



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 28 Issue 3

September 2022

Rockfellow Diggings, Talent's Forgotten Gold Mine Along Bear Creek

By Jeff LaLande

In the following article, my aim is to share with fellow Talent residents the fact that a very familiar piece of our local landscape, situated along Highway 99, gives lasting testimony to a now nearly forgotten enterprise. Some of what is written includes what I believe to be solid interpretations of what is, alas, a sparse historical record.

During the late nineteenth century, mining for placer (i.e., alluvial or stream-deposited) gold along a short stretch of Bear Creek between Talent and Ashland served an important role in our early community's growth. This place - once known as "Rockfellow Diggings" - lies along a section of Highway 99 that many of us have driven countless times. Over the years between the 1850s and the 1880s, a sizable expanse of former hillside was washed away by busy crews of placer miners. They left behind a mined-out excavation that remains quite visible today - despite having since been occupied by at least 20 residences and several roadside businesses. I have been intrigued by this extensive feature on the land ever since I first realized, some decades ago now, that it was a hydraulic gold mine.

To take a quick "windshield tour" of Rockfellow Diggings, you should drive Highway 99 south from Talent. A short distance after passing both Creel Road and the north-bound lane's "Entering Talent" sign, begin paying attention to what you'll see along the right (west) side of the highway. At the mailbox for 2010 S. Pacific Highway (Hwy 99), you can begin to see, beyond that mailbox, evidence of

hydraulic mining: a steep, cliff-like face or "head wall," much of it overgrown with trees and other vegetation.

As you continue southward (past the former sites of the gem store and New Sammy's restaurant, which both burned in the 2020 Almeda Fire), this headwall (which marks the western-most extent of the mined-out excavation) rises ever higher and extends ever further away from the highway. All of the hillside that was formerly located between the headwall and the highway has been mined away. In some places within the hydraulically mined area (miners called it the "washing pit"), you can see that the different phases of the hydraulic mining left step-like terraces and flats. At the southern end of the washing pit, the headwall curves back to the highway, ending behind the house at 2368

Highway 99 (i.e., just before the junction of south Talent Avenue with the highway). You then might also want to turn right onto south Talent Ave. and ascend the hill. You'll be driving past the upper edge of the mine's main headwall on our right. Out of sight on the left side of the road, Rockfellow Diggings' hydraulic-mining evidence actually extends well above that headwall on the right, reaching southward well up the steep gulch. The mining scars reach almost all the way up to the Talent Irrigation District's West Lateral Canal.

Here, early-day Wagner Creek settler Albert G. Rockfellow and others worked the ancient stream deposits that formed the slope rising above Bear Creek's flood plain. Hydraulic mining for gold had first developed in California during the 1850s and 1860s and then moved north to the

Continued on Page 4



Photo by Jeff Lelande

The main part of Rockfellow Diggings occupies this stunning northwesterly view taken from high on the slope of what the author calls "Rockfellow Ridge." The railroad curves across the lower portion of the photo, paralleled by a short stretch of south Talent Avenue. The junction of Talent Avenue and Highway 99 is hidden in the lower-right corner of the image.

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
Wednesday and Sunday
12:00PM to 4:00PM

General Business/Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 582

Talent, OR 97540

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838

Email: info@talenthistory.org

Web Page: www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/talenthistory/

Blogspot: talenttowninflames@blogspot.com

The Historacle is published quarterly.

Editor: Myke Gelhaus
myke505@gmail.com

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 WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY 12:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Memberships Since Last Issue

New Members:

Mike Barrus
Margaret Duggar

Gerri Gibson
Ron & Linda Peil
Jon Peters

Renewals:

Jenni Beck
Lois Jean Bousquet
Don Burke
Tim & Judy Cebulla
Julie Chambers-Sweet
Richard & Donna Corrigan
Martha Davis
Noni Eaton
Greg Goebelt
Dwayne & Kathy Guthrie
Dave Harvey

Paul Larson
James W. Maize, Jr.
Ann Manes
Nick Medinger & Jana Sweet
Michael Myers
Ed & Sharon Olson
Gary Rockfellow
Diana & Charles Roome
Annmarie Slavenski
Elizabeth Stark
Jennifer Van Datta

Lifetime Memberships:

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

Sue Hawkins
Joe Hunkins
Kathy Jerman
George Kramer
Jack Latvala
Jeff LaLande
Matt & Antoinette Lichtenstein
Edwin McManus & Family
Michael Mills
Janice A. Napoleon
Ryan & Carly Pedersen
Wanda Perdue
Brent Thompson
John Wahl

Additional Donations:

Lois Jean Bousquet
Dave Harvey
Paul Larson

Gary Rockfellow
Annmarie Slavenski
Elizabeth Stark
Jennifer Van Datta

Honorary Lifetime Memberships

Jan Wright Susan Moulder Katherine Harris

The Poker Tour



Thanks to all 26 players who played in the Talent Poker Tour XLVII on July 30th, and congratulations to our tournament winner **Mike Barrus!** This was Mike's return to playing poker after a 10-year hiatus. Mike had previously won Talent Poker Tour VI, VII (both in 2007) and XVI (in 2009), so this is Mike's fourth win tying Freddie Taulani for most TPT's won!

Our next tournament will take place on Saturday, October 29th starting at 1:00 p.m. The tournament is open to THS members only, with a membership level of Family or above, and pre-registration is required.

The No-Limit Texas Hold'em tournament will feature a buy-in of \$50.00 with all entry money paid back out as cash prizes. Refreshments and snacks will be available for a modest cost. This event is a no alcohol/no smoking event.

