

# **LITTLE WHITE SALMON AREA MEMORIES**

**(MILL A FLATS)**

**Composed by Carl Nielsen  
of Mill A Flat  
(circa 1973-74)**



**Early-day flume at Mill A.**

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*Only reasonable care has been made to fix dates, names and places accurately. Part of the narrative is based upon the recollections of people who told their stories at various times to the author. Part is based upon the author's own observations and from historical publications pertaining to this region. Without diligent search of the records it would be hard to determine at what date the first white settlers came to the valley.*

*Land deeds in the author's possession show a homestead patent in the Mill A area granted in 1881. If the pioneer had put in his waiting period on the claim it would mean that he was probably living here in the late 1870s. Many people were living on timber claims in the 1880s and 1890s.*

*The trail along the north shore of the Columbia which passes through the lower part of the Little White Salmon Valley was no doubt in use by the Indians for hundreds of years before the whites came. The trail was used by the early-day trappers, particularly the Hudson's Bay Co., and later by the pioneers who crossed the plains. Many of them drove their stock down the trail while rafting their wagons and other goods through the gorge. Some of these people may have explored or camped a little in the valley before continuing their journey.*

*Many of the stories of the older days were told to the author by James Morby, who entered the valley when he was 9 years old and who lived here most of his life.*

*Valuable information about timber claims and people living in the upper valley came from Estelle (Willard) Davison, who was born in a log cabin near Moss Creek in 1896.*

*Olga (Walther) Kelly, who was born on her father's claim in the highlands area above Chenowith, had much to tell about the Chenowith area, where she lived her early years.*

*Loree (Fowler) Jackman, who was brought into the valley at the age of four and lived at several places in the valley in her early years, contributed greatly.*

*Mrs. Mary Jessup contributed information about the Cok and Mill A areas from her own experiences and from earlier recollections of her husband, J. M. Jessup.*

## PRIMITIVE DAYS, FISH AND GAME

In the natural state, before the coming of the pioneers, the Little White Salmon Valley was blessed by its creator with perfect primitive beauty. The forest of firs and cedar and hemlock covered nearly all the land. Only where the soil was thin and rocky and in the clearings caused by forest fires were there any openings in the thick growth.

The streams ran clear and cold and were filled with fish. The waters of Moss Creek, which are filtered by a dozen miles of passage through the porous lava, is a deep blue green even today, and the bottom of the stream is covered by a fine white silicon sand that the stream has leached from the lava. Moss Creek runs so clear and cold, 38 degrees, and so nearly lacking of any insect life that the trout can be found only in its lower reaches where they take refuge when the main White Salmon is high and muddy.

An ancient Indian trail ran through the gorge from the Big White Salmon River. At Underwood it left the Columbia and climbed up to the Underwood heights since the bluffs along the main Columbia were too sheer in many places to allow a trail to traverse close to the river. From Underwood Heights, the trail descended into the Chenowith area. On the James Morby ranch, now Green's, there is a large spring. Judging from the many artifacts found, the indications are that the Indians camped there for long periods. From the spring the trail went down the rock slides to the Indian point which is on the east side of the Little White Salmon River, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile below the present hatchery. Many arrow points have washed from this area on the edge of Drano Lake. Most of them are the small "bird" points. They must have been used in hunting the large flocks of ducks and geese that stopped by in their migration.

In low water, the Little White Salmon could be forded at that point, and in high water the Indians no doubt crossed in canoes or on rafts. After the crossing, the trail followed more closely along the shore of the Columbia the rest of the way through the gorge. The trail can still be seen on the rock slides from the highway looking across Drano Lake to the north. It is the only part of the trail known to the writer that still exists.

An Indian trail went north from the Chenowith on the east side of the river. No doubt there were crossings at times on foot logs, but the first fords that were in much use were probably a short ways below where Moss Creek joins the Little White Salmon. Also, in this area, a trail branched to the west that went to the Lost Creek area, and other branches went on the southside of the lava beds to the berry fields at the Big Huckleberry Mountain. Also up the north side of the lava beds to the berry fields in the high country at Red Mountain and further north to the larger fields at Surprise Lakes and Twin Buttes.

The trail from Cooks on the west side of the river went high up the mountain side to get away from the bluffs along the gorge of the Little White Salmon. From there on the trail was fairly easy with a few fords of the river in the upper reaches.

There must have been a trail up Lusk Creek to the berry fields on the northeast side of Little Huckleberry and probably an Indian campground at the present Oklahoma park. The Oklahoma park area has the appearance of having been burned

out repeatedly, probably to promote the growth of the native wild blackberry since the new growth of timber is extensive in that area and there are very few old growth stumps under the new timber.

The Indians probably had a year-round camp at Drano Lake. I believe that Lewis and Clark journals mention a camp in that area. They had a supply of food from the salmon runs in the river, and from the native and white fish that stayed there year around. A small rock island called "Little Memaloose" in the Columbia just east of the first tunnel on the highway, east of Cooks was used as a place to deposit the dead, and though the flood of 1894 washed over the rocks, buttons and trade beads can still be found in the crevices and in the sand.

Indians used to pick huckleberries on the Auspurger Mountain peak; a small patch that now is almost grown over by timber. There was a small patch at Moss Creek park which is also nearly grown over, and a field on Little Huckleberry Mountain that still furnishes good picking.

Many of the cedar trees on the trails to the huckleberry fields had the bark stripped from one side as high as could be reached from the back of a horse. The bark was used to make baskets carrying the berries. The writer cut a cedar tree at Lusk Creek



**Mill A Community, c. 1910.**



**Mill A, c. 1910.**

in 1946 that gave indications by the growth rings that the bark had been stripped from it about the year 1810 and it still showed the hack marks of a stone axe.

The Indian relics known to the writer found in the Upper Valley were numerous ones found at the Willard homestead at Moss Creek, which must have been an Indian campground, a spearpoint from lower Lost Creek about three miles out of Willard, also a spearpoint found on Holmes Creek about ten miles above Willard. These spearpoints, plus the one found at Spearpoint lava cave, might indicate that the Indians used the spear when hunting deer.

In the winter the white fish gathered in the pools between the gravel bars that stretched downstream about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the present Little White Salmon Hatchery



**Mill A Community, c. 1910. From left: Jane Warham; Grandma Mary Ann Pease Torguson; Virginia Muzzy Ordway, 1880-1963; Fanny Alice Thompson Ordway, 1861-1910 (she married in Newport, Maine, 1879); Frederick Robey Ordway, 1881-1894 (he was named for the governor of Maine); David Kelsey Orway, 1831-1894; Ralph Wiggins Ordway, 1883-1962; James Warham. Virginia was 12 years old when picture was taken.**

bridge. Then came a run of winter steelhead trout. In the spring the great Spring Chinook passed up the stream to the few deep pools they were able to reach in the gorge below the Big Falls and lay for months in the deep pools while they waited for their eggs to ripen.

Sturgeon came into the lake when the waters rose on the June flood. Some of these fish were ancient and of huge size. James Morby told of one fisherman who caught two of 500 pounds apiece and one of 800 pounds in Drano Lake. These were caught on a "China Line." Olga Kelly had heard of an 800 pound sturgeon that took a small team of horses to pull from the river at Underwood, and one of 600 pounds caught in the eddy at Cooks Landing.

China Line: needle sharp, barbed hooks were strung on a short line a foot to 18 inches long to the main line as thick as they could be tied and suspended close to the bottom making a curtain that the sturgeon tried to swim through. When one hook penetrated the hide, the sturgeon, in his struggle, was soon caught by many hooks and made helpless as he rolled in the line.

When the fall runs of salmon and steelhead came up the Columbia, the main river

had lowered and the outlet of the Little White Salmon was at the Indian point just below Cooks. This happened because of a large sand bar that appeared at the low water stage and separated the Columbia and the Little White Salmon rivers.

The salmon and steelhead gathered in great numbers at the outlet of the Little White Salmon and sported in the cool water till it had the appearance of a minnow pond at feeding time. It became a great fishing spot and I heard of one fisherman who caught 17 steelhead one day on a hook and line, and I also heard of at least two occasions where leaping steelhead had landing in fishermen's boats after hurling themselves in the air.

