

SKAMANIA COUNTY HERITAGE

QUARTERLY

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Wilderness Exile: Democrats Can't Get the Best of Ole Peterson (Part 1)

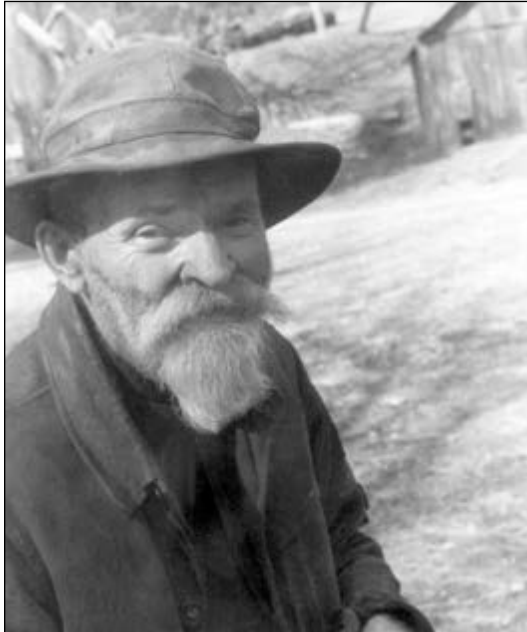
by LEVERETT RICHARDS
Staff Writer, The Oregonian

(October 26, 1947)

(Reprinted by permission of
LEVERETT RICHARDS)

Wilderness Exile: Democrats Can't Get the Best of Ole

**Refugee From Cleveland Panic of '93
At 80 Still a-Feuding' and a-Fussin'
From Hidey-Hole at Foot of Mountain.**



Ole Peterson, age 80, on October 1947. Springhouse is in background. Ole was offered \$100,000 for 700 acres of virgin timber, but when found out the government was going to get some of the money, he nixed the deal.

**by LEVERETT RICHARDS
Staff Writer, The Oregonian**

A HOWL WENT up from the bowels of the high lonesome canyon of the upper Lewis river at high noon on a recent Friday that sent the cougars screaming deep into the crags of the Cascades. The reverberations shook the needles off the firs for miles around and rattled the dishes in the smug, shiny cities far down below.

Some said it was an earthquake or a new volcano araring up and throwing rocks at old Adams and Mt. St. Helens.

But the natives knew what was up. It was Ole Peterson. How else was a ripping, tearing timber beast to celebrate the 80th year of his independent existence, the 55th year of his avowed exile in defiance to the so-and-so Democrats, the sixth decade of his one-man campaign to bring the country back to its Republican senses?

It was no mere volcano. It was Ole Peterson, Ole and a few of the denizens of the deep woods, aided and inspired by a few bottles of 'Old Atom Juices.'

It was a comparatively quiet party, as befitted a mountain man of Ole's advanced years. Ole's two-story moss-covered board house was still standing when the last guest subsided. It only leaned a little.

It was a formal party, a surprise on the old Republican rebel, who buried himself deep in the Washington wilderness at the foot of Mt. St. Helens in defiant protest to the Grover Cleveland Democratic panic of '93 and swore he wouldn't come out until the country regained its Republican equilibrium.

Ole was sniffing and astirring at a pot of navy beans and sow-belly in his kitchen 7.5 miles up the raging Lewis river from the wilderness outpost of Cougar, 30 miles east of Woodland in Skamania county, when the first knock came at his patched and weather-beaten door.

Kenneth Teter, operator of the Cougar store, brought a dainty birthday cake with pretty, pink rosebuds on it and the legend 'Ole Peterson, 80th Birthday' in pink sugar paste on the top. No candles. The boys were afraid of starting a fire. There were store presents from town, and a long-handled pipe hewed out of native alder by Gene Teter, Ken's father. And then there was the 'Old Atom Juice.'

The Timber Toms for miles around came howling out of the highlands to join in the celebration. But, as has been said, it was all quite formal. The boys left their chopping axes and their calked boots outside. There was a sign on the door in Ole's own determined letters, 'No Korks Aloud.'

There's history in those pencilled words, a sad story of the end of Ole's wilderness and the encroachment of civilization. For there was a time, not too long ago, when Ole didn't have a floor to sink his 'korks' in, or a door smooth enough to write his warning on.

