

# The Historacle

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*The Official Newsletter of the* Talent Historical Society



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**Bet You Don't Know When the Last Pioneer Stockade Was Built! Try 1959 and**

## **The Local 1959 Oregon Centennial Pony Express Ride**

Beginning June 1, 1959 and continuing through June 14, 1959 the Pony Express had riders making regular runs over all major Oregon highways into Portland, and during the "hundred days" of the Centennial Celebration there was weekly mail delivery.

A log stockade and centennial welcome booth with restroom facilities was built at the top of the Siskiyou summit to welcome tourists from the south. Brigadier General William H. Prentice, commander of the 417<sup>th</sup> Reserve Engineer Brigade (headquartered in Medford) commanded the National Guard men who were responsible for building the first stockade the U. S. Army had built in more than 60 years. The stockade had sentry posts which housed telescopes. The General jokingly remarked that the telescopes were there so that invading Californians coming up the deep canyons might be spotted at once, while Californians using the highways were to be welcomed to Oregon's Centennial celebrations. Actually, the telescopes were placed so that travelers traversing the 4,466 foot high summit could admire the views of California and Oregon that can be seen from the highest pass on the route from British Columbia to Mexico. The welcome center was manned from June 10 to September 15 and stocked with centennial literature. Some eighty army reserves helped build the stockade and rest rooms. Students from Southern Oregon college manned the stockade for twelve hours a day, beginning at eight a. m.

The Ashland Sage Riders carried the mail from the stockade through Ashland to Talent to Phoenix and to Medford where the Medford Trail Riders helped run the mail to the Jackson-Josephine county line north of the city of Rogue River. The run past Phoenix used 24 horses and riders and they covered that distance in one hour, thirty-five minutes. Each rider was stationed one to two miles apart along Highway 99 and exchanged saddlebags at a gallop.

The saddlebag that held the mail was loaned to the local group by C. E. Lane of Ashland and was the 108 year old saddlebag actually used to transport the mail from Eureka to Jacksonville in 1851-1852.

Both adult and teenage members of the Ashland Sage Riders participated in the 1959 run. The riders were Mike Jacoby, Velma Jacoby, Sharron Jacoby, Malcom Peck,

Earl Root, Martha Root, Charles Renskers, Ruth Renskers, Charles Renskers, Rita Mapes, Judy Ballman, Gene Plankenhorn, Mike Peck, Dick Westfall, Darlene Hanscomb, Mary James, Ethel Belz, Dick Reedy, Trudy Lewis, Beverly McMonigal, Tony Williams, Lucy Keating, Park Clark, Bill Lively, Mason Peck, Bud Plankenhorn, Phyliss Coke, Marcia Pruitt, Tony Ballman, and Bruce Ainsworth.

When the weekly runs began the Ashland Sage Riders covered the entire distance from the Siskiyou Summit to the Josephine County line.

Philatelists ordered “first covers” and envelopes with the Pony Express stamp available at \$1.04 each, using a regular 4 cent stamp.

### **Mail Tribune Articles on the Rogue River Indian War**

Beginning during the days following Christmas, a four part series regarding the Rogue River Indian War of 1856 was written by reporter Paul Fattig and illustrated by photographer Julia Moore. Because it was printed between Christmas and New Year's Day, a time when many are not scanning the local papers, the Talent Historical Society has placed the entire series on display in the museum. Interested individuals who may have missed the series can visit the museum to see and read it.

Titled “The Rogue River Indian War—Yesterday and Today,” the first section deals with the major events of the War which ranged from Little Butte Creek to the coast of Southern Oregon. That section includes the Oregon's “Trail of Tears” as Native Americans from several Southern Oregon tribes either were forced to walk the entire distance from the Rogue River Valley to the Grand Ronde Reservation near Independence, Oregon just south of Portland. Other tribal members from the coast were shipped north by boat, and all Indians from Oregon west of the Cascades were relocated from their tribal areas to that reservation, opening the all interior valleys and the coast of Oregon for pioneer settlement.

The second article focuses on Talent resident John Beeson's life-long effort, first to prevent the conflict between the pioneers and the original inhabitants of the Rogue Valley, and secondly on his twenty year national attempt to redress what he felt was inhumane treatment nationally of Native Americans. By writing his book “A Plea for the Indians” and traveling the east coast on a twenty year lecture tour, John Beeson is thought to have been Oregon's first civil rights activist.

The third article deals with the current anthropological search by Mark Tevskov, the director of Southern Oregon University's Laboratory of Anthropology, to locate the actual site of the Battle of Hungry Hill. That battle, which was a victory for the Takelma Indians and a complete defeat of the Oregon militia, was located somewhere west of Leland, north of Grants Pass in Josephine County.

