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# THE UMPQUA TRAPPER

Publication of the Douglas County  
(Oregon) Historical Society



DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Mrs. Matthews, Sec.—166 Antelope Lane, Roseburg, Ore.  
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VOLUME XVI  
No. 2

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## UA TRAPPER

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Editor

COMMITTEE

Doris Bacon

Maude E. Cole

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Historical Society

## PHOTOGRAPH

action settled in the valley, giving it its pre-  
name. Their coming is thus accounted for;  
H.B. Flournoy, returning from the Calif.  
mines in 1851 induced a number of French  
adians to accompany him and settle in the  
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names of these people were Francois Arch-  
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after their arrival their numbers were in-  
ed by the coming of several of their fellow  
trymen. Narcisse Laraut, Ferdinande La-  
Charles La Pointe, M.M. Moren et Fozet  
Ferdinand Fortin. Most of these gentlemen  
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red and useful lives. All those named except  
Grenot were Canadian French, the ex-  
on being European born."

The cover photo shows Mr. and Mrs. David  
ot and is from the collection of the Douglas  
y Historical Society.

# HARDY CRIER ELLIFF

A Sketch by

His Granddaughter, Bess A. Clough

October 26, 1961

**H**ARDY CRIER ELLIFF, a pioneer to southern Oregon, arrived on Cow  
Creek in June of 1852, where he bought the squatters right of Joseph  
Knott.

There was a floorless cabin which stood on the creek known as Blue Branch  
and today, what is now the Johns ranch. An old apple tree still stands that marks  
the spot where the little cabin stood. Mr. Elliff had crossed the plains with the  
Rough and Ready Co., a group of 30 young men headed by Capt. Barton.  
They came in the Fall of 1849 and arrived at the little settlement now known as  
Rough and Ready, California.

Mr. Elliff was born in 1822, Sumner County, Tennessee. He was the son of  
Everard Elliff, a descendant of John Elliff who came from England in 1660, and  
Adeline Ketron Elliff of German descent. Hardy's mother spoke very little, if  
any English. He was one of a family of at least three girls and four boys. The  
three girls were the oldest, Eliza, Mary and Celia. Celia, the youngest, was mar-  
ried to a Mr. Kinney. She died early in life with no children. Our grandmother  
Elliff always said Celia's husband was a relative of the well-known Kinney family  
of Jacksonville, Oregon.

Eliza married a Mr. Rowe. She had one son, at least that we know of, by the  
name of Frank. He in turn had one son, Phillip, who was mostly raised by Hardy's  
youngest brother William. We do not at this time recall much of any of the his-  
tory of Mary Elliff or her family.

The four boys were Frank, who died as a young man less than 20, Hardy,  
the subject of this sketch, Thomas who followed Hardy to California a year later,  
and William, the youngest, who remained at home and took up farming in  
northeast Missouri where he spent almost his entire life.

The family emigrated to Wisconsin from Tennessee where it is presumed  
the father bought land and lived and died there. Mr. Elliff senior was a tough  
taskmaster and like many men of that day ruled his family with an iron hand.

He bound the boys out to work. The girls by this time had married men who  
had homes in Illinois. Hardy resented his father's domineering ways and later  
when his father had administered a severe whipping, he ran away from home and  
found work along the riverfront in the thriving river town of St. Louis. He was  
about eighteen years old at that time.

He was a strapping young fellow over six feet tall and weighing 200 pounds  
or better. He saved his money until he accumulated \$400. He purchased some  
river front property which was later to finance his trip to California. It is pre-  
sumed Tom eventually joined him in St. Louis where he, too, worked for some  
time.

Following the death of the father, Everard Elliff, William brought the mother to northeast Missouri, where with the older brother Tom's help, they purchased a farm and made a home for his mother until she died.

William never learned to read or write; nevertheless, he was an astute business man, and accumulated more worldly goods than either of his more adventurous brothers. He married Mary Hyde and they had one son by the name of Hardy.

