

The Cases—one of the first families

At 81 years, Hal Case is the oldest living member of the original Case family which was one of the first to settle in Little Lake Valley.

Hal's grandmother was Melcena Sawyers, born in 1827 in Kentucky and married in 1847 to James Case. Seven years later the young couple came West in a wagon train with Melcena's father, Thomas Sawyers, and his

family. By that time the Cases had two children of their own, five year old Mary and three year old Nancy.

The trip to California took four months. In later years, Hal would hear his grandparents tell stories of that trip, but the one he always liked best was that of the night they were attacked by a band of Sioux Indians just before the crossing of the Platte River

where the wagon train had encamped for the night.

Jim Case had taken his dog out into the surrounding brush to gather wild nuts, and the dog began acting very strangely, indicating something unusual lurking nearby. Jim hurried back to his family and only a short time later the Indians attacked, firing on the terrified travelers with flint-lock muskets.

The barrage continued for several hours, during which Melcena Case was injured, but not mortally as the bullet passed through and lodged in the wood of the wagon.

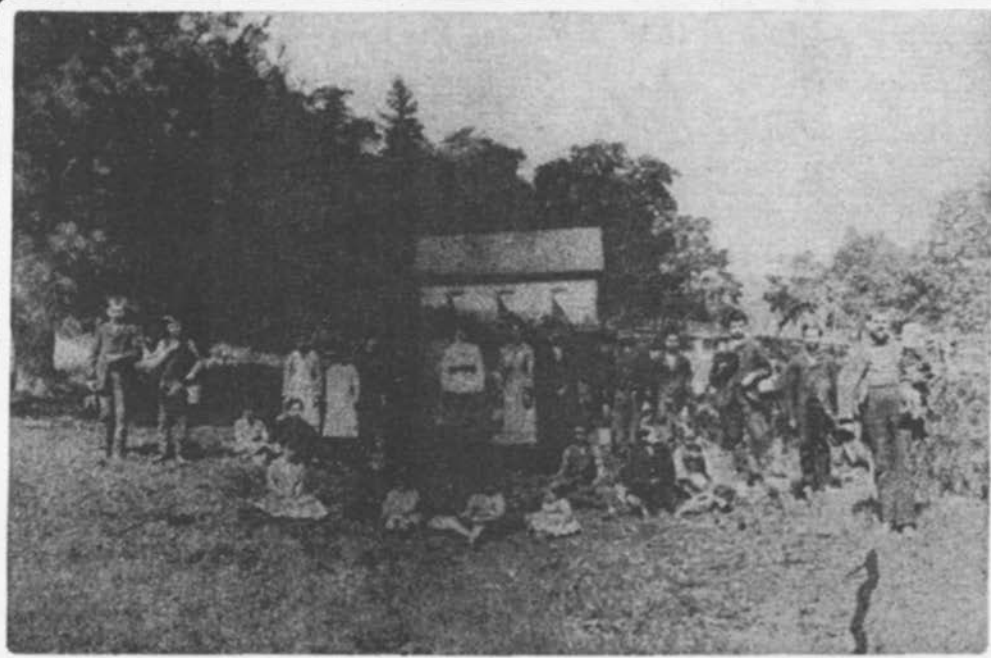
"We kept that bullet in our family for years," Hal says, "but finally it disappeared from the spot where we used to keep it on the mantle shelf."

In the fall of 1854 the Sawyers and the Cases reached a mining camp by the name of Rough and Ready near today's Grass Valley. The men went to work digging for gold, along with hundreds of others frantically seeking the one lucky strike which would bring an end to a lifetime of hard work.

It was a bitter cold winter and many of the group died. The following spring, Jim and Melcena took their children and headed further west, ending up in Petaluma, a farming community north of San Francisco, where they bought a small homestead and planted crops, writing enthusiastic letters back to the rest of their family in Rough and Ready.

Old Thomas Sawyers finally gave up his quest of gold and followed the Cases, and then, in 1858, moved on up to a beautifully fertile green valley in the redwoods which had been named Little Lake Valley and where a half dozen families had already settled.

The next year, in 1859, Jim and Melcena Case sold their



This photograph was taken at the early Sawyers School in 1884. The school was located near the present home of Ed Hayes on East Hill Road and may have been the site of the original grant deed from Jim Case, who gave one acre of land in 1870 for the building of the first school in Little Lake Valley. The man at the far right holding a child is John Rupe, father of Johnny Rupe who married Emma Muir. The children standing are, left to right, Frank Rupe, Charlie Mast, Florence Fulwider, Iva Muir, Rachel Howard, Emma Muir, Adah Haebl, Mary Howard, Lucinda Fulwider, Fred Rupe, Harry Baechtel and Jack Hamilton, the teacher.

in Little Lake Valley

farm and also moved north, buying a section of land from the Baechtel brothers which extended from Ed Hayes' place today up to the Clark property on Hilltop Drive.

Jim pitched in at once to build a home for his family, felling trees on his property and dragging them by horse to the building site. The house was built across the road from where Vic Guehennec lives today, right at the beginning of Hilltop Drive which of course did not exist at that time.

The only road in the Valley was the narrow dirt road which followed the line of today's East Hill Road as far as the creek which ran along the eastern edge of the valley and which was at first known as Fulwider Creek and later as Davis Creek.

Jim Case finished his family's shelter just in time for the birth of their first son, James Lester, in 1860. A second son, Drury Goldman, would also be born in that house five years later.

The two boys grew up as most boys of pioneer families did—which meant they were out in the fields working with their father as soon as they could walk. There was a fine artesian well on the Case property, and the crops produced on the cleared land were legendary.

"I remember my Dad (Dru Case) telling that when he was a boy, the grain crops in the Valley were so tall that a man

could ride through a field on horseback and the tops of the grain would strike his knee-cap," Hal states.

"Although both my Dad and his brother (he was always called Shady Case in later years) were raised just alike, my Dad was just a natural born farmer and had a real feel for the soil.

"He could make a piece of land do just about anything he wanted it to. Never could stand to see the land standing idle—he was always building or planting or doing something to improve it. Hardest working man I ever saw.

"But my Uncle Shady now, he grew up kind of worthless—never did like to work and my Dad ended up feeding him, as well as my grandparents after they got old."

In 1870, Jim Case deeded a plot of his ground to the newly formed Upper Little Lake School District and the first school house in the Valley was built. No one is sure today just where that first school house was, but 17 years later George Youde (who had purchased the Case property) would also deed an acre of ground on which the first so-called Sawyers School was built, named for Melcena Case's father Thomas.

That school house was located near Ed Hayes' place today, and it is believed it may have been the same piece of ground which Jim Case had deeded, but that for some legal reason it had become necessary for the new owner of the property to re-deed it.

To be continued



Melcena Case as she looked at the time she and her husband James moved to Little Lake Valley with their two young daughters. The obituary for her which appeared in *The Willits News* of October 19, 1904, stated she had "been an invalid for 40 years having received severe injuries from Indians while crossing the plains." She was 76 years old at the time of her death.

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10/6/1976

The second generation of Cases



Emanuel Whited, father of Shirley Whited Case, in a portrait taken at about the time of his marriage to Dercas Branch, when he was 40 years old and she was 19. He nicknamed her "Duckle" and throughout the rest of her life she was known to her family and friends as "Duck." In the Whited Journal, the first mention of her and their approaching marriage has just been made.

In 1872, Melcena and Jim Case's youngest daughter Nancy married a young man named Parker Hall, an educated man with knowledge of engineering and land surveying who would be one of the first to lay out the various plots of land in the Valley, in Little Lake Village, and later in the town of Willitsville.

The wedding was a big social event, attended by all the families in the Valley at that time, including Doc and Sarah White and their numerous sons and daughters. One of their sons, Emanuel White (author of the Whited Journal), would later have a daughter marry into the Case family.

Hal Case, who married Emanuel's daughter Shirley, recalls he had a special fondness for his Aunt Nan and Uncle Parker when he was a small boy. The Parkers lived on Mill Street, just a block away from where Hal's parents lived at that time, and the boy was a frequent visitor in their home.

"Aunt Nan was a great cook, and always had all sorts of good things to eat on hand—fresh made cookies and cakes, blackberry jam on bread, fresh and hot from the oven.

"In addition, because her husband was an educated man, they always had lots of reading material—illustrated books and all kinds of magazines from the East. I remember especially the Argosy magazine, but I read them all, stretched out on the floor in front of their fireplace.

"Later, when Aunt Nan was along in years, she always smoked a corn cob pipe, carrying a plug of tobacco in the pocket of the big all-covering apron she always wore.

"I remember watching her as she sat in a rocker in front of the wood stove, pulling her plug of tobacco and a small knife out of her pocket. She'd chip away at the plug, filling her pipe and when it was full, she'd open the door of the stove and use a small shovel to pull out a hot coal which she'd put on top of the tobacco and tamp it down with her bare finger.

"That tinger was burned black with a thick covering that was beyond feeling, I guess. I was fascinated, always waiting to hear her holler, but she never did. She'd just sit there rocking and puffing away."

About four years before the marriage of Nan and Parker Hall, a new family moved to the area and purchased the former Rogers homestead about two miles west of Willits on today's Fort Bragg Road, which at that time only extended about four miles west.

There was a two-story house on the Rogers property and the Thompson family would live there for the next 18 years, raising beef and milk cows.

The house finally burned down and a new house was built on the spot by the father of Hattie London, who still lives there today.

The Thompsons had a large brood of children, and more were born after their move to Willits, including May Irene, who was born in 1871. They eventually had 14 children,

in the Valley



A fine old portrait of Sarah Whited, grandmother of Shirley Whited Case, taken during the early days of the family's homestead in Little Lake Valley. Like most of the early families, the Whiteds had numerous children and at the time this picture was taken, Sarah had already had 13 children.

but only nine grew to adulthood.

Jesse and Margaret Thompson were church going people and they regularly attended the Methodist Church in Willits, along with all their children. Although Hal Case says he never knew how his parents met, it seems likely they might have met through one of the many church sponsored social activities for young people.

In any event, Dru Case and May Irene Thompson were married in 1888, when he was 23 years old and she was 17. By that time, the Thompson family had moved back down south where most of Margaret's family lived, and the young couple were married in Healdsburg enroute to join May's family in Orange County.

