



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 21 Issue 4

December 2015

New “Walking Tour of Historic Talent” Booklet Debuts

Taking a stroll through Talent’s historic District is now more enjoyable than ever thanks to our new walking tour booklet. The “Walking Tour of Historic Talent” showcases 20 properties of significant historic value that are located within the city limits. Some buildings have been altered over time, but their historic importance remains.

The route covers approximately two miles and you should plan on at least 45 minutes to complete it, but take your time and enjoy yourself.

Each property’s listing includes a photograph, street address and date, along with a description of the property. The historic significance is noted as well as in many cases a history of former owners and their impact on our town. Both residential and commercial properties are included.

Information for the booklet came from three sources. In July 1995, Historic Preservation Consultant, George Kramer, prepared a *Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources, Original Town Plat, City of Talent, Oregon*. In his survey, he scoured Talent’s streets for buildings of historical significance. The survey included photographs as well as descriptions of the properties. Many of his findings have been incorporated into our booklet. Other information was gleaned from

wrightarchives.blogspot.com with articles written by THS board member Jan Wright. This latest booklet replaces an earlier pamphlet prepared by the Talent Historical Society in 2006.

The booklet was first available at the Talent Harvest Festival. It can now be purchased for \$2.00 at our museum.

We encourage you to make time to enjoy a leisurely walk through our town as you visit our unique and varied

architectural history.

Properties Included:

1. Talent’s Historic Town Hall
2. Bahr-Brown House
3. Southern Pacific Depot
4. Carey-Alford House
5. Smith-Terrill House
6. F.B. & Nina Oatman House
7. Methodist Church
8. Dunlap-Tryer House
9. Talent Hotel/Ellis Beeson House
10. A.P. Talent House
11. Barclay-Wolters House
12. Bates Service Station
13. Site of Fort Wagner
14. Manning-Nyswaner House
15. Hanscom Hall
16. The Malmgren Garage
17. Hill-Stearns Building
18. Talent Baptist Church
19. Bell House
20. Sleppy-Withrow House



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Talent’s Historic Town Hall
(formerly the Community Center)
206 East Main Street ca. 1899

Originally built in 1899 as the Talent School House, this building only served as the community’s school for 13 years. After a new brick schoolhouse was built, the building was sold to the City of Talent and served many functions over its life as the Town Hall. It not only held the city offices, but also the library and community meeting hall. The city offices were moved to a new City Hall built next door in the 1960’s. Various additions and alterations have changed the character of the building somewhat, but with its registration on the National Register of Historic places in 2002 and the removal of the adjacent 1960’s built City Hall, the future of this notable building is somewhat more secure.

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 operate a museum and meeting place located at:

105 North Market Street
Talent, Oregon

The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm

General Business Address:

P.O. Box 582
Talent, OR 97540

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838

Email: info@talenthistory.org

www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/TalentHistoricalSociety/

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Editor/layout:

Belinda Klimek Vos

THS President's Message

Serving as President of the Talent Historical Society comes with a host of obligations that can consume hours of your time. But more importantly it comes with the satisfaction of serving with a group of dedicated board members and volunteers who make that service joyful.

After we adjourned last month's board meeting, while everyone was tired from their long day followed by a two-hour board meeting and were all anxious to get home, I stood aside and watched as this group of great people spent another half-hour talking excitedly with each other in small groups about "their" part of making THS an organization to be proud of. For me, this is the reward for the time I spend. These are the people who realize how special Talent is and how important it is to preserve its history. And I am honored to do this work with them.

Ron Medinger



Memberships

New Members:

Bradley Flint & Julia White
Stuart Douglas
Kristi Mergenthaler
Nancy Olson-Jones

John & Kittie Harrison
Francis Hayman
Paula M. Mixson

Renewals:

Gladys Fortmiller
Dick & Shirl Phillips
Karen Carr
Elanah Whitenight

Ruby M. Garmon
Robert Burnette
Doris Myers
Gerlinde & Mark Smith-Poelz

Renewing Business Members:

James W. Maize, Jr.

Renewing Sponsors:

Dale Greenley

Elizabeth Stark

Additional Donation:

Dick & Shirl Phillips

Something YOU can do to help!

If you do any shopping on Amazon.com, use the link below to enter the Amazon website. The price doesn't change, but the Historical Society receives a donation from each purchase. Any purchases you make will help support the Talent Historical Society and its projects. Thanks!!

<http://www.amazon.com/?%5Fencoding=UTF8&tag=talent-histosoc-20>

Is This Newsletter Worth Supporting?

