



# The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the  
Talent Historical Society

Volume 27 Issue 4

December 2021

*By Willow McCloud*

The heart of a town is the central and most important part in a small community like ours. I could definitely name a few sources of heart in Talent. Having grown up in this area, I have seen and/or met a lot of people who stand out a little brighter than most for one reason or another: great artists, great musicians, great poets, great actors, great alternative free thinkers, great activists, great inventors. All of these characteristics, plus many more I did not mention, are a big reason why so many people are drawn to move here. Personally, the heart types I love the most are the people who show and share spirit for our community and for life. They bring magic and curiosity to life. They bring color and a destination. They bring a familiarity of soul, and most of all, they bring happiness. People who live in a central location of a town have a special opportunity to be the heart of that town.

The Bahr-Brown house at 202 East Main Street in the center of Talent, is located near the community center, the skate park, the City Hall, the historical society, the library, and downtown businesses. It is the center of many events, like the Harvest Festival which takes place in a complete circle around the home. The residents of this historic home are Ray Kenton and Betty Fitzsimmons. They can often be seen on the front porch in a comfy chair, watching and greeting the walkers passing by.

This home is one of the more decorated houses in the area for the holidays. The first thing I notice is the icicle lights strung on the whole length of the white picket fence. The front porch rains stars that bring a colored dancing glow to the porch at night. The big trees on either side of the house light up the yard, and the decora-



## The Bahr-Brown House: Heart of our Town

tions turn heads and give a take-a-minute-to-take-it-all-in kind of feeling. Over the years, these lights and decorations have brought my kid and I a silent joy every holiday. We usually park and walk up, sharing a moment of quiet in the frosty air in front of the picket fence and magical porch. My kid's eyes light up like sunshine mapping out the whole zone. As we stand there, I always wonder what the people who live in the home are like. Who has such kindred, joyful spirits? Who is living in this historic home? This year I couldn't take it anymore, I wanted to know more, and our Talent Historical Society Board Members did too. I found that Ray and Betty are easy to feel right at home with. They have love, humor, pride, goals and are really enjoyable to sit with and talk.

Ray and Betty are both native locals. Ray has been here from the very beginning, as he was born in Talent. He grew up just up the road on South Second Street. His childhood home was a two-story house originating from Camp White that stood directly in front of the elementary school playground. It burned down years ago, and now another Camp White house sits in its location. Ray

worked at one of the local mills, and later at the Talent Walmart. Betty has had many different jobs in the area and currently works just down the street at our historic bar, which is now called the Talent Club.

The two of them moved into this house in 2007. They really loved the house and did not want to live anywhere else. It just felt like home and "heart". The owner of the Bahr-Brown house does not live in this area anymore, but Ray and Betty take good care of the house and make the most out of being part of the heart of Talent. The first thing I wanted to know was why? Why do you decorate so brightly and vibrantly, what is your inspiration? Why do you put so much effort into it? And the obvious, how much does your power bill go up? How do you afford it? Ray's answer was one I completely resonated with, "My inspiration comes from that house that used to be on Talent Avenue." To this day, that house (no longer there) is still my all-time favorite decorated house from over the years. You may remember it too. That house went all out with lights, and decorations on the front and the back side of the house, even the windows had displays in them. They were located near Creel on the south side of Talent. Toward the end, cars

*Continued on Page 4*

# Talent Historical Society

The Talent Historical Society researches and preserves the history of the Talent area in Southern Oregon. We offer a collection of historical archives to help local residents and visitors become better acquainted with our area's rich history.

We are members of the Jackson County Heritage Association; a group of heritage nonprofits dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Southern Oregon's cultural history.

We operate a museum and meeting place located at:

105 North Market Street  
Talent, Oregon

The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

General Business/Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 582  
Talent, OR 97540

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838  
Email: [info@talenthistory.org](mailto:info@talenthistory.org)  
Web Page: [www.talenthistory.org](http://www.talenthistory.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/talenthistory/](http://www.facebook.com/talenthistory/)

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Editor: Myke Gelhaus

You may submit your written work about historical Talent to be considered for publication in the THS newsletter. Our research library is ready for you to get started on an interesting local article! We are especially looking for more tales from early to middle 20th Century,

## MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is closed to the Public until Further Notice.

1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.

### Memberships Since Last Issue

#### **New Members:**

Cici Brown  
Iris & Allan DeMello

Cyrus Emerson  
Kathy Jerman  
Bonnie Morgan

#### **Renewals:**

Christine Bate  
Maureen Flanagan-Battistella  
Ed Colson & Jennifer Laughlin  
Jerry Deubert  
Noni Eaton  
Ruby Garmon  
Myke Gelhaus  
David & Renee Heath  
Shirley Sullivan Hewitt

Otto King  
Medicap Pharmacy  
Paula & James Mixson  
Rick & Yolanda Nagel  
Ed & Sharon Olson  
Kent Patrick-Riley  
Talent Dental  
Chuck Zickfoose  
Page One Press

#### **Lifetime Memberships:**

Susan (Hartley) Andrews  
Joan C. Barnhart  
Poppie Beveridge  
Jim Bradley & Patricia Remencuis  
Marla Cates & Jan Ritter  
John & Judy Casad  
Joan Dean  
Gladys Fortmiller  
Margay Garrity  
Bud & MaryLouise Gleim  
Lunette Gleason-Fleming