This, then, was the land of the cougar and the home of the deer. The only visitors were the Indians, who were his friends. The nearest postoffice was 30 miles away at Woodland. The road ended at Ariel, miles down the river. Only an Indian trail ventured past Ole's door, leading to the high Cascades where the Yakimas and the Klickitat Indians raced their ponies for mad wagers in the lush meadows every 20th of August.

Now the Indians are gone, long gone. The postoffice has followed the receding timber to Cougar, still the last outpost of civilization. The graveled road runs recklessly past Ole's door, pushes ruthlessly through his bean patch and follows the loggers relentlessly up the green, plangent waters of the Lewis as they greedily gouge the heart out of the virgin timber that has constituted Ole's hidey-hole this half a century and more.

The d-d Democrats have just got through pushing a black swath of asphalt through the stumps of the piteous Yacolt burn to Cougar, and the Harbor Plywood company of Hoquiam is driving stakes for a \$5,000,000 plywood, lumber, shingle and door mill at Chelatchie Prairie, just a spit and a hoot across the Lewis river in Clark county, which will chew up the last of Ole's unconquered wilderness and spit it out in the form of plywood, shingles, sash and doors-leaving Ole to shiver, naked and alone in a desert of stumps.

Only Ole, rebel to the last, leers at all such evidence of the beginnings of the end and clings with professional pessimism to his cynical belief that the whole advance of the juggernaut of civilization is just so much 'bushwah.'

But Ole's bailiwick is still the same old land of the deer and the home of the cougar, in Ole's estimate. And he's the same iron man that padded up the Indian trail alongside the lordly Lewis river 55 years ago with a cast iron cooking stove on his back - and a sack of spuds in the oven to keep it from bouncing.

A principal part of Ole's elusive charm lies in his defiant, profane, spit-in-your-eye and go-to-hell all-American independence. The exaggerated, breath-taking way he thumbs his nose at all restraint captures the American fancy, as does his wholehearted, cock-eyed fervor in politics. He jumps into politics with both feet and keeps his fists a-flying.

'I had a nice little business back in Emmett county, Iowa. A breeding farm for horses, it was. Until that banketee-blank Grover Cleveland panicked it away from me in '92.

'I got 10 cents on the dollar. I told Cleveland to take the damned country and keep it. I took to the woods and told them back home I was never coming out.

'I did, just once, in 1926 when my sainted mother died. But that was the only time.

'But you've seen nothing yet to what's chiming this time,' Ole will tell you. He's never foretold anything but disaster at any time. 'The panic that's coming will make Grover look sick.'

**PROTEST:
Is Ole's Principal
Business of Life**

To say that Ole takes his politics seriously is not merely to understate the facts, but to miss the whole point of his story. Politics is his business in life. No politics, either, but protest. He is a Republican that out-Republicans the Republicans.

His life is one long jeer at the Democrats who 'stole' his business back in 1892.

He has had relapses, one at least.

'I fell for that so-and-so Delano (meaning Roosevelt). I thought he was a Roosevelt. He talked like one. But he didn't act like old Teddy once he got in office - that socialist! Seven months I had him up on my wall...'

But when Delano fell from favor he fell with a resounding crash that rent the welkin and sent the chickens scurrying under the barn.

Ole, deluded and disillusioned, turned from love to hate with the fury of a woman scorned. He tore the revered portrait from his gallery of political saints above his greasy kitchen table, shoved it in the fire and burned it. But he did not stop there.

He tore the telephone from the wall, tossed his three radios out the window so he wouldn't be 'mah-friended' all the long winter. The phone belonged to the forest service and so is back on the wall, but the rest of his vows he keeps.

Those were indeed the dark ages. Ole hibernated in the cave-like depths of his for-



Ole Peterson with Hoovermobile in 1941 at age 74. Ole returned to Iowa only once, when his 'sainted mother' passed away in 1926.

est fortress, surrounded by stores of supplies, ample for a siege of a couple of years. Ole thought the country would come to its senses in that time. But for 15 long years the Delano dark ages have cast their shadow over the Peterson palace.

The 'Delano freshet' of 1933 completed the job, ripping out Ole's little power dam on the creek alongside the house. Ole kicked the whole machinery of government out of his house. He hadn't missed an election since 1880. His shack had been the official polling place where the vast machinery of democracy paused in its grinding to wait for the two votes from his 20-mile-square precinct - a remote shirt-tail of Skamania country segregated from the rest of the county by the whole Cascade range.