Contact info@talenthistory.org, or call the museum at 541.512.8838 for additional information.

How Did I Get Here? *By Debra Moon*

Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator for the Talent Historical Society

I have been asked by the THS Board to tell my story, so I will attempt to do so. When I was young, I lived in an area where strawberries grew. I wanted badly to learn Spanish, so when I was 14, I got a farmworkers card and began working in the strawberry fields with many Hispanic people, learning Spanish on the job. This impressed my parents who arranged for me to become an exchange student in Mexico. I lived with a Mexican family in a small town near Puerto Vallarta. This expanded my world tremendously. The family taught me children's songs, tongue twisters, and dances. I did learn Spanish and many things about the culture.

After being in Mexico, I had interesting jobs while still in high school. I worked doing alterations in a dry-cleaning establishment. One summer I had a job with Lindy, the pen company, in a factory, and then I became a model for the May Company. So, not your normal path for a high schooler. I got married quite young, at age 18. I had a lot of savings from my modeling work, so my husband and I traveled all over Mexico for six months. When I came back, I went to college. That is about the time when I started writing for newspaper. I did a humor column weekly and various other articles. I had three children of my own by the time I was 29. I say, of my own, because as life went on, I seemed to collect more children to raise. I "adopted" the neighbor girl whose mother was a heavy drug user. She lived with us from age ten until she grew up. My nephew

came to live with us during his high school years, and there were a few other children in need who lived at our house temporarily. At age 33, I got divorced, so I raised all these children largely as a single parent. To support a family and put myself through the remaining of my college years, I ran a Montessori Pre-School out of my home (modified for the purpose) with 24 students. I graduated college in 1990 with a master's degree in Psychology and a bilingual teaching credential. I chose to teach in public school. I continued to write articles for various newspapers.

I had wanted to be a Peace Corps volunteer, but of course this was impossible with a husband and several children. After I finished college, I had the opportunity to



live and work on the Hopi Indian Reservation, which was very much like Peace Corps work. Hopi is a remote place with a lot of poverty, and a fairly intact native culture. My children basically came to live with me out there. Two were out of high school by then, but they lived and worked nearby. My youngest was enrolled at Hopi Junior/Senior High School. Our world continued to expand. I believe that many people have not seen or experienced things that I have been exposed to in life.

I wrote for several newspapers while living in Arizona including the Daily Sun, the Gallup Independent, the Tutuveni (Hopi Newspaper), the Navajo Observer, and News from Indian Country. The Hopi Reservation is where I began writing grants. I started as a teacher on the reservation, but while I was there, I took a break from teaching and became a grant writer and social worker. Over the years, I wrote and administrated close to four million dollars' worth of grants. A few of these were for programs in Tucson where I moved after spending nine years on the reservation. I was hired by the Tucson Urban League and worked in a gang neighborhood in South Tucson. Again, my understanding of our world grew.

Finally, I came back to Chico, California where I had begun teaching. I worked at a charter school that supported families who were home schooling. I loved this job and stayed at it until I retired. While I was there, I wrote a book on the history of Chico, which was published by Arcadia Books. I wrote and published two other books, and I continued to write for newspapers in Northern California.

How did I end up in Talent? My sister lives in Josephine County. I had visited every summer while my children were young and as often as I could in the years after that. I knew that I wanted to be in Oregon when my teaching career was over. So, when I retired, I sold my home and bought a house in Talent. I love Talent.

My second day in town, I went to the Downtown Coffee Shop (now Gather). I was waiting for my coffee when Willow McCloud said to me, "Is that you?" Of course, I answered, "Yes". There's only

Continued on Page 10



Hopi girls at 2nd Mesa



The Corn Rocks at 2nd Mesa is a photo of the view from my house on top of 2nd Mesa, Village of Mishongnovi, at Hopi.

Rockfellow Diggings *By Jeff Lalande*

Continued from Page 1

gold-bearing regions of Oregon. By that time, Rockfellow had begun using powerful blasts of high-pressure water - i.e., hydraulic mining - to excavate the gold-bearing alluvium along this hillslope. That water, diverted from Ashland Creek, was carried in a large-capacity ditch that wound around the brushy hillsides for well over two miles, to a point directly above his diggings. Then, diverted from the ditch into rivetted iron pipe that led directly downslope to the mine, the water issued with great force from a huge iron nozzle called a "giant," blasting away ancient Bear Creek's "high-terrace" stream deposits. The water flow then washed the large volume of loosened sand, gravel, and cobbles into a waiting system of wooden sluice boxes that captured the gold.

Beginnings

Nearly twenty years prior to the start of the hydraulic-mining operation around 1870 or so, the very first mining at Rockfellow Diggings began by means of small-scale placer methods, mostly pick-and-shovel work. Apparently, a group of Frenchmen initiated the earliest work here, in about 1853; some people still referred to it as "the old French mines" as late as the 1880s. However, it was Talent-area settler/miner Albert G. Rockfellow, 28 years old in 1855, who became the central character in the story of Rockfellow Diggings.

The three Rockfellow brothers - William, Albert G., and George - were born and raised in New Trenton, a small farming community in southeastern Indiana. They came west to California in 1850. After a year or so of mining, two of them, Albert and George, came north to the Rogue River country, and in 1852 they each established neighboring Donation Land Claims in the Wagner Creek valley. The adjacent DLC's of Albert and George extended southward from one of the common corners of their claims (near the present intersection of south Talent Avenue and today's Rapp Road).

