Juliaetta
By Lura (Groseclose) Nelson-Butler, 1950

(Juliaetta is located in the Potlatch River Valley of West-Central Idaho)

Nestled snugly in a valley
Safe between the rolling hills
Lies the town of Juliaetta
With it memories and thrills.
A decade before the century
Pioneers toiled from early morn –
Homestead families joined them
That’s how our town was born.

A thriving place for many years
With livery barns and shops
Banks and business houses
And a variety of crops.
Parades and basket socials
And ball games in the park
The Depot by the river
Sweethearts strolled there in the dark.

A school and several churches
A cannery and flour mill
And lots of good pasture
For the cattle on the hill.
The changing tides of time
The hustle and the bustle
Are now a settled stage.
Where old folks garden
In a restful easy way
And go to see the trains come
To pass the time of day.

Springtime comes early
Locust blossoms scent the air.
The serenading frogs and crickets
Seem to “Hi-Fi” everywhere.
The murmur of the Potlatch
As it flows to meet the deep
Blends into the sighing of the pines
As they lull you off to sleep.
The winding roads like ribbons
Curl down from either side
To bring the grain for storage –
So doth the Lord provide.

I am happy in my valley
With its crooked twisting stream
From Autumn’s colorful fulfillment
To God’s promise of the spring.
As I pause in thankfulness
My heart just overfills
And I whisper with the Psalmist
“I will lift mine eyes unto the hills.”

The Potlatch
By Carroll Yost Groseclose, n.d.

(Potlatch means “a gift” in the culture of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest)

Like the Garden of Eden in its earlier days,
The Potlatch River has changed its ways.
Once a clear stream and full of trout
It’s no longer so; it’s turned about.
It changes channels according to will
From one side of the canyon to the other hill.
The town of Kendrick once had a thrill
When over its banks the Potlatch did spill.

It takes out railroads and highways too;
Ranch houses and barns before it is through.
Railroad workman have even been killed
When down this canyon the water spilled.
Its tributaries also add their pollution
With acres of dirt held in solution.
Farm land and pasture land descend in piles
Polluting the Clearwater for many miles.

To control it now is a delicate study
For now it is called the Little Muddy.
But unlike the Missouri, it ceases to flow,
In summer time it gets very low.
The water that one time filtered down
Now brings the filter – the colors it brown.
It’s not just someone’s idle notion–
For the soil from here ends in the ocean.
The gifts from Potlatch in days of yore
Were fruits and vegetables in piles galore.
News boys in Peoria bought the cherries
Also were raised many kinds of berries;
Melons and prunes and apple trees,
Squash, corn, turkeys—honey bees.
Now we who live here must change our ways
And restore our valley as in early days.

Seed down the slopes, plant forest trees
Hold back the mud that goes to the seas.
No more logging straight down the hill
With gullies down which the water then spills.
See arroyos with heavy grass,
Filters through which no soil can pass.
Contour rows on every slope
Hold back our soil; It is our only hope.
Build dams both big and little,
Places where the soil can settle.

The gift of mud by the Potlatch given,
Stinks! And it smells to high heaven.
If all will work we can turn it about.
And rebuild the stream where we used to catch trout.