

The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 26 Issue 1

March 2020

The Homesteaders

By Belinda Klimek Vos

I'm writing this article to commemorate the birth of my Father, Richard Klimek, 100 years ago on February 29th, 1920. He was born in a log cabin up the north fork of Anderson Creek on a homestead in the mountains west of Talent; a Talent native through and through.

The date of his birth itself holds some controversy as years later in 1942 when he went to join the United States Army, they refused to accept that anyone could be born on the leap year date and insisted on changing it to February 28th. Being born in a log cabin miles from any town precluded any type of birth certificate being issued, so officially his birthdate became the 28th. But, of course, his family knew the truth. Growing up I used to delight in pointing out that he really only had a birthday every four years, and at a certain point I became "older" than him!

The history and settlement of the United States hinged on westward migration. So how do you get people to pull up stakes, leave family and friends and head out to the unknown? Simple, offer them free or cheap land.

The lands around what is now Talent were originally settled through the Dona-

tion Land Claims Act of 1850. Settlers swarmed into the area seeking free land and opportunity. They quickly gobbled up all the available "good" land laying in the fertile valley floor; land that could sustain a homestead and was suitable for growing crops. The Donation Land Claim Act expired in 1855.

In a July 4th, 1861 speech, President Abraham Lincoln told the nation the purpose of America's government was "to elevate the condition of men, to lift artificial burdens from all shoulders and to give everyone an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life." He championed the cause of land ownership which led to the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862, which remained active for 124 years until it was repealed in 1976, and resulted in 10 percent of U.S. land—or 270 million acres—to be claimed and settled.

Locally, as time went on, more and more land was claimed, pushing settlers farther into the hills and mountains that surround the Rogue River Valley.

My family's story begins in Moravia (now part of the Czech Republic) in the late 1800's. Born in 1887, my grandfather, Marcel (Marcellin) Klimek was a younger son who always had an adventurous spirit and a burning desire to own land, something that was unlikely to happen in his birth country. He immigrated to America in 1911, and after several stops he landed in Hopkins, Minnesota always on the look out for a piece of land. His search continued as he rode a bicycle (I have a photo) westward and ended up in Canon City, Colorado where there was a Czech community.

In the meantime, my Grandmother, Julie Konecek, born on April 10, 1894 also in Moravia, had also made her way to Canon City, Colorado in order to visit her sister who had previously immigrat-

ed there.

There was a picnic. They met, and a romance ensued. Two years later, Marcel again took off westward and landed in Portland, OR where he sent for Julie to join him. They were married on March 5, 1918. Marcel was still searching for that perfect homestead when they then travelled to the Medford area to escape the damp weather in northern Oregon which bothered my Grandmother's rheumatism.

By 1918, the best land in the Rogue Valley had long since been settled, but there was still homestead land available if you were willing to live in a remote area. Somehow my Grandfather found 160 acres in the mountains west of Talent and proceeded to stake his claim. The lands were part of the former O & C grants which had become available with the passage of the Revestment Act of June 9, 1916. The Act restored land formerly owned by the Oregon - California Railroad Company to federal ownership allowing it to be homesteaded. A married couple could claim 160 acres and a single person 120 acres.

Although 160 acres of land seems like a lot, very little was useable for agriculture. A few acres at the south end of the property near the creek were level enough for a building and fields, but most of the land was steep and forested. The elevation along the creek is 2,900 feet, while at the top of the property it's 3,500 ft. From the flatlands around Talent, a narrow road led out of town on Wagner Creek Rd, before turning sharply right onto Anderson Creek Rd. Winding its way deeper and deeper into the mountains, a small spur then turned right heading up the north fork of the Anderson Creek drainage. It's 5+ miles from downtown Talent, and the dirt road is still unimproved.

I applied to the National Archives in

Continued on page 4



*Marcelin Klimek & Julie Konecek
June 25, 1916 Balder Lodge Picnic
Canon City Colorado*

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/

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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
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
1:00 TO 5:00 PM

Memberships Since Last Issue

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Kurt Bailey
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Karen Carr
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Talent Tomato Sale



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GET ORDERS IN EARLY!

Order forms available online at
www.talenthistory.org

Or at the Museum on Sat. or Sun., 1:00 to 5:00PM

Order form
& payment
must be in
by May
3rd.

