

Remembrances of Oretown and Surrounding Areas

by Edna C. KIRBY Redberg in April 2000

Edited and Typed by Dean Bones September 2021

Dean Bones:

I have written down a sort of list of things I know something about, and if there is anything of interest to you and those doing this "Heritage", please do not hesitate to ask for further information. I have always been interested in my surroundings.

Being born on September 2, 1920, at Woods, Oregon, and spending all of 77 years in that county, which I love, has given me many memories to think about in my old age! I moved here, to Boise, Idaho, in June 1997, to be near my daughter, Sharon Carter and her family. Since I have been here, I have written a "book" of information for them to enjoy when they are old enough to care about Mom's memories of events over all the years.

One day Erwin and I decided we should give Dad's, John Redberg's Diaries to the Tillamook Pioneer Museum, which we did. There are a lot of them as he started keeping a record of the weather about 1910 or 1913. It soon became a daily mention of all members of his family as well and then into all events around the country! There is a lot of history in those ledgers of his. John kept his daily ledgers almost up until he died in December 1948. He was a man with a very good memory and a quite accurate one. He and Mother Redberg, Gertrude Porter Redberg, were always very interested in community affairs and always willing to share and be assisting any program.

To make a long story short, the Diaries were to be opened to the public to sit and read at any time. Relatives went into the Museum several years ago (*Note this was written in 2000. db*) and were told they did not know where the books were as they were boxed up somewhere! I was angry and wished we had not given them away as Sharon should have had them; but when we are younger we do not always think as we perhaps should. I have regretted it ever since and so wished I had them back!! Please feel free to avail yourselves of their informative contents. (*Note that I, Dean Bones, visited the Pioneer Museum soon after Edna Redberg wrote this last paragraph and found the the Redberg Diaries were then very easy to find and were all available for people to read. I phoned Edna to reassure her that they were available for people at that time. db*)

Dates have always been a real challenge to me, though I remember incidents very well. I will be glad to help in any way I can. I remember your mom, Anna! (*Note that Anna was my paternal grandmother. db*)

Things I remember and things I have been told about over the years of living in the South end of Tillamook County:

Oretown, Oregon

1. James B. Upton and the Naming of Oretown - James was a Notary Public and had two seals. One said, "Oregon" and the other said, "Township". Hence the name of Oretown was born. The name of Oregon City was asked for, but since there was

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one Oregon City already, the name was refused, and Oretown was accepted. I have been asked by a number of people if it was named because of minerals or such. However, I remember being told years back that there was a very poor grade of coal on the hill to the west of Oretown where Charles Anderson built his new home.

2. Truman Alonzo Porter Homestead in Oretown, Oregon - According to his own writing, Grandpa Porter said he arrived in Oretown to take over the homestead about 1899. He and his wife, Condessa Richardson Porter, lived there until his death in 1922. Grandma Porter, Condessa, was a midwife and assisted many who were ill in the Nestucca Valley for a great many years. Her brother, Seth, was a doctor back in Ohio. After Truman's death, his son, Earl Porter, and wife, Alma (Stalford) from Kansas, continued to operate the farm and make a home for Grandma until Earl died in 1960. The farm was then taken over by a daughter, Eula Porter Pearn and her husband William Pearn, who had been teaching at Nestucca Union High School. Bill Pearn became quite ill which necessitated the taking over of the ranch by two of his sons, Richard and Robert.
3. William Ole Redberg (Roberg in Norway) Homestead in Oretown, Oregon - This homestead was owned by James B. Upton, who if I am correct, was the first settler in the valley. He erected a log cabin and planted a good-sized orchard. William Redberg and son, John, left Portland, Oregon, where they then lived on May 23, 1894. John remained in Oretown while his father returned for family and belongings. They arrived back on the farm on June 20, 1894, and William died there just exactly 29 years later to the day. The farm was then split between two brothers, Lars John Redberg and Ole Barhard Redberg. Ole operated his half until his death when his son Roy took it over. John and Gertie Redberg later moved off of their part of the homestead and sold that farm to nephew Roy Redberg. At Roy's death, his son Harold operated the farm.
4. Oretown Post Office - William Redberg was a postmaster at Oregon, Oregon. Next was Frank Martin, and when he was no longer postmaster, Erwin Redberg was next. Then came Lillie G. Redberg. After Erwin and Edna sold the store, the post office was then moved into the house across the street that Erwin was building for he and Edna. And Edna became postmaster and ran it until it was discontinued in 1955. The town was then put on a star route out of Cloverdale, and the local people's addresses then became Oretown Route, Cloverdale, Oregon.

