

## Jack Dee

Grizzly: 1886-????<sup>1</sup>

The story of Jack Dee was told many years ago by someone that interviewed him, Evada Power. Excerpts of Mrs. Power's work appear elsewhere in this book but I have inserted her story on Jack Dee here in its entirety. Few—but some—remember Mrs. Power (not Powers). Andrew Morrow, of Madras, is one that remember. Mr. Morrow cannot tell me for which she wrote or the year in which the following article was written. With or without the particulars of Mrs. Power, it is fortunate that she wrote these articles and someone cut them out and pasted them into scrapbooks at the A.R. Bowman Memorial Museum in Prineville.

The story of Jack Dee is very closely intertwined with that of the Malings and you will learn some things about the Malings here that were not included in the chapter on C.C. Maling. Here is the story of Jack Dee as told by Evada R. Power.

**Fifty-eight years ago<sup>2</sup> Jack Dee came to central Oregon with his parents from Cleedon, an English village, where many generations of Dees had lived and died. The village was close to South Shields and North Shields, but it was at North Shields Jack attended a church of England school and was graduated in the approved manner.**

**This decision to cross an ocean and the North American continent was not made in haste, but with due English caution and preparation. Aiding the preparation were many letters from Mrs. Charles Maling, the sister of Jack's father, who had arrived in central Oregon in 1877 with her husband. Each letter contained glowing accounts of a new country and persuaded**

**his father, the owner of a drapery store, that in America, and especially Oregon, great opportunity awaited his arrival.**

**Jack, the youngest of three children, was 16 years old and remembers well the eventful ten-day trip across the Atlantic in a ship of the Allen line which was equipped with steam and sails. The other children were the late Mrs. Guy Kibbee and the late George Dee, whose widow, Mrs. Mamie Dee, now lives in Redmond.**

**When the Dees arrived they settled on Willow creek, took over the Maling mill and filed on a timber claim....**

**When the timber gave out, the Malings, accompanied by Charlie Cooper, an uncle of Mrs. Maling, and Charlie Durham, an English friend, came to Grizzly.<sup>3</sup> Durham helped select the mill site. Jack's father and Durham formed a partnership and another mill was set up on Trout creek.**

**When Durham died he was buried in the Maling plot in the Prineville cemetery. The first grade school in Prineville was built with donations and Mr. Maling donated two thousand dollars.**

**Jack remembers Jerry Ackey who worked in the mill and Jim Eagen, who took care of three or four yoke of oxen. Five men usually ran the mill and under them, Jack served an eager apprenticeship. In memory's picture are the sturdy oxen bringing in the logs. After Maling's death Jack bought the mill from his aunt and ran it for over 20 years.**

**The Prineville of Jack's youth was stretched out in a hit and miss pattern of about 300 people with only one house north of the bridge. Madras had two houses, the**

1. I have been unable to determine when Dee retired or quit the business.

2. The date of this article cannot be determined.

3. This seems to imply that Dee has a sawmill in California. In the genealogical records of Sam Compton, a contemporary of Jack Dee, appears this: "Maling's first American sawmill was in California, ...." Provided to the author by Donald Houk, Tokyo, Japan, April 15, 1996.

Palmain and Boice houses, and the flat now covered by business houses was a field of rye.

During the short winter term of school Jack was one of the pupils when Joe Slayton was the teacher. A general store at Grizzley was owned by Lou Hamilton and Ed Wills and a big business was handled. Lumber sold for \$10 per thousand and often rough lumber only brought \$8. Flooring ran from \$25 to \$30 per thousand and the main market was at Prineville and lumber was hauled there with four and six horse teams. Later Jack was associated in a mill with Hank Frohnhofner and Sam Compton, this being the second mill to be set up at Grizzley. Later it was set up on Coon creek and finally ended up on upper Trout creek.<sup>4</sup>

Socials and dances were held at the school-house and at the homes. Church was held at the schoolhouse when traveling preachers arrived for a month of soul-saving revival meetings. This schoolhouse is still standing and has been used as a grange hall for many years. [No longer standing; the date of destruction or removal is not know by this writer.]

Keen rivalry prevailed among the women, who prided themselves on good cooking, when basket dinners or harvest crews were the judges. In fact it was the men's favorite topic of conversation, but all agreed, men and cooks alike, that the late Mrs. Mancel Wheeler was tops. Her huckleberry and mincemeat pies were more sought after than gold. Applicants to work for their winter's board at the Wheeler ranch far exceeded the need. An annual trip to Clear and Big lakes for huckleberries was a vacation enjoyed by old and young.

As a young man, Jack saw a man by the name of Edmondsen killed at a dance at the Grizzley school house. The victim had the

post office on the Click place and had helped himself to a few bottles of beer and some whiskey that came out in an order for a man in the vicinity. It was an unpardonable crime and the man's offer to pay went unheeded. The liquor came out on the mail stage from Prineville and it was intended to promote cheer for the owner and his friends between dances. In the ensuing quarrel Edmondsen was stabbed 17 times with a six-inch dirk. He was a very sorry looking corpse and it was Jack and two others who sat by him the rest of the night and into the next day when the undertaker and coroner from Prineville arrived to take charge. The killer was arrested and sentenced to the state penitentiary for life, but he was back in 18 months.

