

# Remembering Tualatin

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

I am not technically a Tualatin native, but I can still remember standing in dew laden predawn summer days waiting for the old yellow school bus that would ferry me from my home near Gresham to the berry fields at Wilhelm Farms on 65th. Those thistle lined fields, pewter colored wires stretched between rotting posts sagging under the weight of ripe fruit. Row upon row of purple berries that seemed to stretch on for miles.

By noon the early summer sun was blazing over head forcing us to seek shade under the prickly vines, the only shelter from solar insult to our adolescent skin. I don't know who picks the berries now. Certainly it's not the pre-teens with their lunches neatly packed into brown paper bags - lunches of bologna and American cheese on Franz white bread, chilled by the frozen Shasta soda that had spent the preceding night in the top of the Frigidaire. But it doesn't really matter because those fields are a distant memory - Wilhelm Farms is now a residential community with luxury homes each sitting on five neatly groomed acres.

In 1970 ours was one of the first families in Apache Bluff, bringing the population of Tualatin to a whopping 922. I was a college freshman working part-time for Yvonne Addington at the City of Tualatin, putting in water meters and draining water from the heating system in the recently built City Hall on S.W. 80th (now the library parking lot). My younger brother, Kevin, went to Tigard High - Tualatin High was yet to be built. In 1974 my brother and dad joined with the city faithful putting sandbags down the center of Boones Ferry Road, hoping to hold back the flooding river.

Meridian Park Hospital and K-Mart signaled growth to our little town, along with the word that Fred Meyer would be building a huge shopping center adjacent to Interstate 5.

In those years there was no Commons. Instead a dog food plant sat in the center of town, fouling the air. For years my brother managed the Dairy Queen that was removed, along with the street it sat on to make way for a manmade lake. Soon that lake would be circled by new businesses and apartments.

I remember enjoying a sandwich and a beer at the Buffalo Head Tavern, now long gone with those working in the Lazy Boy Showroom unaware that their building replaced that popular hangout. We watched while the Ramada Inn became the Sweetbriar, and gave up our Sunday brunches when that business was cleared making way for Nyberg Woods.

In the late 1970's we saw new attention given to Tualatin with the completion of Interstate 205, as more people became aware of the little town that sits at the starting point of that new highway.

During the flood of 1996 lumber floated freely out of Clark Lumber's yard, and clogged the Tualatin River. Last summer fire totally destroyed that 50 year-old family business, taking away one of our oldest retailer storefronts. K-Mart is now gone, replaced by a new shopping center anchored by Cabella's, the outdoor retailing giant, soon to be a Bass Pro Shop.

Each December my wife and I take our annual sojourn to Lincoln City to celebrate our anniversary. Along the route we see the changes to Sherwood, Newberg, grumble our

way though the slowdown that is Dundee, are amazed with the 747 that sits high above the water park at the ever expanding Evergreen Museum, while across the highway the once influential Evergreen International Airlines headquarters sits empty and quit. Next December we will miss, more literally than figuratively, the Dundee experience as a new bypass will skirt that small community, leaving its two lane road to the locals, and to history.



Even though we moved from our home off of Martinazzi to one we built on Norwood, we still consider ourselves part of this community. We can only wonder what changes the next few years will bring to our little town.



**John Hutchinson** is a native Oregonian and long-time Tualatin resident.