

GLADYS HUTCHISON
CORNELIUS

interviewed March 8, 1978
at her home on Pumpkin Ridge
by Marilyn Watts and Ms. Reynolds

"My granddad was the postmaster in Hillsboro, and a judge, some kind of high judge, and a representative to the state legislature. I remember him going off overnight with a hearing aid and a satchel. His father was Colonel Cornelius." He came to Oregon as a child with his parents in a covered wagon.

The Cornelius family arranged by mail to sell a piece of their land claim to the Chalmers family, who built the Old Scotch church. Someone in the family still has the letters sent by the Chalmers when they were still in Scotland.

Both Mrs. Hutchison and her mother, Jennie Rice Cornelius, were sent to Hillsboro for their schooling. Her mother was sent to live with friends, a doctor and his family, when she was 14, and lived on there till she was 21 or 22 and married B.P. Cornelius, Gladys' father. When Gladys was a child her family lived on the Cornelius family farm, but her mother wouldn't have her go the country school, Arcade School. She thought a country school was too rough. When the kids reached school age, the whole family left the farm. "My brothers went to Arcade school, but my sister and I went to Hillsboro schools. My mother didn't want us to go to a country school. She was raised in Portland and thought it was rough. I stayed with my grandmother, stayed through eight grade and a little of high school. My sister lived with my aunt!"

Granddad Cornelius owned 300 acres, next to the Meeks. That was where Gladys grew up.

My dad, B.P. Cornelius, was in real estate. "Land didn't used to be anything, hardly. I don't remember how much it was when I was younger, but I sold 80 acres of timberland down there---oh, man, ~~xxx~~ would I be rich!--- for \$6,000. That was 20 years ago.

"I never did live in town much. I got deer here. I throw apples to 'em. I got grouse come, and jays, and squirrels. I cook for the birds: cook oatmeal and put lots of grease in. My daughter saves her bacon grease for me. I roll it up in little balls and throw it out for the birds--they like to pick it up and carry it off. If the balls are too sticky, I roll them in a little ~~flour~~ flour. No, I don't have a garden because of the deer. I can't have flowers of any kind. I tried some geraniums once, had them all bunched up on the porch, but the deer came right up on the porch and ate them clear off, down to little stubs!"

"I love to read, never cared for fancywork. My grandmother used to make me sit and do tatting or make a big old quilt top. 'Course they used to do a lot of that in those days. But me, I'd hide my books underneath it and read instead."

~~Xx~~ Her great-grandfather's name was Thomas Cornelius, but he was called Colonel because he chased Indians. May have been attached to the military, but she isn't ~~xxx~~ sure (this would be recorded in historical sources). He chased some famous Indian chief clear up to Yakima. She remembers a story passed down in the family about how Colonel Cornelius was in an Indian hunting party with Joe Meek. They were sitting around a fire at night, trying to be quiet so they wouldn't give away their position, but Joe wouldn't settle down and was making so much noise the Indians got away. The Colonel demoted him for that, but later Joe Meek got his rank back. ~~xxxxxxx~~

(maybe 600 acres)
 Colonel Cornelius's family had a lot of land. They came here with 9 children, and all the boys took out landclaims. They owned all of North Plains. Colonel Cornelius ~~xxxx~~ helped make the road through Cornelius Pass, so they named it for him. He had a grocery store in Cornelius. "He used to be rich in land, but he went broke. He was such a grand old man, such a good Christian, that he took too much credit. My dad ~~said~~ that the people who used to ~~haul~~ haul for him stole sugar and stuff from him too. He let 'em take all his money. (When he went bankrupt) the only land left to sell was in the name of his son and his (son's) wife. It had his wife's name on it and she said no. That's the land that all of us was born on. It isn't in the family anymore... the Corneliuses never kept anything. They all had a good time, but they never hung onto anything."

"My husband was a logger--he was a whistle punk ~~from~~ ^{at} the age of 12. When we got ~~married~~ married we went to ~~take~~ take over a homestead--~~a~~ 80 acres--got it from a soldier who lost it because he was lazy. The homestead was all trees--we fished--oh, we had a good time!"

Mrs. Hutchison's daughter, Marilyn Mathieson, says her parents got through the Depression cutting ~~xxxx~~ salal to sell to florists, butting wood, picking berries, catching fish, hunting for deer.

People still talk about the disappearance and presumed murder of Pumpkin Ridge Pete. "He was crazy. He raised five boys before he went haywire. He used to come around and sing to us in French--anyway he called it French. He wrote letters to the President and sent presents to Nixon's daughters. One day he disappeared--after working hard all his life. He used to carry lots of cash on him. People think somebody killed him for his money. They didn't look for him very long, couple of weeks maybe. It'd have been different if he'd been rich, or had a family--they'd have kept looking till they found him."

Asked if she was afraid to live alone there, she said "no--oh there's plenty of bumos in the night if I wanted to be afraid of 'em. As soon as it gets dark, there's bumping on the walls. I think it's mostly raccoons. Sometimes I see their little handprints on the windows."

She lived briefly in Eureka California with or near her oldest daughter. Told of working in the back of a restaurant, skinning tuna.

One of her ancestors on the Rice side (her Grandfather Rice???) lived in Indiana. "The Civil War was going on, and he was plowing in Indiana on a farm. He tied his horses up to a tree and ran away to the Army. He always got a pension after the war, so that way he could travel around."

"The birds come about 8:00 or 7:30 every morning. They make a noise, and then they come back. I cook my oatmeal and make it into balls and throw it out so they can pack it away. I throw out the raw oats for the jays, but ~~xxxx~~ my other pets don't care so much for 'em. My favorites are the camp robbers. Some of 'em call 'em Whiskey Jack, but they're a kind of jay."

"My granddad was the sheriff and had to arrest Roselear (Rosalier??) for the murder of his wife. He was the first man, and the last, hanged in Hillsboro ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ in the court yard. ~~xxxx~~ Roselear lived in Buxton with his wife--a young wife, too. ^{ad}One morning she skimmed the cream off the milk at breakfast and gave him pure blue milk on his mash. He got so mad he killed her for it. My dad had to go up and take the body out. He was afraid, too--the sheriff didn't have extra help in those days. But when he got there, the fellow had the house all cleaned up and he was waiting for him. She was all ready to go."