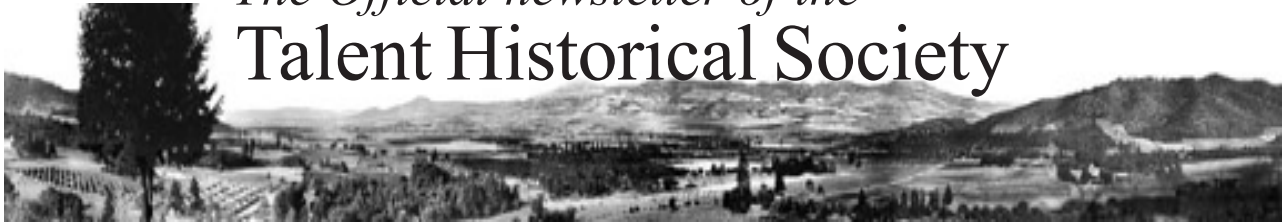


The Historacle

April 2009

The Official newsletter of the

Talent Historical Society



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IT'S NOT TOO LATE

The Talent Historical Society Poker Classic is the first weekend in April. Some of you had good intentions but forgot to pre-register. It is not too late to plunk down your \$100 and join us for the poker challenge on Saturday, April 4th at 2:00 p.m. at the Talent Community Hall at 205 E. Main Street. Chances are good for winning one of the prizes (First prize is \$500, 2nd prize \$250; 3rd \$125; 4th \$63; and 5th \$31 in pre-paid credit cards) and taking home the championship bracelet. Food and non-alcoholic drinks will be for sale during the event. Ron Medinger, a member of

the society, will be helping out and bringing a crew of experienced helpers to run the event smoothly. We are very grateful to Ron for offering to boost THS and support the cause of history. Events like these keep the society afloat and bring people together for a good cause. Thank you for your continuous support through donations, memberships and volunteer time.



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309 Years Ago the Coast of Oregon Washed Away

At 9:00 p. m. on 26 January 1700 a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, centered about 75 miles offshore, ruptured along a 600 mile long fault, running from Northern California to Southern British Columbia, causing untold damage and destruction to the Pacific Northwest Coast and the Native American tribal communities that made the coast their home.” This quotation is from a recent Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries news release.

Low-lying villages along the Oregon coast were devastated—and their oral traditions have recorded the catastrophe. An ancient tale told to members of the Washington state Quileute and Hoh tribes phrase the horrific event this way: “There was a shaking, jumping up and trembling of the earth beneath, and rolling up of the great waters.” The words come from a tale about an epic battle between the Whale and the Thunderbird. This story is found among coastal tribes from Vancouver Island to Oregon’s Tillamook tribe.

Today, thanks to the study of geologists, it is clear that the stories document the 1700 massive earthquake and tsunami that hit the Northwest Coast prior to the arrival of British, Russian, Spanish, or American pioneers. Because the tales have been treated as myth, it wasn’t until the early 1990s that researcher Ruth Ludwin, a seismologist at the University of Washington recognized their value as eye-witness accounts of the huge tsunami of January 1700.

Popular descriptions of earthquakes have always been a key source of information for seismologists. Ludwin says, “These stories just bristle with information.” Besides using the current tools of modern science and technology to study the history of Northwest earthquakes, Ludwin has spent considerable time and effort looking into the Northwest tribes’ oral histories of these events. “When I first started looking into tribal histories, I was looking for statements that said something like ‘the ground shook’ or ‘the land slid’ or that sort of direct description. But that isn’t the way the tribes described things,” Ludwin points out. Major traumatic events were described in the rich tradition of tribal mythology.

“It is not trivial information,” says Ludwin. “Once you dig deep enough, and begin to understand the patterns and symbols conveyed by the words and sentence structures, an astonishing amount of descriptive data begins to emerge.”

