



The Historacle

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Talent Historical Society

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The Story of Round Prairie

By Myke Reeser

In doing research for this story, I discovered many references to the name “Round Prairie”. It seems that the pioneers favored this term for several sites along the Applegate Trail from Idaho to Oregon. This story however is about the location that I have been familiar with since moving to this area in 2007. Having discovered and read the book titled *The Applegate Trail of 1846* by local author William Emerson, I contacted him. He was very glad to talk to me and shared the location of many Applegate Trail sites including the Round Prairie location on the former Box R Ranch off Green Springs Highway. We planned to meet again after this encounter when he became quite ill and passed away. I was honored to have been acquainted with Mr. Emerson, even though way too briefly.

Highway 66, also known as the Green Springs Highway, spans parts of Jackson and Klamath counties and connects Ashland and Klamath Falls. A good portion of it follows the old Applegate wagon trail. The road begins in Ashland, crossing I-5 at Exit 14 as it leaves town, straddling Emigrant Lake’s western and southern shores before ascending oak-studded hills.

The Round Prairie site is located on Highway 66 about 25 miles southeast of Ashland near the village of Lincoln. It is a 100-acre spring fed meadow now privately owned, surrounded by BLM lands of the Cascade/Siskiyou monument as well as other private property. When the first Applegate wagon train came through in 1846, led by Jesse and Lindsey Applegate and Levi Scott, they often were helped by local native people to help them find wa-



Tubb Springs State Wayside, a natural spring tucked amongst the trees in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. It's about 20 miles southeast of Ashland and about 2 miles from Round Prairie.

ter sources or established paths. In the area of the Klamath tribe, friendly scouts led them to a natural spring which is now called “Tubb Springs”, still flowing but now harnessed by modern devices and stone foundations. Upon arrival at the nearby calm, beautiful meadow, the pioneers quickly exclaimed “we have found a large Round Prairie with grass and water”. The area fed by Beaver Creek was soon mapped into records for future travelers. It must have been a welcome oasis for weary people and their animals still facing ahead a mountainous trek to reach the Willamette Valley. They camped as long as a week to rest and replenish. In some historical accounts the area was also referred to as “Long Prairie”. The last Applegate Trail wagon train came through in 1860, as progress was being

made with other forms of travel.

For a time, the old wagon road was used as a crude pathway forged by new settlers willing to make homesteads and associated communities. In 1878 the town of “Shake” would provide a mill and new land claims. In 1892, an early settler, J.E. Henry, built his large lumber mill and named the town of Lincoln. The site was used into the 20th century and the pond and buildings are still visible today. The Charles DeCarlow family purchased many acres of land surrounding Round Prairie, created a “Shake” post office, and in 1920 renamed the area and built the Pinehurst Inn and the Pinehurst School, both buildings still there.

The first record I could find of ownership of the Round Prairie land was in the 1880s, purchased by George Bailey. He used the

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

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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](http://talenttowninflames.blogspot.com)

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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.

The Museum will be closed Christmas Day & New Years Day.

Memberships Since Last Issue

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The Poker Tour



Thanks to the 25 players who played in the Talent Poker Tour XLVIII on October 29th, and congratulations to our tournament winner **Jon Peters!** Our final tournament of this year will take place on Saturday, December 3rd 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.

Have you had a desire to learn how to write grants for an organization in your community that you would like to help? If you want to help an organization you are fond of obtain needed funds, contribute to your community by volunteering time, and learn new skills in the process, then this is a good training course for you.

This is generally volunteer work, since few small organizations that need money for their projects, or to promote their purposes, can afford to pay a grant writer. It is a way to learn the ropes so that after a few years of experience you could conceivably find a position as a paid grant writer. Even while grant writing as a volunteer, there is often a chance to create a small job for yourself within the grant project and receive some payment for it. It is a nice way to eventually earn a little bit of money and to help the community at the same time. The type of job you can create for yourself is usually evaluating or reporting on the grant work (grant administration). I normally volunteer this time, as it counts towards a match for the grant—which many grants require either in-kind volunteer hours for the funds they disperse, or an actual cash match (more about this will be

explained in the training), but if you have other volunteer hours or cash matches, you could write the grant administration into the budget of the project and receive some payment for it.

First of all, you must find an organization that gives grants that aligns with your non-profit's goals. This will be easy if you choose to work with the Talent Historical Society, because many funding agencies have already been identified and want to give to THS. For organizations that have not ever received a grant before this can be a big part of the job at the beginning and could take many volunteer hours.

Secondly, you must be willing to read grant guideline documents with lots of information and instructions, and to try to follow the instructions carefully. It is very helpful if you are good with words...those skills will be discussed in the training.

It truly helps to be friendly, communicative, and persuasive. You must also have at least average computer skills and be familiar with Microsoft Word, Excel, Google Drive, your email program, and Zoom. Microsoft Word and your email program are the two most important—the others require a smaller amount of interac-

tion and the skills needed for those other programs can be learned "on the job".

This is a great opportunity! We are hoping that at least a few of you will choose to apprentice with THS in the pursuit of and management of grants because we are growing in this area and could use some assistance. THS has an established background for successful grant writing and grant management prospects and could provide you with a great impetus to succeed in this field. We are community-minded too and are willing to help people who have other organizations in mind for whom they wish to write grants. If you are interested in taking this course, which would probably have a duration of two 3-to-4-hour sessions (times and dates TBA), please contact Debra Moon, our THS grant writer at debra.moon7@gmail.com

Winter Birds in the Greenway Survey by Debra Moon and Emmalisa Whalley

These are observations made (and photos taken) by Emmalisa Whalley, a volunteer Bear Creek Burn surveyor and resident of Talent. This is a summary/overview, if you are interested in the specific data that has been collected, please contact Klamath Bird Observatory, <https://klamathbird.org/> for inquiries.

