

# **THE WILLARD STORY**

by

**Clara Willard Tobin**



**Willard School House and class. From left, Jerry Tyrrell, Alberta Bertie Myers, unidentified, Ruth Myers, and Robert Tyrrell.**

# THE WILLARD STORY

Willard, Washington, in Skamania County is that portion of the Little White Salmon River Valley extending from a point south of the junction of Lava Creek and the Little White Salmon River to the headwaters of the Little White Salmon River seven miles to the north.

Prior to 1885, this area was veritable forest primeval. There were no roads nor bridges penetrating the darkness of the gigantic fir trees. A deeply worn trail, however, followed the river quite closely. This was created by the Indians who had traveled this route to Big Huckleberry Mountain berry fields for hundreds of years.

Specimens of Indian tools and arrowheads found buried two feet and deeper near the junction of Moss Creek and the Little White Salmon River when the land was being cleared for farming indicated that this was a camping place for the Indians before they started the last ten-mile trek to Huckleberry Mountain. My father had a considerable collection of these items which he unearthed when digging foundations for buildings.

Soon after 1885 settlers began to be attracted by the lush growth of timber and the fertile garden soil along the river.

One of the first of these hardy pioneers was Charles Myers, who had traveled West from Ohio. He is credited with having built the semblance of a road as far as the confluence of Moss Creek and the Little White Salmon Rivers. On the bank of the Little White Salmon, he built a cabin which became a landmark known for 70 years as the "Willard Place."

Myers later sold the cabin to John Johnson and in succession it went to Amos Buirgy, Susannah Willard, and after her death to her son Emil Willard. (*Presently the location is owned by C. E. Boucher*).

Myers extended the road to a place on the Little White Salmon River one and a half miles further north where John Dark had built a substantial cabin with huge logs.

At this time all land belonged to Uncle Sam and the only protection "squatters" had against claim jumpers was continuous residence. However, they often sold improvements they had made. Myers acquired Dark's rights to the place.

He built on to the log house making a comfortable home for his wife, Lovisa Underwood. She was born September 1, 1872, one of eleven brothers and sisters of the famous Edward Underwood family.

Myers also built a blacksmith shop, a log guest house, a huge barn. By main strength and the help of his horses (May and Mattie) he felled the huge trees,

burned them, and practically dug the roots out by hand, creating a farm of several acres.

Charles Myers was a very important person in the early life of Willard. Many settlers long remembered this kind, jovial man who helped them so willingly in their time of need. He was always ready to stop work on his own place to help someone less skilled in woods craft.

Ruth Myers, daughter of Charles and Lovisa (Underwood) Myers, (a long-time resident of Carson, after she became Mrs. Clyde Litton) was born on the Myers homestead January 3, 1893. She was the first child born at Willard.

Ruth's schoolmates and others remember her also for her sunny disposition and her kind and helpful attitude toward family and friends.

### **A New Settler Arrives**

In 1890 a new neighbor staked a 160-acre claim bordering Myer's place on the North. He was George Fisher, born in Portland, Oregon, on June 19, 1868.

Fisher's father, John A. Fisher, was born in Bremen, Germany, in 1825. In 1848, encouraged by friends who had preceded him, he took passage on a sailing vessel bound for New Orleans. From there he went to Quincy, Illinois, where he went into apprenticeship with a confectioner and baker.

Anna Marie Kaiser, born in Canton County, Switzerland, 1826, also arrived in New Orleans with her family in 1848. They, too, journeyed to Quincy, Illinois, where she met John Fisher, and subsequently they were married. In 1856 they left for Portland, Oregon.

Travel was slow. First they journeyed from Quincy to New Orleans by river steamship, then by steamship to Aspinwall on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama; by rail to Panama up the coast to San Francisco on the S.S. Brother Jonathan where they waited for the bi-monthly boat to Portland.

