



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

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December 2020

The Almeda Fire — Evacuation Stories

by Myke Gelhaus

On September 8, 2020, the toxic combination of single digit humidity and erratic, high gusty winds pushed a wild-fire through the Bear Creek Greenway from Almeda Drive in north Ashland, through Talent and Phoenix, and into the outskirts of Medford, leaving a 9-mile-long path of destruction. The blaze grew quickly, spewing out wind blown embers over the fire lines, overwhelming the fire fighter's best efforts. Evacuation was hasty and hectic.

Ultimately almost 2,800 structures were destroyed, three-quarters of which were manufactured homes in a dozen mobile home parks that line Pacific Hwy 99 and Interstate 5. Later investigation discovered a second point of origin in Phoenix which may explain the increased fire presence there. Because the fires traveled along the highways, many businesses were also lost. Amazingly, there were only four deaths from the fire.

As the blaze pushed through to the homes on the south side of Talent, the fire fighters, who were also battling low resources (water, manpower), used Talent Avenue as a break, attempting to keep the flames from consuming the west side of town. Sadly, it was too late for the neighborhoods east of Talent's main street who were in a direct path of the fire. I live on Talent Avenue across from those many blocks of burned down homes. I can see the traffic a ½ mile away on Hwy. 99 at night, directly through what trees remain.

When I first moved to Talent 3½ years ago, one of the things about the town that I fell in love with was how many well maintained vintage and old homes remained. Hanscom Hall was right down the street from me, and it was a used bookstore, heaven! Right next door, Malmgren Garage was a beautifully restored Auto Repair Shop, now an Antique store. The wildfire took both of



Two weeks after the blaze, the concrete bones of Malmgren Garage sit boldly amidst its rubble, waiting to be rescued.

these buildings along with almost everything east of Talent Avenue up to Valley View Road in downtown Talent.

Vintage Buildings to be Rebuilt

In 1979 Bonnie Morgan bought the Malmgren Garage at 111 Talent Ave for her business, Southern Oregon Pottery & Supply. She also purchased Hanscom Hall during this time.

"We loved being in Talent.," she tells us. "There was so little traffic on Talent Ave. back then that the Chief of Police (Chuck Roberts) told us that when we had deliveries, they could park in the middle of the street, and we could run the fork lift out into the street to unload."

After 30 years of serving the clay community, the business closed in 2008. Since then Jack Langford had his sculpture studio in the building, and most recently Angela Blackwell had her Chinese Antique shop."

"I have always been attracted to old buildings, so there was not really a big "should we rebuild?" decision moment. It was more about looking at what was there and thinking how we could do this.... Yes, we could save one or two of the buildings on the City of Talent Landmark list. 111 has a large foot print with

over 4000 sq. ft.. I am exploring the idea of the front part being commercial maybe 1000 sq ft and the rest in apartments. I like the idea of live/work spaces and the energy they can bring to the downtown area. I think 111 has great bones. I love the rough poured concrete walls and classic false front design with the large garage door opening. The building started life in the mid 1920's as a repair garage and I would want to keep that feeling to honor its past."

Bonnie will be working with George Kramer, of Kramer and Company, award winning historic building consultants who have done other work in Talent and who are supporters of the Museum.

"We need to confirm the condition of the concrete, have some discussions with Talent Community Development about our ideas and the possibilities, and then start the design process, along the way we need to find a builder. Clean up was our first step on a long road."



Bonnie Morgan

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/Mailing 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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Editor: Myke Gelhaus

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
Closed Until Further Notice

Memberships Since Last Issue

New Memberships:

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“History rarely repeats itself, but its
echoes never go away.

Tariq Ali

State of Happiness!

Ron Medinger, Talent Historical Society's President, retires from Harry and David

by Debra Moon and the THS Board

Ron Medinger moved from Nebraska to Jackson County in 1986. He has been a member of the Talent Historical Society (THS) since it was founded in 1994. He was General Manager for Medinger Construction, Inc. developing Mountain Meadows Retirement Community in Ashland. Ron served on the Urban Renewal Agency for City of Talent for seven years. He was also the Chairman of the Community Center Restoration Commission from 1994 to 1999. He brings a lot of knowledge, connections and leadership skills to the THS Board. He has been the President of THS since 2014 and has recruited many valuable Board Members and volunteers.

Ron retired from Harry and David on November 18th. He has been looking forward to more time at home, more time for his pet history projects and devoting more time and energy to the Talent Historical Society. We are so happy for him. Below is a collection of comments from the THS Board Members who helped celebrate his retirement:

Myke Ann Reeser—

“Ron called me in November 2019, after I sent in my new membership. His words of kindness and encouragement to join the board were so endearing to me that I said, ‘Okay’. After the board members accepted me in, it has been a great joy to be a part of this organization. It was Ron who made me feel quite welcome and of value. He’s one of my top five favorite people!”

