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HISTORY OF THE RUNNING CREEK HOMESTEAD  
1898 to 1920  
SELWAY BITTERROOT WILDERNESS

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## PREFACE

The author was employed by the U. S. Forest Service from 1969 thru 1973 as a Wilderness Resource Assistant. It was during this time that he became deeply interested in Wilderness History.

His duty station was the Moose Creek Ranger District, Nezperce National Forest located in north central Idaho. This unique Ranger District lies entirely within the Nation's largest classified Wilderness Area, the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.

Today, this area provides the visitor with the opportunity to re-create, in a pristine environment, the experience of our national heritage of wilderness.

The objectives of this paper are threefold:

To document for posterity the history of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness before all those who have first hand early day experiences are gone.

To provide agency personnel with an accurate historical benchmark upon which to weigh future management decisions.

To provide the wilderness visitor with historical material which may enhance his understanding and enjoyment of this resource.

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## INTRODUCTION

The upper Selway Drainage comprises the majority of the land area in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. This designated land area became the largest unit of the "National Wilderness Preservation System" on September 3, 1964 when the 88th Congress passed the "Wilderness Act."<sup>1</sup> It encompasses more than 1.25 million acres and is situated between the Lochsa River on the north and the Salmon River on the south. Boyd Norton describes this country as having extremes in topography ranging from around 2,000 feet along the Selway River to over 10,000 feet in the Bitterroot Range to the east. Viewing this vast expanse of land Norton noted that "it was (and is) as wild and unspoiled as when Lewis and Clark first passed nearby."<sup>2</sup>

An extensive archaeological reconnaissance conducted in 1969 indicates permanent human habitation of the upper Selway Basin occurred at some time during the past 10,000 years.<sup>3</sup> The Nez Perce Indians used this area for hunting and as a passageway to the Bitterroot Valley. Evidence indicates that early exploration by the fur companies and individual trappers rarely penetrated the Selway Basin.

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<sup>1</sup>Public Law 88-577 in U.S. Statutes at Large, 78, 890-96.

<sup>2</sup>Boyd Norton, Snake Wilderness(San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1972.)

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Forest Service, Magruder Corridor Resource Inventory, Bitterroot National Forest, 1970.

The first white men to visit this general area traveled either to the north or south of the Selway Drainage. Lewis and Clark followed the famous northern Nez Perce route known today as the Lolo Trail. In September 1805 they crossed the Bitterroots and then moved westward along the main ridgeline immediately north of the Lochsa River.<sup>1</sup>

A branch of the southern Nez Perce Trail was first traversed by Reverend Samuel Parker. In 1835, Reverend Parker and Marcus Whitman traveled west for the purpose of establishing a Protestant mission. A favorable response was observed from a family band of Nez Perce Indians at the Green River Rendevous. Whitman decided to return East to organize a larger missionary effort while Parker's decision was to search out the home country of the Nez Perce for suitable mission sites. Parker's Journal provides the first written record of a white man's observations while crossing this ancient route. Parker traversed the area from what is now Salmon, Idaho, northwestward to Lewiston, Idaho.

Parker's travel time was sixteen days compared to thirty-nine days for Lewis and Clark over the Lolo Trail. Although they traveled the same general terrain at roughly the same time of year, they encountered entirely different weather conditions. Lewis and Clark's Journal recounts on September 16, 1895, "it began to snow and continued all day..." The snow covered the

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<sup>1</sup>Merriweather Lewis, History of the Expedition of Captains Lewis and Clark, Vol. 1, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, Co., 1917.)

Indian trail so completely that we were obliged constantly to halt and examine, lest we should lose the route."<sup>1</sup>

No snow is mentioned in Parker's notes implying an Indian Summer and excellent weather for traveling. Another factor accounting for Parker's relatively faster trip is noted September 18th "...and being desirous to expedite my journey to some posts of the Hudson Bay Company, I took ten Indians and went forward, leaving the remainder to follow at their leisure."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that this seasonal lack of snow caused Parker to underestimate the elevation of these mountains. "The way by which I calculated the height of these mountains is that some are tipped by perpetual snow; and as eight thousand feet in latitude 42' is the region of perpetual snow, so there can be no doubt, as these do not vary greatly from each other that they average six thousand feet."<sup>3</sup> When in fact many of the ridges and peaks traversed along the divide common to the Selway and Salmon rivers exceed 8,000 feet elevation.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 479.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Parker, Journals of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains, Second Ed., (Mach, Andrus and Woodruff, 1842.)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, September 21, 1835.