Dale Greenley  
Joe Hunkins  
Kathy Jerman  
George Kramer  
Jack Latvala  
Matt & Antoinette Lichtenstein  
Edwin McManus & Family  
Michael Mills  
Janice A. Napoleon  
Ryan & Carly Pedersen  
Wanda Perdue  
Brent Thompson

#### **Additional Donations:**

Richard & Donna Corrigan  
Ruby Garmon

Paula & James Mixson  
Rick & Yolanda Nagel



#### **Honorary Lifetime Memberships**

Bob Casebeer      Jan Wright  
Susan Moulder      Katherine Harris

***Willow McCloud***  
***Author of our***  
***Lead Story This Issue***

"Who has fully realized that history is not contained  
in thick books but lives in our very blood."

Carl Jung



## President's Message by Ron Medinger

### Robert Livingston Casebeer

03/12/1931 - 11/08/2021

Robert Livingston Casebeer, 90, of Talent, OR passed away in his sleep on November 8th, 2021. Born in 1931 in Roseburg, OR, to Robert and Frances Casebeer of Glide, OR. Robert married his high school sweetheart, Audrey, in August 1950. Robert was a graduate of Southern Oregon College. He dedicated his professional life to educating young people working as a teacher and principal at Riddle High School and spending his last 25+ years working as a Professor of English at Southern Oregon University.

Robert served his country in the military in the Korean war. During his lifetime, he had a passion for education, reading, fishing, and gardening. Following his 90th birthday, most days you could find Robert outside his home working on his yard and tending to his garden.

Robert is survived by two of his three adopted children, Kimberly and Kevin, 10 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren. He was preceded in passing by his wife Audrey, son Jeffrey, and sister Morgan.

Bob's obituary, shown above, illustrates what a valuable and contributing member of society he was. The members of Talent Historical Society owe Bob their gratitude for the time he spent providing support in keeping our Society and Museum alive.

By the time I joined the Talent Historical Society Board in October of 2014, Bob had been serving as the board president for 10 years. He would go on to serve one more year, making his 11-year stint as board president the longest in THS board history. Not only did he serve the longest term in that office, but he also served during some of Talent Historical Society's most troublesome years with a steady hand that kept the society in existence rather than giving up when many would.

In the early 2000's, the Jackson County

Board of Commissioners decided to pull the financial support the local historical societies depended on for their very existence. A bond levy had been overwhelmingly passed by voters in 1947 to support and fund local historical societies. These funds provided for the growth of not only Southern Oregon Historical Society, but many other smaller historical societies dedicated to Gold Hill, Phoenix, Eagle Point and Talent among others. Without



this support, all local historical societies needed to spend a great deal of their volunteers' time and resources fundraising rather than preserving historical memorabilia and presenting educational programs for the public.

Talent Historical Society was impacted greatly by this, but during the following years there was always one man who spent his time making sure the THS Museum's doors were open to the public, that was Bob Casebeer. He continued to research and document local history and led the dwindling number of volunteers in

keeping Talent Historical Society in existence.

Bob had done many great and interesting things in his life (one example is Project Prometheus: ([https://www.classcreator.com/Ashland-OR-Project-Prometheus-1965/class\\_custom2.cfm](https://www.classcreator.com/Ashland-OR-Project-Prometheus-1965/class_custom2.cfm)), but in my somewhat biased opinion, Bob's efforts in helping THS through this time was right up there near the top of the list.

Bob did a presentation at THS one time of his poetry (another talent the man had!) and, while poetry "isn't my thing", I found several of his poems quite entertaining and enjoyable. I now wish we had videotaped the evening.

On a personal note, I always found Bob's smile as a dependable pick-me-up on a difficult day. His love and dedication to Audrey always melted my heart. (Older couples who have been together for a very long time and still love and respect each other is a particular favorite of mine.)

I will miss Bob and I hope his memory survives for a long time for those who knew him or knew of him.

*May you Rest In Peace  
Robert Livingston Casebeer.*

## 2022 Bird Calendars by Debra Moon



Each year, Emmalisa Whalley produces a unique bird calendar relevant to the birds in our area. She is a genius at capturing the beauty and vulnerability, or nobility, as the case may be, of these special local creatures, who are so important to our community's environment.

In 2022, the calendar will be particularly unique and authentic, as she will be using only photos of birds caught in her lens from the Greenway Bird Survey, and they will be relevant to the season. Updates from this survey have appeared several times in *The Historacle* along with some of the most captivating of Emmalisa's photographs. We have recorded, in these updates, the return of the bird population to our Greenway since the Alameda Fire, using Emmalisa's reports for information.

Since the start of shared 66 bird photo-course, not all will ones that do will re-Greenway and make protective. This is an not want to miss pur-from all year, and to wildlife history. In its

tion of our survival and recovery from the fire.

The calendars make great gifts as well. You can order your own calendars, and gifts for others, on our website store, <https://store.talenthistory.org/Default.asp> The calendars are \$15 each, which includes shipping.