Cherie Brooks—

“Congratulations on your recent retirement from Harry and David. It is well deserved. Thank you for your dedication to the Talent Historical Society. You always give 100% to whatever you are involved in, while juggling several balls in the air. I count myself lucky to be called your friend.”

Debra Moon—

“I met Ron when I came to the Talent Historical Society to volunteer staffing the Museum on Sundays. I truly enjoyed the projects he suggested I do, and I really liked listening to his stories about local history. I found each Sunday that we would spend an hour talking and then 2 or 3 hours working on things needed in the Museum and Museum Library. It was a wonderful mix. I learned so much from him. Once I joined the THS Board, I enjoyed his support at meetings and in between when he would meet to help me on grants or special tasks.

Ron, welcome to retirement! We look forward to having more of your time and attention at the Historical Society.”

Jan Wright—

“Congratulations on your retirement, Ron. We are glad that you will be putting in more time and work at the Museum.”

Emmalisa Whalley—

“I met Ron a year after I moved back to Southern Oregon and I have been on the board with him ever since, and I consider him my friend. Ron is so excited to be able to spend more time at and about the museum and I love his enthusiasm. He has been a great Talent Tomato King to my Queen, and he is a fantastic Santa. I hope you totally enjoy your retirement,

and it will be nice to see what the future brings.”

On November 23rd several Board Members gathered briefly (covid style—wearing masks, six feet distance, doors open and fans going) to celebrate the retirement event. As a special surprise for Ron, they had hung a historical water pipe, the type of which had been used to bring water to the Brick School, over the entrance door of the Museum. Ron had wanted that pipe up there for years. A friend

of Jan Wright, a blacksmith, custom made the brackets to hang the large pipe and a volunteer secured them to the wall. Willow McCloud home made a special cake with frosting replicas of Harry and David and the Museum. She also made grab and go cupcakes for the rest of the Board, with the message, “We Love Ron” on the bags. A collection was taken to give Ron a Home Depot Gift Certificate. Ron Medinger is not only the THS Board President, he also does a big share of the finances for the THS at present.

He also files yearly IRS forms, pays bills, and keeps the place running. He is still doing all this although he and his wife, Stella, were among the citizens of Talent who lost their home. A big Thank You and Shout Out to you, Ron!



**“We Love Ron” (left to right)
Cherie Brooks, Myke Reeser and
Willow McCloud.**

Ron has written a “blood, sweat and tears” article about his evacuation experience and dealing with feelings and problems after the fire which we will publish in the March 1st issue. Thank you all, we received so many articles, more than we could print in this issue, so we’ve decided to continue printing them along with stories of rebuilding and remaking our community here in Talent. That’s why we’re here, it’s history! We’ll be looking for suggestions for pictures and more articles would be great, email me at myke505@gmail.com -Myke Gelhaus, Editor

Godzilla Enters Talent

by Patti Duke

Patti and our editor, Myke Gelhaus live in Holiday Gardens on Talent Avenue. Patti is a retired teacher and lived on Guadalcanal Island in the Solomon Islands for 20 years. This adventure has added a new story to her vast repertoire.



I knew it was past time to leave my apartment when I heard what sounded like Godzilla coming up Talent Ave. throwing propane tank bombs and exploding ammunition. I had established an evacuation plan long ago with my neighbor, Myke Gelhaus, who has a car, but she was in Medford when the fire broke out. With no car, and carrying Myke's cat Sassy, I could only carry a small daypack if I had to hitchhike out, so I chose to take my Dad's WW2 bronze star, his letter of commendation and a necklace with shards of Roman glass in it given to me by a friend in Israel. I had planned someday to give it to my niece.

Another neighbor said I could ride with her but she was going to wait for the Level 3 evacuation order which never came. I didn't want to wait any longer because even though we hadn't been alerted, it felt like, and turned out to be, Level 3 then. I couldn't go out to the street, which was bumper to bumper with evacuees, because the cat and cage were too heavy for me to carry far. Luckily a man from our compound was being wheeled out by members of his church. They had room and his daughter said Sassy and I could go with them. The wind and smoke made it hard to breathe as we walked to Rays, a block away, where she was parked. Luckily one of the church members carried Sassy's cage for me as I was struggling to breathe. We headed up to feeder roads behind Talent and Phoenix, hoping to make our way to Walmart where Myke was waiting for her cat and her essential medications which I had grabbed. Behind Phoenix we could see flames shooting across the orchards below and the winds had shifted in our direction so we turned around and headed up to J'Ville. I looked back to see an air tanker

dropping its load on the fast-moving flames approaching vehicles on HWY 99 and I-5. As we were heading to J'Ville, thick black smoke full of flames came towards us. We saw a metal shed and a small pond we might have to use as a refuge but luckily the winds shifted. We decided to go up a back way to Williams after stopping at a farm to ask if we were on the right road.