Ed Kutcher was living on a homestead in the Baldwin hills about two miles below the Parish place. The Kutcher precinct was named after this early homesteader who raised horses and worked at the Maling mill.

Jack's wife was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Crooks, early settlers of Grizzley. She was three years old when her father was killed by Lucius Langdon in a land boundary dispute. He was lynched while in custody of the law in Prineville, as was his hired man, who was above Prineville at the time of the trouble. This lynching started a reign of terror of vigilante rule with gun and rope.

Three children of the Dees born near the turn of the century were named for a war hero of the Spanish-American war, Manila, Dewey and George. All attended school at Grizzley and finished high school at Prineville and Madras.

The Click family was living on the Morrow and Kennan ranch which they had bought from the Belknaps. The old land mark, which was destroyed by fire this year [supposedly 1937 or 1938], was built

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4. Pinning down the locations of these various mills is almost impossible, partly because these men were in partnership not only with each other but also others. The author has visited sites attributed to Compton and Frohnhofner. These sites were referred to as "the Compton mill" and "the Frohnhofner mill." The person accompanying me grew up at these mill sites but was such a young girl that she could no longer remember who owned what or who was partnered with whom. It doesn't really matter—although I would like to be able to tell you with certainty; but I can't.

by the father of Dr. Belknap. One of the Click children died and was buried above the red barn on the Grizzly road.

Jack was no exception to the times and he wasn't satisfied until he tried his hand at freighting. He hauled wool for Joe Taylor from Prineville to The Dalles and on the return trip he brought back everything from a wash-board to a threshing machine.

The Dees owned many different places in Grizzly but the old Montgomery place, home-steaded by the grandfather of Hattie Read, was their home. It had been the girlhood home of Mrs. Read when her father, Canada Montgomery, had taken it over from her mother's father, Captain Blakely. It is now owned by the Gordon Monroes. Jack also lived on the old Lytle place on the old stage road between Hay creek and Grizzly.

Now retired and living in Madras, he looks backward to compare the changes of 74 years of living. One decided change he sees is the truck loads of logs being brought to the mill at Madras [What mill was in Madras?] and he thinks this is an improvement instead of taking the mill to the logs as was done in his generation. As the trucks roll by his door at high speed he squints his eyes and sees again the lumbering gait of his father's oxen bringing in the logs to the gee and haw of the drivers.

The arrival of the stage coach was excitement enough for any community. How well Dee remembers the cloud of dust in the distance, which meant the four-horse coach would soon come in at breath-taking speed. The drivers would whip up their horses to arrive in a burst of speed with the old coach swaying from side to side and then would bring their teams to a sudden stop with a grand flourish of horsemanship. Passengers were tossed about looking disheveled and frightened and were reluctant to let go of the straps. Yes, the stage station was a fascinating place, and travelers and freighters making an overnight stop had interesting stories to tell.

Although Jack has leisure now, he finds not the quiet and peace he expected. Most of his friends have died or moved away and

he likens himself to a lone leaf left on a tree with no one near to spin the tall tales of yesterday.

Jack's work in the timber business was not free of problems. The Grizzly area was beset with a number of claims and counter-claims about timberland ownership. This problem resulted from fierce activity by individuals and companies alike to lock up the area's timber. In a separate chapter of this book you can read a summary of Oregon's rampant land fraud problem.

But Jack's immediate problem was described in an article in the *Prineville Review* (p. 1, c. 5) dated April 12, 1906. It read:

**A. R. Eastwood & Jack Dee, who were indicted by the federal grand jury and taken to Portland last week, were charged with cutting timber upon government land. They were the owners of the Dee & Eastwood sawmill near Grizzly mountain. A year or more ago they put a large amount of lumber in a yard at this place to be sold, but as this lumber was sawed from a portion of the timber cut on government land, its sale was forbidden by the government and the timber still stands on the lot next to Roush's meat market.**

Another view of the Jack Dee family is provided by Dewey Dee who wrote the following article for the Jefferson County Historical Society's book, *History of Jefferson County 1914-1983*, published by the Society in 1983. Some information will sound familiar to the reader but I don't want to disturb Mr. Dee's writing by editing out things that Mrs. Power wrote in her article. Perhaps Mr. Dee had Mrs. Power's article in hand when he wrote the following:

**The Dee family roots in America and Jefferson County, Oregon, date back to 1877 when C.C. Maling, an uncle of John W. Dee set up a steam sawmill on upper Willow Creek. Settlers needed lumber for their new homes and the mill prospered. Mr. Maling wrote his nephew, John W. Dee, who resided at South Shields, near Newcas-**

tle on Tyne, England, and urged him to bring his family and come to America. The family consisted of his wife, Hannah, sons George, age 14, Jack, age 12, and a daughter Lizzie, age 10. In due course with financial help in both England and America, steerage passage was arranged.