Spotted Towhee

the survey, Emmalisa has graphs with us. So, of appear in the calendar, but the flect the wildlife of our us feel alternately proud and item that I personally would chasing, to look at and learn collect as documentation of own way, it is a commemora-

## The Bahr-Brown House *Continued from Page One*

were usually lined up almost to Arnos to see the lights each evening. Ray said, "When they passed away, I wanted to buy the displays, but most of it all was taken to the dump". Ray wants to spread the same joy that those folks did. After all, they are in the center of town, their Christmas cheer is accessible for many. They have created a display each year that rivals the Talent Avenue home that we remember. I personally think that Ray and Betty's decorations are even better than today's "Cherry Lane", off North Phoenix Road in South Medford.

Ray holds the belief that we all need to spread as much joy and spirit as possible. As for the power bill, they just save up

throughout the year and gladly take donations which trickle in every year from various admirers to show their appreciation and help to keep it going. Betty and Ray said that most of these lights are pretty darned old now, and a lot of constant maintenance is involved. They are always on the lookout for new or more lights as they are both on a fixed incomes and do this on a bare-bones budget. I instantly started thinking elf style, and on behalf of our historical society, we made a donation this year (hint: a bear) then a donation just from me too (hint: look for the flying animal with a Santa hat). Our board member, Emmalisa, also donated a box of lights and a window sign. This is a great start, but I would love to see Ray and Betty get completely "Christmas Love-Bombed" with donations this year from a town of "elves" celebrating the couple that loves to give to others. If so inclined, you can send any decorations or donations directly to them.

Another thing I wanted to ask the couple about was their national TV appearance on America's Got Talent, Talent Edition. Season 5, 2010. When the filming crew came to town, they held auditions at the Talent Middle School. Tour busses parked

in the school parking lot, and lots of new-to-town cars buzzed around Talent for a couple of days. Local extreme cyclist Jeremy Van Schoonhoven went on to be a top finalist. In the opening credits, I

was excited to see that they were recognized as part of what makes Talent what it is.

Betty said she was outside early one morning and here came a slew of cameras and crew. The couple had no idea who they were, but assumed they were college kids doing a project. Up came a loud-mouthed, cocky,

and demanding

guy wanting to sit on her porch and interview them. That guy was the host at the time, Nick Cannon. She finally gave in and let Nick come up on the porch but made him sit in the most uncomfortable spot on the front porch (ha ha!). Ray and Betty decided to engage in conversation although they had never heard of America's Got Talent or Nick Cannon. They did end up walking him and the crew around their yard and giving a small tour.

The Bahr-Brown house got its name from the first two owners of the property. It is the second house in the Walking Tour of Historic Talent, a booklet produced by the Talent Historical Society with information on twenty historic properties within walking distance in the downtown area (the booklet is on sale

for \$3.00 at the Talent Museum). In 1902 the lot was sold to Jacob and Nancy Bahr from James Helmes (JCD45:274). Four years afterward the Bahr's sold the property to Orzo T. and Roxanna Brown (JCD56:345). Roxanna passed away in 1916, and Orzo lived there until his death in 1917.

I came across a few things about Roxanna and Orzo recently and realized they too had "heart" as well as determination and progressive thinking. Roxanna was born in the state of New Hampshire in 1833. In 1854 she married Orzo T. Brown. In 1861 together they crossed the plains with an oxen team to land in Phoenix, Oregon, and lived in Phoenix for four years. After that they went with the first pioneer settlers in Klamath County where they were prominently known for the development and growth of the area. They were also present in Klamath at the time of the Modoc War. This next part was eye catching to me, Roxanna was the first white woman to go to Crater Lake and see it, but she did not receive credit for it, another woman claimed that particular notoriety. However, Roxanna made sure to have it put in her future obituary, so that this could be known as her one last truth. I don't know what year she made that adventure, but judging from the material that I have read, I'm guessing somewhere between 1890 and 1895. Orzo and Roxanna returned to this area living in Ashland for a

few years, then landing at their final home, the Bahr-Brown house in Talent, somewhere around 1906.

At some point after this sale, the parcel was split into two lots both fronting onto Main Street, with an additional structure built to the east of the original and current house and stood as late as 1930. Our museum has a copy of the 1930 Sanborn fire map that clearly shows the second dwelling still erect in 1930. Later that second structure became a fire station, and then eventually a little place to pay

utility bills. Now it is just a bunch of bushes near City Hall. Our museum does not have every Sanborn map, so we don't know exactly when the building was torn down.