Welborn Beeson, who had arrived in the Wagner Creek Valley as a young man with his parents via the Applegate Trail in

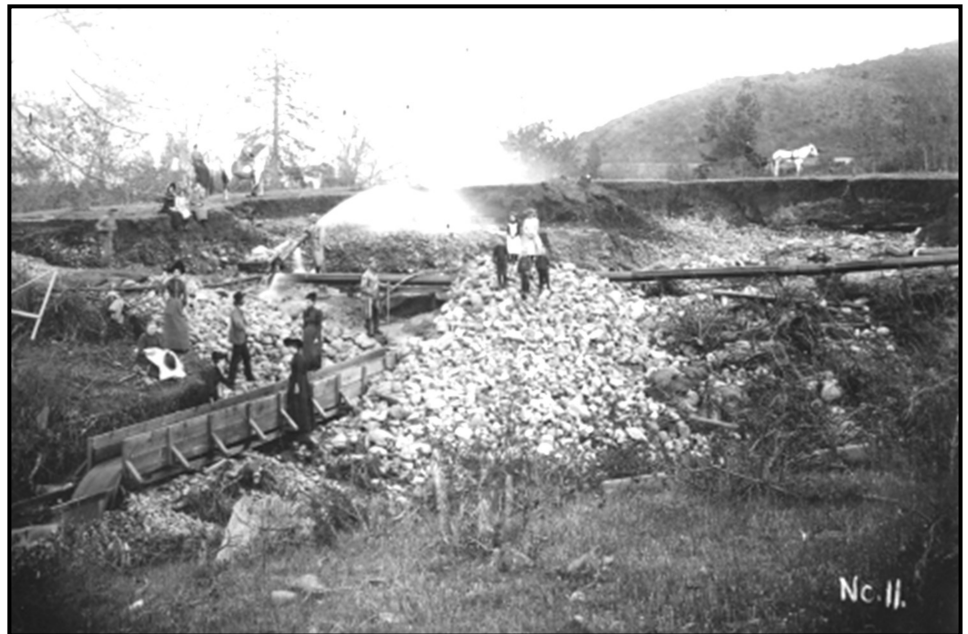
1853, kept a diary for many years. In an entry for February 22, 1855, Beeson wrote that his neighbors, the two Rockfellow brothers, "are busy turning [Bear Creek] over into a dry gulch between here [i.e., present-day Talent] and Eagle Mills" (this early flouring mill was situated along Bear Creek; the site was less than half a mile below/northwest of Highway 99's present railroad overpass). The brothers, Beeson noted, believed that their hard work would "pay for digging the gold."

Albert Rockfellow's elongated/rectangular D.L.C. claim reached southward from present Rapp Road to encompass much of the flat, rich-soiled farming land along a stretch of the Applegate Trail (soon to become a section of the California-Oregon Stage Road, and now south Talent Ave.). The southeastern corner of his land claim lay close to the hydraulic-mining evidence that we see today. Earlier in February 1855, Beeson had noted that the Rockfellow brothers had hired one Henry Church to survey the portion of "their claim" that they had just sold "to Mr. Eldridge and Reddick." This "claim" must refer to a mining claim. The Rockfellow brothers, as partners, had evidently sold part of their series of gold

claims along Bear Creek to Henry Eldridge and Harvey Reddick (men whose respective DLCs lay largely on the east side of Bear Creek). But the brothers retained ownership to the more promising mining claims that would become known as Rockfellow Diggings.

The mining ground that the Rockfellow brothers kept in their own hands lay along the west side of Bear Creek. Geologically, it consisted of old "high-channel" alluvial deposits - a mass of water-rounded cobbles, pebbles, and sand that likely dated to thousands of years before the Rockfellow brothers were born. Some of this old gold-bearing alluvium would have been washed down Bear Creek's channel from the mouth of its tributary, Wrights Creek (where the gold-rich Ashland Mine, a hard-rock gold operation with lengthy underground tunnels, first began to be worked in the 1890s). Other sediments containing gold would have come down the unnamed gulch (i.e., the "dry gulch" mentioned in Beeson's Feb. 22 diary entry) from the ridge that rises directly south and southeast of the Rockfellow brothers' placer mine. (I've come to call this steep-sided seasonal drainage Rockfellow Gulch.)

To be continued in the December issue..



This southeastward view (taken ca.1875) shows "Rockfellow Diggings" fairly early in its hydraulic-mining phase. The hill visible beyond the mine is the ridge that rises between the southern end of Talent Ave. and Jackson Hot Springs.

The Bluebird



My mother, Mary E. (Beth) Barker, told me this story on January 20, 1994. Mom grew up on her family's dairy farm outside of Alden in southern Minnesota, the eldest child of Earl and Ethel Hewitt. Her sister Phyllis was two years younger and brother Richard (Bud) four years younger.

Larry Barker-Talent, Oregon

Mom's Story - From Alden, Minnesota to Medford, Oregon in 1933

I don't know how long our folks had been planning, but the fall of 1933 was when we first knew that they were going to sell the farm and move to a warmer climate for my mother, who was not well. They had talked about moving out west for years.

So we had an auction - it must have been in December. I don't remember Christmas that year, Phyllis might, but I don't. The farm was sold with all its contents. Then one day here came Dad driving down the road - a cold, windy January day - driving a new Chevrolet chassis. No cab or anything. He already had a plan for building the "motor home".

It was made out of pressed wood (like masonite), roof and all. He made a frame out of wood and built onto it. And it all fit onto the chassis. The neighbors thought he'd lost his mind. They'd come and look and say "Earl! What are you doing?". It took about a month to build. He built it outside at Irvin's since we'd already sold the farm and moved out. We lived at the neighbors for 6 weeks. Some with one, some others. I lived at Jensen's (Burnice Erickson's family). Dad, Mom, Dolly (Phyl's nickname) & Bud (Richard) at Irvin's.