The last article focuses on an agreement signed this last September 10 between the Bureau of Land Management, the Nature Conservancy and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. This agreement now gives the Confederated Tribes equal control over

any development in and around the Upper and Lower Table Rocks, on BLM's 1280 acres, the Nature Conservancy's 2789 acres, and some 800 adjacent easement acres.

## **Oh, Yes! We Have Had Visitors from Space!**

While no evidence proves that little green men from Mars or any other place outside of our earth has been found, our visitors from space are meteorites. In fact the largest nickel-iron chunk found in the United States was found near West Linn, Oregon. The Willamette Meteorite, about the size of a small car and weighing 15.5 tons was found in 1902, long after the native Americans in the area had identified the rock as a healing source that the Kalapuyas called Tomanowos.

In 1906, the Willamette Meteorite was moved to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where it still resides.

Locally as readers of the Mail Tribune may have noted recently, Sams Valley, just north of the lower Table Rock, in 1894 yielded up the first meteorite found in the state of Oregon. George P. Lindley of Sams Valley found the 15 pounder between the mouth of Sams Creek and the canyon. Lindley did not know what it was and used the meteorite as a door stop. After Lindley died, his son sold the Sams Valley meteorite to the Foote Mineral Company of Philadelphia in 1914. That company sliced it up and sold a two pound slice to Harvard University's meteorite collection. Another 2.4 pound slice was sold to the American Museum of Natural History where it joined the Willamette Meteorite.

In 1920 a second meteorite was found during a hydraulic gold-mining operation in a Sams Creek tributary. Dick Pugh, a scientist with the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory at Portland State University, indicates that no one knows where that piece is today. In the 1930s three more pieces of the Sams Valley meteorite fall were identified. They had been found years before by William M. Payne who had discovered them while panning for gold on his Sams Valley property. In 1949 a piece of the Sams Valley meteorite shower was discovered in a box of rocks at the Southern Oregon Historical Society museum then in Jacksonville. It weighed two pounds and is thought to have been one of those found by Payne.

For those interested in knowing more about Oregon meteorites, Professor Pugh will be here in the Rogue Valley for two programs open to the public. The first session is scheduled for 7:00 p. m. Wednesday, February 22, 2012, at the the planetarium at North Medford High School (1900 N. Keene Way Drive, Medford), and the second program will be held at 7:00 p. m. February 23, 2012, at the Science Works Hands-On Museum, in Ashland (1500 East Main Street).

**Note:** The following article was written by James Firman Anderson, who with his brother Eli, settled in the Talent area in January 1852, being the third and fourth Caucasians to move permanently to the Rogue River Valley. The two Anderson brothers were considered to be the best known citizens in Jackson County when they died. Eli lived in a mansion near Talent until 1909 when he and his wife moved to Ashland. The article below was written for the Table Rock Sentinel newspaper, and was published on August 31, 1861. The Sentinel was the first Jackson County newspaper and was published in Jacksonville. In 1861, Firman Anderson, who had crossed the Plains to California in 1848, once more came from the East in a covered wagon. This is what he wrote in August 1861:

### **Firman Anderson's 1861 Trip from Missouri to Jackson County, Oregon**

At your request, I will give you a brief narration of my expedition across the plains this present season. With reference to the early part of the expedition, I will merely state that, in company with Mr. Abram Tenbrook and family, of this county, and some of his friends, I crossed the Missouri river on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, and reached Fort Laramie on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June.

Experienced no difficulty from foes or from want of sustenance for stock—not even encountering anywhere the famous Government escort that we were promised, to protect us from the tomahawk and scalping knife of the merciless denizens of that waste of wilds. We fell in with Dr. Wells and Commodore Rose, of the Umpqua Valley, at Elkhorn river, and journeyed with them to Chimney rock, some four hundred miles.

As to the extent of the emigration from, our own observation and from what we could learn from others, it is equal in numbers—cattle alone excepted—to the famous emigration of '52. The greater portion went to California, and had with them a copious effusion of fine stock (horses) for that vast country.

For the benefit of future emigrants, I would say, take the celebrated Leander's Cut-off, as we did, from the last crossing of the Sweet water, and find for yourselves and stock an abundance of the best water and grass, instead of the barren wastes of the old route: also a savings of sixty miles of travel. Another great advantage of this route is that it leads you through the Green River Mountains above the forks of that rapid stream, instead of having to ferry the dangerous stream below. This route joins the old road at the City of Rocks, the junction of the Salt Lake road and Sublett's Cut-off.