There is no history of Hardy's education or where he acquired it, but some place in his long career he must have had the benefit of instruction for his papers and personal letters and habits in reading indicate he was a man of some more than ordinary learning. He was always known as a great storyteller and a delightful host, but on the other hand, when roused, he had a temper that well might be feared by any man. He was himself fearless. There was no bravado or show-off in his nature.

When he was around 26, the story of the fabulous gold rush in California reached Missouri, either through the newspapers or by word of mouth. So, together with eight companions he joined Capt. Barton's group. Unlike later pioneers, they were single and could travel faster than families who came by cumbersome covered wagon and ox teams. They had buckboards, horse and mule drawn vehicles, and riding horses. The trip as far as we've been able to find out was fast and uneventful with no startling incidents save one.

When they were presumed to be in western Nebraska, one of the party fell ill with cholera. This young man was extremely ill and they didn't expect him to live the night through, so council was held and grandfather Hardy told them he'd stay with him and bury him and catch up with them the next day. So armed with a shovel to dig a grave, Hardy settled down.

Before they bedded down for the night, at which time Grandfather made him as comfortable as possible, he said "Hardy, I want you to give me a drink of that good cold water from the spring there — I'm going to die anyway, so what's the difference.." Cold water, supposedly, being poison to a cholera sufferer. Grandfather complied with his wishes, rolled up his own blankets and awaited the morning. When he woke up the next morning, frost was all over their blankets and he said, "Hank, are you there?" and the answer was, "Yes, Hardy, and I feel like I could go on and catch up with the boys." Grandfather fixed a little bit of breakfast, saddled the horses, took the shovel he'd never needed, got Hank on his horse, and away they went, catching up with the train about four that afternoon. Hank arrived in California hale and hearty along with the rest of them.

We believe it took not much more than a month to make the crossing as they used faster transportation (horses and mules instead of oxen).

We just presumed these young men branched out, prospected for gold and we've always understood that grandfather was in on the naming of the town of Rough and Ready, California.

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**HARDY CRIER ELLIFF** was a noted resident of southern Douglas County. He was a Donation Land Claim settler, having arrived in Oregon in 1850 and settled on his claim at some date between July 1, 1852 and December 16, 1853. He served in the Indian Wars involving the Rogue River and other bands of Southwestern Oregon.

*Clough collection, Douglas County Museum*

The next spring, they evidently worked their way north. Some fabulous gold mines had been discovered near what is now Yreka. Grandfather spent some time mining around Hawkinsville north of Yreka, a little forgotten village. The most that marks it today is a small red brick Catholic Church.

One of his friends came with him as far north at least as the Redding-Yreka area ... a man named Tetherow. He married and settled down there and for many years there was a large group of Tetherows in that section.

Grandfather mined along the Klamath River some, and it's always been my understanding that he got as far west as the famous Indian camp site on the Klamath River Happy Camp. For some reason or other, he didn't remain there too long but came on to the Jacksonville-Southern Oregon area. It's presumed quite probably that his brother Thomas joined him here in Southern Oregon or Northern California. At any rate, they made their way to the Blackwell Diggins near Gold Hill and by this time gold had also been discovered in fairly sizable amounts along the Rogue. The country was becoming populated and that well-known pioneer figure of Southern Oregon, (Uncle) Jerry Vannoy had established a river ferry and trading post on the Rogue a few miles west of Grants Pass. But still the Elliff boys had sand in their shoes and came north to what was then Galesville, later the Levens Stage Station and at the present time is owned by the Johnson brothers.

Evidently they thought that this was it for grandfather bought out Joseph Knott, whose little cabin and store site as I previously mentioned, are marked on the Johns ranch today by an apple tree about three miles north of the old Galesville Stage Station. There they presumably decided to farm and acquired some grain, a few horses, and cattle, and I think he put in a little stock of store goods as he could get hold of it — just a meager stock.