We've gotten much positive feedback regarding our newsletter redesign. Of course it costs Talent Historical Society to produce the newsletters. Fortunately, due a generous donation by FunAgainGames in Ashland, the cost of actually printing the newsletter is not one of those costs. We do however pay for paper, labels and postage. The newsletter is written, edited and prepared for mailing all by dedicated volunteers.

If you would like your name, or your business' name, to be featured in each quarterly newsletter as a *Historacle* Sponsor, you can do that by donating \$50 or more specifically towards our newsletter production for 2016. It costs us approximately \$500 to produce the four issues of the *Historacle* each year. If we get ten sponsors, contributing \$50 each, we're covered for 2016. This contribution would be over and above your annual membership.

An update to this effort : Star Properties has generously donated \$200 toward sponsoring the Historacle for 2016. We still need another \$300. We've added the benefit of having your business card published in each 2016 issue of the Historacle noting your business as a newsletter sponsor.

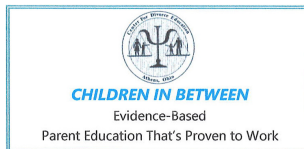
If this is something you think you can help with, please email me at:

r.medinger@talenthistory.org

Thank you all, Ron Medinger - Board President - Talent Historical Society

Thank You

Don Gordon, Ph.D. Executive Director for The Center for Divorce Education for providing office supplies. We appreciate your donation.



Tuesday Evening at the Museum

The Talent Historical Society continues its series of presentations held on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

The annual meeting on Sept. 22nd included a sneak preview of our "Walking Tour of Talent" booklet. Kristi Mergenthaler gave an interesting and entertaining presentation on "Likin' Talent Lichen" at the October 27th gathering, and Bob Casebeer presented a talk on the "1853 Preacher Train" on November 24th.

On December 22nd, we will host a Holiday Open House featuring "Tales of Christmas past in the Wagner Creek Community." See page 7 for more details.

The topics and speakers for the January 26, 2016 and February 23, 2016 presentations will be announced at a later date.

All talks are held at our museum at 105 North Market Street, Talent, unless otherwise noted.

Please come and join us as we explore the rich history of Talent, Oregon. The meetings are open to the public and you need not be a member to attend.

Officers Elected

The Talent Historical Society elected new officers at the October 13 board meeting. They will all serve one year terms. They are:

Ron Medinger - President
Bradley Flint - Vice-President
Emmalisa Whalley - Treasurer.
The secretary position is open.

Two new board members were also elected: Anthony Abshire who is also the Talent City Council liaison and Belinda Vos, newsletter editor. John Harrison was added as a board member at the November board meeting.

October 3rd Harvest Festival a Fun Event

On a crisp fall morning, Talent celebrated its annual Harvest Festival. The weather was beautiful and as the parade wove its way down Main Street the THS float was greeted with applause.

Thanks so much to Willow Nauth and her crew for putting together such an impressive entry. We had all of our board members either riding or walking beside the float with other special guests as well. Our banner was mounted on the front of the trailer and bright red signs decorated the float encouraging people to "follow" us on Facebook.

After the parade, the THS museum was open to the public for the day. Also, our new "Walking Tour of Historic Talent" booklet premiered and was offered for sale for the first time. Board member Jan Wright offered tours at 11:30 and 2:30 to those wishing to have a personal guided walk along the route giving additional information on the properties in the booklet. We are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable authority on Talent history in our organization.

The museum was surrounded by booths with children's activities and across the way apple pressing was in full swing.

We were pleased to be a part of such an important part of Talent's heritage as Harvest Festivals are a time worn tradition in our town. Thanks to all that stopped by the museum and we hope to see you there again next year.



Area's Harsh Treatment of Native Americans Mostly Forgotten

By Robert L. Casebeer

As a casual visitor looks at the serenity that today marks Southern Oregon, they are totally unaware of the area's brutal past concerning white settlement here. Indeed, most of today's residents are equally oblivious of that past also.

Only the local historians, or perhaps a few family members of pioneer families know about the crushing events that marked this area from the time the first Euro-Americans entered the Pacific Northwest. The conflicts lasted until the Modoc War in 1872-73.

While that particular encounter occurred near Tule Lake just over the border in Northern California, most of the Modoc tribesmen were from Oregon's Lost River area. That conflict pitted 60 Modoc warriors against 600 U. S. Army troops. The Modocs were lead by Kientpoos, a young Modoc called Captain Jack by the whites. It was the only Indian war waged in California. Those 60 Modoc warriors held off the U. S. Army from November 28, 1872, until June 1, 1873. The warriors killed 53 soldiers, 17 civilians, and only had five warriors slain.