After the closure of Oretown Post Office Edna took over the star route out of Cloverdale being the first woman mail carrier in the county. I ran it for 18 years, and Erwin started driving the Bookmobile from the Tillamook Library which he continued to do for 27 years until he retired.

This office was 77 years old. It was one of the earliest post offices in the county, but the government was having a hey-day closing fourth class offices.

Our cheese factory was shipping hundreds of 5 pound cheese all over the states from the Oretown Post Office. The government did not like the fact that it increased the salary of that office, so they told us we could no longer mail our own manufactured product. When I took over the star route, it was part of my job to

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stop at the Oretown Cheese Factory and load hundreds of those cheeses to haul to Cloverdale Post Office for mailing.

5. A Store in Oretown - After selling the farm John & Gertie moved to a small building belonging to Mrs. Alexandria Rock which was situated on the ocean side of the first turn as you enter Oretown from the south. It was an old building up on stilts on the back so as to be even with the highway that then ran through Oretown.

Gertie became postmaster, and because people were so far away from any grocery store they put in some necessary items such as "Master Bread" to accommodate their neighbors. This gave rise to John feeling the need to build a new store which he did. A Tillman Trent erected this structure, and when finished John and Gertie moved the Post Office into a room in one corner of the new store and started business. There was also an addition put on the north end of the building, and Ross Chapin, formally school teacher and then an owner of a grain and dairy feed supply, brought in his products for sale to the farmers. It was a lucrative business all around.

Erwin and Edna, John and Gertie's son and wife, had come home from Portland where they both worked in a shipyard during WWII. Due to bad health, John and Gertie needed help to operate their business in the store and post office. After Gertie had a stroke, Edna took over the post office as "acting postmaster". John Redberg died December 1948, and the store was sold to an Allen and Elaine McLain from California. They later sold to Jack and Mae Robinson from the valley, and it was even later sold to Carl and Margaret Meyer from Tillamook. They later sold, and from there on it went downhill. So it was finally purchased by the Oretown Church as a manse.

6. Redberg Brothers' Garage - When Erwin and Edna started their building in Oretown it was intended that Erwin and his brother, Marvin, would also have a garage and a service station to run. They could never seem to get any gasoline company to get interested, so the gas station was never to get started. However, the "Redberg Brothers' Garage" was a complete success as there was no place closer than Cloverdale or Otis where the farmers could get any help with broken-down farm machinery let alone their vehicles. It seemed that many of the patrons did not deem it necessary to pay their bills causing the boys to close the garage's doors for good. This building was alongside of the Oretown Cheese Factory's Cold Storage Plant. We sold eventually to Mildred Schleicher from Winema, and we bought a mobile home at Camper Cove at East Beaver in July 1974. Edna helped in the little park for a year, and then we moved to Nestucca River Trailer Park in Beaver.
7. Fuchsias and Garden Art - At Oretown Edna grew fuchsias. It was a natural for them climate-wise. We did a good business, and finally we built and added wooden yard ornaments for sale. Then we sold cement figures as well. By this time the house was sadly in need of more than just repairing, and the county refused to let us put in a mobile home. So we discontinued our business and moved away. It was a zoning problem they said.
8. Seafood for Sale - On the north end of the old Nestucca River Bridge north of Oretown was a large building built out over the river. It was run by Curtis and

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Martha Carver, and they dug clams and cleaned trim for sale along with other seafoods. They possibly had boats for sale. I'm not sure about all of their business there.

9. The Jesuit Novitiate, a retreat for young men from Sheridan, built on property on the bay at Oregon.
10. A sanitarium or bath house was on the bay side at Oretown,
11. Cement boats were built by a man named Nichols on the river at the old bridge just before Oretown as you head south. He took over the motel that had been owned by a Wayne Hilton.
12. Charles Anderson of Oretown built his lovely home on the highest hill west of Oretown overlooking the entire country. He owned Anderson Logging Company for years until his health got too bad. Mary Porter Anderson, his wife, bred and sold miniature horses.
13. The cannery at Oretown was the income for many who made their homes in Oretown. The Nestucca bar was very dangerous, and many sad and tragic accidents occurred there as pilots tried to get their boats either in or out to sea. This is written about in John Redberg's diaries.
14. After the Oretown Cheese Factory was no longer used Carl and Dory Palmer moved to the old cheese factory house, and Carl started building boats.
15. Earl Porter raised mink as did Lloyd Kellow in the Oretown area. Farther east on Meda Loop Reddekopps also had mink farms.
16. Indian teepees were built and sold in recent years just below Oretown. Marjorie Redberg Loucks, for one, helped sew the canvas for these. I remember seeing a number of them being lived in up Slab Creek below Neskowin.
17. At Oretown three brothers made much of their income from fishing and selling their catch to the cannery. They were John Redberg and brothers Willie and Ole Redberg.

