

# The Historacle

July 2011

*The Official Newsletter of the* Talent Historical Society



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## 1913 Tribune Article Explains Why Talent Area Was Growing

Talent is growing. Why? Because it is surrounded by the largest body of fertile soil of any town in Southern Oregon.

East lies a half township of the best orchard land. The 400-acre Suncrest Orchard is in this belt.

West lies the famous Mountain View Orchard, with flowing artesian wells, besides the George Morris three hundred and twenty acre tract which is all either orchard or garden land, one of the most productive bodies of land in the valley.

The remainder of the west half town is owned by persons too numerous to mention, but all have the best of land.

Turning the compass on around to the north of Talent there you find the cream of the valley, both in soil and water conditions. Anderson mining race, the old mill ditch and Beny creek, all living streams, flow through this land. The largest berry farms and finest gardens of the valley are found there. And alfalfa needs no water to grown four crops each year.

Dairying, too, comes in for its share in the section north of Talent. The Southern Oregon Experiment Station is located there because of the exceeding fertility of soil.

South of Talent is Wagner Creek valley. Fruit and dairy farming are on one of the best paying basis in the valley. W. D. Holdridge and E. F. Foss have peach orchards there that are not excelled in Colorado. The Rapp orchards and alfalfa farm has made its owners independent, as has the Beeson brothers' grove. Each of these own an automobile and are on easy street, as are many others in the southern part of that township. Only a small portion of the young orchards are in bearing as yet, so there are better times ahead for Talent, and bigger payrolls in the future

Talent business houses and enterprises at present {Remember this is 1913} are: Talent State Bank, a \$24,000 public school building {The old Brick School had just been constructed}, three fine churches, a \$12,000 cannery {The Bagley Cannery located south of Culver Road}, a \$20,000 water system just about completed, two large stores, a dry goods and groceries; one grocery, one bakery, three confectionery and soft drink houses, one large pool room, three real estate offices, two barber shops, one hardware

store, a drug store, lumber yard, railroad depot and freight warehouse, a post office, and an International Order of Odd Fellows hall, three fine hotels, a fruit packing house, an experimental station, and the county poor farm.

Plans are being drawn for a \$10,000 Odd Fellows hall. {This structure is now called Hanscom Hall and houses Total Picture, is one story lower than the original and is on the National Historic Register.} Medford Mail Tribune, 6 January 1913 p. 4

## **Museum Hosts Two New Exhibits**

All museums have two kinds of exhibits—permanent exhibits and temporary exhibits. If the permanent exhibits outnumber the temporary ones, the numbers of folk who come to see what a museum offers declines. So, museum folk engage in a balancing act.

Some exhibits are so rare, like the Talent museum's Brickpile Cabin door and the Takelma pictograph exhibit in the foyer of the museum, that they have permanent status. These exhibits are unique and deserve permanent display. But once seen, they only attract folk who have never seen them before. And museums like regular visitors who keep coming back in...so temporary exhibits and loan exhibits become part of the “meat and drink” of museum display.

Recently two new temporary exhibits have been mounted at the museum; one deals with Ersula Goddard Robison Dean, a Talent pioneer woman, and the other is a Civil War exhibit, housed in our new display cabinet.

The Ersula Dean exhibit was created by Talent resident Jamie Cope as part of an assignment for a woman's history class she just completed at Southern Oregon University and she has graciously provided it for temporary display at the museum.

Since Ersula's birth family was the Goddards, who came to the Talent area in 1864 from Missouri, and since the museum also has one other permanent exhibit featuring that family—the 100 plus year old Goddard cradle, we are delighted to call our readers' attention to Mrs. Cope's display panel. Ersula incidentally was eight years old when she crossed the plains to Oregon.

The new Civil War exhibit deals with the brutal encounters between the North and the South in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Winchester, Virginia, which is located in that valley was invaded 70 times during the Civil War. The exhibit displays contemporary photographs of this lovely valley, and features two letters from Union soldiers written to an Oregon sister, and a portion of a Confederate major's diary covering the same August 1864 skirmishes. Union general Phillip Sheridan commanded 55,000 Union troops, and Confederate general Jubal Early had 45,000 Confederate forces battling each other that August. Given the circumstances, and the kinds of battles our own forces face today, the attitudes of the soldiers, North and South are instructive.

