MEMORIES OF
MOFFETT'S HOT SPRINGS

by JAMES E. SWANSON,
Grandson of THOMAS and LAURA HAMILTON MOFFETT
(Along with Thoughts from James' Mother)

WE MOVED TO MOFFETT'S SPRING, WASHINGTON

I remember quite well our move to Moffett's Spring the summer of 1932. Merle moved us and our things to Moffett's Spring with his truck. It is a good thing he did. If we had left some things at Uncle Ben's Ranch for storage, they would have burned,

Moffett's Spring was close to Stevenson. Stevenson was about 45 miles west of Portland. It is in the Columbia River Gorge, with the Columbia River and Cascade Mountains to the south, and the mountains to the north. The Columbia River Gorge had been cut through the Cascade Mountains hundreds of thousands of years ago by the Columbia River. The Gorge opened a door between the high, arid lands of Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington, and the lower, moist areas of Western Oregon and Western Washington. The Gorge was a major passage way for ancient Indians and explorers, such as Lewis and Clark. The Gorge also allowed winds to flow from the high lands of the east, to the west. This permits great weather variances along the Columbia. East of the mountains, it is arid and colder, and the Western area is much more temperate and wet. Very strong winds sometimes flow through the Gorge, and to the west.

Moffett's Hot Springs Hotel, North Bonneville, c. 1925.

The prevailing winds from the west lifted as they went east, and dropped moisture as the altitude increased. Mt. Hood can get 30, or more, feet of snow a year, and a few miles to the east side of the

Cabins at Moffett's Hot Springs Hotel, North Bonneville, c. 1925.

Cascades, it is semi dessert. I remember how it rained at Moffett's Spring, at a lower altitude, and in the gorge. It is interesting that when driving east, across the Cascades, the trees on the west side are Douglas Fir, with lots of underbrush, due to lots of rain. As you travel east, the trees are suddenly Pine, and there is practically no underbrush among the trees. Pine trees do well in the drier climate. There were big Douglas Fir trees at Moffett's Spring on the wetter side.

I was six years, and a few months, old when we moved to the lumber camp. Mother, in one of her writing classes, wrote about the move. With her narrative, and with my recollections, I can "paint" a pretty accurate picture of the lumber camp.

"On Highway 14, about six miles west of Stevenson, was a sign which said, 'Moffett's Spring, next turn north.' The road started out a narrow gravel road. The road was winding, and not wide enough for two cars to meet. If you were to meet a car, one would have to back up to a wider place where they could pass. When you got into the forest, the trees were often very close to the road. When you came to meadow, there might be a swampy area, with smelly skunk cabbage, and thick coarse grass growing among the puddles. At such places, a plank road had been built. Logs or timbers were laid crosswise to the road, and planks nailed with big spikes on top-two planks wide, and the right width apart for the wheels,

with empty space between the planks. Occasionally, two cars would meet on the plank road, and it was quite a challenge for one to back up far enough so they could pass. It was fairly common for a car to run off the planks. Usually, one of the front wheels ran off the planks. That meant using short planks to back up the wheel onto the plank road, or use planks and a jack to lift the front and get a short plank under the wheel it to drive forward back onto the planks. Generally, only one wheel would be off the planks. Cars were small, and I remember a few times when three of four big men would lift the front end of a car and place it back on the planks. There was no real soil in the mountains. There were some big boulders, but most of it was what I would call "rotted stone." The soil was mostly like course sand and pebbles. At places the road was full of pot holes, ruts, and was very rough. On dry land, the road was two ruts. We still had the Model T Ford, and it made many trips over the plank road.

I don't remember, and Mother didn't mention, how long the road was. I don't believe it was very long-perhaps one to two miles from the highway to the lumber camp. Except for the lumber, which was hauled out on a train, everything and everybody came and went on that narrow, rough road.

Mother wrote of our arrival at Moffett's Spring the first time: Here is her description: "The road led to a group of dark gray cabins. We could see we were

Cabins at Moffett's Hot Springs Hotel, North Bonneville, c. 1925. Woman is not identified.

Moffett's Hot Springs Hotel, North Bonneville, c. 1925.

at the end of a street which led to a large building, which we found out was the owner's house. It was also a store where groceries, and many other things could be purchased. We had come here for work, and we were assigned to a small unpainted cabin that was on the right side of the street on which we had entered Moffett's Spring. The train tracks ran between our cabin and the owner's house.

