



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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From time to time, I receive fascinating additions to columns I have written. Today one of those came email via the Chronicle. Vance Wilson wrote about his grandmother who was part of the original lumbering McBride family here in Fillmore.

He relates this:

“Jane McBride (Wilson) was my grandmother, and another story about her horsemanship deserves a note. Her dad had a lumbering operation up in Paradise, and Gram would drive a wagon team down the mountain filled with logs to be milled back in town. Her brothers, being perhaps less enlightened than men of these days, refused to ride on the wagon with her because she was assumed to be less capable than the boys. So, she drove the wagon and they walked.”

Thanks for this fun insight.

Many stories are told and retold about the lumber industry in the area.

One of the more dramatic stories comes from White Pine Canyon just over 134 years ago.

On July 13, 1886, the families who were spending the summer at the White Pine Canyon lumber camp were just getting ready for the summer run of lumber. A sudden thunderstorm came up over the mountain. Brig Tompkinson and Can Melville were milking cows in a corral in a grove of huge pine trees near the camp. Lightning struck five of the trees which fell around the corral. Later crosscut saws had to be used to free the cows.

Soon after that Can heard a terrific roar and realized a flash flood was coming their way. He stood on the bank of the creek and called to everyone to run uphill as quickly as possible. Mary Melville and Bill Dutson were the first up the hill, carrying baby Charles Melville. Can ran to cut the ropes on a team of horses that was hitched to a wagon, saving them from the water which entered the camp several feet deep, carrying mud and timber with it. One of the wheels was torn off the wagon and was found later twenty feet up in a tree. The sawmill was completely carried away with only the boiler left. When the water receded, some of the men went to the cabin to get bedding for the group of thirteen to spend the night high on the mountainside in case of another flood.



Can Melville