Knott came to Canyonville where he established a store there, mentioned in the booklet, "One Hundred Years in Canyonville." By this time, pack trains were carrying merchandise to the Rogue River Valley from the thriving port of Scottsburg, which was supplied by boat from San Francisco, and Knott supplied them and their horses as they passed through Canyonville. Although the road was crude and cruel to a good many immigrants, it was being used to transport the bare necessities and a few luxuries of life to the miners (among the luxuries was liquor).

Pack train captains were rugged souls but none more rugged than Captain Jane, the only woman to run a train over the Scottsburg-Rogue River route for several seasons and is presumed to have made a tidy sum for herself. It took a pretty rugged woman to overcome the elements, the hostile Indians, and the tough terrain to deliver her goods.

During August 1853, the Rogue Indians became hostile and on August 14-15 grandfather captained a group of volunteers while Gen. Joseph Lane commanded the regulars.\* The crucial battle took place on Table Rock. The Indians felt fairly safe. They could face Gen. Lane and his regulars and see them coming, but grandfather's group came up from the rear and the Indians all of a sudden



REBECCA MELVIN  
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November 15, 1853.

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→ CAPT. ELLIFF<sup>30</sup>

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**REBECCA MELVINA BAKER** crossed the plains in 1852 with her two  
aunts and families, Mrs. Jacob Wortman and Mrs. Caroline Nidey. She  
made her home with the Nidey family near Santiam City (now Jeffer-  
son) and in the spring of 1853 came south with them, staying first at  
Elliff's stockade and later at Fort Vannoy. She married Hardy Ettiff on  
November 15, 1853.

Huron Clough collection, Douglas County Museum

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY CORVALLIS

found themselves surrounded. This quieted them, but actually, the Indians themselves had been grossly abused in many cases such as the massacre at the Bate place of Graves Creek, September 1853.\*

There the whites cooked up a banquet, invited the Indians in to smoke the pipe of peace and then disappeared suddenly and shot the Indians through cracks in the log cabin and dumped their bodies in a big hole. Such as this can scarcely be overlooked when we judge the Indians' depredations. My grandfather was not in on this (for which I am duly thankful) for he was not a man capable of such treachery.

In fact, the Indians trusted him in a great many ways. The one thing he deeply regretted all of his life was the fact that he had accidentally shot a squaw during the war of 1855 as she passed between him and one of the Chiefs at a campfire. This Chief was a "bad egg" and grandfather was laying for him. She passed between them as grandfather drew his bead.

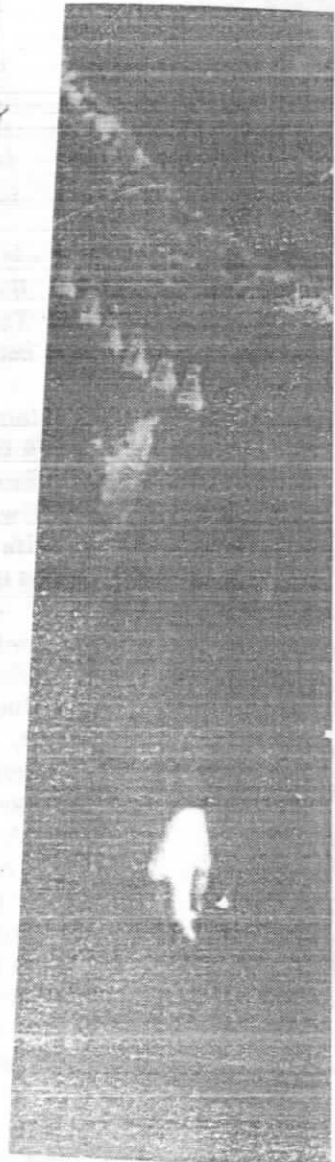
Rebecca Melvina Baker crossed the plains with her two aunts and their families, Mrs. Caroline Nidey and Mrs. Eliza Wortman. The Wortmans settled in the upper Willamette Valley and descendants live at McMinnville at this time. Each woman had one small child with her, John Wortman and Nellie Nidey (Owens). A brother, George Stumbo, Sr., started with them with his pregnant wife and 14 year old son, George Stumbo, Jr. They fell ill of cholera and all died, but the boy who came on to Oregon with his aunts and cousin.