"Our cabin consisted of three rooms. One large room had a wood burning cooking stove and a sink with running water, which was a real luxury in such circumstances. We put in our own table and chairs. A small room to the right and rear of the cooking and eating room was the bedroom. It was small, with one window facing south. Immediately to the right of the entrance door was a small office. It was where Jim slept. To the rear of the cooking and dining room a door opened to a covered porch, which faced directly into the woods. It was not large, but big enough for a couple of chairs, and was a pleasant place to rest and enjoy the birds."

I'm sure we had additional furniture, but I don't remember it. I do remember that Dad's beloved books were there, stacked as book shelves.

Mother described it exactly as I remember the cabin, but she described it better. I do remember some additional things about the cabin. It was built like one would build a barn with rooms. On the inside, the studs were not covered,

and all the 2 x 4 studs were open to the room. Nor was there was a ceiling. We could see the rafters on the underside of the roof. I believe the roof was covered with tarpaper. I remember the board floor, which had been laid with green lumber. As the boards dried, they shrank, and there were spaces between the boards. I don't remember the siding on the outside, except that it was unpainted and gray. Of course, a lumber mill had unlimited supplies of lumber to build cabins. All in all, it wasn't too bad, There was no insulation of any kind. The summer was cool, and we got along fine. In the fall, Mother and I left as the weather became cold,, and we went to the city of Mt Hood, Mother had gotten a job doing a survey for one of the churches. Dad stayed on a few weeks longer, until the mill closed. I do remember the snow before we left. Dad stayed as long as the mill was working. Apparently the timber was cut off, as the mill closed and all the machinery, train, tracks, etc., were scrapped.

When it would rain, and sometimes it would rain hard, and with big drops, the raindrops would hit the roof with a loud "smack." I remember lying in bed listening to the rain, on the roof. It was a comforting feeling to be warm and snug and listen to the rain. To this day, when we have a hard rain shower, with big drops, my memory takes me back to rains at Moffett's Spring.

Mother continued: "To the right of our cabin, about two blocks north, was the cook house. It was there that the men ate and bunked in tents or spread their bedrolls on the ground among the trees." Strange: I don't remember them sleeping in the open, although during the summer, and in nice weather, they may have. I remember a bunkhouse where the men could sleep. I remember well the chow hall where they ate. The cook would pound on a round saw blade with a hammer to signal them to come to eat. I don't remember how many men worked in the woods and in the mill, but seemed to be quite a few, perhaps 30. The married men, with families there with them, lived and ate in the cabins, as we did. The men, especially the lumberjacks, worked hard, and they ate huge amounts of food. Mother's brother, Uncle Vic came up that summer and worked in the mill. He ate and slept with the other single lumberjacks and mill hands. He was always a big eater, and he always got enough. Pancakes, potatoes, eggs, meat, and pie were standard fare. With lots of coffee."

As Mother continued to describe the place: "A couple of blocks north of the cook house was the large lumber mill. Most of it was under a very large roof, under which was the machinery for cutting the logs into lumber. The logs were pulled up from the mill pond in a sort of trough with chains and hooks to grab the logs while they were pulled up to the floor where they were stored until sawed. Before being pulled up, they were hosed with strong streams of water to wash off mud and rocks that may be on them from being pulled along the ground. Stones could damage the saw. The noise was horrendous, with clangs, bangs, and screeches as the saw cut into the logs. The saw was a large bandsaw,

with teeth on both sides. There was a big pulley above, and one below the carriage. The power was on the lower pulley, and it ran so the teeth were moving downward. The logs were rolled onto a carriage, which went back and forth beside the saw. The saw would cut as the log and carriage went forward, and then it would cut again as the carriage and log returned. As I recall, the saw was about eight inches wide. The carriage went fast, the saw moved fast, and it took a tremendous amount of power to run the saw. The machinery was powered by a steam engine, and there was a network of belts and shafts to power the various saws, conveyers, etc. around the mill. The fuel for the steam engine was wood, primarily the slabwood and waste wood created as a result of the sawing. Slabwood was what came off the first cut of a log. It had bark on the rounded side, and was of no value, except as fuel."