President's Message by Ron Medinger

By the time you read this, faithful members, not only is this year's Talent Tomato Plant pre-sale period in full swing, but we will have a beautiful brand-new sign on the outside of the museum facing Main Street! This should make our museum easier to find for those visiting us who are unfamiliar with Talent.

Progress continues in our project to create curriculum for Talent Elementary about the history of our fair city, thanks to the effort spearheaded by Debra Moon and Jan Wright.

Thanks to Belinda Vos for her contribution of the article about the Homesteaders in this month's issue.

Finally, a reminder to anyone who may have photos taken at Talent Harvest Festival in years past, please think about sharing them with THS. You can donate copies, or we can scan your originals and return them to you. We cannot provide an eye on history in the future if you do not help us document that history today. The photos don't have to be old to be worth sharing. Last year's Harvest Festival is already history! Share with us now! Please identify any persons in the photos that you know so we have that part of history too.

New Sign for the Talent Museum

by Debra Moon

Christmas comes but once a year, but Leap Year comes only once every four years! This Leap Year is special for the Talent Museum. On Leap Year Day, February 29, 2020, local artist from Ruch, Gregg Payne, will install a large sign outside the Museum on the wall facing Main Street. The sign is painted metal with a powder coat and a wooden frame. It is 22 inches by 80 inches, or almost two feet tall and seven and a half feet long. It says "MUSEUM". Talent Historical Society is in smaller letters below the word Museum. It is designed to match other Talent Commons' signage.

Gregg Payne is an artist who has worked on community art projects and signage for 40 years. He is currently working on new signs featuring native birds and wildflowers at Cantrall-Buckley Park in Ruch. He has designed hundreds of logos for businesses as well as several high profile interactive musical art instal-

lations. These include giant wind chimes and over-sized xylophones for parks, children's museums, and more. Gregg is also a talented muralist and often does mural projects with young students.



The new museum sign has been long awaited by the Talent Historical Society Board Members, so February 29th is a big day for them. The sign is part of a larger outreach to the community to draw visitors into the museum and increase Talent Historical Society (THS) membership. THS is particularly reaching out to Talent families with young children. People of every age group are always welcome at the Talent Museum, and there is no charge to visit. Donations are welcome, but absolutely not required to see exhibits and artifacts from Talent's unique and interesting history. THS Board Members are pleased that the Talent Museum will now be identifiable from a distance, and that everyone will know we have a museum here in our community.

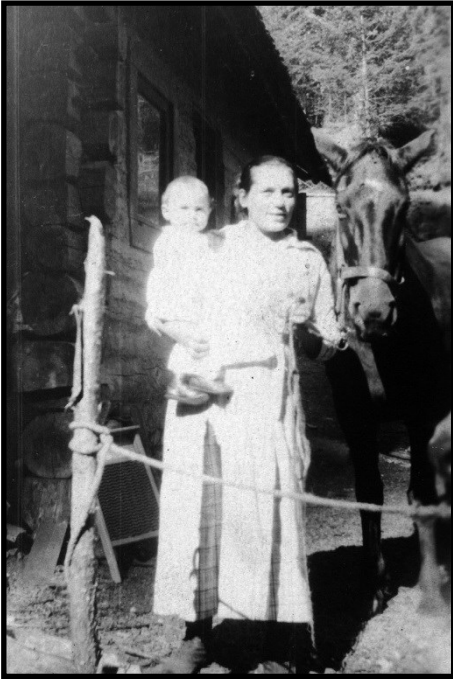
The Talent Quality Book Club Hosts Oregon Author Valarie Brooks in March

The Talent Quality Book Club has chosen *Revenge in Three Parts* by Valerie Brooks as their reading selection for the month of March 2020. The author has been invited to perform a presentation at the March 24th meeting of the Book Club as a special treat for members and their friends. She dresses in costume and poses as characters in the book during the entertaining performance. The Talent Quality Book Club is partial to Oregon authors. They have also read *Oregon Outcast* by Jan Wright, who did speak at a Book Club meeting last April. Last November, the group read *Buy the Chief a Cadillac* by Rick Steber, another Oregon author. He was invited to attend but was unable to travel at that time.

The Talent Quality Book Club meets at the Talent Museum from 6:30 to 8PM on the fourth Thursday of each month. The club was started in 2019 by Coralee Eaton, owner of Quality Paperbacks at 115 North Pacific Highway in Talent, and Talent Historical Society Board Member Debra Moon. Reading selections are somewhat eclectic, favoring historical fiction and other interesting and inspiring novels. The book selections are done by consensus of the group. There is no strict requirement for reading the month's selection, as people live busy lives and each book speaks more to some people than others. The club is more of a discussion group for issues relating to the current book. Discussion is lively!