Grandmother stayed with the Nideys and they wintered at Santiam City, now known as Jefferson. Mr. Nidey was anxious to participate in the gold rush on the Rogue, so he made his families as comfortable as possible and came down to Jump Off Joe Creek and took up some land in the Fall of 1852. In the meantime, his wife had another child, a daughter, Mary. Early in the Spring he gathered up his family, wagon and possessions and brought Melvina Baker and George Stumbo south with him. This was the Spring of 1853.

At Canyonville, they left the wagon and packed the horses, saving one for Mrs. Nidey to ride, and started up through what they called the "Big Canyon". Grandmother always said they began their trip either the 6th or 9th of April on a beautiful sunny day. There was scarcely any semblance of a road although the wagons had been going over it. She was 17 at the time, a pretty, slim, blackeyed girl. She and George, who was 14, walked ahead the entire distance, in fact, they'd walked most of the way across the plains, and crossed Canyon Creek seventeen times, walking in the creek bed much of the way.

You "gals" of today who wear shorts and capri pants take note: The pioneer women crossing the plains wore bloomers which came down to their ankles, but which could be hoisted above their knees to keep dry or out of the brush, and it was just such an outfit that my grandmother wore walking up Canyon Creek.

She and George came out in a clearing and saw a little cabin and sat down on the porch. Then this genial host, my grandfather, greeted them and asked them to



MELVINA BAKER ELLIFF marriage to Hardy Elliff. In 1854 in the Elliff cabin with wife, and Letitia "Aunt T. Elliffs. While forted up in the Indian Wars, baby Alice a Huron

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**MELVINA BAKER ELLIFF** is pictured here in later years, after her marriage to Hardy Elliff. Her first child, Alice, was born in the fall of 1854 in the Elliff cabin with the help of Mrs. Fanny Levens, a midwife, and Letitia "Aunt Tish" Carson, a Negress who lived with the Elliffs. While forted up in the Galesville stockade during the Rogue River Indian Wars, baby Alice died.

Huron Clough collection, Douglas County Museum

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come in, But grandmother said it was improper until her aunt arrived so they sat out on the porch. The Nideys arrived shortly thereafter and spent the night.

The Indians were again showing signs of hostility and Hardy (probably not without selfish interests) persuaded Mr. Nidey to leave the women folk and children there where there was less danger, and to go on and fix up some kind of habitation for the family. Nidey's place lies at the foot of Sexton Mountain near Jump Off Joe Creek although it doesn't bear his name.

At the end of six weeks, when Nidey came back, grandfather Hardy was loath to see the ladies leave and had already proposed, according to grandmother, nine times (probably because she wouldn't accept him the first time). The Nideys and Melvina and George moved out and lived near Fort Vannoy on the Rogue a few miles west of Grants Pass. Needless to say, grandfather found occasions to make many trips in that direction and on one of them he joined one of his friends and neighbors, John Fullerton of Canyonville who was coming to welcome his wife and little boy arriving at the ferry by wagon train. James Gazley and John Fullerton came west together to look the situation over and each had left a wife and son apiece in the east. When they were settled, the men flipped a coin to see who would go back to get their families (the other saying to care for their ranches), and Gazley was the winner. Grandmother said that night she and grandfather and Fullerton crossed on the ferry to meet the travelers and thus our families have known each other since the fall of 1853.

Grandmother was 18 that fall and married grandfather November 15, 1853 (from family Bible). Squire Day, the old gentleman for whom Days Creek was named, performed the ceremony. I presume when he did that he was local Justice of the Peace, no marriage license was needed in those days.

