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**HERE IS A** picture of the old Downing house described in the article. The picture was taken sometime prior to September of 1887 when Mr. Downing died. In the picture are John Downing, his second wife, and their son, Everett, who later became

a well-known Stayton businessman. On the back of the picture is an advertisement for the Oregon & California Railroad, who apparently took the picture to show the prosperity of this area. The house burned to the ground in 1893.

The holiday season is in particular a hospitality season. It is a time when we welcome friends into our homes, when we prepare foods that take much more time and effort than summer's hamburgers. It is a time when we cheerfully carry logs so that fireplaces blaze. As we sit in front of a warm fire it is an ideal time to think back to hospitable moments we shared in other days.

There was in the pioneer days of the Santiam Valley one home that earned the name Hospitality House.

Distinguished in architecture it was the home of a gentleman whose doors had no latches. They were open always to family, friends and strangers.

In 1847 John Downing, at the age of 20, left his home in Pennsylvania and set out across the plains to Oregon. Captain Levin N. English, who had made the trip west in 1845 headed the train.

ONE NIGHT they camped at the same site as the John S. Hunt train, and as part of the evening's frolic young John was asked to dance a jig. Mounted atop a wagon he performed it and it was thus that he first saw little Temperance Hunt, who was later to become his wife.

Upon arriving in Oregon he took up a donation land claim about two miles north of Sublimity, on which he lived until his death in 1887. In 1849, John, aged 22, and 15-year-old Temperance Hunt were married. In time they became the parents of six children, who grew up to be a credit to their parents.

After Mrs. Downing's death in 1876 Downing married a second time and there was one child of this union, Everett, long a Stayton business man. In addition to their six, John and Temperance adopted her niece, Mary Ritchie, whose mother died when she was a toddler.

Of all the pioneers we have record of, none stands out with such strength of character, Christian virtue and deep love for his family and neighbors as did John Downing. His was the home we mention that was crowned with hospitality.

IT IS doubtful that there was a pioneer family from this part of Oregon that did not at some time enjoy the hospitality of John Downing at his fine old colonial mansion.

The home was built in a setting of tall firs in 1859 by a pioneer carpenter of exceptional ability, John Goff. The house was a full two stories, had wide low gables and faced the setting sun.

You entered the front of the house across a wide veranda, with great octagonal columns supporting a portico above. The every day entrance was on the south through a little lattice porch, where Downing used to love to sit and whittle. Mr. Downing was a tall, spare man with black hair and beard. He always wore a shirt and collar.

The main house had a wide hall with the only open spindle staircase in the county separating living room and parlor. Back of the living room was the large dining room that could seat all the heads of families for miles around, while the young folks waited for the second table.

WE GATHERED here at game dinners, which the men of the neighborhood had hunted for days before: at oyster suppers, wedding dinners, and on Sunday dinners after church held at Rocky Point schoolhouse.

The savory odors emanating from the kitchen are unforgettable and children playing on the back porch T-OU'C! steal looks into the milkhouse where long rows of pies and other goodies gave promise of what was to come.

There was such an abundance and the dinners always were so well cooked and there was a genuine warm welcome it is no wonder it was such a popular place. We used to take all day for a dinner at Downings, going home at night warmly feeling this close fellowship.

AT THE FAR end of both the living room and parlor, was a wide fireplace. Each had a bookcase and desk combined on one side, and on the other a cupboard with glass doors in which family heirlooms were kept. These were to be admired, but not touched, by the young visitors.

The woodwork was curly Oregon maple, very highly polished.

There were some drawers in the cupboards and it was here that Downing and his sons kept the ammunition for the stock of guns that always stood in the chimney corner, for the Downings were all hunters and lovers of the out-of-doors.

Here too were kept the cow's horn trumpets that were used to call the hounds and make them howl so terribly. Here too Downing kept his "pullicans" (dental forceps) which he used to relieve the neighborhood toothaches.

The furniture in the parlor was the best to be found in the country. There was a good store bought carpet with its bold, conventional design, while all the rest of our pioneer homes had rag carpets that had been made at home. There was a center table with the family album and daguerreotypes all so precisely set.

OVER THIS, suspended from the ceiling, was a flycastle (unknown today) wonderfully constructed out of silver cardboard and red wool by one of the Downing girls. There were the haircloth sofa, the walnut whatnot, the only square, grand piano that existed in the countryside.

Over the piano was the oil portrait of the beautiful Mary Ritchie, the adopted daughter, who had died at the age of 20. The parlor was seldom used, except for weddings and funerals, and seemed sacred to the younger folks. It was a delight to us to just tiptoe to the door and stand and look in.

The beautiful home was destroyed by fire of undetermined origin in 1893, several years after Downings' death. His widow erected another home on the same spot. This is the present Gene and Jean Lewis home.

Mrs. Nettie Downing of Stayton has one of the old desks in her home and the old piano is a treasured possession of Mrs. Albert (Genevieve Patton) Mader, a granddaughter of Mr. Downing.