

BACK IN TIME

Remembering an old log cabin

BY EVELYN BYRNE WILLIAMS WITH JANEEN SATHRE

One of the best recent changes in my surroundings here on Palmer Creek Road is the elimination of the obnoxious star thistle weed on the forest service acreage adjacent to the north side of my property. Much credit is due to our local forest service botanist, Barbara Mumblo, who has had groups pulling the nasty weed for several years now. As I often take a walk by this area, the results give me much pleasure and bring back such fond memories.

These memories are of the old log cabin that sat on this piece of land, with its picturesque setting against the hillside.

My mother told about her parents moving into it in 1889, with her two older brothers and herself at age four years. The cabin was a three-room

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affair, with two small bedrooms. The bedrooms were portable, so to speak. The walls could be removed when the family wanted to have a neighborhood dance, a common entertainment in those days. The division walls and the floors were very interesting because they were of planed pine lumber 1-1/4 inches thick and 22-1/2 inches wide.

Spring water was available from the mountain gulch behind the cabin. That saved digging a well for water as many pioneers had to do. There was a rock fireplace, but my mother didn't say if it was used for any cooking. It is hard to imagine a family of five living in such small quarters, especially during the winter when they were more or less kept inside, as snow often reached the windowsills.

I don't know why or when they moved from there into another cabin about half a mile up the road near Palmer Creek, and then shortly after that to the Rey Gold Mine near the headwaters of Palmer Creek. At this mine, they moved into a nice two-story log house where my mother's sister

Clara was born.

My grandfather was mining in Palmer Creek when he succeeded in finding a large gold nugget. With this nugget and a loan from Zack Cameron, he bought a 160-acre farm at the mouth of Palmer Creek in 1908. My home now sits on a small piece of the original property.

There is no way to know how many different people lived in that first log cabin. I do know that Valores and Helen Haskins were there for several years in the mid-1930s and then Hiram Head lived there until the early 1950s. He was a wonderful neighbor who liked to be of

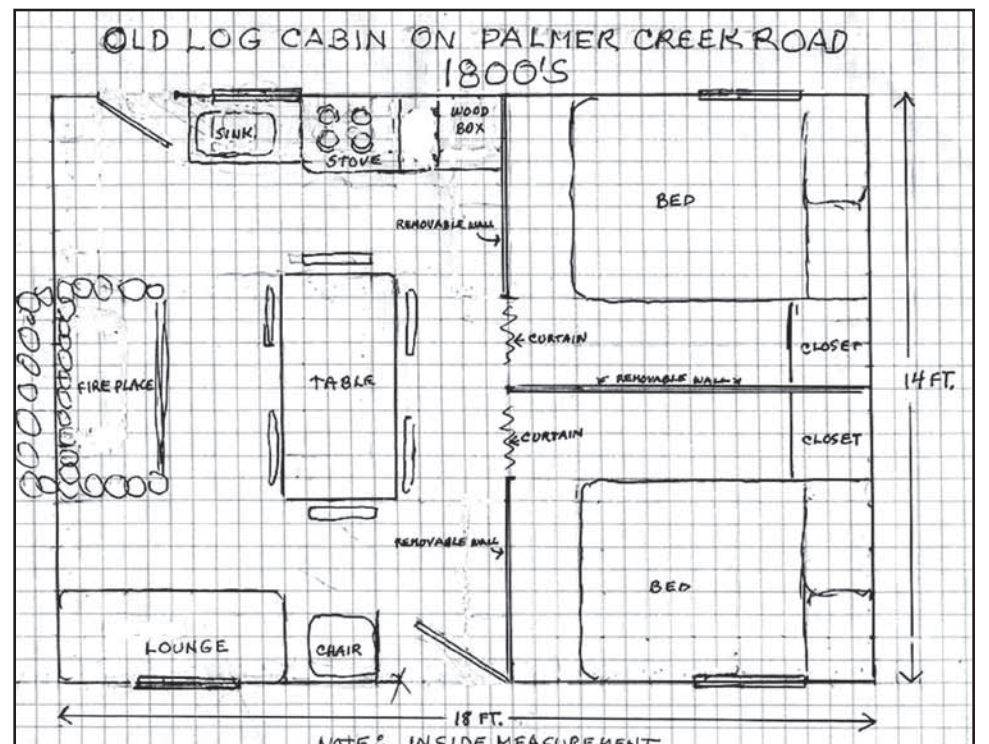
help, such as building a laundry bench for my mother to place her laundry tubs in. Years later, he built new kitchen cabinets for her but refused payment for his labor. Mother

made sure he ate many meals with us through the years.

One time, when Mother needed to go to Medford, our car wouldn't start, so she contacted Hiram and he offered to take Mother and me in his Whippet. It was quite old and only had one seat in front (the driver's seat), so mother and I had to sit on the floor board in the back. I was somewhat embarrassed being seen in such a vehicle. Nowadays that old car would be neat to ride in, say in a parade.

We never knew much about Hiram's background. My parents were careful about asking questions about one's personal life. It was not very neighborly to do so. We did know he had a daughter in Portland who came to visit him one time and when his health began to be a problem, he moved up there and we never heard of him again. That was sad; he had been such a good neighbor and loved living in that old cabin.

Before he left, he wanted my dad to have his mining claim. My dad was not a miner but decided to do the assessment



work in order to keep the property for a few years. When the forest service was tearing down old, unsafe buildings on mining claims here in the Applegate, my parents put a torch to the cabin. My mother saved a board from the cabin, which I now have,

as a memento of her family once living there...back in time.

Evelyn Byrne Williams
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