, and came to Thurston county when 14 years of age. November 5, 1879, here, she was married to the late John V. Yantis.

Surviving are two sons, George F., and Robert G., both of this city; and three daughters, Mrs. Walter House, Seattle; Mrs. Walter Houser, Longview; and Mrs. Henry Kaffenberger, this city; one brother, Joseph Hume, Oregon; a sister, Mrs. Anna McKinley of British Columbia.

Funeral services will be held Saturday afternoon at 1 o'clock at the Mills chapel, Rev. Frank Carlson officiating. Interment in the family plot in the Masonic cemetery.

[Daily Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Friday, June 21, 1929 p.8]

9. Frances "Fanny" A. Yantis
b. 1849 Saline County, Missouri
d. Jul 1913 Washington, DC
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

m. 1873
John Jacob Gilbert
b. 04 Sep 1845 Fairfax County, Virginia
d. 07 Oct 1929 Washington, DC
buried Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington

1850: District 90, Saline County, Missouri, November 7, 1850; Franklin Yantis, 44, farmer, KY; Ann J., 40, KY; Sarah J., 15, MO; James H., 12, MO; William W., 10, MO: Robert L., 8, MO; John B., 6, MO; Mary E., 4, MO; Francis A., 1, MO; William Pullin, 23, farmer, KY; Mariah B., 22, KY; Sarah L., 2, MO

1860: Olympia PO, Thurston County, Washington Territory, July 3, 1860; B.F. Yantis, 53, farmer, $2500 $700, KY; W.B., 20, m, student, MO; Robert L., 17, student, MO; Jno V., 15, MO; Frank A., 11, MO

PIONEER WOMAN OF THIS COUNTY IS DEAD IN EAST

News has been received in Olympia of the death in Washington, D. C., of Mrs. J. J. Gilbert, wife of Capt. J. J. Gilbert, head of the geodetic survey, and the remains are being brought to Olympia for interment in the local cemetery. Mrs. Gilbert was a pioneer settler of Thurston county, crossing the plains when she was a mere girl, just in her teens. She came with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Yantis. She is survived here by one brother John V. Yantis and two nephews, R. L. Blankenship and George Blankenship, of this city.

She came to Thurston county with her parents in 1855 and, as Fannie Yantis, was well known here among the pioneers. She was married to Capt. Gilbert. They had but one child, who died when young.

Mrs. Gilbert played a prominent part in Olympia affairs up to the time her husband left to take up his station in Washington, D. C., in the government employe, which was about twelve years ago. Mrs. Gilbert donated a part of her property as a site for the present Y. M. C. A. building.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Saturday, July 19, 1913 p.1]

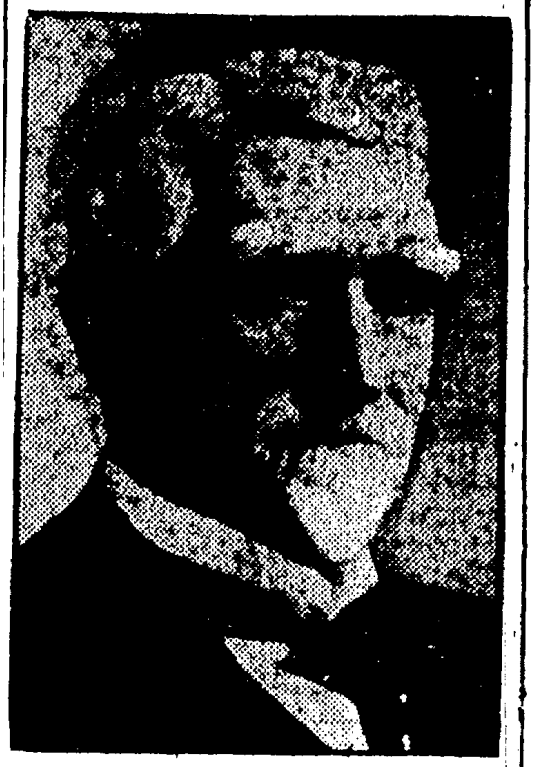
REMAINS OF MRS. GILBERT TO BE BROUGHT HERE

The remains of Mrs. J. J. Gilbert, who died in Washington, D. C., last week, are expected in Olympia tomorrow for burial here. She was the wife of Capt. J. J. Gilbert, head of the Pacific geodetic survey for many years, now in the hydrographic office in Washington. In 1855 she came to Thurston county with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Yantis. She is survived here by one brother, John V. Yantis, and two nephews, R. L. Blankenship and George Blankenship. Funeral services, in charge of H. N. Stickdin, will be arranged after the arrival of the remains.