They came home that night over the mountains. Grandfather had made one concession to taking a bride and had laid a hand-hewn floor in half of the cabin. A lady and gentleman, whose names I don't recall, lived in the other half — he ran the store and she cooked. Shortly thereafter, they moved into the Willamette Valley.

Aunt Tish Carson and small son Jack, freed Negro slaves, came to be with grandmother and stayed a year or so. Grandmother's oldest girl, Alice, was born the fall of 1854 and Aunt Tish took care of her during delivery and was helped by Aunt Fanny Levens, a midwife and wife of a storekeeper.

In the fall of 1855, the Indians on Cow Creek became hostile. Grandmother said warriors complete with war paint and feathers came in one day when she was alone with Aunt Tish. They made themselves pretty obnoxious. Grandmother, who by that time knew quite a little jargon, shamed them and made them get out of the house.

In grandfather's papers, October 5, (Oct. 9, quote Wallings) was a beautiful day when word came they'd massacred part of the Harris family near Jump Off Joe. A son aged 10 was killed on the way to the vegetable garden and the father shot in the chest as he was coming home.\* The Hanley sisters of Jacksonville are descended from the girl, aged 12, who with her mother, held those In-

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**THOMAS ELLIFF** was a brother to Hardy C. Elliff and was also a Donation Land Claim settler. Born in 1828 in Sumner County, Tennessee, he came to Oregon in June 1852, and settled on his claim on July 2, 1853, adjoining the claim of Hardy Elliff. Thomas Elliff never married; he returned east in 1861.

*Huron Clough collection, Douglas County Museum.*

dians at bay all night. It took stout-hearted women to face the emergencies of those days.

The women were rescued by white volunteers who rode ahead to warn all settlers. Mrs. Nidey, a widow at that time, was taken to the stockade at the Harkness house on Graves Creek. People of the lower end of the Cow Creek Valley — the Redfields and others — went into the stockade on the Bentley place which used to belong to Clarence Springer. There are still marks of the old stockade there. Grandfather took grandmother, baby Alice, Aunt Tish and Jack down to the Galesville Stockade where they spent nine months fortified up from the Indians.

The Indians shot two white men, up from the Johnson place on a open hillside, killing one and wounding another. First, the men put some horses and cattle into the Stockade and then grandfather volunteered at dusk to go on foot to carry the wounded man, Carrick Mynatt, down to a place of safety in a ravine. The man killed was Charley Johnson whom the Indians mutilated horribly. Later as it became really dark, grandfather got Mynatt into the fort where he was cared for and lived a reasonable lifetime thereafter.

Although men had locked horses and cattle in the Stockade for their use and to supply the people fortified up with milk, a few nights later, the Indians let them all out before anyone was aroused. Later, other men got Charley Johnson down and he's buried there on the hillside.

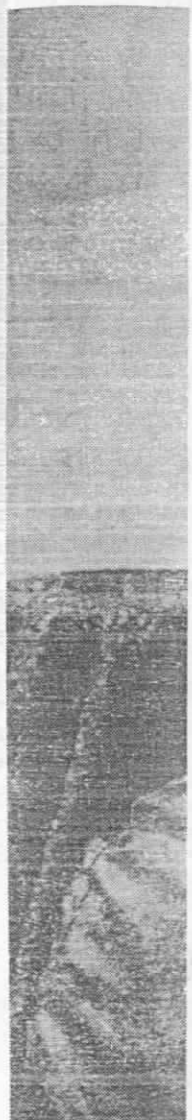
Grandfather, who had placed a pumpkin head lit with a tallow dip in the window of his cabin, dared the old Chief (Chief Jim of the Cow Creek) to burn his cabin, but the old guy said, "No, me see Hardy in the window". Later the Indians did just that — burned the cabin, hay, grain, killed the stock, and drove the horses away. Grandfather's papers show he lost \$18,000 at that time — practically everything he had.

