

## **Dolph** by Lloyd McKillip

*This story was probably written during the 1970s.*

Dolph was a town located in the Coast range mountains astride the boundary line separating Tillamook and Yamhill Counties. It primarily was a stopping place for travelers to rest on trips to and from the coast and the Willamette Valley.

The road from Woods (located on the lower Big Nestucca River) to Grand Ronde was built in the period from 1878 to 1882 by Jordan Fuqua and sons. He maintained a toll gate near the top of the mountain, which later became the town of Dolph.

There seems to be some question whether the road Fuqua built went clear to Grande Ronde as Hardy Rock states when he came to the Nestucca Valley in 1876. They traveled by team and wagon as far as Lenos' where they rented Indian ponies to complete the trip by trail (from Lest We Forget page 191). Lenos' place was known as Midway about 2 miles west of Grand Ronde which was the junction of roads leading to Tillamook County and Salmon River. (Joe Leno and his wife were Indians and maintained a hotel and livery stable.)

Dolph was named after Joseph N. Dolph, a U.S. Senator from 1883 to 1895. The post office was established in 1886, a school was started in 1889, and also in 1889 Fuqua sold his toll road to Carl Landingham who lived near by. At one time besides the post office and school the town had a hotel, store, saw mill, barrel and stave factory, livery stable, blacksmith shop, and a campground for travelers who wanted to rest or go hunting.

Also on the Little Nestucca road about a half mile from where the road forked from the road toward Hebo, George Baxter had a toll gate and a blacksmith shop. He maintained the road that went down the Little Nestucca. Baxters also had a hotel of sorts and what they advertised as health-giving sulphur springs.

In 1916 - 1917 a public road was constructed from the Little Nestucca road up the Sourgrass Creek over the summit of the mountain joining the old road at what is still known as the Bee Ranch. The new road was dedicated in 1917 with a celebration at the bridge which crossed Sourgrass Creek about one quarter mile from the county line separating Tillamook and Yamhill counties. Secretary of State Ben W. Olcott, later governor of Oregon, gave a dedication speech, a picnic lunch was served, and after a ribbon across the bridge was cut a caravan traveled the new road to the Bee Ranch and returned.

As for the original town site on the top of the hill there was no longer a reason for its existence, so it just died a natural death. The post office was closed in 1921, the school

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was moved from the former townsite and relocated at the top of what is still called Dolph Hill and was on the west side of Highway 22. It was used until about 1930 when the Dolph and Castle Rock schools were consolidated into the Hebo School District.

Nothing remains of the old town site of Dolph but the apple orchard. Where the former town was located it has all been dozed off by the present owners Publishers Paper Co. and planted with young trees. The cemetery which was located on top of a hill about a half mile from the town has about a dozen graves, but only about two or three can still be located .

As for the town that was relocated nothing of it remains. Baxter operated it for a number of years. He tried to advertise his sulphur springs with not much success. A service station was built right in the junction of the two roads, but as log trucks kept losing logs and destroying the gas pumps it soon closed. I don't know how long the hotel operated, but it was still going in 1934-1935 as the contractor on the road relocation between Dolph and Castle Rock had their headquarters there. The last people to live in the building were the McFarlands, but I don't think they operated it as a hotel. That was some time in the 1950's. The building burned down not long after that. As for the sulphur springs nothing remains of them.

*My son, grandson, and I made a trip just a few days ago to try and locate the sulfur springs but to no avail. The brush and blackberries are so thick you can't get through them. We may make another try this winter after the brush dies down.*

*Grand Ronde as used here was the old town of Grand Ronde in Yamhill County located where the agency is now, and where the old fort was constructed and remained until it was moved to Dayton's town park in 1911.*

*This information has come from Tillamook Memories, Tillamook Lest We Forget, and the Yamhill Historical Society files as well as from my boyhood memories. I checked with Evelyn Rock to see if she agreed with the accuracy of what I have written . Mrs. Rock is the widow of John Rock who was the son of Hardy Rock mentioned in the early part of this narrative. Mrs. Rock's maiden name was Etwiler. She was born in 1898 and has lived all her life in the Oretown area. Her father was a fisherman on the Nestucca Bay, and crossed the mountains many times to sell fish in the valley. She still lives on the original Hardy Rock homestead .*