We left Mr. Tenbrook and friends at this place for a company of California emigrants that were calculating to go by way of Honey Lake, as he preferred that route to the one by way of Goose Lake. At Lawson's Meadows, the junction of the Old California, Northern California and Southern Oregon roads, we were joined by Dr. Wells and Commodore Rose, who were designing, as we also were, to come through on the Goose Lake route. They being barefooted and the route a very rocky one concluded to go by way of Honey Lake, were we could get our animals shod.

This left of the company to come by the Goose Lake route fifteen men and several women and children. They expected to get into the valley [*Rogue Valley*] seven days ahead of us which was however, too great a difference in favor of that route. We have been in six days and they have not yet arrived. The Indians on that route, are known always to have been more or less hostile. I fear the worst, but sincerely hope

they may have been detained by a better fate than that which befell Bailey and his party. *[Bailey, trailing cattle to Carson City, was ambushed and killed in what is now Modoc County, California.]* Lemuel Baker of Albia, Iowa, whose father lives in Portland, was in this company when we left them.

There were with our company, already arrived, eighteen men, nine women, and quite a number of children, nine wagons, twenty horses and twenty-five head of cattle. Three of these teams, with their cargo of humanity, were bound for Linn County, Oregon: two of them for Puget Sound: one was “scattering,” that is, didn't know where it would fetch up, and the others would stop in this county. J. Firman Anderson.

**Note: Travel across the Oregon Trail virtually ceased by 1870. In 1869 the golden spike was driven at Promontory Summit, Utah, by officials of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads, and inaugurated the first transcontinental railroad.**

## **Oregon Newspapers Had an Early and Dramatic Impact**

The Table Rock Sentinel, published by early pioneer William G. T'Vault, was Jackson county's first newspaper. T'Vault had been on the ill-fated Meek Cutoff wagon train (recently the focus of a current highly-rated Western film), and had previously edited a newspaper in Oregon City before coming south to Jacksonville. The Sentinel began publication in 1855,

The first newspaper in the state of Oregon was the Oregon Spectator, which began publication in Oregon City on February 5, 1846. The previous article by Firman Anderson was taken from the Spectator. Historians Lida Childers (Talent) and Ruby Lacy (Ashland) worked for years compiling significant articles from old Jackson County newspapers, many volumes of which now reside in the Reference Library of the Talent Historical Society. It is their work that has made the previous article from J. Firman Anderson readily available.

Jackson county's oldest newspaper that is still in publication is Ashland's Daily Tidings, whose first issue was published on June 17, 1876. Medford's first newspaper was The Monitor, which existed shortly during 1885.

The Mail Tribune traces its origin to five previous Medford papers, none of which exist today. The Mail Tribune itself was founded in 1906 when the Ashland Tribune merged with the Medford Mail.

The Talent Historical Society's Reference Library has archived the monumental efforts of Childers and Lacy, who typed for scores of hours and recorded key historical data from the over thirteen county publications published prior to 1920

All of these are housed in the THS Reference Library and are available for researchers to use at the museum. Genealogists and historians will be pleased to know that each volume of these papers have two indexes each—one of individuals mentioned in the papers covered, and one for events covered during the specific time period. The Society also has a listing of the newspapers. They are absolutely good sources for those doing genealogical research.

## Historical Reminiscences of Orsen Avery Stearns

**Note:** Orson Avery Stearns was just over ten years old when his parents came west to Oregon in 1853. The Stearns settled up on Wagner Creek two years after the first pioneer settled in the Rogue River Valley. The Stearns cemetery was donated to the community by the Stearns family and was part of the Stearns donation land claim. These reminiscences were written when Orson was nearly eighty years old which would put the date of this composition as 1923. Editorial additions for clarity are marked by [ ] marks in the text below. The following article is chapter 1 of Orson's Reminiscences.

[Orson Stearns began the first chapter of his Reminiscences with this disclaimer:]  
 “It should not be forgotten that the writer does not claim infallibility in his reminiscences, but simply records here his reminiscences as he can recall them, and in a feeble way convey them to paper in his own way.”

Rogue River Valley was first settled in 1851, or rather that year witnessed the first pioneer settlement. The first dwelling house was erected on Bear Creek about midway between what is now Central Point and Medford by A. A. Skinner, who was the earliest Indian Agent appointed to take charge of the Rogue River Indians. This house (a log cabin of fair size) was occupied in the fall of 1853 when first seen by the writer, by Judge Skinner and Rice, the latter man with a family of a wife and one daughter. I always understood that the two men were old friends and partners. Skinner did not long remain a resident, but went to the Willamette Valley and located at or near where the city of Eugene now stands, and Skinner's Butte is a landmark to his memory, as it was undoubtedly named after him.

