

We believe this little story of early Tillamook County by one of our first settlers who is still with us in 1926 will be well worth reading. We believe her name worthy of a permanent place in the history of our county.

Mrs. Mary Elizabeth ATKINSON Wood came here in 1881. She with her husband, Joe and family were among the first to enter the county by the first wagon road from Grand Ronde. They settled on the Nestucca River at the present site of Woods, the town which grew up around her receiving her own family name.

At first they lived in a log cabin. She tells an interesting story of how they built their first frame house. A schooner laden with lumber had shipwrecked and washed ashore near Cape Lookout about 10 miles up the coast. There being no road Mr. and Mrs. Woods took their team with the front axle off the wagon, and by following the beaches and cutting through the brush made their way to the lumber. It was all heavy timbers, so they lifted and tied a few pieces to the wagon axle and started for home with the ends of the timbers dragging on the ground. This was because of the many short turns. The entire wagon could not be used.

They dragged the timbers thus from Cape Lookout to Sand Lake. Here they had to await the turn of the tide in order to ford the lake. This crossed, they again took up their journey down the beach and round-about over Cape Kiawanda and down across the soft sands of the beach to the Nestucca River. Here the lumber was placed on a raft and taken up the river to the place of destination. Mrs. Wood's work on these trips consisted in part of carrying a rope, and on the most dangerous steep places tying it to the load and pulling from the upper side holding the load in balance.

The rustic and other lighter timbers for this first house in Woods were hauled over the toll road from Grande Ronde some 30 miles away. Through the muds of 30 miles over the Coast Range mountains and across rivers swift and rocky and around grades steep and narrow the first load of lumber made its way.

Three Rivers, full of boulders, had to be crossed 8 times. What old-timer does not remember this old toll road? The long, steep numberless hills and the mud all the way; the great deep mud holes which no driver when he entered could tell if he would ever get through; and the big toll gate at the top of the hill where we paid a dollar for the privilege of using the road while we rested our mud-

begrimed horses with bleeding knees bruised by their falling in the hard struggle up the steep rough hills.

Here I wish to say one word in behalf of the toll road and its owner. It was built and maintained without money because its owner had none. It provided a way possible to get over the mountains - a privilege greatly appreciated. Its maintenance consisted chiefly in keeping logs sawed out of the road for dead timber was thick then, and the wisest travelers carried an ax and a saw along to amid delays.

Mrs. Wood says that their load of lumber had to be unloaded several times on some of the short curves on the grades and carried around the curve piece by piece while the wagon was uncoupled or perhaps closely coupled and helped around the dangerous places.

Soon, however, as we then counted time the first home in Woods was built. Other homes and places of business soon followed, and Woods became the principal town in the county south of Tillamook.

The first post office was a real achievement as it was about 30 miles closer to home. Mr. and Mrs. William Booth kept the post office. Al Phelps built the first store, and Mr. Weatherly the first drug store. Frank Wilehart built boats. Mr. and Mrs. Collier kept the hotel. Dr. Linton was the first physician. Mr. Wood was the first stage driver, and a son-in-law, Harrison Booth, the first butcher. The school came, the newspaper also, and after many years the church.

What a wonderful history is the early history of our little town. Yes, we had a brass band, too. In those days we were so proud and happy over every achievement. There was so much more personality or individuality in everyone then. The wonderful 4th of July celebrations we used to have! The splendor of the pageant! The thrill of the oration! The fine spirit of these pioneers whom we knew and loved as a relation The unsurpassed quiet beauty of the little village. This has been Mrs. Wood's home for 45 years; her life interwoven with the life of the town. Her home is a rose-embowered nook for she loves flowers, and they grow at her bidding. Many beautiful handmade articles of furniture adorn her home for she has genius for making odd things.

Wood, Mary Elizabeth ATKINSON b 1 Feb 1837 d 6 Oct 1939 Page 3 of 3
A Tillamook Headlight story from 1926 - author unknown
Retyped by Dean Bones Feb. 2023

She is nearly 90 years old now, and just at present is living with her daughter near Willamina. She still takes much interest in life and in her hometown. Her hands are still busy making pretty things, and her heart is warm and friendly