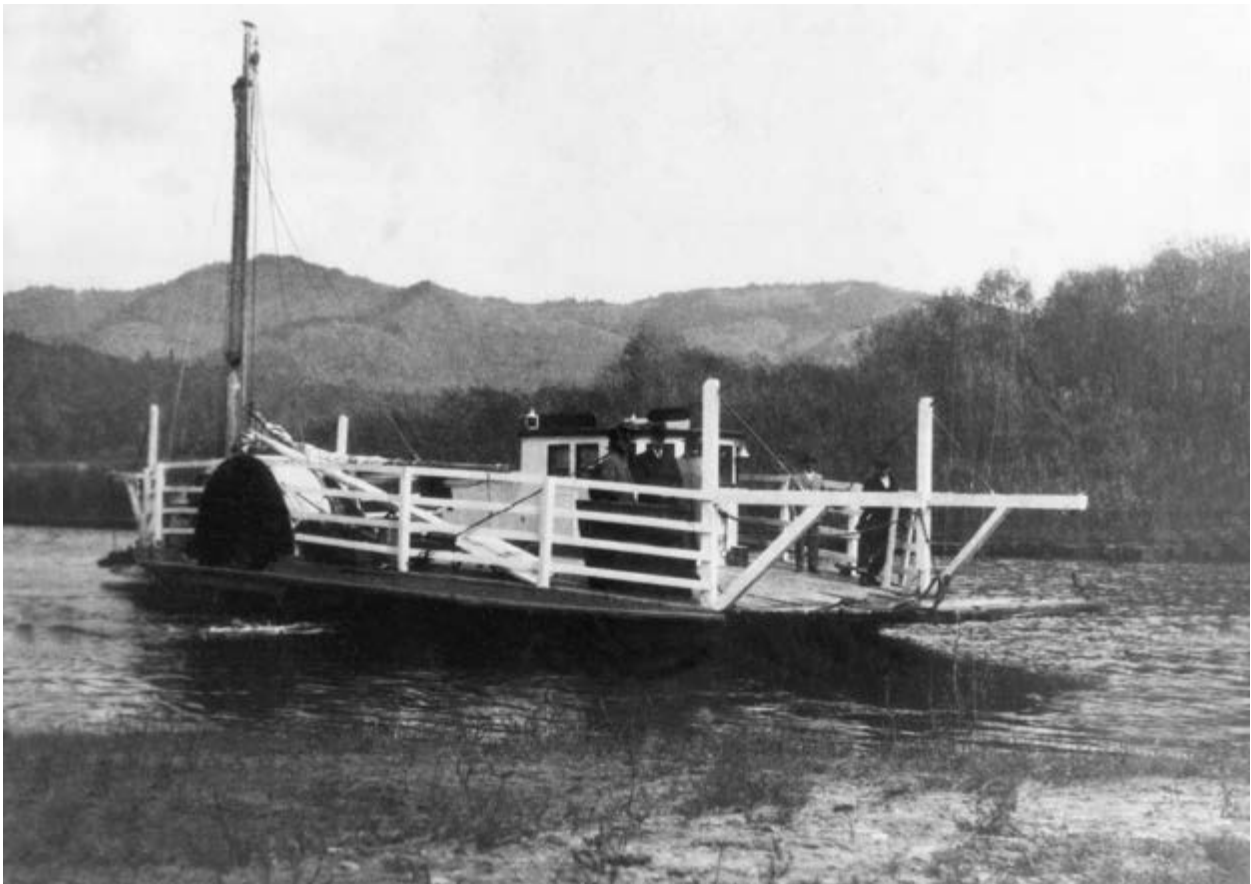


# OTIS TREIBER

Here we are at Underwood this day, this 7th of December, 1978 in the home of Mr. Otis Treiber and Mrs. Jane Bacon, who is here in the home aiding Captain Treiber. (Ivan Donaldson of Stevenson is doing the interview.)

Ivan: We have a number of pictures here, each numbered consecutively and I'll ask Mr. Treiber to identify them and ask him the meaning of each one of these pictures. Mr. Treiber, this is picture number 1, will you tell me what is going on here. Here we're looking at a dock, ferry boat and buildings in the vicinity of the White Salmon River, are we not? Is this your ferry boat?