Central Cheese Factory Brief Note

Frank Redberg, John's son, was a head cheesemaker at Central Cheese Factory for about 15 years. Later P.U.D. purchased the property for their storage and use. The cheese factory house was purchased by Ray and Barbara Jones and skidded over Jenck Road to a piece of property there for them to live in.

Miscellaneous Remembrances of Cloverdale, Oregon:

1. Skating Rink and Theaters - Frank Redberg also operated a skating rink in Cloverdale above a restaurant that was open then. It would have been about in the spot of the telephone building at present. He also ran a show hall perhaps in the same building. There was in later years a theater in what is now the VFW hall on Campground Street. I think people by the name of Cook ran it.
2. Doctors in Cloverdale - There was a doctor's office where the Closet Door now is. Dr. Hugh J. Brown, George W. Lemery and a dentist were inhabitants. It was too far to the Tillamook Hospital, so the doctors moved to Tillamook. There was a

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restaurant in the middle of what is now the drugstore in Cloverdale and was run at one time by Elma B. Redberg, Frank's wife. This same building housed a confectionary owned by Albert Wade and was later sold to Billy and Jess Stephens. There was always a card game going in the rear of Billy and Jess Stephens', and the bar was in the front.

3. Drugstore - There was a High's Drugstore. I am not really sure just where it was. Later there was Groshong's Drug Store. The present drugstore was once run by Max and Thelma Rothenberger. Now the druggist is John Griggs. The original businesses in this block were The Cloverdale Mercantile that was where the grocery store is, and there was a IOOF lodge above the store. Next was the restaurant and tavern, and next was the drugstore and the doctors' office.
4. Telephone Office - The telephone office then was across the street on the river's edge by Ennis Turner's Barber Shop. My aunt, Edna Compton Hushbeck, was an operator years back, and during WWII while the Three C's were in the area my mother, Blanche Compton Kirby, was operator. The building is gone.
5. Candi's Beauty Shop is now a part of what was Ennis Turner's Barber Shop.
6. Cloverdale Hotel - Years later, when Curtis died, Martha went to Cloverdale and with the help of Jake Sasho ran the old Cloverdale Hotel which was just below the Baptist Church Manse and alongside of the old post office. The building is gone now.
7. Howard Owens' Roosevelt Highway Garage - Cloverdale's fire hall now was Howard Owens Roosevelt Highway Garage. Mainard Alt took it over and eventually moved it across town to where South County Motors is operating now. He later put in hardware also. A man named George Wilkins originally built the building and operated a lumber business in it. Wade Alt started working with his father in the old garage downtown when he was about 16 years old. He was a natural when it came to mechanics. People who own it now are named Al and Bonnie.
8. Log Home in Cloverdale - Years ago there was a log house next to the Cloverdale Cheese Factory (*This was where the current Post Office in 2021 is now. db*) . I cannot remember a lot about it as I was too little and lived in Woods. At one time a Coy Bailey lived there, I think. He was a one-legged young man and drove school bus.
9. Businesses North of the Highway in Cloverdale - I remember being told of the blacksmith shop in Cloverdale next to the cheese factory. I think the man's name was Simmons. Alongside of it was a grocery store. Next was a building at the end of the bridge across the river, and the man repaired shoes. His name was Beals. His son, Darwin, went to school in Cloverdale, too. Across the road and on the river bank was Hall's Grocery owned by Dick and Hildred Hall. Hildred was a Hagestrom. Her folks were old timers who lived in Woods. At one time, about the 1935s, I'd say, the grocery store on the west end of the bridge was owned and run by Mel and Mable Bruce. They had living quarters upstairs. They later moved to open a store in Hebo. The next building on the river bank was the home of Larry and Mable Olds. This later became a rod and gun club.
10. Insurance Office - Howard Owens once worked out of a small room attached to the Chevron Gas Station and alongside of what is now the Dory Restaurant selling insurance.