I stayed with my rescuers on their farm in Williams for two nights. The room I slept in was full of taxidermy animals. I let Sassy out of her cage and she immediately went on her haunches and snarled at the slightly open closet door. The eyes peering out at her were a cougar they'd had to shoot a few years ago when it stalked sheep in their pasture. There was also a the moose rack that Sassy did love rubbing on.

The second day we could see the huge smoke cloud from the Happy Camp fire and were informed that Williams was on Level 1 alert so the third morning they took me to Ashland where Sassy and Myke were reunited and I had a friend to stay with.

I have a lot of Solomon Islanders on my FB page and some got a bit confused by the English when I wrote that it looked like a flamethrower was ejecting flames over the orchards at about 4 football fields a second. I hear the story going around Guadalcanal is that the real Godzilla came to Talent and a Polynesian who dances with twirling flame sticks (there are two Polynesian Islands in the Solomon Islands) was fighting Godzilla while I and others were fleeing Talent. Love this lost in translation account of my evacuation.



Sassy is always an indoor cat due to regulations where we live, so I believe she is thinking about her adventure in Williams when she's tearing about the house these days.

My September 8, 2020

Fire Story

By Lunette Fleming

My husband and I spent the morning of September 8th cleaning up damage from the wind storm from the night before, then I prepared for a day of errands in Ashland and Medford. Around 11 a.m. I started my car. That is when I saw a column of smoke billowing up in the direction of Ashland. I went back in the house and called my husband to come take a look. I told him it might be a good idea to think about what might be needed if a fire should come our way and after looking at the column of smoke he said, "maybe you should stay home today." Well, I didn't stay home.. By the time I reached the intersection of Valley View and South Pacific Hwy., the road south was closed to traffic so I turned around and decided to do my errands in Medford first.

As I drove to Medford I turned the radio on hoping to hear of any emergency evacuation news. Since there was no mention of a fire in the valley, I proceeded to run errands while keeping the radio on. By 1:30 p.m. I was in East Medford on North Phoenix Road. I could see the smoke growing closer to Phoenix and became alarmed. I headed home via N. Phoenix Road. I was able to get across Hwy. 99 in bumper to bumper traffic by going through Ray's Market to Cheryl Street, past the High School on Rose Street and eventually reached Colver Road. The oncoming traffic on Colver Road by now was a mix of bumper to bumper cars and semi-trucks heading towards Medford. I was headed toward the home we had just moved to 5 months earlier at the railroad crossing on Talent's NW border. The cars traveling in my direction were stop and go.

When I reached my home my daughter-in-law and two granddaughters were watching the helicopters fly back and forth over the highway near us. I decided we wouldn't wait any longer to be told to evacuate, however my husband refused to come with us. I loaded my disabled mother, my 3½ year-old granddaughter and my dog in the car while my daughter-in-law followed me with her 1½ year old daughter in her car. We headed to my brother's



*Lunette and Sanford Fleming,
A resourceful couple!*

house in West Medford by turning off Colver at Pioneer and taking Dark Hollow. When we arrived at my brother's house around 3:00 p.m., he was surprised to see us. He didn't even know there was a fire. Soon my Aunt, Uncle, and Cousin arrived from their home in Medford Estates, and finally my son arrived but without my husband. A retired Ashland fire fighter friend called to see if we were all safe. When I told him Sanford had stayed behind he was very concerned. He said the fire had likely already burned through that area. That's when our son left to try to find his dad

It was dark by the time Justin and San arrived in Medford. My sister-in-law prepared food for all 10 evacuees while we watched reports on the laptop I had brought with me, and the television. After eating, my husband said he wanted to go back to check on things. I refused to take him. Sanford is legally blind with less than 10% of his field of vision, so, unless someone else was crazy enough to drive him home, he would just have to stay put with the rest of us. That is when my brother volunteered to take him home. What's a woman to do with men like that? Off they went. By this time there were widespread power outages in Talent and Phoenix. Orange embers and flames lit up the darkness looking East and South. We listened to the emergency radio calls on the KOB1 Facebook page. It didn't sound good. It sounded bad, very bad