**The museum is open 1:00 to 5:00 p. m. Wednesday through Saturday. The Board meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p. m. Visitors always welcome. We are in need of new Board members. If interested, call 541-512-8838 and send a brief biography to the Society.**

## **New Babies Bring Free Family Membership**

The Board of Directors of the Talent Historical Society began a special program for parents of new born babies about six months ago. If a Talent area family has had the joy of having a new baby join their family, including adoptees, since January 2010, that family will be given a year's free membership in the Talent Historical Society.

Recipient families receive a document on which to record their child's birth which can be framed. In addition, they receive a somewhat similar document on which they can record their child's parents, grandparents and great grandparents. A copy of the Talent area's "firsts" is also provided and a copy of the Centennial issue of the historical society newsletter—the *Historical* is also included...that copy records decade by decade the history of the city of Talent from 1910 until today.

However, if a family does not have their phone listed in the telephone directories, the Society can not send the free membership to an eligible family because the Society will not have a mailing address. It is a sort of demographic problem, for young families often only use cell phones. And while newspapers record the birth of a new family child, the laws protecting privacy limit the publication of addresses.

To date the Society has four free memberships waiting for known families who have had a new baby since January 2010. Those Talent families are listed next:

Jamar and Adam Boyd and baby Drayson McKay

Melissa and Tanner Cropper and baby John Waters

Jawea and Seth Marsh, and baby Abby Rose

Wendy Serle and Keith Parks and baby Sabret Keith

The Society would delight in being able to give these four families their free memberships. If there are other Talent area families who have had a new child join their family since January 2010, they just need to call the Society at 541-512-8838 between one and five p. m. Wednesday through Saturday to receive their free memberships.

## **Remember the 2010 Centennial Quilt?**

One of the more community involved activities of the City of Talent's centennial celebration was the group creation of a massive quilt. Individuals and organizations paid \$5.00 for a cloth block upon which they could create their own artistic representation of being present at the 100 year commemoration of Talent's founding.

Roughly 168 Talent area folk created their own individual statement about life in Talent and themselves. These were all stitched together, and the finished product has been on display at the city hall and the Talent library. Today the quilt has been framed by Total Picture, and the quilt will ultimately make its way for display at the Talent Historical Society museum. There the quilt will join another group produced quilt put together by members of the Women's Federated Club in 1937.

Because the quilt is a collective achievement, and no one owns the lovely work of art, a 2 foot by 2 and one-half foot poster has been made. Anyone who want their own visual image of this unique art object can secure a copy of the poster from the Talent

Historical Society at 105 North Market Street (behind the Community Center building) for the small price of \$5.00. Then take the poster home so you can view the artistic creation at your leisure.

### **Editorial Comment: How Times Have Changed**

**One of the delights of those of us who operate the Talent Historical Society Museum are the unexpected contributions from the residents of the Bear Creek Valley area. Bill Slack, of Ashland, is one of those folk who made an archivist's day.**

**He brought in a variety of things—a woman's athletic award letter from a school sweater, four Talent High School annuals from 1940 to 1944, and an undated news clipping about the Talent Rural Fire Department circa 1952-1953. Contributions to the Society are always welcome, and the news clipping provided some nearly 60 year old history not readily available.**

**Jackson County Fire District #5 is currently seeking historical data about the early history of the Talent Rural Fire Department, the historical father of Fire District 5. Today's fire protection is far more complex, for fire protection techniques have certainly changed since 1953 here in the rural areas of the Bear Creek Valley. This is what this unexpected news clipping revealed:**

### **Early Activity of Talent Rural Fire Department Reported**

The 1851-52 board of the Talent Rural Fire Association (as it was then called) were re-elected at a general meeting of the group, according to Andrew Hawver, chairman of the board of directors. The board for 1952-1953 consisted of Chairman Hawver, Secretary-treasurer Martin C. Wood, and members George Schulz, Elmer Kantor, Bill Slack, Lee Fifield, Ivan Olson and Roy Coghill.

