

The Historacle The Official Newsletter

Talent Historical Society - March 2015



105 Market Street, Talent, Oregon 97540

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 582

talenthistory@gmail.com

We are a tax free 501C3 Organization

Forgot the Words? Bet You Did!

In 1960, after the merger of the Talent and Phoenix School Districts, Talent High School ceased to exist. Its relatively new high school building became the Phoenix-Talent Junior High School (now Middle School). However, Talent High School students did have a school song. Those are the words we think Talent High School graduates may have forgotten. Here they are:

Talent Alma Mater

Beneath the grand ol' hills of Talent
where the flowers thrive and grow,
stands our dear old Alma Mater
of the fame we all should know.
In our sports and in our studies
comes the honors far and wide.
Of our feats we proudly rally.
Of our deed we sing our pride.
When the sun's last rays have faded
and her men have come to rule,
long. Long, we'll honor her---
Old Talent High School.

Can anybody tell us (here at the historical society) what the tune was?

Contributions to the Permanent Collection at the Museum Often Brings Unexpected Treasures

As residents of the Talent area become more acquainted with the presence of a museum in Talent, those of us who work to keep the museum operational have the pleasure of seeing some of the unusual donations given to the museum. Recently, quite a collection of material of historical interest was donated by members of the Bagley family, a family whose impact began here in 1910.

Dr. William Richardson Bagley moved from Duluth, Minnesota, to Oregon, bought a sixty acre orchard just southwest of the Stearns Cemetery off Anderson Road. He changed his occupation when he and his wife and family moved to Oregon. At that time here, the orchardists in the valley only sold fresh fruit—apples, cherries, pears, etc. Bagley decided he would start canning his apples and sell the canned juice. It was a successful business decision. So successful, that the Talent aldermen suggested that he move his cannery operation to the railroad in Talent just south of Colver road. So Dr. Bagley built a new cannery for \$10,000 and moved his cannery operation to Talent. In 1915, as his health improved, he returned to Minnesota and resumed his medical practice. Some of the older children stayed in Oregon and continued to operate the orchard and cannery. In 1924, the Bagley Cannery Company moved to Ashland and continued operation there until the mid-1960s.

Dr. Bagley's oldest son, Kilmer Smith Bagley (Smith was Dr. Bagley's deceased first wife's maiden name) went to Winnipeg, Canada in September, 1916, without telling his family of his intentions, and joined the Canadian army. When his family found him, he had finished his military training, had been assigned to a bicycle corps and was to leave for England within a week. His parents informed the Canadians that he had just turned 16, and so Kilmer was discharged immediately and returned to Duluth, graduating from high school in June, 1917. He entered the University of Michigan that fall studying to become an engineer. Because of his intensive military training in Canada he was given an officer's position in the ROTC. In March 1918, his parents got a telegram which read:

“Want to join the Marines. Hope you give your consent.”

His parents sent back a favorable reply to his Ann Arbor address and it was returned. He soon was a member of the Fifth Regiment of the United States Marines. Kilmer's Marine unit was sent to France in July. Kilmer was gassed at Champagne where he destroyed two German machine gun nests and received his Croix de Guerre. He was one of the 261 Marines who were members of General Pershing's Own Regiment, who marched through the Arch of Triumph in Paris, marched in London, and marched in New York upon its return to the states. However, in August, Kilmer was informed that what he thought was a cold was tuberculosis, and he was hospitalized. Due to bungling by the military postal system, one of the family letters to Kilmer during his hospitalization was returned with the note “Deceased.” That was not true, and Kilmer returned to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital in September 1919.

Kilmer Smith Bagley survived his illness and after he died in January 1948, his father wrote these words about his first born son:

“You came home, married---had four fine children and established yourself successfully in the business world with the wide respect of your Fellows. Now you

have left us and we are to be lonesome for you until we have fought the good fight and are taken to our reward.”

Kilmer's foster mother, Marian Miller Bagley, compiled all of Kilmer's Marine letters and related correspondence, creating a 35 page printed book which was given to family members and friends. The museum now has a copy, and we welcome interested readers to visit our Reference Library to read Kilmer Smith Bagley's **Letters of a Marine**.