Otis: This is the White Salmon Bay with the town of Underwood in the back and right of the position where the picture was taken. It's looking across the White Salmon Bay towards White Salmon and over at the far right is a house, not shown, that was built by a Mr. Reckors. On the far right and outside of the picture is the White Salmon railroad bridge and



The Underwood-Hood River ferry "Bear" was owned by both a gasoline engine and sail. Otis Treiber bought the ferry from Harry Olson and operated it from 1905 to 1920.



**Otis Treiber's houseboat at the mouth of the White Salmon River at Underwood. He started their family there. Photo also shows dock and ferry boat. Treiber bought the Underwood ferry from Harry Olson and operated it from 1905-1920.**

tressle that extended from the railroad bridge, up to the town of Underwood which later was filled in with rock and dirt until it became a fill, a rather large one that took about two years to complete.

Ivan: Now is this your ferry here?

Otis: This was one of the boats that I built here. It was built as a vessel to sail and tow. Carrying teams, horses, cattle, sheep, wagons and so forth and later was made into a side wheel ferry. The other two floating parts are on the left, an old house boat on which I batched until I built another house boat shown on my right and married a girl from Kansas that I'd known from about 9 years of age. When she was in the 6th grade, I was in the fifth and her brother was the school teacher. She was the apple of my eye and from then on I never gave her up until I married her 10 years later.

Ivan: What is this long building here, this double long building?

Otis: That's part of the logging industry here where teams were kept, and wagons for hauling supplies.

Ivan: And where did you operate this ferry, between here and Hood River?

Otis: This was operated mostly between here and Hood River but, of course, we had to make a dollar wherever it could be made and so this floating scowl was used to carry lumber, freight, dynamite, or whatever I could get to haul from one place or the other on the Columbia but it was used mostly in ferrying teams and horses and finally automobiles between Underwood and Hood River.

Ivan: Was this a powered ferry?

Otis: Not as shown here. It was first a towing barge and then I put a mast in it and sailed it and then later made it into a side wheel ferry which will be shown in another picture. The lumber in front of the picture is part of a tow that I brought down from Lyle when the river was high and swift in the summer, as it would get in those days when there was no dam, as there is now at Bonneville. There was a dam being built on the White Salmon River to supply water to a power house which is still operating and they needed supplies of many kinds and one was lumber so they bought quite a lot of lumber in a saw mill up back of Lyle and got it hauled to the river and got me to bring it down to Underwood. The day was set that I should go forth and I assumed it would be in a raft or there would be somebody there that could help make it into a raft, instead there was a huge pile of lumber on the beach and nobody in sight and from the river I could see no buildings or any civilization and it was a windy day so I didn't dare leave the boat and go up the road and see what I could find in the way of some help so, I finally turned to and just made a raft without lumber alone.

I kept pushing it out so it was afloat and I remember there was about 100,000 feet of it and I hustled into this job until I got all of it piled into a raft, in such a way that I could get ropes on it, a tow rope, and then started the engine and towed it down to Underwood. It was an unmanageable thing for a river that has a lot of current and while I was going downstream with it, the problem was to get it turned at right angles below the White Salmon River upstream point and pull it into the White Salmon River before the current carried it on by. So I watched that very carefully and kept this raft of lumber as close to the rocks on the bank as I thought it was safe, sometimes 2, 3, or 4 feet and then as soon as my boat was in the clear, I turned her at right angles and pulled with all the power I had to pull it into the eddy before the current swept

it on by. Naturally I didn't breath at ease for quite a few minutes until this scow was hauled over into slack water, otherwise it would have been carried down river and the only thing I could have done would be to pull it into an eddy somewhere between here and Stevenson, if possible and notify the dam company that there it was and that that was the best I was able to do.

Ivan: What kind of a tug did you have?

Otis: I had a tug that was called the "Seal". It was a gasoline powered tug and some other pictures, it was a heavy weather boat and looked a lot like a tug and did make a very good tug.

Ivan: We are now on picture number 2. Is this the Seal shown here?

Otis: Picture number 2 shows the Seal that I just spoke of in the center of the picture. It was arranged to carry passengers in an enclosure during heavy weather, it would keep it protected from flying spray. The Seal is here shown laying against the face of a dock which I built for the ferry service. It was floating so I could move it in different places as the water raised and fell throughout the year. We had as much as 44 feet of rise and fall between low, low water and high, high water, during those early years before there was any dam on any of the contributory rivers of the Columbia.

