

KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Issue 111

TRUMPETER

Summer 2018

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Tours of Topsy Grade and Beyond *by John Fortune*

True Logging Stories of Southern Oregon
Submitted *by Ron Loveness*

Meeting Schedule 2018

July 22 Annual Summer Picnic - Wiard
Park 2 p.m.

Sept 27 History of Malin Park Ryan
Bartholomew

Oct 18-21 Merrill Potato Festival

Oct 25 Highway Builders—Todd Kepple

November Potluck Dinner—*At both the picnic and Potluck KCHS will furnish the main dish and members should bring side dishes to share and their own drinks*

Regular Membership meetings are at 7 p.m. On the fourth Thursday of March, April, May, September, and October at the Museum

Museum Campaign Planned for Fall

It appears likely that a campaign will be mounted to seek voter approval in November for renewal of the five-year museum levy that expires in 2019.

Voters have previously approved a modest amount of tax funding for museum operations in 2011 and 2014. We hope they'll continue to support museum funding for the next five years.

You may have heard that county officials were considering asking voters to approve a heritage district to provide permanent funding for museums. That remains a possibility for the future, but circumstances will not allow us to pursue that at the present time.

Local property tax funding covers roughly half the museum's annual budget. Without that funding, many museum programs would be cut, and staff positions would be eliminated.

Please be prepared to help spread the word that local history is important! Donations will be needed to help fund the campaign, and workers will be needed to place signs, staff booths, etc.

Stayed tuned for more information.

Museum Happenings

Check the Midge for Museum details and a list of other cultural happening in the community. Get on the list by sending your email to midge@co.klamath.or.us

Tours of Topsy Grade and Beyond by John Fortune

In recent years I got to make trips down Topsy Grade. Topsy Grade was a road developed in the 1870's for travel between Yreka and Ager to Klamath Falls. The northern end of Topsy starts at the intersection of Hwy 66 and Klamath River then works along the south side of Klamath River down to where Copco Reservoir is today. From there it's been called the Ager-Beswick Road where it goes SE across the Bogus and Willow Creek drainages to Ager. The road then went on over to Yreka. After the railroad reached Ager, the Topsy Road continued to serve travelers north to Beswick and on to Klamath Falls. Besides being a route between those locations, the Topsy route served as a more passable winter route from the western valleys being at lower elevations than the Greensprings Road that was often snow bound. The Topsy Grade road continued to be an important route into the Klamath Basin and beyond; up until the 1920s it was an official state highway.

The 2013 fall trip was "official" with Todd Kepple and Jack Inman with the objective to find and document the locations of the "yellow rail" historical markers down along Topsy Grade. Todd drove the county Explorer and had his camera and GPS unit to document the marker locations for the Klamath County files. Jack and I had the assignment to help locate the yellow rails that had been placed by the Klamath County Historical Society in the 1970s. I had been down Topsy several times before and knew about the marker locations so served as "guide" to the markers and other interesting sites along the route.

The summer of 2014 Topsy road tour was for the pleasure of introducing wives and friends to the route and its attractions. Jack Inman drove, carefully, his big Chevy to haul the six of us: Jack and Kathy Inman, John and Sue Fortune, and Society members BJ and Bill from Chico.



We assume that Topsy Grade was in much better shape in its day when traffic was by horse drawn stage coaches and freight wagons because a lot of it is pretty (read very) rough now even for modern vehicles; best for high clearance rigs and a 4x4 is probably a good choice.

The first few miles on Topsy from 66 is through forest lands down to the site of the first yellow rail at Topsy Station which existed from 1875-1903 as a stage and freight stop and Post Office.

Topsy Station is on the road just before it drops off onto the side of Klamath River canyon. (The old Picard-Dorris road is an alternate route to access this point by coming from Dorris past the Picard Cemetery to the NW.) If you've seen Maude Baldwin's photo



of the buggy coming up the cut along the canyon- you get the picture!

Moving slowly down the road, the next stop is for the marker at Robber's Rock at the foot of the grade and turn-off to the Frain Ranch site. As the name implies, the large rock was supposedly the site where "highway men" stopped and robbed the stages passing through. Just across the road lies the ruins of the old Frain Ranch School.

A "must do" side trip is to turn down to the Frain Ranch site along the river. There are a few remains of log buildings and orchards to explore. The old ranch site developed by Klamath pioneer Martin Frain is now the domain of river runners and fishermen. It's a great picnic site for lunch on the Topsy tour. On both of our trips we were entertained by rafters running the Caldera Rapids.



Back up on the Topsy road, the next stop is the marker for the Kerwin Ranch which was a wayside for stages and freighters, 1875-1903. We found no evidence of ranch buildings, only a few fruit trees and old fencing. The most exciting discovery here was the giant black oak tree back about 100 yards south of the road. Having a trunk about 18 feet in circumference, it is indeed impressive.