The fall Chinook came in great numbers to spawn on the gravel bars in the present hatchery area. In 1937 the hatchery took 40 million eggs from that run. Estimating 6,000 eggs per female, and since there were perhaps twice as many males and immature males, of Jack salmon, as females, would make it possible that close to 20,000 salmon were on the ½-mile of spawning grounds.

The gravel in some places was churned and washed three feet deep on the flats and where the riffles fell into the pools below. The larger stones were piled six feet deep. Some of the fertile eggs found a haven in the crevices in the gravel and deep between the larger stones. The white fish, suckers sea-run cutthroat, and the river gulls feasted on the eggs they could reach. The eddies below the large rocks were red with masses of eggs. Infertile eggs soon turned white and decayed. The spawned out fish littered the beaches and stream bottom, and in three months when the young salmon hatched, they fed on particles of the flesh of the dead salmon that was washing away in the current.

The Little White Salmon Hatchery was built in the 1890s. I believe it was the first U.S. Government hatchery on the Columbia river. Henry Bolle supervised the hatchery in the 1920s and 1930s. His policy was to use only the large males in spawning and the fish were of large size.

It was stated to the writer that the mature fish averaged 35 pounds apiece, quite a difference from the present day. The writer was told at the present hatchery a few years ago that the large males were not used because, "They were too hard to handle," and because it was thought that the smaller salmon had a better chance of escaping the fishermen's nets.

The writer had been told by men who worked in Henry Bolle's crew that one salmon of 100 pounds had been caught on the spawning grounds of the Little White Salmon and one had been taken at the Spring Creek at Underwood that weighed 85 pounds.

Every salmon stream had its individual strain of fish. They could sometimes be distinguished by a careful eye from the ones of another stream. The fish in the Big White Salmon were even larger than those in the Little White Salmon.

The writer observed the weighing of a large female fall chinook salmon from the Big White Salmon that weighed an even 50 pounds with the eggs removed, and it yielded just ½ pint short of a gallon of eggs. The live weight was probably close to 58 pounds and there were many females of that size. Some of the large males were in the 60 pounds and perhaps close to 70 pound size. The salmon run that arrived on the

spawning grounds before the commercial fishing industry was taking its toll must have been even larger in numbers and was a great example of nature's bounty.

After the fall chinook came a small run of chum salmon that could still be found in the river in December.

The chief of a small tribe who fished on the Wind River told us that the salmon in the Little and Big White Salmon had white (or light colored flesh) while the fish in the Wind River and the Klickitat had red flesh. Observation seemed to prove this point and we accepted the fact that the rivers were named by the Indians and the names adopted by the whites.

The Little White Salmon above the falls had a fine population of black spotted native trout. The pioneers used to take a pack horse into the canyon and bring out a load for smoking. They said the trout averaged about two pounds apiece.

The headwaters streams were filled with smaller trout and any one who could hold a pole could catch a hundred in a day.

The deer were not plentiful, perhaps because there is little feed under a thick forest and because the predators were unchecked.

The birds were plentiful in the forest and along the stream. In the fall great flocks of ducks and geese appeared in the gorge on their migration south. The river lowlands where they used to settle and feed have nearly all been covered by the highways, railways and the back waters of the Bonneville Dam.

The Bald Eagles followed the flight of ducks from the north and fed upon the ones who died along the way. Golden Eagles nested in the gorge. They used to be seen quite often flying about the rugged bluffs just west of Dog Creek.

Dog Creek was named because Cougar hunters lost their dogs in the rugged canyon area. The large Peregrin Falcon hunted the ridge for pigeons and grouse and small animals.

In the forest the Great Grey Owl sought out grouse and rabbits. The Screech Owl looked for the smaller rodents, and in the winter the tiny Pigmy Owl, no larger than a robin, looked for game in his migration route.

Along the streams that astounding bird, the Water Owl, lived year around. It walks under water along the bottom of streams by gripping the rocks with its claws and feeds on insect larvae. It builds its nest of moss where the moss is kept green by the spray and hatches its young in the waterfall's misty rainbow.

Those who have heard the nightingales say that its song is not sweeter than the long trilling song the Water Ouzel makes in the spring evenings along its forest streams. I have heard it and was supremely glad I had.

In the forest in the upper Little White Salmon and in the alpine area above the South Prairie meadows lived the Canadian Jay or Camp Robber. A dove-grey and slate bird not quite as large as a robin that travels as quietly as a falling leaf, and is trusting enough to fly down and share a logger's lunch.

Also in that high country lived the big black Raven. Much too wise to try to share lunch with a logger, but who is wise enough to appear after the loggers have gone home to search out any leavings.

High up on the side of Little Huckleberry Mountain one hunting season, I saw three ravens harrying a large Golden Eagle. They dive bombed him until in his rage he



would perform a slow roll and try to catch them in his up-lifted talons. His movements were slow because of his great wing span and the ravens avoided him easily. The eagle finally lit in a tree top and after a few cautious dives at him, the ravens sailed off around a shoulder of the mountain. A few moments later the eagle dove from his perch and soon was far out across the lava beds.

Several moments later a lone raven sneaked around the shoulder of the mountain and, being satisfied that the eagle was gone, sailed off to rejoin his comrades.

The deer herd built up rapidly during the years from 1939 to 1946. There had been little hunting during the war years and fire and logging had greatly increased the amount of browse available. There was a bad winter in January and February of 1950 but the herd recovered quickly. In 1955 the Game Commission opened the doe season and the writer estimates from observations and hearsay, that about 130 does were taken from the Little White Salmon drainage. The doe season the next year produced only 35 animals and continuing doe seasons and late buck seasons have kept the deer herd as estimated half of what it was in 1955. This is despite the fact that logging has greatly increased the available browse. In the winter of 1946 cougar were taken from the Oklahoma, Trout Creek, and upper Wind River areas. Four of these were from the headquarters of the Little White Salmon. The increase in the deer herd and the lack of hunting during the war years had led to an increase of these large predators. Cougar hunters had moderately good success for the next 10 years or so and then hunting declined because the cougar had become scarce.

Hunters with their hounds were having good success in hunting black bear in the 1950s and 1960s, until their huntin was restricted by a year limit of bear per hunter.

One fine specimen the writer recalls was shot by B. M. Bush when it persisted in invading his yard to eat apples. It weighed an estimated 450 pounds and was 14 inches between the tips of his ears.

The writer and men from the Little White Salmon fish hatchery once killed a medium sized bear that had been wandering around residences in the Mill A area. It was very thin and had been blinded in one eye, probably from a fight.

## **TALES OF THE EARLY DAYS**

There must have been quite a few Indians living at Cooks in the early logging days. The pioneers said that there were more Indians than white women at the dances. At the berry fields on Big Huckleberry, an Indian claimed a horse that a white man was riding and the argument became so fierce that the whites packed and left at the first opportunity.

Broadaze Peter Borderwine — so called because of his skill with a broad axe; wounded a small bear with a light rifle on Little Huckleberry Mountain. The bear had attacked him and tore off all his clothes except his shoes. He managed to beat the bear to death with the barrel of his rifle, but he was so scratched and bitten that he nearly bled to death before he could walk out to get help.

The competition between the steamboats became so great that at one time a person could ride from the Valley to Portland for \$1.00 and have a free meal on the

way.

A giant of a man worked in the cordwood camps on Mill B flat. He sawed the cordwood blocks and hired two men to split and pile the wood. He hung a weight on the end of his saw to make it cut faster.

For \$5.00 he would take a wagon across the Little White Salmon river at a fairly shallow place about 200 yards below the present Willard Hatchery bridge. He stretched a rope across the stream and tied it to two horses, then he took the wagon apart and, taking the rope in one hand and a wagon wheel in the other hand, would wade across the stream.

Moroni Morby and several other men went looking for him since he had not been seen for quite a while. They found that someone had killed him in his cabin by battering him on the head. The reason was probably robbery since most men kept their money rather than trust it to banks. The pioneers buried him by his cabin which was close to where John Young now lived.