Sometime, among reports that Medford Estates had burned, Phoenix and Talent were in ashes, the Rogue Valley Manor was being evacuated, and my brother's neighborhood was at a level 2

evacuation notice, my brother called on his cell phone to tell me that our property was surrounded by 20 foot tall flames of fire. Sanford was driving the riding lawn mower along the burning fence line hoping to keep the flames from reaching our home. When my son heard this, he took off again to help his dad. I reminded my brother that we had a generator that could run the well pump so they could use water to fight the flames if they were crazy enough to stay there. Well, they got the generator going and gathered up all the hoses they could find. My brother directed my husband to cut the grass between the burning blackberries on the western fence line between our field and our neighbor's field before it reached the large briar patch with trees around our neighbor's house. While driving the mower through the gate opening, my husband ran into the burning fence post. Flames went under and up the sides of the mower but San was able to back up before damage was done to it. My brother fought the fire with a shovel and by carrying buckets of water across the hay field from the house to quench the burning fence posts and stop the progression of the fire along the western fence while my husband subdued the flames on the eastern side of the property with a garden hose and sprinklers.

When my brother called to report that the flames had died down enough that it would be safe to come home, I drove the back roads, arriving home around midnight with flames still burning along the railroad tracks as far as I could see both ways. When my husband left the field around 2 a.m. on September 9, we could still hear explosions in the distance. When we fell into a troubled sleep, we had no idea how much of Talent was left or if the fire would flare up in the night, but, because we had a generator, we had water and lights and believed we, at least, would be safe for the time being.

We wouldn't find out for days what had been burned and what had been spared because there were roadblocks in many places. My son's Talent home on 2nd street was spared but because the power was out and the water was off his family ate meals and stayed with us during the day and then went home at night to prevent looting. A neighbor living in

Candlewood Park came by during the days before Talent water was on to fill up 5-gallon jugs from our well to share with his neighbors. We had to drive the back roads to West Medford to get gasoline for the generator. Nearly every time we drove to Medford we were met with new roadblocks that changed from day to day because new fires flared up around Phoenix. On one trip to get gas, my son was blocked on his way home from driving to Colver Road. He had to go back to Griffin Creek and drive up the mountain roads, out of cell phone range, to Anderson Creek Road and come down Wagner Creek Road to get home. The deputies manning the road blocks couldn't tell drivers which roads to take to get home. We just had to figure it out ourselves.

My family has lived in Talent for nearly 60 years so we were able to figure it out, getting food and gas by using different back country roads between Talent and Medford, but we couldn't figure out how to get to Ashland. We had been told that Talent Avenue was closed, the Phoenix, Talent, and North Ashland I-5 Exits were closed and Hwy. 99 was closed between the intersection of Stage Road and Ashland, but once, while I was on my way back from Costco, I got on the freeway without thinking, not remembering the closures until I got to exit 21, I had to turn around at Exit 14 and go back to Medford and then through trial and error discover the path back to Colver via Dark Hollow, etc. When Voorhies Road was blocked I asked the Deputy Sheriff, "How do I get back to Talent from here?" He didn't know. Good thing my mother and father loved trying new country roads when I was a kid growing up on Wagner Creek Road

By the time I got home with a Costco roasted chicken and pumpkin pie it was late and I was tired but I made mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, cornbread, and green salad. That evening I celebrated a Thanksgiving dinner with my extended family, thanking God for surviving the worst natural catastrophe we had ever experienced.



Memories: Lost & Found

By Belinda Klimek Vos

My Talent roots run long and deep. My Grandparents homesteaded in the mountains west of Talent in 1918, and then moved down into Talent proper when their children needed to go to school. But my Grandmother had always wanted a farm, so in 1937 they purchased 41 acres just south of Talent with the northwest corner lying across from Rapp Lane, and that is where their house stood. Recently, it was occupied by South Valley Pool & Spa. The property ran south from there along South Pacific Highway with the eastern boundary being Bear Creek.

When my Father returned from WWII, my Grandmother gave him and his new wife several acres at the south end of the property. He then proceeded to build a house for his family and that is where I grew up. The house at 717 S. Pacific Hwy. was most recently the home of Simple Machine Winery. The land between my Grandmother's house and my old house was divided and sold through the years with several small businesses locating there. The bottom land in the big field adjacent to the creek was used for wheat, alfalfa and later on became Mt. View Estates. But now, everything is gone. It all burned down in the Almeda fire of September 8, 2020. All

those memories from my childhood are just piles of ash.