Dru went to work in the beet

fields there, eventually being named superintendent of a large beet plantation. It was there that the couple's first three sons were born—Frank in 1892, Hallie in 1895 and Verne in 1897.

By that time, letters from home indicated that Dru's parents were getting on in years without much in the way of support from Dru's brother Shady, so the decision was made to return to Willits in 1899 when Hallie Case was four years old.

Hallie remembers that trip vividly, with the family and all their possessions packed into a covered wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Another family in a wagon traveled with them, but somewhere along the way they came to a fork in the road. The men argued over which road to take and they split company with Dru taking his family on the lower road, which proved to be the right one.

Hal especially remembers the days they traveled along the narrow dirt road overlooking the ocean. Verne's high-chair was tied to the back of the wagon and kept falling off, so finally father Dru, in a fit of anger, threw it over the cliff into the ocean.

Another time, they passed a troop of gypsies with a circus camped out on the beach and the children cried to be taken down to see the show. Sternly, their father said there was no money "for foolishness."

To be continued



James and Melcena Case pose in front of the small cottage where they lived for the last years of their lives on what was then known as Raymond Alley. This was the last picture taken of Melcena before her death in 1904. Old Jim died in 1912.



Part of the Thompson family, at about the time of the marriage of Dru Case and May Irene Thompson. The mother, Margaret Thompson, is seated in the front row with some of her grandchildren. In the back row are Sammy Thompson and his wife, Frank Holloway and his wife Maggie, Retta Thompson and Danny Thompson, Maggie's twin.

Hal Case — memories of his boyhood

Hal Case has some special memories of the month-long trip his family made from Orange County in Willits in 1899, including the overnight stop with a family in Los Angeles, the first big city the boy had ever seen. While the rest of the family sat around the supper table, Hal stood at the window to watch the street cars go by.

Later, when the family reached the ferry crossing at Benicia, Hal and his brothers expressed great concern because the horses were all blindfolded so they would not spook while making the crossing. Maneuvering the team and heavily loaded wagon on the ferry called for assistance by all the family, with father Dru keeping the team reins firmly in hand.

When the family finally reached Willits, they rented a house on Mill Street near Aunt Nan and Uncle Parker, while Dru made arrangements to buy two lots at the corner of what is now Raymond Lane and Coast Street and began building a barn, to be followed by a house for his family.

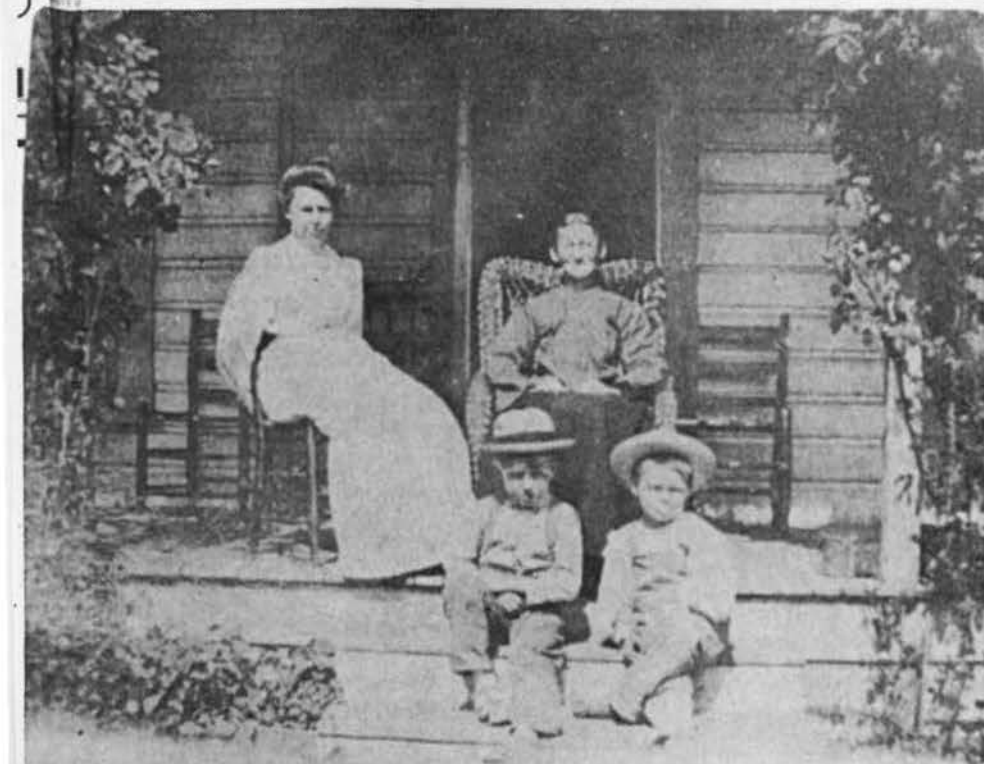
As money was needed for supplies, he also hired out his wagon and team for a hauling business, calling upon brother Shady to help. Their first job was for Dave Coffey at his sawmill out on Sherwood Road past the Northwestern Mill. Dru's wagon was used for hauling the timbers and shakes from the mill into town, in return for free lumber needed for building the Case home.

The house was a large two story structure with a veranda and wide porch steps, decorated with the gingerbread trim of the time. It sat atop a small rise just above the Fort Bragg Road, now called Coast Street. Nothing remains today of the barn, house and outbuildings which Dru Case built, and a new redwood house built by Fred Mickey stands on the spot today.

Hal's grandparents, Jim and Melcena Case, were living in a small house further up



A photograph of Vinnie and Tobias Blosser taken on the hill above the Blosser homestead, overlooking the Fort Bragg Road. The entire family of Blossers were musicians and they frequently had musical afternoons for neighbors and friends on this hillside.



May Irene Case visits with Grandma Melcena Case on the porch of her home located on Raymond Lane. Seated on the steps are Hallie and Jake Case.

days in early Willits

Raymond Alley, which at the time did not run all the way through to what is now Coast Street, but only to the Case home.

The new house was completed in time for the birth of a fourth son, Foster Willits, in 1902, who would be known throughout his life as "Jake" by his family.

Two years after the birth of Jake, grandmother Melcena died in the small house and grandfather Jim moved in with Dru and his family.

Hal remembers his grandfather with affection as a teller of tall tales who never tired of the company of wide-eyed small boys begging for Grandpa to "tell just one more."

Grandpa Case also enjoyed a "snort of good likker" on occasion, and once he found a bottle of liniment on the mantle in the living room. He didn't have his eyeglasses on to read the label, but it looked like whiskey so Grandpa tipped up the bottle for a quick snort.

Young Hallie walked into the room just in time to hear Grandpa holler and to stare with amazement at the sudden spurt of activity in the old man's legs as he danced about the room.

"He used to go around with the fly of his pants open," Hal says. "The women in the family finally gave up trying to reform him, and I always had a feeling he did it just to keep them stirred up. When asked about it, he'd just say that it was more handy that way, without any further details."

The Blossers, who were related to the Cases through the marriage of mother May Irene's sister Vinnie to Tobias Blosser, played an important role in Hal Case's childhood.

Vinnie and Tobias lived on the old Blosser Ranch, called Buck Ranch, with old man Nicholas Blosser out on the Fort Bragg Road. It was located across the road and a bit further west from today's Cutter Lumber Company.

Tobias' twin brother John and his wife Ora lived in a

handsome large house across from where St. Anthony's Church is today. It was John who built the flour mill at the corner of Coast and Harms Streets.

The entire Blosser family were fine musicians and formed the first City Band, and performed at all church and social functions. They were devout Methodists, as was the Thompson family of which May Irene was a member, so the small Cases also attended the old Methodist Church on Pine Street.

Hal says he would frequently ride home after church services with Aunt Vinnie and Uncle Tobias in their surrey with the fringe on top.

The small boy would lie down on the back seat, looking down through the floor boards at the big turning wheels as they made furrows in the soft thick dust of the road, listening to the clop-clop of the horses and the deep rich baritone of Tobias singing hymns.

Buck Ranch was built half way up a hillside and the road up to the house was steep and rocky. Hal says he always held his breath as the wagon turned up the road, but they always made it without the anticipated overturn.

There was a large spring behind the ranch house, and Tobias had built a series of wooden boxes to put down in the cold waters flowing down a trough to the house, and it was in those boxes that Vinnie kept her milk, butter and cheese.

"They also had an apple orchard," Hal recalls, "and a special apple house with bins for storing the apples. I can still smell the spicy fragrance that clung to that cool, dark interior—and I can still taste those apples—crispy and sweet and juicy."

Old man Nicholas, the father of the Blosser boys, had built the first sawmill in this area in 1863. It was a water powered mill up Willits Creek, which was later bought by Norton, and still later by the original group of investors who established Northwestern Redwood Mill at what is now Brooktrails.

To be continued



May Irene and Dru Case are pictured here with their first baby, Frank, during the early years of their marriage when Dru was supervising a beet farm in Southern California. This was taken in 1892, seven years before they moved back to Willits.



Young Hallie Case poses with his little brother Jake [Foster Willits], who was born in 1902 in the new home father Dru built for his family at the end of Raymond Alley.



The Case home as it appeared a year or two after its completion in 1902. In this photograph are Grandmother Thompson and her daughters, including May Irene Case and Vinnie Blosser.

WN 10/22/1976

More Case history photos



Dave Cotter's mill, located on Sherwood Road, where Dru Case worked hauling split stuff and timers to town with his wagon and team. Pictured here is an oxen team, used to haul the heavy logs to the mill. The figures in the photograph are unidentified.



The original Methodist Church, located on the site of the present church, as it looked at the time it was being attended by the Cases, the Thompsons and the Blossers. The church was later enlarged and remodeled with a slightly different steeple, and was still later replaced by today's structure.

The Cases move to Sherwood Road

When Hallie Case was about eight years old, his father Dru was hired by the Northwestern Lumber Company as a foreman of diversified responsibilities.

At that time, Northwestern owned the sawmill at what is now Brooktrails, as well as a large planing mill and lumber depot where Little Lake Industries and Mendo Mill are now located.