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11. Tillamook County Road Department - The county tool shed has been in its present location ever since I can remember.
12. Veterinary Office - Dr. Lasley bought his present veterinary office from the Mr. Hebo housing project when it was to be dispossessed of after the radar tower installation on top of the mountain was discontinued by the government. I understand he had it skidded down the road to its present position. Roy Peterson had the first vet's office in Cloverdale about the 1940s and ran it out of the house that had belonged to Groshong who had been Cloverdale's druggist. Roy Peterson moved to Tillamook later. Two men have had the office after he left. One was Ken Gallagher, and another was Don Helfer. Don later moved to Corvallis and went into lab work.
13. Cloverdale's Cheese Factory was in its later years sold to Marvin Noble for his plug mill.
14. Flower Nursery - Mert and Marjorie Loucks operated a Louck's Nursery for many years in Cloverdale until Marjorie's health got too bad for her to be able to work in it.
15. Cloverdale Bank - I believe there was a bank near the corner nearest the highway by where the Napa store is now located.
16. I remember wooden steps that followed up the hill alongside the south side of the highway to people's houses up above who lived on the edge of the hill overlooking the highway and Cloverdale.
17. Parkway Drive from St. Joseph's Catholic Church to HWY 101 - A school teacher named Ira Forrey lived in the house by the Catholic Church. The next house down the hill was called the Farmer's House. I cannot get their names in my mind. My great aunt, Mrs. Richard (Lucy) Allen purchased the home after she moved from the Compton Homestead at Woods. I think she bought this house from a man named Lamson. The next house past it was lived in by Dr. Brown and his wife, Marie.

The building which was in the location now housing Cloverdale's ambulance (*Current Lion's Club site in 2021?.db*) was once a hospital and since called The Brown House. After my father, Ernest Kirby, died, Mom, Blanche Compton Kirby, moved to that building and lived upstairs while Art and Ora Call and family lived downstairs.

18. Covered Bridge - I was so very sorry to see the covered bridge that went west across the river at Cloverdale disposed of. I am sure it had become dangerous. I remember it so well along about 1928 when several of us kids who lived on the other side of Cloverdale walked to and from school. Some of the young people used to "neck" in the alcoves along its frame, smoke and dangle their legs out over the water
19. Mill on Mill Road - Many years ago there was a large mill operating up high along the road now called Mill Road. It's used to be called Old Mill Road.

Years ago there were what was called lookout stations. They were towers that a fire watcher lived in during the summer months to watch for wisps of smoke from any direction. There was the tallest one on "Little Hebo". As I remember it was a bit over 100 feet high. Then there was Buzzard Butte which was accessible from a road that went up the hill across from Miles Lake north of Woods.

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Miscellaneous Remembrances of Woods, Oregon:

1. Tidal Wave - I can remember my parents, Ernest and Blanche Kirby, speaking of a tidal wave coming into the river across from where Lew's Market is now.
2. Woods Store - There was a store owned and operated by a Will and Maude Dunn Compton on the river bank at Woods. When still a young man he contracted la grippe and died. He was buried somewhere on his father's homestead nearby.
3. I have a picture of a ferry across the river at Woods. Blanche Kirby and three of us girls were on it along with children with the last name of Hayes. I would say it was prior to 1925.
4. Along the river on the Pacific City side, Woods had a large place of business called Neil's Resort. There was a store and cabins along the bank of the river. It has been gone for years, but a long time some of the cabins still stood.
5. Dr. Jackson and family lived in Woods by the church.
6. Woods School - The grade school at Woods was a small one room building on the Anton Hurliman Sr. farm when I attended. There were all eight grades in the room. There was a small playground in back. Even after the school closed the building stood for many years. At one time I remember there were only 15 students attending in all grades!! I remember one special teacher, a Mrs. Bony. I do not think of her first name right now. She took me home with her one weekend to Salem and treated me to a movie! It was the first I had ever seen. We also rode on a stage to get to Salem. I thought it such a wonderful thing for me to get to do.
7. While on the ranch at Woods, my father, Ernest Kirby fished from the river with a net. I can remember a long row of huge big silver fish laying on the ground by the barn being readied for sale. They were the biggest fish I have ever seen, I think. Depression times were very hard for everyone, and money on which to survive was hard to come by.