What has just been described was the last conflict near Southern Oregon, but the tense encounters actually started soon after Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1805 at the mouth of the Columbia River. The fur trapping companies (John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, the Northwest Company, Hudson Bay Company, Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and several others) dominated the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest. However, most of them wanted good relationships with the native tribes because they wanted the Indians to do the fur gathering in addition to their own efforts, and because many of the "mountain men" dressed like Indians, took Indian women as wives and adopted many tribal behaviors. They were not as disruptive of native American tribal groups as were the later settlers and miners.

Peter Skene Ogden, who first worked for the Northwest Company and later for Hudson Bay, explored southern Oregon and northeastern California in 1826-27. Although married twice to

Indian women, with whom he had children, his own account of his life and travels shows that he was not adverse to using force against native Americans.

The members of the several Southern Oregon tribes suspiciously viewed strangers as people who failed to ask their permission to travel through Indian controlled country. By ambushing the white intruder, the hostile Indians were provided with both the opportunity to plunder as well as satisfying feelings of hatred and revenge engendered by the careless, contemptuous attitude of superior acting whites.

Not all settlers or miners held such attitudes. Our own local John Beeson, Central Point's Isaac Constant, both Lindsay and Jesse Applegate, and Phoenix's former Texas Ranger Samuel Colver (the latter who served as an Indian agent for the Rogue River Takelma reservation in Sam's Valley), had more moderate views. Captain Andrew Jackson Smith, the man who built Fort Lane, was commanded by Major General John E. Wool to protect the local Indians from marauding white settlers and miners.

One of the early negative encounters was sparked by explorer Jedediah Smith in July, 1828, near present day Reedsport, on the Umpqua River. While he was out exploring, his men molested an Indian woman and the Indians killed all but one man of the party left behind.

The next recorded negative encounter occurred in 1837 when Taos mountain man Ewing Young, while driving 800 head of California cattle to the Willamette, wantonly killed a pair of local tribesmen who peacefully walked into the herder's encampment. The local Rogue Indians' response was immediate. As the party hurried with their cattle through the Rogue valley, they engaged in battles with the local Takelma near present Gold Hill.

Then in 1848 gold was discovered in California, and Oregon settlers headed south and returned with regular episodes of conflict. But when gold was discovered in Jacksonville, real serious problems developed. First, almost every creek and river bar in greater Jackson county (present Curry, Josephine, and

Jackson county) was the scene of mining activity, driving the resident Indians away from their main food source---salmon. An effort throughout greater Oregon (parts of British Columbia, Montana, and all of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho) to seek treaties and land purchase as well as designated reservations for the various tribes occurred. However, the United States Senate neglected (perhaps deliberately) to ratify any of the treaties. In 1850, all the land west of the Cascades was opened to settlement by American and foreign settlers. The white settlers immediately gobbled up all the prairie lands, the second source of food used by Indians---various vegetable roots. Also in 1850, the sale of ammunition to Indians was forbidden. At the same time white settlement sky-rocketed for the Oregon Territory because it was the only place in the nation where land was free---everywhere else, U. S. land was sold for \$1.50 an acre. The net effect: INDIAN STARVATION! How many Indians affected? Estimates suggest that given the 50 small tribes in Southern Oregon, about 10,000 natives lived in greater pioneer Jackson county.

Samuel Colver, in a letter to Joel Palmer, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Oregon Territory, on 20 July 1854 wrote:

"...the Indians complained that the white people had come into their country taken their homes, destroyed their means of subsistence, and shot down their people, until with the uncertainty of food and of life which surrounded them, and the agonies of continual mourning, life had become almost a burden. . . .these statements are true."

"The food of the Indians consists of deer, elk, and bear-meat, with fish of several kind, principally salmon, and a great variety of roots. They cannot supply themselves by the chase for want of ammunition, as there is a territorial statute prohibiting the sale of it to them. . .the whites have nearly destroyed [the root areas] by plowing the ground and crowding the Indians from localities where it could once be procured." "To anticipate the ratification of the treaty, {putting} in a crop of potatoes to prevent them from suffering and perhaps starving the coming winter was deemed necessary.

Continued from previous page

... Humanity, too, seemed to require it for our people have taken from them their means of subsistence, and ought at least, in return see that they do not starve."