He had a piece of plate iron in his cabin that he used as a stove. Iron was scarce and one of the pioneers wanted it. It took two men to load it into the back of a wagon, but the giant had packed it in for quite a long ways on his back.

Rober Fowler, while traveling with team and wagon on the narrow Cooks grade, had a horse slipp down the canyon side of the road. He tore free from the harness and slid and rolled for several hundred feet before being caught by a log. The horse was not seriously injured and the men worked three days getting him to his feet and building a trail to get him back to the road.

If a man was badly injured in the woods or mill he would be taken to Cooks Landing There a fire was built on the beach as a signal and a steam launch came across from Viento and took the man to Hood River for doctor's care.

Viento, just across from Cooks, was a good sized sawmill town. It was served by the Union Pacific Railway, which was built on the Oregon side of the Columbia, quite a few years before the railway on the Washington side. Many of the early day land claims of the Little White Salmon Valley were recorded at Viento and much of the lumber from Mill A was loaded on the trains at Viento.

One of the pioneers had a cabin close to where Cabbage Creek joined the White Salmon. His cabin burned and he said that his main loss was a barrel of salted deer hams.

An Indian, Alec Silas and his wife, went off the road and into the canyon for quite a ways in a Model T Ford. Alec was able to crawl out but his wife was seriously hurt, and a grou of men tied her to a wooden door and carried her up to the road. In later years an auto went into the canyon just a few feet from that spot and three people were killed, since the car tumbled 600 feet to the river's edge with the people inside. In the 1920s a log trucker by the name of Snodgrass died when his truck went off the upper part of the grade. The truck went into the river and a wheel turned in the water for years.

Sam Samson came from Sweden as a young man and worked in the shingle mill at Moss Creek. From there he went to the gold fields at Nome, Alaska, and made a good strike. He returned to Stevenson and built the Hot Springs Hotel.

Squaw Creek at Mill A is supposed to have received its name when an old Indian

woman left alone on the creek, and died from burns received when her many skirts caught on fire while she was drying berries. I have heard that the tragedy actually happened on the first little steam north of Squaw Creek that runs through the Louie Friand property.

One of the homesteaders dug a tunnel in a hill following a small seam of coal on the south side of Wilson Creek, (or School House Creek). It had a fair grade of coal but the amount was small. Also in that area was the Razor Hone mine that produced a type of rock that was used to sharpen the old straight razors.

James Morby was nine years old when his dad brought him to the Chenowith area in the 1890s. Dad Morby broke his leg in the woods and Jim remembers sawing the planks from the cabin floor for fuel that first winter. Jim pulled one end of the saw while his dad pulled the other and with his broken leg propped up on a chair. Snow was five feet deep on the Chenowith flat that year. Jim remembers that there were many rats which came into the cabin. He believed they came off the steamboats.

An early mail carrier, an Indian by the name of Joe Ellick, used to carry the mail by horseback from Hood River to Mitchell Point on the Oregon shore. There he crossed the river in a rowboat and packed the mail on his back up the Chenowith hill and up to the old post office at Willard. In the winter he could sometimes ride his horse across on the ice. The Columbia froze over nearly every winter.

When the Borthwick and McClain mill closed, the equipment was transported to the Oregon shore. The oxen were thrown and tied to sleds and pulled across the river on the ice by horses. The horses had caulks in their shoes and could walk on the ice, while the oxen could not because they were shod on each half of their divided hooves with quarter arch flat plates.

The cordwood cutters on the Chenowith flat sent their wood down the bluffs to Drano Lake in a wood chute. Jim Morby was impressed by a one-armed man named "Scotty," who loaded the cordwood on the steamboats. Cordwood cutters dumped several hundred cords of wood in the Little White Salmon at Willard to float it to Drano Lake. They lost much in the eddies and rocks of the canyons and never tried again.

In the years after 1915, the old wagon road through the valley was rebuilt and relocated in some places. A section of road from the Willard fish hatchery bridge east was contracted by a group of Swedes. They had a small tram car on a track to carry the material, and Jim Morby said that there wasn't hardly a rock too big for a bunch of Swedes to lift onto that car.

The wagon road still is visible in the timber at the south end of Mill a above the present road, just before the road leaves the valley to travel along the bluffs above the Little White Salmon.

In 1894 Emil Willard was living in his homestead claim in the upper Little White Salmon Valley, about ½ mile below Berry Creek. He slept in an open lean-to shelter while building his first house. One night he felt something grab him in the side through his blankets, and his first thoughts were, "It's a bear!" He lay still and the visitor soon left. In the morning he took a look around and a short distance away saw a large brown bear feeding in a skunk cabbage swamp. He felt that the bear had investigated his blankets out of curiosity and, after hollowing the bear out of sight, he was not bothered again.

## COOKS



**Town of Cooks, as seen from bunkers on the railroad station.**

Cooks was originally “Cooks Landing.” The name was supposed to have originated from the steamboat days when the boats used to stop at the landing to let off a cook from one of the boats who had a claim in the valley: thus the landing came to be known as “The Cook’s Landing,” then Cooks.

According to Mr. Jake Brock, an early resident, the post office acquired the name “Cook” at the time the railway reached Cooks and mail service became available. The settlers met in an upstairs meeting room one night to decide on a name to request for the post office. They were not sure whether the name on the railway depot was “Cook” or “Cooks,” and rather than going to the trouble of lighting a lantern and walking down to see for sure; Mr. Brock said he believed it was “Cook,” and the letter was sent to the Post Office Department with that name on the request, and that it is the name the department granted in its reply. So, from then on the name on the depot was “Cooks” and the name of the post office was “Cook.”

At the railway was Jessup’s warehouse; above that the Ellsworth Saloon, scene of some rough times including a shooting fatality. After prohibition the saloon burned under mysterious circumstances. On the left going up hill was the hotel, later purchased by Nancy Wallace. Then several residences, one owned by Laura Wallace, a store building with rooms upstairs, another business building, and garage with a dance hall upstairs. Several of the buildings were built by Mr. O. A. Perry.

J. M. Jessup first came to Cooks in 1912. At various times he worked at the fish hatchery and operated a warehouse by the railroad at Cooks. Mrs. Jessup believes the

warehouse was built by Mr. Jackson, who ran sheed at Sepsican, near the Crest Trail on Dog Mountain, and trailed sheep in later years over the Cook hill and Augsburg mountain areas. Mr. Jessup made his permanent residence in the valley in 1915. In 1918 he and Mrs. "Mary" Jessup were married and lived at Mill A on what is now part of the Louie Friand property. They purchased their present home site at Cooks from Alden Kingman in 1925. This property was originally part of the Billy Drano land claim. They built a chicken ranch, planted an orchard, and kept a herd of goats for many years. Mr. Jessup died in 1948 and Mrs. Jessup still lives on the home place at Cooks.

Alden Kingman operated a blacksmith shop at Cooks on his property just south of Jessup for many years. In later years Jackson had a sheep ranch on Rock Creek, east of Goldendale. Old timers remember seeing his bands of sheep being trailed down the old highway to Cooks and then up Cook hill to graze on Ausburger and Dog Mountain. They then trailed down into the logged off areas at the head of Rock Creek and down Lost Creek to the lava beds country. The went up the north side of the lava beds to Little Huckleberry Mountain and were trailed back to Rock Creek in the fall.

On Indian Point at Drano Lake there used to be a group of cabins used by the Indians during fishing season, with some year-round residents. Just across the lake on the Joe Thomas property was a log house and a barn. Thomas was not a reservation Indian. When the shoreline was being cleared by the Corps of Engineers for the flooding caused by construction of the Bonneville Dam, most of the cabins were burned. Mrs. Jessup tells us that there is a grave just below the hatchery residences where is buried the Indian wife of John Dye, who lived in that area.

A few miles to the west of Cooks ws the rocky point known to the steamboat men as Thirteen Mile Point, and to the residents as Sepsican (its Indian name). Jackson had a sheep ranch there, with a chute to load or unload the sheep from the railway. Just north, upon the side of Dog Mountain, was a logging camp on a wide bench. It was humorously called "Poverty Flat." The loggers sent their logs down to the river in a log chute. They took their logging horses to Alden Kingman's blacksmith shop at Cooks to have them shod.