#### **The Status of the Association**

**Fire Chief:** The fire chief is Jim Perdue supervising and training 15 volunteer firemen.

**Fire Truck:** A two ton fire truck is now in operation which was constructed from donations of various parts. Using a 1946 chassis including a pump and motor salvaged from an old Talent City fire truck donated to the Association by the City of Talent; the volunteer firemen collected enough sheet iron to construct a water tank on the chassis which would hold 600 gallons of water. The cost was \$1500, and the reconstructed fire truck would cost at least \$5000 if it were to be replaced.

**Direct Phone Line:** When a fire is called into the Association, a siren is now set off automatically which calls 15 volunteers to the fire. The telephone charges for a year will cost \$192 with half that cost being borne by the city of Talent.

**Operation:** The Association is going to select volunteers in each area served by the Association who will be available to operate the truck when a fire happens to be in their locality. A training program on how to operate the truck will be given to those key volunteers.

**Fire Hazards:** The Association plans to devise a system to check and eliminate fire hazards on the property of members of the Association.

## **Antique School Desks Available**

Two antique school desks attached to 2x4 wooden runners with metal iron supports holding wooden seats and work spaces (with ink bottle holes). One has book storage. Needs refinishing or repolishing.. To secure, call Amy at 541-227-8805.

## **Why Can't I Find That?" A Much Too Common Problem!**

Museums, like many organizations that store objects and paper, have massive filing problems. And when a society, like the Talent Historical Society, operates almost entirely with volunteers, the filing can occasionally become chaotic. We will know that we have a document or an object, and then cannot locate it quickly. However, we are not alone. Consider the recent case of the State of Pennsylvania which has a real "inventory" problem. More than 1,800 historic artifacts have gone missing according to its 2010 audit. Not only that but the audit "also discovered that upward of 5,100 artifacts from the state's collection haven't even been officially cataloged into its record. The state auditor general said, "The missing artifacts are pieces of Pennsylvania history that are likely lost forever, either through mishandling or theft!" What would cause this? Budget cuts: The Historical Commission's budget was cut in half (to \$27 million) and that caused the Commission to reduce the number of employees from 443 to 228 during the past four years. Is Oregon doing any better? Here is what the Oregon Historical website says about its funding, "The State of Oregon has cut funding to OHS!" However, as was noted in the December Historical, the voters of Multnomah county stepped in and passed a five year **county levy** to support what has been the State of Oregon's largest and most important historical society. Here is the wording that introduced the measure on the Multnomah county ballot "Shall County support history library, museum, and educational programs with 5-year levy of \$.05 per \$1,000 assessed valuation, with oversight? " The Multnomah County voters passed the measure last November. The state legislature should be embarrassed! And Jackson County also is no longer supporting its 13 historical societies! Even though the original 1948 tax for that purpose is still being collected!

## **Garden Club Photos Need Identification**

Jan Menke, a member of the Talent Garden Club, needs some help identifying pictures of Talent women who attended meetings and activities of the Talent Garden Club in the past. Any readers of this Historical who feel they could help Jan are asked to call the museum at 541-512-8838. You can make an appointment to view the photographs with Ms. Menke, and she will come down to the museum to display them for you.

**And you will get to see the changes here in the Museum as well!**

## **Attempt to Find Route to Idaho in 1861 Fraught with Danger**

A J. S. Pearce manuscript describes Col. John E. Ross and a company of Jacksonville miners as they traveled from the Rogue River valley across part of Eastern Oregon on the way to the gold mines on Idaho's Salmon River in 1861. The original manuscript was found in a scrapbook, the possession of the Central Point Deuel family.

The manuscript records the story of the exploration of a route between Southern Oregon and the Salmon River in Idaho beginning May 1, 1862. "Gold in Idaho" was the rallying call that prompted Jacksonville businessmen to raise \$5000 by subscription to finance the expedition and determine a safe route to the new gold strike.