Several other houses were built that same year among which was that of Samuel Colver on the site of Phoenix, just across the road and little south of the present [Colver] house, known for many years as the block house. [Note: Orson is referring to the house that burned down a couple of years ago which dominated the south of the city of Phoenix for over 150 years.] Hiram Colver, a brother of Samuel's, took up an adjoining section to the south of Samuel's, both of these claims including the land lying along Bear Creek. Whether Hiram built his log cabin the year 1851 or not, I cannot say.

It should be remembered that the provisional government of the country [USA] enacted a law as an inducement to settlement of the Oregon Country, which then embraced both Oregon and Washington territories and part of Idaho and Montana, giving to every settler one section of land, if said settler was married and one half section to a bachelor. By the terms of this law, the amount of land was cut in half after the year 1852, therefore emigrants settling in the valley after that time were restricted to [the] amount of land, hence the variance between the earlier and late donation land claims.

I believe the families of the two Colver brothers remained in the Willamette valley until 1853, as up to that year there was a very sparse settlement and the facilities for procuring provisions was as limited and prices so prohibitive that it would have been almost impossible to maintain a family. Believe there had been a few small fields of grain and vegetable gardens raised in 1852, but am not sure of that. It was difficult to obtain seed wheat at \$10.00 per bushel and everything else was correspondingly high.

My father traded Jacob Wagner a two horse wagon worth \$200.00 for 100 hills of potatoes and dug them himself. Flour was selling at \$33.00 per hundred and the sacks would stand alone after the flour was emptied out, the flour having been packed across the Coast Mountains from Scottsburg during the rainy season, uncovered until wet-in from ½ to 2 inches in depth which hardened into a stiff dough and molded. All kinds of groceries were scarce and very high. The sugar we could get came in fifty pound mats, it was more like sand as it was an ashy grey color and full of all kinds of filth. It was made in China with the usual contempt for cleanliness that was characteristic of the Coolie [note the disparagement of the Chinese implicit in this remark!] My mother knew how to refine the sugar after which it resembled nice clean yellow maple sugar, but was reduced in weight fully one-fourth in the process. For coffee, parched corn, peas and sometimes carrots or parsnips were used. Some people used browned bread crumbs making what was termed Crust Coffee.

The merchants those days carried but little clothing except miner's supplies and people had to resort to picking up castaway clothing from the streets of Jacksonville where it was the custom of the miners and gamblers to throw their old or soiled clothing after purchasing new, and a large part of this castaway garments were simply soiled, and after washing nearly good as new. As no children's clothing or footwear were obtainable, nor material for the making of them, the mothers of families were forced to make the clothing for their own and children's wear.

My father made lasts for the footwear of all the family except for himself, and mother made the shoes for the family, the uppers from castaway boots picked up in the streets of Jacksonville in front of the stores, the soles made from harness or saddle leathers picked up here and there. All flour sacks were carefully washed and used to make underwear, pillow cases, sheets, etc.

On account of the high prices and poor quality of the flour, potatoes and squash were added to make it go farther, and often the adulterant was a perceptible improvement to the quality of the bread. A few wild plums were to be had along the streams, and elderberries quite plentiful. They were largely used both as sauces, pies and dried for winter use, while some made a very fine wine of them for use in case of sickness.

After the harvest of 1854, the amount of flour from outside was largely supplemented by boiled wheat, and coarse meal made by grinding wheat or corn in large coffee mills bought for that purpose. As wild game was quite plentiful, and after the first winter, beef was plentiful and of excellent quality, the fare of the settlers was much improved.

There is a diversity of opinion as to the building of the first sawmill. I have always been of the impression that the sawmill on Wagner Creek built by Granville Naylor and Lockwood Little and a doctor, was the first, and that of Milton Little of Gasburg second, but some claim that the sawmill built by the Emery brothers at Ashland was first. However, all three of these mills were erected very early and were running in 1854.

Neither of them could saw much more in a day than two good whip sawyers. They used to claim they could, either of them, saw from 500 to 1000 feet in twenty-four hours, and they were always behind their orders. The early settlers had to split or hew out puncheons for their doors, floor, and other parts, requiring lumber in their house's construction. Most of the early houses were built of round logs with the bark on; some were hewn on the inside, a very few hewn on both sides. All were chinked by putting split pieces from shingle or shake bolts and plaster over with mud. Chimneys and fireplaces built of rough stones with split slats and used for chimneys. Windows were very rare except for a hole cut through the logs and covered by cloth, usually an empty flour sack. Many of the first cabins built had earthen floors, some rough slabs from the mills with the sawed side up, and the edges trimmed to fit by an axe.

