

## Letters To The Editor

June 5, 1972

Editor  
Wallowa County Chieftain  
Dear Sir,

Having visited your grand county twice last year, we really enjoy reading of the many fine folks that we met there.

We are only renewing the Chieftain for a short time, as we are sincerely hoping to move to your area — when the right opportunity comes along.

We have a boy and girl, ages 14 and 11, who share our enthusiasm for your lovely Wallowa county.

We're looking for land or a ranch, out quite a way from town, and are willing to put up our own buildings, if necessary.

If you happen to know of anyone ready to retire or just have a "change of pace," and would make available land, to raise beef on, we'd be very grateful to hear about it.

We've been raising a few Herefords the past several years and would like to stick with them and hope the right place will soon become available for us.

Whenever we hear of a ranch that's been sold and will be split up into small recreation sights, we feel so sorry. There's only so much good land for raising animals or farming, and when that's gone — that's it!

We're looking forward to more "Around Our Town and Elsewhere", the Canadian adventures of the Coffins. Really enjoying the story.

Thanks for any information we can receive that will help us locate the ranch land we need.

Sincerely,  
Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Bowles  
3205 Grand View St.  
Gig Harbor, Wash. 98335

—o—  
806 C Avenue  
La Grande, Oregon  
11 June 1972

Mr. Don Swart, Editor  
Wallowa County Chieftain  
Enterprise, Oregon  
Dear Don,

Here is a century old local news item from the LaGrande **Mountain Sentinel** which may interest some of your readers. It was dated June 15, 1872, and headlined "Wallowa Valley". It refers to the first Minam Canyon - Smith Mountain Road which opened the valley for settlement.

"A. C. Smith informs us that on Saturday McRees and himself, with others numbering fifteen in all, will begin work on the road referred to and will remain on the ground until it is completed, or made passable to wagons. The time occupied will probably be about one month."

While man has brought about some subtle changes in the countryside over these first hundred years it staggers the mind to think of what he might produce over the next hundred.

Sincerely,  
Jon M. Skovlin

Try A  
**CHIEFTAIN**  
**CLASSIFIED AD**

**EVERY**

Imnaha, Oregon.  
June 22, 1972

Jon M. Skovlin  
806 C Ave.  
LaGrande, Oregon.

Dear Friend Jon:

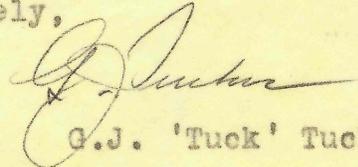
I refer to your letter of June 11th to the Editor of the Chieftian and the quote from the 'Mountain Sentinel', dated June 15th, 1872. There seems to have been an error somewhere along the line in the reference to the partner of A.C. Smith. Anderson C. Smith and McDonough B. Rees formed a partnership to build a bridge across the Wallowa River and construct a road from the bridge up over Smith Mountain and down into the Lower Wallowa Valley. This was chartered as a toll road.

There never was a man named McRees connected with the road. Mr. Rees because of his first name of McDonough was commonly known as, Mack Rees. There are probably descendents of Mr. Rees still living in the Grande Ronde Valley who would appreciate having their ancestor credited with his public service in opening the road into Wallowa Valley. Mr. Rees was a man of considerable means for those days and he financed the Smith Mountain Road and Bridge almost 100%. He was a prominent farmer and rancher in the Cove area. An ex-miner who had made good in some of the early day gold strikes, such as Colville and Oro Fine, he was well liked and had many friends.

The original road crossed the Wallowa River quite a ways below the confluence of the Wallowa and Minam. In fact, the bridge was down at least a half mile toward/ about where the State Park is now below Minam. The bridge had one, or possibly two center piers, and was built entirely of logs and poles. Even the decking was of poles which rattled and rolled under the wheels of wagons crossing the bridge. Some of the old timers referred to the bridge as a 'rattleing good bridge'. The road up to Smith Mt. ascended up a draw, very steep, where evidence of the old road can still be plainly seen.

I would like to visit with you some of these days, old friend.

Sincerely,



G.J. 'Tuck' Tucker