The key person, and the highest paid and most skillful, was the sawyer. He could practically make or break the company's profits. Since the logs were of varying sizes, it was his job to "eye" the log and determine how to get the maximum amount of lumber from the log. The first cut would cut into the log three or four inches. The carriage had various rulers and gauges so he could decide how much to take off on the next cut. Generally, he would turn the log 90 degrees, take the next cut, etc., until he had a square piece of timber. Then, it would be sliced into various size boards, timbers, etc., so as to make the least waste. As the bandsaw sliced off the slabwood, boards, etc., they would fall onto rollers beside the carriage. They would then roll forward to where they were shunted to wherever they needed to go for further cutting. Some might go down the roller past two circular saws 2,4,6, 8,10, or 12 inches apart, which would cut off the waste wood and cut them to the desired width. From there they would be cut to length-8,10, 12, feet, etc. After the boards were trimmed, they were randomly conveyed, to a wide table and pulled along by chains. As they slowly moved along the table, men at various work stations along the side pulled off the boards they were working with, such as 4", 6", 8" boards. As. they were pulled off They were stacked in piles of identical size boards. Thin, narrow boards, called stickers, were placed between the layers of boards so air could flow through the spaces so they could air dry and not warp. Later they would be loaded onto railroad cars and shipped to market Uncle Vic worked on that line when he was working at the lumber mill. He said he was a "pilot" He piled them here, and he piled them there. The lumber was rough. That is, not planed, so it was very slivery. I imagine most of the lumber was shipped to a planing mill where it would be smoothed, before it would end up in a lumber yard, or for a specific construction project.

Dad's first job was as a pond monkey. He worked in the mill pond moving logs to where they were pulled up to the mill. The logs came down on railroad log cars from up the mountain, were dumped into the pond, and eventually

moved over to the chains to be pulled up. He used a long pole with a metal point on the end to push the logs around. It was called a "pike pole." The pond was, perhaps 5 or 6 acres. I don't know if it was actually a small lake or had been created by excavating an area and was made into a mill pond. He had to jump, walk on, and push from, various logs which were free in the water. They would roll, turn, etc., and were not stable. He wore caulked boots. I remember well one day Mother and I were in the cabin and Mother was reading to me. Dad opened the door and came in. He was soaking wet. He had fallen into the pond. I don't know how deep the pond was, and I don't believe Dad had ever learned to swim. Somehow, he got to shore, and came home. I don't know how he managed it, but he never worked as a pond monkey again. That was really a dangerous job, as one could fall into the pond, have logs move over you, and have no place to come up for air, or one could be crushed between two logs. I remember that Mother was very relieved when he no longer had the job of pond monkey.

The rain didn't stop work in the woods or the mill. The lumberjacks worked in all kinds of weather felling trees and getting them down to the mill. By the way, the lumberjacks don't "cut down a tree." They "fell" it. Today they may fell eight trees. Yesterday they may have "felled" eight trees. To "buck" is to cut the tree into logs of the desired length, such as 16 feet. A tree is "bucked." The one who does it is a "bucker." In the woods, among other jobs, there are fellers or (fallers) and buckers. They use special types of crosscut saws called "felling saws" and "bucking" saws. Fellers always work in a team of two, with one man on each end of the saw as they cut down a tree. Buckers generally work alone, although they may use a two-man bucksaw, with a man on each end of the saw. The felling saws were longer and very narrow-perhaps four inches wide. Being narrow, there was less friction in the cut. The buck saws were shorter and wider-perhaps 8 or 9 inches wide narrowing toward each end. They were also made of thicker steel so they wouldn't buckle on the push stroke. They also had axes. A felling ax was double bladed and had a narrow blade, perhaps 3½ inches. A regular ax was double bladed, and perhaps five inch blades. Axes were honed very sharp-sometimes even sharp enough to shave with. Ax throwing was a sport, to a logger, much as roping was to a cowboy. Other events were competitions in chopping through a log, and bucking through a log. The winner was the one with the fastest time.

Rain gear, as we know it, was not yet developed. In rainy weather, the lumberjacks, who worked in the woods, wore what was called "in pants." They were pants and jackets which had been waterproofed. Linseed oil and water were brought to a boil in a large kettle, and the clothes were put into the kettle and boiled for a time. When dried, the clothes were waterproof, but very stiff-almost like a sheet of tin; thus, called tin pants. They would limber up a bit, but were still very stiff. They were waterproof, however. Those who worked as fellers

and buckers wore caulk boots. They were high, rugged boots, with nails in the soles and heels with the point sticking out. The soles and heels had a nail about every half inch, both ways. This gave them traction when walking on wet logs, or walking through "slash," the broken branches, branches trimmed off the logs, smashed small trees, and the general wood trash in the woods.

