

Pioneering in Tillamook County

Edited and retyped by Dean Bones March 2023

In the year of 1878 my family left Bakersfield, California, and started our long trek into Tillamook County. We landed at Dayton, Oregon, which was at the end of the railroad. From there we hired a hack to take us to Grand Ronde. We remained there while Father went on foot over the old Hebo trail to what is now Hebo where my uncle, N. P. Hansen, had taken up a homestead.

Uncle and Father came back for us with an old Indian, Mose Hutchins, and three Indian ponies. Mother rode one pony and carried my youngest sister who was eleven months old. My brother and I rode together. Father and Uncle carried my oldest sister on foot. We packed four sacks of flour and some bacon, our only provision, on one pony. The old Indian rode ahead with a huge rifle over his shoulder.

We were three days on the trail which was very dangerous to travel. The pack horse lost his footing and rolled a great distance down a rocky cliff. We had to unload him and carry the pack sack up the trail and lead the horse which was none the worse for his experience. Where there was a log in the trail the top was cut off just enough for a horse to jump over. There were no bridges across the rivers, so we had to swim our horses where it was too deep to wade. At night we found a hollow log and stretched oil cloth over the top to have a dry place to sleep. It rained every day we were on the trail.

Years after I would see the old Indian guide when he came to Pacific City for salmon. He always knew me and never failed to say, "You know me. I pack you over mountain. You just little papoose."

We filed squatter's rights on land at what is now Cloverdale. After we paid the guide we had only five dollars left, so after we were settled Father went out to Amity to work on a farm until Christmas time.

Later on we took up land at Hebo, part of which is now my home.

The country was very wild with an abundance of wild animals.

We had to pack all our supplies in from Grand Ronde, and we also got our mail out there. One man would get (*the mail*) for all the community. If we needed a doctor we had to ride clear out to Sheridan for one.

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There was no closed season on deer then. Whenever we needed meat Father would go out and kill a deer. We raised some garden after we got the land cleared. While the men were out working Mother rented cows to milk for the summer paying twenty pounds of butter for the rental. In the winter the cows were turned out on the range. Mother churned the butter, and we packed it in kegs on horseback to Grand Ronde where we were paid ten cents a pound for it.

We walked three miles to attend the first school which was a log house on the banks of the Nestuccah River (Nestuccah is Hans Lars' spelling.) at a place called Butts Landing. For chairs we used crude wooden benches. At noon hour the big boys had to go into the woods and drag in spruce limbs to break up for fire wood. We attended school three months out of the year.

When I was sixteen I worked on the toll road from Grand Rond which was the first road into the country. After it was passable for a hack they carried passengers.

The first sawmill was built above Hebo. They used an upright saw which sawed lumber to build the house on the Selly Kellow place (*Could Selly be a nickname for Marcellis Kellow 1861 - 1929? db*). The house is still standing. They got logs from Beaver and floated them down the river to tidewater.

The first store was built at Woods. The supplies were shipped from Tillamook by boat. Later on they built a drugstore which was run by the most well-educated man in the country. The two Wallace boys carried the first mail on the route from Tillamook to Grand Ronde. They had fresh horse waiting for them along the route. When the water was too high for them to ford they crossed by boat. It was our duty to have fresh horses waiting on the other bank to take them on.

About two years after we moved in a terrible forest fire broke out. It was so dark that the chickens thought it was night and went to roost. It was so hot that we could hardly get our breath. We took our bedding to the river where the banks were lined with a heavy growth of green alders and brush. The deer and elk were all running in a frantic effort to escape the flames. The river was full of animal life. After it had burned out there were bones of animals all over the country where the wild life had met a fiery death.

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About four years later we had a tidal wave which covered the whole country with water. What is now Cloverdale was completely covered. The water came into the houses, and the families had to vacate. All the stock in the country were drowned. After the water went down we found cattle hanging by their legs in the alder trees. *(This would have been about 1884. db)*