Sanborn was a company founded in 1867 that created detailed maps of U.S. cities



*Ray putting up Christmas lights*



*Ray and Betty on their front porch*

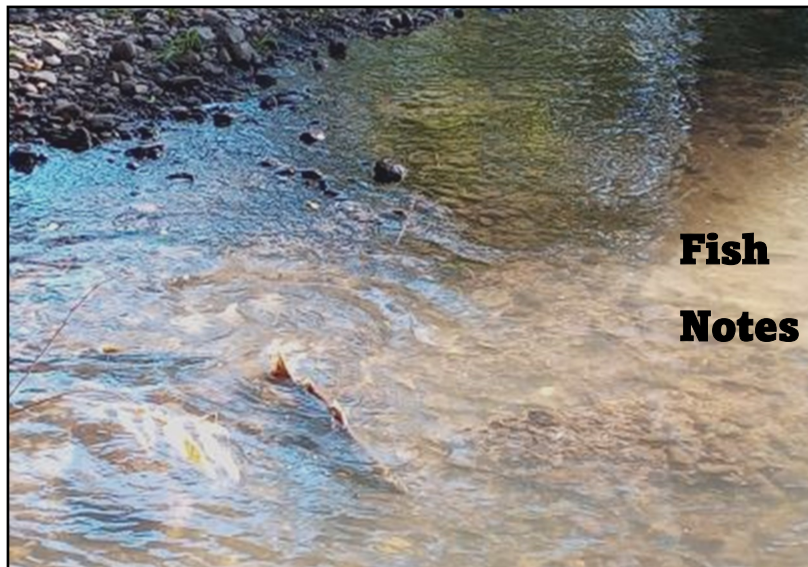


and towns in the 19th and 20th century. These maps allowed fire insurance companies to assess their total liability in urbanized areas of the U.S. and are widely used today by historians to determine what structures were in existence during each decade.

I could not find any records of who resided in the home between Orzo's death in 1917 and the next sale of the home in 1945. So, I assume that the couple's only surviving daughter, Mrs. J.H Withrow of Talent, one of the couple's four children, inherited and possibly resided in the home, or she might have rented it. In 1945 W. and Cleo Kenyon purchased the Bahr - Brown house. Mr. W. Kenyon remained in the house at least as late as the mid-1960's. As stated in the walking tour book, the Bahr-Brown home retains a high integrity to the original design and effectively conveys the early 20th century period of residential development in Talent.

Something quite synchronistic happened as I was preparing to write this article. The same day I interviewed Ray and Betty, I ran into a friend of mine. I was talking about the great interview I had just come from with Betty and Ray, and her face lit up in excitement. Her father lived there for a while, and she remembers sitting on the porch right there in the heart of Talent taking it all in with the existing good vibe. She said she had great memories of the home. I have a feeling this house has a great big, lovely story to tell, especially of the times in its early years. The Ames building was directly across the street until the 30's. It featured a drug store, a furniture store and dance hall. I am sure there was a lot of excitement around that front porch, and many stories from passersby stopping to check in.

Today the Skatepark and a wine bar, with frequent live music, are a nice source of porch entertainment for Betty and Ray. When Ray and Betty first decided they wanted to live there, they started doing improvements such as cleaning up the overgrown yard immediately, even before they were given permission to rent the home. Years later the improvements are now about improving their holiday decorations to give back to a community that gives them joy. They hope to be here for a very long time. I wish this for them too as they are the perfect fit for the center of town. They love it and they represent it perfectly.



The newest members of the Talent Historical Society, Iris DeMello and her husband Allan, new to Talent, reported watching salmon spawning in Bear Creek in Medford. Their guide from KS Wild (Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center) showed them likely spots for salmon spawning in the Lynn Newbry Park area. The water temperature and flow are important, as well as having small stones in the creek bed that the female salmon can displace by thrashing in the water to make a little pocket in which to lay her eggs. They observed the likely habitats for spawning here in Talent but didn't see any salmon. The guide then took them further up Bear Creek, in Medford, where they did see salmon spawning. They were thrilled to see salmon populating our creek waters.

## Seeing the Elephant

When reading trail journals, it is common to come across the phrase "seeing the elephant", a term that the pioneers used to describe their anticipation about striking out across the unknowable wilderness of the plains. The origins of the phrase are not certain, but it seems to have been a popular nineteenth-century colloquialism that referred to the rare thrill that families felt when leaving their isolated farms to see the elephants marching through town when a traveling circus arrived.

Initially the pioneers jubilantly expected to "see the elephant" in the endlessly scenic plains that they would encounter after embarking across the Missouri River. "All hands early up anxious to see the path that leads to the Elephant," wrote gold seeker John Clark of Virginia in 1852, the day he left for the trail on the St. Joseph Road. But a mythic, baleful elephant also came to represent the many hazards of the trail – disease, drowning, or stampeding buffalo that carried off a wagon train's cattle.

Seeing the elephant, as historian Merrill Mattes put it, "was the popular symbol of the Great Adventure, all the wonder and the glory and the shivering thrill of the plunge into the ocean of prairie and plains, and the brave assault upon mountains and deserts that were gigantic barriers to California gold. It was the poetic imagery of all the deadly perils that threatened a westering emigrant."

*This is excerpted from "The Oregon Trail—A New American Journey" by Rinker Buck, a wonderful tale of two brothers who in 2010 retraced the westward path of the Oregon Trail in a covered wagon drawn by a team of three mules. Excellent read!*





# The Southern Oregon Wagon Road

A new road was constructed in 1869 between the Rogue River Valley and the Klamath Country. It was built to replace the almost impassable Applegate Trail. Its story is best told by O. A. Stearns, emigrant of 1853, and soldier at Fort Klamath until 1867, when he settled on a tract of land midway between present Keno and Klamath Falls. His reminiscences were recorded in the Klamath Republican of December 1, 1909 and in part follows: "...When the first settlers came over this side of the mountain Ashland was a very small village of less than a hundred people. There was but one small store - that of R. H. Hargadine- a grist mill, sawmill, marble mill, hotel (Emery's), and a blacksmith and wagon shop. It was trade from this side of the

mountain that made Ashland the best town in Rogue River Valley. Let those dispute that fact who may.