The Company also had nearly 300 acres of land along Highway 101 and Sherwood Road, and in the Valley, planted in potatoes and other vegetables for use in the big cook house up at the sawmill, and in hay and grains for the numerous pack and work animals owned by the Company. These animals were kept stabled in a long low building at the corner where Anker Lucier Mortuary is now located.

Dru Case was hired to oversee the planted fields and their harvest, and he also had charge of the horses and mules. A favorite hangout of the Case boys was the Northwestern stables, and Hal says he especially remembers how his dad used to hose the animals down after their day's work, standing them on a slatted platform built for that purpose.

During the year or so that Dru worked for Northwestern, the Cases lived in the Company house which had been built by a man named Sweetney and which today is the home of Helen Smith on Sherwood Road.

The four Case boys slept on

the second floor of the house, overlooking a pond which was full of frogs that kept the youngsters awake most of the night with their powerful booming.

They attended the school built for the children of Northwestern mill families, located across the road from the entrance to the St. Francis Ranch. It was a small one room building with a potbelied stove and Hallie does not remember there ever being more than six or seven students on hand for classes.

One other memory he has of the time they lived on Sherwood Road was the night a skunk got trapped underneath the house, driving the entire family out into the yard in their night clothes.

Father Dru hitched up his team and headed for town to pick up Louie Bergerson, a neighbor of the Cases back on Raymond Alley.

"Lou Bergerson was one of those men who could do just about anything, like all the men folks of the day, and a little bit more. Any kind of problem anybody had they couldn't figure out, they'd send for Louie.

"Sure enough, soon as dad came back with Lou, he walked around a bit and gave the matter some thought, and then he disappeared on the far side of the house and all at once the skunk came running out and headed for the woods.

Never did know what Lou said or did, but that skunk sure took off."

Hal says Lou Bergerson was also famous for the neat work he did in rocking up the sides of wells, and was much in demand to help when a new well was being installed.

"He was crazy about butter-milk—could drink more buttermilk than any man I ever saw, and the ladies used to always keep plenty on hand whenever Lou was doing any work about the place.

"One funny thing I remember about Lou. He was coming home one night, walking along Mill Street, and he passed the John Hardwicke place just as John and his wife were having a big argument.

"It sounded and looked pretty bad, so Lou stepped into the yard and grabbed John by the arms, thinking to keep him from killing his wife. Well sir, that wife turned around and started beating on Lou with a stick—dang near beat him to pieces before he could make his way back out of the yard."

The first job Hallie ever had was for Billy Magill, who had a 30 cow dairy farm alongside the old Fort Bragg Road, across the road from the Case home on Raymond Alley and covering the area where Ella's Laundry is now located.

Hal's job was to help Billy milk the cows and fill the

bottles which were then delivered throughout town in a horse drawn cart. Hallie sat up on the driver's seat and held the reins while Billy took the bottles of milk and put them just inside the customer's doors.

One of those customers was the "house of ill repute" which was located along a narrow dirt alley running between Main Street and Humboldt, the street which today separates the Bank of Willits and Al's Redwood Room. The house stood in the area of the Bank's parking lot, facing south.

One day when Magill's dairy cart pulled up in front of the house to make the milk delivery, Hal as usual remained on the driver's seat while Billy took the milk up to the door. Just as he reached the door, it banged open and a group of hollering, angry-faced women appeared, struggling with a man whom they were attempting to evict as he was still attempting to get into his clothes, hopping on one foot as he pulled his trousers on.

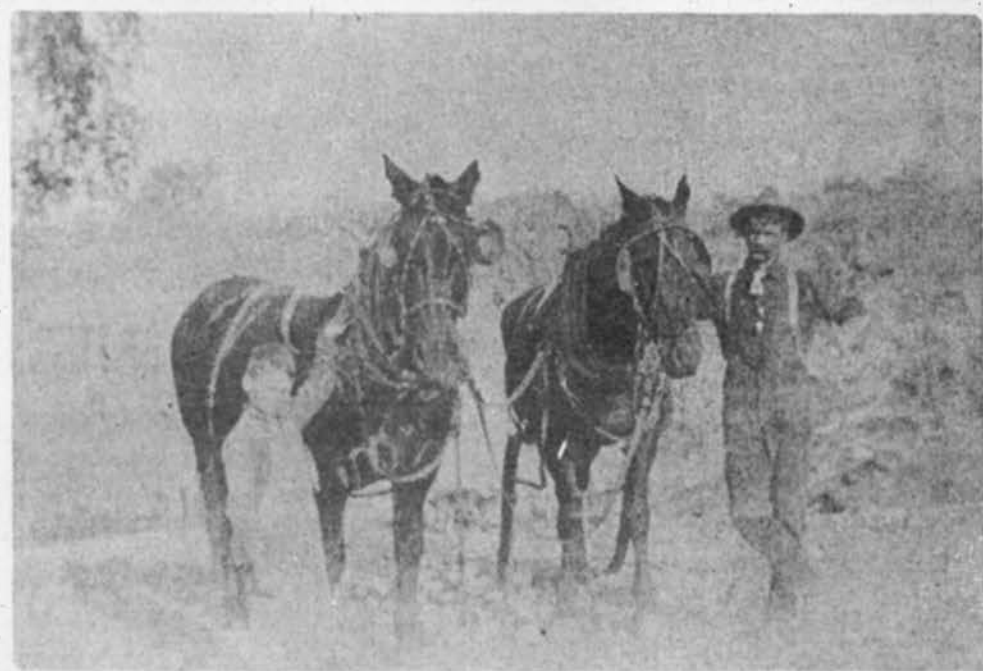
"I had never heard such language before," Hallie chuckles in remembrance. "Those ladies were really mad. Don't know what the fellow did—or didn't do—but he was getting a real royal heave-ho."

To be continued

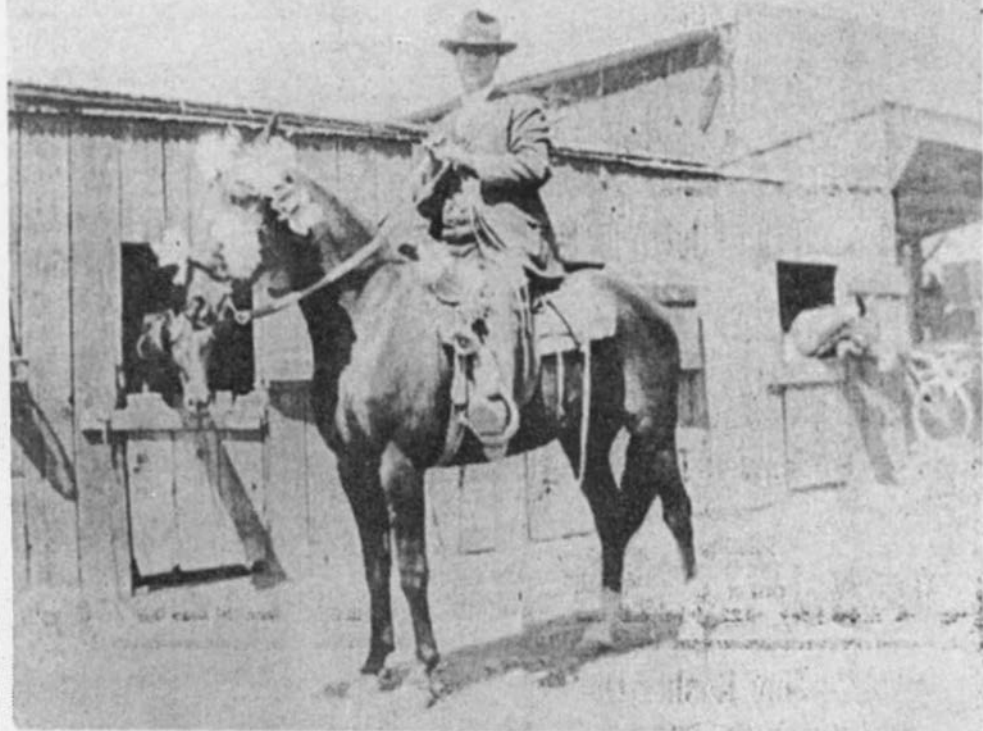
and Hal gets his first job



A typical gathering in the form of a picnic held in Baechtel Woods, off East Hill Road in the Valley. Beginning on the left are Dru Case and his wife May Irene; Vinnie Blosser; 10 year old Hallie Case and his cousin, Bessie Hall; Willits [Jake] Case; Bessie's father, George Hall; Mrs. George Youde and her husband George; and Mrs. George Hall with a couple of little Halls. George Hall was a son of Parker and Nancy Hall. The Youdes bought the original Jim Case homestead on East Hill Road.



Eight year old Hallie Case poses proudly with his father and two horses of his Dad's six horse team. This picture was taken on what is now Coast Street, near the Case homestead.



This is the Northwestern Lumber Company's stable located on the corner of Commercial and School Streets. Between 40 and 50 mules and horses were kept stabled here, animals that were used in the woods and for hauling wagonloads of timbers, shakes, lumber and tan bark. The man on the horse is W.A.S. Foster, president of Northwestern.

WN 11/10/1976

The Case family moves back to Little Lake

When Hallie Case was 11 years old, his father decided he had had enough of "living in town." His work as overseer of the extensive crops planted by the Northwestern Company served to hasten his decision to get back to the soil and farming on land of his own.

A deal was made with the Baechtel brothers to buy a 33 acre section of land along both sides of Davis Creek, bisected by a narrow dirt lane that today is Center Valley Road.

With the help of his sons and neighbor George Youde (who had bought the original Case homestead on East Hill Road where it splits with Hilltop Drive), Dru Case pitched in to develop his new homestead, putting in a well and garden first and then building a barn and other outbuildings, with the house itself going in last.

The barn was built next to a large walnut tree, and although the barn is long gone,

the walnut tree still stands near the home of Doug and Skip Case who today live on the spot where Doug's grandfather built the home in which the family would live for the next four years.

Hal Case says that George Youde was considered a very clever man when it came to building things. He was the man who designed and built the Octagon House for Alfred Sherwood, and when a giant redwood tree fell diagonally across the house in 1902, Youde was called back to supervise the rebuilding.