All this was worth it, however, when the first city directory in 1863 showed the following full-page advertisement:

“New Confectionery and Ice Cream Saloon, 111 Front Street, John A. Fisher, Proprietor. (Ice cream only when natural ice is available)

At that time, Portland's 1864 directory showed a population of 1344 adults or a total of 4078 inhabitants of all ages.

George Fisher was born June 1868 in Portland. He was to become one of the first white settlers to explore the Little White Salmon Valley, in the state of Washington and the only one who left a detailed, written account of his ten years residence in the area.

In early adulthood, George Fisher joined a musical group directed by Mr. R. W. Brooke, in the Sunnyside Methodist Church in Portland. This acquaintance with Mr. Brooke was a factor in his ambition to acquire a homestead from Uncle

Sam. Mr. Brook had heard of the homesteads in the Little White Salmon Valley, had made a trip into the area and selected a site for himself. (He later relinquished his right to this one, however, for another in the Big White Salmon Valley.)

George Fisher writes, "On Friday, December 12, 1890, at 5:00 a.m., I joined Mr. F. Brooke at East 34 and Belmont Streets, and we proceeded on foot to Ash Street Dock, crossing the river on Morrison Bridge. At 6:00 a.m. the stern wheel steamer, '*Luline*,' was on her way to the lower Cascades. The purser, Rufus Ingles, collected our fares and billed us through to Chenowith Landing on the middle Columbia."

At Chenowith Landing ("Drano") they were met by Charles Myers and his team. After topping the long steep hill, the road leveled off and six miles further on they crossed the Little White Salmon River by fjording — there were no bridges anywhere on the Little White Salmon. This was extremely hazardous and Charles had to have a little "nip" to fortify himself for the ordeal.

A mile further they arrived at "Camp deBurgy" the little log cabin on what later became the "Willard Place." It contained plenty of dry firewood.

Mr. Brooke and George Fisher spent the next day becoming acquainted with the area around the cabin and the following day they walked to Myers' place to find out when he could take them to the claims he had in mind.

The land had not been surveyed, but when it was, Myers' knowledge of the approximate locations was essentially correct.

George Fisher chose the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4; the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4; the SW 1/4; the NW 1/4 and the NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 15 in Twp 4N, Rouge 9# of WM --an area one-quarter mile wide and a mile long. The Little White Salmon coursed nearly its entire length.

The following day Charles Myers helped the men put up cabins, small 8' x 10' structures to indicate that the land would be homesteaded. At the end of the second day the cabins were complete with roofs of cedar shakes.

Mission completed, Fisher and Brooke decided to go home. They hiked seven miles in the rain to catch the steamer at Chenowith (Drano) Landing to transport them to Upper Cascades. Upon leaving the boat they were told that was the last trip of the season, and the boat would be tied up until spring.

On Christmas day Charles Myers made his way to Fisher's home in Portland to tell George what he already knew about the boats being tied up for the winter. On the spur of the moment, George decided to return with Charles and Mr. Buirgy, who had accompanied him. Myers and Buirgy made a visit to Deckenbach's saloon, which turned out to be quite lengthy. When they finally came out, they went back in again. This was repeated several times until the Union Pacific train from Hood River was chugging up the gulch without them.

Charles Myers had the solution. The men slid down the steep bank at the

end of East Hoyt to the East Portland Depot just in time to board a freight train to Hood River.

Arriving at Hood River at 2:00 a.m., Myers remembered that Lovisa had told him to bring home a small keg of pickles. Since no stores were open at the hour, Myers aroused Bobby Rand, who owned Mt. Hood Hotel. He opened his general store, produced the pickles and the men were off for a long trek across the sand to the Columbia River. Finding a row boat, George manned the oars and chartered the course to Underwood Landing arriving at Ed Underwood's home at 4:00 a.m. The whole household arose to greet the travelers. Mr. Underwood, who was road supervisor, his brother Amos, and Harry Olson decided to go with the travelers as there had been a severe windstorm the day before. They feared there were trees across the road. Sure enough, a tree three feet in diameter was encountered. They cut this one out and the escorts returned home.

