



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



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 25 Issue 2

June 2019

If These Walls Could Talk: A One-Hundred Year History of the Talent Community Center

This article was written as a paper for Dr. Karen Gernant's History 298 class at SOU, submitted on 11 March 1999 by Robin Cook. It is reprinted here with the author's kind permission.

By Robin Cook

Her name was Edith Cochran. She became the librarian for the Talent Branch in December 1933. She earned five dollars a month. In November 1934, the people elected Edith the new city recorder for Talent. Her new position became effective in January 1935, with a monthly salary of ten dollars. For the next five years Edith continued working as both the librarian and the recorder. Sometime between November 13 and December 3, 1940, Edith Cochran married C. R. Coffman. By April 1941, She had resigned from her librarian position, but she remained the city recorder for the next five years. In January 1943, Edith's husband, Roy, became one of the six newly elected councilmen for Talent. Within four months he was elected town marshal beginning April 6, 1943, earning a salary of \$150 a month. For the next three years the Coffmans would continue to be involved in the town of Talent. On July 16, 1946, during a special session town council meeting, both resigned. Their reason for leaving is unknown, but by August 1946, the names of Edith and Roy Coffman had disappeared from the city council minutes never to be mentioned again. Over time, the names of Edith and Roy have been forgotten, but a part of their lives represents a history reflected in a building that they were so much a part of for one hundred years this building has stood in the heart of Talent. This building is known today as the Talent Community Center.¹ Originally, this building had been the Talent Elementary School. It was the



Talent School and students about 1908

third schoolhouse built in the Talent community. In 1899, School District #22 saw a need for another school in an area where the population was the greatest – in the center of town. In September 1899, a local businessman and real estate investor, C. K. Klum, sold the property at the corner of I and Main Street to the School District for \$200.² By December of that year the construction of the building had begun. It cost approximately \$1,500 to build the two-room Schoolhouse.³ The school was constructed of wood, built upon a stone foundation. Its vernacular style and gabled roofs reflected the common architectural design of the late 19th century.⁴ The new facility was equipped with the necessary amenities. Six water closets, all in good condition; good ventilation; good water, available at the neighbors; and a wood shed on the premises containing a good supply of wood. Also provided was a sufficient supply of brooms, water pails, cups, chalk, black-

boards, and teacher tables.⁵ The school was ready to open its doors. The completion of the new school at the turn of the century marked the beginning of a three-month term for the pupils in Talent. Two teachers, each earning a salary of \$40, taught in the two-room schoolhouse.⁶ The courses taught included reading (first through fifth), orthography, penmanship, primary and advanced arithmetic (mental and written), primary geography, comprehensive geography, primary and advanced grammar, United States history, physiology and hygiene, vocal music, and drawing.⁷ The exact number of children who attended this first year is not clear, but according to the information gathered in a census report, the ages of these children ranged from five years to nineteen years.⁸ Attendance varied from as little as one day up to fifty-eight days.⁹ Students wanting to further their education beyond the elementary level had to go elsewhere, usually to Ashland.¹⁰ For the next decade,

Upcoming Events

June 4	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum
June 11	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Special Presentation by Talent Elementary School - Outdoor Discover Program (held at Talent Community Center)
June 27	Talent Quality Book Club	6:30 - 8:30 pm	At the Museum
June 29	Talent Poker Tour	1:00 - 9:30 pm	At the Museum
July 9	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum
July 23	Tuesday Evening at the Museum	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Jan Wright - Psychic History of Talent
June 27	Talent Quality Book Club	6:30 - 8:30 pm	At the Museum
Aug. 13	THS Board Meeting	6:00 pm	At the Museum
Aug. 22	Talent Quality Book Club	6:30 - 8:30 pm	At the Museum
Aug. 27	NO Tuesday Evening at the Museum	TEAM will return on 4th Tuesday of September	
Aug. 31	Talent Poker Tour	1:00 - 9:00 pm	At the Museum

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!!
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-1125614>

Just a reminder that you can check the top, right hand corner of the address label on this issue of the *Historacle* to see when it's time for you to renew! The date will tell you when your membership expires.

Talent Historical Society

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

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

We operate a museum and meeting place located at:

105 North Market Street
Talent, Oregon

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

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

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838
Email: info@talenthistory.org
Web Page: www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/talenthistory/

The Historacle is published quarterly.