But Ole wouldn't have the books on his place during the years of Delano.

'They'll be back here again come next election. Things are getting back rational again. There's be about 30 votes for Dewey right here this time, maybe more; lots of loggers voting here this time,' said Ole, as his irascible old blue eyes lit up in anticipation of that happy day.

But he won't be satisfied with just any Republican. Ole is a do-or-die-for-Dewey man, now, and you'd better be likewise, mister, if you want to do business with Ole Peterson.

'Dewey's got guts. Look what he did for New York,' Ole says.

'Taft? He's hollow. Nothing there. A banker type. His wife's a better man than he is. 'Stassen? Measley-mouthed (and he means measley-mouthed).

'Uncle Harry? (Meaning Truman.) That Socialist son-of-a-ballot? Bushwah. That's all he is.

'Dewey's got it. Dewey's solid.'

That's it. And Ole meant it. Don't think he doesn't.

A collector of antique automobiles offered him \$1,000 and a new car for his 1911 Hupmobile the other day.

'Hell, man,' said Ole, 'what would I do with \$1,000, or a new car. Guess I'll keep it, leastaways until Dewey gets elected.'

Another dealer offered him a new Chevrolet for his Baby Grand, vintage of 1916. Ole turned it down.

'Maybe I'll trade when Dewey gets in.'

A timber buyer offered him \$100,000 for his 700 acres of virgin timber. Ole dickered awhile. Then the buyer explained a sizable chunk of the cash would go to the government. That did it. Ole blew up like a bottle of home brew in a warm cellar.

'The jig's off. Git the h--- out of here and don't show you jug ears around here again. I ain't a selling. I ain't a payin' Harry nothing,' said Ole. 'And I ain't either. Maybe I'll hear to another offer when Dewey gets in there and frees us slaves from our chains - maybe.'



Ole Peterson's place as it appeared in winter when snow covered ground and buildings. Ole let his whiskers grow in winter and hibernated. He discarded radio so he wouldn't have to listen to FDR's 'Socialism.'

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Wilderness Exile: Democrats Can't Get the Best of Ole Peterson (Part 2)

by LEVERETT RICHARDS
Staff Writer, The Oregonian

(October 26, 1947)

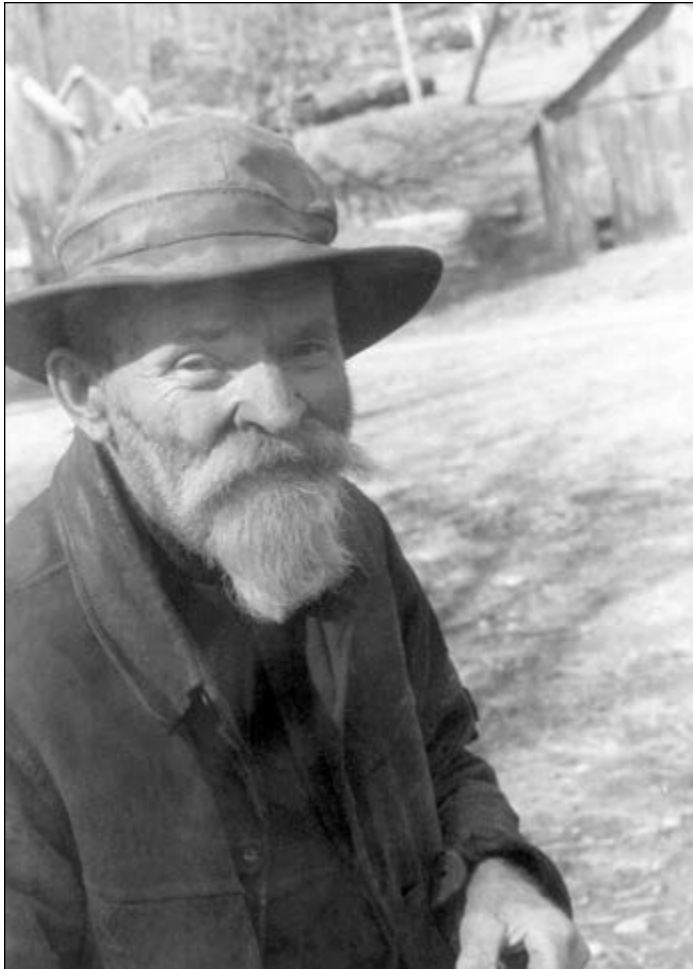
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Refugee From Cleveland Panic of '93

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by **LEVERETT RICHARDS**
Staff Writer, *The Oregonian*

(Part 2)

(Continued from Vol. 17, No. 4)

All of which is mild to the rebel yell that rent the wilderness of the cougar country when 'Delano' come atrying to make a slave out of Ole with his rationing during the war.