A third small booklet titled **Life and its Obligations**, written by Dr. William Bagley, the father of Kilmer, numbering 16 pages was also given to the Reference Library with the other Bagley family material. This booklet which went through three printings, the last dated August 15, 1951, was published by Steel Lounsberry Company in Duluth. The first section presents Dr. Bagley's beliefs titled “Health.” It is followed by a section titled “Life,” and Dr. Bagley discusses plant, human and animal life in some eight pages. These two sections provide a fascinating peek into the mind of one of the men who had a great impact on both Talent and Jackson County, as well as Duluth, Minnesota and the university in that city. It also resides in our Reference Library.

Stray Document Yields Fascinating Data About Cattle on the Siskiyou

(Note: This article was written by Robert L. Casebeer, secretary of the Board of Directors. When he first came down to Ashland as freshman to attend what is now Southern Oregon University, he boarded with the Kleinhammers who had retired to Ashland from their ranch on the Little Applegate River.)

One of the delights of museum operation involves the documents which seem to stray into the place, donated by members of the Talent community. One such gift was titled “The Legend of Arthur S. Kleinhammer,” written some years ago by Ellis Beeson. The Kleinhammers operated the Circle G Ranch on the Little Applegate River. Beeson writes that Kleinhammer was known as the “Boss of the Siskiyou Range.”

The article which lauds Kleinhammer discusses the way cattle ranged up and beyond Wagner Creek, describes various cabins used by the cattlemen particularly Freezeout cabin, Wrangle Creek cabin, and the Brickpile cabin. Two of these are carefully described by Beeson. He lavishes considerable detail on the Brickpile cabin--probably because Ellis's father Emmett Beeson had bought that cabin sometime around 1903, at which time a new log cabin had been constructed at that site. (Note: The door of that log cabin is now housed in the Museum, and is decorated with carved names of some of the folk who used the Brickpile cabin in past years.)

The Freezeout cabin had a double row of beds on the south end, one above the other which could sleep twelve cowboys. Beeson describes his first meeting with Arthur Kleinhammer in 1915—which occurred at Freezeout when Ellis was twelve years old.

Further data about how the various cattlemen used the high pastures of the Siskiyou mountains is described in some detail including how multiple owners of the herds of cattle were rounded up each fall and then moved down to the valleys to winter at lower elevations or to be sold. Beeson's memory of these events is titled: "The Legend of Arthur S. Kleinhammer" and can be secured by the curious in the Beeson family archives at the Talent Historical Society Museum under that title. For those curious about how cattlemen used the Siskiyou Mountains about a hundred years ago, this is a document worth reading—and take a peek at the old Brickpile cabin door, too.

Talent Family Commemorated by Anderson Creek and Anderson Butte

As one travels up Wagner Creek Road south of Talent, one of the side roads is named "Anderson Creek Road," that's the one by which the Stearns Cemetery is located.

Many people reading this article or traveling on this road will have no idea whatsoever about the family whose name has been placed on a creek, a road, a nearby mountain, a water ditch and another road south of the Klamath River called Anderson Grade.

Anderson Butte which lies west of Wagner Butte is 5,195 feet in elevation. In July 1933 the lookout below was erected by the USFS at the summit. A thirty foot tower topped by a 14 by 14 foot house was built using timbers cut at the towers location by members of the Applegate Civilian Construction Corp or CCC as such camps were usually called. Other materials were packed in some three miles by pack teams. The butte is 6.4 miles southwest of Talent.



Anderson Butte Lookout (now removed)

So who were the Andersons? There were several Anderson brothers who came to Jackson County, all children of George Anderson and Hannah Knighten. Eli Knighton Anderson was the oldest pioneer of the Rogue River Valley when he died on March 13, 1912 at 85 years of age. In 1849 Eli left for the gold fields of

California, arriving in the middle of September at the Redding ranch on the Sacramento River near present day Chico. He then went to Salt Creek on the Trinity River where he mined for gold. In the spring of 1850, after mining on California's Scott River, Eli's brother James Firman Anderson came west and joined his brother at Shasta City, which was a complete surprise to Eli who did not know his brother had left Indiana.

The two brothers heard that there were rich diggings at what is now Yreka Flats, the previous name for Yreka, California. Even though Eli had netted about \$2,500 dollars in just over a month on the Scott river claims, they went to Yreka and found that the mining there was not as productive as it had been on the Scott or Salmon rivers. The two brothers went to mine on the Salmon River, but ran out of provisions in March of 1851. Flour was selling from \$3.00 a pound, and then a severe snow storm hit. To keep body and soul together, the two brothers killed their mules to keep from starving. When a trader came through with enough flour for the price to drop to 50 cents a pound, Firman bought enough flour that he went to Yreka and sold bread and mined. Eli cleared \$900 that summer.