Harold Anderson relocated the route of Parker's travel but noted that the individual campsites were impossible to locate. He felt this difficulty in site relocation was due in part to the fact that "Parker was ill and this portion of his journals are brief and sketchy. It, therefore, required intimate local knowledge of the country and much time to interpret the journals to locate his route."<sup>1</sup>

Trapping played a major role in the early exploration of the Pacific Northwest. David Thompson of the Northwest Company was at the confluence of the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers in 1810. The Hudson Bay Company which succeeded the Northwest Fur Company in 1824 and numerous American fur companies began at the same time to trap and trade in the area. These included the Missouri Fur Company, American Fur Company, Astor's Pacific Fur Company and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.<sup>2</sup> None of the fur company records reported travel through the Selway or "Coos-Coos-kee" country.<sup>3</sup>

Kit Carson and other mountain men may very well have passed through this country in search of fur, routes of travel and gold. In a report dated February 2, 1935, Ranger R. C.

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<sup>1</sup>Harold E. Anderson, The Travels of Reverend Samuel Parker Over the Southern Nez Perce Trail in 1835 on the Salmon and Bitterroot National Forests. (Typewritten manuscript, January 28, 1966.)

<sup>2</sup>Frank Schumaker, History Predating the Bitterroot National Forest, (Typewritten manuscript, rough draft, February 9, 1968.)

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Parker, September 24, 1835.

Fitzgerald reported "...not known positively, but local legend has it that Kit Carson stopped here on one of his trips through the country." Another link in the chain of evidence that suggests that Carson was in the area was the original hand-carved "magruder Murder Sign." This sign recorded Kit Carson's name among many others as it served as an early day signature post. A description of Kit Carson's duel with Shunar at the Green River Rendevous is also documented in Reverend Parker's Journal for August, 1835.<sup>2</sup>

The remote character of the country remained unchanged at the turn of the century as John B. Leiberg documented. Leiberg and his party completed a reconnaissance of the newly formed Bitterroot Forest Reserve during 1898. Speaking of the Selway basin he mentions "There are no domestic animals running at large in the interior of the reserve, except horses of the chance traveler, hunter, trapper or prospector..."<sup>3</sup> Leiberg comments that from the earliest of time the Indians had three trails crossing through this country. Two were main travel routes between the "Plains of the Columbia and the Rocky Mountain regions. The third trail extended eastward to the summit of the Bitterroot Mountains and was used principally as a hunting trail. Its

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Schumaker, February 9, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Parker, August 1835.

<sup>3</sup> John B. Leiberg, The Bitterroot Forest Reserve Nineteenth Annual Report, U.S. Geological Survey Part No. 5, 1898.



course was along the crest of the Lochsa-Selway divide, and as it ran through the heart of the game region in the Clearwater basins must have been very largely traveled."<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth P. Wilson, a Nez Perce Indian woman born in 1881, remembers traveling as a child into the Selway Basin country during the summer months. She noted that their ancestors "Camped at Moose Creek full summer drying meat and chinook salmon as they came up to heads of the rivers in August to spawn."<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere Leiberg references these trails as being "the three trails extending through the reserve" and that they were laid out with their course coinciding "as nearly as possible with the crest of the primary ridges, ...the canyons being utterly impassable."<sup>3</sup>

Leiberg encountered some frustrations while mapping the Forest Reserve. One such incident occurred while he was on the summit of a prominent peak. He found it impossible to trace the course of a canyon or a spur but for a short distance even though he had an unobstructed panoramic view for many miles. "The curvings, windings, ascents, and descents are incessant and confusing, and in every case only actual travel can determine the precise point at which any particular canyon or spur originates or ends."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 386.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth P. Wilson, letter to Mrs. Mary Ellen Ackerman, June 4, 1970.