Col. Ross was placed in charge of the expedition and twenty-three daring men were chosen to lay out the route. According to a Mail Tribune article dated February 9 1966, "mules, provisions and other supplies were purchased and arrangements made for all to meet at a rendezvous on Little Butte Creek where Eagle Point now stands."

Pearce who was one of the twenty-three men wrote that the group elected a five-man peace commission to settle any difficulties that might arise. At this same time, the men confirmed Col. Ross to captain the expedition and John W. Hillman was elected lieutenant. Actual departure was delayed until May 10 due to a storm.

The day before the party left Little Butte Creek, Daniel Rathburn, one of the men dove into that stream, changed his clothes and declared that he "would not wash his face or change his clothes until we reach Idaho and struck diggings that would pay." According to Pearce it was nearly two months later that Rathburn washed his face.

After the party left the valley, they had to wait at Rancheria Prairie (Near Butte Falls) due to deep snow. Finally, the party crossed the Cascades and moved on to Wood River (near present Fort Klamath), and were accosted by about 40 Klamath tribesmen bearing a flag of truce, who marched into their camp wearing war paint.

The Klamaths had been ordered by their chief, Leihlak, to notify the party that they were not to cross over into their country—and they were forceful in their manner. Their hostility had been triggered by an incident which had occurred a few years earlier when the Ledford exploring party had been killed by Rogue River Indians, but suspicion fell on the Klamaths. Chief Leihlak proclaimed the innocence of the Klamath tribe but seventeen of his tribesmen had been given up to be hanged, but were later proved innocent of the charges.

Col. Ross told the Indians that he wanted to talk to Chief Leihlak personally. So the next morning Leihlak appeared with fifty of his best warriors. Ross explained the object of the exploring party and assured the chief that the Klamaths were not endangered. After the Colonel gave an exhibition of target shooting, there was a short consultation and the Jacksonville party was permitted to pass on.

The Indians were invited to join the traveling party for dinner and the pipe of peace was smoked. Chief Leihlak promised that the party would not be molested by any of the Klamath tribe. And the party found their way onward to Idaho.

## Reference Library: New Additions

One of the key areas at the Talent Historical Society Museum, is our Reference Library. In the far northwest corner of the Museum, are stored key books, manuscripts, and historical data to be used in the Museum by interested patrons. Here are the new additions to the collection:

**Where Living Waters Flow: People & Place—Southwestern Oregon** by Jeff Leland, Kay Atwood, Stephen Most and Dennis J. Gray (Local historians)

**Rogue River Valley's Early History Reviewed** by Vanita Daley. (Daley is from Eagle Point)

**Memoirs of General Sheridan, chapters 3, 6, and 7.** by Phillip Sheridan. This covers his time in the Northwest prior to the Civil War. Chapter 6 deals with his direction of the Siletz Reservation, and Chapter 7 deals greatly with the treatment of the Rogue River Takelma on the Siletz Reservation.

**Klimek-Konecek Family History** by Belinda Klimek Vos (extensive book)

**Historic Context Statement for the City of Talent, Oregon,** June 1964 by George Kramer, Historic Preservation Consultant.

## Society Archives Host Family Data

For this issue of the **Historacle** you will find below the names of the families listed alphabetically, starting with D, which have data in the Archives. Readers who may have documentary or pictographic materials about the listed families are urged to share those materials with the Society. We would photocopy your items and return them to you, as we do not wish to separate you from family treasures. Here are the names:

**(D)** Danforth, Davidson, Dean, DeYoung, Dingman, and Dozier. **(E)** Eldridge and Estes. **(F)** Firestone, Flury, Ford, Foss, and Furry. **(G)** Gangnes, Gleim, Goddard, Gore, Gray, Gridley, and Grimm. **(H)** Hamlin, Hanley, Hanscom, Hanson, Harris, Hartley, Heim, Herrin, Hewitt, Hill, Hollowell, Holton, Holdridge, Hoxie, Hutchison, Hummer, and Hurley. **(J)** Jacobs, Johnson, and Justus/Justice **(K)** Kane, Kantor, Kime, Kenyon, Kerby, King, Klimek, Klum, and Konecek—see Klimek Family book.