After chasing after a gang of horse thieves who had made off with over 100 horses, finally catching the thieves at the head of the Deschutes River, Eli and Firman first saw the Rogue River Valley in the December 1851. So early in 1852, Eli and Firman came up from Yreka to homestead and chose to settle in what is now the Wagner Creek valley. Eli built the first house for a white woman in the Rogue River Valley, and it was for a married couple named Walton.

Early in 1851, Eli went up to the Willamette Valley to buy wheat seed, potatoes, garden seeds and other grain seeds. He and Firman grew the first crop of wheat in the valley and sold it for \$8.00 a bushel, after it had been stamped out by cattle and fanned with a sheet. Incidentally, Eli also bought a cat while in the Willamette valley. Firman and Eli built a two log houses by the fall of 1854 to house other members of the family from Indiana who came west in the summer of 1854. Their mother, two sisters, and Jesse Marion Anderson, who were out of supplies and completely exhausted, were met by Firman on the Greensprings part of the Applegate Trail. The newcomer Andersons were totally surprised at Ashland Mills (the first name for what is now Ashland) to find a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, a hotel and one store.

In January of 1856, Eli married Elizabeth Myer. Firman was not married and in the fall of 1859 went back east, and married a widow with two children and returned with four more relatives. The Myer family (Elizabeth's father and two brothers) had settled north of Ashland about where the current north entrance from I-5 is located. The top of the small hill to the left of I-5 at that location is where the Myer cemetery is situated.

Eli K. Anderson and his wife Elizabeth made their home up Wagner Creek on what is now Anderson Creek until 1909. In that year they moved to Ashland, leaving behind in Talent, a spacious mansion. (There are pictures of the mansion at the museum.) Unfortunately that building burned down sometime in the mid-1950s, and the house in Ashland has also been removed. Elizabeth died in 1911 at age 80. Eli died the next year at age 86.

Eli Anderson's accomplishments were many. He operated the first flour mill in the Rogue River Valley, and with his son operated the only woolen mill in Southern Oregon – it was also located in Ashland. He built a three mile long water ditch on Ashland Creek and donated enough money to buy some of the land that is now Lithia Park which he gave to the city. Eli was also at one time one of the Jackson County commissioners.

When 305 acres of Anderson property in Talent was sold in 1896, some 42 acres were planted to Spitzenburg apples, with peach trees planted between the rows. Fifty acres was planted in alfalfa and the balance was planted to various grains, except for 30 acres of timber land. Eli sold the property for \$350 an acre. Eli had owned the land since 1852.

His brother Firman moved down past Hornbrook and operated a ferry across the Klamath River. He told his sons, who actually ran the ferry, that they should always secure the fare from any person using the ferry service. When Firman died and the pallbearers came to get the casket, which was located in Firman's house on the south side of the Klamath River, so the burial could take place at the local cemetery on the north side of the Klamath river, adjacent to Hornbrook, the young men charged the pallbearers for the use of the ferry, both coming to get the casket and when they returned to take the casket back across the Klamath. When asked why they charged the six men, they invoked their dead father's instructions regarding the collection of the fare. It is Firman Anderson whose name is commemorated by the high Anderson Grade roadbed visible to the left and across the river from I-5 as one travels to Yreka

Through marriages several local pioneer families are linked to the Andersons including Tolman, Carter, Wight, and Coleman. Both Tolman and Coleman have places named after those families. The two Anderson brothers and their relatives were significant settlers here in the Bear Creek valley.

If you are on Facebook, check out our daily postings for "150 years ago today in Talent" quoted directly from "Welborn Beeson's Diary" by searching on Facebook for Talent Historical Society.

Jordan Valley Travelers Should Visit the I-O-N Museum

Jordan Valley, Oregon is cuddled about halfway up the Idaho border on U. S. Highway 95. That town is a long way from Southern Oregon, but for those Oregonians who get there, one place they should visit is the I-O-N Heritage Museum.

Located in a ten room house, and three additional rooms in what was an adjoining apartment, the museum has a "large varied collection of information, artifacts, historical data, and furnishings. The museum seeks "to preserve the history of the area surrounding the state lines of Oregon, Idaho and Nevada."

Like several places in these three states, the initial white settlement was sparked by gold rush fever. During the 1860s, this area experienced an influx of Chinese miners who came to the region in fairly large numbers. Relatively large numbers of Basque immigrants from Spain also settled in this area. In the town of Jordan Valley, there is a 98 year old pelota ball court where the Basques could play a sport similar to squash and racquetball. Basques at one time made up two-thirds of the population of Jordan Valley.