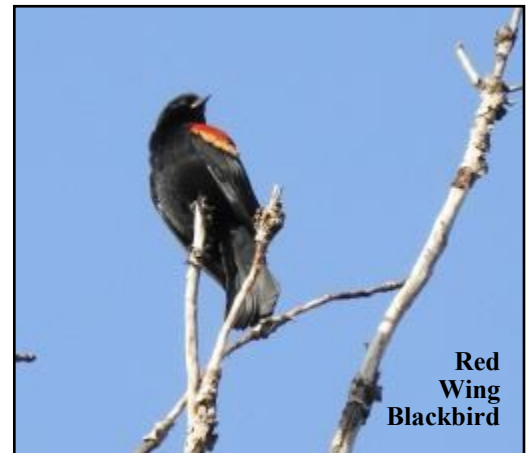
There are also a couple of observations from Debra, who is a bird watcher from her kitchen window.

We are always happy to see the return of the Lesser Goldfinch in the colder months. I have a feeder sock with tiny seeds outside my kitchen window where these little guys come to feast. By the way, the reason these little birds are called "Lesser" is due to their size. They are small. Emmalisa mentions that they are easy to spot on her survey walks because of their yellow chest and black cap. They keep these colors through the winter, whereas the American Goldfinches lose their yellow. Twenty of these charming little birds were sighted on the Suncrest walk in October, and numerous on two walks through the Lyn Newbry surveys in September and late October. Between the two walks through Lyn Newbry, the number of birds in total and the number of species sighted increased significantly. There

were 30 species and 231 total birds in September, and by the end of October the numbers increased to 46 species and 559 birds total. Our winter birds are home.

Another of my favorite are the Red-Winged Blackbirds, small, but regal looking in a way, and so intent on keeping track of their mate(s) (apparently the males have several mates—and they do want to know where they are at all times). They seem to be here year-round. These birds were among the most numerous sighted both in the Lyn Newbry and the Suncrest areas. Juncos were also seen in numbers. The Oregon Juncos signal the coming of cold winter months, and they are so delightful with their little black hoods and energetic bodies, hopping around on the ground looking for seed and insects. The surveyors saw some little birds flitting in the trees and realized it was a couple of Orange-Crowned Warblers that were searching for food. A couple more highlights were seeing four Yellow Warblers and three Western Tanagers flying down the creek.

Emmalisa noted some rarer birds too.



"Highlights from this Transect (Lyn Newbry Transect A) we were hearing a Marsh Wren, seeing 5 Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, and seeing a Steller's Jay, which is very rare to see in the park, they tend to like higher elevation. Also, we added three more water birds, the American Wigeon, 23, Gadwall, 6 and American Coot, 2. It will be interesting to see when more water birds return."

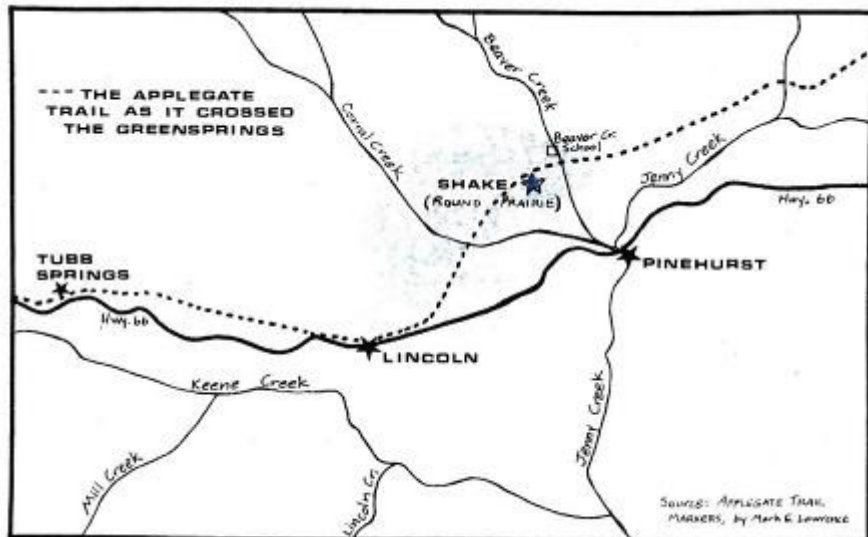
It was also exciting to see some large birds in the survey, a Killdeer flushed a Great Blue Heron from the creek, and 16 Turkey vultures gathered to begin their migration. Then heading down the path they heard and spotted a Red-Shouldered Hawk in the trees. In a minute there was a Red-Tailed Hawk that came in and chased the Red-Shouldered Hawk from its perch and down the creek, towards the pond.

Note: Emmalisa Whalley, THS Board Member and volunteer Bear Creek Burn surveyor, is an excellent photographer, providing us with amazing photographs of our birds and producing a bird calendar each year available at the THS website store www.talenthistory.org.

The 2023 calendar is "Birds of Hawaii".

The Story of Round Prairie by Myke Reeser

Continued from Page 1



100 acres for cattle. His son Saylor Bailey was born on the ranch in 1890. According to a 1966 Medford Mail Tribune article by Marjorie O’Harra, George Bailey arrived in the Rogue Valley as a 16-year-old on one of the last large (90 wagon) trains coming from Missouri. At some point, he bought the 100-acre Round Prairie site and raised his family there. Saylor lived on the ranch and/or in the area his entire life. During his later years, being the oldest living witness to the original names and locations of places on the Green Springs, he was often contacted by the state and county for accuracy in details.