Photos clearly show that when my Father was building our house in 1946, there were no buildings to the west at all. The road out in front was just two lanes and was always referred to by locals as the New Highway. It was the new location of Highway 99, the Pacific Highway, compared to the Old Highway (now Talent Avenue). Later when I was growing up, a few houses were built along the highway, but the land lying between the roads was a cow pasture with a unfriendly bull presiding. If I wanted to visit friends on the Old Hwy., I needed to go to Creel Rd. or usually north to Rapp Road and around. At that time, Arnos Rd. didn't exist. It was a rural area and wasn't included in the Talent city limits until years later. What a wonderful place to grow up. With the creek running down at the bottom of the hill, I spent many a day playing and exploring all the nooks and crannies amongst the oak trees.

Currently, my husband and I live in the foothills between Talent and Phoenix just up from Colver Rd. and I'm proud to say I still have a Talent mailing address. When the fire started on the morning of Sept. 8th, we watched in horror as the clouds of billowing smoke got closer and closer. Like so many others, our power was cut off

early on, and trying to figure out where the monster was headed became our primary purpose. It headed north and for the most part stayed down in the valley devouring most everything in its path. Our two sons and their families were more directly in its path and evacuated early that afternoon. We stayed on hoping that we were safe. But as darkness fell and retardant planes and helicopters could no longer fly, the fire began to spread west, encroaching closer to us. There came a point when it was no longer safe for us to stay and we headed down the driveway. I took one last look at our home for the past 30 years, assuming it would be lost. The night sky glowed red and we could see the flames just over the hill, but we were safe and our family was safe, and that was all that really mattered. Thanks to the amazing efforts of the firefighters, they managed to secure a fire line on Colver Rd. and our neighborhood was saved. Our house was still there when we returned.

Over the years, that southern section of Talent along Hwy. 99 has become much more commercial, and the land between the Highway and Talent Avenue filled in with apartment buildings and a large manufactured home park reached by Arnos Road. It was a busy area with businesses lining the road. More than a week passed after the fire before that section of road was open again. Until then, downed power poles and debris made it too dangerous for traffic. But eventually there came a point when once again you could travel south on 99 from



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Phoenix to Talent to Ashland , and I knew I needed to go and see what the fire had done with my own eyes. I had seen the photos. I should have been prepared. We set out to view the destruction. No words can really do it justice. My hand was gripping the door handle tightly and my stomach was tied in a knot. So much was gone. Just gone. We had to keep up with the traffic as my head turned from side to side, saying over and over that this was gone, and that was gone It was strangely disorienting. All those familiar places were missing. Where was I exactly? Rapp Rd, was just ahead.

My Grandmother's house was just a pile of rubble, and there was little left of the house I grew up in. Only the chimney remained. Some of the pretty red tiles on the face of the chimney survived, while others were scorched and

brown . My Mother had loved those tiles as they reminded her of fireplaces in her native England. How many times had I stood in front of it on a cold winter's day? As I surveyed the carnage around me, it suddenly occurred to me that I could once again see across those former green fields to the road to the west. You could see from the New Highway to the Old Hwy again. Just burnt remnants of buildings and homes were all that remained in between. The burned carcasses of trees stood out directly across from my old house, but along Arnos Rd. not much was left. In a strange way, it had gone back to how it had been so many years ago. We are, after all, just borrowers of this land. Building on it and thinking that what we humans have constructed is somehow permanent is in reality a myth. A fire like this proves that our material dwellings are but temporary. But what no fire can do is take away the memories. Over the past few weeks, I have found myself remembering that little house on the highway more and more. It might be gone, but I can still recall how it felt to grow up there.

My family was one of the lucky ones. Our houses survived and my deepest sympathies go out to those that weren't so lucky. Many friends lost everything. I hope that even though your house might be gone that you will still have memories to somehow get you through. The response from those who call Talent home has been tremendous, and I hope that everyone who has any kind of Talent roots will help one another and rebuild our special town back again; treasuring our old memories while finding ways to make new memories in the future.



1946 - Richard Klimek building the house at 717 S .Pac. Hwy.
Note that there are no buildings looking to the west toward what is now Talent Avenue.



The remains of the house at 717 S .Pacific Hwy. after the Almeda fire hit. Notice that the chimney and some tiles are all that remain.

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My Mother's Daughter

The Continuing Memoirs of Jewel Donaca Lockard

Jewel Donaca Lockard's Memoirs Part Three

The hills we had moved to were covered with snags (dead trees), small trees and brush. We were always taking walks, which was a problem, because I was deathly afraid of snags – afraid they would fall on me. What's more, one would fall now and then, and I would hear it. One bad tree stood up above the pond going to the tin cans, and 3 or 4 huge old snags stood up Beeson Road around the turn. I'd run past them as fast as I could. Everybody else would just walk along unconcerned. None ever fell on me but many years later while hiking in the Seven Lakes Basin, a lodge pole snag fell close by me in the timber. I watched to see where it was falling – it missed me. Snags seem to fall more on a hot summer day than any other time. Bugs chew the last piece of solid wood and down they go.