The air was blue for miles around and the smell of singed ozone drifted far down the river on the quivering breeze. For days afterward the echoes cussed each other in a rich, rolling thunder of invective such as Ole has perfected in long years of practice.

'I ain't ready for no dole. Nobody's going to push no free American into signing such a lot of silly papers,' Ole said - or that was about what came through after the profanity was filtered out.

RATIONING:

Finally Accepted After Gurgling Bait

The war was almost over and Ole was sitting in the dark, out of kerosene, before the sheriff and the prosecuting attorney of Skamania county finally cajoled him into signing up for his ration books. And then the trap was baited with the one gurgling item that Ole deigns to mention in the same breath with the Grand Old Party.

The sugar shortage was Delano's most grievous crime against the Peterson country, however. Without it there could be no brew. And without brew, what was the use?

Ole was getting desperate enough to go out for some store brew one day Lady Luck smiled on him. Ole was busy strapping the stems out of a handful of fine Kentucky tobacco, his favorite smudge, and tossing them onto the ceiling-high pile of stems that had accumulated in the corner reserved for this purpose since the flood of 1933. Ole saved the bitter stems because 'us slaves might have to smoke them yet, thanks to that blankety-blanked Delano.'

The huge pile of stems toppled into the center of the room, burying the roomful of accumulated junk under something nigh onto a ton of tobacco stems. Compelled to dung out the mess or spend the winter under the odorous foliage, Ole went to work. In the course of time he came to the bottom of the heap, and there, stained and yellow with age, he came upon a treasure trove - a 100-pound sack of sugar that had been there for more years than a man would believe anyhow.

Ole says he never tasted such heavenly brew, seasoned through, as it was, with the delicate aroma of Old Kentucky Twist.

'That dirty socialist Delano' isn't the first 'd..d Democrat' since Cleveland to excite Ole's atomic ire, however. Woodrow Wilson felt the fire of his fury in his day. Ole swore if the country was fool enough to elect Woodrow he'd put his beloved one-lunged Reo racer up on the blocks and never take it down.

'I never thought nothing of it when I said that,' Ole ruefully recounts - for that old Reo was his first love. 'But I done her. I put her up like I said I would.'

That Reo was his sweetheart. 'I saw her achugging down the street one day when I was out to Tacoma,' Ole recounts. 'I lit out after her and run her down. Bought her on the spot and brought her home with me up the old wagon trail.'

BELOVED REO:

Driven Away at Last By Fast-Talking Man

But the priceless old Reo is gone now. 'Fellow drove up with an almost new Hup one day and wanted to buy her. I told him I'd trade him even up, just ajaping. But, by God he took me up. And there I was. I squirmed around, but a man can't crawl out of a bargain. So he took her.'

The 1911 Hupmobile, with its carbide headlights and coal oil tail light, its oil shock absorbers and brand-new tires, is the prize of Ole's automobiles, which include a 1926 Liberty and the 1916 Chev. But the Hup, too, went into the garage when Roosevelt took over. Ole would still like to take her out for a drive - but not while the Democrats are at large in the land!

And if you think Ole's fooling about the Democrats, take another look at the bullet hole in his kitchen window. 'Thought I saw Delano standing out there in the lane one day,' Ole will tell you. Some folks see pink elephant. But Ole is not



Ole Peterson, 74, is shown raking his garden in front of his house. Garage and storage shed is in background in the garage Peterson stored, in protest to election of Grover Cleveland, 'put his beloved Reo on blocks.' He also stored his 1911 Hupmobile and vowed not to drive it until 'Delano' was out of office.

so fortunate.

The legend of Ole Peterson has grown so great and wondrous in the years he roamed the woods that Ole himself can no longer tell for sure where history leaves off and yarning begins.