Editor/layout: Ron Medinger

Museum Hours: Saturday & Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 pm

Memberships since Last Issue

New Members:

Ruth Ansara
Susan (Hartley) Andrews
Ollie & Courtney Bucolo
Summer Fessenden
Heather Gleason-Biesanz
Daniel Wise

Jenni Beck
Judith Ann Richards
Elizabeth Dimick
Allison French & Emily Minah
Mary & Ted Tsui

Renewals:

Kurt Bailey
Bill & Carolyn Cecil
Joel Goldman
Christopher & Melody Knox
Marilyn Lee
Ron & Stella Medinger

Nick Medinger & Jana Sweet
Marie Morehead
Rick & Yolanda Nagel
Nancy Olson-Jones
Ryan & Carly Pederson

Lifetime Memberships:

Marla Cates & Jan Ritter
Bud & MaryLouise Gleim
Edwin McManus & Family
George Kramer
Matt & Antoinette Lichtenstein
Lunette Gleason-Fleming
John Wahl
Janice A. Napoleon
Gladys Fortmiller

Margay Garrity
Al Nijenhuis
Michael Mills
Jack Latvala
Wanda Perdue
Poppie Beveridge
Brent Thompson
Jim Bradley & Patricia Remencuis

Additional Donation:

Brent Thompson

Honorary Lifetime Memberships

Bob Casebeer Jan Wright Susan Moulder Katherine Harris

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: \$ _____

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

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

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!

Talent Historical Society Board of Directors:

Ron Medinger	President - Membership Chair
Willow McCloud	Vice-President - Art/Design Chair
Jan Wright	Secretary - Historian
Theodora Blom	Treasurer
Emmalisa Whalley	Webmaster
Debra Moon	Board Member
Bob Casebeer	Board Member - Emeritus

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 Grade School for grades 1-3 was built in 1949 and is still in use today as part of the Talent Elementary School. When this photograph was taken, the big brick school still stood next door, where grades 4-8, the cafeteria, library and principal’s office were located.”

From “*Images of America - Talent*” by Jan Wright of the Talent Historical Society, page 110. This book may be ordered through our online store or purchased directly at the Museum. The price is just \$14.95. This must have book documents Talent’s early history through images and text and is published by Arcadia Publishing as part of its Images of America series.

Accessions

We are grateful and delighted with the following donated items for our collection. Please visit the museum to see many of these things already on display.

- Sam Charters donated an ashtray from the *Par-a-dise Motel* in Talent; a 1919 Jackson County Farm Bureau Newspaper; and a photo of orchard workers.
- Nils Olaf Soderback generously donated a handmade display case with items found during an extensive remodel within the walls of his house on Anderson Creek Road. Included in the case were wallpaper and newspaper fragments, a spoon, marbles, an 1880s school book, square nails and a medicine bottle.
- Suzanne Seiber donated a set of salt and pepper shakers imprinted with “Seiber’s Farmer’s Market”
- Shane Bolz donated a framed painting of the old brick school in Talent and a 1944 “Senior Memories” booklet from Talent High School student, Everett Taylor.
- Cherie Brooks offered an 1890s photograph of Oregon Trail Pioneers.
- Luana and Don Perry gave us an 1878 “Irish Chain” patchwork quilt and a wooden cradle.
- Marla Cates brought in an old garden dibble they found at their home when they purchased it.

Thanks to all of these folks for thinking of us. We appreciate your donations.

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.

President’s Message by Ron Medinger

The main article in this issue of the Historacle is about my favorite building in Talent, the 1899 Schoolhouse, now known as Talent’s Historic Town Hall. All Talentians should realize the historic value of this building. As you read the article, you will find how it has served and been the heart of our little city for 120 years.

I served on the Talent Community Center Restoration Commission in the late 1990’s preparing this fine building for it’s 100th birthday. I’ve got a lot of time, effort, labor and love wrapped up in our Historic Town Hall and can testify that it just exudes Talent history. I’ve also been a charter member of the Talent Historical Society since its inception in 1994.

When I joined the THS board in late 2014, I had three goals. Improve the financial health of the Society, increase membership and the most relevant to this writing, try my very best to see if Talent’s Historic Town Hall could become the permanent home of the Talent Historical Society Museum.