The family resided at a small house near the mill. The children completed their educations, mostly self-taught, and helped about the mill, long ahead of child labor laws.

In the 1860's and 70's the Crooks family of girls were growing up in the vicinity of Jefferson, Oregon. Mr. Crooks didn't like Willamette Valley rains. His destination was near Grizzly Mountain, where he took a homestead claim. Shortly thereafter he was killed by a neighbor in a property line dispute. The murderer was well known and a vigilante group sprang up almost immediately to take the law into their own hands. The following morning the murderer's body was found hanging beneath the Crooked River Bridge near Prineville.

Life for Anna Crooks became more difficult following the death of her husband. The older girls were of marriageable age and left home. The youngest girl, Nellie, was left at home alone. For her companionship, Anna Crooks adopted an orphan boy, John Lewis, to raise. Nellie Crooks met Jack Dee at a Saturday night dance, the one social event of the rural area. They were married in 1897. The Spanish-American War must have left a lasting impression on the newlyweds. Their children were named George, Dewey and Manila. All were delivered by midwives. Vital statistics were not important so there was no recording of these births.<sup>5</sup> The children escaped typhoid and scarlet fever and survived other childhood diseases, thanks to Castor Oil, aspirin, turpentine and Denver Mud.

Their most vivid memory of raising their family occurred when their small tyke, Manila pursued her kitty into the woods. She did not return at dusk. Parents and mill workers searched for her throughout the night, but to no avail. Manila walked out after daybreak. "My kitty got lost," she said.

Jack Dee and Sam Compton acquired the mill in 1906. The partnership of Compton and Dee. The business thrived for several years while settlers fulfilled their building requirements. Markets were limited to where they could haul lumber by horse and wagon. Jack Dee felt that his future and the welfare of his family was in farming. He purchased the Montgomery place on lower Willow Creek. It was near school, store and post office.

The one-teacher school offering all eight grades exposed the youngsters to good learning habits and pleasant childhood memories. Daughter Manila took her high school training in Prineville, while the boys, as they neared high school age, moved to the newly purchased Palmain house.

Like most young people who had survived the rigors of the Grizzly country and marveled that their parents had somehow managed to eke out a livelihood for their families decided that this life wasn't for them. The descendants of John W. and Hanna Dee have scattered far beyond Jefferson County. Only George W. Dee and his wife, Elyse, would answer roll call.

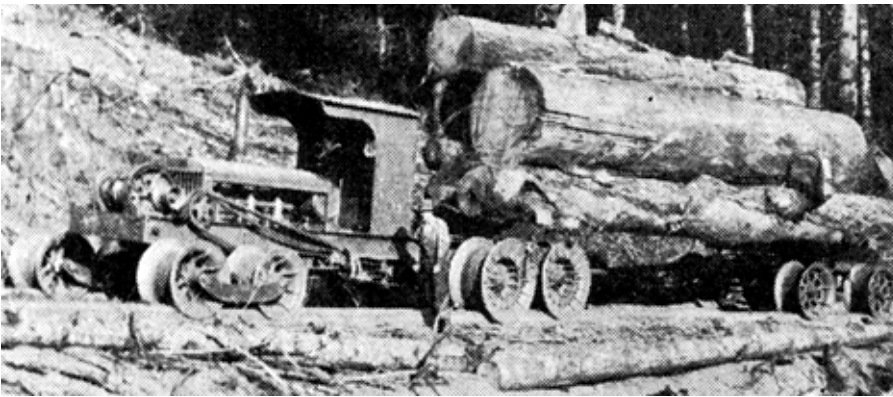
And that is the story of Jack Dee—as the records reveal it. I wish I could tell you more about Jack's sawmill activities but back when he was a lumberman no one thought to record those details; they are lost—probably forever. To my knowledge, no photographs of the Dee holdings exist.

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5. This makes formal documentation of the lives of these early pioneers difficult; the records just don't exist.

## GREEN GOLD

There are no photographs for Jack Dee, but below are some random images from random sources which might interest you. It has not been recorded: photographer, date, location.



Top left: That's a BIG cant! Top right: Consolidated Pine, Inc.  
Bottom: Logging RRs came in ALL forms.



Another sort of pioneer timberman, John Breese of Dixie Meadow Company, where he and his wife Lynne, utilize modern equipment to maximize their efforts to care for their timberlands of ponderosa pine and juniper.

Below, John is using a specially designed tractor imported from Finland (via Canada) which has been outfitted with processor called a NIAB-15B, made in Sweden, at the rear end. The tractor is equipped with what I call "a skidding line (wire rope)" which is remote controlled. Logs are processed on skid trail to be picked up by forwarder and taken to the landing log deck to load on log trucks. The tractor has a delimber and "bucks" the logs to preset lengths.

Don't get too excited; this works only for trees that are considered "small."

Part of the equipment included in the package is a self-loading trailer. After the saw bucks the logs they are in a deck (of sorts) and the trailer picks the logs and loads them on to the trailer for transport to the log truck loading area. This can, and usually is, a one-man operation.