By the time Dru Case was building his first home in the Valley, Youde was already well along in years, but was still a very active man. He was in charge of maintenance and repairs at the Sawyers School, and was a member of the School Board who took his appointment seriously and made frequent unexpected visits at the school to see how things were going.

The children sat at double wooden desks, and Hallie says he can remember old man Youde slipping into the classroom and into an empty desk chair next to one of the girl students who would blush furiously in embarrassment at having the elderly man squeezed in next to her.

"He had an expression that sounded something like 'Higgillies', and that's what he'd say on almost any occasion when he got excited," Hal remembers.

"I remember once when my mother had gone up to the City and us boys were in the kitchen making breakfast while Dad was out tending the stock. Old man Youde stopped by and we invited him to have breakfast with us.

"I was just taking the biscuits I'd made out of the oven, and Youde took one of those hot biscuits, put a slab of butter on top and popped the whole thing in his mouth.

"I stood there, anxious as

an old hen, waiting to hear his reaction. Well, he rolled his eyes around a bit and then he slapped his leg and said, 'Higgillies! that's good eatin! best I ever et.'

"I'll never forget that."

Hallie also remembers Mrs. Youde as being a fine woman, but one living under the shadow of her husband.

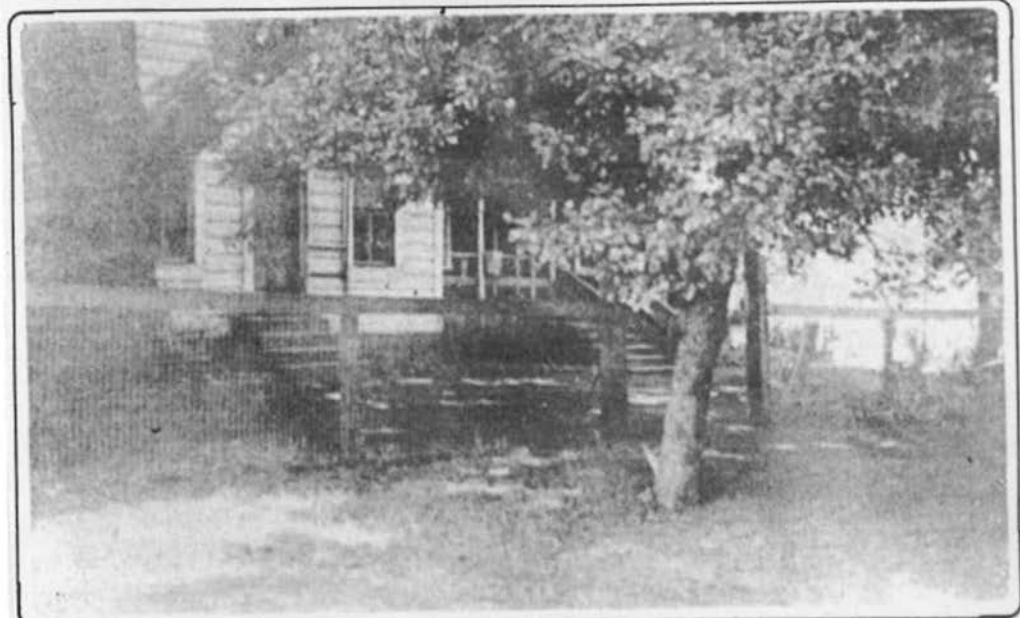
"He'd take his horse and buggy and head for town, never thinking to ask his wife if she'd like to go, too. Chances were, she'd have some errand or other to do in town, so once old George was gone with the family buggy, she'd put on her bonnet and take off for town on foot.

"She was a kind of soft-spoken lady. I remember once I was up at the Youde place and I was really mad at one of the Valley boys for something or other and was going on about it at great length. Finally Mrs. Youde said in that soft voice of hers,

"My, Hallie—that's a fine exhibition of righteous indignation."

"I'd never heard that expression before and it really pleased me—sounded so grownup and important."

George Youde was also one of the most productive farmers in the Valley, helped to a great extent by the fine artesian well on his property, a well that is still flowing today.



The old "Sweeney place" where the Case family lived for a short while when Hal Case was a small boy, and which has now been the home for many years of Helen Smith. This photo was taken about 1930, and shows how the exterior looked at the time the Cases lived there, except that the original stake fence has been replaced.

Valley

Nearly everyone who lived in the Valley at that time remembers the Youde blackberries as being something exceptional, and Hallie says Youde also grew the biggest string beans he ever saw, and used to plant three crops of corn two weeks apart.

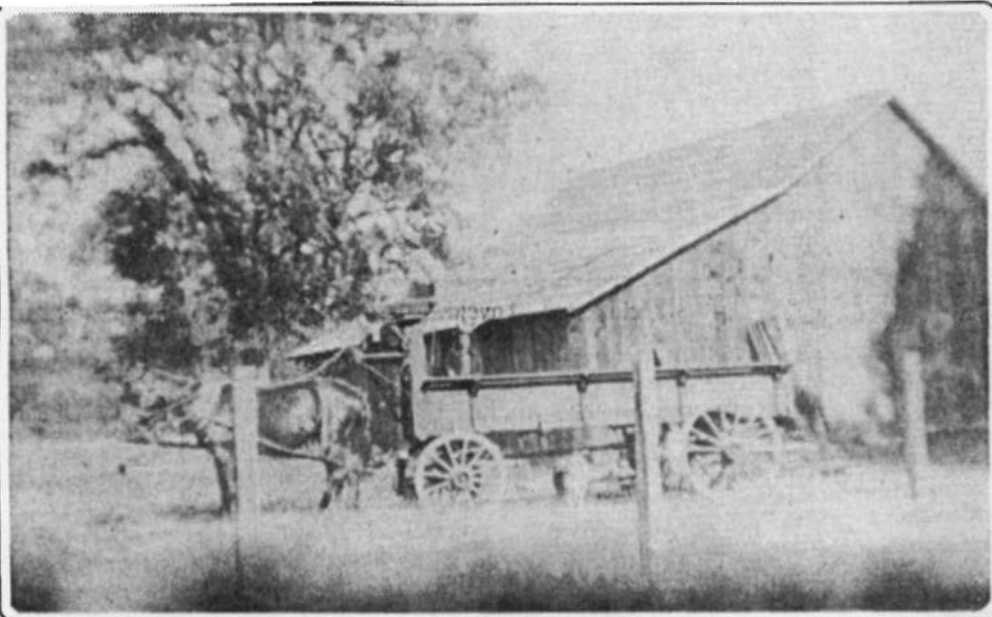
Speaking of crops, Hal says it has been his observation that the planting seasons in the Valley have never been the same since the 1906 earthquake, with the change building up slowly in the following years until eventually there was no more big scale farming done as there was in the Valley's early days.

"In the early days, everything was on a regular schedule. October and November were the plowing months, following the first rain. Then the heavy winter rains and snow came in December and January—up to 80 inches of rain in a season. Come February, there'd be a little dry spell, and that's when everybody planted seed, before the second round of rains set in.

"That was the pattern all the Valley farmers followed, year in, year out until after the earthquake, when the weather began to change. Nowadays, nobody knows what to expect of the weather from one week to the next. It's all changed—like a lot of other things."



Dru Case stands on the narrow dirt road which ran in front of his house and barn, seen in the background. This is today's Center Valley Road. Note that there were no other houses on that side of the road. This was taken about 1912.



The first barn built by Dru Case on the land he purchased from the Baechtels along what is now called Center Valley Road. The house, built just to the right and front of the barn and out of sight in this picture, has been rebuilt and is the home today of Dru Case's grandson Doug Case and his wife Skip. The barn is no longer standing, but the walnut tree is.

More on the early days of the Case

Hallie Case was 12 years old when his parents moved with their boys into the new home father Dru had built for them in Little Lake Valley.

By the time the place was completed to the point the family could move in, Dru had already planted fruit trees and a garden, and one of the first chores the Case brothers had was to take the horses and wagon down to Davis Creek and fill up big barrels with water to take back for watering the trees and garden.

In doing this, the boys came in contact with the heavy growth of poison oak along the creek banks and it wasn't long before most of the family had severe cases of the unpleasant malady.

May Irene also fell victim to the unfamiliar plant, and finally she asked Hallie, who was the least affected of the family, to go over to the nearest neighbor and ask for a remedy to ease the family's distress.

The nearest neighbors were

Emanuel and Dorcas (Duck) Whited who lived just east of the Case land, and Hallie struck out across the fields of tall grain to seek help.

When he arrived at the Whiteds and knocked on the door, Dorcas Whited answered with nine year old Shirley hiding shyly behind her mother's skirt.

Looking back on this momentous occasion, Hal says all he could see at the time was a tangled mass of black curls and big dark eyes and he was

so fascinated that he had trouble trying to concentrate on what Mrs. Whited was telling him.

From that day, Hallie Case never gave serious thought to any other girl, and he recalls sort of drifting back home across the fields in a state of light-headed buoyancy.

He did manage to remember to tell his mother that Mrs. Whited recommended the use of alder bark, gathered from along the creek bed, chipped into small bits and then boiled to make a pink liquid which was to be spread upon the areas of skin affected by poison oak. The cure proved effective, as Hal recalls.

Shirley Whited was the second youngest of her family. Her younger brother Doug was six years old the summer the Cases moved to the Valley, and she had two older brothers—Reuben who was 18 and Jim who was 15.

The annual threshing season in the Valley began shortly after the Cases settled into their new home. This was a community wide event with all the men in the Valley taking part, although the actual equipment and threshing operation were the property of the Blosser men.

The season lasted for 30 days, during which the men worked from dawn to dusk seven days a week, and even the women were called upon to lend a helping hand in addition to cooking for the crews.



Twelve year old Hallie Case and his dog Mutt float along Davis Creek in the wooden dinghy his father made for his sons. The creek was considerably deeper then, and followed a slightly different course than it does today. This picture was taken about where the creek bends just under the bridge into the Gary Ford ranch.

family in Little Lake Valley

It was hard, hot and dusty work, but Hal remembers it as being a time of carnival spirits and good fun.