After Dad fell into the mill pond he had a job at the mill. It was beyond the roof line, so was out in the weather. Certain pieces of lumber came down the rollers to his station. It was his job to use a swing saw to cut them to a certain length. He was then to take the sawdust and dump it at the edge of the mill. Very few pieces came along for him to cut, and he got tired of taking small amounts to the edge to be dumped. It was boring. He rigged up a two-wheel cart with a large box on it that would hold several bushels of sawdust. If boards came along, they could pile up and he could process them all in a few minutes, and not have to dump the sawdust more than a couple times a day. One day he was sitting there and the boss came along and asked him why he wasn't carrying sawdust and trimming boards. Dad showed him how he had rigged up the operation so there was little labor involved. The boss agreed that the job was getting done, so he allowed Dad to continue as he had been. At that time there was apparently little effort toward efficiency. Human labor was cheaper than developing a machine. Such a job operation would not be tolerated today, but it was apparently the norm then. Also, insurance companies and Government Agencies would not tolerate kids, like me, being around the mill while it was working, or some of the other things I did, which will be explained later.

I had seen the log cars dump the logs into the mill pond many times. Tracks were laid up the side of a small mountain. At the top end was a facility to load the log cars. A cable was attached to the cars, and a donkey engine would let gravity take the cars loaded with logs to the bottom, to the side of the pond. A man would ride the cars down. At the bottom he would release the chocks on the side and the logs would roll off and into the pond. Then, he would walk over to a telephone hanging on a post and call the donkey engine operator, who would then pull the cars back to the top to be loaded, again, and repeat the process. The donkey engine consisted of a steam engine and a winch loaded with many hundreds of feet of cable. They were mounted on big timbers, like big sled runners, and anchored so it would not move. If it was desired to move the donkey engine, a line would be attached to something solid, and by a series of blocks (a block is a large pulley) it would pull itself to where it wanted to go, like a truck winching itself out of a mud hole. I don't really know how long that track was, but it must have been close to a mile. It took quite a while to walk up to it.

Again, today, this would not be allowed, but one day Merle, Grandma Hogle, Mother, and I walked along the track to the top while they were working. When we were above the logging cars we had to walk along the side because the cable

would swing violently as the log cars went over high spots or down into low spots, and there were slight curves. When we were below the cars we could walk on the roadbed, but we had to watch for the log cars coming down and get out of the way. It was dangerous, and I sometimes think how dangerous that was.

At the top we were fortunate to see something most people have never seen, or even heard of. We watched a topper top a spar pole. A spar pole is used to pull logs in close to the loading area. A spar pole has a big block (pulley) attached to the top. A cable is threaded through that block and the end taken out a distance-maybe a quarter mile, or more, and a log is attached to the end of the cable. Another donkey pulls the cable and the logs are reeled in. With the spar pole the front end of the log is lifted and rides over trash stumps, etc., as it is pulled in. A second cable is attached, which runs through a block at the outer end, and the second cable winches the tow cable back to where another log will be attached.

To prepare a spar pole, a topper climbs a big and tall tree using spurs. He has an ax, a saw, and a small pulley and line attached to him. As he climbs up he cuts off limbs until he gets near the top. Then, he uses the saw to cut off the top. This is dangerous, and tricky, as the severed part may fall on him, and the top of the tree will sway violently. He tied himself to the top with a belt around him and the tree. Though rare, there is a potential that as the top is cut off, it will split the top of the tree, and he will be squeezed to death by the tree splitting. After the tree is topped, he attaches the small pulley at the top, runs a small line through it, with a weight, and lets it go to the ground. A stronger line is tied to it and pulled through, again. When a strong enough line has been pulled through the block, a large block is pulled up and secured to the top of the tree. Then, by using larger and larger lines, finally a cable is pulled through, and the end carried out to where logs can be attached and pulled up to the base of the tree. Then, other cables are used to pull the logs up to the loading area. Because of the mountainous terrain, it would be almost impossible to cut trees and get to the loading area by pulling them on the ground. In modern logging, helicopters are used to lift logs where it would be difficult to get them up to the spar tree.

