

# RINEARSON SLOUGH

By HILDA SCHREIBER

In West Rainier there is a slough that winds its way below the hillside, west of the Longview Bridge approach, for a distance of four miles as the crow flies, to the end of West Rainier where it empties into the Columbia River. Today it is no more than a large drainage ditch which is its present purpose. It catches the drainage from the hills flanking it and the tidal waters from the river and is controlled by river dikes and a modern pumping system. This is what is now referred to as Rinearson Slough.

There was a time before such modern control methods that the slough was very different and of much more importance. Before 1898, during the days of the trading boats, there was a landing place in the yard of a family living along the slough. Their name was Perrine and for that reason, it was then called Perrine Slough. Earlier, a man by the name of Major Rinearson made a home on the hillside just west of the bottom land and planted flowers and shrubs to beautify his place. Although he moved away before 1880, the plantings remained and young folks would row down the slough to picnic there and enjoy the beauty. It soon began to be referred to as Rinearson Slough. On old documents it was referred to by either name.

This slough was of importance as a means of transportation also, for it was a connecting link with the Hudson Community. People from Rainier or the Washington side of the river wishing to go to picnics or other reasons in Hudson, came down the slough in boats and walked up the hillside to their destination. A story



Picture shows winding Rinearson Slough

is told of how young H. R. Dibblee carried custard pies up the hill to a picnic, tripped and fell just as he reached the location.

A wood burning trading boat owned by Johnson and Johnson, as well as other boats, would come up to the slough to Perrine's landing with household needs to sell or trade with the people. The people of the Hudson Community would come down a road that had been an old Indian trail in the past and hauled their supplies with oxen and sled. This road began where the Beaver Valley Grange hall is located and went through the Burn's (Lowe) place and crossed the Johnson (Schreiber) place down the hill.

The slough was used also in these early days to get logs to market. The trees that grew near the banks of the slough were hand logged and sometimes a log jack had to be used to roll them down the hill into the slough. In 1898, Peterson's brought in locomotives and donkeys. They used a chute to get the logs over the hill, but this method was discontinued because there was so much damage to the logs.

In 1901 or 1902, John Yeon and Pelton came along and built an incline from the top of the hill to the water. It was 3200 feet long and varied from 5 to 33 per cent grade. Two and later three trucks loaded with logs and controlled by a large cable from an engine at the top of the hill were dumped into the slough from a rollway by the men who had come down the hill on the load of logs. The tidal action of the river was the power that took the logs to the mouth of the slough where they were made into rafts to be towed away by river boats. Logs were taken this way until the fall of 1911.

At least once a year when the snows melted in the mountains, the river would be high and flood the whole bottom. Both sides of the slough were bordered with boom sticks to keep from losing the logs and extra boom sticks were placed so as to keep the incoming tide from bringing the logs back from where they came. These sticks were fastened only on one end which left them free to swing with the tide and so block the passage as the tide came in. A man on patrol saw that the logs moved freely to the river.

The land through which the slough ran was used by H. R. Dibblee to pasture cattle when the water was low. When high water came, he would move the cattle to land on the hillside.

Late in 1912 the Portland Lumber Company built a switch back railroad. With a locomotive logs were hauled down to the slough, three loads in front and three loads behind. Robert Johnson operated the first unloading donkey. This means of logging continued until about 1920.

When the Northern Pacific Railroad was completed through the bottom in 1898, a railroad bridge was built over the mouth of the slough where there was a flag station. With the service of four trains a day there was always someone coming or going from the

Rinearson stop. Besides the train station, there was a camp warehouse, cook house, bunk house and an oil tank. There were also boat houses along the slough bank where workmen and their families lived.

The slough was diked in 1921 when the logging was finished. Later a pumping system was installed and other improvements made. This diking and flood control has made a great difference in the land along the slough which is used for dairy grazing, mint growing and general farming.

After the logging activity came to an end, the station was called Tryon. Today at the mouth of Rinearson Slough there is a little marina where small river craft are moored.