Ivan: About what period in history was this Mr. Treiber?

Otis: It was about 1913. The long structure shown on the bank just above the Seal is a dock that was made for the steamboats to serve the area of Underwood.

Ivan: Was picture number 1 also about that period?

Otis: No, picture number 1 was an earlier period, perhaps a year or maybe two earlier.

Ivan: We are now at picture number 3.

Otis: Picture number 3 is the picture of one of the greatest gals that ever lived in this country and her name was Cornelia Underwood. She was one of the descendents of Ed Underwood and her mother was Isabelle,

granddaughter of Chief Chenoweth. This girl, woman now, Cornelia Underwood, was one of the great persons of this country because she was always concerned about other's welfare and never wasted an opportunity to leave her home and go somewhere to take care of somebody that she thought needed it. Many times she would take her tea kettle and some towels and get on her raincoat and a rain hat and walk up the Underwood road, which were nothing but rocks and mud, to somewhere where there was sickness and trouble where she might be of help and that was her normal way of carrying on throughout her life from the time she was very young until she died at the age of about 91 in Alaska. At that time she was living in a home of the old pioneers of Alaska and was getting very good care but after she died, Mrs. Bacon and I brought her to Underwood and buried her with her people in the Underwood Cemetery on the top of the hill.

Ivan: About what year was this?

Otis: This was about 1940's. Cornelia Underwood was married three times. It's kind of a long story, can I tell it?



The historic Underwood Saloon, which was part of the Underwood Hotel, c 1913. Lundy Stewart (husband of Nellie Underwood), left and owner Amos Underwood are ready to greet customers.

Ivan: Yes.

Otis: Her first husband was named Lundy Stewart, a likeable young man and made her a good husband to start with but Lundy was like the shifting winds and would fall for various things which got him into trouble. As the years went by Nell's uncle who was Amos Underwood, got a license from the County Commissioners to have a saloon in Underwood and Lundy spent part of his time tending bar in Amos Underwood's saloon. Nell, being part Indian, came into money through Indian grants and at one time used it to build a livery stable in Underwood which was on the river side of the railroad which was just being completed at that time and there were very few trains but all traffic with the livery stable had to cross the railroad track. Lundy run this livery stable which was quite an active business and was quite a well paying business.

Ivan: What years?

Otis: About 1909 thru about 1914. Lundy got into some kind of a brawl one night at the saloon, it was raining. I was batching and in the house shown in the previous picture. It was awful stormy, before I went to bed that night I took a turn around the floating equipment to see that everything was secured well for a hard blow & as I walked to the end of my floating dock, towards the shore, the waves had carried away my gangplank going from the floating dock to the shore but as usual I was wearing hip boots so I waded ashore because of some instinct or possibly I had heard something but I couldn't be sure of it and I couldn't see anything. But I carried a lantern, as usual, at night and on the shore I found this Lundy Stewart, husband of Nell Underwood Stewart, pacing up and down the beach, staggering. He was so completely drunk that he couldn't talk straight and I went to him and I said, "What are you doing here Lundy?" I couldn't understand his reply, but from what he said, I gathered that there was something or somebody down on the steamboat dock which was down river about 75 or 100 yards from my dock. I went down there and looked it over and I could see nothing but some shipping boxes and some bales of hay with one or two broken open, as usual and the hay scattered about. I concluded that there was nothing there so I started back from the face of the dock and had to walk over some of this loose hay and as I did, I kicked into a man's leg. So I pawed the hay away and here was a man that I'd known.

His name was Quinn. His sister taught school up on the top of the hill.