I couldn’t imagine a more appropriate use of this historic structure than to help continue promoting Talent’s unique story. Anybody interested in helping me?

Talent Historical Society Museum receives its own Pollinator Garden thanks to Talent Garden Club members!

A while back, Gerlinde Smith from the Talent Garden Club asked the THS Board if we would like to have a Pollinator Garden on the park side of the museum building. Of course we said, “YES!”

Gerlinde set to planning, asking for permissions, obtaining all sorts of beautiful plants and then recruited fellow Garden Club members to help make it happen. We owe Gerlinde and her Garden Club crew many thanks for the spectacular garden that resulted after many weeks work.

Gerlinde said she was looking forward to this project because it was the first time they were able to create a pollinator garden that included shady, partial shady and sunny sections.

THS is looking for members who might be willing to volunteer to be on weed patrol for this newly landscaped area. The garden is watered regularly by the irrigation system that waters the park area, so that issue is handled. Because of the layers of cotton sheets, cardboard and bark mulch applied after the planting was complete, weeding shouldn’t be

too much of a problem either. But we all know weeds will come and we’d like to know we have someone on stand-by for when that day happens. If you would like to be one of the THS weeders stop on by the museum and let us know. The museum is open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. and of course the Pollinator Garden is open all day everyday for the busy bees of Talent!



Garden Club Angels - Gerlinde Smith and Terri House.

≈≈≈ 2019 Talent Harvest Festival ≈≈≈
September 21st, 2019

Mark this on your calendar and spend a great day in Talent

Tuesday Evening at the Museum

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

On March 26th Willow McCloud gave her presentation on “Remembering History in our Backyard.” This was a spectacular photo show featuring memories of past life in the Rogue Valley. Willow is an artistic photographer and had amazing and touching photos of many places dear to those who are familiar with the sites, and impressive to those who are new to the area. She had accumulated these photos over several years while exploring hidden historical gems.

Debra Moon offered the fascinating history of the Hooker Oak in Chico, California, on April 23rd. The amazing tree was world renowned and was the key factor in choosing Chico for the filming of the 1938 Warner Brothers technicolor film, Robin Hood, starring Errol Flynn.

On May 28th, Steve Brairton related the origin and history of the tower on his property, Towerview Vineyards. The tower, which is also a “tiny house,” was built by Steve and his family using the wood from the historic Rapp Barn. Steve brought samples of the construction used in the time period. It is a unique and fascinating structure in Talent, offering incredible views, a slide, a fireman’s pole, a zipline, and a secret room. Steve showed an HGTV’s professionally made video of the structure.

We are collaborating with Talent Elementary ODP for a “History Night” on June 11th at the new Talent Community Center. This event will replace our June TEAM meeting.

The Tuesday Evening at the Museum on July 23rd will be a presentation on the Psychic History of Talent by Jan Wright. Who knows who will show up for this psychic evening at the museum?

In August Tuesday Evening at the Museum will be on vacation, returning on the fourth Tuesday of September. All talks are held at our museum at 105 North Market Street, Talent, unless otherwise noted. The meetings are free and open to the public, and you need not be a member to attend.

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No 3 Public School, Talent, Ore.

Talent Elementary School served its purpose until a newer, two-story, brick schoolhouse took its place in 1911. Now the question remained as to what to do with the old school.¹¹

An election at the new schoolhouse on April 11, 1914 determined the fate of the former school. The overwhelming majority voted in favor of the city purchasing the vacated building to use as a Town Hall on August 9, 1914, the Town of Talent officially purchased the building for \$1500.¹² The city then converted the building to its new purpose.¹³ According to the *Ashland Tidings* dated February 8, 1915, "Two rooms of the Town Hall have been redecorated. One will be used by the Commercial Club and the other by the Town Council."¹⁴ For the next 55 years, meetings held by the Town Council would take place in this building.