Several miles further on another tree had fallen. This one so high off the ground they could not hurdle it. They unhitched the horses and rode on home. Surprises of this kind were to be expected, especially after a storm.

### **Mail Comes From Hood River**

Saturdays were mail days at Chenowith post office. It was then that Indian Joe Aleck would bring in the mail sack, throw it down and go over in a corner to eat his lunch. The post office was in a log house. Patrons of the office numbered about twelve. They included William Drano (French Billy), John Dye and his wife Betsy, Horace (Hod) Witherwax, Bob Intam, the Ordways, Walter Thompson, John Dark, Charles and Lovisa Myers and William Kennedy.

Mail for Chenowith was made up in the Hood River office by Lee Morse, postmaster. Joe Alec strapped the mail to his saddle, rode to Mitchell Point where he tied the pony to the willows, retrieved his skiff from its hiding place, crossed to Chenowith Landing, then hiked the three miles to Chenowith post office carrying the mail on his back.

It is not known how long Joe had been carrying the mail but George Fisher could personally attest to fifteen years. During this time, service increased to bi-weekly, tri-weekly and daily.

### **George Goes to Viento for Supplies**

One Saturday George received a letter from his brother Gus saying he had purchased the cabin and rights that had been built for Mr. Brooke and he was shipping tools and supplies to Viento (across the river from Drano) and that he wanted George to meet him there that day.

George hiked the three miles to Drano Landing from the post office, searched

a bit and found a 12-foot dug-out canoe complete with paddle. He rowed over in comparatively calm water. The train came but no Gus and no freight. Gus had found out the difficulties of shipping to Viento and decided to ship to Hood River.

With means for communication at zero level, this sudden change in plans created a great deal of confusion.

A stiff breeze had come up which made canoeing in the heavy boat very hazardous, but George managed to return to Drano.

Gus had sent the shipment of supplies on to Hood River, transported them by team to Mitchells' Point and ferried across to Drano Landing.

Drano Landing was a busy place at the time. A flume about six miles long taking water from The Little White Salmon was used to float cordwood, posts, telephone poles, etc. which were assembled for shipping at Drano (Chenoweth) Landing.

Cordwood was dumped on a barge moored in an eddie, which made it convenient for the steamer to wood up because the deck hands could truck the wood aboard. Fifteen tons were required as fuel for the roundtrip between The Dalles and Cascades. These wood products provided the chief means of livelihood for the settlers.

By mid-January George's cabin was snug and livable. Although small even after building an upper and lower berth on one side, there was still room by coordinated effort to turn around in it. A small cabin has its advantages, everything is within arm's reach. They were a bit cramped, however, but with an abundance of timber handy, they decided to construct an auxiliary building to store some of their possessions.

They learned considerable about woodsmanship in this way. The first tree felled went squarely over their cabin. It broke the ridge pole, splintered a few shakes and made a mess of things inside. They blamed a shift in the direction of the wind for that.

It was well that they had built the additional shelter for trouble was in the offing. Gus was fond of eggs and brought in a dozen chickens. They were housed in the new structure. George was allergic to both chickens and eggs. He reasoned that the chickens would be company for Gus while he went to visit his dad and mother. He was the baby of the family and had been away longer than ever before; besides he felt the need of comfort and encouragement. Also he had grown a beautiful mustache and whiskers which he wished to show old friends.

By going on Saturday, he crossed the river with Joe Alleck, spent the night with the Price family in Hood River and took the train next day to Portland. He was received by the family with open arms. The next Friday night was dime social night at the Mt. Tabor Methodist church and old friends did not readily recognize him. Luke Edmonds began introducing him as J. Thorburn Ross, a

man of considerable prominence socially.

After a stay of ten days he took the Union Pacific train to Hood River, crossed the river to Underwood and kept going to his homestead about twelve miles distance. The snow was about six inches deep at Underwood, increasing to eighteen inches as he neared Myers place just as night was closing in.