She'd been around here for a year or two but he was a new comer. He was still alive but he was covered with blood and unconscious. I knew I could get no help from Lundy, it was dark and cold and rainy so I draped him over my shoulders, taking hold of his right arm and pulling it up and then working my body under him until I could balance his body and then carried him over to my dock and into my boat where I layed him down in the bottom of the boat. I stretched him out and saw that he was breathing alright but by that time I had a telephone fixed up so I could reach Hood River and I called for Hack to come to the dock to get an injured man and to send for Dr. Dumbold to come to the Mt. Hood Hotel when we arrived which would be in about 3/4 of an hour. Then I had the problem of Lundy on the beach which seemed to be so disturbed that I was afraid to leave him there, afraid he'd might get killed or drowned so I thought I should take him with me and did. I got him out in the boat and took him with me across the river and it was low water at the time, so the Hood River Landing was out on the Sand bar about (telephone ringing - break in tape) When I got these two men across the river, the hack was there and we all got in it and were taken to the Mt. Hood Hotel in Hood River and there I told Lundy to stay near the depot until I came for him, not to go away, because I couldn't take him into the hotel in the drunken situation that he was in. Then I lugged this injured man into the hotel, registered for him, and the clerk led us through the room where he was to be which contained a chair and a little stand and an iron framed bed that didn't look too comfortable but it was at least out of the rain. Doc Dumbold was there, he came in right away and we cut and pulled the clothes off of this man so he could see what was wrong was him and he'd been stabbed many, many times over his legs and arms and body and neck and was unconscious. Doc Dumbold started sewing on him and he sewed and sewed, he seemed to me for hours until I begin to get kind of sick and I told Doc Dumbold that I was sick and I couldn't take it anymore. Doc said, just go out in the hall and walk up and down the hall, keep straight and breath hard and you'll be alright and come back because I need you. That I did and helped him finish sewing up this man which was so many places to sew up and then when it was finished, I said well Doc, is this man going to live and Doc said he couldn't tell until morning. He says, you know he's drunk, don't you? I said no, I didn't realize that. He said, he's dead drunk.

So until morning I don't know if he's going to make it or not. Well, I said, I'll get along back to Underwood then and try and get some rest before 5:00 in the morning when my first run starts and if you need me, you

send for me and I'll help all I can. So, I went down to the depot where I expected to find Lundy and he was around there, stumbling around and mumbling which I couldn't understand and I got a hold of him and said, well Lundy we're going home. So he came along with me and we had quite a long walk through some cottonwood timber on a flat area between the depot and the sand bar which was about a third of a mile wide and in this road through the cottonwoods, the rain had filled the road so full of water that in walking it would slosh into my hip boots until my boots were full of water but there was no other place to walk that I could see-It was pitch dark and I knew I might lose my way if I got off the road so I stayed in the road and half carrying Lundy all the time. Finally Lundy stopped and said, Ote, let's have a drink! I didn't know he had any liquor on him up to that moment. So he reached in his pocket and pulled out a pint flask of whiskey or maybe ½ pint and I said, let me have the first drink Lundy, and he knew I didn't drink but he handed me the bottle and he'd already pulled the cork so I floundered around as I tried to keep him from falling and finally threw my arm over my shoulder and let go of the bottle with all the speed that I could give it and then I said, it's all gone Lundy, we got to get home now. Then I thought he might fight so I got in a position that if he did want to fight, I could slow him completely and then I thought, Jeepers, if I knock him unconscious how am I ever going to get him out of here. But he didn't resist so with one arm around my neck and half over my shoulder, I stumbled along with Lundy to the sand bar and then across the sand bar which is nearly a third of a mile wide and it was so pitch dark and course in those days, we had no lights anywhere to guide one. When I got to the river, I knew I'd missed my way 'cause there was no path on the sand bar and I knew the river bank well enough to know that I had missed the place I intended to go.

Ivan: This was on the Oregon side?

Otis: Yes. I recognized that I was way up-river from my landing, from where my boat was and I thought, Oh goodness, I wouldn't have lost my way if I hadn't of had this fellow dragging me and every step he'd drag me a little further to the right and that took me way off my course and here I was 2 or 300 yards above my landing and then I had to work my way down river to the landing, which I did. I got Lundy aboard and then on the way over I thought, well I can't take Lundy up to his home with Nell because Nell was a kind of an idol to me, she'd been so good to everybody, including me, often she'd bring me food when she knew or