<sup>3</sup>Leiberg, p. 319.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

The report addresses the question of agricultural potential within the Reserve saying that land fit for cultivation was limited and the acreages would be small. Leiberg referenced this area of the Reserve specifically stating "The canyon-like formation of the lower portion of the Lochsa and the entire Selway and Salmon river valleys precludes the existence of any considerable tract of arable bottom lands along these streams."<sup>1</sup> He continued that the cultivation elsewhere was out of the question because of the steep hillsides, altitude, and that all of the higher areas were adversely affected by the length of growing season or existing marsh conditions.

According to Leiberg's map,<sup>2</sup> trail access to the upper Selway country shows the Southern Nez Perce Trail, a trail down Bear Creek and Moose Creek, a trail joining the last two trails and continuing up the Selway River about five miles above the confluence of what is now called Running Creek. It is a good twenty miles on up the trailless Selway to tie in with the Southern Nez Perce Trail.

There was no trail access from this portion of the Selway Basin westward, nor did a trail exist down the rugged Selway Canyon from the present Moose Creek Ranger Station site. There is a possibility that a spur indian trail, not located on the map, existed branching northward from the Nez Perce

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>Leiberg, Bitterroot Forest Reserve Land Classification Map, 1898.

Trail at what is now Spot Mountain and heading down Green Ridge to the confluence of Hunning Creek and the Selway River (see Leberg's map.)

These are the conditions under which the first documented settlement and later homesteading of the upper Selway country occurred.

## THE RUNNING CREEK HOMESTEAD

We can only suppose who the first relatively permanent resident in the upper Selway country was. Present information indicates it might be a toss-up between Tom Running and William M. Wylie, both of whom are said to have entered the country in the late 1890's.

All of the information sources but one say both men were trappers. A Mr. Burke and a Mr. Porter, both from Elk City, Idaho remembered "William Wylie, who prospected through this part of the country"<sup>1</sup> referring to the area surrounding the peak now bearing Wylie's name. They also stated that Wylie "marked out first trail in the country about 1900."<sup>2</sup> For these individuals to have remembered Wylie implies that he must have obtained supplies or at least done some trading in and around Elk City. This was the nearest settlement to the west and at that time a very active mining center.

Jesse McPherson, when asked about Tom Running's activities in the upper Selway, recalled that Running Creek was named after "Tom Running, who homesteaded in 1898 near the mouth of this creek."<sup>3</sup> McPherson went on to say that in 1904 Running

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<sup>1</sup>H.W. Higgins, Origin of Geographic Place Names - Nez Perce National Forest, Authority: H. Burke and G.I. Porter, Elk City, Idaho.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>George Case, Origin of Geographic Place Names - Bitter-root National Forest, Authority: Jesse McPherson, March 24, 1937.

lost his eyesight and was influenced by friends to give up his homestead for the better care that would be available if he moved nearer civilization.<sup>1</sup>

Running did not give up the idea of homesteading. In 1910 he wrote a letter to the Bitterroot Forest Supervisor contesting a mineral claim on a parcel of land which he wished to homestead. This claim was located in the upper Bitterroot Valley at the mouth of Overwhich Creek. A mineral examination was scheduled by the Supervisor to settle this dispute and in November of 1911 mineral examiner C. A. McElroy noted that "there seems to be a well laid out scheme on the part of the Claimant to win out in a contest between him and the agricultured Claimant Thomas Running, who by the way is totally blind."<sup>2</sup> Tom Running fulfilled his ambition of land ownership. In 1916 the U.S. Commissioner denied mineral patent and the land was patented as a homestead.<sup>3</sup>

It is not known what percentage of the time Running spent at his Running Creek Cabin or in the surrounding high country trapping. He is thought to have built a cabin at the head of Long Prairie Creek. The remains of a cabin are at this location. Its construction is similar to many other

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<sup>1</sup>McPherson's use of the term homestead should not be interpreted as a legal homestead since the Forest Homestead Act (34 STAT.233) was not passed until June 11, 1906.