The story of the cougar that encountered Ole unarmed on the Lewis river trail is told for gospel. Ole had been to the lowlands to turn out his stock for wintering and was returning up the trail near the spot now called Cougar, when he sighted a tawny cat, as skinny as a snake, slinking out of the woods and along the open trail toward the weary woodsman.

'The cat was out of his mind with hunger and about to starve or he wouldn't be doing a silly thing like that,' Ole will tell you, and show the measure of the old catamount's belly with his two hands.

'So what could I do but face up to him?' asked Ole. 'I took up a bit of a club

about two feet long and I thought 'What kind of a game is this snow. I'll just have to bluff him.' And so I made at him, a beating on the ground and agrowling as loud as that silly cat, with his mouth all puckered back like a tooth-less granny.

'He was an old one, with most of his teeth gone, but enough left to take care of me. I got that close before I let out a real Saturday night howl that scared him back into the brush. Then I was afraid to turn my back, so I chased the poor devil a half mile into the brush, a beating and a yelling like an Indian with a bellyache.'

But that wasn't the one that gave his name to the 'town' of Cougar, as Ole will tell you when the spirits are in him. No sirree, Bub. That was the cougar that Ole adopted for a pet. Used to romp and play with the backwoodsman when he was little.

Took to hunting bear when it got its growth, though, and one day Ole's pet puma met the granddaddy of them all. They thrashed around the mountainside and knocked down an acre of timber before the bear finally clamped his great jaws down on the cougar's right front leg and snapped it off at the shoulder.

But Ole nursed the cougar back to health and chopped him out a wooden leg as good as new - maybe a little better. He could run and leap as fast as ever. He could even climb trees and crack nuts with it.

COUGAR

Gets Even With Bear That Chewed Off Leg

Soon he was hunting bears again. One day Ole heard a fierce commotion out back of the barn that sounded like a drunken logger chopping down a rotten snag — only there was growling and snarling in it that didn't make sense.

Ole grabs up his bear gun and goes a ripping out there, just in time to see his pet cougar beating that bear to death with his wooden lag. It was the very same cinnamon that had bit it off in the first place.

The woods are full of stories like that.

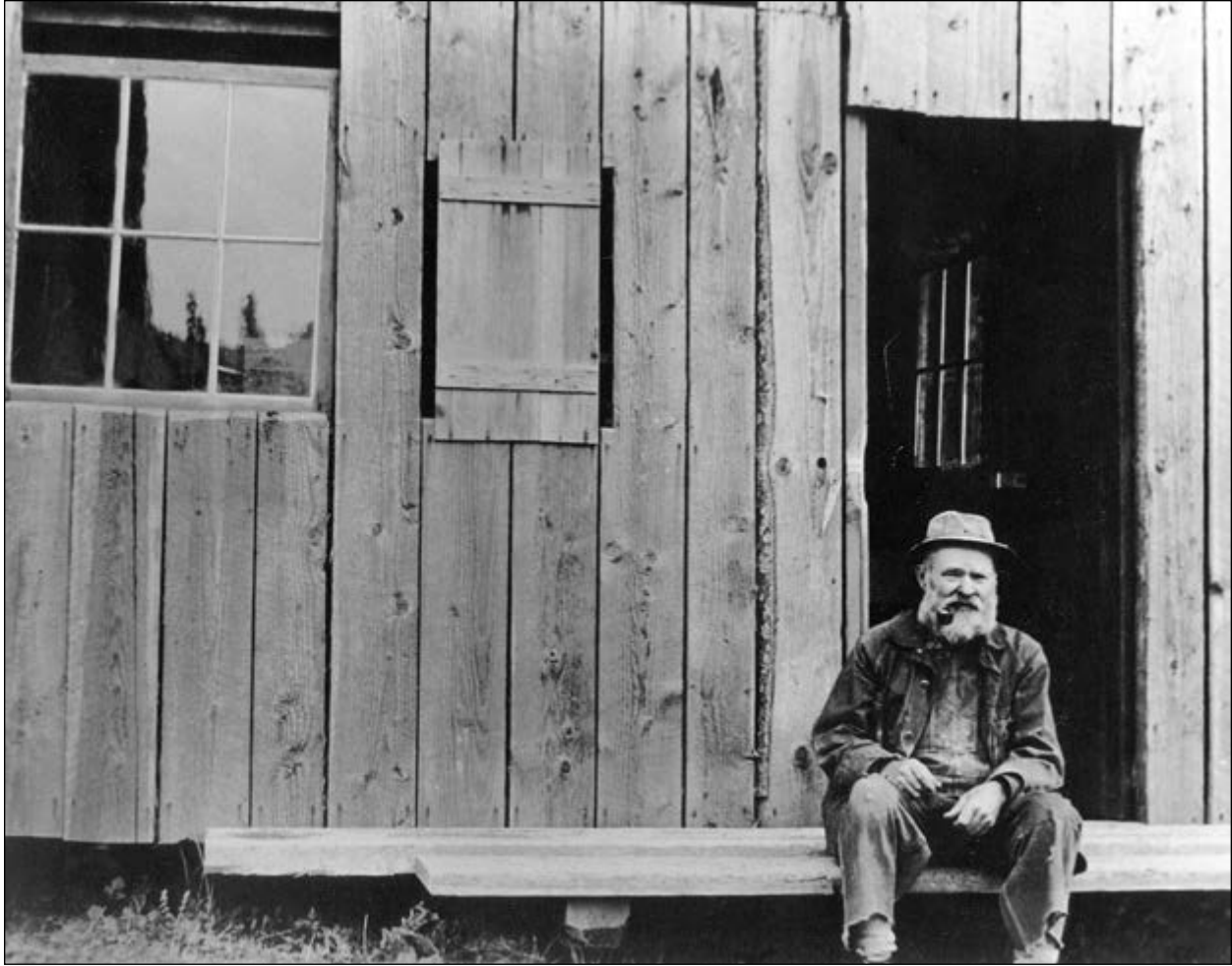
Ole's first log cabin was 'too far from town,' he tells you with a leer. It was about 200 feet upstream from his present house. The second one, of sawed lumber, was too close to town. About 50 feet to close. But a tree fell on it and he built his present castle, a two-story mansion with vertical siding, on its present site, surrounded conveniently by a monument to Chic Sale, a barn, chicken house which houses two dozen faded Rhode Island Reds, and his prized tool house and garage.