In 2019, the TQBC supported the Phoenix High School Alumni, where Talent high schoolers attend, to raise money for scholarships for graduating seniors. The club welcomes people of both genders, all ages, and various backgrounds. At this time there are fourteen members. Between ten and twelve members attend each month. Membership in the Talent Historical Society and a desire to share good books are the only requirements to join.

Light refreshments are served. Please direct questions to Debra Moon, debra.moon7@gmail.com



*Julie Konecek Klimek and Willy
1919 - Klimek Homestead*

Washington D.C. and received Marcel's complete Homestead application file. As part of the public record, anyone may access the information. The file contained 66 pages and proved to me that bureaucracy didn't start in modern times!

The original Homestead Entry application made by Marcelin Klimek was dated May 13, 1918 and was given the Serial No. 011344. The application was sent to the U.S. Land Office in Roseburg, OR.

The process of obtaining a homestead patent (deed) was complicated and took many years. First off, you had to live on the property continuously for five years along with making improvements. After the five years were up, you could then file a "Notice of Intention to make Proof" stating that you had met all the Homestead requirements and that you then wanted a permanent deed to your land. In 1923, Marcel filed several papers with the U.S. Land Office in Roseburg detailing his compliance. There were several stipulations required before you could get your final patent.

One requirement was that you had to have four witnesses testify that you had lived on the land continuously and had made improvements. The four witnesses were: James Mayes, John Bailey, John Schuette and Henry Maltby. Each witness had to fill out a lengthy form entitled "Testimony of Witness" with questions pertaining to the length of time they had

known the claimant, verifying length of settlement and whether the claimant had ever been absent from the homestead. They then had to state by subdivision how each acre was being used.

The claimant also had to fill out a similar form and through this I was able to gather quite a bit of additional information. Marcel claimed he first established a residence upon this land in October, 1918 and built a house in February 1919. He said that he had 2 1/2 acres cultivated with four acres of pasture fenced. He had a log house, one story with two rooms, measuring 24 by 18 feet. He also had a barn, chicken house, storeroom, blacksmith shop and hog house. He owned three cows, two calves, two horses, 36 chickens as well as a wagon, plow, truck, buggy, gasoline wood saw and buzz saw. Domestic water for irrigation and household was from the creek.

One form required you to swear that there were no valuable mineral deposits on your land. You also had to publish a notice in a local newspaper for a period of five consecutive weeks. Marcel chose the Jacksonville Post and paid \$7.50 to have the ad run. A "Notice for Publication" form had to be filled out and notarized to prove this had been done.

The final requirement was that the applicant become a U. S. citizen as it was not in the best interest of the United States to have a large portion of its population loyal to another country. Marcel's "Declaration of Intention" provided a wealth of personal information including height and weight, place of birth and when and where he arrived in America. It also included his signature.

At this point in time, homestead land wasn't free and my Grandparents paid \$2.00 an acre for their property. Reportedly, Marcel borrowed the money from Clarence Holdridge's Father and it took years for them to pay him back.

As I mentioned earlier, Marcel and Julie originally applied for a Homestead in May of 1918. They began clearing land and building a log cabin using timber from the property. One son, Vaclav Wilson (Willy) was born in December 1918 while the family was still living in Medford. They moved into their newly built cabin in February of 1919. My Father's birth, Richard, quickly followed on February 29, 1920 making him the first of their children to actually be born in the cabin at the Homestead.

My Grandmother grew a garden and

kept chickens. She always had a milk cow, and they also had pigs which they butchered each year. They heated and cooked with a wood stove, which was located in the northwest corner of the cabin, and even today you can see where the logs are blackened by its use. Their only source of water was the seasonal creek that sometimes dried up in the summer. A spring located just up from the cabin, saw them through the summer months.

The characteristics of the property made it difficult at best to scratch out a subsistence living. Being in a deep canyon there was little sunlight in the winter and the growing season was short. But there was plentiful timber and the trees were the real value of the land. Everyone heated with wood back then, so there was a ready market for firewood. Marcel would hitch up the horse, load the wagon with wood and take it down into Talent to sell, providing the family with a small bit of cash to buy flour and necessities.