The U.S. Government never would reimburse any of these people for their losses for it said no war had been declared. Baby Alice died in the fort, probably because of improper food. One time when grandmother was in the kitchen fixing some gruel for the baby, a spent bullet rolled under her skirts. She always regretted that she hadn't picked it up for a souvenir.

Grandfather and the other man went back and forth at night to tend what they had left on their places. They always left some men at the fort with the women. In 1856, the government came to their rescue.

During the war of 1855, at the big battle on Hungry Hill northwest of Glendale, the Indians were commanded by an Indian princess and the whites by Lt. Phil Sheridan of Civil War fame. There they used a small cannon mounted on a mule. This story was told to me by Isaac Boyle, Mrs. Manning's grandfather, whose family still has the rifle. When the first shot was fired, the mouth of the cannon was going over the mule's tail (the mule's feelings had been ignored in this bit of strategy) and the frightened mule turned tail and almost demolished the white soldiers.

The Indians were subdued at last and put on reservations in the Grand Ronde



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**MRS. JACOB WORTMAN** was a pioneer of 1852. She was born Eliza Stumbo and crossed the plains by wagon train with her husband and other members of her family. Jacob Wortman and wife had one son, John, with them on this trek. After serving some time on the Willamette River steamboats, Jacob Wortman founded a bank in McMinnville, still owned by descendants. Eliza Wortman was an aunt to Rebecca Melvina Baker, who became Mrs. Hardy Elliff.

*Dama Sexton Lennon collection, Douglas County Museum*

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area. A few were allowed to visit their old homes at intervals where they would spend their visit grieving and mourning.

Grandfather was a great hand to take up property and bought every other section around that had shake or post timber. At the time of his death, he had 5000 acres on Cow Creek with what would be about \$2 million worth of timber today.

Grandfather turned over his farm to his oldest daughter, Florence and her husband, Jess Dewey, who had one daughter, Edith. My mother, Margaret Adeline, was the second daughter to live and married Joseph L. Clough, parents of Bess A. Clough and Huron W. Clough. George Elliff, the only son, farmed and mined on Cow Creek and in the Graves Creek area and married Lola Bailey and had one daughter and three sons. Celia married Alphonse Peter Lagenberg and had a son and daughter. Lucretia married James Shay and had no children. Eva married Frank O. Plotner and had two daughters, both deceased. The last child born to grandmother and grandfather died in infancy and was to have been named Thomas for grandfather's bachelor brother, who returned to Missouri in 1861 to make his home with his brother, William. William came out to Oregon by train in 1871.

Grandfather's health broke when he was in his late 60's and he developed dropsy from which he died in Nov. 1894. He never drank or smoked in his entire lifetime, but during his later years, the doctor persuaded him to try to smoke a pipe. This he did with disastrous results to his digestive organs for it make him very ill.

Grandfather moved down farther west in the valley living on his various places and died on the place which family records call the Deeds place on Windy Creek, where the house is still standing.

He was one of many who lived a rugged life of the early west. Presumably they enjoyed it for they wouldn't have it any other way. There are many names that can be added to his who made the upper Cow Creek habitable for future generations—the Levens, Redfields, Bentleys, Quines (who later moved to the Riddle area) and the Mynatts and many others that this writer doesn't recall but deserve a place in the history of southern Douglas County.

This biography of my grandfather would hardly be complete without a few of his favorite stories which illustrate his sense of humor, his patriotism, and his sense of justice.