Myers encouraged George to stay at his place over night but he declined, as no one had seen Gus while he was away and he was worried. He found the trail and followed it as well as he could in the semidarkness when he came upon fresh footprints in the snow. His first thought was that Gus was on his way to Myers and they failed to meet. Later he discovered the footprints were his own. He had unknowingly made a complete circle.

About 50 yards short of the cabin there was a cedar log to cross the river. George was too weak to walk over so he crawled on his hands and knees. He then saw Gus come down the bank to get a bucket of water. George called to him and he came and helped George into the cabin. He was dead to the world until noon the next day.

While in Portland, George had bought and shipped to Hood River some necessities which he requested Ed Underwood to get and keep at his home until they could pick them up. To get their goods from Underwood presented a problem because of the deep snow. They went to Charles Myers for advice. He showed them how to make a pair of skis out of 1x4's yoked together to form a double-runner toboggan. They dragged it to Underwood and brought back as much as they could handle. They got as far as Underwood Heights the first night, where they found a log cabin with a good roof and some "nice soft boards" that could be used as beds. To add charm to the situation they were serenaded by owls, coyotes and bats. They had not gone very far when they met a rescue party, Hod and Bob, who took the load on to Myers place.

When they arrived at Myers Place at about noon, Myers asked George if he would go to Underwood on an errand for him; he willingly complied. On his return the next day, he found Gus at Myer's place with a wading boot on one foot, a light shoe on the other and looking very glum.

Gus explained that the cabin had burned with most of the contents. Saved were George's gun and some bedding. The fire originated from the fireplace in the cabin.

Fortunately, one of the things George had in his supplies was a sheet iron stove, which was installed in the spare cabin. What a joy it was to see a column of smoke again arising from the stovepipe, while from within there came to George the scent of sizzling bacon and to Gus that of his frying eggs.

It is not surprising in view of the hardships endured that the Fishers felt a little discouraged at times — but never for long.

George, who was fond of nature, found strength and peace in the rippling of

the stream, the woodsy sounds when all else was quiet, the birds which he could identify by their song.

Spring came early to the Little White Salmon Valley that year (1892). By mid-March the snow was gone, bears had awakened from hibernation and were in the skunk cabbage much for their first feed, their medicine, and tonic, and cougars were on the prowl.

During the winter Fishers had studied seed catalogs and ordered some of the latest improved specials. They had also received garden seeds from their Congressmen, as was the custom in those days. Planting a garden was the first order of spring activity. They cleared and planted an excellent place across the river with fine alluvial soil and open to the sun.

Having accomplished this, their attention turned toward building a wagon road to a place north of the present camp to build another larger cabin in anticipation of visitors during the summer.

They found an excellent site on the banks of the river, overhung by willows, where the water rippled over stones and conveniently near were cedar trees. They felled the cedar trees and split them true in half, so that when laid up, the walls were flush, there was plenty of down cedar for shakes and lumber was imported from an abandoned camp. This was a house with a board floor, door, tables, window casings, “honest to goodness” cook stove and ample cooking utensils.

### **Self-styled Oklahoma Boomers**

“Your guess is wrong!” said George Fisher, “There was no wedding.” Guests who came were sister Laura, her husband George Suttle, their two boys, John and Herbert, and George and Gus’ mother.

George Suttle, in after years, loved to recount the wonderful catches of Rainbow trout he had made and he returned year after year to fish. It was no trick at all to build a fire in the cook stove, throw your fly in the stream and by the time the stove was hot, have trout for supper.

“Those were wonderful days while the folks were with us,” writes George, “but when they left at the end of their vacation, it seemed like a part of us had gone with them. Then, too, the thought that winter — with its snows not far away was depressing.

But the depression was not long to continue. That fall there came a rush of settlers stampeding for locations farther up the valley.”

These settlers were self-styled Oklahoma Boomers and to this day that part of the valley is known as “Oklahoma.”