On that first threshing season after meeting Shirley Whited, Hal rigged up a small pony cart with two billy goats pulling it, and drove it over to the Whited home to ask Shirley to go riding.

Both Hal and Shirley are hazy today about just what the lad said or did to convince the shy little girl to get into his cart, but get into it she did and he proudly took her riding around in the fields where the threshing crews were at work.

It was the beginning of a romance that would end in marriage nearly 10 years later.

That fall, the Case boys entered Sawyers' School, attending along with the Whiteds, the Sawyers, Halls, Masts and Winans.

It was a happy, carefree time for the youngsters of the Valley who found plenty of time for play and fun, even with the daily rounds of chores expected of them all at home.

Davis Creek followed a slightly different course than

it does today, and had deep swimming and fishing holes that were kept cleared of channel debris by Dru Case and his team of horses making a sweep along the Creek's length at least once a year.

One of the largest swimming holes enjoyed by the Valley children was located just behind where Graf's gravel plant is today.

Dru made a small boat for the youngsters and Hallie remembers poling along the creek with his dog named Mutt and his girl named Shirley for some of the happiest hours in his memory.

The youngsters usually walked to school together, or sometimes rode bareback on horses, as many as four youngsters to a horse.

There were lots of picnic gatherings of all the families—sometimes at the school, sometimes at individual homes, sometimes in the woods along East Hill Road or up in Pine Mountain.

Wintertime was a period of decreased work activities for everyone, with the men concentrating on hunting for the family larders and keeping up

with the tremendous daily drain on the wood shed in every barnyard.

The annual heavy snow fall was eagerly looked forward to by the children. Hal especially remembers one winter when he and his cousin Jinks Hall worked all night long at the Hall home (formerly the Mast house, and where Sherman Schwartz lives today) making a snow sled.

The youngsters had spent a day in the woods up on Pine Mountain to find four curved sections of madrone to use as the runners, on which they set a platform of redwood slabs.

Jinks' father was George Hall, a son of Parker Hall, and he was married to a girl from the Hopper family for whom Hoppers' Flat in Pine Mountain was named. A brother of hers, Louie Hopper, lived with the Halls.

Hallie says that the night he and Jinks spent making the sled, Uncle Louie Hopper sat nearby throughout the entire operation, reading out of the Bible to the boys, just to keep a nice balance on such frivolous activity.

To be continued



Students at Sawyers School on East Hill Road are shown in a photo taken in 1907, the year the Cases moved into Little Lake Valley. In the top row, standing on a tree stump, are Gus Chahon, Alex Hellesoe, Hallie Case, Bertie Moxley, Cleo Winans, Pierre Mondotte and Vernon Case. The row of standing girls includes, left to right: Lavisia Cudney, Louisa Cudney, Amie Mondotte, Irene Sindt, Lorene Winans, Shirley Whited, Julia Quinliven, Doug Whited, Karlene Winans, Adelle Winans, Thelma Sawyers and Mary Mast. Seated in front are Gladys and Georglia Mast. Thelma Sawyers, who is barefooted in the picture, recalls that the children were all told to come to school barefooted that day, but she was the only one to do so and was greatly embarrassed.



Frank and Hallie Case, in their early teens, are pictured seated in two horse-drawn carts which were used during the threshing operation. Called derrick carts, they were used to pull the cut hay up on the derrick wagon. It was one of these carts to which Hallie hitched a couple of billy goats to take his girl, Shirley Whited, for a ride around the pasture.

Dru Case builds still another home for his

W N 11/23/1976

No sooner had May Irene Case and her four boys settled into the home Dru had built for them on Center Valley Road, with the outbuildings complete, and the orchard, garden and well all in—than Dru began to look around for new fields to conquer.

A man with a compulsive urge to work, Dru even leased extra fields throughout the valley to plant in grains and potatoes. He was never satisfied—every job had to be done over until perfect—every chore had to be done today, with nothing put over until tomorrow.

So, as soon as he felt there was nothing more to do to develop his home and barnyard, he decided to tackle that portion of his land which lay on the other side of Davis Creek.

He took his team of horses across (there were no bridges then) and began to plow the big open pasture which lay on the other side of the trees adjoining the creek. And, at the far back of the pasture in a grove of big oaks, he decided to build a new and larger home for his family, complete with the usual barn, outbuildings and water tower.

That house was finished and

the Cases moved in shortly before Hallie Case's 15th birthday, so it was that house which he remembers as being the scene of various social gatherings during the period he was courting Shirley Whited.

The family continued to go into the town of Willits to attend church services at the Methodist Church, but only infrequently and for special occasions. Mother Case taught a Sunday School class for Valley youngsters at the Sawyers School, and church services were also held at the School or in Valley homes.

Hallie recalls there was a preacher by the name of Schomp who lived on Center Valley Road in a house which for some reason was always called "Snug Harbor" by Valley residents. It is still standing, just at the bend of Center Valley Road across from the bridge into Gary Ford's place.

"He was a preacher, but I don't recollect ever hearing him preach, or seeing him doing anything but sitting in his kitchen with his feet on the stove and a book in his hands," Hallie says.

"He had about five children, and all the other Valley

families helped take care of those kids. My dad kept them in potatoes every winter, and always shared whatever he brought in from a hunting trip.

"I remember those Schomp youngsters used to come over to our house with a can, or tin cup, asking for sugar, or flour, or coffee or something like that.

"Every time, they'd say—'Poppa's going to town tomorrow so we'll pay you back'—but they never did."

"That's the way folks were in those days—nobody really minded, everybody knew we had to take care of the Schomps, so we just did what we knew needed doing. No need for food stamps, or welfare payments, or all those things folks expect today."

During all the time the Cases lived in the house across Davis Creek, there was no bridge except for a swinging foot bridge. Asked what they did about getting across the creek in the wintertime, Hal says,

"We just didn't take the wagon and team across."

He also recalls that the first time he kissed his girl Shirley goodnight (after at least two years of getting up the courage to try), he went to bed at

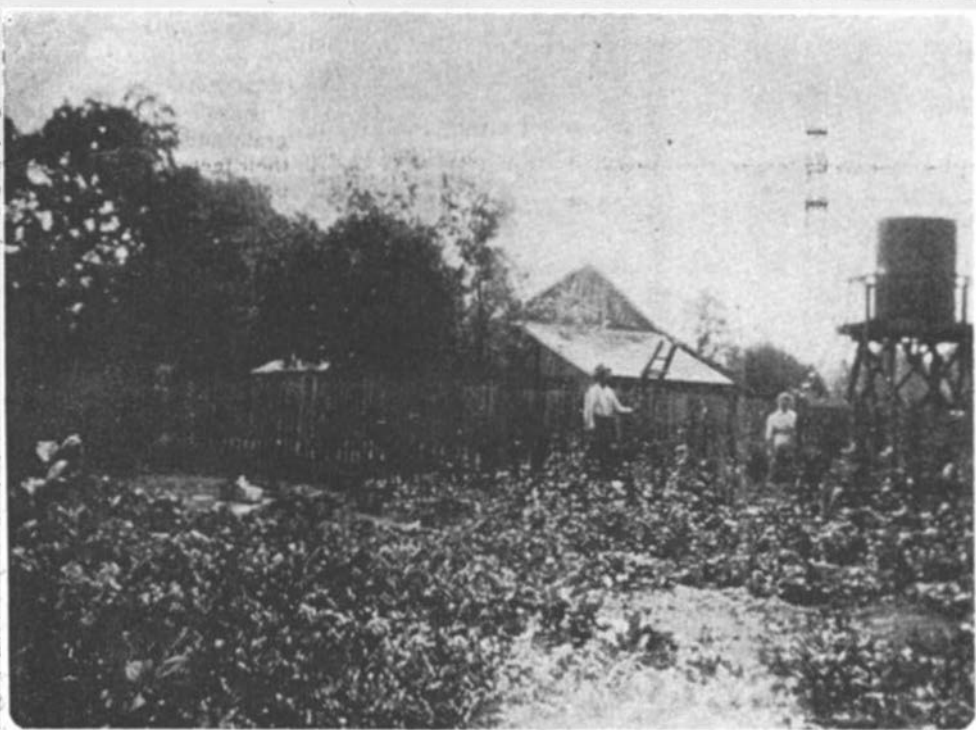
home in a state of non-alcoholic intoxication with no memory at all of crossing the bridge on foot. With a twinkle, he says he has always believed that he flew over the creek that night.

On another occasion, he took Shirley to a dance in a big barn which was located where the Harry Peters house is today, at the foot of Pine Mountain.

"I don't know who owned that barn, but Joe Raymond lived nearby, and he used to hold dances in the barn and everybody in the Valley went to them. Ted Fulwider played the fiddle, and Bey Barnwell, and Bob Wright—he lived in that house at the corner of Bray Lane and East Valley, across from where the Southwicks live today, but in those days it was owned by the Whiteds and Ruelles."



Dru Case and his team of six horses are shown hitched up to a handmade wooden land plane used to level off the land after it had been plowed and before it was seeded in grain.



Dru and May Case stand in their vegetable garden behind the house Dru built for his family "across the creek." Note the water tower, which was later enclosed in a wooden building which still stands.

family in the Valley

"So, one night I borrowed my Dad's horse and buggy and slicked all up and took Shirley to a dance up at Raymond's barn. Well, it was a pretty moonlit night, so I drove on up the road a bit (Ridgewood Road today), and then I sort of casual-like wrapped the lines around the whip stalk and inched over next to Shirley to put my arm around her.

"Just about then, something spooked the horse and he bolted, running up on the bank and tipping the buggy just enough so that Shirley fell out in the ditch.

"I don't remember much more about that night, she was so doggone mad at me. I remember she said—'From now on, why don't you just stay on your own side of the creek?'"

"Another place we used to

go for big doings, dances and the like, was at Walnut Grove Ranch, at the south end of the Valley. That was Eugene McPeak's home originally, but later it was owned by Amy Requa Long and leased to Homer Mitten before his wife died and Homer married Mrs. Long. Today Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Shuster live there.

"Right near there, Conklin Creek runs into Davis Creek, and everybody pitched in and built an outdoors dance platform there. We'd build a big bonfire on the creek, and dance to firelight all night long.