<sup>2</sup>C. A. McElroy, Mineral Examiner, (Pencil draft of mineral examination report, Bitterroot National Forest Files, Hamilton, Montana.)

<sup>3</sup>Frank Schumaker, Bitterroot Forest History, (rough draft, November 18, 1968, p. 25.)

trapper cabins scattered throughout the wilderness. (Plate 1). In 1904 Running pulled up stakes, leaving the wild Selway country for the Bitterroot Valley. Three years later the next resident made his appearance.

Jesse McPherson recollected that Martin Moe, a trapper, "settled on the Running Creek Ranch at the mouth of Running Creek in 1907 and trapped in the Bear Creek Country the following three winters."<sup>1</sup> Ray R. Fitting, Ranger on the Bear Creek District until November 1917, noted that Moe's residence at Running Creek was "more or less indefinite."<sup>2</sup>

An incident which may help to explain some of the later actions of Martin Moe occurred during his tenure on the upper Selway. However there is disputed evidence as to the date of occurrence. Phil Shearer's recollections of the event were recorded by Ranger George Case while compiling the origin of names for Archer Mountain and Archer Point.

A young fellow named George Archer was Moe's trapping partner during the winter of 1908 - 09. Archer was running the trapline in January of 1909, possibly returning from the cabin at the head of Long Prairie Creek when he failed to show up. Archer's dog came to Moe's camp during a raging blizzard and spent the night whinnying. Early the next morning Moe tried to backtrack and locate Archer, but failed. He then headed down the Selway seven miles to enlist the aid of Phil Shearer

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<sup>1</sup>George Case, March 24, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Ray R. Fitting, Forest Ranger, Letter to District Forester, Missoula, Montana, October 15, 1918.

and Henry Pettibone. Both Shearer and Pettibone built cabins near the mouths of Elk Creek and Ditch Creek respectively and later filed for separate homesteads.

The threesome continued searching for Archer until new snowfall made further efforts useless. Moe departed the Selway for the Bitterroot Valley after the fruitless search and "his appearance without his partner excited suspicion." Moe was held in jail until spring when his story was checked. Later the following summer "~~Sawman~~<sup>INDIAN</sup> Blake's ~~quaw~~<sup>WIFE</sup> was picking huckleberries along Running Creek and her son was wandering along the creek banks when he found some bones." Ensuing investigation confirmed that Blake's son had in fact found the remains of George Archer. During the investigation all evidence pointed toward Archer possibly picking the wrong spur ridge in the blizzard. "...he had run over a bluff on his skis and hung up. He had fired all of the shells from his gun before dying."<sup>1</sup>

Archer's grave is located about one mile up Running Creek from its confluence with the Selway. Mrs. Alvin Renshaw remembers the epitaph on his tombstone saying "Look before you leap."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Mary Ellen Ackerman, personal interview with Mrs. Alvin Renshaw.

Henry Pettibone kept a diary. In his absence whoever remained at the Pettibone Homestead managed a daily entry. This diary which covers the period from October 1913 through April 1916 provides us with much insight as to how these early settlers lived and in one instance suggests a conflicting date of Archer's disappearance.

The first entry mentioning "Mart" was October 21, 1913 with the note that "Phil and Mart got here from Montana." That Martin Moe was a trapper is made clear by the entry for January 13, 1914. "Mart got back from trapline, chased a cougar and liad out all night--did not get anything." On the 28th of April 1914 the entry "Mart went to work on trail up Ditch Creek," Through the months of May and June there continue to be entries of Phil and Mart working on trail. No mention is made in either the Forest Service records or Pettibone's diary as to whether this trail work was an independent effort or whether they were in fact working for the Forest Service as their time permitted. The entry on June 24th reads "Weholt drifted in." and the next day's notation "Weholt went up to end of trail, it was O K and he left for kooskia."<sup>1</sup> gives strong support to the supposition that it was a Forest Service trail for at that time Adolph Weholt was employed as an Assistant Forest Ranger.