The ownership trail is varied and uncertain. What is known is that the Bailey ranch was filed as ownership, that J. E. Henry held possession of some land, that

Charles DeCarlow owned adjacent land, and according to the book, “Lincoln On the Green-springs” by Anne Foley, it was also known as the Zinn Ranch (no dates available). In 1972 we see from records and obituary information that Don Rowlett purchased the 100 acres and named it the Box R Ranch. He and his family lived there and rebuilt the site as a re-creation of an Old West Town, with Pioneer Days



celebrations, church and business retreats, a main lodge, school and group camping cabins and tents. He also ran the Box R Beef cattle on adjacent property. The father of Lunette Fleming, our Vice President, was an active participant in Talent’s Draft and Harness Club in those years. They often attended reenactment events at the ranch and she has fond memories of being there. Upon Don Rowlett’s passing in 2017, the Box R Ranch was sold.

On a side note, an interesting geological landscape envelopes the area which can be seen along the highway from Lincoln almost to the Keno. There are vast

numbers of lava rocks of all sizes laying on the ground, the result of Mt. Mazama blowing its top some 7,700 years ago. This eruption, the largest known within the Cascade Volcanic Arc in a million years, destroyed Mazama's summit, scattering ash

and pumice rock all around this NW area, and volcanic dust over much of our now surrounding seven states. It was an action that eventually resulted in the beautiful Crater Lake, which is the deepest lake in the U.S..

Round Prairie is all covered with the lava rock except for the roads and some meadows both of which have been obviously cleared by human effort at one time or another. One wonders how the pioneer wagons traversed this obstacle or was it they who out of necessity did the clearing?

The Mt. Mazama information is from “Ancient Modocs of California and Oregon” by Carrol B. Howe.

You may have noticed the variant spellings of Green Springs and Tubb Springs. We have decided to use the spellings as they came to us rather than make a decision that has been avoided for almost one and three-quarter centuries.

<< Artist's concept of Mt Mazama in eruption whose collapse created the Crater Lake caldera. (Painting by Paul Rockwood on exhibit at headquarters of Crater Lake National Park.)



Rockfellow Diggings—Talent's Forgotten Gold Mine along Bear Creek

Part Two—by Jeff LaLande

Something of a Renaissance Man

The Rockfellow Diggings story is bedeviled by a lack of additional information for the 1850s and on into the 1860s. However, it is apparent that Albert Rockfellow must have continued (at least periodically) to mine there during those years. Based on a brief mention of his mining in Jacksonville's *Oregon Sentinel* (4/27/1872), we know he was hydraulic mining there by 1872.

In addition to farming, we also know from Welborn Beeson's diary that Albert taught at Wagner Creek's one-room schoolhouse, at least briefly, in 1854. Like many of his early-settler neighbors, he participated in the final (1855-1856) Rogue River War against the local Native people. In 1856, four years after arriving in the Wagner Creek valley, he married

Sarah Myer, daughter of a nearby neighbor, W. C. Myer, another early-day settler, one who later became locally renowned for his breeding of Percheron horses. (Albert and Sarah would have seven children, only two of whom survived past infancy into adulthood.) Albert and George had a small tavern on their property in 1857, and in 1859 the brothers held a contract to carry the mail between Jacksonville and Yreka.



Sarah Myer Rockfellow

For a time, Albert had the Wagner Creek valley's post office in his house. The brothers also prospected for gold up Wagner Creek and elsewhere in Jackson County.

In 1862 Albert sold off most of his farm in Talent to a neighbor. Like many of Wagner Creek valley's other first White settlers — Jacob Wagner, Eli Anderson, James Thornton, and others — he left farming life for town life in Ashland; his new home there was at 116 Church Street, very close to the Methodist church (today still located on the corner of Main and Laurel), of which he was a prominent member. However, Albert Rockfellow did keep his "diggings" along Bear Creek. Indeed, Albert had financial interest in a

number of mining prospects elsewhere in western Jackson County. In the mid-1860s he even spent time prospecting for hard-rock gold ("quartz ledges") in the Blue Mountains of northeastern Oregon.

Given Albert Rockfellow's varied activities over the years, one might think of him as something of a Renaissance man. He wrote considerable poetry during the 1870s-1880s, published regularly in

the Ashland

Tidings. The *Tidings* also featured news that he had invented, and in 1878 patented, a small "self-adjusting" metal gate for fenced yards and pastures. Although he marketed his gate at Salem's Oregon State Fair and elsewhere, Albert's invention evidently failed to earn him a fortune, but he continued to tinker with various improvements to it well into the 1880s. Whatever the sources of his income during his years

living in Ashland, it seems that Albert Rockfellow enjoyed a fairly comfortable life.