Another shack was just above the cabin we lived in, where the berry patch is now. The first winter mom put her canned goods in it, as we had no storage space if any kind, and it all froze and popped the lids. The second summer, Grandpa and Gramma Curnow moved into this cabin with Uncle Nick who was in his teens. Times were very hard, no work of any kind. They cut wood, and I think they picked fruit for the Shuttes. This cabin was just one crude room, probably 12' X 16', board and batten on the outside. I would go up to see them, but I don't remember them paying much attention to me.

A few years later we tore the shack down to make a chicken house which we needed badly. It stood on a flat place near the barn. We also built a smoke house above where the shack was, a little larger than an outhouse. Dad smoked hog meat there with alder wood. It was one way to keep meat, although it was very salty.

We didn't have a wheelbarrow, couldn't afford to buy one, but needed a way to haul wood in for heat and cooking. Dad cut runners to make a sled out of oak with planks across to hold it together, and a chain attached so it could be pulled by a horse. He also made a smaller one to be pulled by hand, but it was never thought of

as a thing to ride on for fun.

There was a crude cedar slab barn up where the wire chicken yard is today, probably 12' X 14', with a thrown together pole corral about the same dimension which had a hog pen nailed onto it. Over the years we raised pigs. Finally Dad got poles out of the woods and made the barn we have today.

I can remember Dad lighting the lantern on a cold winter's night, snow on the ground, going to the barn to do chores – me all bundled up to try and keep warm, following Dad in the lantern light. After we got inside, he would bring the cow in, feed her and start milking. I'd lie back in hay and watch the flickering shadows play on the poles, roof and sides of the barn, listen to the cow chew on the hay and the sound of the milk streaming into the bucket. Oh, so cozy there in the hay.



Alex Donaca, 28 years old, fishing on the Rogue River He was the kind of man who loved the activities involved with filling his families pantry.

People's cattle ran free out in the woods, crossing the roads at will – there was no herd law. They couldn't be in the fields which were used to raise hay. You didn't buy hay unless it was a necessity, but we had to because we had no hay fields. Almost all the neighbors raised their own. Most of them had an old mowing machine and a hay rack pulled by horses. The place next to us raised alfalfa.

Evidently Steve Lunik didn't feed his stock any too good, as one day 2 or 3 animals showed up here at the barn wait-

ing to be fed. Dad fed them, I guess, anyway they hung around so there must have been a little hay. One was a blue cast Jersey, dry, going to have a calf. She was very wild and would run every time she saw you. Dad bargained for her from Steve by cutting wood. He gentled her and in due time she had her calf. That was the start of our milk cows through the years.

When a cow came into heat, Dad would walk her over to the Shutte place to have her bred by their Guernsey bull. It would take all day as the distance was something like 5 miles over. Dad kept the heifer calves until the cow was about to freshen then either sell her or the cow. Bull calves were sold quickly. Once in a while we had veal calf, but Dad didn't like the meat, of course it was canned.

We didn't know what beef tasted like, really knew nothing of steak or even roast. I knew about hamburger, but not hamburgers. When I was 13, we were asked to dinner at the George Holt's who lived down the road a couple of miles. Oh, the food was so good, especially the brown gravy and potatoes. I just couldn't imagine anything like the tasty rump roast with fat all around the edges. I never forgot this meal and swore if I ever could, I'd have meat like this. Wow!

As us kids got older, it was our job to hunt the cows on up in the other places, up into the woods or up to the Bright place (later the Peans) or anywhere we could hear the bells. Sometimes we saw deer, but not often, as they were pretty much killed off. Birds and their nests were mostly what we saw. Once a grosbeak had its nest in a hazel close to the old Bright Cabin and the little fellow would sing on his nest. A flicker (Yellowhammer) had a nest once in a small snag. Another time a snowbird had a nest in the swamp below the Bright Cabin. It rained every day one spring and its nest threatened to drown.

After Doffs lived down below, and their cows did run out – they had an old blue jersey that could hold her head still and we couldn't find her or the other cows. I have her bell today in the garage. It's a big bell with a notch out of it.