Within six years of its purchase by the city, a part of the hall was converted to provide a different service to the community. It was the Talent Library. This first library opened on April 24, 1920, with a collection of 225 books and eight magazines. The Community Club, a ladies organization, can claim responsibility for preparing a room in the hall for the new library and paying the salary for a part-time librarian.¹⁵ The Community Club continued to pay the librarian's salary for another thirteen years before it became a part of the city's budget.¹⁶

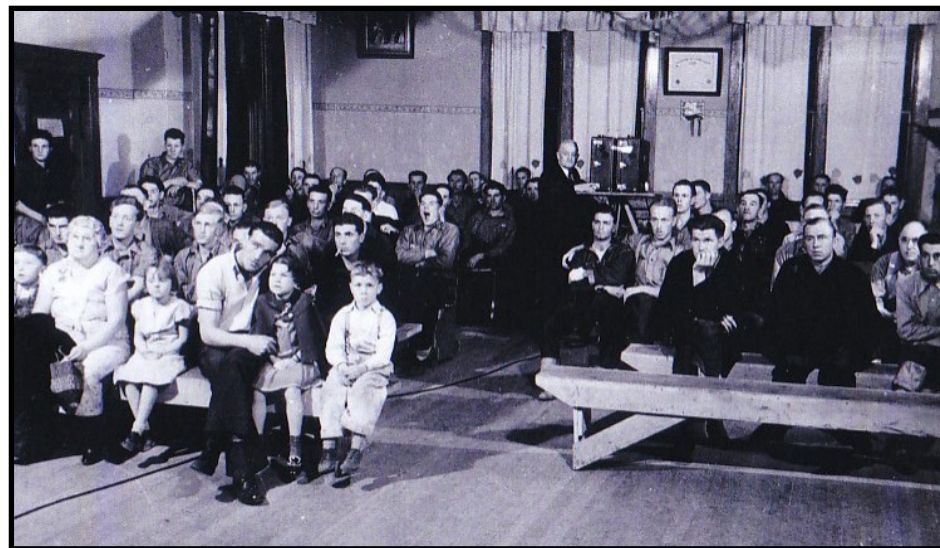
It became evident during these early years that the upkeep of the Town Hall would be a joint effort by members of the community and the Town government. This government comprised the mayor, the treasurer, the recorder, six council members, and the town marshal. The council held monthly meetings in the hall. Toward the end of the 1920s, the council

read a written request at one of these meetings. It was from the Community Club asking for the council's permission to raise the roof of the fire apparatus room and to put a dining room over it.¹⁷ The request also included permission to remove the partition between the two rooms, replacing it with folding doors, and any other needed improvements.¹⁸ The council granted permission for these renovations to the building. At the next council meeting on April 3, the council asked the Community Club to put up a canvas partition between the two rooms at City Hall, and agreed to pay for half of the expense for finishing the floor.¹⁹ Since renovations for the building were in progress, the council also decided "to put in the toilets and septic tank with the toilets to be put on the North West corner of the building."²⁰ In February of the following year, the

council approved additional improvements to the building. Since wood stoves were still the source of heat for the hall, the council made the decision at the February 15 meeting "to side up the space under the kitchen and use it for a woodshed."²¹

In the early 1930s the Depression hitting the nation was also felt in this small community. Council meetings continued to be held monthly. For a short time, films were shown in the Town Hall, and for a minimal cost, families could briefly forget their troubles.²² It also became a meeting place for the Good Government Congress during the so-called Jackson County Rebellion in 1933.²³ Despite the economic bust experienced in the early part of the decade, the mid-1930s brought several improvements to the Town Hall. In 1935, the council had a drinking fountain built in front of the building.²⁴ In the latter part of 1936, plumbing with hot water in the lavatories was approved.²⁵ A door constructed between the kitchen and the dining room was an addition welcomed by the Community Club.²⁶ Then in November 1938, the council approved the purchase of roofing shingles for the dining room and the kitchen.²⁷ Before the end of 1939, the Town Hall had a newly sanded, polished floor and a new roof. At the request of the Community Club the dining room floor was lowered.²⁸ The promise of donated funds by each organization made this final project possible.²⁹

Of all the decisions made by the council during the 1930s, perhaps one of the most significant was the introduction of a sewer system. The Chamber of Commerce initiated the proposal for this project. When the council denied the request, some members of the Chamber would not give up and continued to push for the badly needed sewer. Mr. Ray Burnett,



Films shown in the Town Hall Circa 1930s

a new handicap ramp on the rear of the building (which was replaced in later years with a much more modern and appropriate ramp when funds were available); removing the broken concrete stairs at the front entrance and replacing them with period appropriate wooden stairs. Reroofing and painting inside and out.

2007 - The Talent Historical Society moved its operations from the small multi-purpose room to the old library building behind the Community Center.