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Pettibone, Diary, October 1913 through April 1916. Quoted by permission of Mrs. Alvin Renshaw, Kooskia, Idaho.



Pettibone's diary also provides us the opportunity to sense the strong feeling of independence that all of these pioneers had. It is also evident that comradeship and the attitude that "if it needs to be done, lets pitch in and do it" prevailed. For instance on May 15th, 1914, the day after they came down from working on the Ditch Creek Trail this entry is found. "We piled logs in the forenoon. Mart and Phil staid and we planted 62 hills of cabage. Rained hard after diner, Open sac flour."<sup>1</sup> The next day Phil Shearer and Mart went up river to their homes.

Forest fires were ever present then as they are today. August 31, 1914 - "More fires broke out today." and the following day, the first of September, "Phil and Mart came here and shod their horses. All the Bear Creek fire fighters went to the fires." September 2nd, "Phil and Mart left for the lookout stations."<sup>2</sup> Fires were again mentioned in the diary for the summer of 1915.

Pettibone's place seemed to be the gathering together spot on the upper Selway especially at Christmas as this entry of December 25, 1914 describes. "We got Xmas diner. Phil, Hamersly, and Mart came here. We had rost chicken and dressing, lemon and strawberry pie, sponge cake, mashed potatoes and gravy, tomato pickles, dried stewed rubarb, strawberry preserves, good

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

old corn whiskey and F & B cigars. Cloudy day, snowed in the evening a little (12 above.)"<sup>1</sup> Phil and Mart were mentioned at all three Christmases documented. Pettibone's cabin was probably used because it was the largest on the Selway.

An entry on October 27, 1915, "Archer came here. Nice day." raises a question. Phil Shearer stated the Archer died in 1909. Is it possible that Shearer may have mistaken the date in recalling the Archer event some twenty years later in 1937 for Ranger Case? Everything but the year coincides. The following entries from Pettibone's diary corroborate what Shearer remembered about the heavy snowfall after Archer's disappearance. February 3, 1916, "Mart and Phil came from his place, had been looking for Archer, didnt find him. Nice day in the fore noon, snowed a little after diner 18 above." February 4th, "Mart went to Phils place... Stormy day, 30 in of snow 4 above." February 5th, "Mart came here from Phils... Snowey day 20 above opened sac flour." The 6th, "Paul and Mart went home. Soft cloudy day 24 above, 35 in. new snow."<sup>2</sup> Although Shearer indicated that both he and Pettibone helped Moe search for Archer, it is interesting that Pettibone never mentions it.

There are numerous mentions of Mart traveling the Selway stopping at both Phil Shearer's place and at Pettibones'. There is little doubt that Moe must have been searching, hoping to find Archer, for a person does not make social calls in 35

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

inches of new snow covering distances exceeding seven miles one way. Daily notes in Pettibone's diary on the weather, indicated that for the following 30 days the weather continued stormy with one to two inches of snow per day and on the days it was not snowing it was raining. On the seventh of March, a month after the first mention of Archer being lost Phil and Mart left Pettibone's place for Elk City, Idaho. What was the purpose of the trip other than for normal winter mail? Possibly they went to report the Archer incident.<sup>1</sup> Was he imprisoned at Elk City at this time rather than in the Bitterroot Valley as Shearer remembered?

April 1, 1916, "Mart got here at supertime from Elk City."<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that round mid-April, the highest average snowpack occurs along the mountain ridges and passes. Moe had to travel with snow often exceeding a depth of ten feet.<sup>3</sup>

It is not known whether Moe used skis or showshoes in his winter travel. The latter usually required more physical effort. At any rate the shortest one way distance from Pettibone's to Elk City would be around forty-five miles crossing some extremely rough and hazardous terrain.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Author has not yet checked Idaho County Coroner's Records.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Pettibone, Diary.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Forest Service, Handbook, Water Resource Data, Nez Perce National Forest. Area Average Snow Depth and Water Equivalent Data Table, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> The author made two extended crosscountry ski trips while employed by the Forest Service, Moose Creek Ranger District, which is located entirely within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Though the purpose of the trips differed from Moe's (snow survey vs. travel) similar terrain was covered. These trips required a great deal of physical effort and skill even with today's modern equipment.