## Names Change As Population Changes

When a newcomer to the Rogue Valley becomes infatuated with the area, and decides to take up permanent residence, one of the very first intellectual challenges is to learn the names that mark the landscape into which he or she has just moved. Street names, road names, creek names, mountain names, city names, etc. all become learning challenges. Sometimes, older names of areas receive new labels; city subdivisions are a prime example of this kind of name change.

John Beeson, the well-known Talent 1853 immigrant, puzzling over this situation wrote the following lines:

“There were still remaining the excavations. . . the fresh ashes

of their fires. I was constantly reminded of being an interloper or usurper of homes which others ought to possess.”

When the pioneer settlers of this valley moved here, displacing the native Indian population who were driven into a reservation at Siletz west of present McMinnville, Oregon, south of Portland, the names the Takelma used for centuries for places in the Rogue Valley nearly all vanished, as were the traces of Takelma occupancy.

As one local historian wrote:

“Within five years of the arrival of the first {pioneers}, most visible traces of Indians were gone. Stream bank villages became farmsteads; camas fields yielded to pastures enclosed with split rail fences; grasses converted to wheat or oats; and trails widened into roads. Upland camps disappeared as the forest was skinned from the hills. Fishing spots were destroyed as streams swirled with mining mud . . .”

And the names changed immediately: *Di'tani* became Table Rock, *Titankah* became Rock Point; *Si-ku-ptat* became Stuart Creek (named after an Army Captain who the Talkema killed in battle—Stuart is now buried in Arlington National Cemetery, and Stuart Creek is now called Bear Creek), *Ti-kalawik*—Jacksonville, *Tak-elam*—the Rogue River, *Al-ketak*—Mount Ashland, *Al-wiya*—Roxy Ann, *Titsan*—Coker Butte, *Sathkaw*—the Rogue River Valley; *Lathkaw*—Grizzly Peak, *Tantsat Seniftha*—Pilot Rock, *Lawaya*—Ashland, *Takaw*—Jackson Hot Springs, *Soytanak*—Butte Creek, *Ti-talam*—Grants Pass, *Ti-senkwatak*—Gold Hill, *Tawaxki*—Evans Creek, *Latha-lick*—Antelope Creek Valley, *Sbink*—Applegate River.

Not only were the names of places changed but so were the names for food: *yana*—Acorns, *tip*—Camas lily roots, *tak*—Freshwater mussels, *ilibis*—crawfish, *op*—tobacco (tobacco was the only plant agriculturally cultivated by the local native Americans), *lakwan*—chokecherries, *puim*—wide carrots, *piuk*—wild plums, *thkanay*—parsnips.

Interestingly enough, the early pioneers became multilingual. Regardless of their own native tongue (French, Spanish, German, English, Russian, etc.), they all learned the native Chinook jargon. In the Oregon Territory, prior to pioneer settlement, there were 26 different Indian languages spoken—so a common jargon was needed.

## Here's Another First for Oregon

Oregon's first state librarian was Cornelia Marvin Pierce (1873-1957). She moved from Wisconsin to Oregon, and helped establish and administer the Oregon State Library Commission in 1905. During her more than 20-year tenure, the number of public libraries in the state significantly increased, and in 1909 she established the first mail order department in any American library. The forerunner of the Talent Federated Women's Club started Talent's first library in 1913. Those 15 women hired a librarian and paid her \$3.00 a month for her services. Come see a 1922 picture of Talent's library.



## So You Folks Have an Archive? Hmmm?

Periodically, the Historical mentions that the Talent Historical Society maintains an archive. Ours focuses on the Talent and Upper Bear Creek Valley area and its people.

**So exactly what is an archive?** The American Heritage Dictionary defines an archive thusly: “A place or collection containing records, documents, or other materials of historical interest.” The Talent Historical Society Archive, is housed in several places in the museum. Foremost are the gray archival boxes located in the library area. We have manuscripts, diaries, newspaper clippings, and Talent area family files. Foremost in our archive are the photocopied diaries of Welborn Beeson (1851 to 1893), and the digitalized transcriptions of those handwritten documents through 1888.