thought she knew that I had no other way to get food and many times that was the status. At one time when I was really hard up, she gave me some money. She said, this is just a present for you. Well, I wondered how in the world did she know that I needed some money so bad. I thought well, she's going to get this back, and many fold and I saw to it that she did. So I liked Nell so well I didn't want to disturb her piece of mind and Lundy was not a drinking man, he was never have known to have been drunk before around Underwood so when I got back on the Underwood side, the Washington side, I got Lundy into my little houseboat and put him to bed with me. The next morning which was only 2 or 3 hours away, I took all of Lundy's clothes in my boat where I had a trip to make to Hood River, I locked the door, so he couldn't get out and went on my run. Later on, I unlocked the door and went in and Lundy was laying in bed awake and I said, well how do you feel Lundy? He said, terrible! Can you give me a drink of water? So we used tomato cans for drinking cups in those days so I dipped up a quart can of White Salmon water, which was really good in those days and handed it to him and he drank most of that quart can of water. Then I said, well you better stay right here the rest of the day, you don't want to go up to Nell's now, you'd just break her heart, so you stay here and I got him something to eat and he did. He stayed calmly and seemed to be glad and I kept his clothes on the boat and kept the door locked so nobody could get in and he couldn't get out. So when it come evening, I said well Lundy do you think you can make it now and he said yes he thought he could. I gave him some more food and his clothes which he put on and by that time it was getting deep dusk and we walked out on to the end of the floating dock and across the gangplank on the shore with me holding his arm and I said, well Lundy do you think you can make it alright or should I go with you? No, he said, I'll be alright, but he seemed to be terribly thoughtful of what I'd told him just before we left the cabin and that was this, "How did Frank Quinn get hurt"? That was the man that was injured that I'd taken over. Frank Quinn get hurt, how did he get hurt? He said, I don't know, when was this, what happened? I said, well that's what I was trying to get from you is how did he get hurt. He said, well I don't know a thing about it, I can't put it together at all. He seemed to be completely absent of any knowledge of that incident so he said, well, what about it?

I said, well I found him down on the steamboat dock and he was pretty badly stabbed and I got him to Hood River and Doc Dumbold sewed him up and I took you along with me and then brought you back here

because I was afraid to leave you alone and he said, well how is Frank Quinn and I said I don't know, I told Doc Dumbold if he needed me for anything more, to send for me and I'd help all I could but Doc didn't know how bad he was hurt because he said he was dead drunk and he didn't even know if he was going to live until morning or not. With that and us across the gangplank, heading for Lundy's house which was up a winding road about 200 yards to where his home was with Cornelius Underwood. (*Stop in tape*) At this point on the beach he was bewildered and thoughtful and studious and he said, yes, I'll be alright so I stood there while he walked on towards the lower end of the road leaning from the beach up to the level of the railroad and he seemed to keep his head down and walk real slow as though he were thinking and studying about something until the deep dusk took him pretty well out of sight and with my many problems I took back to care for them and Lundy Stewart has never been seen since.

A day or two later I heard that Lundy Stewart was missing. I told nobody of this incident, not one word. The only way it could ever have been known would have been from Doc Dumbold and I didn't think he would bother to tell any of it. So the following day, again somebody told me that Lundy Stewart was missing. Well, I seemed to be quite surprised and was and the following day, which I think was the fourth day afterwards, Nell Cornelius Underwood Stewart, came to my boat to go across with other passengers and as soon as my boat had left the dock, she came to the pilot house and I thought oh brother, I'm going to be in trouble now, I don't like this situation but I looked straight ahead and steered my boat and she stood along side of me and looked square at me and said, "Ote, Where's Lundy?" I looked straight ahead and I said, "Nell, I don't know where Lundy is". Well you know something about it, she said. Well, I thought, I wouldn't tell this woman a fib for anything because she was just an angel, that's all, I'll have to tell her the truth, I hate to tell her anything but I saw no alternate. So I said, well Nell the last I saw of Lundy was after he slept with me one night and stayed in bed the next day and that evening he started up across the beach to your house and he said he could make it alright. I didn't tell her that Lundy had been drunk so Nell turned and looked up the river out the window for a long time and finally she turned to me and said, "Well, Ote, I know that you never hurt him none." She said, we've got along fine, we've been going some and I'm going to find him and we're going to go some more. I told her I'd do anything I could to help her so she cried the rest of the way on the trip, tears and I cried in my throat. So that was the end

of Lundy Stewart but not the end of Nell. Nell was too much of a girl to fade away.

Ivan: When was this, about 1912?

Otis: About 1910

*(end of Tape)*