Those who have traveled across the mountain between Ashland and the Klamath Basin at any time during the past twenty years (1889-1909) are wont to declare that it was no wonder this country did not settle up the roads were so atrocious that no one would willingly go over them the second time; and yet, compared with what they once were, they are now equal to a turnpike."

The old road, as formerly traveled was the old emigrant road first traveled by the Applegate party in 1846...

As the objective point of these emigrants was westward, and they never anticipated any attempt to rerun over the road, their only concern in crossing a

mountain range was to find a practicable way up; the going down was easy. (Traveling west, there were four wagon slides over the Cascades, at Jenny Creek, Keene Creek, Green Springs Summit and at Strychnine hill on Tyler Creek - Ed.) At these places (traveling east- Ed.) it was necessary to unload all wagons and pack on animals or carry on the backs of individuals the entire load, as it took four good horses to pull the empty wagons up these places. When pack animals were used, as was frequently the case, no trouble was experienced.

When the weather was good the task of hauling supplies, though tedious and slow, was not dangerous, but sometimes the early rains or snows would come and catch the seeder on the wrong side of the mountain, when trouble of a serious and often dangerous character ensued, as many can testify to their sorrow."

The first attempt to better the road was made in the fall of 1868, when the writer circulated a petition among the settlers this side of the mountain asking the County Court of the county (Jackson) to have viewed and surveyed a wagon road from a point on the stage road near the Songer place by Soda Springs across the mountains to Brown's ranch (at Spencer Creek) on the Klamath, thence up the Klamath valley to and across Link river, thence down Lost river and around Tule Lake to the state line.

Considerable opposition to the measure was found on the west side of the mountain, partly caused by a local feud among the settlers on Emigrant Creek and partly by Ashland citizens who were



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contemplating the asking of Congress to authorize a military road to the Klamath Basin by way of Dead Indian and Buck Lake, with a land grant of six or ten sections per mile. The urgent needs of the people out here caused the court to consent to the survey. The bond, with F. B. Sprague and the writer, was given, and in the spring of 1869, W. F. Songer, O. T. Brown and Samuel Colver were appointed as viewers, and I think J. S. Howard as surveyor, and the road was surveyed and accepted.

The new road, as surveyed, made some very material changes in the old emigrant road to overcome the steep grades. A subscription was started and \$600 pledged for the work. Yet of the \$600 subscribed over \$400 was by residents of this county (Klamath). On the other side of the mountain but one person below Ashland contributed (D. E. Stearns on Wagner Creek). Sam Colver took charge of the work, and for the amount of money expended did the largest and best work ever accomplished at one time on that road.

In 1872 a bill granting \$25,000 towards surveying and constructing the Southern Oregon Wagon Road was passed by the Oregon legislature. The funds, however, were to come from the sale of swamp and overflowed lands.

The governor appointed as a commissioner to construct, or supervise the construction of work, Silas J. Day of Jacksonville, George Nurse of Linkville and Judge Mason of Goose Lake. Judge

Mason did the survey work and kept a team of mules and wagon at an expense of six dollars per day for the team, while other exorbitant expenses ran the preliminary survey and other costs up to such a sum that it is generally believed there was not to exceed \$10,000 in money actually expended in work. Several changes have since been made by this county and much money spent out of private as well as public funds, so that the road is much improved over former conditions. No one here regrets that they are no longer obliged to pull their teams over that mountain to obtain their supplies.

In those days the keepers of road houses were important citizens, and at times of the year their accommodations were taxed to the utmost.

No early pioneer but remembers the hearty cheer and hospitable board of Mrs. O. T. Brown on the Klamath, of Mrs. Henry Duncan of Johnson Prairie, of Mrs. Jas. Purvis at Jenny Creek, and of Mrs. Zenas Howard or Mrs. Will Breedings on Green Spring mountain. Others have come close, but their's were the pioneer houses of the road, and the thoughts of their beautiful tables and excellent cooking heartened so many a storm-bound and weary traveler and are cherished as among the pleasant recollections of those days."

The Applegate Trail, Southern Oregon Wagon Road and present State Highway No. 66 all approximate each other, crisscrossing several times and

never separated more than a few miles at any time. This route, first used in 1846, has through the years remained the main road between the Central Valleys of the Klamath Country and the head of Rogue River Valley at Ashland.

*Ref (Stagecoach to Linkville, Klamath Echoes, 1973, Sanctioned by Klamath County Historical Society)*

*Ed. Note: Articles on Pages 6 & 7 and the Bear Creek article on Page 10 were excerpted from Medford and Surrounding Area's Memories, a FB group administered by Marlene Biddle and Gwen Pettey. I joined the group a few months ago and thoroughly enjoy their historical articles and save those relevant to Talent. Printing them here is a show of gratitude for their good work, and my inner historian's need to save for the future.*



This one is pretty incredible. Ezra Meeker, crossed the Oregon Trail with an ox-drawn wagon when he was a young man, and then when he was 96-years-old he got to cross the same distance on an airplane. That's an enormous technological advancement to see in one lifetime.  
- Marlene Biddle

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# My Mother's Daughter

## The Continuing Memoirs of Jewel Donaca Lockard

### The Great Depression – Chapter 7 Reading and starting School

Dad never had much schooling and when he did go to school, they mumbled out loud. So he could never read to himself. This was hard on Mom. Dad would come home from work and us kids from school, meanwhile Mom was trying to get supper on the table. We would want to tell Mom about our day while Dad was reading the world news and politics out loud wanting Mom to listen. She would often remark that she could “read the paper herself”. She really would get mad but couldn't say much or Dad would go on a rampage.