A Major Operation (at least for this vicinity)

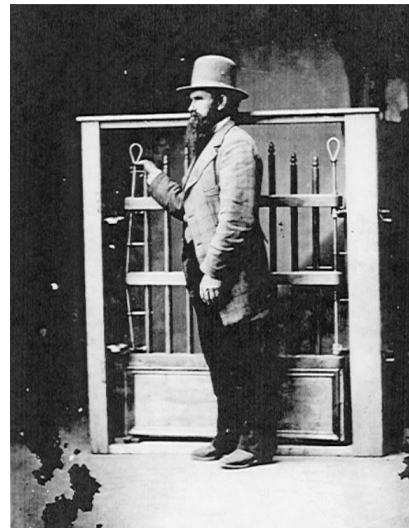
In 1916, geologists H. M. Parks and A. M. Swartley, as authors of the Oregon Bureau of Mine's 1916 *Handbook of the Mining Industry of Oregon*, described the by-then long-abandoned hydraulic-mining operation "located in Section 31, Township 38 South, Range 1 East" (i.e., the legal location of our Rockfellow Diggings) as "the best known placer mine" in the southern Bear Creek valley. They correctly stated that the site was situated "about 2 ½ miles northwest of Ashland, at the north end of the ridge between

Wagner and Ashland Creeks." However, Parks and Swartley mistakenly called the mine at that Section 31 location "Forty-Nine Diggings," but "Forty-Nine Diggings" was situated much closer to Phoenix, well to the northwest of the location they give. Adding to the confusion, they include in their description a detailed geological description of the actual Forty-Nine Diggings mine, taken verbatim from geologist J. S. Diller's *Mineral Resources of South-Western Oregon*, published by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1914. The old hydraulic

mine of Forty-Nine Diggings

is located at the base of the Siskiyou Mountains' foothills, about 2 miles south of Phoenix. The mined-out area (which includes headwall, washing pit, and a sloping "ditch" used to deliver large amounts of water for sluicing) is a short distance west/upslope from the junction of Adams Road and Colver Road, but the mined area is not readily visible from either road. (Forty-Nine Diggings' legal location is the NE¼ of Section 21, Township 38 South, Range 1 West, W.M.)

Whatever the cause of Parks and Swartley's puzzling entry in their *Handbook*, we can confidently surmise that mining activity at Rockfellow Diggings reached its height during the late 1870s and early 1880s. This was due to use of hydraulic-mining methods. The need for a large volume of water required excavation of what the *Tidings* called "the big ditch" to divert it from Ashland Creek at a point well upstream of the Plaza, and carry the water around the slopes to a point above the mine. Although at this point in my research, I have not encountered evidence of just when the lengthy ditch was first excavated, the *Tidings* of Nov. 15, 1878 attests that a crew of men were then "repairing [emphasis added] the big ditch which heads from Ashland Creek to the mines a few miles below town [i.e., Rockfellow Diggings]." Thus, with the 1872



Albert Rockfellow and his Gate

Oregon Sentinel statement quoted in the first paragraph of the preceding section, we can be reasonably confident that the ditch's original construction was some time in the very early 1870s at the latest. (I have a hunch that a section of Talent Irrigation District's present West Lateral Canal utilizes the route of this old mining ditch.) It's important to acknowledge that Rockfellow himself almost certainly did not personally help dig this ditch, nor would he have done much of the actual mining at his diggings by this time. Instead, he would have employed crews of workers to get their hands dirty, while he supervised (or at least personally inspected) the work regularly.

Salem's *Oregon State Journal* for May 1, 1880, featured this interesting tidbit taken from the Ashland *Tidings*: "A.G. Rockfellow left in the *Tidings* office the other day an immense tooth, which, with a portion of jawbone, was washed out of the ground at Mr. Rockfellow's mines below Ashland a few years ago [emphasis added]." How many years before 1880 the blasts of mining water exposed the fossil tooth we do not know for certain, but most likely it occurred sometime in 1872, when the *Sentinel* (4/27/1872) remarked that Rockfellow had unearthed an extinct mammoth's tusk from the gravels of his mine. The tooth (a molar) and jawbone probably came from the same Columbian mammoth (*Mammathus columbi*), a huge, hairy elephant (13' high at the withers!) that roamed North America from at least one-million years ago until less than 12,000 years ago.

(Note: During the closing centuries of the Ice Age, ancestors of America's Indigenous people definitely hunted these creatures across much of the present west-

tern U.S. During the nineteenth century, mammoth remains (but not associated with human artifacts) were revealed at other Jackson County hydraulic mines, including along Sterling Creek, the lower Little Applegate River, and at Missouri Bar. During the 1940s-1960s, the bones of one unfortunate mammoth were found, during various construction excavations, scattered within the area now encompassed by Omar's Restaurant, the present Market-of-Choice shopping center, and the SOU student infirmary.

As I type these words, I glance at the mammoth molar [found in Alaska] that rests, along with a few other fossils, on my office's window sill; its occlusal ["working"] surface measures 6" in length and 3" in width.)



Columbian Woolly Mammoth
Mammathus columbi

Some year prior to 1882, Albert Rockfellow — now 57 years old and possibly wanting additional capital to operate and expand the mine — joined in a partnership with one of Ashland's most prominent businessmen, John M. McCall, founder of the Ashland Woolen Mill. The *Oregon Sentinel* (9/7/1881) related that "Piping [i.e., hydraulic mining] is still going on at the McCall & Rockfellow diggings [i.e., Rockfellow Diggings] near the Eagle Mills." According to the *Sentinel*, the "gold yield is still good and water is expected to last for a month or two yet." Just how many years they cooperated in the mining endeavor is apparently lost. But the March 31, 1882, Jacksonville *Democratic Times* published a snippet from the *Tidings* that stated that the two men had leased their mining claims at the diggings to Joseph Bagley and A. Rummel. The following year, the March 10, 1883, issue of San Francisco's *Mining and Scientific Press* printed a brief account from the *Democratic Times* stating that a completely different pair of men, "Mullen and Adams," had "commenced working the Rockfellow diggings this side of Ashland, and expect to make a good run." The fact that Msrs. Rockfellow and McCall stepped back from the mining operation and now let others take a crack at it indicates that the two men no longer felt the mine's return was worth their own investment. Instead, let others carry the risk that the diggings were by this time almost played out. With further news of Rockfellow Diggings quickly fading from the pages of the local press after 1883, this would seem to be exactly what occurred.