After staking their claims they had to extend the road. Extending the road was quite an undertaking so they pooled their manpower and went at it. Since



our lodge was at the end of the road, we gave them permission to move in with us. Squeezed in with us were William A. Orser, William Lusk, Thomas Lusk, High Lusk, Charlie McFarland, Ed Dark, Herb Ellsworth, Ed Coates. Others who were not in the “sardine box” but belonged to the group were Dan Shuck and his wife, William Ganger and his wife and her father William League.

### **Buirgy Homesteaders**

That same year, Mr. Amos Buirgy brought his family to live on the homestead at the junction of Moss Creek and Little White Salmon. He and his brother Arbon, along with another homesteader, J.W. Hill, built a shingle mill. The Buirgys furnished the capital and Hill, being a shingle weaver, furnished the “know hows.” The mill had a capacity of about 15,000 shingles a day. Water to turn the mill came from Moss Creek through a flume chinked with moss and the flume made of small poles, carried enough water for all purposes.

It was no surprise to the community when the agreement between Buirgy brothers and Hill came to an end as no one could get along with Hill. If he couldn't run the show he'd quit.

George's friend, Will Crosier, was persuaded to come and see what could be done about the mill. Will, George and Gus Fisher formed a co-partnership under the name of Chenowith Shingle Company. Lease on the mill was based on the number of shingles made. They depended upon Mr. Hill to teach them regarding babbiting, filing and setting saws and adjusting machines. The mill lacked power to cut to capacity. The cause was that the overshot was not getting the full volume of water. To remedy this they cut back the apron six inches. This increased the power and made more shingles but the strain on the two inch shaft snapped it at the drive pulley. They sent to Portland for a three inch shaft and a coupling which was keyed inside the water wheel.

### **Stevenson**

That winter 1892 the Columbia River was frozen solid. The shaft was sent to Viento where it was loaded on a sled and dragged over to a point where it could be picked up. Shingles cut that winter were stacked until they could be moved in the spring.

Stevenson was born in 1892. Previously it was known as Shepard's Farm at Sprague Landing. There was a big building boom going on and Fisher's mill supplied the shingles, shipping them by steamboat.

While the shingle mill was not in operation, George Fisher busied himself with hauling shingles to the Drano boat landing. It was a hair-raising thrill descending the long steep grade on the last lap. Before attempting to descent he

slipped the iron “shoe” under the rear off-side wheel, climbed onto the top of the load, jammed on the brake and went sliding over the huge boulders. He said he was always looking for a “friendly tree” to embrace if the loaded wagon should slide over the edge.

Eventually, the demand for shingles decreased and the mill was returned to the owner, Mrs. Susanne Willard, Emil Willard’s mother.

One of the main reasons Skamania County, and especially the Little White Salmon Valley, developed so slowly was the lack of transportation by both river and land. There were only a few short stretches of road along the river. Roads in the valleys terminated at the steamboat landings. Claims of the Northern Pacific Railroad to a grant of land along the Columbia complicated titles until a suit, forfeiting the grant, cleared them and vested the lands in the United States Government.

An area on the west side of the Little White Salmon, known as “Mill A Flat” contained some thirty or more potential homesteads of 160 acres each but were accessible only by trail. In air miles this area was two miles from the Columbia but by wagon road it meant three miles of side hill grading down the canyon. However, those hardy settlers took the matter in their own hands and built it. Without any relocation it became a part of State Road No. 8 (U.S. 830).

Charles Cook contributed much toward the road’s construction with equal credit given to Sam Samson, another homesteader in the valley (he owned the land at Cook which was also a homestead).

Soon after the road to Cook was built, the Oregon Lumber Company moved in their Sawmill A, built a flume to Drano Lake and from there rafted lumber to Viento, which was shipping point on the OWR & N Co. railroad. The OWR & N was owned principally by David Eccles and C. S. Nibley (Mormons).

Logging to Mill A was over a couple of miles of railroad while logging to Mill B, the east side mill, was done with horses over skid roads. The timber was mostly red fir and could be bought for 25¢ to 50¢ per thousand board feet. When sawed into lumber, the price was \$8.00 to \$10.00 per thousand. Mill A was destroyed by fire and was never rebuilt.