Mom wanted reading for us kids so she managed to get a few little books, but I couldn't stand them and cried and mostly hid and stuck my fingers in my ears while Mom read out loud to Leland. He liked them, but to me they were tragic. Finally, she borrowed some books that were Thornton Burgess's animal stories and from those grew my love for books. I simply loved those animal stories and have a few of his books yet today.

We also took a magazine or two, like

the Country Gentleman, The Saturday Evening Post and sometimes the Oregon Farm. The latter would run a serial, a family story that Mom would read out loud to us in the evening as we grew older. One story I particularly remember took place at Big Smoke Mountain in Kansas. As I got to my teens, I liked reading the country stories like *Missouri Moon* and *Harvest Time*. The Saturday Evening Post ran cowboy stories like *Ride the Man Down* and *Tall in the Saddle*.

We had nursery rhymes and Mom would tell some she knew. She taught us to stand face to face and clap our hands with each other in time to the rhymes.

*Peas Porridge hot,  
Peas Porridge cold,  
Peas Porridge in the pot  
Nine days old.*

-or-

*Mary Mae, dressed in black,  
Silver buttons down her back.  
Tee eye oh, tippy toe,  
Over the hills to Mexico.*

When we lived in the old cabin, we'd sometimes sing songs after we went to bed. Mom and Dad would sing the old songs that I loved so well through the years. One night when we were all singing, we heard horse hooves clicking on

the rocks. A man was riding by from up the lookout way down the road. Then all was silent. He was probably grinning to himself and hoping to hear more.

I remember when the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) made the BLM road over to the Little Applegate in the next canyon. We could stand in the yard, and they'd shoot off a blast and we could see rocks and stumps go up in the air. I was about 11 years old at that time. Then later I would watch Beeson and Straten drive cattle over to the Applegate to graze through the summer. The way I knew they were there from that great a distance was I could hear the old doleful bell the lead cow wore.

Leland was always weather conscious, even as a small child. He had a small magnet and when the first rays of sunlight shone through the window in the cabin on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, he held it in the light and made a yellow bright beam on the floor. Sometimes Mom would let him have a dishpan filled with dirt and he would make mountains with the dirt, then Mom would give him a dab of flour to sprinkle on the peaks for snow. He also had a weather nail (an old bent nail outside the kitchen door), he'd turn it different ways and he claimed it changed the weather. When he or I did something, we'd always say, “Look Momma, look. Look at this or that.” She'd always look. Good old Mamma. No better Mamma ever lived. Oh how I loved her.

Leland was also interested in finding Bee Trees. He got quite good at it. He'd watch a bee load up with pollen and watch the direction it would fly. Then he followed it, maybe several miles. In due time he'd find it.

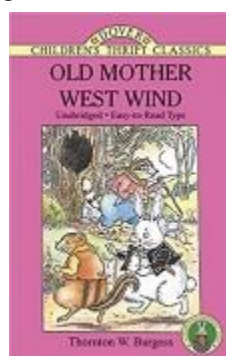
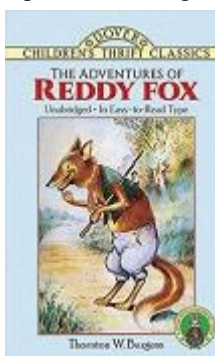
Dad would walk from here to Steve Lunak's to cut wood, walking four miles each way. In bad weather he would wrap his feet with gunnysacks. He would work five or six hours for maybe a dollar. On top of this he milked and fed our animals day and night, was the primary person in charge of the garden and cut our wood all by hand - no power tools - for cook stove and heat, including extra wood to sell. He would hunt deer to keep meat on the table. Mom was busy with cooking most of the time since she made three hot meals a day. Then there was the clean-up, dishes, floors, keeping the house clean, and one



**Thornton Waldo Burgess** (January 17, 1874 – June 5, 1965) was an American conservationist and author of children's stories. Burgess loved the beauty of nature and its living creatures so much that he wrote about them for 50 years in books and his newspaper column, *Bedtime Stories*. He was sometimes known as the **Bedtime Story-Man**. By the time he retired, he had written more than 170 books and 15,000 stories for his daily newspaper column. Born January 17, 1874 in Sandwich, Massachusetts, Burgess was the son of Caroline F. Hayward and Thornton W. Burgess, Sr., a direct descendant of Thomas Burgess, one of the first Sandwich settlers in the New World in 1637. Historians will note that the first representative legislature in the Americas was the House of Burgess convened in

Virginia in 1619. The word *burgess* comes from middle English for citizen.