## **Community Tribute to Alice Burnette Set for February 26, 2012**

**Long time Talent activist and community leader Alice Burnette, now 95, will be honored at a "Tribute to Alice Burnette" to be held at the Talent Community Building on Sunday, February 26, 2012, from 3:00 to 5:00 p. m. Sponsored by the Talent Historical Society, and hosted by Mary Louise Gleim and Lani Richstein.** Those who wish to honor Alice for her many years of service and dedication to the citizens of Talent are asked to attend and extend their appreciation to her.

Alice was often the founding member of such organizations as the Talent Federated Women's Club, the September Harvest Festival, and served many years as the leader of the area Campfire Girls clubs and director of a Campfire Girls summer camp up Wagner Creek. Perhaps her longest public service to the Talent area was the joint publishing effort of a mimeographed newspaper, the Talent area News Flashes, published from 1934 to 1989 in both a biweekly and monthly fashion. Alice and the late Mae Lowe, wrote, typed the stencils, printed the papers, distributed the papers free of charge to the residents of Talent for 55 years. She was one of the founders of the Talent Historical Society, and a member of the Friends of the Talent Library. She worked in the Talent post office for years, and was a key agitator that got Talent a public sewer system.

## **Been Here A Long, Long Time**

The oldest record of humans on the North American continent was found a few years ago in a cave near Paisley---fossilized human dung. Now archeologists have discovered two fossil beaver teeth up near Dayville that scientists say date to about 7.3 million years ago—the earliest record of a beaver in North America. So those folk who know that Oregon is called the Beaver State can glory in that distinction—including graduates from Oregon State University!

## **Membership New and Renewed October 2011 Through January 2012**

### **Individual Membership**

Hunt, Dianne G.; Cooley, Linda; Hanscom, Nelda; Snook, Bruce D.; Truwe, Ben; Ricks, LaVelle; Berger, Fredric; Dean, Joan J.; Rockfellow, John; Hunt, Dianne G.;

### **Family Membership**

Wagner, Ron & Jackie; Bradley, Jim & Remencuis, Patricia; Slack, Billy; Gleim, Bud & Mary Louise; Fullerton, Lillian; Holdridge, Robert G.; Carr, Robert & Karen; Baylor, George & Colleen; Douglas, Grail & Phyllis; Guthrie, Dwayne; Phillips, Dick & Shirl; Casebeer, Robert & Audrey; Gore, Cecil & Lysa; Fulton, Robert & Elizabeth; Perdue, Carl & Wanda; Colwell, Cheryl Lynn & Evans, Marilyn; Delsman, Robert & Carol; Jackson, Daniel & Linda

### **Business Sponsorship**

Rockfellow, Gary; Kramer, George; Maize, James W. Jr.; Carter, Liz; Hunkins, Ralph & Margaret

### **Total Membership Dues during this last quarter provided \$990.00 to the Society.**

Memberships provide one of the more stable sources of financial support for the Talent Historical Society. This quarter our memberships provided a total of \$990.00 to help the Society perform its mission. We also have an arrangement with Camelot Theatre which uses our floor space to prepare their actors, dancers and singers for their upcoming productions when their theater space is unavailable because a production is using their theater space. This cooperative arrangement helps the Society with the lease of the building from the City of Talent, and with some of the essential utility bills. Gifts, donations--both in time and in materials; and add volunteers and the assignment by Experience Works of one experienced individual also helps the Society staff our facility.

**FUND RAISER - MAY 12, 2012** The Talent Historical Society will be participating in the Talent citywide Yard Sale on Saturday, May 12, 2012 from 9:00am to 5:00pm. This is an opportunity for you to get rid of unwanted possessions that still have value. We are asking members and friends to bring the following items: Books, clothes, jewelry, furniture, bedding, towels, kitchen and bath items, garage or garden items, collectibles, knick knacks, or any item that you think we will be able to resell. You can bring them to the Talent Historical society on Friday, May 11 from 10:00am to 3:00pm or call Pamela @ 541-535-4700 to schedule a pick up on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, or if you have any questions about the Yard Sale. We will be selling these items to raise money for the Talent Historical Society Museum. All of your donations are tax deductible!

**Community Wide**  
**“Tribute to Alice Burnette”**  
**February 26, 2012 3:00 to 5:00 p. m.**  
**Community Center Building**  
**Join Us in Honoring this Remarkable Lady of Talent**

**Talent Historical Society**  
**105 N. Market Street**  
**P. O. Box 582**  
**Talent, Oregon 97540**  
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