My Grandparent's homestead in the mountains was not all rosy; personalities were strong and there was strife and conflict. My Grandmother did not leave the property for seven years. While Marcel went to Talent for supplies and to sell firewood, she was required to stay up on the Homestead and care for the children; giving birth to seven children in nine years, five boys and two girls. I tell these facts not to air dirty laundry but out of respect for the truth. We tend to romanticize our collective past; Western movies always have a hero, even the Middle Ages are made to seem pure and gallant. Robin Hood and his Merry Men always look like they're having fun, but imagine what living conditions in that era were really like. It was a tough life on the Homestead and my Grandmother was a strong woman, both physically and emotionally to survive. I don't believe she had any help during childbirth as there were no



*Willy, Marcel and baby Richard
1920 - Klimek Homestead*



Cabin at Klimek Homestead -1975

close neighbors and they were very isolated. Czech was the only language spoken in the family although Marcel could speak some English.

As time passed and the children grew, attending school became an issue. Finally, the truant officer threatened Marcel with jail if he didn't comply and start sending them to school. At this point, the three oldest children were Willy, 8, my Father, Richard, known as Richy, 7, and Marcel Jr., 6. Although there was a school farther down Anderson Creek Road, they made the decision to purchase a house in Talent.

On January 6, 1927, Marcel and Julie purchased a house and property from Elizabeth M. Leaming for \$400.00. It was located on Bain Street between First and Second Street in Talent. The Methodist Church was on an adjoining lot and the big, red brick schoolhouse was just

across the street. The house was very primitive and had no plumbing, just an outhouse in the back. It was very small and the three older boys slept in a tent in the yard. Julie was able to have a better garden there and she had a little more contact with the outside world. However, she spoke no English and never went to the stores. Marcel had a small forge that he used for making repairs. The three boys went off to school that next Fall unable to speak or understand any English. I can only imagine how difficult that must have been. They all started in first grade together so at least they had each other.

But each summer, the family would trek back up to the mountains to cut wood and live in the cabin for a few months. Walking the cow and hauling the chickens back up to the Homestead became a yearly event. Working away all summer, they would stockpile the wood on their Talent lot and sell it throughout the year.

The family would move back down to Talent in the Fall so the children could then go back to school. During this time, students were required to pass tests at the end of 8th grade. Richard Klimek's "Statement of 8th Grade Examination" was certified on May 24, 1935 and was signed by Jackson County School Superintendent. C. R. Bowman. A grade of 70% was required in the subjects of agriculture, arithmetic, civics, geography, history, language, reading & literature, spelling and writing. After completing the requirements, the State of Oregon then issued a Elementary School Diploma

that certified the student had completed the Course of Study and entitled the holder to enter into any High School in Oregon.

The school year was divided into two semesters with a report card issued for each. Richy had completed his freshman year and the first semester of 10th grade at Talent High School when the family came down with Scarlet Fever. The family was quarantined and the children were not allowed to go to school for several months as the illness worked its way through the family. One of his brother's got it so badly that he had to learn to walk all over again. Richy only had a mild case, but by the

TALENT HIGH SCHOOL TALENT, OREGON									
Report of <u>Richard Klimek</u>									
Class <u>Tenth</u>		Semester beginning <u>193</u>				Semester ending <u>193</u>			
Subject	Class	1st	2d	3d	4th	Exam	Semes. Stude.	Credit	
English	11	4	2	2		82	3+	2	
ALG. I	1	2	2			3	2	1/2	
Voc. Guid	2	3	3			3	2+	1/2	
MANUAL Tr. U.	3	3	3						
Health+PE	3	3	4						
Days Present						26	23		
Days Absent						1	3	5	
Times Late						0	0		
Department									
Application									
Principal						District No. 22.			
PARENT'S SIGNATURE									
First Month	<u>M. J. Klimek</u>								
Second Month	<u>M. J. Klimek</u>								
Third Month									
Fourth Month									
1-94-100; 2-86-09; 3-78-55; 4-70-77; 5-below 70.									

time he was cleared to go back to school he had missed so much time that he felt he would never catch back up. So, he and his two oldest brothers dropped out of school and went to work cutting wood.

He did however, remain on the schools baseball team that was undefeated that year. (See the photo on page 10) He is pictured in the front row on the far right and his brother, Willy, is on the back row second from the right.