Thornton Burgess used his keen outdoor observations of nature as plots for his stories. In Burgess' first book, *Old Mother West Wind* (1910), the reader meets many of the characters found in later books and stories including Peter Rabbit (known briefly as Peter Cottontail), Jimmy Skunk, Sammy Jay, Bobby Raccoon and Reddy Fox. His books are still easily available.





day a week the laundry which led to ironing, mending, and sewing. Dad never helped Mom.

Time came for me to start to school and there was no way for me to get there. Mom worried and worried about it, but Dad said I didn't need to go, we were just poor people. But when I was seven when it was time for school, we moved to the Brophy place just below the Anderson Creek School. Dad drove up into the hills to work and weekends we came home.

After we got moved another problem arose – no clothes. Mom had no sewing machine and no yardage of any kind so now what. Twisting Dad's arm, she bought an old machine she didn't like for ix dollars. The one she wanted was twelve dollars. With this sewing machine and secondhand dresses people gave her, she made my clothes. My first school dress is now in the big cedar box. It is a dark red dress.

The first day of school came and Mom took me , with Leland tagging along too. When school let out in a few hours he was there. He fell and rolled down the hill by the school yard. I remember this still, so I guess I was embarrassed by him. One of the reasons I was so uncomfortable at school was Leland was the only kid I knew how to play with, we played nicely together, no fights, no teasing or arguments. We spent a lot of time together; he was my brother! So, with other kids I was bashful and sincere – unfortunately leaving room for the mean kid business that came later.

The school consisted of two rooms. The main room held the desks for the eight grades, the teacher's desk, a low flat table, a huge stove in the middle of the room, some shelves with books, and a piano I loved. Then there was the anteroom with cupboards, closets, and coat hangers. Some years later there was running water at a sink and a gas stove. We had carnivals in this room. There was also a water pump that you pulled the handle up and down to get water. Then on the south side were two outhouses which were replaced by two new W.P.A. types later.

Animals and pets sometimes came to school. The first animal was a billy goat. I didn't know who owned him but now and

again he'd show up at the schoolhouse and he was mean. He chased people. One day I was having to walk down to the house some little distance to the Brophy place. Lucky for me Jack Lovell, a very tall and lanky eighth grader walked me home. I think I only came up to his knees. The goat didn't appear. Years later I saw Lovell in Talent and he remembered me. We had a good laugh. He was a good, kind fellow, kind of a puppy-dog type. He lost his wife in middle age – a short time later he lost his son, then he died also.

I got started out okay and my grades were good until February. We came up home here for the day. I didn't feel very good and by evening I was sick with pneumonia. Mom was also sick with pleurisy. Dad called out old Dr. Haines and he came at about 10:00 that night. There were no antibiotics then, so I laid in bed for weeks. Mom hurt so bad she could hardly stand, but she had to take care of me, which she did. I



*Anderson Creek School*

finally managed to go out into the kitchen to look outside. Spring had come. The alfalfa was up about 4 inches. I'd been sick a long time. That meant I had lost a lot of school which I never, ever regained.

Then when I got strong enough to return to school, I thought it would be fun to move back home and go back and forth with the kids. Mom and Dad wanted to move back home too, so we did and that started many years of misery and unhappiness.

I was sick again, this time with whooping cough, just 2 or 3 weeks before school was out, so I didn't finish the term and was passed "on condition" and remained that way all the years until I was done with school.

The second term of school was the win-

ter of the deep snow. Dad would take me down halfway to the school and he'd park the car in front of May's log house and walk up to Steve Lunak's two miles. The school district gave him money for that. I would walk two miles to school. That winter the snow was 4 feet deep. But I went to school, Dad would walk ahead of me breaking trail. The snow came up to my dress hemline and many times way over. I wore long cotton stockings and galoshes over my shoes. I'd be cold and some wet. I had to walk alone at night and at the canyon down the road I'd get scared of the snowy trees so I took to the field. Finally a 'cat' would come and plow out our little road, and in doing so buried our old car in a snow bank.

But moving home and going to and from school proved to be a night mare, a great disappointment when I thought it would be fun walking home with other children. They were meaner than rabid dogs, especially the older girls. Leland and I were so timid because we were raised to be nice. It made life very unbearable. A child couldn't learn under these circumstances.

The one thing I did like about school was the programs and the plays at Halloween and Christmas. We would have a curtain across the front of the room that opened in the middle back as far as the two dressing rooms on the sides. Halloween was a program where once I recited the poem Two Hundred Wagons Roll-

ing out to Oregon, a feat for me as I thought I could never remember or memorize anything. After the program we'd have a carnival in the ante-room. The Fish Pond was especially fun. You paid a nickel and swung a fish pole over a curain and some one fastened a little gift on it and you fished it out. I got a schoolhouse pin once and a necklace with an orange elephant on it. I still have them.

We also sang songs to the parents, "When You and I were Young Maggie", "Oh Susanna", "Camp Town Races", "Old Black Joe", "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean", "America", "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and so on. I loved them and play them today on the piano.

*Jewel's story will continue in the next issue.*



## Bear Creek Early Days

Prior to the arrival of settlers in the 1850s, the Bear Creek Valley was home to three Native American tribes; these were the Takelmas, the Latgawas, and the Shastas. When the area was originally settled, the stream was called Si-ku-ptat by the natives and may have been known as Stewart River by settlers.