Down the road near the state line, records show a marker placed at the Way Ranch but it wasn't found on either of our trips. The Way Ranch was another of the stations supporting traffic on the Topsy Road. Recently, the private land owner has built a house on the site and has moved the road; the marker was likely lost in that move. On last summer's trip we did find the Way Cemetery on the hill across the road from the ranch. This old cemetery has markers for T.O. Way 1834-1900, Edward Way 1873-1916, and Martin Frain 1832-1927 to name a few; it is still in use with a few recent markers present.



Crossing the state line into California, the next feature is the BLM access for river rafters. Then, back on pavement, moving down across Shovel Creek, a major tributary to that stretch of Klamath River, are the remains of the old Klamath Hot Springs Resort at Beswick. There was once two large hotels and other buildings, one allegedly a brothel. The great features were the hot springs and mud baths that attracted folks coming north by train to Ager and then by stage to Beswick. In perusing 1901 issues of the Lake County Examiner, I found that my Great Grandfather Judge Winslow Bayley spent nine days there "and enjoyed the resort very much".

West of Beswick a bit and across the river is the site, still visible, of the famous log slide built to slip Pokegama logs down over the cliff to Klamath River to be floated to downstream mills.

Further along the road through ranch lands is the head of Copco Reservoir and the village of Copco. From there the road leaves the river and heads over pleasant hills and valleys to Ager and the end of the Topsy-Ager road. At Ager, there is still the large hotel and several other buildings that were part of the important railroad stop and junction of the road north to Beswick and Klamath Falls over Topsy Grade.

Instead of backtracking over Topsy, it's a pleasant drive to circle around through Montague and Little Shasta back to Hwy 97 and north past Grass Lake and Butte Valley returning to Klamath Falls.

Klamath Echoes No. 11, Stagecoach to Linkville contains great descriptions of the history and adventures along the Topsy Grade and road to Ager along with old photos of features along the route.

End

A little background on these Paul Bunyan stories is that Jim Stevens was a logger and friend of Cap Collier. In Cap Collier's copy of a book about Paul Bunyan authored by Jim Stevens in 1925 was a note written by Cap that included the following information:

Jim Stevens



"I knew Jim Stevens for some 40 years. Jim drove stinger tongue high wheels (horse drawn log skidders) at Weed in 1916. He later wrote for the Saturday Evening Post. Then he did public relations for the West Coast Lumbermen's Association while I was President of the Western Retail Lumbermen's Association. We swapped stories back and forth. Often when he would get a good one he would tell it on me. He had heard quite a bit about Paul in the days when he logged and thus was able to give quite a plausible twist to the stories he invented. I liked him. Jim drew his time in 1972."

signed Alfred D. Collier



Cap Collier



Shot Gunderson Pulled A Boner When He Logged Crater Lake Rim

One of the greatest mistakes ever made by Paul Bunyan's famous foreman, Shot Gunderson was when he logged the timber off the inside of Crater Lake rim.

Gunderson put in the whole of the day logging the rim, for Paul had the bulk of the crew Logging Langell and Horsefly Valleys.

Just before sundown, when the crew started to drop the last few trees, about where the lodge stands now, Shot came to and forgot that there was no outlet to Crater Lake. This was a dilemma. The grand foreman spent a whole hour in thought, and then sent word to Langell Valley for Paul to come and help him. Paul came hurrying across country wondering what the trouble might be.

When Paul got to the rim, he took one look and started back across country to camp. He hurried as fast as he could, but it was nearly dark when he got back with a bucket in his hand. The bottom of the bucket contained a little bit of Sourdough Sam's famous sourdough. (Sam could make everything but coffee from his sourdough and it can be used for shaving soap, hair tonic, boot grease, eye wash, shin plasters, ear muffs, corn pads, arch supporters, lamp fuel, saw polish or a chair cushion). Waving the men back with his hand, Paul stepped down and walked along the west side to the only spot in the water that was not covered with logs. Then he poured in the sourdough. The lake instantly began to rise. Paul had to quickly climb up on Glacier Peak to keep from getting his feet wet. In just a few seconds this seething mass poured over the rim, logs and all and traveled down the mountain washing out Annie Creek Canyon and through the Wood River Valley and into Klamath Lake.

That is vouched for by the fact that there is no large timber inside the rim, Annie Creek Canyon is still there and everyone who visited Crater Lake has seen Paul's footprints below Glacier Peak where he stood when he poured in the sourdough.

Klamath Evening Herald, July 1925



Trumpeter Staff

Bill Lewis

Sue Fortune

John Fortune

Phyllis Goebel

Mary Noble

Ron Loveness



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KCHS Website :

klamathcountyhistoricalsociety.org

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**It is time to
renew your
Membership**

Membership fees
are due at the end
of each year.

Individual \$15.00

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\$125.00

Make checks
payable to the
Klamath County
Historical Society

Mail to or drop off
at the Klamath
County Museum

1451 Main Street

Klamath Falls , OR



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