So, the cows came, and the cows did go until in 1982 when we had to get rid of Daisy. After that I bought young stock to raise and eat. I would go to the sale barn and buy day old calves and feed them on bottles until they were old enough to

wean, then grain them until older. Grass grew in the spring and they grew big and fat and ready to butcher. I had my roast beef! Then in '85 I bought Ginger as she looked so lonely in the ring. At that time a person could hardly find a heifer. She was a very pretty cow but had something wrong with her udder. We should have sold her before we did. She was a problem.

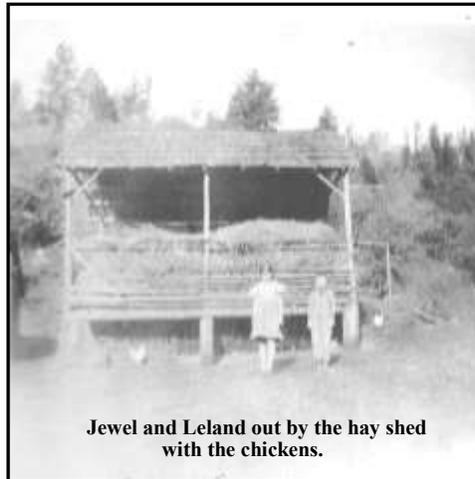
I'll write a bit about the neighbors we had between here and the mailboxes during this time. At the first place on our road was the place owned by James Marquess. I thought he was a real antique. Once a person asked me who lived at that place and I replied "that old, old man Marquess". I felt silly afterwards. The house he lived in was an old-fashioned farm-type affair. His son and daughter-in-law lived with him. We ate there at noon once and the meal consisted of fried venison, potatoes and watercress from the creek. How she got the watercress I don't know as she was very crippled. We lived there a while when I was 16 which I hated. I wanted to stay home. Anyway the outhouse stood near the road, but in later years it was set over the creek in front of the house. As we come up the road across from Dead Man's Point there was a shack up in the canyon on a steep hillside. Once, mom saw an old man and his lady going home up there. He was bringing her home from the hospital and mom felt sorry for them to think that was all they could call home. Later that was torn down and a cabin was built in sight of the main road. All are gone now.

The next place was Ralph and Mildred Green and daughter Dale. We visited back and forth quite a bit. We kids played with Dale. I wanted to play cow and talked them into eating Daffodil blades. Did we get sick! Dale didn't eat many, but Leland and I did. Mom had to carry him home and I staggered along. The Greens stayed until Dale was school age, then sold out so she could go to better schools than the little one at Anderson Creek. They sold to Ralph and Della Dorr and moved to Tillamook. I remember the day they moved in as we went to get the mail and there were two boys, Jimmy Dorr and James Procter. They were playing under the pine trees on the hill by the shop.

The Dorr's eventually sold out to the Couches, then came the James, and James

it is yet today.

The place next to us had been homesteaded by 'Old' James Marquess in his younger years. His son Frank and his wife lived there when they were married, but when we moved here, Ralph Green's parents lived there. They were real nice old people. At that time there was a barn right below our line. I thought the property was



Jewel and Leland out by the hay shed with the chickens.



A beautiful drawing by Jewel depicting one of her families homes, "the old house". Can you see her face peering out of the window? Love the grass growing on the roof and the box of canning jars front and center.

big - a hog pen higher on the hill above the barn, a large house (large for the times) with a woodshed attached Aon the upper side. It had a glassed-in porch and a pantry that fascinated me. Across the road was a root cellar dug into the hill. Above the house was a garden spot and a nice lawn, and next to the hill, on the shady side along the creek, an outhouse, a hen house and rabbit cages. Dad Green fiddled around the place and Mrs. Green quilted all the time. She'd make a quilt for someone, charging a dollar for each spool of thread. She gave mom lots of quilt pieces. The Greens came

from Tennessee and had been married on horseback on some lonely divide or nob.

The next place on up the canyon was the Bright Place with no one living on it. It consisted of a little old log cabin in much decay right under the road. On up on the flat a shake chicken shed of sorts, then a fenced garden with a cold spring in one corner under a tall cottonwood. In later years they logged the land and tore everything up. At this place Mrs. Bright and her first husband lived. I presume they were very poor and he had T.B. She went hunting for meat for the pot over here in our canyon up about where the big fir is. One time a huge buck with a magnificent set of antlers stepped out to cross in front of her. She saw how pretty he was so returned home with no meat. This husband died so then she married the son and he also died of T.B. Then she left to go the valley. A daughter owned it until recently.

The canyon divides above the Bright place. There's a spring on the left called Salal Springs as salal grows there. Then on the right side ran the canyon that goes up to Mahogany ridge, where hunters always said you could run a big buck out of the brush. Now it has a road through it and young growth of Douglas Fir trees growing densely, but I must add that this ridge was also called Airplane Burn as a small plane crashed there before our time. The Greens recalled the men being carried down past them on stretchers.