There were five other entries concerning Mart for the month of April 1916 and they all mentioned another person going or coming with him. This is somewhat unusual since before the Archer incident, Moe usually traveled by himself. It is possible his companions were trying to console him. The last entry in Pettibone's diary was April 30th. The last statement on this date was "Andy and Mart came here from Carrion Creek. Nice suny day."<sup>1</sup>

Jesse McPherson remembered that around three years after Moe inhabited his cabin at Running Creek (1907) "His mind became deranged and he was taken to the asylum at Orofino, Idaho."<sup>2</sup> William Bell, Forest Guard on the Bear Creek District, included this account of Moe's mental condition in his homestead examination of September 21, 1918. "Approximately two years ago the man was declared insane and committed to the Insane Asylum and was later released, but has been in a poor state of health ever since and wanders over the country trapping and working and returns to the claim only occasionally."<sup>3</sup> McPherson placed Moe in the asylum in 1910 while Bell indicates this occurred in 1916. In either instance this would seem to have occurred shortly after Archer's disappearance.

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Pettibone, Diary.

<sup>2</sup>George Case, March 24, 2937.

<sup>3</sup>Report on Homestead Entry Survey, No. 453, (Claim examined by William Bell, Forest Guard, September 21, 1918, p. 3.)

Moe made application for homestead in 1912. There can be no question that the examination of the Moe homestead claim was indeed an administrative headache. The Selway Forest headquarters were located at Kooskia, Idaho. A trip to the claim entailed covering fourteen miles by wagon road and eighty-five miles by trail. William Bell, after completing his field examination of Moe's homestead claim, noted that "the trail to the claim had become practically impassable, due to windfalls, and visitors to that section of the country are very few."<sup>1</sup>

A letter from Supervisor Howell dated October 5, 1918 reflects the problems. "The Shearer case can probably be handled without serious delay, but the Moe case will be difficult, due to the fact that there is no cultivation and the man is practically insane."<sup>2</sup>

Ranger Fitting wrote that from all indications Moe did little to improve his living quarters into any kind of a "desirable or permanent [Sic] home"<sup>3</sup> but used an old trapper's cabin that was existent for some years before Moe made application for homestead. This cabin is assumed to be the cabin that Tom Running built in 1898 or '99. Forest Guard Bell appraised the cabin as being worth about fifty dollars,

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<sup>1</sup>Report on Homestead Entry Survey, September 21, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>Chas. F. Howell, Forest Supervisor, letter to District Forester, Missoula, Montana, October 5, 1918.

<sup>3</sup>Ray Fitting, October 15, 1918.

consisting of a log dwelling, shake roof and a dirt floor having but one door, one window and measuring fourteen feet by sixteen feet. Bell went on to say that the cabin was in a poor state of repair but that it was habitable in all seasons.<sup>1</sup>

Moe's attempt to homestead encountered a barrier in October 1918. The Register in the Lewiston, Idaho Land Office informed the Selway National Forest Supervisor that "...the claimant in this case has never filed his citizenship papers and has practically informed the Lewiston Office that they will not be filed. The final action upon this claim is, therefore, indefinitely delayed..."<sup>2</sup>

Moe answered a request from the Forest Supervisor for information and intent as to the Running Creek Homestead in a letter dated October 21, 1918.<sup>3</sup> He recalled that he moved on the claim in the latter part of July in 1908. "From that time on I made it my residence continually until 1916 with the exceptional times when packing in supplies, which would be about two months each year." Time away from the claim for the year 1914 amounted to about three months while making trail up Ditch Creek, and five months during 1915 "making trail and fighting fire." Other periods away from the claim were spent going for mail. "This is as near as I can explain as I have no time books."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Report on Homestead Entry Survey, September 21, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>C.F. Howell, Forest Supervisor, Letter to District Forester, Missoula, Montana, October 17, 1918.