The family had the pine timber logged off the Homestead by Charlie Skeeters which gave them some much needed money. Julie had always wanted to own a farm so in 1937 they bought a 44 acre parcel of land near what later became South Pacific Hwy. It was lo-



*1930 Talent School - 4th Grade
Mildred Rogers - Teacher
Middle row: 3rd from left - Richy
4th from left - Marcel Jr.
Back row; 2nd from right - Willy*

Continued on page 8

Calico Tails In 1865

By Ann Haseltine Russell

Christmas in Ashland fifty years ago! What memories the words awaken in many an aged heart! Most of those who lived here in the '60s had but lately come from the East, leaving behind loved ones from whom they were separated by the width of a continent. More than one heart was sore over the loss of friend or relative, killed by the savage foe who still lurked in the surrounding hills with arrows and cruel tomahawk.

But the little company of pioneers was brave and cheerful, determined to make the best of the hard conditions in their new home. And all conditions were not hard. Ashland weather was just as pleasant then as now, the trees and mountains as beautiful, the water as pure and sparkling. Wild game was plentiful, while clothing, groceries and other things needful were hauled or packed over the mountains from Crescent City and Portland.

"Well do I recall the Christmas of 1865, the next year after the Civil war," relates Mrs. A. H. Russell, eighty three year old Ashland pioneer living at 117 North Main street, to a Tidings representative. "I was twenty seven years old and living with my husband right here where I have resided ever since. We had a community Christmas tree in the town hall, which stood on the site of the present Odd Fellows' building.

"There were sixteen business and professional men in Ashland at that time. They were: Charley Klum, school clerk; Bob Hargadine, store keeper; Jim

Thornton, woolen manufacturer; Jake Wagner, flour mill; Jim Russell, marble works; Mike Nickleson, blacksmith; Bill Kentner, wagon maker; Ebe Emery, tavern keeper; John McCall, merchant; A. V. Gillette, sawmill man and justice of the peace; Ed Depeat, lawyer; Abe Helman, carpenter; Abe Gid-dings, stage driver; Oliver Applegate, teacher; Ivan Applegate, telegrapher; Albert Rockfellow, whose business I cannot recall.

"Here is a dim photograph showing these men standing in front of the old



Ashland House, which was located on the present site of the Ford garage. There is Bill Kentner with a wagon wheel, my husband with a block of granite, and all the rest of them, each with something to indicate his work. Another view shows Bob Hargadine's house where the First National bank now stands, with timber on the south and east sides.

"A mass meeting was called to arrange for the tree, and present a program. In order to avoid being given something to do, I stayed away but was appointed on the committee to solicit money and buy gifts for the children. I rebelled, saying it

was not fair to place someone who was absent on the most responsible of all the committees.

"A Methodist South minister, Rev. Johnson, who used to stay with us, persuaded me to consider the appointment favorably, so I finally consented to serve, provided Mrs. James Thornton would help. We collected \$40 and obtained the names of all the children in town. A bag of candy and some small gift was provided for every child. The costliest presents we bought were a hat for an orphan boy and a silver thimble for a girl whose mother we feared would be

displeased with a cheaper present. These two articles cost one dollar each.

"The tree committee did not have to go so far to get a fine young fir as they do now, because the forest then came right down to our back yards. The tree was decorated with strings of popcorn, bits of colored paper and tallow candles. Candle lanterns lighted the room, this being before we had kerosene lamps.

"People were great practical jokers in those days, and everybody poked good natured

fun at their neighbors. The women thought it would be a good joke to give the men neckties made of bright colored calico red, blue or green tied in a bow with ends a yard long, and fastened with a big brass button.

The men got an inkling of what we were doing and more than paid us back by giving us aprons made of the brightest colors and tied with strings three yards long. Oh, the calico wasted in those strings! The men themselves made the aprons, which were sewed with long, clumsy stitches.

"Bill Kentner was Santa Claus, and A. V. Gillette led the music with his flute, which at that time was the only musical instrument in

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Ashland. John McCall sang bass, Charley Klum tenor, and Mrs. Helman soprano.

"Even in those days we appreciated our wonderful sword ferns, Oregon grape, mistletoe and other Christmas greenery and used them in decorating the room where we had our Christmas tree. In addition to the game which we have now, there were antelope and mountain sheep, which have since been exterminated.

"Someone made me a present of a whole bolt of calico, which at that time was a very valuable gift. I was very curious to know who had bought that bolt for me and determined to find out. So I made a big sunbonnet and dress with very full skirts out of part of the cloth and wore them down town one day, walking in the middle of the street, spreading my skirts out with both hands, to make as much of a show as possible.