East of Cooks on the high ground that separated Drano Lake and the Columbia, close against the big rock that is now pierced by the highway and railway tunnels, was a store that supplied residents on the Chenowith side of the valley.

Supplies came in by steamboat and there is still a large iron ring set in the rock above the eddy in the Columbia. The boats used to tie to this ring when stopping only at this point.

A road came down from Chenowith across the rock slides and across the flats a the head of the lake. In 1894 the flood waters was so high that they store washed away and was never rebuilt.

When the railway was built on the north side through the gorge, the engineers was careful to have the railway constructed four feet above the 1894 high water mark.

The lake just below the second tunnel east of Cooks, now known as Tunnel Lake, was known to the pioneers as Walthers Lake since it was just below the high land homestead of Emile Walther and the Walthers family patured cattle on the slopes in this area.



Willard Elementary School.

## **SCHOOLS AND POST OFFICES**

One of the early mail carriers was an Indian by the name of Joe Ellick. He picked up mail at Hood River, where it had been left by steamboat. From Hood River he carried it on horseback to Mitchell Point in Oregon. Then crossed by rowboat to the foot of Chenowith Hill. He packed the mail on his back up the hill to the Willard post office. In the winter he would sometimes ride his horse across the river on the ice. The river used to freeze over nearly every winter.

There was a post office near the site of the present lower Moss Creek Park. In later years there was a post office about ½ mile below the present Willard bridge up on the east bank. In the 1920s, Dad Howe had a small store and post office at Willard, just south of the Lava Creek bridge on the east side of the road. In Chenowith there was a post office below the junction of the two roads going into Chenowith.

Charlie Rosencranz claimed to be the first white man to carry mail from Underwood up the hill and into the Little White Salmon Valley. He picked up the mail at Hood River and crossed by rowboat. After crossing he carried the mail with a horse and cart or used a bicycle. The bicycles in those days did not have coaster brakes and when going down hill he had to ride the pedals when braking. One day he lost a pedal going down hill and the bike ran away and threw him into the rocks and brush. He felt lucky that he wasn't seriously injured.

Later Mr. Hoge carried the mail to Chenowith. Olga Kelly remembers that the children in school could hear him coming from the rasping of the corduroy pants he wore.

After the railway came to Cooks, Jake Brock used to carry the mail on horseback from Cooks to Willard.

Orrin Jackson was probably the first carrier to use an auto to carry the mail from Cooks to Willard. After Jackson, Bennie Krider carried the mail for years.

Early day postmasters at Cooks were Laura and Nancy Wallace. Dolly Burden served for a few years. Edith Wilson served many years in the 1930s up to 1946.

Gladys Krauspe was postmaster from 1946 to 1969 and then the post office was moved from Cooks to the present site at Mill A.

In 1935, Loree Jackman started carrying the mail on the Star Route from Cooks to Willard. She carried continuously for 32 years.

## SCHOOLS

The old Chenowith school building is still standing at its site on the Harris ranch.

A homestead residence that was used as a school was located several hundred yards west of the Mill B site.

Another school building in use in the early 1900s was located north of the power line on the present Lewis Rist property.

In the upper valley the homesteaders sent their children to a school that was located close to where the Little Huckleberry trail joins the White Salmon road. Later a school was built on the Willard property just south of Wilson Creek.

In the 1920s there were three grade schools in the valley; all of which had been built in the early 1900s. They were: the Willard school at Wilson Creek, about 2½ miles north of the Broughton mill. (In those days it was known as Cooley Creek and the pioneers had known it as Schoolhouse Creek.)

The Chenowith school at the Harris ranch, and the Mill A school on Jessup Road just north of Squaw Creek.

The Chenowith school was an interesting one-room building that gave the appearance of having been built by men who were skilled in barn building. It had wide rough board siding and was heated by a large wood stove. It was a fine example of the use of local materials and should have been preserved.

The Chenowith and Willard schools were abandoned when the three schools were consolidated into one district and a larger school was eventually built at the Mill A site to accommodate the increased number of students.

## HOMESTEADS

James Morby said that at one time there were 30 timber claims in the Little White Salmon Valley. Many of the homesteaders are listed below from names and locations furnished by Mrs. Olga Kelly, daughter of the pioneer Emile Walther family, and Mrs. Estella Davison, daughter of the Emil Willard family.

Emile and Charlie Walther and a Frenchman by the name of Duvenal took up timber claims in the Highlands orchard area on the hill east of the Chenowith flat. Duvenal returned to France but the Walthers staid and proved up on their claims. Emile Walther returned to Switzerland to claim his bride and after returning, their six children were born on the claim.

Olga was born in 1904. She started working in the orchards in 1917 and next year became a fruit packer. She packed fruit every year thereafter till she had put in 48 seasons.

Homesteaders in the Chenowith area were Mr. Offer. His home was close to where the Harris family now live. To the north was the Cromwells on the present Lynn Logan place; a Mr. King had a home in the Highland area and he became the first school teacher at the Chenowith school. A Mr. Hoke had a homestead east of the Walther family.

The Stipp mill was located close to the intersection of the roads coming into Chenowith. A group of homes and the Chenowith post office were in that area.

When Moroni Morby died of the black measles or smallpox, the Oregon Lumber Company gave his family the 40 acres that is now the Delbert Green ranch.



Horse team on Mill A Road. Man is not identified.



Out in the flat by the lumber flume is the old Mill B site; north from there another mill or so is the Whitehead place; where the road crossed Dry Creek was the Fuller Mill and homesite.

On the bench on the side of Baldy mountain east of the Willard mill was the Lapham homestead; farther up the mountain beyond was the Mame Gullick homestead. She was a music teacher from Portland. Estella (Willard) Davison took piano lessons from her.

Northwest of the Willard mill on upper Moss Creek was the Taylor homestead. The Sam Samson shingle mill was on Moss Creek where it enters the Little White Salmon. The Emile Willard home was just downstream from the mill. He lived there in 1895.

Up towards the head of Wilson Creek (called School House Creek by the pioneers) were the homesteads of Art Cumming, on the left going up, and just across the creek was the Cooley homestead. Further up the creek on the left was the Wylie homestead. Charlie Myers' homestead was in the Little White flat above School House Creek. Then came the George Fisher homestead that is still owned by the family; above that, Gus Fischer's; and a little further north across the Little White Salmon was Denny Atkins' place.

In later years Denny Atkins filed saws for the timber cutters at the Broughton Lumber Company. To the right of Denny Atkins' place was the original Willard claim that he traded for the property at Moss Creek.

Above Denny Atkins was the Joe Reif claim, and further up, by the Little Huckleberry trail, was Pete Atkin's place. Arthur Holmes had a claim further up the river, and Holmes Creek bears his name. Tom Lusk had a claim on Lusk Creek and it carries his name. The Keiffler homestead was close to the present Oklahoma park.

Above the village of Cooks on the old wagon road that climbed to the top of the 3,000 foot hill and descended to Mill A Flat, was a school teacher's homestead; the Taylor homestead; and far up the mountain was the Graves' homestead.

From Cooks going up the present road, the first home was the Alden Kingman place. He operated a blacksmith shop on his property for years. His homesite is now owned by Harlan Johnson. Next was the Jessup place, which was part of the Billy Drano donation land claim. A quarter of a mile up the road beyond Jessup's on the hillside is the Norris homesite. The next homesite up the road is the Fouts place, now owned by the Gahimers.

South of Mill A Flat high on the ridge was the Gaslow claim. Loree Jackmand says that as a child she could remember seeing the light from a lantern as he made the round of his evening chores. The homesite has disappeared due to logging activities, but in the saddle to the north is an open well, 15 feet deep, that was the water supply for the claim. The next claims north were the two claims for Henry and Ray Bunker. Bunker Creek bears their name.