Captain and Mrs. Gilbert were residents of Olympia for many years during the time Captain Gilbert was engaged in survey work. He commanded the old Pathfinder for nearly 30 years. They moved to Washington about 12 years ago.

[Morning Olympian, Olympia, Washington, Monday, July 21, 1913 p.1]

Survey Officer Dies



CAPT. JOHN J. GILBERT.

CAPT. GILBERT DIES AT THE AGE OF 8

Served Coast and Geodetic Survey With Distinction for Many Years.

Capt. John Jacob Gilbert, 84 years old, former "inspector" of the division of hydrography and topography, in charge of hydrographic operations United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, with which he served with distinction for nearly 57 years, died at his residence in the Iroquois Apartments, 1410 M street, yesterday, said to be a victim of a stomach ailment he contracted while in service.

The position of "inspector" of the division of hydrography and topography corresponds with the present title of "chief" now used in the departments of the survey.

Served in Pacific Northwest.

Much of Capt. Gilbert's service with the Coast and Geodetic Survey included extensive surveys in the Pacific Northwest and as commander of the survey steamer Pathfinder on surveys in Alaska and in the Philippine Islands. He commanded the Pathfinder on a trip from Alaska to the Philippines in 1901.

Capt. Gilbert had the distinction of holding the record in the survey for continuous survey operations in one locality, having carried on survey work in Georgia Strait, Washington, for 22 years. He was known not only as the pioneer in the work in that section, but to him was attributed the development of that region and the waters south of it.

Although lacking some of the modern-day equipment and methods for conducting surveys and collecting certain scientific data, Capt. Gilbert was accredited with being able to produce substantially as accurate and thorough results as are possible today.

Goes to Retired List in 1920.

He was placed on the retired list in 1920 while serving with the Division of hydrography and topography as a special "inspector."

Born in Lewinsville, Va., Capt. Gilbert attended schools near there and later entered Wilton Academy. Subsequently he attended Williams College in Massachusetts, leaving there to enter the survey.

Capt. Gilbert was a member of the Cosmos Club, the Washington Golf and Country Club and was a thirty-second degree Mason, having numerous Masonic affiliations. He was a member of the DeMolay Commandery, Knights Templar, this city.

Funeral services will be conducted at the Church of the Covenant, Presbyterian, tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock. Interment will be at Olympia, Wash.

Capt. Gilbert's wife died many years ago.

[The Evening Star, Washington, D.C., Tuesday, October 8, 1929 p.9]