Nevertheless, Albert Rockfellow's

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David Tokar**
Counselor
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days as a mining man were not yet over. By 1878, McCall and E. K. Anderson (Rockfellow's old Wagner Creek neighbor and fellow Ashlander) had formed a partnership to open a new hydraulic mine at a known placer deposit located a bit closer to Ashland; it had been called "Davenport Diggings" since at least the early 1860s. They employed the experienced Rockfellow as superintendent (he may have been a junior partner in the enterprise as well). The McCall and Anderson "Davenport Diggings" mine was situated on the hillside above the railroad (i.e., behind present-day Butler Ford and Ashland Motors, in the section of a steep gulch that is today well marked by a grove of tall pines and cedars (easily visible from Highway 99) that have grown within the unmistakable scar of a hydraulic mine. According to the July 12, 1884, *Scientific and Mining Press*, McCall and Anderson's hydraulic operation at Davenport Diggings continued, under Rockfellow's supervision, at least into that year (and perhaps for a few years beyond that).

Epilogue

In 1888, Albert (now aged 63) and wife Sarah moved to San Diego, evidently so as to be close to their two sons, Eugene and Alfred. Some years after Sarah's death in 1904, Albert returned to Ashland to live out his final years. Writing well into his late-eighties, Albert Rockfellow's pioneer reminiscences were published in the Ashland *Tidings*. Albert died in March 1915, three months shy of ninety years of age. The *Tidings* (3/29/1915) remarked that he was "one of Ashland's oldest pioneers"; the *Medford Mail Tribune* (3/31/1915) stated that, "with probably only one or two exceptions...[Rockfellow] was probably the oldest resident" of the Jackson County vicinity. He is buried in the family plot in the Ashland Cemetery, on East Main Street.

We will likely never know just how financially rewarding the Rockfellow Diggings mine actually was —whether to Albert Rockfellow himself or to the others who mined there. In the 1930s, much of the Talent-to-Ashland section of the Pacific Highway/Hwy 99 was re-routed. From its original late-1910s-built route (i.e. Talent Ave) the Pacific Highway now followed a new segment, located alongside the edge of the terrace that overlooked Bear Creek's floodplain — that is the straight stretch that we drive today. Highway construction would have demolished any evidence of the old mine that lay closest to the floodplain. That now-obliterated portion had probably retained most of the mine's "tailings" — large quantities of stream-rounded cobbles and pebbles that had been blasted from the hillside during hydraulic mining. By the early twentieth century, those lichen- and moss-covered tailing piles would have

made for excellent rodent and rattlesnake habitat, at least until the new stretch of highway was built. During the 1940s and 1950s, a scattering of modest homes and businesses popped up along new Highway 99, all of them located within the old mining scar of Rockfellow Diggings.

I am grateful to Talent historian Jan Wright, who not only provided me with primary-source information but who also reviewed and commented on a draft of this article. Like so many others who labor in the vineyard of Southern Oregon history, I'm indebted to Ben Truwe's wonderful website: Southern Oregon History, Revisited. < truwe.sohs.org >

See Page 10 for a further notation about Columbian Mammoth Teeth.



E.K. Anderson and his wife at "Davenport Diggings", a placer mine located above and behind where Butler Ford is now, which was supervised by Albert Rockfellow in the 1880's.

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Oregon Heritage Commission Comes to the Talent Museum for their Fall Meeting

by Debra Moon

The Talent Historical Society (THS) prepared for the arrival of the commissioners and staff members of the Oregon Heritage Commission (OHC) last October. Eight commissioners and three staff members arrived on Sunday October 23rd in the afternoon for a tour of the Phoenix Museum, a look around the Talent Museum, and a guided tour of Talent's historic downtown area led by THS Board Member, Ron Medinger. The actual OHC meeting was held on Monday October 24th at the museum.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Patrick Flanagan, head of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, with a Zoom presentation on land acknowledgement for Oregon Native Tribes;
- the OHC Main Street Program, which helps participating towns and cities make use of space in older buildings in their downtown area and gives small businesses and non-profits much needed office space;
- a presentation on the Northwest Digital Heritage Toolkit, a document digitizing kit that may be available for use to organizations;
- a sharing of the OHC 2020-2025 Heritage Plan and their four long-range goals, which are well reflected in the projects and pursuits of the Talent Historical Society. For example, one of the goals is expanding access to heritage preservation and learning, which THS is doing through publishing a column on historical sites in the area monthly in the Talent News and Review (Where's Willow). Also by creating a blog, book, and exhibit on the history of the Almeda Fire in both Spanish and English.

The Oregon Main Street Program was very attention-grabbing for me, especially since Talent just became a participant. Oregon Main Street helps communities in their downtown

revitalization efforts. The program provides support to organizations who are ready to develop a vision for how they want their downtown to look and function, and then to attract the people and the resources to bring about the change they want to see happen. They provide training and technical assistance to communities participating in the Oregon Main Street Network and access to the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant funds. I was pleased to know that the



OHC meeting in the Talent Museum



Ron Medinger leads historic downtown tour for OHC Commissioners

City of Talent took initiative and pursued this assistance and stream of income.