**How do we decide what to collect?** Basically, we collect historical materials for the upper Bear Creek Valley geographic area. In April 1999 the Board of the Society adopted a set of policies for our general collection which includes our archives. Briefly, this sentence summarizes the five page document: “The Society shall collect and preserve objects and research materials that relate to the scope and diversity of human experience in Talent, Oregon and environs.” Putting the objects aside, our actual archive focuses on research materials including some 3,000 historical photographs of the Talent area.

The environs matter does cause us a bit of latitude for as the Talent area is the second oldest area in Jackson county that was settled by Euro-Caucasians, our geographic scope, depending on the decade involved goes from the Phoenix area to the California line, with most of our focus in recent decades excluding the Ashland area.

**What do we do with things that are brought in to us?** We first evaluate all the items to see what sort of research or historical value they have. Documents and photographs trickle by in small lots. The accessions committee decides which objects should be recommended to be included in our permanent or educational collections, and the Society Board acts on their recommendations when the board meets. At that time, the donor is asked to sign a “deed of gift” transferring all rights, title, and interest the donor may have to the Society.

**Then the work begins!** We collect background information about the people, the events relating to the manuscript, document or object in question, and in the case of objects clean the materials if necessary, try to store the materials in acid free containers, and in acid free folders. We arrange the materials so researchers and we can find them. Often bibliographic documents are created to help in this regard.

**And what can you do to improve our archives?** If you have documents, minutes of organizations that exist or have existed in the Talent area, or simply oral memories that should be recorded, drop by the Talent's only museum at 105 N. Market Street and talk to one of us there. We are open Wednesday through Saturday from 1:00 to 5:00 p. m. You can call us at 541-512-8838 or email [talenthistory@gmail.com](mailto:talenthistory@gmail.com).

## Talent Avenue, 1916



Notice that the church is facing Talent Avenue, rather than Main Street, which is the present location. In 1916 this was Talent's Baptist Church. Notice, too, that Talent Avenue, which then was the Pacific Highway, was paved. Jackson County was the first county in Oregon to have the entire length of the Pacific Highway in its borders paved.

## Travel Planning? Want to View History?

### Talent Historical Society Reference Library Can Help!

The Talent Historical Reference Library now has a copy of the History Channel Club's **Guide to Historic America, Fourth Edition**. Individuals planning vacation trips will find this guide very useful. The book is divided into Historic Sites by Topic and those include these topics and lead the reader to actual parks and museums: 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Century American Life. And with topics ranging from A to Z. In addition historic sites are listed by state.

Site data includes the name of the site, and provides mailing addresses, website computer addresses, and some entries provide actual location data in addition to a brief description of the site, museum, park, fort, ships, battlefield, etc. Those readers who wheel across the country in recreation vehicles, or are just looking for key locations to visit while visiting friends or families are invited to visit the museum reference library and use the Guide to Historic America. Ask for book number 127.

**New Memberships: Robert L. Jacobs, and Al Nijenhuis**

**Renewing Members: Roanne Clapp, Paul Creel, Judy Drais, Diane Glendenning, David M. Hodson, Judy Jordon, Gifford and Marilyn Lee, Connie and Gregory Miller, Carol Muir, Claire Sommers, Charlotte Spohn, Bob Wilson.**

**Family Memberships: Boyd and Dorcas Lockwood, Bill and Carolyn Cecil, Catherine A. (Beeson) Weber, Joel Goodman, Rick and Yolanda Nagel.**

**Business Sponsorships: Star Properties, Tarks Market, South Valley Bank, Talent Urban Renewal, Jim's Better Buys.**

*The Society currently has about 120 members. The City of Talent is now approaching a population of 7000. The area outside the boundaries of the city house more than 4000 more individuals. Some 40 percent of the Society membership live in distant places, and enjoy membership because of past family settlement or have a keen interest in the history of the Bear Creek Valley. We would welcome a larger membership. Perhaps you can help by suggesting to others that they too should join our number. The Talent Historical Society Board of Directors.*

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