2007 - On August 26th, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to officially open the new Talent City Hall. This move of city offices resulted in Talent City Council meetings moving back to the Talent Community Center as the new city hall did not have council chambers.

2015 - The new Talent Community Center building opened and the 1899 Schoolhouse was renamed Talent's Historic Town Hall.

2016 - The Talent Food Bank now serves its clientele out of the Historic Town Hall, using the basement area for storage.

Talent Poker Tour

Thanks to everyone who came out to our last tournament on March 30th, and congratulations to winner Freddie Taulani. Our next tournament will take place on Saturday, June 29th starting at 1:00 pm at the Museum. 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 \$30.00 with all entry money paid back out as cash prizes. Refreshments and snacks will be available for a modest cost. This is a no alcohol/no smoking event.

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



Freddie Taulani
Winner of Talent Poker Tour XLI



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Site of Fort Wagner 226 Talent Avenue ca. 1853

The first cabin built in 1852 in the area that would become Talent belonged to Jacob Wagner, a bachelor from Ohio. A year later, Fort Wagner was built around the cabin and covered about an acre of ground. A bronze plaque in front of 226 Talent Avenue commemorates the approximate location of the site of the fort. The fort fell into disuse following the signing of the treaty at Table Rock and by 1884 was little more than a pile of rubble and come chimney stones. In 1976 Talent resident Al Grabher and then Jackson County Surveyor Edward McGinty pinpointed the location of the fort to this property 300' north and 200' west of the Wagner Creek bridge.

Taken from our "Walking Tour of Historic Talent" Booklet. The booklet may be purchased at the museum or at our online store: store.talenthistory.org. Purchase price is \$3.00 and includes descriptions of 20 properties of significant historic value that are located within the city limits of Talent.

DON'T MISS OUT!!

Would you like timely email reminders about upcoming events at the Talent Historical Society? If so, contact us at: info@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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kitchen was built on the other side of the dining room. This kitchen still serves the needs of the community today.

By the late-1960s, the council decided that the City Hall needed to be expanded once again. This time, however, rather than another addition to the old building, a new City Hall was proposed. A very progressive Mayor Granvil Brittsan encouraged growth in Talent.⁵¹ He realized that part of that growth included a new City Hall.⁵² In 1969, the city hired Al Grabher. Since 1950, Mr. Grabher, as a member of the Lions, had volunteered countless hours toward improvements and renovations of the old City Hall. Now, as a paid city employee, he would oversee the construction of a new City Hall. The site chosen for the new building required the removal of the fire station. Rather than tear it down, the fire station was moved to a lot directly behind the old city hall. Construction of the new City Hall began in 1970, and by 1971 the entire city administration, including the police department, had moved to its new facility.⁵³

With the library, the fire department, the police department, and the city hall no longer housed in this building, the 1970s marked the beginning of the Talent Community Center. Of course, the building had always been a center for the community and continues to be used by the community today. Within its walls have been countless meetings by numerous clubs and organizations, dances, breakfasts, dinners, parties, Christmas bazaars, Church groups, and weddings. Council meetings are still held in this building when there is a large gathering, and it is still the poll site for elections. Throughout the seventies, the police department and the fire department hosted annual Balls in the Community Center.⁵⁴ The City hosted inaugural Balls to welcome newly elected city officials and to say farewell to those leaving office.⁵⁵

In the mid-1970s, the hall housed another service to the community. The former police station and city recorder's office because the site for a preschool. As demand for childcare reflected a change in societal roles as more mothers entered the work force. Janet Post started LOVE preschool in 1975. It began as a parent co-op and its name meant Lots of Valiant Efforts. Linda Purdom taught for this co-op for two years beginning in 1976. By 1977, the pre-school moved out of the Community Center. The decision to move was two-fold: the multi-purpose room used as a classroom required that the staff take down and set up every day, and the room had become too small for the grow-



Alice Burnett on the porch outside the kitchen on Harvest Festival Day 1999.