After dissolving the Chenowith Company partnership, the shingle mill was idle for about a year. Mr. A. R. Byrkett, a recent arrival from Ohio, bought a considerable tract of land from the Sucksdorf Brothers with a view to trucking a general farming. (The town of Bingen is on the original Sucksdorf farm). Emil Willard was also from Ohio and probably because of this, he took Byrkett’s order to deliver 20,000 shingles for a barn. The mill was as Fisher had left it and was ready to be put into operation. After he and Emil Willard filled the order, the mill again lapsed into idleness.

However, it did not remain idle long. R. D. Jones, a lumber broker, leased the mill from Mr. Willard and put George Fisher in charge. Members of the crew

were John Hanna, Ted Muellhaupt, and Jimmy Boggs, with Mr. Emery as the manager. Jones also built a mill at Drano Landing which was operated by steam. The shingle bolts were delivered through the flume from Willard's timber. Because the shingles were shaved instead of sawed and produced an inferior shingle, the project was short lived.

The Willard mill was idle again but not for long, when Sam Samson came on the scene. Sam was born in Sweden 1869, migrated to this country in 1887 and to the Northwest in 1889, and to Stevenson soon after. He was also interested in the Little White Salmon Valley. He believed the solution to the shingle mill problem was a turbine water wheel to replace the overshot. It worked but could not supply enough power for practical purposes. His funds exhausted and in dept, Sam went to Nome to prospect for gold. He prospected for five years and is said to have discovered the richest gold mine of the time.

This famous mine, known as the "Third Beach Line," netted Mr. Samson and his associates over half a million dollars during the two years they operated it.

During 1907 Mr. Samson returned to the United States with his bride whom he had married in Nome. The couple made their home in Portland for two years and then moved to Skamania County, Mr. Samson's former home.

Mr. Sampson paid all debts with interest he had incurred. He built and operated for fourteen years, the first hydro-electric plant in Skamania County. Among other investments he purchased the Columbia Mineral Springs Hotel (known as Stevenson Hot Springs Hotel).

## **The Willard Story**

### **(Emil Willard)**

## **The Willard Family**

At this same time came one who was destined to become the only early Willard settler who remained the rest of his life. He was Emil Willard, my father.

He was the son of Eugene Willard, a Swiss watch-case maker, born in France, and Susanne Hinderlong Willard, born in Bern, Switzerland.

Motivated by a spirit for adventure, the couple, with their two sons, Auguste, and James, sailed for America in 1859. They first settled in Sardis, Ohio, where a son, Alcide and daughter Ida (Mrs. John Koenig) were born. Later, after the family moved to Philadelphia, my father Emil joined the family on August 22, 1866.

After a number of years, August and James ventured West to Colorado where they worked in gold mines. While there, they heard of large acres of land being opened to homesteading in the Oregon country in Washington. They persuaded

the family to “go West.”

Traveling by train to San Francisco and boat to Portland, the family branched out. All found suitable farming locations in Eastern Washington except Emil. He was not satisfied with what he saw until he reached Skamania County and the Little White Salmon Valley. He decided to settle there in 1891, only a few months after George Fisher’s arrival. He was the only one of the early settlers who was destined to spend the rest of his life in the Little White Salmon Valley. He decided to take his chance on a timber claim, choosing his homestead adjoining Fishers on the north in Sec. 10, Twp. 4N or 9E Meridian.

Tom Lusk, of the “Oklahoma Stampeders,” had already laid four logs in a square signifying his intention to build there, but he and Emil Willard arrived at a mutually satisfactory agreement as to claimant.

Emile built a shelter without sides in which to live while he hewed the logs and built them into a habitable house.

True to Swiss tradition, everything that he built had two essential qualities — strength and neatness. The little cabin with logs sawed square was still standing until a few years ago.