Miscellaneous Remembrances of Pacific City, Oregon:

1. Pacific City had a hotel called Edmonds Hotel. It is long gone also. It was on a knoll south of Lew's Market.
2. Liz Miller operated a fuchsia nursery in Pacific City in late years.
3. Ernest "Brick" Gilman of Woods fished in the ocean as did his son Jack. Later Victor Learned Jr. spent a lot of years doing the same. Victor also had a business in his barn building dory boats for those who ordered them.
4. Cape Kiwanda - As a child growing up on the farm near Woods, we had easy access to Pacific City and all the beaches. The sand dunes were beautiful. There was no harsh grass anywhere, and the big hill back of Woods was a favorite play ground for everyone's children. Now, I understand it is out of bounds as being dangerous! I remember so well many picnics on the far end of Cape Kiwanda. There was then a treed area and picnic tables for locals to enjoy. Children were responsible then, and there was no danger from the cape. Now, outsiders are foolish and accidents have happened. Not a lot of years ago a young married couple were there on it sight seeing with a camera. The young lady told her new

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husband to step back a bit. He did and went over the edge. As I remember his body was never found.

The cape has indeed dwindled a great deal since I was a child. I have been told in the past that the cape was once connected to Haystack Rock. I wonder if anyone really knows.

Paul and Irma Lewis once landed on Haystack Rock and stayed on it all night. Yuk! What a dirty mess that must have been as no inhabitants but birds! My grandfather, Bert Compton once landed on the rock, but he did not stay.

Old Woods Road

1. Gist Cemetery - A very sad occurrence to me is the loss of any cemetery. The families of folks in the Gist Cemetery have mourned because of the inability to reach their loved ones or care for any graves there. It is up behind the Compton Homestead and was a county road, but finally the county took no more care of the road, and trees grew up in the roadway as well as deep mud holes. And the farmer built a fence across it. Erwin Redberg spoke to the then county road boss in Tillamook numerous times and begged for the road to be opened. It was all to no avail. I have people in that cemetery also.
2. Cheese Factory - Years ago there was a cheese factory on the old Woods Road west of Cloverdale perhaps three miles from Cloverdale. It was in the vicinity of the Ivan Gist farm and the Caspell farm.
3. A.A. Compton Homestead About Two Miles from Woods, Oregon on the Old Woods Road - A.A. Compton and his wife, Lucy Hunt Compton farmed until the retired and moved back to Bay Center, Washington when the farm was divided between the two children, Albert and Lucy. Albert got the half on the road. Lucy got the upper half up the canyon east of Albert's acreage. Lucy was married to a Richard Allen.

Albert was married to a Mary Brown Compton. When Albert retired about 1928 his daughter Blanche Compton Kirby and husband Ernest M. Kirby took over the ranch and ran it until Ernest died in November 1933. It was then sold to Joe Lowrance. Later his son Ernest farmed this acreage until he moved. I believe one of the Anton Hurliman sons has it now.

Albert, Bert, and wife Mary, Mame, purchased the Dr. George house at the south end of Cloverdale about 1928 and made it their home until both died. It was then given to daughter Blanche Kirby, and when she moved away it was sold to Ben and Doris Olson.

Great Aunt Lucy lost her husband at about the same time as Bert, her brother on the homestead moved to Cloverdale. So she moved to Cloverdale as well. She purchased what was called "Farmer House", the 2nd house west of the Catholic

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Church. I believe the man who had owned it then was named Lamson. Aunt Lucy's portion of the homestead was sold to a man named Tom Blackburn.

After Mrs. Allen's death her granddaughter, Lurleen Allen became the owner. She married Dr. George Lemery, and they moved to Tillamook.

After his retirement from the homestead, Albert Compton built and sold row boats from his basement in the house at Cloverdale which was his profession in Bay Caner, Washington, before moving to the farm of his father's.

Brooten Road (Pronounced like "broughtn" db)

1. Clams could be dug up Mud Nestucca Bay and gotten by the bucket full.
2. Brooten kelp ore baths was a booming industry for some years. There has been no sign of the cabins for years.
3. There was a barber shop on Brooten Road owned and operated by Harry Kraner. This would have been back into the 30s or 40s as I remember.

A Few Comments about Hebo

4. Gas Stations - At one time there was an Associated Gas Station operating in Hebo just past the Texaco station and the grocery store. It was run by a Kirby. His son, Ralph, went to Nestucca. They were no relation to my family. There was also a Shell station, a Standard station and a Texaco. At one time Wendell Beaman ran the repair shop as the Texaco. He was an excellent body and fender man. There were also cabins behind the station and his living quarters to the north side.

A Few Comments about Neskowin

1. Neskowin had a horse stable and offered Horse Rides. It was owned by Bill and Bea Brandt.
2. The Neskowin store was operated by Art and Helen Woodcock. The post office was in one corner of it then, and Ruth Carver was postmaster.
3. Linn Whiteman also fished, and tales are told about one night walking back home in a blackest night. He had to walk backwards throwing lighted matches in front of a cougar that was stalking him.