"The chiefs urged{this}and said that although they would like clothes and blankets for their comfort, yet something upon which life could be sustained ought first to be looked to, and further, they urged that it was a thing impossible to control their people with certain famine staring them in the face."

S. H. Culver, Indian Agent. July 20, 1854

This letter was written after the three treaties with the Rogue River tribes had been negotiated---one in 1851, another in 1853 and the last in 1854, with native uprisings interspersed.

Oregon's Native Americans suffered greatly. Historians have said there was a reason that U. S. Army forts were established locally "to protect the Indians from the settlers!"



Pancake Breakfast Fund Raiser a Success

Our November 14 Pancake Breakfast was a big success. Held in the Historic Town Hall, diners enjoyed a great breakfast of pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage links, hash browns, juice and coffee.

Sponsorship tickets were available to those who couldn't attend, but still



Katherine Harris Voted Lifetime Member

At the November Board of Directors meeting, it was voted to award Katharine Harris an Honorary Lifetime Membership in the Talent Historical Society. Katherine served on the board as secretary for many years, and she was voted the Outstanding Volunteer in 1997.

We wish to extend our thanks to Katherine for her many years of service and to let her know how much we appreciate all the hours she has put in on behalf of THS.



Katherine receiving her 1997 award along with Bud Gliem and Alice Burnette



wanted to support our community. Those tickets were donated to ACCESS Food Share.

The event was helped by a generous matching funds donation of \$500 by Mayor Darby Sticker and the City of Talent. We thank them for their generous support.

We would also like to acknowledge Sean Byrne at Minuteman Press for providing the tickets for this event.

And finally, a big **Thank You** to all that came and enjoyed a fine breakfast and to those who provided a meal to others by purchasing a sponsorship ticket.

Donations Appreciated

We'd like to thank the following people for their generous donations of items for our September 19th yard sale fundraiser. Thanks for helping us make this event a success.

Dave Hodson
Gerlinde and Mark Smith-Poelz
Bruce Snook
Ron and Jesse Hodgdon

DON'T MISS OUT!!

Would you like timely email reminders about upcoming events at the Talent Historical Society? If so, contact us at: membership@talenthistory.org or call and leave a message at (541) 512-8838. Or just drop by the museum and leave us your information. We'll email notices out including all the information about upcoming events.



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From Our Facebook Page

To read all the THS posts and information, "like" us on Facebook

Find us at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TalentHistoricalSociety/>

Or go to www.facebook.com and type Talent Historical in the search bar at the top of the page. Then from the options shown, choose Talent Historical Society (Public Group)

In a daily post, we are following pioneer Welborn Beeson's diary entry from 150 years ago. (currently 1865)

Our Facebook page has now grown to 208 followers. We continue to post up to date information on current events as well as the daily postings of Welborn Beeson's diary. Members comments about what they are reading from 150 years ago have been insightful and heartwarming.

At the end of August 1865, Welborn traveled to Fort Klamath before heading home to the Wagner Community. On his way home, he passed Crater Lake. It's always interesting to read his descriptions of places we can still go to today. Diary entry for August 31st, 1865: *after Muster about half past ten Jake, Gwin Brannon Roads, and Mathews and myself started North West to come in to home on the new wagon road around the celebrated deep lake and Canyon, the most sublime and grand Secenry I ever beheld, but a good natural road to Rouge river. down Rouge River to bridge here two miles below we camped having travled very late.*

While Welborn was away, there were several entries written by Welborn's mother, Ann Beeson. Her entries allow us a glimpse into her life and feelings. Her entry on Sept. 1, 1865 is especially poignant as she seems sad and at a loss when her son is away. [Mrs. Beeson's handwriting] *This is the commencement of my Fifty Ninth fall how many more shall I see not many I hope. It is quite cold this eveing. Mr Stevens took his Cattle up to day. We have got a box of Plumbs for Sammy to take to Jacksonvill to morrow I cannot save any money I dont know when I shall make up that twenty dollar frute sells for so little. I made some preserved Pechs to day for Welborn and Wallace to take with them to Camp Sublimity I hoped Welborn would have returned this eveing but he dos not come.*

Jan Wright shared her insights into Mrs. Beeson's feelings, and says, "As to Mrs. Beeson saying she hopes not to see another year - think about it. She

had a husband that was obviously much more interested in National Affairs than he was of the comforts of home, she had not known if she would see him again when he left in 1856 to start his "mission" to the Indians. When he did return, they did not particularly get along.

