



# Indian scare at Pilot Rock

By Jane Lenon

**I** was ten years old that fall when the Indian scare was at its worst. For some time we had been hearing tales of hostile Indians gathering to the east of our Pilot Rock ranch, heading our

way. Folks were mighty jumpy even though our local Umatilla tribe had always seemed friendly.

The day was bright and crisp with a bit of wind moving through the yellow leaves of the box elder and locust trees in the yard. I had just come in from the usual morning chores of feeding chickens, pigs and horses. The kitchen was warm and fragrant with the smell of new bread that Ma had just lifted out of the wood stove oven and set on the side table.

My two littlest sisters chatted happily over rag dolls on the front room floor. Ella, my eight-year-old sister, was bustling about with Ma, washing up the baking utensils.

"Elmer, you'd best fill the box right now so there'll be plenty of wood for cooking dinner," Ma directed.

I had just headed obediently toward the door when a shadow passed across the bright patch of kitchen window.

Suddenly, two tall Indians stood in the opened doorway, each holding a long hunting knife. Ma, with a little intake of breath, pushed Ella behind her long skirts and confronted the Indians squarely.

They were dressed in worn black trousers with buckskin jackets and mocassins. Their long, black hair hung in braids over their shoulders. Their dark faces were serious and unmoving.

Grunting and making circular motions with their hands, they pointed first at me and then toward the large grindstone standing by the woodshed just outside

(continued page 12)