

Early Hugo & McCormick Hotel

Mary Ellen Ritchie, StoryTeller

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

2000

I, Mary Ellen Ritchie, was born October 30, 1912 at the time my folks were living on their homestead off the Ahern Road within a mile of downtown Hugo, Oregon. My grandfather, John Ritchie, was a Union soldier serving right after the Civil War. He eventually came west to Hugo and died here.

My folks first came to Hugo in 1910. Sister, Marge, was three weeks old at the time. My family stayed with the Petersons for awhile until they moved to the Holgate house. Our family was not rich. I remember the kids felt they were pretty poor.

My family moved to Wolf Creek in 1920 and then to Salem, Oregon in 1924, but my family always retained property and friendship ties in Hugo. We started having reunions of Hugo people who had birthdays in October and I have been returning Hugo in October ever since. I have so many wonderful stories of Hugo. A little about early Hugo and the McCormick Hotel follows.



Photo 1. Early Hugo: c.a., 1915

“Early Hugo” An early picture of Hugo after the new railroad crossing was established around 1915 shows the railroad crossing before they moved the semi-fore signals down (Photo 1).

There were originally three stores in Hugo.

1. The long low building was first the post office before it became a store (first building to right of railroad tracks). This was where the Grimms were when they had the post office.

2. William McKenzie had a one-story little store back behind that pretty close to the creek that runs between the old Henry place and the railroad track.

3. Lynn Smith’s grocery store had a loading place out front. This store is where the Hitching Post store is today (can see a small part of above post office and McKenzie store in picture).

4. Big white empty boarding house is in center of picture by semi-fore. This was a different building from the McCormick boarding house. It had been built when the tracks were first being built in Hugo c.a., 1883.

Hugo had the McCormick Hotel along the same street, then a little house, and then the Triplett house. Will McKenzie boarded in the upstairs of the first Hugo Hitching Post for years.

“McCormick Hotel” Mrs. McCormick was partly of Indian descent. She had a boarding house for the railroad men. “I remember sitting and playing with Edith McCormick when her little Indian mother (dressed like an Indian) was there sitting in the corner over by the fireplace. Her Indian mother never talked or said anything, but her eyes would kinda sparkle when the kids did something humorous while playing.”

Edith and Mary would sit in front of the fireplace and play when it was raining outside. The McCormicks had this rooming house and “I would love to go there because they had an upstairs, halls, and downstairs while in comparison my family lived in a shack that did not have those neat features.” Edith called her grandmother “Nanna.” “I remember that Nanna always had these good things in the boarding house and she would give these good things to the kids and I would love it.”

Walker, Michael L. April 26, 2000. *Mary Ellen (Ritchie) Fitzpatrick's Hugo Memories*. Education Chair for Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. Hugo, OR.

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