They planned furniture to take - a piano (a large upright - a Cabel-Nelson), a writing desk, a Maytag gasoline washing machine - just heated water in a Coleman gas stove - built into a cabinet by the front door. They had a portable oven to put on top of the Coleman, underneath the stove where we stored all the pots and pans. Beside

that cabinet he built a cupboard with a door that let down to serve as table. Over the writing desk he built a cupboard that was one of the beds. Over the top of the piano was a bed, over the washing machine was another one. My parents slept on a sleeper sofa.

In the front the cab was angled out on both sides, on the left of Dad was a jump seat where my brother (11) sat and on the right of Mom (who sat in a regular car seat) were two seats for my sister (13 1/2) and I (15 - 16th birthday on way out).

When it was all done, they painted it bluebird-blue (that's the way Mom wanted it) and named it the "Bluebird".

And so it flew, on the first day of February, 1933. When we started out, we had a little black and white terrier named Tag (I think). We lost it in Ames when we visited Aunt Edith (Dad's sister) and Uncle Bert.

We were heading for the sunny south first. Also there: Dad's brother Charles (and Hazel). Aunt Grace & Aunt Addie (dad's maiden sisters) had a boarding house for students (I later stayed with them when I was in college at Iowa State). Also Aunt Sib (Silvia) and Uncle Roy (she was dad's sister). Stayed in Ames a day or two then on to Council Bluffs where Dad was raised and visited Dad's brother Bill and family.

On we went to Kansas City, Missouri and stayed a couple of days with Mom's Uncle Dave Winter and Aman-

da. We stayed with another family (I can't remember their name) since Uncle Dave only had an apartment. Her name was Eleanor and they showed us the sights of Kansas City. And that's where we saw the first bread lines where they were serving bread and soup to the homeless and jobless.

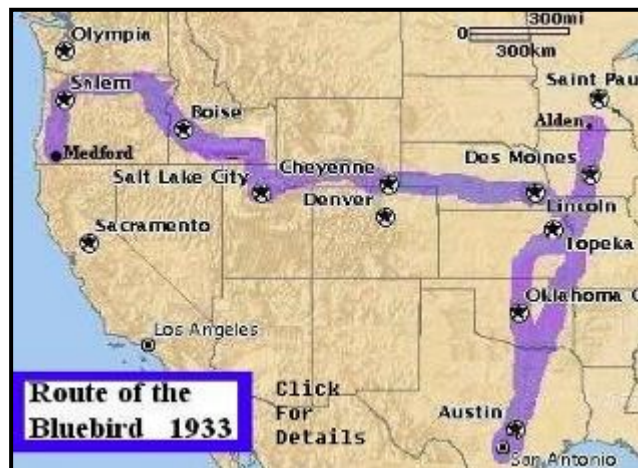
Uncle Dave was the neatest man - really a gentleman. Quiet spoken, handsome, and he had the blackest hair. We stayed 2 or 3 days. We went on to Richmond, Kansas to visit their son Charles who had a tiny farm with one cow to milk. I remember that we had supper with them that night and traveled on the next day.

Then on through western Kansas to Zenith to visit my grandmother's brother - Uncle John Hooton and families. They had 2 sons and their families. We visited a long time - 4-6 weeks. As we drove along, the sand was piled up along the fences like snow in Minnesota. It was the days of the dust bowl. We had a great time at Uncle John and Aunt Minnie's. They had 4 children around there. A daughter with 2 kids in Stafford. One son (Lee) lived at home and helped run the ranch. Another son Floyd and Francis and 2 children lived a few miles from there (Suzy and a little boy - they were so cute.)

Since it was March, we celebrated Mom's and Dad's birthdays who were both born March 30, 1888. We always had 2 birthday cakes. I baked sponge cakes at Floyd's. We ended up with 4 cakes because I used their wood stove, and they didn't usually bake. The damper wasn't closed so heat went up the chimney instead of around in the oven. I mixed up 2 more and baked them successfully. And we all got together at Uncle John's and celebrated the birthdays. We left the next week. We hated to leave there - we had such a good time, but I bet they were glad to see us go.

Oklahoma - they were having floods in Oklahoma, and the folks were worried but we did not have any problems. The soil was so red. We went through Oklahoma City and there were oil wells all over - our first sight of oil wells. We just kind of drove on through Oklahoma. I don't remember much, just pit stops and service stations. We

Cont. on Page 6



Bluebird *by Larry Barker*

stayed in Ardmore one night, near by an old, rundown service station, which at least had water (which was horrible).

Then we were looking forward to seeing the bluebonnets of Texas. They were supposed to be blooming by that time (first of April). I remember laughing at the bluebonnets because they looked like fields of vetch.

On to Mineral Wells Texas, where we stayed several days, visited the once-famous crazy water crystals. It was a very small town with two very large and tall hotels. People came to partake of the crazy water crystals, for their health. It was our first introduction to the Armadillo, a small burrowing mammal.

Carlton E.



The next destination was San Angelo where we rested and cleaned up in a nice park. Then on to San Antonio. We went through Austin, and drove by the capitol, but did not stay. Drove on to San Antonio, where we stayed for several weeks, in Breckenridge Park where there were several other families camped. We had a great time exploring the city, visiting all the historic sites, the Alamo for one. And having many good times in the park. Mom would play the piano and the campers would gather around for a song fest.