The Julius Ordway claim took in the property at the Mill A crossroads. The Keeling claim took in both sides of Rock Creek. There were more homesteaders in the Mill A Flat and on the Mill B side of the river whose names were not recalled by the people I happened to interview. One of these is an old homesite west of Olga Kelly's place under the present power lines.

## MILL A AND MILL B

The mill at Mill A was incorporated by a Mormon group in Odgen, Utah, in 1889. The mill was on the edge of the Little White Salmon canyon at the southeast corner of the Mill A Flat. The slabs and sawdust poured into the canyon and eventually slid down to where the damed the river, backing up the water for a quarter of a mile. It made a great fishing spot. Eventually it caught on fire and burned completely.

There is a circular saw stuck in a tree below the mill site nearly down at the river's edge. It was rolled from the top of the canyon and gathered enough speed to stick into a tree trunk about 15 feet above the ground. With the growth of the tree it has become more deeply embedded.

Cecil Combs told me that his dad had worked at the Mill A and had fallen from a flume 80 feet into the Little White Salmon River. He had been badly hurt and was taken to the Hood River Hospital where they put him into a small room so he could die quietly. A day or so later, a doctor dropped in and examined him. He said, "Why hasn't this man had medical attention?" The reply was to the effect that since he was sure to die they had just put him in a room out of the way. The doctors then proceeded to care for him and he lived for many years after that.

There was a five-acre pond at Mill A, formed by a dam across Bunker Creek. In dry periods water was diverted from Squaw Creek to help fill the pond.

A railroad ran across the flat and crossed Rock Creek on a high trestle. It ran along the rim of the Little White Salmon gorge. As far as the present site of the Willard fish



**Shingle Mill at Mill A.**

hatchery. Also branches ran up Squaw Creek, Bunker Creek and Rock Creek.

Various skid roads led to the railway where ox and horse teams brought the logs from the woods.

A log chute was built down the hill close to the Bush place and logs slid down from the plateau above. When a log was rolled into the chute, warning was given to workers below by hammering on a circular saw. One man was killed in the log chute when he failed to hear the signal, or perhaps the signal was not given.

The mill workers lived in a cluster of cabins scattered across the Mill A Flats, usually by streams where water was available. There were also farms where the more permanent settlers were trying to build permanent homes.

When the timber supply that was easy to get with team logging was gone on Mill A Flats, the Mill B was built on the flat across the river. A flume carried the lumber to the bluffs above Drano Lake, cut at Mill B in 1906. The timber was reseeded itself and now, nearly 70 years later, the Mill A and Mill B areas have a fine stand of second growth timber and it is being harvested by selective logging.

The Mill B had a row of cabins along the flume, a large horse barn, and several bunk houses. Many old liquor bottles have been retrieved from the site and 24 morphine bottles were found in one spot. A few morphine bottles were also found in the Mill A area, indicating perhaps, that someone was addicted or had urgent need, perhaps from a lingering illness.

The flume on the Mill B side came out of the Little White Salmon river close to the present bridge just below Willard. It ran across the flat and before the lumber mills started, the flume carried cordwood for cordwood cutter camps, into Drano Lake, where it was picked up by steamboats which used it for fuel. At one time there were 100 men employed in the cordwood camps. They received \$1.00 per cord and skilled workers could cut and stack two cords per day.

At the bridge above Willard where Moss Creek ran into the Little White Salmon was the Willard homesite and Sam Samson's shingle mill. The waters of Moss Creek were carried on a high flume to the top of a water wheel which furnished the power for the shingle mill. Shingle bolt cutters worked along the banks of the Little White Salmon and floated their bolts down to the mill.

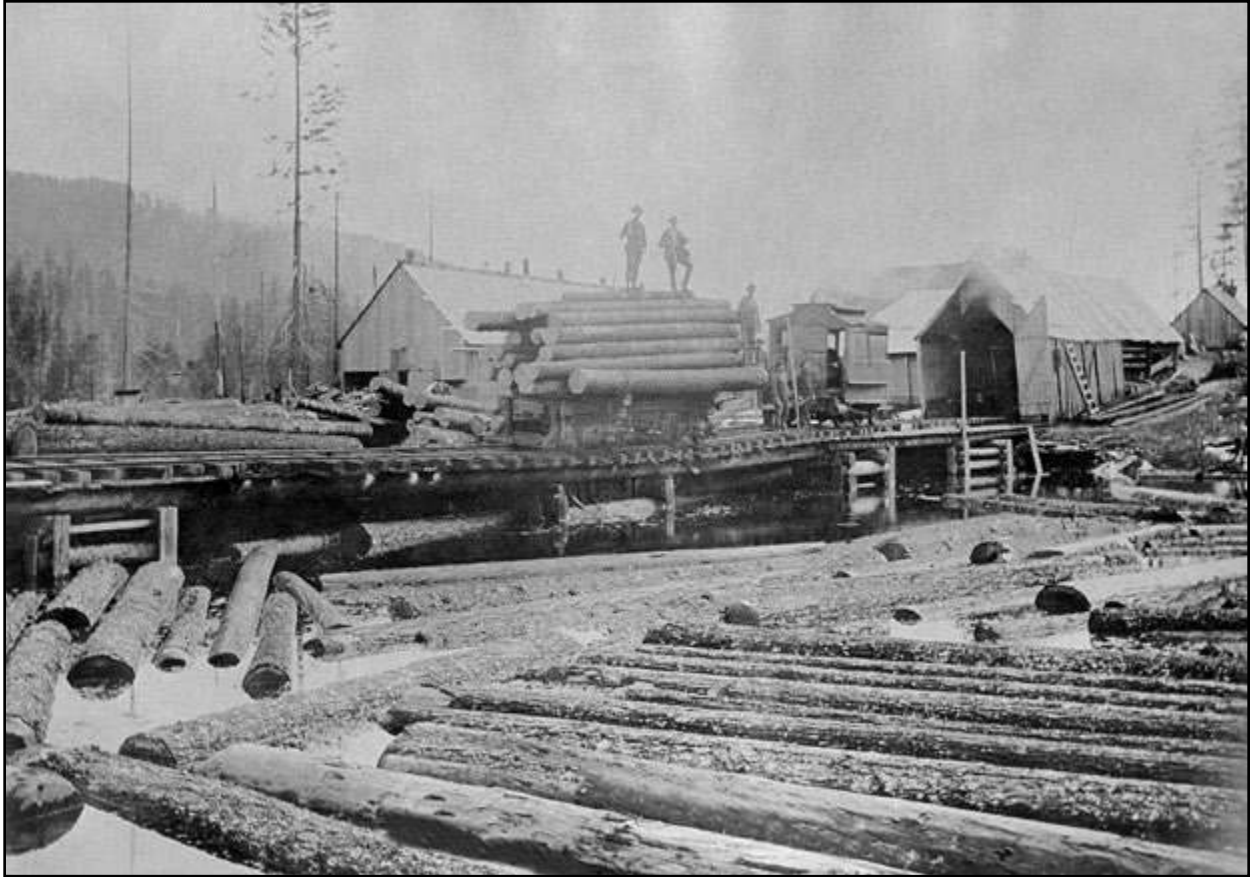
Much of the river bottom was timber claims of 80 acres each. Regulations were that the claimer had to clear five acres for cultivation, build a cabin at least 12' by 16' with at least one window and a door and live on the claim for five years. At the end of this period the U. S. Government would give the person a clear title.

Before the days of the timber claims, Charlie Myers lived on the Little White Salmon flats below Timberland Mountain. He claimed all the land in the upper valley.

John Doetsch lived near the present site of the U. S. Moss Creek Park. He claimed all the land in the valley below Myers.

There were perhaps 100 acres of apple orchards planted in the Mill A Flat area in the years between 1910 and 1920. J. M. Jessup estimated that close to a quarter of a million dollars was spent in the clearing of land, and planting the orchards and in buildings. A Mr. Haswell was a promoter of the orchards. He believed that this area could produce apples as well as the Hood River Valley.