After a skirmish with the Upland Takelma near the Rogue River in 1851, U.S. Army troops named the stream Stewart's (or Stuart's) River for an officer who was buried near its banks. Later that decade, a near-fatal encounter between a settler and a grizzly bear among the creek's alders and cottonwoods resulted in the permanent name, Bear Creek.

### *More of the story....Origin of Bear Creek Name Recounted*

The late Captain James H. McMillen was one of a party of pioneers who gave this name to the stream in 1851, before it was spanned by the great concrete bridge and before Medford was ever thought of [as] a "boom town."

On Table Rock in 1851 a battle took place between a small party of whites and a band of Rogue River Indians. Several packers had been killed near

this point by Indians, while on their way with flour, bacon and butter to the miners at Yreka, Cal. Among those killed was Lieutenant James Stuart. His body was buried hastily near the scene of battle and the letters J. S. were carved in the bark of a large oak tree near the grave. Then a fire was kindled on the grave, beef bones and brush were burned upon it and later horses were led over the spot, so as to obliterate the appearance of a grave. Otherwise the Indians would have removed the clothing and blanket in which the body was wrapped.

Later, Governor Joseph Lane had Stewart's body removed to Vancouver, Wash., for final burial. About this time the late Joseph McMillen, father of Captain James M. McMillen, with a number of men, one of whom was Calvin C. Reed, were returning from Yreka, Cal., with ox wagons. When nearing the shore of the stream they saw three grizzly bears leave the carcass of an ox and run into the dense thicket at the roadside. Two horsemen rode, who had three dogs with them. The

dogs were sent into the brush in quest of the bears. They returned quickly, yelping at a great rate. One of the bears, which was wounded by a rifle shot from one of the horsemen, rushed out of the thicket and, seeing Reed standing by the ox team, charged him. Reed had just borrowed a double-barrel shotgun belonging to Joseph McMillen, and when but a few feet from the bear he fired, killing the beast. The other two were dispatched quickly and their bodies were left in the road. As the men resumed their journey someone remarked, "We will christen this stream 'Bear Creek'."

## Native Fish Society

Native Fish Society's River Steward Program exists to empower, inspire and grow a region-wide network of local grassroots advocates dedicated to science-based solutions for their Northwest home waters, such as Bear Creek, and their wild, native fish. The website can be found at <https://nativefishsociety.org>

Bear Creek is an important tributary to the Rogue River in southern Oregon. Its Native Species are Coho Salmon (ESA-listed), Summer Steelhead, Winter Steelhead, and Fall Chinook Salmon.

Bear Creek is located in Jackson County, Oregon and drains approximately 400 square miles before entering into the Rogue River north of Central Point. Despite its urban location, it is an important spawning and rearing tributary for steelhead and ESA-listed coho salmon.

The Talent Historical Society is a qualified Oregon Nonprofit participant of the Oregon Cultural Trust, and we encourage your support of this innovative, uniquely Oregon organization For more information, please go to [culturaltrust.org](http://culturaltrust.org).



*Bear Creek flooding in Talent in 1940..*







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**BIRDS ON THE GREENWAY** by Debra Moon

Exciting news of this update is that Emmalisa Whalley, THS Board member and participant in the Greenway Bird Survey, has added two transects in Blue Heron Park to her survey walks. This beautiful Great Blue Heron, namesake for the park, welcomed the birders on the morning of September 9th as they began their walk, "In this transect we started off with a Blue Heron giving a squawk and flying down the creek." The heron was followed by a Belted Kingfisher.



The Blue Heron Park habitat contained a lot of flowering plants going to seed, so many of the birds sighted were American Finches, Goldfinches and Lesser Goldfinches. Also, on this transect, Emmalisa says, "...I saw my first White-Crowned Sparrow on this walk, and they ended up coming to my yard within a week."

Numbers of birds sighted, and number of species are both definitely increasing now in all three areas: Lynn Newbry Park, Suncrest and Blue Heron Park. In the Lynn Newbry area, the total number of birds sighted went up to 253 from 172 in the last update. On the year anniversary of the fire, September 8th, Emmalisa reported 201 total birds counted, and 30 species identified in just Transect B (transects are about a mile

long, so this is impressive!) American Widgeons were just sighted in this update too. The birds are coming back!!

Suncrest and Blue Heron Park areas reported even higher numbers and greater numbers of species than Lynn Newbry Park: Suncrest, 537 total birds and 33 species; Blues Heron, 436 total birds in the two transects and 43 species.

Emmalisa describes some special sightings at Lynn Newbry, "I was very excited that we spotted a Hairy Woodpecker in the trees, it is my first time seeing one in Lynn Newbry Park. I was always told how you can tell the difference between a Downie and a Hairy and that is the beak of the Hairy is as big as its head, the Downie has a small, petite bill. ... We had quite a few Cedar Waxwing, 19, that were in the top of the trees searching out seed pods to eat on. We also heard and saw a Purple Finch, that is the first one this fall. We viewed a Western Tanager and a Brown Creeper."

From the Suncrest transects she reports, "As we walked along the path we noticed and heard a lot of Cedar Waxwings and then we spotted the ripe Elderberry bush and there was a large group of Waxwings, around 85 birds, and American Robins that were joining in on the feast."