I remember a game of rounding up snipes. Phyl was to hold the bag while we went out to round up the snipes. The game backfired because Phyl caught on and she hid from us. We finally went back to camp after dark. We were worried and when she was found, we received a good lecture.

I can still remember all the fresh fruit there and the little man on the corner selling "BANANOOS, ten cents a dozen".

The folks had planned to go on to Long Beach, California to join other friends from Minnesota, but the report of a severe earthquake there changed their plans.

The folks loaded up with fruit and we headed back north, stopping in Osceola, Missouri. We visited the cemetery there where Dad's sister Ethel and brother Ernest were buried among the Yuccas growing tall and with white-white blooms. Dad inquired around and we found our way out to the Long place, where Dad was born. We took his picture sitting on the old cellar door. We wandered around the place and a small stream running through it. The house was still part log house. We tried fishing from a bridge right in the middle of town.

The next day we drove on to El Dorado Springs where Dad said he used to go with his sister Addie to get the special health water there. The folks had heard about strawberry fields around Joplin, Missouri. They stopped at the town square and Dad inquired. He was

told to go to the Bonnow's place. We found it back in the hills and scrub oak. We were hired as a family to pick strawberries and we did until the crop was in. We had many a song fest there where we parked the Bluebird right out in the woods. We heard and learned many Ozark songs. Dad was privileged to go on a coon hunt with the men and he really enjoyed that.

We were on the road again and headed north and planned to take Hwy 30 to Denver. But we stopped in Council Bluffs to spend the 4th of July with Uncle Bill (Dad's brother). We then headed west. There was nothing new until we stopped at a service station near the west end of Nebraska. The attendant told us to keep our eyes straight ahead and we would see our first mountain, Long Mountain. At first it looked like a white cloud. As we drew near, it took the form of the mountain -- our very first mountain.

We had planned to go on to Denver but there was a flash flood that washed out the highway, so we headed west by way of Ogden, Utah and then to Brigham City. As we were leaving there was a large, ripe cherry orchard, ready to be picked. Dad stopped and asked if he, Mr. Anderson, needed pickers. "I sure do", he replied, so we all picked cherries. Mr. Anderson owned a creamery across the road from the cherry orchard and the night before we planned to go on, the creamery burned to the ground. Dad built a new one.

During that time, the Andersons took

KRAMER & COMPANY
Historic Preservation Consultants

George Kramer

386 North Laurel
Ashland, OR 97520
541-482-9504

www.kramer.com
george@preserveregion.com

City of Talent
Serving residents of
Talent since 1910

www.cityoftalent.org
Facebook: @City.of.Talent
Twitter: @City_of_Talent

PO Box 445 110 East Main St. Talent

Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm
13195 Upper Applegate Rd.
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
541.899.8627

sanctuaryone.org

**Renee Tokar
David Tokar**

Career: 541.500.059
rtokar2@gmail.com

Retired Adult Family Care
ARCO Fund Dr.
Redmond, Ore

541.840.5966

GREG GOEBELT
Deluxe Home Team

Specializing in Talent and Ashland
GGoebelt@gmail.com | www.GregGoebelt.com

Page One Press
Debra Moon
Writing Services

Books/Articles
Grant Writing/Evaluation
Group Instruction/Facilitation
Presentations

530-570-5113 debra.moon7@gmail.com
www.page1press.com



us on our first mountain trip. We three kids and their two boys rode horses to the campground on Ben Lomand. By the time we got there, Mr. Anderson had a large skillet of sheep herder's potatoes cooking. I don't remember what else we had, but I'll never forget those potatoes. They took us on a trip to Salt Lake City and attended the Tabernacle Choir concert. We made a trip to Promontory Point to see the spot where the Central and Southern Pacific railroads joined. My mother was secretary to General Dodge, who helped put the railroad through. I have the books which she transcribed for him, describing the history of the railroad.

We left the next day, stopped the night and celebrated my 17th birthday at a stream in Utah. Then on to Oregon by way of the Columbia River. We made several overnight stops along the way. One was at American Falls and another at Crown Point (near Troutdale, Oregon) where we kids laid on our stomachs and

looked over the edge of the cliff to watch a train going far below. The folks said not a word and probably held their breath until we had moved back. We detoured Portland and drove down the Willamette valley to Eugene, Roseburg and Medford.

Then they decided to go to the coast before settling down. We went over to what is now Sunset bay and camped along the beach. There was not one house there then. We picked blackberries and caught weird looking fish from the rocks and thoroughly enjoyed the coast.

We had to make a decision as to where to settle. It was harvest time in the Rogue Valley and the beautiful Siskiyou swayed us. Dad got a job on the Crater Lake rim road, so we moved up to Bear Camp below the rim and enjoyed real back woods with wonderful spring water - bears and all.

When the snow began to fall, we moved back to Medford and moved into our first real home - 507(?) Hamilton Street. November 1st, 1933 - with running water, lights and gas. They paid \$12.50

rent. Phyllis and Bud started school at midterm and I waited until the following fall. We all loved the valley. Mom only lived 2 1/2 years after that. I'm sure she lived that happy journey many times over.

Dad sold the house part of Bluebird to Mrs. Brownlee, the woman we rented the house from. She parked it in her back lot and rented it out. I don't know what she charged.

Postscript - July, 2022

Mom's family settled in Medford and purchased two acres with a house to the east of Medford at what is now 615 S. Keene Drive. Her father lived there for the rest of his life.

Her sister Phyllis married Melvin Nipps. They lived in various places in the West, eventually returning to the Rogue Valley where they built and operated a greenhouse business in Grants Pass for many years.

Mom's brother Richard was a pilot in World War II and was killed in action in 1945.

