

Pacific County

## Adolph Huber

Sitting in a rustic, homemade cabin on the edge a pond, Theodore Huber describes his feelings for the family tree farm where he has spent most of his life. Talking to any of the Hubers about tree farming and the legacy left to them by several generations is an emotional experience that brings tears to their eyes.



In 1906, Konrad Huber emigrated from Switzerland to Frances, Washington, where he joined relatives who lived in the area. Konrad purchased an 80-acre parcel for \$5,000, plus an adjoining parcel of 240 acres for \$1,400. The property's history dated back to 1884 when a man named Thomas Lusk first homesteaded 160 acres. One month after receiving the title, he sold the property to Solomon Soules. Soules homesteaded an additional 160 acres. Solomon waited five years to receive title to the property. Three years later in 1882, he set up a logging operation with the splash dam on the Willopa River. In those days, they logged with oxen.

Later, Konrad and his son Joe purchased the property and set up to do their own logging. Adolph Huber, "They were all farmers when they left Switzerland. That was their main objective. But when they got here, they worked in the woods to help pay the bills." Adolph is Konrad's grandson and Theodore is Adolph's son.

Adolph has a zest and love for the land as well as gratitude for the legacy left to him and his family. Adolph recounts a time of logging with steam donkeys, the railroad, and blowing up stumps to open up farmland, "When Dad first logged this piece in 1955, they would leave a portion called a seed area down in some far off corner in some hole where they couldn't log to begin with. A seed area was supposed to reseed everything. The alder and brush grew up faster than any fir or hemlock would."

In the 1970s, Joe passed the title of 600 acres to Adolph and his two brothers, which they later split. Adolph received a 280-acre portion. Up until this point, a large percentage of the 600 acres were used for dairy farming. As a landowner, Adolph took interest in finding out what to do to improve what he had.

He became involved with the Washington Farm Forestry Association (WFFA) and met people like Rex Hutchins who gave him advice on the options of good stewardship. His land was scraggly with alders, hemlocks, vine maples and brush, so for Adolph the choice was simple. "In the 1980s, we slashed and burned and did it the right way. We've replanted over 100,000 trees, and we got into tree farming as it is known today."

This was an enormous project, which involved consultations with Rex Hutchins from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Weyerhaeuser's Family Farm Program, and others. Rex, "We devised a plan to cut the alder, get rid of the brush, burn the slash and plant the trees back. This is just one of the tree farms we were working with at the time.

“Adolph was excited about the project and we had fun with it. When you have 120 acres on fire at the same time, there’s a lot of smoke in the air, some nervousness and tension, even though you do call it a control burn, you are at mother nature’s mercy right there.



“There were helicopters and we were pretty lucky. It was kind of a community effort on this tree farm. There were people down in the fields and the neighbors watching what was going on. It was like tailgating for a football game or something. Show up to see what was going on and help if needed. For me, it was just my job. You can’t get any better than a job like that, to come out and deal with folks. It was a great opportunity for us. We just provided the advice, and Adolph did all the work and contracted the work with his family. Adolph to me has always represented good stewardship, and hopefully I can emulate what he has done as I continue with my tree farm.”

The Hubers replanted 50,000 trees in 1981 after the log slash burn in 1980. Two years later they repeated the same thing on an additional 100 acres. While driving along access roads through his property, Adolph points out how well the trees are growing and expresses his gratitude to all that’s been left him and is being passed onto his own children.

Leaves glitter in the autumn light and drop into a pond that was used for holding logs in the late 1800s. The Hubers have it stocked with trout and watch the fish jump from the cabin window. Adolph, “Coming from a country where it was nearly impossible to own land, my grandparents couldn’t have found a better piece of property. My parents were proud to have lived and worked here. My wife Geri, myself, and our six children, Shelly, Denise, Ted, Colette, Steve and Shannon and their families have enjoyed working what is now called “Soules Tree Farm.”

*“Forestry for people like Adolph and his family is deep inside – an emotional thing. It’s great to be out in the trees, to be in tune with wildlife and the forest eco system. That’s what it’s all about to people that have the opportunity to own forestland. It’s more than a monetary return. There’s an emotional presence that affects you deep into your soul. This is a part of life to us. It’s a major part and it doesn’t get any better than this spot right here.” – Rex Hutchins, Pacific County Chapter President*

*“I’m the luckiest guy in the world. Family wise, we’re fairly close. I live about an hour from here. People can go on vacations to Disneyland, Florida or wherever. I come here for a week vacation and enjoy every minute of it. Whether it’s limbing trees or watching fish jump, it doesn’t get any better than this. It’s part of the fabric growing up here and part of who you are.” – Theodore Huber*

**SOULES FAMILY TREE FARM: GENERATIONAL**

Konrad Huber, 1869 – 1958

Mary Huber, born 1878 – 1955

Joe Huber, born 1902 - 1982

Hermina, born 1909 - 1994

Adolph Huber, born January 1, 1934

Geraldine Friese, born January 3, 1936

Member Pacific County Farm Forestry