It was hard work being a pioneer - watching neighbors with big families of workers all contributing while the Beesons had only Welborn and his mother. At least half of the money they made from the farm had to be sent East to fund John Beeson's wanderings. JB lived off his family, wealthy philanthropists and charity for his entire sojourn in the East.

She knew that Welborn was longing to marry, longing to branch out on his own but was weighed down by the duties of home. I understand that it's hard to hear when people are not happy but the reality of her life was not that joyous.



Ann Beeson, wife of John Beeson and the mother of Welborn. Ann stood for this portrait at the Peter Britt Studio in Jacksonville, Oregon, in 1864.

In Welborn's diary, you can find similarly discouraged messages about not wanting to keep going, not having hope that he would get out of debt or find a mate, or proposing to build a home in Ashland like so many of the early Talent pioneers did.

More than anything else, Ann's statement testifies to the grueling hard work that it was to settle and to do it alone for much of her Oregon experience. It must have been very bleak at times for her."

September posts saw lots and lots of thrashing going on, while by October they were sowing crops. Almost every entry for those two months includes descriptions of what they were harvesting and all the labor it entailed. It reminds us that the people in those days grew most of what they ate. Harvest time was so important, not only to insure that the families had enough to eat for the winter, but also to earn valuable money selling their various crops after months of work. There was no refrigeration available and it was difficult to get crops to market. And as Jan mentioned above, it was particularly difficult for the Beeson family as Welborn was the only child.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1865

Wagner came and sowed 27 bus of Oats. Wallace and I draged forenoon. Logan helped Mother to wash, after noon he draged and I gathered fruit and made some boxes to put apples in, been beutiful day. Father is not very well. Wallace and I have been cutting peaches again. It is cool beutiful, moonlight night. Mother is quite unwell. Mr Holton has been hauling his oats passed here to day. The land drags nice. It will be a good crop I think if it dont freeze out.

They were still cutting and trying to dry peaches until October 9th. The weather did not always co-operate, and they did the best they could. As the harvest was finally finished, they looked to wintertime for a slight rest before spring planting began in earnest.

got a question? email it to us today

ASK JAN



Many followers of our Facebook page have asked interesting questions while we've been reading Welborn Beeson's diary entries, especially about the history of Talent and the area. Jan Wright - Former Executive Director of the Talent Historical Society has agreed to answer some questions for us. So if you have a question, email it to askthsjan@gmail.com and every week she will answer three questions from the requests she gets. Her answers will be posted every Sunday evening on our Facebook page for you to see. The questions don't have to be about Welborn's diary or even the Beeson's specifically. They can be about anything you are curious about concerning the history of Talent.

Question from July 5: Relative to the September 18th diary entry by Welborn which in part reads, "*Mr Denny commenced school to day. Esther is attending, she has been vacinated, and her arm is swelled pretty bad, oh what can the matter be.*" Stella Medinger commented, "Wonder what the vaccination was?" and Rosemary Sauer asks, "Ya me too what kind of shot?"

Jan's Answer: From WB's description, it sounds like Wagner Creek residents (Ester Ann) were using the arm to arm type of vaccination. Someone infected with smallpox or some other disease would "donate" an infected pustule or live sample that would be scratched into the arm of the person being vaccinated. It would then give the vaccinated a light case of the disease and hopefully immunity. During the civil war, doctors were using cowpox to vaccinate the troops. But it doesn't sound like too many cows on Wagner Creek were infected. This method was used for a number of diseases. The most significant outbreak of small pox happened in 1869 in the Rogue Valley.

On October 4th Nick Medinger asked, "There is a lot of talk of '*so and so being sick*' or '*Father had another chill.*' Is this just typical diary talk, in that they are the daily small things of interest and so are written down a lot? Or were mid to late 19th century frontier folks more prone to being sick significantly? Obviously the advances in medicine in the last 130 years are huge but is there any good way to tell if all this sickness is just average colds or more?"