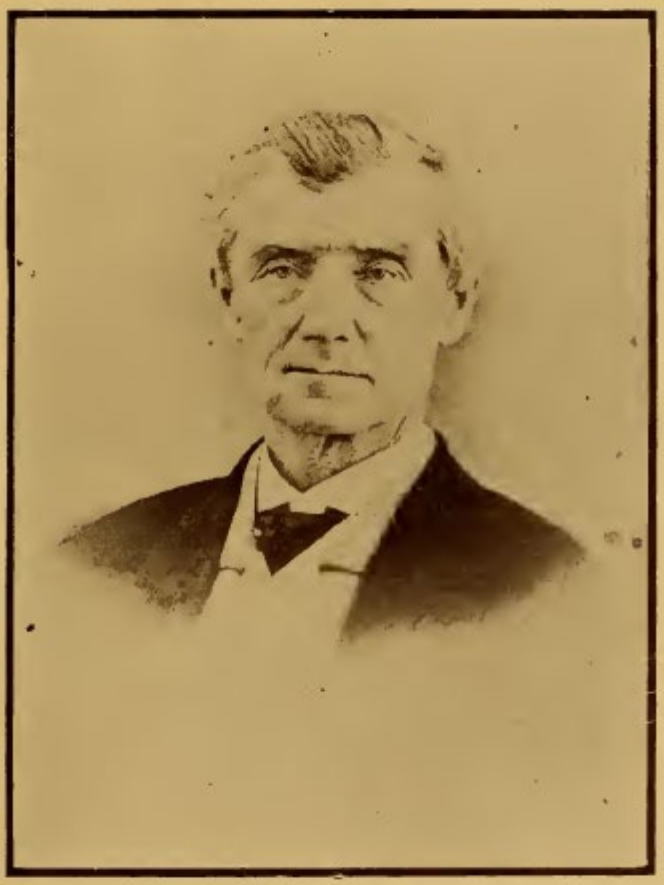
B. F. YANTIS

Snow beginning the latter part of October and falling to a depth of fifteen inches, and himself and eight children being forced to subsist on potatoes and dried salmon straight all through the winter months, was the experience of Judge B. F. Yantis and family, when they reached Bush Prairie in 1852.

Starting in the Spring of that year from the old home in Missouri, where, although money might be a little scarce, there was an abundance of the fat of the land for subsistence, travelling all those long, weary months over the old Oregon trail, leaving his wife and the mother of his children in a lonely grave on the sage brush plains of Idaho, with his motherless child, Fannie, an infant of but three years of age, the prospect awaiting the hardy emigrant when he reached the El Dorado of his dreams seemed cold and forbidding.

The trip, undertaken in company with a number of kinsmen and friends, had been an unusually trying experience. Besides that of Mrs. Yantis, there were many other deaths occurring in the train, owing to the appearance of black measles, a sister, Mrs. Eliza Ostrander, with her children, being among the sufferers. Judge Yantis' oldest daughter, Mrs. W. H. Pullen, with her three-year-old baby in her arms, was obliged, as were all the women and children, to walk across the five miles of portage below The Dalles. This child was ill when the weary march through the hot sun was begun, and grew rapidly worse as the mother plodded along. Before the little boat was reached in which the party was to be brought on down the Columbia, the baby was dead in the distracted mother's arms. That evening a tiny grave was made by the banks of the majestic river and the party were obliged to proceed on their journey.

When the Big Sandy was reached the march was again resumed to the Cowlitz River, where Indian canoes and bateaus were employed to bring the weary emigrants to Cow-



B. F. YANTIS

litz Landing. Judge Yantis' oxen were so exhausted by the trip across the plains that he left them to be wintered at The Dalles. In the Spring he found that all had perished but one ox. But nothing dismayed, and with the pluck and endurance which was characteristic of the sturdy pioneers, Judge Yantis at once proceeded to take advantage of the opportunity he saw on every hand, for bettering his financial affairs. A homestead was pre-empted out on Bush Prairie, a few miles from where Plum Station now is, and a comfortable home was soon established.

Before the family had lived many months in their new home, another terrible blow was dealt them. The oldest boy, James, became a pony express rider, carrying the mail from Cowlitz Landing to Olympia. One day, being hot and dusty from the riding, he went in swimming in Barnes' Lake, and contracted inflammatory rheumatism, which caused his death within a few days.

After several years spent on the homestead, Judge Yantis moved into Olympia and took a contract for carrying mail and passengers from Cowlitz Landing to Olympia. This was a two days' travel, over what has frequently been described by other pioneers as the "worst roads on earth," but the mail was always delivered with regularity, and the passengers in safety.

While living in Missouri B. F. Yantis was Judge of the Superior Court of Saline County, and after reaching the West, served in the first Territorial Legislature. He was an unswerving Democrat and a life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, and was the first Entered Apprentice initiated in Masonry north of the Columbia River. A man of high ideals of honor and justice, Judge Yantis was held in great esteem by his fellow pioneers.

His children were: Mrs. W. H. Pullen, who in later years became Mrs. Richard Wood, and the mother of Oscar and Addie Wood; Sarah, who was made a girl widow when her husband of a few months, was killed at the beginning of the Indian war. It was for the killing of Moses that Chief Leschi was hung, after peace was declared. Sarah afterwards became the wife of George C. Blankenship, and the mother of George E. and Robert L. Blankenship; James H. Yantis, the lad who died on Bush Prairie; Wm. M., Robert L., John

V., Mary, who died in infancy, and Frances L., wife of Capt. J. J. Gilbert. Of this goodly family of sons and daughters the youngest son, John V. is left—the last leaf on the tree. His living children are George, Annie, Robert, Hope, and Faith.

[Early History of Thurston County, Washington by Mrs. George Blankenship 1904 p. 272-74]