Grandfather used to fatten hogs, dress them out and sell them to the Chinese miners on Starveout Creek. This part of the county was well populated with wild animals, cougars in particular, and this incident illustrated grandfather's love of a practical joke. Delivering a hog one day, grandfather shot a cougar and loaded it in with the hog, conceiving a joke on the Chinese enroute. When he came to a log before the Chinese miner's cabin, he arranged the cougar thereon in a life like pose and went on up to the cabin. "Boys", he said, "I've got your pork down there but I'm not strong enough to carry it; you'll have to go and get it yourself." They cheerfully acquiesced and trotted off down the trail. The first

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GEORGE W. STUMBO'S *parents both died of cholera while crossing the plains to Oregon in 1852. His father, George Stumbo Sr. was a brother to Mrs. Eliza Wortman and Mrs. Caroline Nidey, members of the same wagon train. George W. Stumbo, Jr. whose picture appears here, was brought on to Douglas County by his aunt, Mrs. Nidey.*  
*Dama Sexton Lennon collection, Douglas County Museum*

China boy jumped over the log and lit practically on top of the cougar. The scream and blast that went up when they discovered it could have been heard almost in their native land and the air was full of a variety of Chinese cuss words.

It may be of some interest to this generation who are now dealing with the Russians to know that at one time, in fact 1884, a Russian colony settled on the Sether ranch a mile south of Glendale. They were dissenters and came here to get away from Czarist rule — mostly engineers and men of technical training. My mother was teaching at Oak Grove School at that time where several of their children attended.

They had to flee Russia to save their lives. How they ever found this isolated community a couple of miles out of Glendale, no one knows. There was a young couple that wanted to get married but refused to comply with the law. They planned to just stand up before the colony and declare their intentions.

However, law and order had settled in this community by this time and a marriage license and a minister or justice of the peace were required to make a marriage legal. They were quite defiant and said they wanted to live under their own laws. However, they were persuaded to have the justice of the peace come over from Glendale to perform the ceremony.

It wasn't long after this that someone got to stealing their sheep and they came to grandfather for help. He said, "Now, look here, my friends, when it came to a matter of your obedience to our laws, you were very defiant. You want help now, when you're in trouble, so if you're going to live in this country and enjoy the protection and liberties of this land, you must also comply with the laws. I'll do everything I can to help you recover your livestock, but remember, it's a funny wheel that doesn't roll two ways."

So the Russians complied and how many sheep grandfather recovered, I have no idea, but their way of life was communal at that time. They couldn't farm and make a living and eventually had to sell the property and move to the city where their technical knowledge was of greater value than on a farm in south Douglas County.

Around 1878, grandfather's friends, Fullerton and Gazley and a Mr. Fink of Roseburg, conceived the idea of ditching out a little bit of mud and water between the corduroys (log roads) between Canyonville and the Elliff ranch and upon occasion sent a man out to keep it in repair and charge a toll. Stages, wagons, etc. were charged \$2.50 a round trip for 12 miles, a man on horseback paid 75 cents and a person afoot, 25 cents. The tollhouse stood at the site of the Clifford Beals place in Canyonville. Grandfather stood this abomination for two years and his German blood got to the boiling point. One day when he drove up to the tollgate, he armed himself with a good stout axe and pry bar and threw the tollgate into the creek. When it was brought to trial and he was summoned to pay damages, it was found that they didn't have a rightful or proper franchise and were taking the money unlawfully.