ing numbers of children.⁵⁶ LOVE preschool returned to the Community Center in 1984.⁵⁷ This time the school occupied the larger space available in the basement. A stairway provided access to the kitchen and restrooms upstairs. Through the efforts of the parent co-op, the preschool had become a non-profit organization by 1983. Karen Riggs started teaching the year the basement flooded in 1985. She remembers classes being held upstairs in the small room and dining room during this time. In an effort to prevent future flooding, the parent co-op approached the City Council about excavating and bringing in gravel along the back wall, and having gutters put around the building so water would be directed into the storm drains.⁵⁸ The council approved the plan and the parent co-op implemented it. The preschool continued for another five years, with the enrollment fluctuating from 12 to 20 children. The school offered morning classes, dividing them into two sessions, broken down by age groups, when the enrollment was high.⁵⁹ The preschool closed its doors in 1990 when Karen Riggs resigned and a replacement was not found.⁶⁰ Today the basement is the meeting place of Boy Scout Troop #110.⁶¹

As the end of the 20th century approaches, a new community effort has evolved to preserve the Talent Community Center and its history. A number of community members came together to form the Restoration Commission in 1994. Through this commission, the Talent Community Center, as well as several other buildings in the Talent area, have been designated historical sites. The implementation of a

five-year plan to restore the building to its original condition is now in its fifth and final year of completion.⁶² A part of this restoration effort also included the formation of the Talent Historical Society. The multi-purpose room in the Community Center is now the home of the historical society. On July 15, 1995, the Talent Historical Society officially opened its doors to the public.⁶³ Although this nonprofit organization is small, it continues to grow daily and is already planning to expand elsewhere.

Throughout its 100 years, the Talent Community Center has been a part of people's lives in the community. Within this building's walls, people have laughed, cried, celebrated, mourned, argued, agreed and perhaps most importantly, have made decisions that have impacted the lives of families and the community. It is not just a history of a building; rather, it reflects the history of a community as well. Generations have passed, and the names of the people have been forgotten. But because these people cared about this building, a part of their history is remembered forever.

A list of citations listed in this article as well as a Selected Bibliography are available at www.talenthistory.org or in print at the museum.

Updates

By Ron Medinger

Many changes have happened at the former Talent Community Center building since Robin's paper was written 20 years ago, but I did not want to interrupt her excellent work by calling them out within the article itself, so I decided to note them here.

1998-99 - Oregon voters decided all future elections would be held using a "Vote By Mail" process. The Talent Community Center was no longer needed as the city's polling place.

1999 - The Talent Community Center Restoration Commission finished its work and a rededication ceremony was held at the Community Center on Harvest Festival Day. The restoration consisted of a new electrical system for the building; updating the bathroom in the old schoolhouse cloak rooms; restoring the transom windows above the double-hung windows in the main room; replacing the ceiling in the main room; replacing fluorescent lighting fixtures installed in the main room with period correct schoolhouse globes and adding ceiling fans for increased comfort without using air conditioning; rebuilding the bell tower so the bell could be safely rung again; building

secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at that time, wrote a letter to the governor. The governor responded in writing to the Chamber that legally every town had to have a sewer. The Chamber of Commerce presented this letter at the next council meeting, forcing the council to act on this issue. With a grant from the Works Progress Administration, a federal government program the construction of the sewer system began in 1936. The building of the sewer provided employment for many men during a time when unemployment was so high. When the sewer was finally completed, Talent became the first small town in Oregon to have a sewer system.³⁰

Following the Depression came the war era in the early 1940s. The war effort on the home front was felt even in Talent as "... everybody went to making bandages... and stuff for the Red Cross and for the soldiers in the hospitals."³¹ Talent also experienced a resurgence of its population; the largest felt since the Depression when so many had left in search of employment. The establishment of Camp White, located where White City is today, brought thousands of people to the valley. One old timer, Al Grabher, believes this influx of people doubled the population in Talent and it has continued to grow since that time.³² Although the community experienced a population increase, and a number of businesses developed, there were relatively few improvements to the Town Hall other than its general upkeep. The only significant renovation at this time was new paint on the interior and the exterior of the building.