"Once, a fellow named Guy Hall, his wife was quite heavy set and the two of them were really stamping and whooping it up, and she went right through the floor. That broke up the dance that night."

To be continued

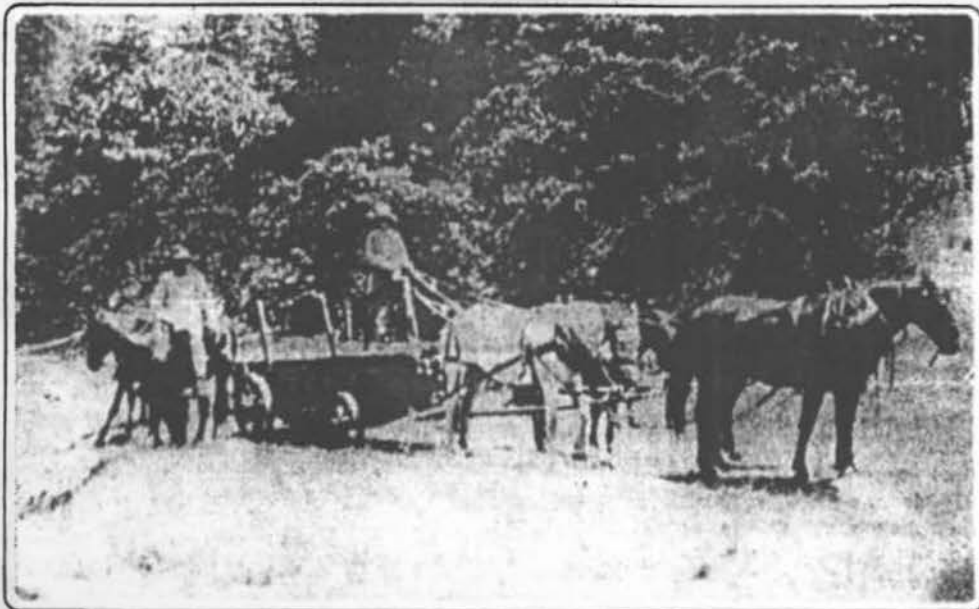


The Case home as it appeared shortly after its completion in about 1910. Frank Case and one of the Blosser boys are in the foreground, making an excavation for the root cellar. The place was later bought by a family named Grove, then by the Sheltons and for years was known as "the Shelton place." Today it is the home of the Glenn Fords.



The beautiful photograph at the top left is of Shirley Whited Case when she was the teenage sweetheart of Hal Case, during the years when they were courting and attending the barn dances and home parties held throughout the Valley. The left center photo shows the

Case home built at the far end of the large pasture across Davis Creek as it appears today, with the enclosed water tower in the background. Known for many years as the "old Shelton place" after the Cases sold the property, it is home today for the Glenn Ford family.



Amy Requa Long stands on a flat bed wagon loaded with fence posts for her Pine Mountain property during the years when she was a familiar figure, either on horseback or in horse-drawn wagon, on the rough dirt trails that served as roads in the Pine Mountain area. The man in the picture, one of the many hired hands Mrs. Long had working for her, is unidentified.

WN 12/1/1976

Continuing Hal Case's memories of early days in the Valley



The house on Walnut Grove Ranch which was located just below the spot where the Harry Peters home is today, at the entrance to Pine Mountain. Behind the house was the big barn where Joe Raymond held dances for all the Valley families from the late teens to early 1920s.

Continuing Hallie Case's memories of his early teens in Little Lake Valley, he says his mother and father always welcomed groups of neighbors into their home for evenings of music, even though they were not always in agreement as to just what kind of music was "proper." May Irene liked church music—Dru preferred something livelier.

When Hallie was in his early teens, his dad ordered a player piano by mail, out of a catalogue. It came up on the train, and all four boys went into town with their father to pick it up at the station and bring it home in the wagon.

There were some anxious moments crossing the creek, with the weight of the piano causing the wagon wheels to sink considerably deeper than usual, but they finally got it across and into the house.

From then on, the Cases usually had "open house" every Sunday afternoon and most of the Valley would come to sing and listen to the newest rolls of music from the city. Orletta Gowell (later Nelson) was one of the "town girls" whom Hallie recalls as a regular Sunday afternoon visitor.

On those occasions, boards were laid along the picket fence for the ladies to walk upon, so they wouldn't dirty their skirts in the dark, rich soil of the plowed pasture.

The musical afternoon

would usually end with a taffy-pull in the kitchen, or sometimes all the women would have brought baskets of food and they would sit out under the oak trees for a picnic lunch.

Picnics were, in fact, one of the favorite social gatherings of Valley families and there were a half dozen or more favorite spots for holding them, including the Baechtel Grove along East Hill Road, Conklin's place up in Pine Mountain (near the junction of Conklin and Davis Creeks), and the Walnut Grove Ranch.

Considering the number of hours of work put in by every man and woman every day of the year, it is a wonder that there was any social life at all, but Hallie remembers those early years as being especially full of fun and good times.

"For one thing, we used to make good times out of work—like when we were threshing, or building roads or barns or just about anything," he recalled.

In the new house across the creek, the Case brothers had reached an age where they were doing men's work so they were able to help with much of the heavy work around the place.

There was a particularly large garden behind the house, planted in potatoes and vegetables, as well as berry bushes of all kinds. Keeping that large area weeded and watered was an on-going

project in which all the family shared.

Hauling water up from the creek became such a chore that Dru and the boys finally laid in piping from the house down to the creek and had their own irrigation system for the garden and fields of grain.

Like most families, the Cases also had a large flock of chickens and ducks, as well as a milk cow, goats and hogs.

Despite all the chores at home, Hallie still found time to hire out now and then to work for other families in order to earn a dollar or two in those days when cash was a particularly scarce commodity.

Typical of such jobs, he once helped Bill Moore plant an open acre of pasture land up on Pine Mountain.

Hal remembers that the 100 pound sack of grain seed was purchased by Moore from John Hellesoe, father of Alex Hellesoe. The Hellesoe ranch, which was the old original Moore ranch, was on the one lane dirt road leading up into Pine Mountain, and today is the home of Paul Krause.

After picking up the sack of grain and loading it into the back of Moore's horse-drawn wagon, the two made their way up to the Conklin place by the roughly rutted wagon road which was the main access to Pine Mountain at that time.

"There were several families scattered around up in the Pine Mountain region then,

some of them going back to the 1880's and 90's—the Conklins, for instance, and the Hoppers, for whom Hopper's Flat was named," Hal says.

"Eventually, Amy Requa Long bought up all those old homesteads and all of Pine Mountain and the lands to the east, clear over to Highway 101.

"She started out with the Mariposa Ranch of some 640 acres in Redwood Valley and the western flank of Pine Mountain. Then she began to buy up those old homesteads and before she was through, she owned about 20,000 acres."

One of the properties bought by Mrs. Long was the Walnut Grove Ranch at the foot of Pine Mountain, which covered the south end of the Valley floor. There were two fine old houses on that ranch. One, which was located where the Shuster home is today, was leased by Homer Mitten and his wife and was a favorite gathering place of the Valley families for a number of years.

The other house was just below where the Harry Peters' live today, and it was near that house that the Joe Raymond barn dances were held.

Both of those old houses were lost to fires in later years.

"That Mrs. Long, who eventually married Homer Mitten after his wife died, was quite a lady. She provided work for lots of us young fellows during those years.

"Always had some project or other going on up there in Pine Mountain, building corrals and fences, cutting brush and clearing land for the cattle she ran up there. Guess there's some remnants of those old fences we built for her still up there in those woods."

To be continued

The Case brothers grow up and the

WN 12/8/1976

The year 1915 saw a lot of changes for the Dru Case family. World War I was just beginning, and the two oldest boys, Frank and Verne, volunteered for the Army and left home, following one of the last big family parties to be held in the last home Dru had built for his family on the far side of Davis Creek.

Of that farewell party, Hal Case says the only thing he remembers is that his brother Frank managed to talk him out of a ruby signet ring that was a source of special pride.

"I had saved up a long time to buy that ring," Hal recalls. "I bought it from old man Guslander, who was the father of A.B. Guslander, the jeweler. It was a real beauty, and that night before the boys left for the service, Frank got me off in a corner and went on about how he'd like to have that ring to wear as a remembrance of me while he was off in battle.

"Well, of course, it was a sentimental occasion with the family breaking up for the first time and all, so I agreed and that's the last I ever saw of my ring."

In that same year, Hallie took his first job away from home, working as a freight handler for the railroad at the big freight terminal located at Dos Rios. That was the beginning of a 40 year employment with the railroad, although it was an on-again, off-

again situation for the first few years.

During the year he worked at Dos Rios, Hallie roomed and boarded at Beard's Hotel, and carried on his courtship of Shirley Whited by hand delivered messages sent down to Willits by the train crews.

Once, Shirley came up on the train with Hal's mother and her own mother to spend a few days, and Hallie proudly took her around to meet all the railroad men and families living in Dos Rios at that time.

Shirley's father, Manuel Whited, had died when she was 12 years old, but her mother and the four Whited children continued to live in the home Manuel had built for them in the Valley.

Her mother, Dorcas ("Duckie" as Manuel had called her) would a few years later marry Parker Hall, but at the time Shirley and Hallie

Case were courting, Shirley filled an important role in the family, helping her widowed mother make a home for the three brothers.

Reuben, the oldest brother, had one of the first big passenger cars in the Valley—a Buick touring car that was a familiar sight on Sunday afternoons, loaded down with young people and picnic baskets.

Another familiar sight during the rainy season was Reuben's car bogged down in the mud on one of the Valley roads, and a half dozen young men with coats off, heaving mightily to set it free.

After Hal left the Valley to work for the railroad, and Frank and Verne went off to war, Dru and May Irene decided the homestead had served its purpose and it was time to move on.