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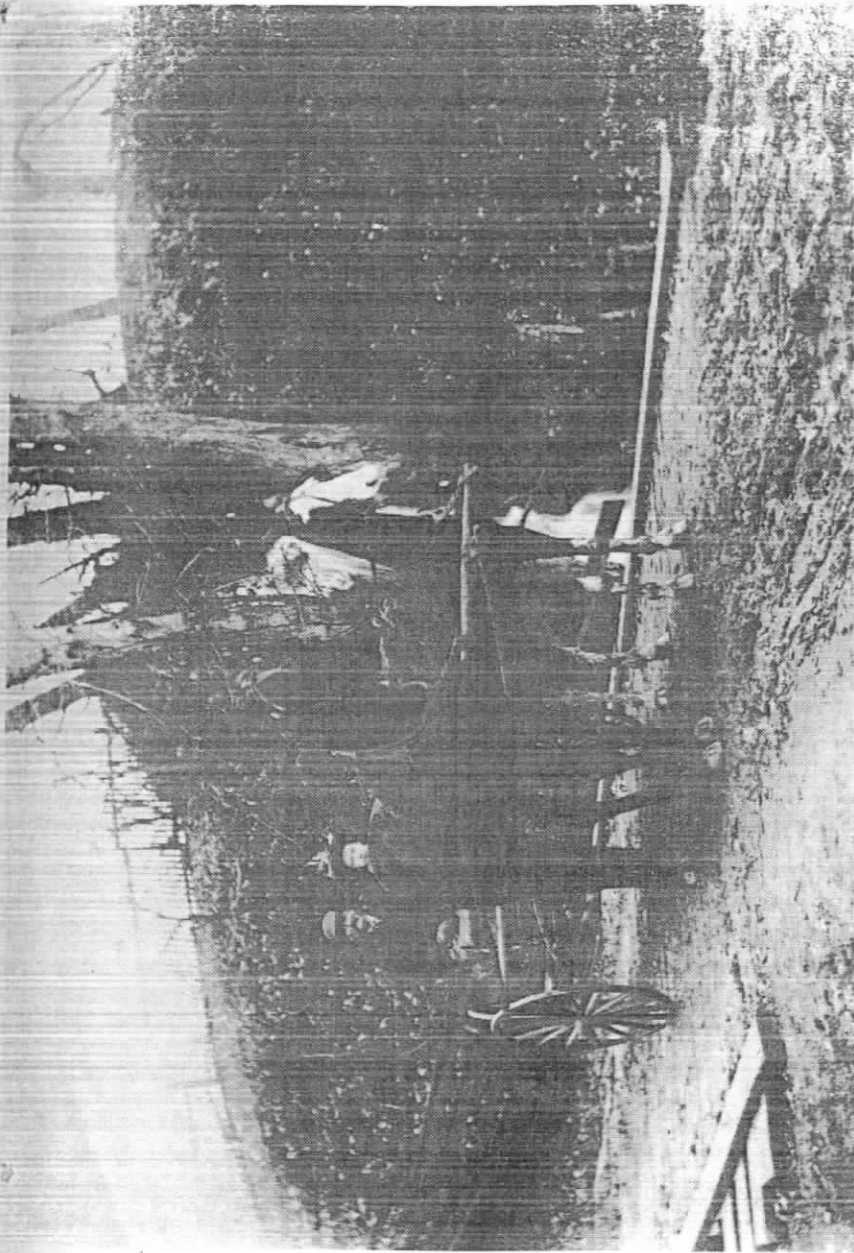
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**STAGE DRIVER'S TOUCH.** Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Clough are shown with their team and cart on the old Days Creek road near Canyonville in this glass plate negative photo from the CANYON CREEK CURRENT. Clough was an expert driver, having held the reins on many six-horse teams during his days as a stagecoach driver.  
Douglas County Museum





**AUTHOR AND MOTHER.** *This photo, taken about 1891, shows Mrs. Joseph L. Clough and her daughter, the late Bess Clough. Mrs. Clough, the former Addie Elliff, was the mother of the late Huron Clough as well, and the grandmother of Huron's daughters, Donna, Jean and Joann, the latter the wife of Ralph Sandstede.*

*Huron Clough collection, Douglas County Museum*



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about 1891, shows Mrs. Clough. Mrs. Clough, late Huron Clough as Mrs. Donna, Jean and Douglas County Museum



**THIS EARLY PHOTO** shows Hardy Elliff's grandchildren, Bess and Huron Clough. Both are now deceased; Bess Clough was the author of the story of Hardy Elliff, and Huron Clough served as Douglas County Commissioner. They were the children of stage driver Joseph Lyford Clough and Margaret Adeline (Elliff) Clough. Bess was born in 1889 and Huron in 1892; the photo was taken about 1895.

Huron Clough collection, Douglas County Museum