"My sister, Mrs. Gillette, who lived where Holmes store is now, saw me and threw a stick at me, calling out that I was making a fool of myself. But I thought I'd find out who bought that bolt of calico. Arriving at Hargadine's store, I accused the clerk of putting the calico on the tree for me and threatened to use part of it in making a vest for him so long it would reach to the floor.

"Ten yards of cloth was given to the wife of a Methodist minister from Roseburg. Long afterwards I learned that the one who gave me the calico was Rev. Johnson, to whom I had talked about the gift, and told how much fun I was having with it. Our community tree was a great success. We all felt Christmas spirit and spent the evening together in a happy, friendly, love everybody fashion, hoping for better days to come. They are here."

Thank you to THS Historian Jan Wright for her submission of this early 20th Century oral history done by The Ashland Tidings..


Walking Tour of Historic Talent



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Malmgren Garage 111 Talent Avenue

This one-story, concrete structure was probably constructed in the mid-1920's, apparently as an investment by an early physician, Theodore Malmgren of Phoenix. Malmgren, who traveled extensively, required a skilled mechanic. It is thought he had this garage erected to encourage a mechanic to locate here. It was capable of holding 10 automobiles. In 1931, following the doctor's death, L.I. and Belle Crawford entered into a lease with Associated Oil of California for three years. In 1945, Jackson County took control of the building for back taxes and sold it to George Davis. A variety of small businesses have occupied the Malmgren garage for the last nine decades. The Malmgren Garage was the most substantial of Talent's second generation of commercial structures, and remains one of the few concrete structures in the city. It remains essentially unaltered with its stepped parapet false front, façade cast sills and lintels.



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cated just south of Talent where Rapp Road intersects the highway. The land was originally part of a Donation Land Claim of 160 acres, #70, claimed by H.H. Eldridge in 1857. Through the years, the land changed hands many times and was divided up into smaller parcels. The 44 acres ran south from the east side of the road with the eastern boundary being Bear Creek. Currently, the house is occupied by South Valley Pool & Spa at 401 S. Pacific Hwy. The bottom land is part of Mt. View Estates manufactured home park.

When they purchased the property there was only a dirt road out front. Soon after they moved there, the County built a paved road and Marcel worked on the road crew. Up until this time, the main Highway 99 had gone through the center of Talent. When the new road was built bypassing the town, Talent was changed forever.

The 44 acres included good bottom land from Bear Creek and they grew wheat there. The house had been built in about 1924 and they eventually added a bathroom. They had a windmill to supply power for the well. *(Later, a new house was built to replace the original one)*

Richy's Father, Marcel was working in Eugene during this time, and it was up to the boys to earn money to support the family. Richy got the contract to provide fire wood to heat the Talent School building for the 1937-38 school year. However, he wasn't old enough to sign the con-



Klimek family harvesting wheat in a field that is now part of Mt. View Estates

tract, and his Mother, Julie, had to sign with an X. In 1939, they supplied wood to all three Medford Schools. They still lived up at the Homestead in the summers. The three older boys continued to cut wood and when customers paid them, they gave the money to their Mother so she could save it to make the property



*Sgt. Richard Klimek
England - 1944*

payments. Julie also kept cows and sold the cream to help out.

But dark clouds were brewing. The war in Europe was heating up and when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, life changed in an instant. The United States had been attacked and the nation was forced to go to war. Richard enlisted in the Army Air Corp (this was before there was an Air Force) in January of 1942 with the hopes of being trained as a mechanic. He reported for service at Ft. Lewis, WA, and with the war threat so eminent he was immediately sent to Texas. He received no basic training; a situation he always lamented. He was unable to get into mechanic school, and as his occupation was listed as logger, the Army decided he would make a good telephone lineman. It should be noted that he had never climbed a pole before, as it wasn't a skill that loggers needed. In September of 1942, he traveled to New Jersey and boarded the Queen Elizabeth along with 20,000 other soldiers to make their way to England. It took 7 days because they had to zig zag around to avoid German submarines. Conditions were poor and they only ate once a day. They arrived at the Firth of Clyde in the dark and boarded trains to take them south to an English air base. It was supposed to be a big secret that the 93rd Bomb Group had arrived in England, but the German radio welcomed them! Later, he was sent to Hardwick Air Force Base where he was with the 409th Squadron, 93rd

Bomb Group. When he first arrived at Hardwick, they were building the base so he put his lineman skills to work by climbing poles to install lights so the planes could fly at night, but when that job was completed, his lineman skills were no longer needed. The bomb squadron was suffering heavy losses so they decided to train him as a replacement bombardier. However, he constantly got airsick during the training sessions, so his commanders finally gave up on that idea and assigned him to the supply unit. His affliction may very well have saved his life as being a bombardier was a perilous position and many of the planes didn't make it back to the base.