In addition to these interesting and informative presentations, representatives from several small, local historical societies shared their recent accomplishments and greatest challenges. Talent Historical Society, Southern Oregon Historical Society, the Railroad Museum, McKee Bridge, Rogue Genealogical Society, Eagle Point, Lake Creek, Jacksonville, and the Jackson Coun-

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Oregon Heritage Commission

The commission, established to secure, sustain, enhance and promote Oregon's heritage, is a nine-member, governor-appointed commission that has broad responsibilities as a connector and catalyst for hundreds of organizations and thousands of Oregonians devoted to preserving and interpreting Oregon's heritage resources. Its programs include the Heritage and Museum Grant Programs, technical assistance for heritage organizations and an annual conference. It also gives annual Heritage Excellence Awards and designates Oregon Heritage Traditions, All-Star Communities and Statewide Celebrations.

[/www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Pages/](http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Pages/)

ty Cultural Coalition were among the societies represented.

Staff members of OHC were Katie Henry, Oregon Heritage Commission Coordinator, Kuri Gil, Grants and Outreach Coordinator, and newly hired Oregon Heritage Technical Resources Coordinator, Cam Amabile. The commissioners in attendance were Anne Levant Pahl, Laura Ferguson, Rosemary Johnson, Maureen Battistella, Larry Landis, Chelsea Rose, Matias Trejo de Dios, and Mary

McRobinson. The meeting started with these eleven OHC representatives, three THS Board Members, Lunette Fleming, Myke Reeser, and Debra Moon. Jan Wright, former THS Board Member and current archivist for Southern Oregon Historical Society, was also in attendance as were several members of the Phoenix Historical Society, including Board Member, Dorothy Cotton who presented for PHS. Talent

Mayor Darby Ayers-Flood attended also.

The Oregon Heritage Commission was founded in 1995 by the Oregon State Legislature. It is the primary agency for coordination of heritage activities in Oregon. Commissioners are chosen based on a variety of factors, but geographic representation is a big one. Expertise and experience also contribute. There are nine governor appointed Commissioners and nine Advisory Representatives from different state entities. The Talent Historical Society was very happy to host their meeting and to give a tour of the town and museum.

We Found It at the Annual Outdoor Sale at Jacksonville

by Judie Bunch

There it sat on a table in front of an antique shop. A blue leather, pocket-sized record-keeping book, much like what my grandfather used to record in pencil the fish he caught and the bait he used. I have always treasured his little book. This one was an old diary written with fountain pen and blue ink. The shop was letting it go for 50 cents. I couldn't refuse it.

The diary sat on our dresser for a number of years where I thumbed through it from time to time. Search though I might, I could not find the husband's name, nor tell where the hillside farm was. No need for him to sign it. It was his diary, after all. The story began on page one with his marriage to Winnie on January 1, 1938 when the couple drove over the border to California, circled around to Klamath Falls then drove back to the farm.

Farmers didn't take leisure honeymoons in Hawaii or the Bahama's, I guess. Who would feed the cows? Who would milk them?

The daily entries were short; two or three sentences at the most; no emotions, or exclamation points. Every morning he noted

the sunrise, the early day temperature, whether the day was overcast, misty or cloudy, rainy, snowy, or blue sky of Spring, then went up the hill to care of the cows. He recorded when he and Winnie went to the movies in Ashland, drove to town for hair cuts (10 cents each), stopped for coffee (5 cents each) and perhaps a piece of pie (15 cents each), or attended grange and school board meetings. He took Winnie to church every Sunday, and friends with last names often stopped by to visit.

I loved reading the little book and the seemingly peaceful life described, but when I finally discovered that the farmer had recorded the birth of his daughter, Madalene, at Sacred Heart Hospital on October 13, 1938, I realized that she and I were about the same age. Wouldn't I love to see my name in print from the very day I was

born, and know my father had written about me? Had she ever seen this little diary? Was she still alive? Where was she? What were their last names?

Reading the farmer's story, these people had become like family to me. If Madalene was found, could I actually give up the diary? It might be hard, but it would be right: the book that I held in my hands belonged to *her*, not me. I set my upcoming April birthday as my goal date and made a trip to the historical society in Phoenix. Perhaps they could find someone at their grange hall who knew of Madalene, her parents, and a farm in 1938 at the base of a hill. I was determined to have her father's diary in her hands that Father's Day. I didn't have too wait long.



A graceful old hay barn is still there behind what once was the Schnack house with a later addition of a milking shed.

ful relationship with her Dad, and would cherish the it. The next morning a deliveryman knocked on our door and handed me a gorgeous bouquet of flowers from her along with a thank you card and her email address. Thus

began a happy exchange of messages that lasted for quite awhile. With Father's Day just around the corner, I gave the record-keeping book a little kiss, tucked

The good women at the Phoenix society called me a week later. They had found Madalene married in San Francisco, called her, and she was excited to hear about the book. She told them she had a wonder-



If you look closely, you can see the name Schnack on the front of the milk cans.

it into a box and put it into the mail.

Madalene's father was Martin Schnack, and the farm was right off North Phoenix Street on Campbell Road, next to the Hawk winetasting room where the orchard used to be. Their old home still sits at the end of Campbell Road hidden behind tall hedges. The smaller house that Martin built for Winnie's parents sits higher on the hill across from the road.

In later correspondence Madalene wrote, "I have many happy memories of growing up there. The Ferns family lived higher on the hill and were very good friends." She had known nothing about the little book but she could just picture her father putting all the information in it. Holding the diary was like having him with her. She said her father had died in 1976. Madalene's mother, Winnie, died in 1980.

As I near the closing of this story, I can hear some of you calling out, "Hey, wait! Why are you telling a Phoenix story to Talentians. You're supposed to be writing about *our* history!" Because, I say, I'm leaving the best until the last. This story ends with Talent, to whit:

After all the above happened, one summer day my husband and I spent a day's drive following the Applegate Trail I-5 signs to Sunny Valley, and stopped at the Trail museum to see if they might have a road map showing the pioneer trail through the mountains. Inside, I talked

with an old gentleman who was doing the greeting. He asked where I we were from.