<sup>3</sup>Moe's letter to Forest Supervisor Howell is the only piece of correspondence found to date by which to judge the claimant by his own hand.

<sup>4</sup>Martin R. Moe, letter to Charles Howell, Forest Supervisor, Selway National Forest, October 21, 1918.

Moe's letter states that he made application for final proof on July 6, 1918, but proof was suspended by the U. S. Land Office for the reason that he had not fully become a U. S. Citizen. On September 27, Moe received notice by registered mail dated July 8, 1918 that proof had been rejected by the Land Office. Moe wrote that "I notified the U. S. Land Office that I would take no further steps acquiring the homestead or take any further steps in becoming a citizen so therefore I will relinquish entirely."<sup>1</sup>

The question of why Martin Moe decided not to carry through to patent his claim on the Running Creek homestead must have bothered some people in the Forest Service. There was quite a flurry of correspondence after receipt of Moe's letter. At this point it must be remembered that we are looking at the dates the correspondence was written and attempting to place it in a chronological order knowing nothing about mail delivery and work schedules.

A letter from the Selway Forest Supervisor's office, dated November 4, 1918, signed by Adolph Weholt noted "There is nothing on file in this office to indicate that proof of above designated case has been suspended by this office awaiting the claimant's citizenship, not that the proof was rejected by this office at any time. The statement made by Mr. Moe in this regard must be in error. It appears that no action has been taken by this office to cancel entry."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Adolph Weholt, Acting Forest Supervisor, Letter to District Forester, Missoula, Montana, November 4, 1918.

This case was reviewed and a memorandum dated November 14, 1918 noted that Moe appeared to have met the necessary residence and cultivation requirements. This review further pointed out that the claimant might request action based on facts showing excuseable grounds, during the period of entry, for not becoming a citizen. The recommendation made to the District Forester was to send a no-protest letter to the Registrar and Receiver. "The Land Office will undoubtedly pass on the qualifications of the entryman."<sup>1</sup>

The following day P. J. O'Brien wrote a letter to the Land Office stating that "The Forest will enter no protest against the issuance of patent for the land under consideration and any action taken by your office to require the entryman to complete his naturalization prior to the issuance of patent, to him, for the tract will be satisfactory to the Forest Service."<sup>2</sup> A letter of the same date was forwarded to Martin Moe informing him of actions taken.

A subsequent request for information regarding the date of patent or cause for delay was written by O'Brien on October 28, 1919.<sup>3</sup> The Land Law Clerk's reply, dated January 3, 1920 stated "on July 5, 1918 the final proof submitted by

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<sup>1</sup>P.J. O'Brien, Acting District Forester, Memorandum for District Forester, November 14, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>P.J. O'Brien, Acting District Forester, Letter to Register and Receiver, United States Land Office, Lewiston, Idaho, November 15, 1918.

<sup>3</sup>P.J. O'Brien, Memorandum to Land Office, Lewiston, Idaho, October 28, 1919.



entryman was rejected by the General Land Office because he was not a citizen of the United States. No further action has been taken."<sup>1</sup>

Information found to date indicates that Martin Moe did not attempt to become a naturalized citizen thus forfeiting his legal right to the Running Creek claim. Nor is there any evidence indicating that the Land Office carried on any further correspondence with Moe informing him of his right to redress.

The last known information about Moe is found in a letter written November 12, 1918 by Forest Ranger McGregor at Stevensville, Montana. He states that Moe had spent most of his time since leaving his claim in July 1916 in Montana. "Mr. Moe is now employed as a lumber jack at Storrs Mill on Carlton Creek."<sup>2</sup> Carlton Creek originates in the Bitterroot Range and is located about six miles south of Lolo, Montana.

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<sup>1</sup>J.E.B., Chief of Status, Status Report reply to Forest Service, Missoula Montana, January 3, 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Donald B. McGregor, Forest Ranger, letter to Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest, Missoula, Montana, November, 12, 1918.

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+ 7767

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M<sup>o</sup> Gruder Mt.  
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Perces Pass

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