

dirt, tamped down hard. The cut was on the shoulder of a bench that had the end caved off by the river, so it was more of a shove than a cut. The blast shoved the end of the ridge into the river. People came from miles around to see it. It took us about four months to move the earth loosened by that blast, working from both ends.

In the spring of 1907, I think it was, we moved to the Kansas City and Orient, known as the K.C. & O. It was continuing the Southern Pacific de Mexico from LaJunta to the West Coast, but went broke at Boconia. That was in the center of the Tarahumara country, north and east of the Baranca de Cobre. We had one kilometer--I think it was Number Forty-three. It was so wet, we couldn't use the teams, so we used wheelbarrows and split trees to lay runway for the wheelbarrows. So many wheelbarrow loads was a day's work.

HOLY PENOLE

Heber and I had it easy, just herding the mules. We would graze them days, and corral them at night. One mule got away and took up with a band of local horses, and we couldn't separate it from the band. I offered \$1.50 to an Indian to bring it in. One morning it was there, and an Indian was sitting cross-legged, waiting for us to wake up. The mule was so sore-footed that he was lame for a week. It was common practice for the Indians to run a deer down in just a few hours.

Their national sport was a race run by kicking an oak ball about four inches in diameter. It wasn't so much a kick as a punt. They would run their toes under the ball, and it rolled up the shin, and then was bunted with the knees. The race could be run by single contestants or a team of two or more. Each man would carry a bag of penole (ground, parched corn, mixed with brown sugar) tied to the waist, and a tin cup. When crossing a brook, the Indian would scoop up some water and dribble some penole into it, stir it with his finger, and drink it on the run.

The races could be of varying distances--from ten to a hundred miles. The race track was usually a long valley, and they would make so many trips up and down the valley. Indians are great gamblers--betting horses, cows, sheep, goats, dogs, and even squaws. The race was sometimes run by women, but usually by men--young or old. They wouldn't take paper money at all. They wanted hard money and would test every coin by biting it. St. Patrick's Day was their national bath day. The streams would be lined with naked Indians.

RELIEF SOCIETY SQUEEZE

We finished our contract in early fall, sold everything but six teams and three wagons, and got ready to go back to Chupe. This was in 1908, I think. All went well, until we reached the southern side of Babicora Flat. The ground was so level that the valley was a lake. We made aparajos (Mexican pack saddles) out of sacks stuffed with straw. We packed what we could and put the provisions in one light wagon drawn by six animals. By not leaving the road, we made it across the flat and on to the mountains, where the water drained off. We had to cross three canyons--Garavata, Middle, and Rio Chico.

When we were building this road a few years earlier, there was a V-shaped canyon that had to be filled up to where it was wide enough for a wagon to go through. It was named "Relief Society Squeeze," because the day it was finished, most of the women from Chupe came to camp. The Relief Society is a Mormon women's organization.

OUT OF CONTROL

When we got to the bottom of Middle Canyon, we were expecting a supply wagon from Chupe. After the camp settled down for the night, some of us young fellows went up the north side of the canyon, got some single trees and chains, and then started down the new road, banging single trees and rattling chains. The boys who stayed in camp began to shout, "Run-away," and shook the wagon wheels to make them chuckle. Men who were sleeping under the wagons bumped heads on the bottom of the wagons. Those sleeping in the open made for trees. One two hundred pounder tried to climb an oak tree in his socks. He was a little lame for a day or two. We kids took out down the canyon and spent the night around a fire. By morning the sore heads and feet began to appreciate the joke. They sent a man to tell us to come back to camp.

PLUG THAT BLEW

All went well, until we got to the north top of Rio Chico. Then it was mud all the way to Chupe. Upon arriving in Chupe, we heard that Colonia Oaxaca had been flooded out. A narrow canyon below filled up with drift wood, causing the river to back up and flood the whole town, except for two houses and the schoolhouse. When the plug blew, the water rushed out, taking the soil and houses with it.