The English people welcomed the Yanks with open arms and invited them into their homes. Dick, as he was called in the Army, met a young woman, Queenie Warnes and fell in love. Their war time romance turned serious and they were married on May 15, 1945. By then, the end of the war was in sight and Dick was sent home to Talent on leave. He arrived on July 4th having been away from home for 3 1/2 years. He was supposed to then be shipped to the Pacific Theater, however, the war ended and he was honorably discharged having attained the rank of Sergeant. My Mother, a "war bride" had to wait until the spring of 1946 before she could join him. I can't emphasize enough how much WWII affected people in that generation. Throughout their lives, my parents always measured time in terms of "before the war" or "after the war".

The couple lived their first year in a small metal trailer parked on the yard of the family home in Talent. My Father returned to his work as a timber faller and was gone for many hours each day. The summer of 1946 was one of the hottest on record and I'm not sure how my Mother survived. On July 6th the temperature reached a record high of 115 degrees in Medford.

The next winter, when my Father was off from logging, he began building a house for them on the far southern part of my Grandmother's property. A photo of my Dad building the house looking west shows an empty field with no other houses at all. What is now South Pacific Highway was just a two lane road at that time. He built the house back from the road a bit envisioning it would someday be widened to a four lane highway. In May of 1947, on Dick and Queenie's second anniversary, Pacific Power hooked up electricity to their house hav-

ing to run poles down to them as they were the first in that section to build.

A modest house, Dick also built the furniture as well. One of his brothers dug the well. The water had a strong smell of sulphur, like rotten eggs pouring out of the faucet every time you turned it on. This was the house I grew up in and I just assumed all water tasted like that. Originally, the address was R.R. 1, Box 226, Talent, but it was later changed to 717 S. Pacific Hwy., Talent. The house is now occupied by Simple Machine Winery & Tasting Room.

As the family grew, the house was enlarged to provide another bedroom. Again, my Dad did all the work himself. The city limits of Talent were much smaller then, with the southern boundary at the Wagner Creek bridge on the highway. We felt like we were in the country. Now, the area is a bustling commercial site.

The road out front was eventually widened to four lanes and growing up, freight trucks roared past our house. Until the freeway was built in the early '60's, it was the main north-south thoroughfare. It was background noise, and we didn't pay much attention to it; the constant sound just melting away. It was a good place to grow up. While the house was up near the road, there were also acres down toward the creek that were great for building forts and playing cowboys and Indians. We built rafts and floated down Bear Creek, that is until someone reportedly came down with typhoid fever from the creek and we were ordered to stay out.

My Dad and his four brothers were all loggers. With their background of cutting wood as boys, it was the obvious choice of professions. The timber industry ruled the valley during the 50's, 60's and 70's and the majority of men worked in some aspect of the timber trade. Logging trucks could be seen parked in driveways all over Talent, while many others worked in the mills. Talent was primarily a bedroom community at this point and there were few services. Gas stations and a couple of markets existed, but people mostly went to Medford or Ashland to shop.

Early on, Dick worked as a timber faller, but he soon saved money and bought his first log truck and became self-employed. He logged throughout the valley for many years partnering with his brother Marcel for most of that time. At one point, he drove all the way to Beaver



Dick and log truck abt. 1968

Marsh on Hwy. 97 each day to log Lodgepole pine that was made into telephone poles. I can't imagine the miles he drove, all without an accident. Leaving before dawn and returning home for 6:00 o'clock dinner, his daily commute was incredible. Always a conscientious logger, he abhorred clear cutting. He was the first in the valley to have a rubber tired skidder which lessened the impact on the forest. As the years wore on, he became weary of the increasing rules and regulations handed down from the Forest Service; rules he felt were arbitrary and written by men who had never actually logged.

My Dad retired in his late 50's after a lifetime of work and spent his later years restoring antique cars. The years of hard physical work took their toll, and he endured a series of strokes in later life. He died on May 27, 2007.