How he made a living is a little obscure, even to Ole. He keeps about 50 head of stock wandering through the timber, maybe 150, Ole doesn't know, 'but everybody steals 'em,' he'll tell you. 'Can't raise 'em fast enough for the thieves.'

He plants potatoes, 'but they've failed three years running.'

'What do you raise here anyhow?' asked one visitor.

'Hair, mostly,' Ole japed.



Ole Peterson, 74 on step of spring house In 1941. Lore has it that Peterson scared down a cougar and chased him a half mile into the woods. Later Peterson had a cougar for a pet. A fight between the cougar and a bear resulted in a loss of leg by the cougar. Later on the two got into another fight, this time with the cougar coming out on top.

He does, too. Raises enough to stuff a mattress every winter. He quits shaving when the first frost hits and never lays shears to beard until the frost leaves the ground in the spring - except to clear away the undergrowth around his ears so he can hear the fire burning in the shiny wood stove.

Come spring he logs off the winter's growth with his sheep shears, leaving a handful on each side of his upper lip to tickle his nose all summer. He's never seen his upper lip himself since he came to this country. Don't rightly know if there's anything there.

The tangled growth is something of a fire hazard. But Ole has a series of pipes, each with a longer stem than the last, which he uses as the beard builds up.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This information about Ole Peterson first appeared in the Sunday Oregonian on October 26, 1947. Ken Teter, owner of the Cougar store, sent it to the late Roy Craft in 1988.

Peterson passed away May 6, 1953. His house burned May 4. He escaped but he ran back in to save some belongings. He was badly burned and was rushed to Vancouver Memorial Hospital, where he passed away at the age of 85.

We give thanks to Leverett Richards for permission to re-publish this exciting and informative story about one of Skamania County's exciting pioneers.

Friend persists in efforts to recognize pioneer

By LEVERETT G. RICHARDS

Special writer, The Oregonian

COUGAR, Wash. — The name of Ole Peterson will not be forgotten if Ken Teter can help it.

Teter, former Vancouver city councilman, ex-county commissioner and one of Peterson's closest friends, has renewed a 30-year-old campaign to dedicate the Cowlitz County Public Utility District's secondary powerhouse on the Lewis River to Peterson's memory.