One of the first persons my father became acquainted with was George Fisher. The two young men, ages 24 and 22 respectively, began a life-long friendship. Together they explored the watersheds of the creeks and rivers and climbed the mountains in the area.

George had acquired May and Mattie, the horses from Charles Myers, and he helped dad by drawing poles out of the timber for the fence. Each time he passed a certain spot, a cougar expressed his displeasure of the intrusion by hissing and growling, making the horses almost unmanageable.

After the cabin was finished, dad’s mother, Susanna Willard, then widowed, came to keep house for him. George Fisher’s mother also came to her son to visit and the two Swiss women became good friends.

Grandma Willard bought the log cabin and the land at the junction of Moss Creek and the Little White Salmon River from the Buirgys where dad had added a room built of shakes.

In the early spring of 1895, dad made a trip to Lewisville, Ohio, to visit Barbara Egger, an acquaintance he had made seven years earlier, before he went West with his family. The couple had corresponded regularly during the years he had been away.

During the visit, dad proposed marriage and was accepted. The ceremony was performed April 4, 1895.

It was a sad group of relatives who bade them farewell as they left on the train for the “untamed West.” Many were certain they would never see Barbara again and that is precisely what happened. She did not, as some feared, become victim of an unfriendly tribe, but she became so involved in homemaking and

raising a family that she did not return on a visit for 34 years. They arrived in Skamania County May 29, 1895, mom was 27 years old and dad was 29.

After leaving a well-managed, productive farm in Ohio, and a home which provided the comforts of that time, the little cabin on the river at Oklahoma must have seemed a humble beginning to my mother. But she was equal to the task before her.

Mother's grandparents had migrated from the German sector of Switzerland. They were a thrifty, industrious people. In no time, mother had the situation under control. Friends in later years recalled it was a cozy cabin with most of the windows facing the river. The floor was of small uniform logs, sawed the long way through the center and laid sawed side up. Many chips with the ax smoothed the rough or uneven places. Friends later recalled that the floor always had a clean scrubbed look. Mom cleaned the crack between boards with a hair pin.

My sister, Estelle, is the only one of us who has the "distinction" of having been born in a log cabin. She was born October 2, 1896, in this cabin and is still living in this location.

By this time, it was evident that a larger home was needed. Dad built a one and one-half story frame house of lumber, semi-finished from Fisher's portable mill above the county road from the cabin. Window and door casings were of stock which dad planed by hand. Although there was no plumbing nor wiring, the house was still a great improvement over the log cabin. Water was carried by flume from Moss Creek to a reservoir on the back porch. The overflow was carried by a square wooden flume, underground to a point outside the yard.

There was also a second house nearby which was called the "Mac Millan" house, after the man who built it when he worked in the mill. This, we used as a guest house for many visitors who came to spend a few days with us every year.

This is where I (Clara) was born March 17, 1900. Lois was born on July 28, 1904, and Harold on October 10, 1906. It continued to be the family home until 1929 when our mother built a modern home with four bedrooms, a bath, and a full basement. A hydro-electric plant operated by water from Moss Creek furnished the lights. This plant was later abandoned, however, as it was never entirely satisfactory, requiring more attention than mother could give.

All of the children had left home by this time. Mother suffered a light stroke at the age of 83. She died April 7, 1951, at Hood River hospital.

Sister Estelle, who had finished high school at Vancouver, was married October 1, 1925, to Wayne Lerett. They lived just across the Little White Salmon River from our mother and spent some time with her every day. Estelle and Wayne's daughter, Sherry (born June 16, 1927) made her home with her grandma Willard most of the time.

Tragedy struck their family when Wayne, who worked for Broughton Lumber Company, was walking through the woods. When bending over to pick up something, a small yearling tree fell across his back killing him instantly.

Estelle remained a widow for several years until she was married to Harry Davison of Stevenson. He died September 25, 1966. Estelle, now 85, has continued to live in her own home on the Little White Salmon River.

Lois, too, worked for her board and room in the home of a Portland family whom she met when they camped at Willard on occasions. She graduated from Washington High School, as did our brother Harold.