Previous studies by UW geologist Brian Atwater found evidence proving that the Northwest Coast had been hit in 1700 by a massive “subduction zone” quake large enough to send destructive tsunami waves all the way to Japan. It was Atwater’s work that prompted Ruth Ludwin to search for Native American records of the 1700 quake and tsunami. It took her quite a while, but then she discovered the story of the Thunderbird and the Whale. That myth is a “story of the underworld and the over-world,” she points out. In the story the Whale is a monster, killing other whales and deriving the People of meat and oil. The Thunderbird, depicted as a benevolent supernatural being, saw from its home high in the mountains that the people were starving. So the Thunderbird soared out over the coastal waters, then plunged into the ocean and seized the Whale.

The tribal stories indicated that the struggle between the two of them first took place in the water. “The waters receded and rose again. Many canoes came down in trees and were destroyed and numerous lives were lost.” Sounds just like the events that took place in the recent past in Sumatra.

Eventually, Thunderbird succeeds in lifting the evil Whale out of the ocean, and carries the Whale high into the air, and then dropping it to the land on Beaver Prairie. Then another great battle ensues.

“For,” says Ludwin, “A picture begins to emerge that looks a lot like what you’d expect from a major quake. One tribe even had what sounds like an explanation for severe aftershocks, noting in that tribe’s story that Whale had a son, Subbus, who took Thunderbird several more days to locate and kill.” An earth-rumbling struggle began, but eventually Subbus was subdued. “I can’t say for certain this was the 1700 event,” Ludwin points out, “but it sure sounds like it.”

Another story from the Makah tribe out on the tip of the Olympic Peninsula tells of a huge earthquake occurring in the middle of the night. In some versions, the people in a doomed village have misbehaved. Elders tell the young that they must run for high ground. Those who heed the warning survive, although the “flood waters” follow close behind them. They spend a cold night in the hills surrounded by animals who have also fled the flood. In the morning they find that all traces of their village, and all the neighboring villages on the coast, have been completely washed away and no one else has survived.

The tribal storytellers, in telling this story over the years to their listeners, indicate that among the signs of danger is “a long lasting shaking moving from west to east, and sand that becomes so loose that people walking the beach sink into it.”

Today the Makah have uncovered a village that 500 years ago, according to the scientists, was buried by mud, trapping everything. The objects are so well-preserved, that today a first class tribal museum displaying the objects that have survived fill the museum and are today has become a major tourist attraction, helping to finance the Makah tribe.

Bob Casebeer, THS board president found this story on the internet



Sesquicentennial

Nellie May Oregonia Rowe Creel has passed away. She came to the Sesquicentennial celebration at the Talent Historical Society on the 14th of February and died 5 days later in Medford. A descendant of one of the signers of the Oregon Constitution, Haman Lewis, she had more seniority and authority at the celebration than anyone else. She and her husband, Paul Creel, were married for 70 years. Paul had the best wife anyone could ask for and we hope his time can be filled with loving memories with family and friends around him. Talent Historical Society is lucky to have known her and to have felt her kind support.

The Sesquicentennial celebration on Valentine's day was a success. A couple of hundred people came to the museum to see the costumed ladies and gents, play old-fashioned games, have refreshments, and see the exhibits at the museum. *Belles & Beaus* of Jacksonville came in costume to spice up the celebration and Banjo Bill showed up in the afternoon to entertain the folks with a banjo concert. Other historical societies throughout the valley were also celebrating the day. Many of us will not be around to witness the Bicentennial celebration so it was our chance to say Happy 150th Birthday, Oregon! The board at THS all helped but special mention goes to Lysa Gore and family for planning the event.



Old-fashioned clothing experts from Jacksonville made the day lively and informative. *Photo by Margaret Hunkins*

The *Talent News Flashes* are a valuable part of our history. We don't yet know if we have a complete set because no one has gone through them to sort and archive all the boxes of old issues. We need a **volunteer** to literally unfold history and take inventory of the Talent News Flashes in our possession. Extra issues are welcomed.

Art Walk April 10th

Talent Historical Society will be opened late on Friday April 10th to participate in the Talent Art Walk. Potters and painters will be on display at the museum and elsewhere around town. Take the opportunity to see the museum and other Talent Businesses.