Ole Peterson — explorer, pioneer settler, recluse and rebel — died from burns 35 years ago when fire destroyed his cabin on the site of what is now the powerhouse.

In 1893, Peterson staked a claim on a remote 80-acre parcel of timberland east of Woodland. He lived there, alone, for 60 years — gradually adding more buildings until his haphazard compound in the wilderness became known as Cougar Flats.

After his death at age 85 in 1953, the property was sold and eventually became the site of the Swift Dam, with two powerhouses — one sitting exactly on the site of Peterson's original homestead.

The legend of Ole Peterson began during the depression of 1892 when, as a young man in his mid-20s, Peterson lost his shirt and a stable of stallions in Emmett County, Iowa.

Grover Cleveland — a Democrat — was president, and an enraged Peterson vowed to take to the woods until the world came to its Republican senses.

He headed West in 1893, and when he reached Woodland, Wash., he hiked east up an old Indian trail alongside the Lewis River for 35 miles. Old-timers swear he carried a sheet-metal stove on his back and a bag of spuds in the oven to keep it from bouncing.

Peterson built a cabin by the side of the trail and settled down to watch the rest of the world go by. He kept his vow, coming out of the woods only once during the next 60 years — to attend his mother's funeral in Iowa in 1926.

'Liked to starved to death that first year,' he once recalled, 'until the Cowleskie Indians showed me how to snag salmon in the riffles.'

With the aid of the Indians, who were his friends, Peterson explored the untracked wilderness that lay to the north and east of Cougar Flats.

He discovered Cispus Pass, lowest route through the Cascades, and led Northern Pacific railroad surveyors to it in the late 1890s. For his efforts, they gave him a lifetime railroad pass, which he used only once, to get to Iowa in 1926.

Each spring, Peterson would

plant beans and potatoes in the meadow alongside the creek and bring in a few head of stock, about an equal number of bulls and cows. 'It keeps the cows contented,' he said in an interview in 1947.

Asked what he raised on his 80-acre claim, Peterson thought a moment, then said, 'Hair, mostly.' Every winter, he said, he grew enough hair to stuff a mattress. By spring, he had a beard so long he considered it a serious fire hazard for a man who smoked a pipe, which he did. So, as the winter wore on, he had to use a series of pipes, each with a longer stem than the last one.

Over the years, the Indians and the occasional loggers in the area knew it was spring when Peterson got out his old sheep shears and cut away the winter's underbrush, leaving a handlebar mustache to tickle his nose all summer.

He built what he called 'more stately mansions as the swift sea-sons rolled' until, on his 80th birthday in October 1947, the 'mayor of Cougar Flats' lived in a two-story cabin of vertical siding, surrounded by a barn, outhouse, chicken house, tool house and — eventually — a garage.

A sign at the front gate warned: 'Privit property. No hunting; No shooting.' On the front door Ole had crudely lettered a sign: 'NO KORKS (caulk boots) ALOUD.'

The house was a boar's nest, clouded with cobwebs, cluttered with boots, groceries and piles of tobacco stems - he raised his own. A

pot of beans seemed to be forever boiling on the old kitchen range, while socks, shirts and winter woollies hung up to dry overhead.

Peterson cultivated a reputation as a profane recluse, an eccentric character who wanted to be left alone.

'But he actually liked people,' said D. Elwood Caples, retired Vancouver attorney and one of Peterson's confidants who has strongly endorsed Teter's letter to the PUD commissioners urging them to name the powerhouse in Peterson's memory.

Peterson professed to hate all Democrats, but he made an exception for Caples, a party leader.

'Caples is the only honest lawyer in the country,' he once declared.

'Every hunter and fisherman that ventured up the Lewis River knew him as a friend,' Caples recalled. 'He would share his bread and beans with every passer-by. Sometimes, if he liked you, he would offer you a shot of 'Old Atom Juice,' a home brew that he kept in the spring 100 yards up the creek.'

'I first met Ole in 1930 when I was a Boy Scout,' Teter recalled. 'I would get his permission to sleep in the haystack on our Scout trips.' Teter and his wife, Eunice, took over the store at Cougar, 2½ miles downriver from Peterson's place, in the spring of 1947 and operated it through 1950. In the winter, Teter would hike through the snow to deliver Peterson's groceries.