Uncle Bill Hewitt, her Dad's brother, moved West later and owned a gas station in Talent.

My mother graduated from Medford High School in 1936, went to college and graduated as a Registered Nurse. She returned to Medford and worked at Sacred Heart Hospital and later the Community and Rogue Valley Hospitals. She married my father, Gordon Barker, in 1942. After the war they built a house next door to her father's home. Mom lived in the house until 1989. She moved to Woodburn for several years before returning to Medford in 1997. She lived in SW Medford until her death in 2011 at age 94.

MEDCAP
Pharmacy
We'll always make time for you.

Rick Chester, Pharmacist
Naturopathic Physician
& Acupuncturist

205 N Pacific Highway
Talent, OR 97540
Phone: 541.535.5843
Fax: 541.535.6362

STORE HOURS
Monday-Friday: 9:00AM-6:00PM
Saturday: 9:00 AM - 1:30PM
Free Local Delivery
Drive-Thru Window
Compounding

Kelli Cox
Branch Manager II
1370 Center Drive
Medford, OR 97501
kcox@roguecu.org
P: 541.622.7350
F: 541.770.3714

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

Harry & David

HarryandDavid.com

f t p

Harry and David, LLC
2500 South Pacific Highway Medford, Oregon 97501

Talent Dental
General Dentistry
Mehdi L. Gharvam, D.M.D., L.L.C.
P.O. Box 275
106 North Market Street
Talent, OR 97540
Phone: 541.535.1597

Office Hours By Appointment

Biscuits & Vinyl

NEW & USED
VINYL RECORDS & GOODS

Open Wed thru Sat - Noon-6pm
805-455-6616
316 East Main St - Talent, OR

STAR PROPERTIES
Call today at 541.535.9999
Talent's Full Service Real Estate Office for 25 Years.

JACK LATVALA BROKER/OWNER

P.O. Box 442 · 88 Lapree Street · TALENT, OR 97540 · 541.535.9999
jacklatvala@gmail.com · www.starpropertiesrealestate.com

My Mother's Daughter

The Continuing Memoirs of Jewel Donaca Lockard



Jewel Alexine Donaca Lockard

June 2, 1928 - April 17, 2022

Jewel Alexine Donaca Lockard born in Horton, Oregon on June 2, 1928 passed away in Ashland, Oregon on April 17, 2022. Jewel is survived by Deborah and James Griffin of Talent, granddaughters Elisa, Amanda and husband Bernard, and Bonnie and husband Manny, as well as great grandchildren Zachery, Alexis, Venzel, and Merrick. As well as niece Barbara, great niece Heather and great nephew Matthew. Jewel spent her life working hard, camping, gardening, and enjoying her property where she lived for 92 years.

She loved to go places, but always enjoyed coming home. She was an avid writer, reader, and artist (drawing) who also

enjoyed playing piano. She was never happier than around a campfire in her beloved Yellowstone, or one of the many lakes and bird refuges around the state. She will be greatly missed, but we can celebrate a life well lived. She was preceded in death by her husband Venzel, her brother Leland and her parents Irene and Alex Donaca. Arrangements in care of Litwiller-Simonsen Funeral Home, Ashland, Oregon.

A Graveside service was held Friday April 22, at 2pm at Stearns Cemetery on Anderson Creek Rd. in Talent.

Editor's Note: Regretfully we did not hear of Jewel's passing until after we had published the last issue. I know many of our readers have enjoyed reading the reminiscences of her life during the depression years, so I include her obituary here today. Every moment of transcribing her memoirs has been a delight for me. She wrote clearly and was enjoyable to read. What you have seen in this newsletter is 95% in her voice, I've had to make very few corrections for publication. - Myke Gelhaus

Talent Historical Society Receives Grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust

Time to celebrate!! THS has received a \$8451 grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust (OCT) which will fund the exhibit for the Almeda Fire documentation project. This will allow THS to purchase new cases for the exhibit and new portable wall panels. Yes, the exhibit will be portable in parts. It will start at the Talent Museum and work its way to the City Hall, the Library, and the schools in Talent, then on to other locations in Jackson County and the State of Oregon. Also, our Almeda Fire documentation project is going to have large portions of it translated into Spanish. In addition to that, we have been chosen by OCT as a featured project. There will be feature stories about our project. Our blog is talenttowninflammes.blogspot.com. There will be more news to come.

The Tree Swallows Are Back!

by Debra Moon & Emmalisa Whalley

This update covers the Greenway in the Suncrest, Lynn Newbry and Blue Heron transects. Total birds counted were down from previous walks in all three areas. When I asked Emmalisa, our birder, about it she said it was because the birds were nesting. She was most pleased about seeing Tree Swallows. She says, "One of the highlights...for me was seeing a dozen Tree Swallows and watching them go into nest holes in some of the trees. This is the species I was most concerned about returning."

Emmalisa noted Yellow, Yellow-Rumped and Wilson's Warblers, Lazuli Buntings, Western Tanager, and Brown-Headed Cowbirds in both Lynn Newbry and Suncrest. The Brown-Headed Cowbirds are parasite birds. Their eggs are laid in other birds' nests, never raising any chicks of their own.

In the Suncrest area they saw Cliff Swallows, a Red-Tailed Hawk, and a Red-Shouldered Hawk, a Green Heron, White-Crowned Sparrows, and Lesser and American Goldfinches in addition to the birds named above. No raptors were sighted, but previously they had seen Bald Eagles, a Sharp-Shinned Hawk, and an American



A Tree Swallow

Kestrel. They also got their first sighting of a Muskrat as it swam up the creek, and on a different walk they saw a River Otter pop up in the creek.