I chose to attend Vancouver High School where I worked in the home of an attorney. After graduating June, 1918, I was eager to become a teacher (that was about the only profession open to women at that time. They either clerked in stores or became teachers.)

I went to Meier Frank and applied for a job. Noticing that I had 100 in arithmetic on my state 8th grade exam, they gave me a job as apprentice to the head bookkeeper at \$48 a month. Of course, I couldn't make ends meet on that. Fortunately, after three months, through a friend I learned that the railroad company was hiring women as checkers at \$150 per month in Vancouver. I rushed over to Vancouver and told my best girlfriend about it. Her parents were agreeable. We both applied and were hired at once. We worked the freight trains together, she on one side, I on the other. We tabulated all the pertinent information. Some of the trains were about a mile long, but we usually "hitched" a ride back to the depot on a switch engine and then "worked" another train. We were tired by 8:00 in the morning but we felt we were progressing.

After three months the men were returning from the war, and we were glad to relinquish their jobs to them. With a little overtime, we had saved \$500 each, a considerable amount at that time.

There was still time for me to enroll at Bellingham Normal School for the winter quarter, which I did, remaining also for spring and summer quarters. I then received my elementary teaching certificate and was elected to teach at Willard.

I continued teaching at Willard for a total of two years and was becoming a little weary of the tight schedule of teaching and going to school. I wrote to Mr. Nelly, the district ranger at Guler, inquiring about the lookout job on Little Huckleberry Mountain. His answer came back that I was hired and to report for duty right away. The pay was \$150 a month.

As soon as I gained my equilibrium, I went shopping for a pair of 8X Bausch and Lomb binoculars and a radio. Both were expensive but I considered them necessities for the job. I bought a pair of Bausche and Lomb binoculars (8X) and a head set antenna radio, operated by a large dry cell battery. I never regretted buying these things. The radio provided a link between me and the outside

world and the binoculars helped me locate fires more accurately.

I was surprised when I awakened the first morning on the mountain to find the “lower apartment” was “occupied.” About 4 a.m. there was considerable activity under the lookout house. The cabin was so strongly built that I couldn’t hear clearly to decide what the fuss was all about. I soon learned, however, that it was a family of delightful blue grouse, getting organized to start the day. The chicks were so “wiggly” that I couldn’t count them, but believe there were 22 chicks to start with. They usually headed down the mountain in the direction of the saddle. That is where the spring was. About 4:00 every day they came back up the mountain and kept me company for a while before turning in for the night. I never tried to pick one up but they didn’t mind my touching them. Mrs. Grouse always kept a wary eye focused on the sky and constantly warned that danger was eminent. I couldn’t see anything to merit concern with my naked eye, so one day I laid on the ground and scanned the sky with my binoculars. Sure enough, there were two hawks floating lazily with attention focused on us.

It was with a feeling of regret that I left the little family in the fall, knowing the cruel elements of winter would soon take control and they would have to go down the mountain to find a better wintering place.

I signed on for a second summer on the lookout (it was an excellent place to save money) and enjoyed it as much as the first but felt that a third year would probably be an anticlimax. But the beauty of the panorama which surrounded me I shall never forget, especially in the evening after the sun had set in the west. Down in the valleys there was darkness while the snow peaks of Mt. Rainier, Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Adams and the Three Sisters reflected the sun’s last rays and stood out in pink relief. One had to look quickly as in only about 15 minutes the pink was gone and the mountains stood out in cold relief against a dark background.

By that time, the “family” in the “basement apartment” had quieted down and it was time to lock up for the night. Morning came early on the mountain top and there was little chance to shut out the light in a cabin that had windows on all four sides.

First offer of the day in the morning was to climb the ladder to the observation tower to scan the panorams for fires. That is where the Osborne Fire Finder was located. The center of the map was Little Huckleberry Lookout. By sighting across the from the fire one gained a fairly accurate reading as to the location if they were at all acquainted with the terrain.