The city of Jordan Valley is in Malheur County at an elevation of 4,390 feet and has a population of 450. Basques migrated in great numbers from the Pyrenees Mountains in eastern Spain to Southeastern Oregon and adjacent areas of Idaho and Nevada, bringing with them their traditional games, customs, festive occasions and Basque food.

As a consequence, existing today in the town of Jordan Valley, is Oregon's only Basque Handball Court. The Pelota Frontone court was built in the spring of 1915 and was created of native stone, hewn by Basque masons who learned their trade in Spain. The court was restored in 1997 and is celebrated with a Basque Fall Festival.

Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, the son of Sacagawea (of Lewis and Clark Expedition fame), died of pneumonia near the Owyhee River in 1866 and is buried in Jordan Valley on the Inskip Ranch, now called the Ruby Ranch. Charbonneau, who had been raised by Clark in St. Louis after the death of Sacagawea, eventually found his way to Southern California where he became a local marshal. However, when word of the gold strikes in Montana reached Charbonneau, he decided in the spring of 1866 to leave California and go to Montana with two companions. Fate and illness intervened and Charbonneau who was born in 1805 on Lewis and Clark's way to the mouth of the Columbia River died in Jordan Valley.

Even though Jordan Valley is a long way from Oregon's major population centers, it is deeply linked with early Oregon exploration and settlement, and the I-O-N museum is documenting this key relationship.

The Indian Attack on Fort Aberdeen

Note: This article was written by diarist Welborn Beeson for the Talent News, published on August 15, 1892. It describes an Indian attack which occurred on August 15, 1853, just south of Ashland, Oregon, near Tolman Creek.

The fifteenth of the present month marks the thirty-ninth anniversary of the Indian outbreak on Fort Aberdeen, a stockade surrounding Fred Aberdeen's log cabin, which was located on the farm afterward improved and cultivated by Judge James C. Tolman, and situated above the prosperous town of Ashland.

Believing that the Indians were preparing for hostilities the few scattered inhabitants, that were located in the upper end of Bear Creek valley, gathered at Aberdeen's, built a stockade and, having captured a few squaws, detained them as prisoners, or rather hostages, hoping by that means to induce the braves to come in and propose a treaty of peace, but unfortunately as the sequel will show, the settlers made a mistake. A day or two before the fifteenth of August, a small train of immigrants, commanded by Capt. Asa Fordyce, the first to arrive that season from across the Great Plains, camped at the stockade, some of the families inside while others occupied their wagons and tents just outside. A guard was stationed outside to give the alarm if anything should indicate that Indians were near, but all seemed quiet and the imprisoned squaws on the inside gave no evidence that they expected any relief from their braves. But just at daybreak on the morning of the fifteenth, the guard heard a shrill coyote yell, which was nothing uncommon at that time, for coyotes were more plentiful than now, but on the instant of this particular yell, a volley of bullets and arrows came thick and fast from the surrounding thickets and trees against the wagons and stockade and into the tents. To add to the confusion, the squaws all jumped up and escaped through the doors of the stockade which were opened to admit the guard. As soon as the squaws were out, the firing from the brush ceased, and the Indians escaped without a wound.

But not so with the little company at the Fort. A number were wounded, among them Capt. Fordyce. A Mr. Higgins, who was sleeping in his wagon with his wife and little daughter, was killed, while his wife and daughter escaped. His remains were buried near that large pine tree that now stands just east of A. Alford's barn in Talent. There was also a young man by the name of Smith, a nephew of the late lamented "Grandma" Robison, instantly killed and lies buried in what is now known as the Hill Cemetery, near the scene of his death.

The little garrison with the immigrants immediately moved down the valley to Fort Wagner (**Editor's note: Located here in Talent just north of the bridge across Wagner Creek and placed about 75 to 100 feet to the west.**) where they remained until peace was established soon after the arrival of Gen. Joseph Lane from the Willamette. This was not a very encouraging welcome to tired, travel-worn immigrants, who had been toiling for five long months to reach this beautiful vale. The poor wife and daughter of the murdered Higgins found a home with the old man Holman, at Jacksonville, for a while. The daughter is now a grandmother and resides near Los Angeles, California, but the memory of that fateful morning will never be obliterated from her mind while life lasts.