The summer of 1932 was an enjoyable one for me. Mother was not employed, so she had lots of time to read to me. We made trips to the library in Stevenson and checked out books. One of my favorite books was the Uncle Wiggly series by Howard Garis. I discovered they are still available in book stores. Uncle Wiggly was a rabbit who was continually getting into a jam. Whatever he needed to solve his problem was available when he would reach into his knapsack. I never tired of the stories, and there was a lot of them. We checked out other books, too. I think Mother, also, had an enjoyable summer. It was pleasant there, and Uncle Vic was also there. I don't know if Dad was as content, but he did have a job which was not too unpleasant. I remember that from time to time we would go to see Grandma Hogle and Uncle Merle at Carver. Sometimes we went to

Vancouver on the Washington side of the Columbia, and sometimes on Highway 30 to a readjust east of Portland, and then south to Carver. Highway 30 is the same Lincoln Highway that runs through Iowa, and it went on west to Astoria, Highway 30 was a hilly, curvy road along the Columbia. Before we moved to Iowa a river-level road was built which was a big improvement, but not very scenic. It is now called 184. The old road, though hilly, is still in existence. It is a beautiful, scenic road.

I felt very bad one time we left Carver to go back to Moffett's Spring. We got started later than Dad had planned. He wanted to go back on the Washington side, but I insisted, and begged because I wanted to go back on the scenic Oregon side. Highway 30, on the Oregon side was curvy, hilly, and a slower road. Dad yielded, and we went back on the Oregon side, but we didn't make it by dark. We got stopped by a Highway Patrol cop for having only one headlight. Dad got a ticket for the violation. I don't know how much the fine was, but whatever it was, it was money we didn't want to spend. If I hadn't been so insistent, we would have been back to Moffett's Spring before dark. I don't remember Dad saying anything to me about it, but I felt the ticket was my fault. That highway we took is now known as the Scenic Route up the Columbia River Gorge.

There were quite a few kids at the lumber camp that summer. I was one of the younger ones. The mill owners had built a swimming pool with the water about 4 feet deep. There was a slide on the pool. We kids spent a lot of time in the pool. We also explored the woods, but we didn't go near the mill.

Donald Link, Merle's friend, was the engineer of the locomotive which hauled the train cars loaded with lumber to the main line at the river. It was a small wood-burning engine. I don't know exactly how long the spur line was that went to the main railroad line that followed the north shore of the Columbia River, but I would guess two or three miles. When taking flatcars loaded with lumber to the main line, he would let us kids climb onto the locomotive and ride. We got to pull the rope to ring the bell, and to blow the whistle when it was appropriate. We even got to throw wood into the firebox. What a thrill for a little kid!! I can remember it huffing and puffing and the steam blowing out the sides, by the wheels. We then pulled back empty cars to the mill. I don't remember that there was a fireman, so we kids probably served a useful purpose. Can you imagine an insurance company standing for such a thing today? Our parents didn't mind. I would guess that parents today would forbid their kids riding on a steam locomotive.

At some time during the summer, Moffett's Springs was hit by a terrific wind. It did a lot of damage. Mother wrote about it for her writing assignment. I remember it very well, but Mother remembered more details. The storm was similar to the Santa Ana Winds that blow in California. A high pressure to the east, and a low pressure to the west causes the wind to flow from the high

pressure to the low pressure and follow down the Columbia River Gorge. We had lots of wind blowing from east to west down the gorge, but nothing like this storm.

Mother wrote: "Since early morning the wind had blown from the East down the Columbia River Gorge. At first we did not give it much thought, as we were used to the wind blowing, and picking up gritty sand and small gravel. But, this wind was different, it blew constantly and increased in intensity. The mill was working as usual, and the lumberjacks had gone to the woods at the top of the mountain. Things closed down for lunch, but the wind continued to blow harder. Some big trees were starting to crash down. The mill was closed down for the rest of the day.

We had shut our windows and doors, and those who could stayed inside. The sand seemed to blow right past the glass and through the walls. We had trouble breathing without inhaling sand. We tried to eat, but the food tasted like the sand and was gritty..