Jan's Answer: Although humans have been prone to disease and sickness since Adam and Eve - In the case of Wagner Creek residents or Jackson County residents in the 1860's you have to look at several factors. Sickness affected one's work output - so noticing sickness was a little more critical when it came to how much work needed to be done at any particular time and how many people you would need to get the job done. Beesons did not like to bring in doctors and had their own way of healing - called water cure. It required someone attending the sick person - so when one was out sick - the other had to take care of him or her. The uncertainty of life was more evident to the settlers - they had seen the smallest thing take life away. A cut could rapidly become infected or blood poisoning could set in. Food poisoning was a real threat every day because of the lack of food preservatives (not that I am advocating preservatives) and sanitation conditions were not what they are today. The table they used to butcher the hogs could be the same table they served supper on. Clean surfaces were hard to come by. Contagious diseases came in waves and were seemingly unstoppable and random in their wake. Drinking water could carry contaminates from the upstream flow or from mining wastes. On Wagner creek as in any rural setting in the 1860's neighbors mingled more than they do now even though they may live a mile or so away- they needed each other and obviously didn't have TV and computers to restrict their social lives. They saw each other die - young and old, rich and poor and after sitting up with the corpse all night, the living dug the graves for the dead. "*Another chill*" could have meant malaria - a common disease that spread through mosquitoes. Or it could have been a flu or just a cold. Settlers who came from Illinois, like the Beesons, or from a river town or lowlands of the south were often infected with it. John Beeson would have been wrapped in a warm wet blanket or taken a cold bath to cure whatever ailed him and hoped for the best. He called himself a physician from his self taught studies in what we would call "alternative medicines and because he had taken courses at the Water Cure institute in NY.

Just a reminder: Our Holiday Open House will be held on December 22nd from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm at the Museum. Hear tales of Christmas past in the Wagner Creek Community. Bring a plate of cookies or desert to share and exchange. Beverages will be provided.

Come join us for good cheer and holiday stories!!

School Days

Schools are an important part of any community and the Talent area is no exception. Often one of the first buildings erected, schools provide a consistency and a gathering place where lifetime relations are often formed.

By Belinda Klimek Vos

One of the most iconic buildings to ever grace the streets of Talent was the brick schoolhouse located where the round building at the current elementary school is today. An imposing structure, it towered over the surrounding landscape and made a bold impression on all that passed by.

The need for a new school became evident as more families with young children moved to the area and the Main Street schoolhouse built in 1899 was quickly being outgrown.



According to an article in the Ashland Tidings dated January 12, 1911, a school election to vote on a bond issue to build a new, up-to-date school building was to be held the next day. It stated that *"An option has been secured upon a six and three quarter acre site from Fred Rapp adjacent to town. Talent residents say that there is no question of the outcome of the election, and the successful carrying out of the project is now only a matter of the required time."*

After the bond measure passed, construction began. The building and land cost \$32,000 which was a sizeable amount for those times. J.B. Coleman was chairman of the school board and Welborn Beeson (son of pioneer Welborn Beeson) and G.A. Morris were board members. The school opened in the fall of 1911, and F.C. Smith was the principal. At first, the high school section had only two grades with juniors and seniors sent to Ashland to complete their education, but a four year high school was soon established. The first graduating class consisted of one student, Maude Rice in

1919.

The imposing three story building housed all twelve grades for many years. As time went on and student populations grew, a separate building for grades 1-3 was built in 1949. It is still in use today. By 1955, a new Talent High School was constructed leaving the original brick building to grades four through eight. During this time, Roy Parr was the Talent School Superintendent. In 1960, the Talent and Phoenix School Districts consolidated and the high school moved to Phoenix. All 7th and 8th graders in the district then went to the former Talent High School building and it became Talent Junior High. That building is currently the Talent Middle School. The brick schoolhouse in Talent continued to house grades fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

During the 1972-73 school year the brick building was declared unsafe for school use. Classes continued in mobile classrooms and a bond measure was passed to build a new school. On the last weekend of May 1973, a reunion was held for all students that attended any of the Talent schools with many former students in attendance. Sadly, the old brick schoolhouse was soon torn down. All that remained were memories and a few bricks that people saved as souvenirs.

The history of the brick schoolhouse is a combination of dates and events - when the school was built, when it was torn down, etc. However, my own personal history is tied very closely to that old brick schoolhouse.

In 1918, my grandparents, Marcel and Julie Klimek homesteaded on the north fork of Anderson Creek west of Talent. As their family grew and the need for schooling arose, they bought a small parcel of land on what is now Bain Street and moved down into town for the winters so that their children could attend school. The photo of the school at the right was taken by my Grandfather in about 1927 looking down the street where they lived. The Klimeks were immigrants from Moravia

and their children had lived a very isolated life up in the mountains in the family cabin. When my father and his two brothers crossed the street to attend school for the first time they didn't speak a word of English, only Czech. I can only imagine how frightening that must have been. In 1927, the three oldest boys, Wilson, Richard (my father) and Marcel started 1st grade together. I've included a photo of their fourth grade class which shows 17 students and their teacher Mildred Rodgers. School photos were always taken in front of the main entrance with the brick walls behind them. In 1937, family circumstances intervened, and after the entire family contracted scarlet fever and were quarantined for the best part of the school year, the three older boys left school and went to work cutting firewood to support the family. There was a large burner on the bottom floor of the school and they provided the firewood that heated the brick schoolhouse. The other four Klimek siblings went on to graduate from Talent High School.