The apple growing quickly declined when it was found that the soil leached too



**Oregon Lumber Company's mill at Chenowith, c. 1910.**

badly from the heavy rainfall making constant use of fertilizers necessary, and because the damp climate made the apples subject to scab which impaired their selling value. Also, the late frosts common to this area seemed to hit at apple blossom time and blighted the selling of the fruit.

In the writer's opinion, pears do better in this area since they seem to bloom several weeks later than apples and escape the frost that blights the blossoms. Some old pear trees in the valley that are well watered seem to bear heavily year after year. Also, the apple trees in family gardens that are fertilized and watered bear fine sweet apples.

Some of the orchards were the Gates and O'Malley orchards. The Carl Gray orchard, (Carl Gray was a superintendent on the Union Pacific Railroad), his orchard is the place where Wingfields now live.

The Hamilton orchard and packing shed were just west of Louie Friand's place on the Fred Nielsen's property.

John Purcell set out an orchard on the property now owned by Lowel Leighton, and in many places in the valley now in second growth timber you can see the dead trunks of grown-over orchards.

The Broughton Lumber Co. purchased many of the old timber claims in the valley. The only timber claim that is still owned by the family of the original owners is the Fisher claim in the big flat above Willard.

## LOGGING AND MILL SITES

A few years after the closing of the Oregon Lumber Company's Mill A and Mill B, there were quite a few small mills and logging operations in the valley.

Al Bolter logged on the Augspurgen ridge west of Mill A. A 3,600 foot skyline carried the logs from the top of the ridge down to a landing where the trucks were loaded.



Oregon Lumber Company's mill at Chenowith, c. 1910.

Bert Douglass operated a small mill in this area on the bench lands west of the present Olga Kelly ranch.

There was a logger by the name of Fowler, who logged in the upper Rock Creek basin.

The Dunlap loggers worked around the area of the springs where the Willard fish hatchery gets its domestic water supply. The Dunlap cabins stood beside the road for years and were used by loggers and transients.

One of the Aalviks had a small mill and mill pond on the head of Squaw Creek.

Snodgrass logged in several areas of Mill A. I believe he trucked logs down the plank road coming off the plateau back of the Bush place.

On the ridge that borders Mill A Flats to the north someone logged off a large area with the large steam donkey engines. The donkey sleds were left on the hillside just

west of the Leighton property.

In 1924 to 1926, John, Walt and Alfred Kock operated a mill on the Mill B flat close to the site of the old Mill B. They sent their lumber down the flume.

About 1929 a logger was working with perhaps the first logging tractor used in the valley. His machine was a 10-ton Holt track type tractor. He was logging on the Willard property north of the Big Cedars Park.

That winter a heavy snow closed all roads in the area. The Broughton Lumber Company built a vee plow of heavy planks and strap iron and the Holt tractor opened the roads by dragging the plow. They cleared the roads as far as Underwood and to Crest Trail to the west, also up the Little White Salmon Valley so the children could get to school.

## TREES AND PLANTS

Most of the trees and plants of the Little White Salmon drainage are the ordinary firs and cedars common to the Columbia Gorge region. There is a small number of Chinquapin trees where the Big Huckleberry road crosses the lower end of the lava bed. Also in that area were a few native rhododendrons, but they are becoming crowded out by the thick second growth firs.

About one mile to the west and off the road to the right, several hundred yards is a fine large patch of rhododendrons. The only other patch of rhododendron is at the junction of the main lava bed road with the Little White Salmon road. The patch is to the right of the junction toward the Little White Salmon River.

The high area above the South Prairie Meadows has the Engleman Spruce, Mountain Hemlock, Alpine firs, and Tamaracks. The Tamaracks needles turn bright yellow in the fall and are soon shed, leaving the trees bare until new bright green needles make their appearance in the spring. When Tamaracks mature, some of the upper limbs turn up into extra seed producing tops. It is not uncommon to see five tops to the tree. Some of them 20 to 30 feet in length. Cedar trees also put out extra tops when mature.

Timber in the Little White Salmon Valley is of fine quality, although not as large as that of the milder climate region in the western part of the state. James Morby told of 10 acres on Mill A flat that had 100,000 board feet of timber.

I recall seeing a fir tree north of the Big Cedars park that was supposed to be nine feet in diameter. Also helped cut a large fir on the Fisher claim; a perfectly round tree, seven feet in diameter. In the Lusk Creek flat I worked with a crew that cut a tree that was 6½ by 8½ in diameter. There is a cedar tree in the Big Cedars Park that is perhaps 13 feet in diameter.

In the high area above the South Prairie Meadows there were many fine old White Pines among the firs and hemlock. I cut one White Pine four-feet in diameter at the stump that had a smooth clean trunk of little taper that measured 30 inches in diameter 90 feet from the stump. Reno Ziegler cut a pine in the same area six feet in diameter.

Northwest of the South Prairie Meadows is a fine stand of tall clear Engleman

Spruce growing along the Lost Creek Flats.

Lower Lost Creek had a heavy stand of large cedar growing in the marshy bottom. In the old growth timber at the head of Rock Creek were many fine tall cedars that were cut for telephone and power poles. I recall one that measured 22 inches in diameter at the stump and had a ten-inch top at 105 feet.

Listed below are some plants that might be interesting to a stranger in the valley some of which even the present residents do not recognize.

**The Mountain Ash:** a shrub or a small tree that has large clusters of berries that range in color from orange to a brilliant waxy scarlet. The scarlet berries on the green hillside are very showy in the fall around the October deer season.

**The Tiger Lily:** blooms in July, some of the stalks are six feet tall with eight or ten large tiger striped blooms.

**The June Berry:** a small shrub or tree that booms in the lowland areas in the gorge in April and May. Large clusters of snowy white blossom.

**The Columbine:** a lily in shades of white, pink and lavender; two feet high, grows in clusters in cool, damp area.

**The Indian Painbrush:** likes alpine areas. When in bloom the tops of the plant are colored in the appearance of being dipped in red or orange paint.

**Bear Grass:** wide spread in the upper valley. The flower stalks grow to three feet tall from the clump of coarse grass at the base. A cluster of white blossoms that show to great effect against the green background of the forest. The blooms have a scent offensive to humans but no doubt attract the insects that help to pollinate the plant. I have seen Bear Grass clumps that have the juicy blanch centers chewed out by bears in the spring. The long grass stems have been used by the Indians to weave baskets.

**The Fairy Orchard:** called by many people "Lady Slipper." Blooms from April to July depending on the altitude. Grows from a bulb in the moss or duff of the forest floor or on other decaying humus. Perhaps the most striking display of wildflowers I have even seen was about 11/2 dozen fairy orchids in bloom in a scattered group on a thick smooth patch of moss on a large sloping rock in the canyon of the Little White Salmon River. I felt compelled to pick off one or two small twigs that were lying on the moss that detracted from the absolute perfection of the scene.

**The Wild Pea Vine:** grows in great quantity on the clay soils of the ridge that is the north boundary of Mill A Flat. Has clusters of small blue flowers. Livestock seem to like it best after it has been cut and cured in the sun.

**Elderberry:** small tree or shrub. Plentiful throughout the Little White Salmon Valley. Makes very fine jelly that is hard to distinguish flavor from blackberry. Blackcap, or wild black raspberry, grows well in logged off and burned areas. Usually furnish the best picking in second and third years after the logging. When conditions are right the vines and canes will produce a yield that compares with that of cultivated plants. At the foot of Big Huckleberry in a logged off area, the writer picked a gallon of blackcaps from three bushes; the finest patch I have ever seen. One year the wife and I picked enough blackcaps to make 105 pints of jelly, mostly from a patch at the foot of Shingle Mountain.

**Mushrooms:** in the valley throughout the forest grows a wide variety of fine edible mushrooms. By learning the varieties by picking with an expert or by studying

an illustrated book, even a novice can gather a good quantity at the right season. Among the more commonly known and of the best eating are the **Morels**, shaped like a pine cone on a stalk. The **Shaggy Mane**, so called because of the shaggy appearance of the cap. The **Chanterelle** that have gills running down the stem. The **Inky Cap**, which melts into black slime when over-ripe. The **Meadow Mushroom**, which has pink gills when first opening.

