

# Community Parks "Tualatin Mill Company" Origins



The Tualatin Mill Company sawmill which hired local men to run the machinery and haul the logs. The mill was located in what we now call Community Park

BY LOYCE MARTINAZZI

Unlike mathematics, history is not an exact science. Just when I think I "know it all" I get my come-uppance as another layer is peeled away, revealing a tasty historical tidbit and proving me wrong.

We used to think that the park on the river between the two railroads was

always called Community Park. Not so. Recently I found a reference to Galbreath Park in

some old City papers. I knew that Lycurgus (Kirk) Galbreath owned the property after the sawmill closed down, but I



It takes four horses to haul a big log and the Smith women to the mill. Left to right-Lev Cole driving, Lizzie Smith Robinson, Caroline Smith, Malinda Boone Smith. Dick Townsend walks alongside.

didn't know it was a park. The sawmill? That's what this month's story is about.

## Boomtown-1890-1915

John L. Smith brought his extended family to Tualatin around 1892. There was his wife Sarah, and their children Jessie and Bessie, his parents Leonard and Caroline and two brothers Frank and Ambrose, (Doc) and their families. Two sisters came also: Lizzie and her husband Newt Robinson and Malinda who married John Jesse Boone. The family bought up several acres of land along the river and set up a saw mill where Community Park is now located.

John L and John C. Gram incorporated the *Tualatin Mill Company* to operate a general logging and lumbering business. The business provided Tualatin's first payroll. Smith's enterprise prospered and he built homes for himself and his family along Tualatin Road. He built a wooden store on the corner of Tualatin Road and Boones Ferry Road, and set up a brick yard a few blocks south.

Smith's workers logged all over the county, felling trees with cross-cut saws and hauling them to the river with horse or ox teams. The company owned a little steamboat, *The Tualatin*, which chugged up and down the Tualatin River bringing logs from as far away as

Farmington.

Dick Townsend and Eleven "Lev"



Old Leonard Smith operated the first Smith store. In 1912 the building was moved east and the brick store was erected and operated by Lizzie and her husband Newt Robinson.

Cole were head teamsters for the company, and so skillful with the wagons it is said they could turn a team of horses on a dime.

John L. met his untimely demise in 1910 when a log chain broke in mid air and hit him in the forehead. Without his skillful leadership, his little empire slowly

crumpled. The mill and brickyard closed, and the row of homes fell into disrepair.

All the Smith family, as well as the head teamsters are buried in Winona Cemetery.

*Photos courtesy of the Tualatin Historical Society*



Smith's row of houses along Tualatin Road. The third house with a butcher shop attached, is the only one still standing. It has been moved across the road and is in poor condition.