Two Great Blue Herons were spotted in the Blue Heron section. Lazuli Buntings were singing up a storm at the top of the trees. Warblers, a Red-Tailed Hawk and a Turkey Vulture were seen here too, along with a Downy Woodpecker, a California Scrub Jay, and Red-Winged Blackbirds. More Tree Swallows had taken up residence in some of the nest boxes around the community garden. Welcome home little Tree Swallows!

Note: Emmalisa Whalley, THS Board Member and volunteer Bear Creek Burn surveyor, is an excellent photographer, producing a bird calendar yearly which is available through the Talent Historical Society. If you are interested in the complete survey data, contact Klamath Bird Observatory, <https://klamathbird.org/>.

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.

The Bike Paht Journal by Judie Bunch

The Misspelling is Part of the Story

My story of the mailbox on the Bear Creek Greenway begins on a day when I'm really griped. This afternoon I went out to check on the journal, and was bummed out that other than a message on the back of an empty JJ's Bakery Blackberry Pie wrapper from a guy named Tyler, the small notebook and pen were missing. Usually, I replace journals when they disappear. but it seems to happen fairly often these days and I don't keep up quickly enough. Well, Tyler from Iceland, let me simmer down while I tell my story. D-e-e-p breathe 2, 3, 4... Here's what he wrote:

Did not find a journal but I guess this will do.

Visiting from Iceland. How about you?

A rare sunny day they say

But glimpses of sun are cherished anyway.

Heading on my way.

Enjoy the day. Tyler

The idea for a bike paht journal began in December 1998 after my mother passed away November 19, followed by our 29-year-old daughter, Lacey, on December 5th. They had both lived in Portland. I read a lot of books about the death of family members over the next year and one of them said, "When you lose your mother, it breaks your heart. When you lose your daughter, it crushes your soul." Lacey's dad and I can attest to that. Our family was in the throes of grief for a long time, and I have come to realize that we never completely heal.

Our mother was the best ever; funny, sunny, sensible. She cooked, sewed, danced... My sister and I, and her grandchildren pretty much worshiped her.

Brown-eyed Lacey lived life with passion. She was devoted to her husband and said their little boy, Devin, was their best creation. She was a good sister to our younger daughter, Keri; sensitive, kind to animals, rode horses, was an artist, and could have answered much as Emile Zola wrote, "If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, I will answer you: I am here to live out loud!" And that Lacey did.

Living next to the greenway along Bear Creek where moms, dads, children and so many others use its bike path, we needed solitude, and kind of closed ourselves off from the world. But, we were still aware of life on the other side of the fence, and it somehow helped to hear the chatter and laughter. Those sounds brought us comfort and hope for the future. Our family had also enjoyed riding bikes from

here to the Lynn Newbry park and beyond, walking dogs, and birdwatching along the way. Our girls had often ridden their horses on the horse trail and through the orchards when they were teen-agers. Good memories.

So, in January 1999 my husband dug a hole for the post and with help from resulting bike paht journals, and a lot of prayer, we slowly began our journey back to life. It took what seemed forever but finally a day came when I decided whether I would continue to live in misery...or for the sake of my husband, family and myself, renew life with happiness. I chose happiness.

Based on trust between the writers and we providers, the principle is simple: a notebook and pen for writing poetry, bird sightings, philosophy, quotations, revelations-simple, (brilliant or startling), drawings, and a rural mailbox with a post to anchor it. In painting its invitation and purpose on the outside of the box I accidentally reversed the H and T for the word "path", and rather than repair it, I drew "switch" arrows over the H and T which then became part of its story. Even today, 20 some years later, journal writers will mention the mistake. "Do you know...?" they ask. Others happily accept the screw up and dive right in: "Dear Bike Paht Journal..."

Someone once asked in an old notebook, what has happened to all the used



*The mailbox in place.
Photo by Bella Doucette*

journals: Answer: If we can catch them before they disappear, they're saved in a box under our bed. Several times people have volunteered their own new notebooks when we were too slow to replace them.

After one of the mailboxes was vandalized, someone actually left a check for a new one! Thank goodness our world is made up of more good people than ornery ones. We will never forget the kindness of those riders and walkers.

After a particularly rough year with theft and vandalism around 2006, we kind of gave up for a long period. One book was torn apart; another looked like it might have been thrown into the creek; others were just plain missing. It wasn't fun anymore. Eventually we read through old journals from under the bed, and as we visualized all the little kids, parents, grandmas and grandpas who had written from their hearts, we knew it was time to start again.

Here are a few samples of past writings. Spelling and punctuation belong to the writers:

"Ah, a brisk autumn day. Had heard of this box & was excited to finally stumble upon it. Thank you. To All who Read— FOLLOW Your BLISS! Oct. 1999

I've been running from the cops for ages now. I really hope they don't read this. I'm from Utah and I like chickens. Peace out. October 2015

Quit smoking today. This is my 1st stop in what is going to be a difficult journey. Pray for me please. J. Feb 1, 1999, 12:00 noon

I am going to be famous one day! So save this book. On a bike trail is great! TENNIS FOREVER

We went into the unknown It was really a fun bike mile. July 7, 1999

Today my pettle fell off my bike and an old lunitic yelled at me. It was not fun. All morning we were saying how we were going bikeing and so finally after I cleaned my room that happened and now I have to walk my bike bak.

