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# *Columbia City Days*

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## Charles Green Caples

From the book History of the Columbia River Valley from The Dalles to the Sea by Fred Lockley:

Among the pioneer families of Columbia County, none had more influence in their respective communities or performed more distinctive service for their fellow men than the Caples family, a worthy representative of which was the late Dr. Charles G. Caples, who, as an able, devoted and successful physician and loyal and public spirited citizen, was for a long period one of the conspicuous figures of his section of the county.

Born in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, on May 22, 1832, Charles lived in his native county until 12 years of age, and in 1844, accompanied his father on the journey across the plains to Oregon. He attended public schools in Ohio and Salem, Oregon. He also attended Tualatin

Academy near Forest Grove. In 1848, he joined the gold rush to California, where he engaged in mining for about one year, making enough money to pay the tuition and expenses of his sister and himself at Tualatin Academy.

According to Lockley's book, "On leaving that institution, he returned to Columbia City and took up a donation land claim of 320 acres, a portion of which on the high land was heavily timbered, while the remainder was mainly rich bottomland. He gave his attention to clearing this place, which he developed into a good farm, there spending the remainder of his life."

On May 10, 1855, Charles married Lucinda M. McBride. Together, the couple had five children: Dr. Byron M., who practiced medicine in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and was the owner of the Waukesha Springs Sanatorium; Margaret A., who married Elijah M. Wharton and remained in Columbia City; Willie L., who moved to Arcadia, California; Dell M., who lived in Santa Cruz, California, for awhile but later returned to Columbia City; and Frederick C., who was a mining engineer at Wedderburn, Oregon. Lucinda died September 4, 1916.

Lockley states in his book:

After his marriage in 1855, he went to Portland and took up the study of medicine under the direction of Dr. Giltner. In 1868, he was appointed state medical examiner for the insane at Monticello, Washington (now known as Longview), in which capacity he rendered effective service for three years, after which he returned to his farm at Columbia City, where he practiced medicine for many years.

He possessed high qualifications as a physician, for which profession he was naturally fitted. In those early days, the practice of medicine in this sparsely settled country meant long and tiresome trips, day and night, over often almost impassible roads, in fair and foul weather, to reach those who required his services. The record of Dr. Caples was replete with faithful service, as he spared not himself that he might relieve the suffering of the sick, and he commanded the unqualified confidence, esteem and gratitude of the people of his community.

After many years of practice, he retired and lived quietly on his farm until his death, which occurred April 3, 1906, when he was 74 years old.

The following is a description of properties that Charles owned as of 1874. Note that No. 2 shows that Charles owned part, if not all, of the Germany Hill Cemetery. This document was provided by Lorraine Larson, a great-granddaughter of Charles and Lucinda Caples.

#### 1874 DESCRIPTION AND APPRAISEMENT CERTIFICATES

(1) A farm of 140 acres situated upon the Columbia River in Columbia Co. 30 miles from Portland and 8 miles from Kalama. Described in titles as follows: Claim No. 40 part of section 11, 17, 20 and 21 in Township 5 North of Range 1 West, beginning at the Northeast corner of the SE 1/4 of said section 17 and running thence E 30 chains and more particularly described in the Government Patent dated 26 March 1866. There are about 30 acres in cultivation, also five acres in orchard. Nearly all fenced in a cross fenced there are three barns and one old dwelling house, later being worth \$250.00 one half in timber and the other half 70 acres being all cleared and improved. Land suitable for any kind of crops. The whole farms value \$2000.

(2) That piece of ground adjoining Columbia City, Ore. Containing 40 acres of which there are about 10 acres in cultivation the balance being light timber land suitable for pasture being the 1/3 of 120 acres or lot of land situated in the Co. of Columbia and State of Oregon and known as all that portion of the DLC of Abram C. and Elizabeth Neer, which is upon what is known as Germany Hill so called Westerly from St. Helens extending from the foot of the bluff on rocky hill Westward to land of Frank N. Goerig being the Westerly 120 acres more or less on the S1/2 of said DLC. The land herein described being bounded on the Northerly side of land claimed in 1818 by Jackson Preacher, on the Easterly the foot of the bluff on the Southerly by the land of F.A. Lemont on the Westerly by the land of Frank N. Goerig including the improved portion of said DLC and a part of the portion allotted by the officers of the land office to Elizabeth Neer. Accepting and reserving one acre which has been partly occupied and cleared off for a cemetery with right-of-way thereto value \$400.

(3) House and two lots in Columbia City occupied by the applicant containing 8 rooms situated upon Second St. about 100 yards from Columbia River, built of wood. Two story with one orchard and garden attached. House cost to erect \$1000.

(4) Small farm of 64 acres of pasture or prairie land right opposite to farm and house above mentioned, but in Washington Territory used as a stock ranch and hay farm estimated worth \$7.00 per acre \$468.00 fenced all around. That of said land 70 acres are under cultivation of the value of \$30.00 per acre; 64 acres are pasture (prairie), of the value of \$70.00 per acre; 70 acres are in timber of the value of \$10.00 per acre; but being upon the river applicant makes about \$50.00\* acres are enclosed by fence as follows: (\*from timber cut into cord wood) There are about one hundred and forty (140) acres enclosed by fence. There are also several acres of orchards consisting of Apples, Pears, Plums, Cherries, and all fruit grown in this state. There is on said premises 2 houses built of wood containing 10 rooms finished of the value of \$12.50 3 barns various sizes of the value of \$100.00 and other outhouses included. The lands 30 miles by river from Portland adjoining and in the town of Columbia and 24 miles from Hillsboro and Oregon Central railroad depots and 8 miles from Kalama railway (Northern Pacific Railway) and upon Steamboat landing of Columbia river; nearest flour mills is 9 miles distant. There are two streams of water running through lands all the acres of land above described of first quality suitable for any kind of crops. The lands are occupied by myself and are now used principally as a Stock and Grain growing farms and are upon the public road. The lands were assessed for taxes in 1873 at \$50.00.



**Dr. Charles Green Caples**