Board of Directors:

President: Bob Casebeer
Vice Pres: Bill Horton
Secretary: Katherine Harris
Treasurer: Lysa Gore
Directors: Lynn Newbry
Greg Goebelt
Ralph Hunkins
Diane Glendenning
John Morrison
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Museum Director : Jan Wright

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Katherine Harris
Karen Carr
Liz Carter
Larry Wikander
Dick Simonson
Pat Bentley
Bob Casebeer
Ralph Hunkins
Bill Horton
Greg Goebelt

Helen Seiber, a treasured board member, passed away the 16th of March 2009. Her spirited contributions to Talent Historical Society, the library, business groups, her family, Soroptimists, and the people of Talent remains a bright spot in a sometimes gloomy world. She had a fine intellect and a respect for humanity that are hard to come by these days. We will miss her and want to thank those who made contributions to the Talent Historical Society in her memory, namely, Jim Walker of *Jim's Better Buys*, Dorothy Claflin and Ralph Hunkins. Katherine Harris of our board was especially kind to Helen and was there for her through thick and thin.

One Man's Family

One Man's Family, a popular radio show from the 1930s through the 1950s was dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation and to their bewildering offspring. Written by one-time Talent resident, Carlton Morse, it introduced radio audiences to a real-life American family, the Barbours.

This was no "Leave it to Beaver" family, the Barbours had real emotions and problems and appealed to the listeners. It started on April 24, 1932 as a 13 week trial on local West Coast stations and quickly moved Coast to Coast lasting 27 years. Morse considered his creation a family drama instead of a Soap Opera.

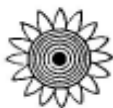
Winner of the Peabody award for radio excellence, One Man's Family (OMF), heard prime time weekly on NBC, brought out subtle character development and conflict that made the show addictive. To regular listeners, the Barbours became real people and part of their family. Listeners named their babies after the characters (especially Cliff and Claudia), wrote Christmas cards, get well cards, and letters of advice to the family. When its sponsor, Standard Brand, dropped the show in 1949 and there was a hint that the show might be dropped 75,000 protest letters poured into NBC.

OMF continued without a sponsor weekly on Sunday nights until Miles Laboratories sponsored a 15-minute nightly version on June 5, 1950.

The show unfolded in chapters and books. After 27 years, 136 books with 3,256 chapters had been written making it the longest-running noninterrupted serial in the history of American radio. The show did finally end on May 8, 1959 and with it ended a golden era of radio.

The creator of One Man's Family returned to Talent when brother, Melvin Morse from Grants Pass, urged the family to take advantage of the school reunion at the old Brick school house in 1973 and have a combined school and family reunion. Carlton remembered the great lunches his mother packed for him while he attended school and Saturday night bath times when they lived on a farm on Anderson Creek in the early 1900s.

(see Medford Mail Tribune article *From the Desk of Marjorie O'Harra* 23 May 1973 and internet source for *One Man's family*)



Mural for the Museum

Wow! When we asked the Middle School art students to paint pictures of Talent we weren't quite sure what to expect. The results are in and impressive. We congratulate the young ones of our community who picked up a paint brush, some of them for the first time, and completed their assignments with gusto. We hope they gained more than an "A" out of the project but also a respect and appreciation for the people, places, and things in Talent. Everything from a portrait of Jacob & Ellen Wagner to a painting of the Talent Skate Park, from the Community Hall to the Camelot Theater building was portrayed. Art teacher, Brian Taylor and student teacher, Paul Messenger made the project rock. Anyone who would like to help with installing the paintings please call Jan at 512-8838. The artwork is meant to be seen and volunteers are needed to hang the pictures above the stage in the museum.



One of the paintings from the Middle School done by Halie Weber - Talent Community Hall

New Exhibit

Come into the museum to see the new exhibit of oil lamps on loan from a local collector. The lamps are a study in time, technology, and beauty and range in date from the 1850s to the early 1900s. Some are very delicate and some strickly utilitarian.

Memberships this Quarter

Renewing Members

Lee and Ann Banks
Alice Burnette
Robert & Carol Delsman
Boyd & Dorcas Lockwood
Ron & Stella Medinger
Jim Maize
Doris Myers

New Members

Diane Glendenning
Willa Johnson
Judy Jordan
Carole Kehrig
Olivia Levin
John Norton

Thank you!

Talent Historical Society

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