From Maggie 2-10-18

1st time on the bike path...for all three of us...we're having a baby! April 2001

I'm very thankful that life is full of new beginnings. Today is one of those. So, here's a note for Tyler who wrote his poem on the back of an empty JJ's Bakery Blackberry Pie wrapper: *I've added your pie wrapper poem to the box under our bed for safe keeping. Thanks for stopping by on your grand adventure. Now I'm on my way to buy another notebook.*

How Did I Get Here? by Debra Moon

Continued from page 3

one correct answer to that question. She thought I was Denise O'Brien, the owner of the Talent Café. In our conversation, I found out that Willow was a board member for the Talent Historical Society. I expressed a desire to learn about Talent history. Little did I know that this would be a mission that took over my life. Willow invited me to attend a board meeting and join the Talent Historical Society Board. She pointed out the museum and told me the time and dates of the meetings.

I am very passionate about the value of local history. I truly believe that if people know their local history and feel ownership of it, that they become better citizens and take more pride in their community and their surroundings. They are more likely not to deface property, more likely to care about local issues and to participate in the governance of their town. From the book that I'd written on Chico's history, I developed a curriculum on local history for 2nd and 3rd graders. I taught this class at our charter school, which did provide some supplemental classes for home-schooled children. It was a big hit.

Back to Talent: After meeting Willow, I went online to the THS website and applied to become a member. I said that I would help staff the museum once a week, thinking that this would be a great way to learn local history. I went to my first board meeting in November of 2018. There was a lot of banter and some interesting topics. It seemed like a fun group. I confessed that I was an experienced grant writer and they invited me to join the board. I joined the board in December and began helping at the museum on Sunday afternoons. Most Sundays we did not even have one visitor. So, that gave a lot of time for Ron to teach me about Talent history. I was an avid learner.

Being a new board member, I began listening to what other board members wanted for the organization. As a grant writer I could make some wishes (but not all) come true. Ron wanted a nice sign to show people in town where our museum was. My son-in-law, Gregg Payne, a sign maker and artist, made the large, attractive sign on the wall of the museum that faces East Main Street. It went up on

March 2, 2020. Twelve days later Covid-19 hit with a bang and all doors were shut for a good long time. As soon as covid let up a bit, we discovered that our sign really drew people in. We now have 6, 10, or 12 visitors each time we open instead of zero or one.

Jan Wright, our local historian, wanted an exhibit on the history of schools in Talent. I liked that idea, and I wanted to create a local history curriculum for the elementary teachers here in Talent too. So, we forged a bond and combined our ideas. We got grants from both the Jackson County Cultural Coalition and the Oregon Heritage Commission to fund this project, which we named, "Making Local History". Several other board members helped with artistic or practical parts of the project. We were especially lucky to have help from Myke Reeser, a board member and artist who help us with the exhibit and made a coloring book depicting scenes from the community and figures from

Talent's history. Jan and I met once weekly to accomplish our work. I continued to absorb Talent history from these meetings with Jan as we worked together. Emmalisa Whalley, Webmaster for THS, helped us put all this curriculum online so that we could share it with teachers and students who, at that time, were at home because of covid.

Emmalisa and I also work together to report on the post-fire return of the bird population to the Greenway.

When covid restrictions relaxed, Talent Elementary School classes came for tours of the museum and the historic downtown area in the spring each year. After the fire, our board decided to collect stories and images and document the history of the fire in the voices of our own people. Middle-school students began doing interviews to help us get Almeda Fire stories, and they also came for tours. The museum became a busy place! People research their families

there; students bring their parents in to see a place that they liked when their class visited. Other people see the sign and decide to drop in.

Another bond was formed with me and Willow. We decided to do the "Where's Willow" column in the Talent News and Review each month to help raise awareness of historic places in our area. This had been super fun for Willow and me. It has raised an interest in local history and my awareness of the history of the area has grown.

I applied for and received grants for THS: Covid relief grants, Jackson County Cultural Coalition funds, state grants, and Pacific Power and Light grants. We applied to the City of Talent and got help with documenting the fire. So, there are many streams of income that Ron (our Treasurer) and me (grant writer) track that help us do our work. Talent Maker City has been a partner too, helping us out in a pinch more than once.

If I am not working with projects and people at the museum, writing grants or grant reports, interviewing for fire stories and collecting images, then I am actively involved with my children and grandchild-

dren. Two of my children live within 30 miles of me. We visit frequently and have family meals and celebrations. I help home-school and care for my five-year-old granddaughter, Bella.

I have a nice garden and do my own yardwork with the help of my son David. I have a bit of a green thumb. I

love Talent tomatoes, among many other plants. I write various

articles besides the "Where's Willow" column for the Talent News and Review and for our newsletter. I also write the grant applications for THS.

I feel that I am planted right where I belong. I am nourished with a constant flow of learning local history. I've been able to give back for what the community has given to me. I thank all our board members, my neighbors, my new friends, the City of Talent, our funders in the State of Oregon, and just everyone I meet here, who have added so much to this chapter of my life.



Grammie & Bella at the Museum dressed as Talent tomatoes.



Talent Historical Society
P.O Box 582
Talent, OR 97540



Zack Watson is the owner of a landscaping business in Talent called **Going Green Lawn and Garden**. He has ancestors buried in the Church of the Brethren Cemetery just off Highway 99 in Talent. THS has recently taken an interest in the cemetery with limited oversight, which basically means we are trying to recruit volunteers to help maintain the grounds. Zack and his sons, new volunteers, are pictured here just after a session of weed eating and mowing at the cemetery. ***We are looking for more volunteers to help.*** We also hope to find a gas mower dedicated to the care of the cemetery that can be donated and stored there. If you are interested in helping, please call the museum at 541-512-8838.