"Talent," I said.

The man grinned. I know it well," he said, and since we were the only visitors at the moment, Mr. Bell told his story:

His pioneer Bell family had owned the white, 1 1/2 story house

at 104 South Market Street in Talent from 1907 to 1927. They had operated it as a lodging and rooming house. (Info. from the Historacle Dec. 2020 archives).

The Blue Diary by Judie Bunch

Continued from Page 9

When Mr. Bell was a boy he often stayed with his grandfather on North Phoenix Road. He always remembered how cold that house was in the winter, what with no insulation to speak of.

Early in the winter his grandfather would kill a goat, take out its gall bladder, blow it up like a balloon, set it near the stove where it would eventually dry out. Then, on Christmas Eve, his grandpa would take the goat bladder to the front porch so his grandson could stomp on it real hard, and the bladder would explode loudly just like a firecracker on the Fourth of July. That was young Mr. Bell's Christmas celebration from Grandpa, and they laughed and laughed until their sides were sore.

Like almost anyone who drives the North Phoenix Road toward the Hawk winetasting room, we know that the grandfather's old, small, white farmhouse with the faded red trim still sits near the side of the road; even with

street changes in the last few years along that stretch. Out back, these days, there's a barn and horse arena, and in front is some kind of a sign with a metal bow and arrow; newly graced by a large metal rooster. As serendipity* would have it, I realized, the adjoining field was the Schnack farm in the early days. Excited to hear his story, I asked if he had known the neighbors.

He didn't hesitate. "Yes, I remember Mr. and Mrs. Schnack," Mr. Bell said. "They were always friendly people. I really liked them." Oh, that made me so happy. I wanted to hug him. But, about that time a man, woman and two children came in the door, so Mr. Bell excused himself to greet them. As it turned out the museum had no road map to give us anyway, so we called out "Thank you" and went on our way. Although he might not know it, Mr. Bell had given me something far more precious than a map.

**Serendipity: The knack for finding wonderful, unexpected surprises not sought for.*

The story of the blue leather record book is dedicated to the memory of Madalene Schnack who passed away May 1, 2010. May she and her parents be together again in the bright Heavens.



Marvin Schnack's great-grandson, his wife and their child now live at the farmstead that Madalene remembered so fondly.



Columbian Woolly Mammoth Tooth

Jeff LaLande (author of this issue's piece about Rockfellow Diggings) shared these two photos of a fossilized mammoth tooth from Alaska. It is almost certainly very similar in size and shape to what Albert Rockfellow found at his hydraulic gold mine between Talent and Ashland about 150 years ago. The top photo shows the tooth's occlusal surface, and the bottom photo shows the buccal (cheek-facing) surface. This molar weighs 2.6 pounds.

On another note, Jeff's new book, *The Jackson County Rebellion: A Populist Uprising in Depression-era Oregon*, will be coming out this Spring from the Oregon State University Press.



and industries that have called Talent home since immigrant farmers arrived in 1852 to the Wagner Creek Valley. The original quilt can be seen at the Talent Library during regular business hours. Posters of the quilt can be purchased for \$2 at the museum. A free poster will be given to the first 5 people who can name three businesses from the quilt which are no longer in business today. Answers can be submitted by phone, email, or in person at the museum. Winners will be announced in the March edition of the Historacle. More about Talent's Centennial celebration and how THS celebrated it can be found in the 2010 editions of the Historacle available at the Museum or online at www.talenthistory.org. **Museum hours are Wednesday and Sunday Noon to 4pm. 541-512-8838 info@talenthistory.org**

Talent's Centennial Quilt Scavenger Hunt

In 2010, the Talent City Council formed a Centennial Committee to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of Talent becoming an incorporated city on February 14, 1910. One of the ways the city of Talent celebrated its anniversary was by creating a quilt. The city offered blank squares of fabric to anyone willing to decorate them. The quilt squares that were created memorialize many families, businesses,

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 Talent Historical Society Membership Application

The Talent Historical Society was founded in 1994 as a non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of the Talent area in Southern Oregon. By becoming a member of the Society, you provide valuable support of the Society’s ongoing work.

To become a member, please select a membership level, complete the form below, and return the completed form along with your membership payment. All memberships, regardless of level, are greatly appreciated.

Name _____ Date _____

Mailing/Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Member Type: New Renewing

Membership Level: Junior (12-18) - \$10 Individual - \$20 Lifetime Individual - \$200
 Business - \$50 Family - \$30 Lifetime Family - \$300
 Individual/Family Sponsorship - \$100 or more
 Business Sponsorship - \$100 or more
 Donation in addition to membership: \$ _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

If you would like to volunteer to help in any way, please check the box, and we will contact you.

Dues include our quarterly newsletter: ***The Historacle***
 Check if you want it sent electronically by email in lieu of paper
 or by regular mail via post office



Please make checks payable to and
 Send completed form along with payment to: Talent Historical Society
 P.O. Box 582, Talent, OR 97540

Thank You!

The Talent Historical Society Board Meeting is held monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum Building at 105 North Market St. in Talent. The meetings are also still being held on Zoom. If you wish to participate on Zoom, please contact debramoon7@gmail.com and she will email you an invitation to join.

Talent Historical Society Board of Directors

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
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Tuesday Evening

At the Museum

Ready for some fun again?