Peterson never married, but he always enjoyed telling his men visitors about 'the hens that come up here and cluck over me,' referring to the occasional women who would hike or later drive into the area to hunt or fish or to see for themselves the old hermit of Cougar Flats.

As the years went by, Peterson widened the old Indian trail to accommodate a horse and buggy. At the turn of the century, he fell in love with an old Reo Racer, bought it and drove it up the rocky road to his hide-away. Later, he traded it for a 1911 Hupmobile, which was soon joined by a 1916 Baby Grand Chevrolet, a 1916 Liberty and later a Model T Ford.

When 'that blankety-blank Delano' (Roosevelt) aroused his ire, he put the old Hupmobile up on blocks in front of his garage where it sat to the bitter end.

After surviving for 60 years in the wilderness, Peterson finally was killed by the foe he feared most.

'Ole had an almost fanatical fear of fire,' Caples said. He had seen a firestorm at its worst when flames from the historic Yacolt Burn roared overhead in 1902, skipping his sheltered valley, but burning a massive area to the south.

'Ole had signs 'No Smoking Aloud' posted all over,' Caples remembered. 'When he let me sleep in the barn, he made me empty my pockets of all matches — everyone else too.'

Despite all his precautions, fire of

disputed origin broke out in his weather-beaten cabin about 3:30 p.m. May 4, 1953. By odd coincidence, someone was driving along a nearby logging road, saw the flames and notified the U.S. Forest Service, which sent a truck to the scene and rushed Peterson to Vancouver Memorial Hospital.

He died May 6 with a smile on his lips. 'This is my first time in a hospital,' he told Teter. 'I'd a come here sooner if I had known they had such pretty nurses.'

After Peterson's death, two nieces sold the property to Northwest Power, then a subsidiary of Pacific Power & Light. Swift Dam, which began operation in 1958, was built partly on Peterson's old property. The next year, a second powerhouse — owned by Cowlitz County PUD, which shares water rights with PP&L — began operation about one mile down stream from the dam on the actual site of Peterson's original homestead.

This week, Teter sent a letter to the PUD requesting that the Swift No. 2 powerhouse be named after Peterson. By the end of the week, the PUD had not received the letter, according to Bob McKinny, PUD manager. McKinny said that while dams have been named after individuals in the past, powerhouses usually do not receive any special designation.

KENNETH E. TETER
4410 EAST 15TH STREET
VANCOUVER, WA 98661-6308
(206) 693-9073

April 22, 1988
Board of Commissioners
Cowlitz County Public Utilities District
P. O. Box 3007
Longview, WA 98632

ATTN: Bob McKinney, Manager Dear Mr. McKinney:

Two weeks from now, May 6, will mark thirty-five years since the death of the last and most well known of the pioneers who settled the upper Lewis river. That rugged mountair man, Ole Peterson, was a legend in his own time and is a never ending historical tribute the establishment of civilization in the Northwest. He was there at the earliest beginning of Washington's statehood.

Ole Peterson was loved by those who came to know him and is a fascination to all who learn of his life and works. Somehow, Ole's triumph of man over wilderness must be honored. After all, his efforts opened the way for development that benefits us all.

Thirty years ago Pacific Power & Light Company built a campground near the former Ole Peterson camp ground, and many local residents asked PP & L to name the new facility ii honor of Ole (see enclosed). That worthy proposal came to naught. What a shame!

Ole Peterson, many years ago, constructed a water wheel and generator in the spring hou: on the small creek near his house. That primitive power source provided his home with the first electric light in the region. Ole was very proud of that marvel.

Today, Cowlitz P.U.D. owns and operates a modern electricity generating plant located on the former Ole Peterson land holdings. Your powerhouse is used as the land-mark to locate the former Ole Peterson property. That's because all of Ole's improvements to the area have been obliterated.

How very appropriate it would be for Cowlitz Public Utility District to name that powerhouse in honor of Ole Peterson. He was the first and last of the pioneers that settled the upper Lewis River. The legend of Ole lives on, and will continue. His was the first electricity in the region. Ole Peterson beat back the wilderness. All that has followed is indebted to the mighty efforts of Ole Peterson.

'OLE PETERSON POWERHOUSE'

has a good sound and will honor the place and the man. Please make that name a reality.

Sincerely,
KENNETH E. TETER