I have my own memories of going to school in the old brick schoolhouse. I grew up just outside of Talent and dutifully rode the big, yellow school bus each day that dropped us off on the west side of the school. My fourth, fifth and sixth grades were spent in the brick building.

Getting up into the brick building meant you were progressing; you were now one of the big kids. The school was a rabbit's warren of small rooms. Remember, all twelve grades were originally housed there. The bottom floor was the cafeteria where the cooks turned out home cooked meals every





1930 - Richard Klimek - 2nd row 3rd from left. Mrs. Rodgers 4th Grade Class

day. Homemade apple crisp was my favorite. There were several other small rooms, the art room and the mechanical rooms.

The main floor housed the school office where secretary, Mrs. Wall and the principal, Mr. Farthing worked. He was a kind, but stern man who ran the school with competence and authority. In the corner of his office leaning up against the wall stood the paddling board, brought out and used when needed. I don't remember it ever being used on a girl, but a certain spit ball incident made my brother become aware of it. School authority was never challenged and teachers and principals were deemed to have the right to discipline as needed. The fourth and fifth grades were also on the main floor.

The pinnacle of grade school was

sixth grade when you got to climb the truly spectacular curving staircase and ascend to the top of the building. Up there in the lofty heights were two classrooms, a science room and the school library which was presided over by Mrs. Olive Fountain. She reigned with regal authority, demanding quiet and composure. Many a winter day was spent huddled in the library at noon recess, playing Clue while using hushed and whispered voices. From the inside of the library, a door lead to the fire escape; a large, shiny metal half-tube that led down to the graveled yard three stories below. Angled at quite a steep pitch, we had drills where we were forced to descend at a dizzying speed to the waiting teacher below - all of us girls in our little dresses trying our best to be lady-like and proper.

Sixth grade was my favorite year in school and my teacher that year, Mr. Fader, was my favorite teacher of all times. Playing with friends and giggling with the boy who sat next to me made it a special time and also foresaw changes ahead. It was 1963 and history happened that year. On a November day while eating lunch in the cafeteria of the old brick schoolhouse, Mrs. Wall had her tiny transistor radio on and we learned that President John Kennedy had been shot. Even at our age, we knew the

significance of this horrific event. We were afraid, unsure, sad. After we went back to our classroom, Mr. Fader had us stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, his eyes bright with tears. Sixth grade was an ending of sorts; an ending of the carefree days of grade school. The next year we would go on to join the students from Phoenix Elementary at the Junior High, something we were quite anxious about. Change was coming. Our days at the top of the building were about over.

Schools are more than old bricks or concrete or wood. They hold the collective memories of our youth; of who were then and now. And every community has its roots based in those people who went to school in those buildings. Those memories make a town, especially a small town, unique. And that beautiful, brick schoolhouse was wonderfully unique.

Even when I was going to school there in the early 1960's, it was rumored that the ivy that draped over the building was all that held it together, so the fact that it was eventually condemned was inevitable I suppose. I remember that ivy climbing all over the walls and turning a fiery, brilliant red in the fall, shooting blazing flames all the way to the top story. Still what a treasure to lose. That old brick schoolhouse, steeped in memories for Talent as well as my own family. I feel privileged to have those memories.

At the Museum

In each issue, we showcase an interesting artifact or exhibit housed at our museum. Stop by and take a look!



"experience" ours obviously has had.

Such irons were invented about 1857. Ours is a vintage, three piece, cast iron Wafflemaker #8 produced by the Fanner Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio in the early 1900's. The waffle maker has three handles: the one on the base is made of cast iron and has the C8 cast on it. The other

This cast iron waffle iron once made old-fashioned waffles the way Grandma and Mom used to make them - right on top of a wood stove top. Cast iron waffle irons make delectable, crispy-edged, round waffles on a stove, grill or over a campfire. New ones can still be purchased today, but will not have had the

two are of wood, and appear to be replacement handles. Unfortunately, the hinge between the top and the bottom waffle holder is broken.



People & Places

Early settlers often became namesakes for roads, creeks, mountains etc. As we go about our daily lives, we take these names for granted, not really knowing the people behind the names. Here we present a history of one of those names.