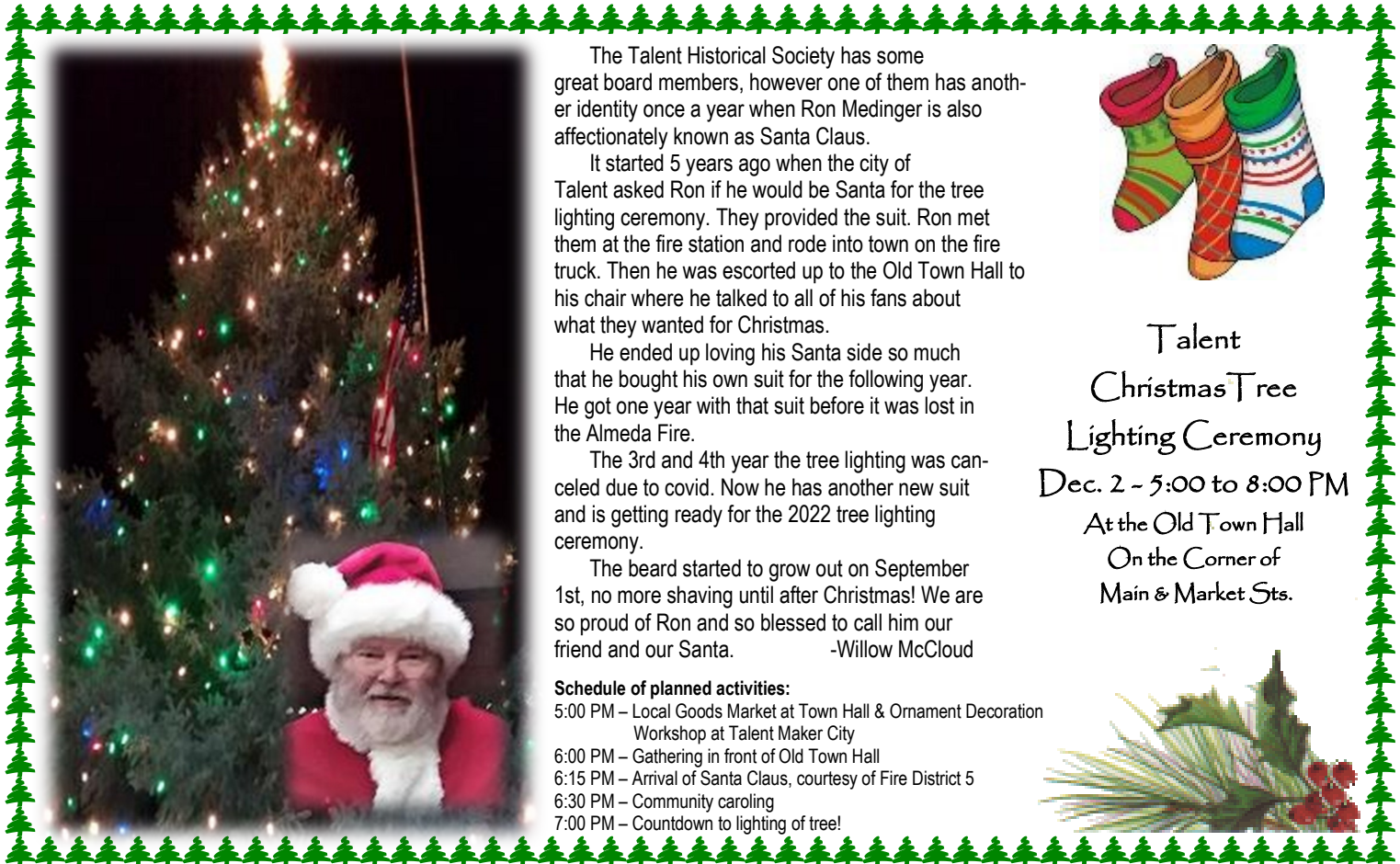
After a 2-year hiatus, T.E.A.M is back for 2023!!

We are all eager to resume seeing each other again and learning local history at the museum each 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm. Join the fun at our first 3 meetings of the new year and consider inviting a friend who is not yet a member of THS. Refreshments will be served..Let’s pack the house!

- January 24 “Zane Grey in Southern Oregon”
by Keith Liddy
- February 28 “Girl with the Blue Tattoo, the Olive Oatman Story” by Jody Fleming
- March 28 “How I saved the Talent Tomato”
by David James and Band



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



The Talent Historical Society has some great board members, however one of them has another identity once a year when Ron Medinger is also affectionately known as Santa Claus.

It started 5 years ago when the city of Talent asked Ron if he would be Santa for the tree lighting ceremony. They provided the suit. Ron met them at the fire station and rode into town on the fire truck. Then he was escorted up to the Old Town Hall to his chair where he talked to all of his fans about what they wanted for Christmas.

He ended up loving his Santa side so much that he bought his own suit for the following year. He got one year with that suit before it was lost in the Almeda Fire.

The 3rd and 4th year the tree lighting was canceled due to covid. Now he has another new suit and is getting ready for the 2022 tree lighting ceremony.

The beard started to grow out on September 1st, no more shaving until after Christmas! We are so proud of Ron and so blessed to call him our friend and our Santa. -Willow McCloud

Schedule of planned activities:

- 5:00 PM – Local Goods Market at Town Hall & Ornament Decoration Workshop at Talent Maker City
- 6:00 PM – Gathering in front of Old Town Hall
- 6:15 PM – Arrival of Santa Claus, courtesy of Fire District 5
- 6:30 PM – Community caroling
- 7:00 PM – Countdown to lighting of tree!



Talent
Christmas Tree
Lighting Ceremony
Dec. 2 - 5:00 to 8:00 PM

At the Old Town Hall
On the Corner of
Main & Market Sts.