With the end of the war came the abandonment of Camp White. The City of Talent purchased a siren from the former military camp. This siren became a part of the new fire station that was built after the war.³³ The new siren replaced the bell in the bell tower above Town Hall.³⁴ The separation of the fire department from the hall marked the end of an era when the bell, since 1915, had summoned the bucket brigade, Talent's early fire department unit.³⁵ Although its purpose was diminished, the bell continued to be used by the Boy Scouts for many years.³⁶ A large crack finally silenced it. It would not be heard again until December 9, 1980.³⁷

For the next twenty years Talent continued to grow, but at a slower pace. With the construction of Interstate 5 in 1963, it settled down, becoming a quiet bedroom community. Changes in City Hall, however, continued to take place. In the 1950s updated electrical wiring and a gas heater to replace the woodstoves modernized the facility.³⁸ The



The Campfire Girls met for many years in the Community Center.

many clubs and organizations including youth groups like the Campfire Girls, the Boy Scouts, the Cub Scouts and the Blue Birds that had used the hall as a meeting place in the 1930s and 1940s continued to meet during this period as well.³⁹ Dances also continued in the hall just as they had over the past two decades. In the past, different clubs and organizations sponsored these dances and by the 1950s it was the Lion's Club. These dances were one of their biggest fundraisers. They hired musicians to play at these dances and in the mid-1950s they even hired the Maddox Brothers and Rose.⁴⁰ At that time they could get the whole group to come and play for \$100 a night.⁴¹ The money earned from these fundraisers was, in turn, used to make improvements on the City Hall.⁴² One of these improvements was an addition to the building in the mid-1950s.

Like so many organizations in the past, the Lion's Club played a significant part in making this addition a reality. Members provided the manual labor and helped fund the cost of this project. The addition of two new rooms and an extended hall resulted from countless volunteer hours. The only costs were the materials and the contractors hired to do the plumbing, electrical and gas hookups.⁴³ Upon completion, the library relocated to the new room at the rear of the building.⁴⁴ The other new room, located at the front of the building, became a multi-purpose room. It was the police station, the city recorder's office, the municipal court, and the council meeting room. Bill Young, the chief of police, and Nona McAbee, the city recorder, became the first people to occupy this space.⁴⁵ The expanded hall separated these two

rooms. During the reconstruction, the old stage disappeared, but in its place stood a bigger dance floor and a bigger meeting room.⁴⁶

By the early 1960s, more remodeling of the City Hall was needed to meet the needs of a changing community. This time the basement became the focus of renovations. Once again, joint efforts by community organizations and the city made this project possible. The Garden Club offered a donation for paint to help with this endeavor.⁴⁷ Once the renovations were completed, both the library and the chief of police, who happened to be Chuck Roberts at that time, moved to the new location. By September 1964, the library was established in the basement and, for the third time, opened its doors to the public. This would become its last home in the Talent City Hall. The library would remain in this location for another eleven years before making one more final move in 1975 to its present location.⁴⁸ The small office built in one corner of the basement would be the site of the one-man police station for the next seven years until it too, like the library, would relocate to a new building.⁴⁹

With the relocation of the library came the availability of the rear room off the main hall. This room did not remain vacant for long. Within two years, the County Health Department had condemned the kitchen and one of two things had to be done - either remodel it and bring it up to code or tear it down. The council granted permission to the Lions and other service clubs to make the old library room into a kitchen in place of repairing the present kitchen.⁵⁰ So, in January 1966, the Lion's Club undertook another renovation project"

The old kitchen came down and a new

From Our Facebook Page

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In a daily post, we are following pioneer Welborn Beeson's diary entry from 150 years ago. (currently 1869)

Follow our Facebook page for the latest news and updates from the Talent Historical Society. And thanks to all our followers!!!

As always, we share the posts from Welborn Beeson's diary from 150 years ago. (1869)

Mar 2nd ... Still warm to day no Signs of rain. People are now beginning to prophesy a famine, and all are down in the mouth...

Mar 3rd ... been hot day, no signs of rain... It is curious It don't rain some, every one prophesys a dry summer.

The lumber business kept everyone busy:

Mar 5th ... Will Sawed out 4000 feet of lumber again which makes 20,000 this week....

Emmet gets some blocks:

Mar 6th ... Henry and I went to Jacksonville ... bought shoes for Kates and Emmet, a dress for Kate, and a box of letter blocks for Emmett. He is so pleased with them, the little fellow staid awake till late playing with them he finally fell over asleep with them in his hands...

March 8th ... Dear Kate and little Emmett went up with Mrs Young and the girls to spend a few days and I am keeping bach. Johnny Stevens is staying with me, but he and all the boys after playing with Emmetts box of A. B. C. blocks some time, have gone to bed, and I am so lonesom I can hardly make up my mind to go to bed... my own Dear Kate who I believe loves me better than she does anything on earth... Oh I wish you were here, ... I don't believe I can stand it without seeing you and Emmet ...