Not too much to say about the canyon up from the mailbox. The road didn't go over the top over Anderson Gap and down on the Little Applegate or to the Anderson Butte Lookout. There was no lookout then. I suppose there could have been a trail as there was a tunnel dug way up high on the middle ridge (straight back of Jim Merry's buildings). Leland and I found it one time while hiking. Down below the mailboxes lived Old Zeke Foster under the big white fir. Leland got some old bottles around there one time. Then on down the center, the Mayes, the Marquesses, the Browns then the Jones and the Nobles before you got to the Anderson Creek School.

Jewel's story will continue next issue.

A Fire Rant - From Jan Wright

On September 8, 2020 gusts of wind brought sudden and unwelcomed change that burned down my entire neighborhood and a large portion of our town. I am struggling with a literal firewall to the past. My senses no longer have access to my home though my mind still cherishes every inch of it. There is a death-like bracket around unresolved matters and unfinished tasks. In my displacement from home, I struggle with being busy rather than with building and maintaining my own nest. My relationship to “things” ranges from hostile to acquiescence as I bow to my needs.

I want to walk to Ray’s and see people I know. I want to buy a lottery ticket there. I want to breathe in the familiar and ride my bike with the fluorescent pink rims on the gently inclined streets of Talent. I miss the greeting of my garden that signaled admission into my world. I want to walk under the living willow arch near my front door that took years to braid and twist into shape and to smell the Daphne I planted 6 years ago. I want to see my neighbor’s liquor bottles in the recycling bins where I parked my car. I want my children’s faces captured by the camera all over my walls. I want to enter the delicate bubble of remembrance as I leaf through my photo albums. I want to hear the drums of Africa in the weavings and sculptures I collected from there.



I long for sewing projects that have piled up over the years – dresses still pinned to the pattern that I never made, embroidery designs still in the hoop, pants that need to be hemmed. I want my historical research to be at my fingertips when I write a story. I want the guilt of never doing enough with what I already had and at the same time digging deeper into my research and making new files. I want to paint on an empty canvas. I want to see my teenage granddaughters every day and take them to school even when they are non-communicative and sullen.

I want the sheets of the past to bed in. How can I possibly replace the ratty old nightgown that I wore to bed that somehow always ended up on the floor by morning? The handmade baskets that filled every corner of my house in Talent made perfect combustion. Though there is something poetic about journals and love letters going up in flames, their passion (and stupidity) will never be revealed – their memories burned at the stake.

Jan Wright lived on Gangnes Drive in Talent. After the fire she was fortunate enough to find a place to rent in Medford. Many of her former neighbors are scattered from Portland to Ashland or to places unknown.



The Anderson Butte Fire Lookout was built in the 1930s by the Forest Service about 6 miles west of Talent. It is no longer standing but Jewel made a model of it that is housed in the THS museum.

Almeda by John Enders

Rain and leaves of autumn fall
softly upon
The burned out ashes of this town,
Children and their mothers/fathers
have all gone
To live in shelters, motels -- or
further down.
Oh Devastation! What have
you brought
To this good people, this village?
In an hour it blew through and
wrought
Like an army come to burn and
pillage.
Winds of brutal fortune blew
that day,
Flames and fire ravaged those with
greatest need.
There is no justice, nothing
can repay
The pain in all the hearts that bleed.
Those who choose to fly too
near the sun
Are at fault for what becomes them.
But if your choice is to die or run,
We must only pity those who
run then.
Thousands now await a better day,
If they have chosen yet to stay
Amid the ashes of this
community.



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.



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Walking Tour of Historic Talent

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The Bell House
104 South Market
Street c.1897



This 1½ story wood frame house is one of the vernacular L type houses, a modification of the I type house, with the addition of a second gabled volume constructed at a right angle. It is located in the heart of Talent and was probably constructed in 1897 following the acquisition of the lots by Daniel and Maggie Hanscom. Mr. Hanscom was a blacksmith. He purchased the lots for \$56 and later sold them to Marie Wight in 1902 for \$700. In 1907, Wight sold to Thomas Bell, an early Oregon pioneer. Although Mr. Bell listed himself as a farmer, by 1910 Mr. and Mrs. Bell were operating the Bell House as a lodging and rooming house. Bell sold the property in 1927 to Thomas and Cora Lamb. By the 1980's the house had become a professional office. The Bell House has undergone extensive renovation, but is still an outstanding example of the historic period in which it was built.