We had big trees near us, sand was peppering the windows, so when a large tree near us fell, and branches were being broken off, Mother and Dad decided we should go to the mill foreman's house which was in the middle of a clearing. Other people were doing the same thing. The mill owner lived in a big house, but there were trees nearby, so he also came to the mill foreman's house. One person from each family went back to their cabin and collected blankets and pillows and came back to the foreman's house. They wrapped their head with towels, with a little slot to see through while they made the trip. There was a large group of people. We spread our blankets on the floor and tried to sleep, but was almost impossible with the sound of the wind and sand beating against the windows and the sound of trees crashing down. We were glad we weren't near a tree.

The next morning the wind died down and we all returned to our cabins. Fortunately, no trees had fallen on a cabin, but there were many close calls. Some cars were crushed. It took days to get the sand cleaned up. Dishes, clothes, furniture, and floors were covered with sand. It also took days to get the downed trees and branches cleaned up." I never knew, and Mother never mentioned if the mill had been damaged.

Except for the wind storm, life went pretty smoothly at Moffett's Spring. The weeks went by. I was one of the younger kids at the camp, so most of the kids who lived there started back to school at Stevenson. I can't remember how the kids got to school. I think there must have been a school bus, but I can't imagine a bus coming in on those plank roads to pick up the kids. Perhaps they were picked up on the main highway, but I don't know how they got there. Somehow,

they got to school, and home again. I imagine school started in early September. I remember I was pretty lonely with most of the kids gone.

Sometime during the summer I acquired a dog. We didn't have him very long, and I don't remember very much about him. He was brown and white, and might have been some sort of Terrier. He was an adult dog, and never bonded very well with us. He lived with us, but we never became pals. His name was Mickey.

Later in the fall, probably October, Mother got a job in the town of Hood River. I know we had had snow and was getting colder at that time. She worked for the Methodist Church doing a survey. I don't know what the survey was all about. She stopped at almost every house to get the information she needed. I went with her to Hood River, and we stayed with the church's minister. His name was Rev. Buckley, and Dad had known him at Garrett. They had twin boys, James and John, and they were a little younger than I. We did get along fine, and enjoyed playing together. In writing up a time schedule of the early days, Dad wrote that Mother worked two weeks on the survey. I was enrolled in Sunday School at the church, and I know I attended the class more than twice. Perhaps we were there for a time before Mother started her survey. Dad continued to work at the mill, and stayed in the cabin by himself.

While at Hood River I had an experience which I remember as vividly as if it were yesterday. Hood River wasn't very far from Moffett's Spring, and Dad had driven up for the weekend. Rev. Buckley also served a small church up the mountain and not far from the base of Mt. Hood. Dad and I rode with him. He conducted the service, and then we came home. I remember Rev. Buckley as being a fast driver, and what I would now call "rammy." I remember that after we left Hood River the road was gravel and the width of two lanes. As we went higher there was packed snow on the road, and there was no railing along the outside edge of the road. The road was carved into the side of the mountain Rev. Buckley had a green 1929 Chevrolet. The three of us sat in the front seat with me in the middle. I was only five, and not very big.

Going up, he drove fast, but going uphill with an underpowered car (at today's standard) it went OK. Coming back down, he didn't slow down a bit. All of a sudden, the car started to rotate counter clockwise. We made two complete rotations, and stopped headed uphill. Dad could look out his window and look straight down several hundred feet to the bottom of the cliff. I remember Rev. Buckley got turned around and drove very carefully home. Many years later I asked Dad about it and what happened. He was surprised I remembered it. How could I forget? Dad remembered it as well as I. This is how he analyzed it. We were going too fast. There may have been a slight curve in the road. The moment we started to spin, the front wheels had some traction on some gravel. The rear wheels were pulling and hit an icy spot. The rear wheels kept the power on and started to skid to the right. Rev. Buckley panicked and locked the brakes. The car

then had no steering, and with the wheels locked, the car was completely out of control. During the last rotation the front wheels had slid into the low ridge of gravel pushed there by the grader, The ridge of gravel gave resistance and the front end stopped. Then, the rear end came on around and slid into the same ridge of gravel about six feet further on. The gravel offered friction and resistance and the rear end came to a stop. Dad said both wheels were about two inches from the edge of the road. He also said that time seemed to stand still while this was happening and he was trying to open the door to throw me out onto the road. Not being in car he was used to, he couldn't find the door handle quickly enough, to open it. I don't think Mother, or Mrs. Buckley, were ever told of the adventure, or there would have been a tremendous reaction. I know I never told anyone for years.