Welborn finds he is not good at being a bachelor:

Mar 10th ... Oh how lonsom it is and dear Kate is so near to and don't come home, Oh if she loved me I don't think she would stay away volenteerly... I feel very lonesom to night tomorrow is my dear Kates 20th birthday she will then be twenty years old and the Mother of a boy, big enough to walk to the school house...

And finally they're home:

March 14th ... hitched up the buggy and took Kate & Emmet down the vally, for a buggy ride, stoped at the Gassburg School house to Meeting, a large congregation out, all the neighbors far and near, the first time this season.

Welborn ponders the past:

Mar 16 ... 16 years have now passed away, since I departed from the place of my birth and I have never returned ... I suppose now it would be folly to return also the old friends are gone, and I would be a stranger in the home of my youth, but I shall never return now.

April 2nd ... Tweed and I commenced to set my lane fence, It has been standing nearly 16 years and the rails are good yet...

Ahhh... "Dear Kate":

April 11th ... Dear Kate has curled her hair and does look so pretty.

Reflection:

April 20th ... I am now leading an exciting life I seem to be busy and in the highth of my glori but I do not think I can live as long under so much excitmet as if I was leading a steady life. When I look back, and see how I have lived and can hardly realize I am the same Welborn Beeson, that these books past before this relate of but so It is life has its Changes, and I belive that I am begining, to be more excitable and firey or Spiritual or something I feel something in Side of me. Maybe it is a diseased Stomach.

May 7th ... one of our oldest and best Citizens W. C. Myers left Ashland for Missouri with a band of 267 head of horses, taking with him his wife and nine men to help him drive. Among them was Jack Thurber and Henry Roberts and Tom Simmons. A number were present to see them start and som have accompanied them out to Link River, to aid them thru the Mountain. I think they will soon return to Oregon very fast to stay here.

The preceding entry was accompanied by this note from the transcriber: "W. C. Myer and his wife bought a farm in Kansas and lived there awhile. He farmed and then purchased some Percheron horses and sold his Kansas farm and returned, with them to Southern Oregon in December, 1870.

He continued to make trips back East and imported many more horses and Jersey cattle.

History of Southern Oregon, A. G. Walling, 1884 [The complete book is online on Heritage Quest]

Concern about the surveyor:

May 13th ... I took a load of lumber to Ashland. Will went up with me B. F. Myers was surveying the line between A. D. Helman and O Coolidge & myself. Coolidge and I helped them, but Myers is not much of a Surveyor I think. He has run the line three or four times, this time It runs down into James Thorntons clearing about three rods, and we don't know whether it is right or not now.

May 14th ... I also got the S. Union [newspaper]. It is full of the Accounts of the finishing of the great Iron band connecting the Atlantic Seaboard with the Pacific. They held a grand Celebration on last Teusday, at Chicago and Sanfrancisco and Sacramento in Consequences of the glorious news. a few years ago I wrote note of the Commencement of the railroad by the Crocker & Stanford & Co. the same partys are going out to

lay the last track, or tie at the Junction of the Union Central, and Pacific Center near Saltlake. Now for the road connecting, Portland & Marysville and then hurra we will be in paradise.

Emmet is sick to night with the Chicken pox, or Measles, quite a number of the neighbors have the disease. Will has been painting his Engine, Johnny is not very well.

The Beeson family heads into a busy summer season with noticeable lapse's in diary entries for many days in late May and in June.

The Welborn Beeson diary transcriptions are available in their entirety at the Talent Historical Society's Research Library at the THS Museum. We are not a loaning library, so the reference materials available cannot leave the library, you are welcome to spend up to 10 hours per week reading or doing research. The Research Library is open every weekend from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Looking for Harvest Festival Photos

THS is looking for photos from past Harvest Festivals.

Many of us have snapshots we've taken over the years at the Talent Harvest Festival, why not share them for posterity? You can email them to us at info@talenthistory.org or stop past the museum and drop them off. We'll scan them for our electronic files and then let you know when they're ready to pick up.

If you only have a few and don't want to leave them with us, you can stop by on Saturday or Sunday afternoon between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. and we'll scan them while you wait.

Who can spot friends in this picture?



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