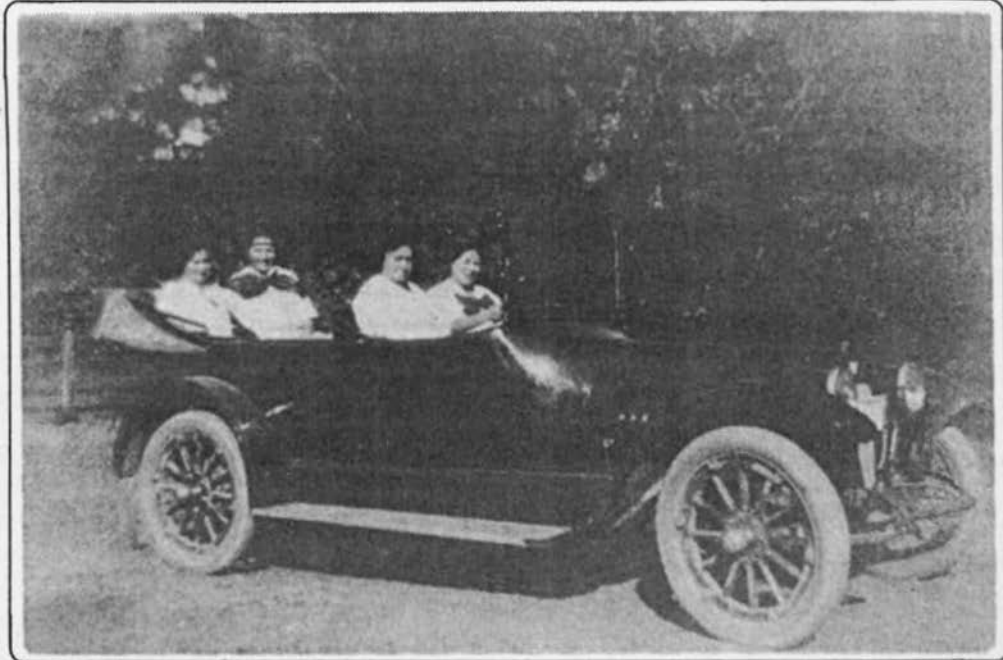
They had added one more

member to their family, an adopted daughter.

According to Hallie, his father had always wanted a black haired, brown eyed daughter and after talking about it for a number of years, he and May drove down to the Lytton Home, an orphanage near Cloverdale, and adopted a six year old girl. Her name was Josephine Farley, but Dru and May renamed the child Mildred Case.

Mildred was about 11 years old, and Jake (Foster) Case was 13, when Dru Case sold his last Valley home to a family named Grove and moved back south to the town of Poplar, where he was hired as superintendent of the big Harrison Ranch.

Later, the Groves would sell the place to the Shelton family, and for many years the well hidden ranch house would be known as the



homestead is sold



In the top photo, Shirley Whited and Halle Case pose together at Dos Rios when Shirley visited him there while he was working for the railroad freight station. Shirley was properly chaperoned by both her mother and Halle's. In the lower photo, Frank and Vernon Case are shown as they appeared at the time they left home to serve with the U.S. Army during World War I.

"Shelton place."

In the meantime, Hal's job at Dos Rios finally came to an end and he came back to Willits to hire on with the highway crews that were working on Highway 101, improving it from the narrow, rutted dirt road that followed a winding course of many curves. The work had started in 1913, with Charles Whited and Dave Sawyers getting the contract for the first section of the work between Ukiah and Calpella.

A year or so later, A.J. Fairbanks and Gordon Baechtel were awarded the contract for continuing the work from Calpella to Willits, to the point where the highway entered the town along what is now called Baechtel Road, curving around the wooded hill which was still part of the original

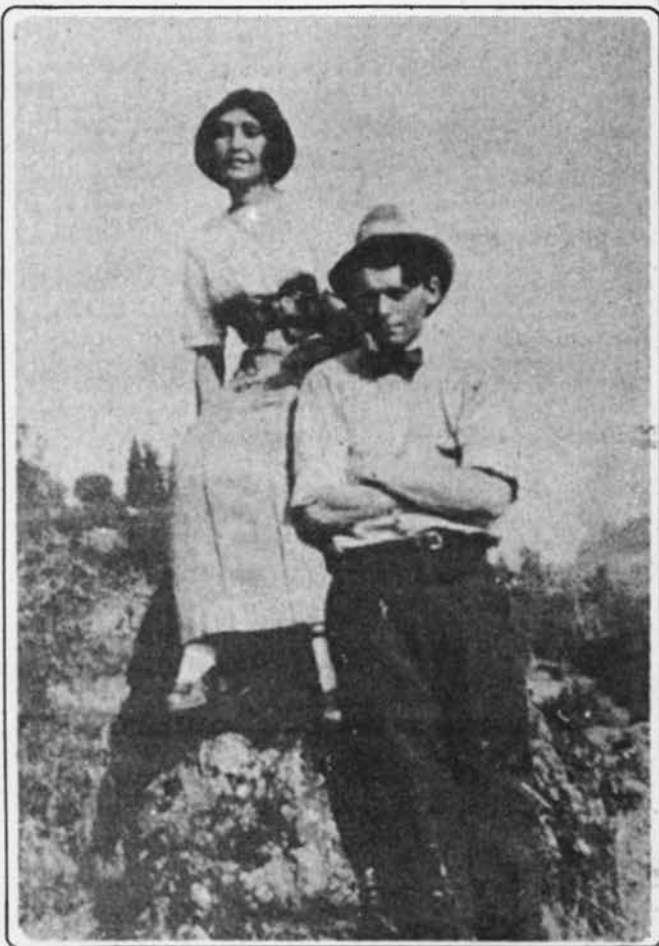
Baechtel homestead that extended across where South Main Street now runs.

The work consisted of blasting a straight-of-way through hills, taking the more dangerous of the curves out, and widening the roadbed to 24 feet with a 10 foot wide center strip of eight inch deep gravel which was rolled with a 13 ton gasoline roller.

At the time Hallie started work on the highway, the work was centered around Forsythe Creek and a family by the name of Van Dusen provided room and board for some of the workers.

Hallie talked the Van Dusens into letting him rent a tent with a wooden floor, and then went to work convincing Shirley that the time had come to get married.

To be continued





Reuben Whited's famous Buick touring car is pictured above filled with its usual bevy of local beauties. Seated in the car are Roberta and Evelyn Cook, and Grace and Ruth Johnson. The lower picture was taken on the old dirt highway coming into town from the south. Baechtel Hill is the wooded rise in the background to the right, and the highway at that time curved around that hill along what is now called Baechtel Way. Turning off to the left in the foreground is the entrance to the old Mulr Ranch, today known as the Sunnybrook Ranch.

Shirley and Hallie Case begin their

married life

On June 11, 1916, Hallie Case and Shirley Whited were married in the Whited home on what is now called Sawyers Lane, the place which later would be the home of Doug and Ethel Whited.

Hallie does not remember much about that day, only that "everybody there cried except Roy Good," but he does remember he was in something of a daze in sheer disbelief of his own good luck in finally getting the independent Miss Whited to the altar.

Once he got her to set the date, Hallie busied himself with fixing up their honeymoon cottage at the Van Dusen ranch, close to the highway work he was doing at the time. The cottage was actually a tent, in which Hallie put a wooden floor and covered it with matting, then hauled in a Bridge Beach cook

stove, a bed, dresser, table and two chairs.

So much time was put into getting the tent ready for his bride, that Hallie completely forgot a few details connected with the business of getting married. Early the morning of his wedding day, he woke up with a flash of remembrance and realized he had neither a license nor a ring.

"I broke all records getting out of bed and getting dressed, and rode horseback into town to the home of Zack and Margaret Elliott on School Street, just north of the Methodist Church."

Zack was one of the owners of the Elliott and Frost store which was located where Sprouse Reitz is today, and was also a good friend of Hal's. Those two facts added up to Elliott's being the one person in town to whom Hal

felt he could turn in his hour of need.

Dashing up to the Elliott home at 6 a.m., Hallie pounded on the door until he awoke the occupants and then borrowed \$15 cash from his friend — \$5 to pay for a ring from Guslander's Jewelry Store when it opened at 8; \$5 to get a license from the Justice of the Peace, and \$5 to pay the preacher, the Reverend J.T.C. Smith.

Dorcas (Duck) Whited made her daughter's wedding dress, a simple ankle length gown of white georgette and crepe, with short puffed sleeves and ruffled neckline, tied at the waist with a satin bow. With every stitch put in by hand, the dress covered a series of lace-trimmed undergarments which were also all made by hand.

The young couple was at-

tended by Shirley's cousin, Clyde Chahon, and her best friend Orletta Gowell (Nelson), while Shirley's brother Reuben gave her in marriage.

The couple stood beneath a parasol covered with fresh sweet peas for the ceremony, which was followed by the usual lavish spread of foods of all kinds set out upon several long tables in the yard.

Their wedding trip was a drive down the highway in Reuben's Buick touring car to the wood-floored tent where they lived that first summer of their marriage.

Hallie's work on the highway consisted of using his father's team of horses, which had been left in his care along with the wagon, when Dru and May left the Valley. The horses were used to pull a scraper along the rocky road bed to level it before the loads of gravel were applied.

The pay was \$4.25 a day, a truly munificent sum in those days for 10 hours of work and out of which the worker had to pay for the horses' feed.

Shirley busied herself "fixing up" her first home and in going swimming in nearby Forsyth Creek with Mrs. Van Dusen.

At last the summer came to an end, and when the winter rains started work had to stop on the highway, so the young pair moved back home with Shirley's mother. About that time, Manuel Whited's last remaining brother, Frank, died in the old Whited homestead at the end of Sawyers Lane and left Dorcas \$1600 plus the 50 acres on which she lived and which had been Manuel's share of the original Whited property.

Dorcas immediately divided up both the money and the land among her four children. Shirley received \$400 cash and the 12 acres which is still the Cases' home.

By this time, Shirley was pregnant with their first baby and Hallie was anxious to have the child born in its own home. With the help of Parker Hall, who would marry the widow Dorcas four years later, he

built the home in which they have lived ever since.

Following the good example set for him years before by his hard working father, Hallie first dug the well, then built the barn and lastly the house.

All the lumber was bought and paid for out of Shirley's \$400 inheritance. Hallie remembers that all the doors and windows for the place came to \$75, and all the lumber was redwood bought from Northwestern.

The house was located at the very rear of the 12 acres Dorcas had given them, and Hallie then hitched up the horses and went to work plowing the rest of the land, planting the wheat, oats and potatoes that were the staple crops of the Valley at that time.