The Japanese from Hood River like to pick in the area around Moss Creek Park. They pick what they call the **Fine Mushroom**, a fairly large mushroom with white gills and a grey or tan top. The morels are found in the early spring under cottonwood trees in the upper valley. Chanterells grow in damp shady areas in the forest.

The **Great Bear Head Mushroom** is a large shaggy mass that might be more than one foot in diameter, usually found growing on a decaying log. **Oyster** mushrooms grow in brackets on tree stumps or decaying logs.

**Black Cottonwood** grows to good size in the upper Little White Salmon Valley on the stream flats. There is a fine specimen close to where Berry Creek joins the Little White Salmon. It must be close to five feet in diameter and is of impressive height and symmetry.

**Big Leaf Maple** grow to good size along the streams. In the river flats above Big Cedars Park are many fine old maples, some of which are close to 40 inches in diameter.

The **Lowland Ash tree** grew along the Columbia. Only a few specimens are left, perhaps some at Indian Point.

**Cascade Tree:** an extract from the bark is a natural laxative. The bark is bought by drug companies to use in medicine. Quite a few Cascara growing in the upper Little White Salmon flats.

## **ANIMALS AND INSECTS**

An interesting animal is the "Pika," or "Coney," that lives in the crannies of the lava beds. In appearance they are quite a bit like a small grey rabbit except they have round ears more in the shape of a human ear than a rabbit's ear. They are about the size of man's two fists put together. They have a shrill whistle that sounds as if someone is whistling to attract your attention. The Pika is numerous but shy and I have only seen two.

Another interesting animal is the Mountain Beaver, or Sewell, very rarely seen since they spend most of their time underground in the maze of tunnels they construct in the soft ground around springs and in the banks of gullies. The sewell in appearance is like a small woodchuck. Short legged and wide in build and seemingly with no tail, they have a thick brown fur that was prized by the Chinook Indians.

James Morby told of a trapper in the early days who caught a Fisher at Drano Lake in the 1930s. A large black wolf was shot by Jack Daniels while travelling on his trap line in the upper Little White Salmon Valley. I once read that the Game Department believed it to be the only Canadian black wolf on record of being taken in Washington state.



Several times the writer has been startled by the headlong dash of the Water Vole as it splashes across marshy areas seeking shelter in its hideout. It is the size of a small rat, dark in color and lives in the marsh and along streams. It is a good diver and swimmer.

Large Silver Grey Squirrels used to live in the oaks at Cooks and Chenowith areas. A few were living in the oaks just above the Broughton Mill camp. These squirrels, and also the ones who lived in the Big White Salmon Valley, all died from a disease thought to have brought in by the invading Columbian Ground Squirrels. Pioneers have stated that there were no ground squirrels north of the Columbia until several years after the bridge was built across the Columbia at Hood River. The writer recalls when the first ground squirrels established residence in the lava rocks below the Willard fish hatchery. The date was about 1931.

There was a family of flying squirrels living in a broke, shaggy old fir close to the Willard hatchery bridge. They used the roof of the writer's home for a landing field and the thump of their landing, and their scampering after each other on the roof was often rather startling. I believe they used to do most of their flying on bright moonlight nights.

The writer has seen a few specimens of the colorful King snake along the Cooks Grade. It is recognized immediately because of its series of white, black and red bands. It is a harmless snake and should be protected because of its rare beauty.

Another interesting, harmless snake seen in the valley is the Dust Boa. The color is of pale coffee and so smooth it has a varnished appearance. It has a small head and a knot on the end of its tail that resembles a head so that on first glance it appears to have two heads.

The Brown Racer is a handsome snake and the only specimen that I have seen were travelling at the speed from which it gets its name. I have seen one specimen of the Western Bullsnake, just west of Cooks. It must have been close to five feet in length.

The Rattlesnakes are of the Timber Rattler variety. They are common along the Cook hill. I have never known of one to have been seen in the Mill A Flat area or in the upper Little White Salmon Valley. One was found in the road just above the Broughton camp in the early days, but it was presumed to have fallen from a load of hay. They have been seen in the Chenowith area and on the Mill B side of the Little White Salmon Valley.

Scorpions are common on the Cooks hill. One spring the writer saw many while cleaning rock from the ditches on the Cooks Grade. I have known several people that were stung by them without serious harm. One compared the sting to have about the same effect as the sting of a wasp.

Racoons seem to be more numerous than in the early days. They live in the Cooks and Chenowith areas and seem to have extended their range up to the Mill A and Mill B flats, and also into the upper Little White Salmon Valley.

On a hot June day in the fir forest, countless tiny spiders hang on the end of the fir limbs and spin a thread until it is long enough to carry them in the breeze, and then they sail away to a new home.

On the first day in the summer that the temperature rises above 80°, usually late June, the males and females of the large black ants emerge from their nests in the logs

and stumps and take to the air. For a few days in this annual flight they must appear by the millions as they seem to be everywhere after they have descended to the ground.

The Termites spend years underground in their colony, but eventually develop wings and send up a flight on a dry, still day in late summer. They are sometimes so numerous they give the appearance of a rising cloud of grey smoke.

The Pine Marten lives in the alpine area above the South Prairie Meadows. They are a light coffee brown in color and about the build of a medium sized short legged house cat. They are skilled hunters of small animals. One logger said he saw where a marten had killed a rabbit in the snow, and with his ravenous winter appetite, had eaten every part except the rabbits toe nails.

Crawfish appear in the Little White Salmon River above Moss Creek. It is evidently too cold below that junction, and I have never seen them below Moss Creek.

One of the Forlorn Lakes has a numerous population of large Grey Leeches and is named Leech Lake. It is a fine place to swim for those who aren't squeamish.

The Hoary Marmot: so called because of the long light colored hair about their heads and on their backs; lived in the alpins country above Goose Lake. They are stocky and chubby in build, about the size of a half-grown porcupine, which they resemble somewhat, except that they have no quills. They have a short tail that flips erect with each warning bark. They live on plants and roots and build their den in the rocky hillsides where they hibernate over the long winter months.

## **GEOLOGICAN FEATURES**

An interesting geological feature in the valley is the basalt columns in the ridge on the Cooks Grade where the county has a rock pit. These five-sided columns sometimes break off so that they have a deep dish in one end and a rounded end on the other. These are the same kind of columns found in the "Giants Causeway" on the coast of Ireland.

Several miles to the west and nearly to the top of Augspurgen Mountain, is a slide of basalt blocks. Most of these blocks are perfect in formation and of many varied sizes.

The Big Lava Bed north of Willard is perhaps nine miles long by five miles at the widest part. It is supposed to have flowed out of the ground somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 years ago. In the northwest middle part of the lava beds is Crater Peak. It is a 1,000-foot peak with a 400-foot deep crater in the top. The crater has walls as steep as the cinders would stand; perfectly round and about 150-feet across the bottom. Snow water has kept trees from growing up about 30 feet from the bottom and then there is another 30 feet of stunted timber, and above that is a heavy growth of tall second growth fir and spruce, so that when you are in the bottom, you are in a great amphitheater that is 550 feet to the rim of tree tops.

There is a lava trench 50 feet deep in places that make a  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle around the crater. It does not appear on the northeast side which is much higher above the crater than the other sides, probably because of the prevailing wind piled the cinders several hundred feet deeper on that side.

On the north edge of the lava bed is Goose Lake. A 100-acre body of water that used to be much smaller in the dry part of the year, but in the 1930s Ross Sheppard of

the Forest Service and the C.C.C. Boys gathered several truck loads of forest duff and dumped them into the hole in the lava that drained the lake and now the lake remains at a higher level. Since that outlet has been filled the lake drains through the main body of the lava flow.

On the northeast shore of the lake that used to be exposed at the low water level, was a single pair of human hand and foot prints impressed in the hard and fairly smooth lava shelf. About 100 feet to the northwest of these prints is a single line of lightly impressed prints made by a medium-sized deer that wandered along for 75 feet or so. These could have been made in a volcanic mud that later hardened into stone. There is evidence of volcanic oddity of this type in Nicaragua made in an eruption in 1925 when fleeing villagers left their foot prints in a volcanic mud flow that has hardened into stone.