His was a life well lived; a honest, hard working man that provided for his family and treated others well. My Father belonged to the Greatest Generation. That generation that survived the Depression, went to war, and then came back home to establish a society that was on the verge of such great change.

I marvel at the changes that took place during my Father's life span, and in Talent as well; their histories so intertwined. From humble roots with no electricity or paved streets, few services, horses to cars, airplanes, footsteps on the moon, and computers and the internet, no other time frame in the history of our earth has seen such profound changes.

We would go up to the Homestead during my childhood for various activities; cutting firewood, riding motorcycles and getting Christmas trees. Occasionally, the extended family would get

together for hot dog roasts and a baseball game (the Klimek pastime) in the clearing by the cabin. After my Grandmother's death in 1960, the property was divided up amongst my aunts and uncles. When my Uncle Marcel died as a result of a logging accident in 1975, my Father inherited his portion as well. In 1998, my Father decided to deed over his land to my brother and me, and I became the proud owner of 40 acres of the Homestead. In recent years, my two sons now own a portion of the Homestead as well, and the cabin site has been preserved.

I've always had a deep emotional attachment to this homestead; the ancestral roots of my family in America. It's still a wild place with no electricity and a primitive road. I imagine my father, and his brothers and sisters, scampering through the woods and playing down by the creek.

I never get tired of going there and in recent years, after my Father's death, have found great comfort in the timeless mountains and quiet that envelop them. It's always a pleasure to round that corner and see the old cabin, although the roof has now fallen in as the result of a heavy snowfall in 1998. It's slowly going back to the earth, but the walls still remain.

My Father had a deep and abiding love of the mountains and it was his wish that his ashes return to the Homestead. They lie nestled beneath the moss covered trunk of a big leaf maple tree. The maples tower along the creek, their roots anchoring them solidly to the earth. Each Autumn, their huge leaves fall and make a thick blanket to see him through the cold winter. The Talent boy is truly home again.




*Richard Klimek marker
Klimek Homestead*



The 1937 Talent High School baseball team had six victories and no defeats that year. They even won all their practice games. John Childers in the catcher's gear successfully caught Don Hungate's fireball pitch and Richard Skeeter's curveball from behind the plate.

From "Images of America - Talent" by Jan Wright of the Talent Historical Society, page 103. 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.



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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.

TALENT POKER TOUR



Thanks to everyone who came out to our tournament on November 30th, and congratulations to winner Freddie Taulani. This was the second THS tournament Freddie won in 2019 and that helped him win the coveted Player Of The Year Award for 2019. In addition to that honor, Freddie was the player who eliminated the most players from tournaments in the year 2019. For that accomplishment he earned the Terminator Of The Year Award for 2019. Congratulations Freddie! You had a good year.

Our next tournament will take place on Saturday, February 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.

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
Thank you! Talent, OR 97540

Talent Historical Society Board of Directors:

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

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

- Tues, March 10th THS Board Meeting - 6:00 to 8:00 PM
- Tues, March 24th TEAM meeting - 6:30 to 8:00 PM - *Honoring Teachers in Talent Throughout History*
- Thurs, March 26th Talent Quality Book Club - 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Talent Museum
- Visiting Author, Valerie Brooks, *Revenge in Three Parts*
- Tues, April 14th THS Board Meeting - 6:00 to 8:00 PM
- Thurs, April 23rd Talent Quality Book Club - 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Talent Museum
- Tues, April 28th TEAM meeting - 6:30 to 8:00 PM - *The McKinnis Postage Stamp Quilt*
- Presentation by Anne Billeter from Rogue Valley Genealogical Society
- Sat, May 9th **Talent Tomato Sale** THS FUNDRAISER!!! Get orders in early! Order forms online
www.talenthistory.org or at the Talent Museum. Pick up tomato plants Saturday
 from 8AM to 2PM or Sunday 1PM to 5PM
- Tues, May 12th THS Board Meeting 6:00 to 8:00 PM
- Sat May 16th & Sun 17th THS booth at *150th Anniversary of the Woodhouse* on Highway 62
- Tues, May 26th TEAM meeting - 6:30 to 8:00 PM - *Indigenous Peoples of the Area - Elderberry Flute*
Making presented by Steve Berman
- Thurs, May 28th Talent Quality Book Club - 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Talent Museum
- Saturday, May 30th Talent Poker Tour - 1:00 PM at the Talent 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.