[To be continued]





These two photos taken on Shirley and Hal Case's wedding day, June 11, 1916, have an interesting history. They were taken by Orletta Gowell in the roadway in front of the Whited home, and are of the happy newlyweds [left] and Shirley's cousin Clyde Chahon [right] who stood up with them. [Note the "high water" pants and high button shoes].



Fifty years later, Orletta Gowell Nelson discovered the undeveloped roll of film in a drawer and sent it off to be processed. These pictures which came back were given by Orletta to Shirley and Hal on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Hal and Shirley Case recall early Christmases in Little

Hal and Shirley Case's first baby, June, was born in 1917 in the same house where Shirley was born, with Dr. Gunn in attendance.

Hallie and Parker Hall were busily at work on the Case's new home at the time, but it was not finished until June was four months old and the family moved into their new home right before Christmas.

Neither the Case family nor the Whiteds had ever had a Christmas tree. Looking back now, Hallie and Shirley say they do not remember Christ-

mas being as big a thing in the very early days as it is now.

Hallie says he and his brothers used to hang up their stockings, which were then filled with hard candies, nuts and oranges, and that was the extent of the family's gifts.

In the Whited family, too, filled stockings were the big delight of Christmas morning and, as there was no fireplace at the Whited's, the youngsters hung their stockings over the backs of chairs.

The first Christmas tree the young couple ever had was the

one they put up the first Christmas they were in their own home with their new baby girl.

Hallie hiked over into Baechtel Woods, which contained about 70 acres of big firs, and cut down a tree which he then packed home upon his back.

From that year on, they always had a tree—cut sometimes in Baechtel Woods, sometimes on Dave and Bertha Cook's property, sometimes out on Bob and Verna Corbett's place north of town, and occasionally out past

Hearst.

Through the early years of the Cases' marriage, however, Christmas remained a simple, homespun affair with homemade decorations for the tree and homemade toys for the children.

Shirley, like all the girls of the time, had been taught at an early age to knit, crochet and embroider and sewing for her babies as they came along was a favorite past time. (June was followed by Douglas in 1919 and Leah Jean in 1921.)

Christmas dinner was the

one bit of holiday activity which was never simple. As long as Shirley's mother, Duck Whited, remained alive, the family always took dinner at her house and as Hallie remembers with nostalgia, "Nobody could ever put out a table of food like Duck Whited!"

No matter how hard times might be, there was never any lack of good things to eat from the bountiful larder that every family built up through the year by "putting up" vegetables, berries and fruits as

they were harvested from the highly productive gardens and crop fields of the Valley.

Shirley says, "We never even knew a depression was on. We had our cow for milk, made our own butter and cheese, had chickens and eggs and vegetable garden, and what we didn't raise, my mother did on her farm right next door to us."

Hallie agrees, but remembers that salaried jobs were hard to come by and harder still to hang on to during the 20's.

"I worked on and off for the railroad during those first years; it wasn't until later that I went to work full time as a car inspector, making 47 cents an hour. That was big pay.

"However, even during the so-called depression years, I never was out of work. I'd get laid off one day, and the next day I'd find something else to do, hiring out to cut wood or dig ditches or do anything at all."



Panoramic view of Willits in 1910

Lake Valley

When he wasn't hiring out for pay to work for others, Hallie found plenty to do on his own farm, and was also tending to the fields that were still owned by his father and planted in wheat.

When June was still a baby, Hal had to leave home for a couple of weeks in order to take Dru's team and wagon back to him in Poplar, as well as \$1000 in cash which Hal had collected by selling Dru's grain, and which he carried inside his boot on the 400 mile trip.

"It took 14 days to cover the 400 miles going down in the wagon. I started out with Uncle Shady Case riding along with me, but down along Modesto someplace we got into an argument about him smoking his Bull Durham cigarettes, and we parted company, so I made the rest of the trip alone."

With the horses, wagon and money safely delivered to his father, Hallie then took the

train back home.

About that trip, he remembers only that he was carrying a bottle of Lysol in his hip pocket and it broke during the trip, thoroughly drenching him in its acrid aroma and causing him considerable embarrassment.

Shirley's brother Doug was in his teens at the time she married, and he spent a lot of time with the Cases, helping Hallie with the crops and occasionally talking him into going fishing instead of working.

"Especially when the salmon were running in Tomki or the Eel, we'd take off, going through town to sell a crate of eggs or so to Irvine and Muir to get enough money to buy grub and gas for the Model-T flivver.

"Those were good years. They weren't what you'd call carefree, because everybody had problems, but nobody was alone, we all pulled and worked and played together."

To be continued



A typical gathering of Little Lake Valley families is shown during the years that Hal and Shirley Case were keeping company. Although all of these persons have not been identified, those who have been include in the back row, Duck Whited's mother, Mrs. Hoover, and Hal's parents, May Irene and Drew Case. Seated in the center of the second row is Duck Whited and second from the left is Shirley Whited sitting between Irene and Hilda Sindt, with her younger brother Doug stretched out with his head in her lap. The other young boys in the picture include the Case brothers.

Case history concludes with



Hallie and Shirley Case in the late 1930's are pictured during a family party in the back yard of their home on Center Valley Road. Through the years numerous birthday parties, anniversaries and weddings have been held here, and in 1967 Hallie and Shirley were honored by a reception in the yard honoring their Golden Wedding Anniversary. There are now two grandchildren and three great grandchildren to attend the family gatherings.



Hal and Shirley as they appear today, enjoying a relaxed moment in their secluded tree shaded back yard where Hallie spends most of his time. Shirley leads an active life and Hallie says admiringly of her, 'She can crochet, work a crossword puzzle and watch TV all at the same time.'

memories of the 1920s and 1930s

The last time Hallie Case was laid off by the railroad was in 1929, by which time all the Case children were in school and the needs of the family were at their greatest. Even so, neither Hallie nor Shirley remember feeling particularly concerned.

"I never had any problem finding honest work to do," Hallie says, "and I don't recall ever feeling anxious or troubled about being able to provide for my family. A man just does whatever he has to do."

After the 1929 layoff, Hallie went once again to Homer Mitten, who was serving as manager of Amy Requa Long's extensive holdings in the Pine Mountain region, and was put to work cording wood and mending fences.

At that time there was a log cabin on the ridge road running along the top of Pine Mountain which was used by some of the men working for Mrs. Long when she had cattle roaming the area. Hallie was put to work with a couple of other fellows putting in a well alongside the cabin.

"We drilled down to water, and then put in a metal casing like we used in those days. After we had it all finished, Mrs. Long came riding up on

her horse to check the job, and decided the casing wasn't put in exactly right so we had to pull the whole thing apart and do it all over."

It was during that period that Hallie became active in school affairs and was appointed to serve as Clerk of the School Board. He was very much involved in the campaign to bring about a consolidation of the many outlying schools into one District.

"Mamma was having to drive in to town to take June to high school, then she had to drive the two younger children to Sawyers School and in the afternoon make the rounds to pick them all up," Hallie explains, "so the consolidation into one District was important to us, to all the families in the Valley."

When the consolidation went through, all the small one and two room schools like Sawyers School were closed down, and the first school busses began to roll, picking up Valley children and bringing them into Willits to attend the elementary school here.

"I figure what that move saved us in gasoline bills just about paid our taxes each year."

Hallie says that during those years there was minimum government interference

in people's lives, and he was active in the fight to eliminate the job of School Administrator as being unnecessary with a County Superintendent on the job.

"Roy Good had the job at the time, and he was a good man and a smart one," Hallie recalls, "but I just didn't feel we needed one more fellow supervising our affairs. I went around telling everybody how I felt, that we were over supervised, and most folks agreed, but Good kept the job."

"In those days we didn't even have any PTA, but then we didn't have a lot of other things like Planning Commissions and all those kinds of groups that are telling folks how they can live today."

Hallie reflects a moment and then adds, "It's terrible, just terrible, the way the government has complicated people's lives."

After the 1929 layoff, when Hallie went back to work for the railroad it was a permanent job that continued until his retirement in 1960 at the age of 65.

"They gave me a big party up at Brooktrails, lots of folks there, and they gave me a big fancy bunch of fishing tackle. It was real fine, but I hadn't done any fishing in years and didn't aim to do any more. Gave it all to my brother-in-law and my son-in-law. Sure appreciated the party, though."

Asked what his hobbies are, if not fishing, Hallie grins, "When I was young enough, it was chasing good looking women—but now it's just looking at 'em."

He slides a mischievous glance at Shirley and chuckles, "Mamma knows I'm just teasing. I've got the prettiest girl in the Valley right here."

In 1938, Dru and May Case celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. One year later, Dru went out to the barn one evening to feed and milk the cow, complained of feeling tired and went upstairs to bed. That night he died quietly in his sleep.

serving as pallbearers at Dru Case's funeral were Gordon Baechtcl, Bill Baechtcl, Dave Cook, Wade Cook, Val Blosser and Ed Simonsen—a representative roll call of old timers whose family roots went as deep in the Valley as the Cases'.

Eight years later, May followed Dru in death, and both are buried in the old Little Lake Cemetery.

Today, Hallie and Shirley Case live a quiet, gentle life in the only home they've ever known since their marriage over half a century ago.

It is a warm and beautiful place, with a wide back yard shaded by trees and honeysuckle vines where Hallie has his easy chair set out and where he spends most of his days when the weather permits. He seldom leaves the place unless one of the children or grandchildren insist on taking him somewhere special.

Shirley leads an active social life and goes to a weekly bridge game, but Hallie prefers to stay at home, evidently drawing strength from the land with which he has been intimate for all of his long and happy life.

There are not many Hallies and Shirleys left, and an entire way of life is passing with them. A time of innocence, of basic human goodness and simplicity is reflected in their lives and in their surprisingly young and unlined faces.

It is a solid kind of goodness, a product of an era when, as Hallie says, "A man did what he had to do."



Hallie Case's mother, May Irene Case, is shown in a picture taken in her flower garden in 1942. This was the last home that Dru Case had provided for her, and was the one in which he died three years before this picture was taken. The house on Coast Street is still standing.