Just north of South Prairie Meadows in the timber under the needle mat of the forest floor, is a one-inch layer of pumice over all the land. This is from a fairly recent eruption, as no soil has formed over it. It could perhaps be from the last eruption of Mt. Saint Helens that took place in 1845.

Northeast of the South Prairie Meadows on the Cave Creek road is an interesting hillside of smooth grey rock that gives the appearance of having been smoothed by ice from a glacier. When wet the rock reflects the light as does a smooth barn roof. This rock is a hard granite formation. It is part of the ridge from Little Huckleberry Mountain, which is an island of granite surrounded by rocks of volcanic origin.

At the extreme north end of Augspurgen Mountain, where the road and gas line pass around the end of the mountain, are many acres of bare rock that give the appearance of having been shaped in ridges and hollows by glacier action.

A mile or so further up the Cave Creek road is Mann Butte, which is a solid mountain of light colored pumice. It has been thought that the pumice that made this peak fell into a deep lake and after it hardened the surrounding material eroded away. There is a rock pit on the north side of the mountain, and since the pumice packs well after it has been wet, it makes a very smooth road.

In the Trout Lake area, and also to the west and north, are many lava caves. The Ice Cave is the one most visited. The Dynamite Cave is perhaps the most complex because of its several levels and deep drop-offs. The Spear Point Cave is a cave whose low ceiling at the entrance gives the appearance of being smoked from camp fires and in the earth at its entrance a single Indian spearpoint was found.

The canyon of the Little White Salmon is perhaps 600 feet deep. There are quite a few good sized falls in this section of the river. The highest falls is in the canyon below Gahimer road. It is a sheer plunge of about 35 feet. This is the barrier that prevents steelhead from ascending higher in the canyon.

A few hundred yards just below the spine of rock that drops into the gorge from the corner where the county has a gravel storage, is a 25-foot fall and it plunges into a pool that is the largest on the river. Another  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile upstream is a double fall with two drops of 10 or 12 feet. The next large fall upstream is a short ways above where Rock Creek enters the river and is a sloping plunge of about 18 feet.

The many lakes and ponds in the Indian Heaven area must have been formed by a large glacier that covered the high country. When snow is melting in the high country

in the Forlorn Lakes area, upper Lost Creek carries the heavy flow down and floods about 100 acres at the South Prairie Meadows. The water drains through the newer lava flow and bursts out in its old channel which is known as Lava Creek. These flood waters do not seem to affect Moss Creek, which rises from the older lava several miles further down the valley.

Lava Creek goes dry in its upper reaches later in the summer. It has water in the lower part that appears to come from Howe Creek, which sinks into the lava a few hundred yards south of the junction of the Little White Salmon road with the South Prairie road. The waters from Howe Creek then appears a hundred yards away issuing from under the ridge of lava that separates the two creeks.

Lower Lost Creek comes from a valley south of the Lava Beds and sinks into the lava just south of Lava Creek. It runs year around and it might be the source of Howe Creek, which rises a mile or so further down the valley. In the high water period, some of lower Lost Creek's water must get into Lava Creek since the Eastern Brook Trout that live in the Lost Creek beaver ponds, appear in Lava Creek.

## **GHOST WAGONS RATTLES LITTLE WHITE SALMON BRIDGE: SPIRIT WARNS WORKMEN OF BURIED DYNAMITE**

**By J. N. Flesher**

Old timers around Willard will remember me. I taught school at Chenoweth about 1913. The stories I am going to tell you are timed for Halloween, but they are all true. Perhaps they are the best authenticated Halloween, but they are all true. Perhaps they are the best authenticated super-natural incidents recorded in this vicinity.

I think the James Morby family will remember a spiritualist named Wilber who was employed by the Portland R.R. Light and Power company to string a line in the valley. Wilber was estranged from his son. One evening, while we were talking together, he started crying.

"I just got a message from my son whom I haven't seen for five years, he's going to write me a letter."

People in those days weren't any more superstitious than we are today. We thought the old man was touched, and just in order to prevent his playing any shenanigans, we went to the Postmaster Gus Fisher.

"Is there a letter from San Francisco here for Old Man Wilber?" we asked. "Nothing," the postmaster said. He knew every letter that came in or went out of the little office.

Just to set our minds at ease he fanned through the few letters on hand. There, to his surprise, was a letter he hadn't noticed — a letter from San Francisco, a letter from Wilber's son. Later on we learned it told of young Wilber's marriage, the birth of a baby, and a request for reconciliation of father and son.

### **HAUNTED HOUSE**

Things like that make you nervous, intelligence likes to discount everything it can't understand. Explain this, if you can. Near the old Willard bridge was a

ramshackle single house. When it rained, the line crew used it for over-night shelter.

Like many old houses it was said to be haunted, and the wind made spooky noises in the loose boards. One night Wilber and Jack Reager were camping in the decrepit building. Jack was reading a newspaper by the light of the fireplace, Wilber interrupted him.

“See that fellow standing by the fireplace? He’s talking to us.”

Jack was a matter of fact foreman, he didn’t like that stuff, but he, too, had noticed a strange shadow fall on the newspaper he was reading several times even though no one had passed between him and the fire.

“You’re crazy, Wilber,” he said, “but if you see someone what is he doing?”

“He’s trying to talk to us and pointing to where you are sitting. He wants us to look under your bed.”

Reager tossed the newspaper aside in disgust, and took up the pick and started excavating in the rotten board floor. Underneath the bed he discovered five boxes of dynamite, only a few feet from their blazing fire.

These two incidents point up to my main story. That same fall I borrowed a cocker spaniel and decided to do some bird hunting near the old Willard bridge. About mid-afternoon, I heard a team of horses going over the wooden span. There was no mistaking the familiar sound. I heard the creaking of the bridge and the turning wheels. Very distinctly I heard the sound of horses’ hooves.

The dog was out of his wits with fright. I could swear he screamed with terror and I thought I would have to shoot him. Nevertheless I walked up the road for a look, there was nothing to be seen.

Now my own hair stood up. I walked to the noisy bridge with my gun ready to fire. I caught the terrified dog and held him in my arms. Then I ran to Postmaster Fisher to tell him the strange thing that had just happened.

“That’s no surprise to me,” he said. “Strange things happen up here.” There had been dozens of such reports he said. That fellow who was hanged put a jinx on this place, he was innocent.

By the time Fisher finished his comment, my courage had returned and I started back home. When we got to the bridge, the dog’s hair stood up and it was all I could do to hold him and carry him across the bridge. And about half way over the bridge my breath quit. Why?? It was broad daylight. Again I heard the invisible team. Clankety clank, squeek squeek, lot-t lot-t. My mind refused to believe and my blood turned cold. I went to see Jake Brock and to Mrs. Willard for an explanation. Neither had seen a horse or a wagon that afternoon.

Only Wilber seemed to understand, and claimed he was a “7th son of a 7th son.”

Just to prove he was clairvoyant, he offered this proof which I confirmed later:

When he was a young man he was a salesman, something warned him to get off a Kansas train before it arrived in Wichita, where he had an important engagement. So, “Help Me Hannah,” when the train came into Wichita there was a terrible wreck and many were killed.

As George Santayana, the world’s greatest living philosopher says: “There is nothing impossible in the existence of the supernatural: it’s the existence seems to me decidedly probably.”

**NOVEMBER 20, 1979**

The local Little White Salmon area R.R. logging R.R. ceased on the west side of the Little White Salmon in the early 1900s. Jake Brock and family was the only family on the west side of the Chenowith flat and on the west side of the Little White Salmon River in 1905. Mill B was still operating on the east side of the Little White Salmon River until 1906, when they closed down (this was a Mormon church and people operation).

Mr. J. M. Jessup came here about 1912 and aided a number of individuals to set out orchards, mostly apples. Mr. Jessup told Mr. Nielsen that about 500 acres of orchards were planted here in the Little White Salmon Valley. They did not prosper.

Oklahoma area was named for the sign on a wagon "Oklahoma or Bust."



