After Mother finished the survey, it was time to close up the cabin and move to Portland. Dad's job had been eliminated, and we learned that the timber had been logged off, and all of the machinery was being sold for scrap. We then learned that the Hood River Bank had closed, and Mother never got paid for her work. Thus, for the third time Mother and Dad had lost their money in a bank closing. Dad told me that Mickey had gotten some poison salmon and had died. That could be, but I suspect that Dad had somebody shoot him. We couldn't take him with us to Portland, and he was not a very good pet, anyway. I will never know.

These few months, from sometime in early summer to sometime in the fall, were certainly an eventful period of time. It was an interesting time, with some high points, and some near tragedies. Now, it is back to Portland.

(Letter from James E. Swanson to Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.)

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March 4, 2008

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Hello Sharon,

I enjoyed visiting with you a few days ago about Moffett's Spring. As I indicated, my father worked at the mill at Moffets Spring in 1932. I am in the process of writing my life story, and the short time I lived at that lumber camp is an important part of my childhood.

I am writing my story at the computer as my thoughts and memories appear. The enclosed pages cover a time period of (probably) late spring, 1932 to sometime in the fall. I know that the other kids at the camp had been going to school for a time when we left. I am depending mostly on my memory, with some help from some writing my mother did many years later. She was enrolled in a writing class. I don't know if her writing was to accurately write an autobiography, create a short story, or meet an instructor's style. As near as I remember, her writing is an accurate description of life at the mill. I have only a few pages of her notes. I wish I had more.

I am in hopes that somewhere in your area there are people who remember the early 1930's. Perhaps there was a newspaper that could shed light on Moffets Spring. There may be an article reporting the severe storm that went through sometime during the summer. I don't know how extensive your files or archives are. If nothing else, perhaps I can offer a glimmer of light about life at a particular mill in 1932. When you get a finished copy, it might add something to your files.

It was mentioned that, perhaps, the area where the mill was located has been obliterated by the construction of the dam. I have been studying Google Globe to bring up detailed pictures of the area. In tracing roads, streams, etc., I find nothing that appears to be familiar to anything in my memory. The Bridge of the Gods is as I remember it. After all, it has been 75 years, and many changes would have been made. I also didn't find the place on the road toward Mt. Hood that might be where we almost went over the cliff. Probably the road has been moved, straightened, widened, or whatever.

Those in my family who will be reading this story have probably not even heard of the Columbia River Gorge. I want my description of the area of the gorge to be as accurate as possible. If there are inaccuracies in my description of the topography, weather, climate, history, etc., please tell me where I am incorrect. Also, if there should be some additions, I would appreciate them, too.

I wonder if there is any record of the name of the mill. As I remember, a Claude Potter was the boss-Supt., owner, or something. Also, what railroad line went down the north side of the Columbia? If there are any photos, anywhere, I would appreciate a copy. I remember my father talking about Wind River. Does that mean anything?

As I search through papers and pictures, I will be glad to send you anything I find of reference to the mill at Moffett's Spring or of the area. I find a Moffet's Hot Springs in the Stevenson area, but it doesn't appear to be in the area I remember. I don't recall Moffits Spring ever being referred to as a hot spring.

You indicated that you are involved in another project, and maybe couldn't get to this until April. I will look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James E. Swanson
JSwan52246@,aol.com
319-338-9129

From: Sharon Tiffany [sharon@columbiagorge.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2008 11.22 AM
To: 'JSwan52246@aol.com'
Subject: Reply: Letter regarding Moffett's Spring

First, check the spelling of Moffett. If we are talking about the same area, it is spelled with 2 "fs" and 2 "ts" for Thomas R. Moffett

He was born in England in 1846. Came in 1865 to an area in the Columbia River Gorge that was near a creek on the south bank or Oregon and staked a donation land claim. The creek bears his name. He married Laura A. Hamilton in 1868 and they resided in Portland, OR. He was listed in the 1873 census as being a saloon keeper. In 1874, they moved to Lower Cascades (today's North Bonneville, WA area. Moffett's Hot Springs is north of the town. From 1878-1880 he was the county auditor. In 1879, the fishwheel era had begun and he built the 6th wheel on the river, on the Oregon side, near the creek previously mentioned. The wheel was referred to as Moffett's Wheel.