Anderson Creek Road stretches from the flatlands at the base of Wagner Valley up through the foothills and into the mountains. It then parallels the small, picturesque creek that also bears the Anderson name as it winds its way upwards. Lined with big-leaf maples along the creek, the maples give way to firs and pines as the canyon narrows and the pavement ends. The road continues upward, deep into the mountains until it emerges at the top of Anderson Butte.



Eli K. (Joe) Anderson (1826-1912)
SOHS MS766

So who was this Anderson that became the namesake for so many local landmarks. Eli Knighton Anderson was born on December 20, 1826 in Monroe Co., Indiana. He and his parents moved to Putnam County, Indiana in 1839 where he remained until "gold fever" broke out in California. Having an adventurous nature, he and three companions set out in the spring of 1849 to seek their fortunes.

Over the next few years, he panned gold, worked as a carpenter for a time and by the fall of 1851 was mining in Yreka, California. There he helped hunt down a group of horse thieves and was instrumental in apprehending the band.

One can only assume that at this point in his life, now being 26, that he felt the

need to settle down. In January of 1852, he and his brother, James Firman Anderson, headed for the Rogue Valley and took up adjoining Donation Land Claims at a location where the creek that bears their name now crosses Colver Road. There, Eli and his brother lived in the same cabin, half of which stood on one claim and the other on the second claim. Eli's obituary states that he is said to be the third man to settle in the Rogue River Valley.

Always an enterprising man, Eli and his brother went to the Willamette Valley for garden seeds and grain and in the fall sowed some wheat and oats which they brought back on pack horses from Yamhill county. In 1853, they had twelve acres in wheat which brought them eight dollars per bushel. This wheat was tramped out with cattle and fanned with a sheet.

On January 9, 1856, Eli married Elizabeth Nessby Myer and they soon outgrew the family cabin. They built a more substantial house and lived there for several years before building a larger, ornate house. Eli and Elizabeth had eight children, Laura, Mary, George, Lena, Anna Bell, Elmer, Dora and Sarah.

Eli was known as Joe or "Uncle Joe", but it's not known how he came by this nickname. He is mentioned from time to time in Welborn Beeson's diary entries. In Welborn's Monday, October 23, 1865 entry he writes, "Joe Andersons baby died to day." The child, Elmer E. Anderson, had been born on October 1 just a few weeks before.



Anderson Gap lies on the extreme western boundary of the Talent area. It's named after Eli K. Anderson and his brother, James Firman Anderson.



The elaborate gingerbread home of the Eli. K. Anderson family was built along Colver Road. The home burned down in the 1960's.

Eli was a very successful farmer, orchardist, miner and business man, and he financed large mining operations in the mountains above Talent. He planted fields of grain, and orchards of apples, peaches, pears and also nut trees - 65 acres in all. For many years his was the largest orchard in Southern Oregon.

In 1909, like many of Talent's first pioneer families, Eli moved to Ashland where he lived until his death on March 13, 1912. He is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery there.

His obituary lauds him as "one of the Rogue river valley, best known, universally beloved and up to a few days before his death a familiar figure on Ashland streets." It goes on to report that, "he has been closely connected with the growth of Jackson county from the time of his entrance into the valley and leaves a host of friends in all part of the county."

So perhaps the next time you drive along Colver Road and come to where the creek, Anderson Creek, crosses the road, you will pause to think of what the Anderson brothers saw when they first came that way; the good, flat, bottom land, water from the creek, and most importantly, opportunity.

(Ed. Some information was taken from "Images of America - Talent" by Jan Wright which may be purchased at the THS museum.)

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 _____

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
 ☐ Sponsorship - \$100 or more

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Dues include our quarterly newsletter: *The Historacle*

☐ Check to receive *The Historacle* electronically, sent by email in lieu of paper.

Please make checks payable to: **Talent Historical Society**

Send completed form along with payment to: Talent Historical Society
 P.O. Box 582
 Talent, OR 97540

Thank you!

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The Monthly Talent Historical Society Board Meeting is held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the museum building at 105 North Market Street, Talent, Oregon

All interested persons are invited to attend.



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

Upcoming Events

	Dec. 8	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum	
	Dec. 22	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Holiday Open House	
	Jan. 12	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum	
	Jan. 26	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Speaker and topic TBA	
	Feb. 9	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum	
	Feb. 23	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Speaker and topic TBA	
	March 8	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum	
	March 22	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Speaker and topic TBA	