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

By Robin Cook

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.

Upcoming Events

June 4
THS Board Meeting
6:00 pm
At the Museum

June 11
Elementary School - Outdoor Discover Program (held at Talent Community Center)
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Special Presentation by Talent Quality Book Club

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

Talent School and students about 1908

Volume 25 Issue 2
June 2019

The Historacle
The Official Newsletter of the Talent Historical Society

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. Originally, this building had been the Talent Elementary School. It was the 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. By December of that year the construction of the building had begun. It cost approximately $1,500 to build the two-room schoolhouse. The school was constructed of wood, built upon a stone foundation. Its vernacular style and gabled roof reflected the common architectural design of the late 19th century. 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, blackboards, and teacher tables. 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. 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. 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. Attendance varied from as little as one day up to fifty-eight days. Students wanting to further their education beyond the elementary level had to go elsewhere, usually to Ashland. For the next decade,
Museum Hours:
Saturday & Sunday
1:00 to 5:00 pm

Memberships since Last Issue

New Members:
Ruth Ansara
Susan (Hartley) Andrews
Kylie & Courtney Buolo
Nan Fessenden
Heather Gleason-Hiesanz
Daniel Wise

Renewals:
Kurt Bailey
Bill & Carolyn Cecil
Joel Goldman
Christopher & Melody Knox
Marllynn Lee
Ron & Stella Medinger

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

Additional Donation:
Brent Thompson

Honorary Lifetime Memberships
Bob Casebeer
Jan Wright
Susan Moulder
Katherine Harris

The Talent Historical Society
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.
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.
- Niels Olof 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 nails 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.

The Talent Historical Society is a qualified Oregon Nonprofit participant of the Oregon Cultural Trust, and we encourage your support of this innovative, uniquely Oregon organization. For more information, please go to culturaltrust.org.

The 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 Talitans 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 its 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?

President’s Message by Ron Medinger

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.

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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. An election at the new schoolhouse on April 11, 1914 determined the fate of the old 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. The city then converted the building to its new purpose. 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.” 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 new library opened on April 24, 1920, with a collection of 225 books and eight magazines. The Community Club, a ladies organization, claimed responsibility for preparing a room in the hall for the new library and paying the salary for a part-time librarian. The Community Club continued to pay for half of the expense for finishing the floor. 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.” 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.”

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. It also became a meeting place for the Good Government Congress during the so-called Jackson County Rebellion in 1933. 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. In the latter part of 1936, plumbing with hot water in the lavatories was approved. A door constructed between the kitchen and the dining room was an addition welcomed by the Community Club. Then in November 1938, the council approved the purchase of roofing shingles for the dining room and the kitchen. 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. The promise of donated funds by each organization made this final project possible.

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, 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 Talent 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 next Wednesday, 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@talentinhistory.org or call the museum at 541-512-8838 for additional information.

Freddie Taulani
Winner of Talent Poker Tour XLI

Films shown in the Town Hall Circa 1930s

No 3 Public School, Talent, Ore.

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.

Site of Fort Wagner
226 Talent Avenue
ca. 1853

DON’T MISS OUT!!
Would you like timely email reminders about upcoming events at the Talent Historical Society? If so, contact us at: info@talentinhistory.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.
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 City 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, Armin Frisston, encouraged growth in Talent. He realized that part of that growth included a new City Hall. In 1969, the talent was a new 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. The former police station and city recorder farewell to those leaving office.

out the seventies, the police department still the poll site for elections. Through-when there is a large gathering, and it is

dinners, parties, Christmas bazaars,
and organizations, dances, breakfasts,
marked the beginning of the Talent Com-
the police department, and the city hall no
facility.

police department, had moved to its new
Hall began in 1970, and by 1971 the
city hall. Construction of the new City
Council about excavating and bringing
water would be directed into the storm
the parent co-op, the preschool had become a non
room and dining room during this time.
In an effort to prevent further flooding, the parent co-op approached the City
Council about excavating and bringing
grating gutters put around the building so
would be directed into the storm
drains. The council approved the plan
and the parent co-op implemented it.
The preschool continued for another
five years, with the enrollment fluctu-
ating from 12 to 20 children. The school
hosted morning programs for the children
in the mid-1970s. The City Hall housed another service to the community. The
former police station and City Recorder
office because the site for a preschool. As
demand for childcare reflected a change
in societal roles as more mothers entered
the workforce. Janet Post started LOVE
preschool in 1975. It began as a parent
co-op, with parents doing the decorating and
t each other to form the Restoration Com-
mission in 1994. Through this commis-
sion, the Talent community worked to
keep the old library building in the
community, and by the 1950s it was the Lion
Club. These dances were one of their
biggest fundraisers. They hired music-
ians to play these dances and in the
1950s they even hired the Maddox
Brothers and Rose. At that time they
could get the whole group to come and
give for $100 a night. The money
earned from these fundraisers was, in
turn, used to make improvements on the
City Hall. One of their improvements
was an addition to the building in the
mid-1960s.

Like so many organizations in the
past, the Lion 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 for the new hall were partially
covered by the City, with the balance
finance by the Lions Club.

City Hall, however, continued to take
space. In 1956, it increased by a brick
and a gas heater to replace the wood-
stoves modernized the facility.
In a daily post, we are following pioneer Welborn Beeson. To read all the THS posts and information, go to www.facebook.com and type Talent Historical in the search bar at the top of the page. Then from the options chosen, select Talent Historical Society.

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

Mar 1st...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 prophesy a dry summer.

The lumber business kept everyone busy:

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

Emmetts gets some blocks:

Mar 6th...Henry and I went to Jacksonville...bought shoes for Kate 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 books....

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

Welborn ponders the past:

Mar 10th... Oh how lonson 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 voluntarily.... I feel very lonecon 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 & Emmett down the valley, for a buggy ride, stopped at the Gassburg School house to Meeting, a large congregation out, all the neighbors far and near, the first time this season.

Wellborn foands he is not good at being a bachelor:

Mar 16th...I am not leading an exciting life I seem to be busy and in the highflth of my glory but I do not think I can live as long under so much excitement 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 time It runs down into James Mountain.

Reflection:

April 20th...I am now leading an exciting life I seem to be busy and in the highflth of my glory but I do not think I can live as long under so much excitement 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 time It runs down into James Mountain.

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?