The hot springs were discovered in 1880 by a miner, R. J. Snow, and the property was leased by Thomas Moffett in 1881. He purchased the property in 1885 and within 10 years built a health resort. Over the years, the property and resort have changed hands and is currently doing business as the Bonneville Hot Springs Resort. Originally the area was referred to as "Lower Cascades" and then in August 1908, it was changed to Moffett's Springs, WA. It became North Bonneville when work on Bonneville Dam began in the early '30's. Saw mills came and went like sheets on a bed in those days. The historical society has no record or images of the mill you refer to. Sadly, many of our older historians who might have had memories of it are no longer living. You mentioned Claude Potter: we can do a search in the obit files but it will take more time. If I find anything, I will send it.

The railroad line was the SP&S, completed March 11,1908 near the Bridge of the Gods. It was purchased by Burlington Northern and then BN merged with Santa Fe, so now it is called BNSF. Wind River is the river that runs north and south with a deep canyon near Carson, WA. Carson is east of Stevenson about 9 miles.

The area of the hot springs has been approximately in the same place as when it was first discovered in 1880. It may be placed incorrectly on the map: it should be near North Bonneville not Stevenson. There is an 11 mile difference.

The story is being filed under your name in the family history archives. If you have more, we will add it. Thanks. Newspaper leads: I would do a search with the Washington State library system. North Bonneville had weeklies over the years.

Sharon Tiffany
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Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum
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1-509-427-8211
1-509-427-7429 (fax)

From: James Swanson <jswan52246@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2012
To: Rich Curran
Subject: Moffett's Hot Springs Story

Rich:

I was pleasantly surprised to open your message which arrived a short time ago. I am answering right away so you will know I received it. I will take a look at my materials involving Moffett's Springs to see what I can find, and I will put my thoughts to work to see if I can come up with any additional memories about my short time there. It was some 80 years ago, it would be a wonder if much has survived. Some of my memories are very vivid, some are pretty murky, some are probably not accurate.

First, my father was Lawrence E. Swanson, possibly known as L. E. Swanson. My mother was Harriett Swanson. The mill boss was Claude Potter, and he might possibly have been the owner. The engineer on the little train was Donald Link, who was a friend of an uncle, Merle Hogle, who also worked at the mill. At the moment, I can think of no more names.

My wife, daughter, grandson, and I made a trip to Portland to visit my sister. We had limited time, and were not able to spend much time in the area. We visited with some very interesting, and interested, people. You may have been one of them. I am not good at remembering names. It was suggested that we talk to a man who had lived in the area all his life, and ran an auto restoration, or repair business, or was a dealer, or something. We drove into Stevenson and I think we found the business, but did not have time to stop. You probably know who I'm referring to, and have already "picked" his mind about the early history. On that short trip I was thrilled to drive along what is now the "Scenic Route" along the Columbia. I was amazed at how much I remembered, and how much had changed.

What I sent to the museum was a result of my writing about my childhood. I don't remember if I copied what I had written in my autobiography, or if I wrote a short synopsis, of my memories. If you now have my story on the computer, perhaps you could send me a copy. I might be able to fill in more blanks, or maybe it is all that I remembered. I don't know if you are a historian, or only concerned about getting your materials onto the computer. I know that Oregon is not Iowa, but I have had success in finding plat maps and other information about the area in Iowa where my father was born. Our Iowa State Historical Library in Iowa City has a fantastic amount of material going back to

the mid 1800's. Just a thought. Maybe Washington has such records somewhere.

I will do some searching, and if you have anything which might "tweak memory," I would appreciate it. Thanks for writing, and I hope we stay in contact.

James Swanson
901 Wylde Green Road
Iowa City, IA 52246
319-338-9129

-----Origial Message----
From: Rich Curran <rchcurran@yahoo.com>
To: JSwan52246 <JSwan52246@aol.com>
Sent: Tues., Feb. 14, 2012
Subject: Moffett's Hot Springs story

Hope this finds you in good health. I have been working with the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center digitalizing their historic stories. Tonight I finished working on the very interesting story of your memories of Moffett's Hot Springs. I remembering going there in the 1960's. Two things: would you relay back the names of your Father and Mother; and, if you have any photos of the springs or the area, the Interpretive Center would be thrilled to receive them.

Thank you very much,
Rich Curran