FIELD TRIP TO LOWER KLAMATH LAKE --- 29 JUNE 1987

As we met on the State Line Road near the Fish and Wildlife sign the group of interested people kept growing. By the time we could make a count there were 32 vehicles.

Verland Huff was our tour guide and started us off by pointing out Adam’s Cut. He was ably assisted by Jim Flowers and others also gave information including Cal Peyton and Janis Kafton. Information was also given on the White City development.

After we had all turned our vehicles in the right direction we headed for the “Long Tour” road across the Wildlife Refuge. Permission having been granted for this tour across parts that are no longer open to the public, we drove through gates leading eventually to Laird’s Landing. The ducks with their young were swimming in the Lower Klamath Refuge and the egrets and cormorants and mud hens (coots). One beautiful white pelican flew directly over us headed for a quieter, less dusty area, with less traffic. We even had the privilege of seeing two beautiful antelope that were either trying to race with the lead pickups or trying to find a safe passage across the road. Even a buck with large antlers was sighted.

Mount Dome was in our vision for many miles and we passed the site of the old Mount Dome School before finally getting to Laird’s Landing.

There isn’t much left there. Just to look at it you would hardly believe that the steamers turned around that large mound of dirt that remains as there is no longer any water to show how they did it. It was said that Mrs. Laird found that mound the best vegetable growing spot and planted her garden on it.

The stones surrounding the old well were still there even though the well itself had been filled to the top with rocks, wire and debris. One old building was still standing, possibly the post office.

The group of tall cottonwoods and parts of the rock fence are still there where the Skeen cabin stood. We were also allowed to see the hidden and fenced burial site of Kitty Skeen and Mandy Kitty, mother and sister of Bill Skeen.
The Chalk Bank Landing area was pointed out to us but we didn't go over there. We drove to the old Hammond Ranch which had been the Van Brimmer home on Willow Creek. No one has come forward yet that knows the exact spot on Willow Creek where Van Brimmer set his Fort over the Creek although there were a lot of conjectures. This cabin now sets, restored, on the lawn at the Klamath County Museum. Some say it was originally a bunk house, others say a cool spot for the butter and milk.

By special permission we had our lunch amongst the trees on the ranch property where there was a spring and watering trough and a "Chic Sales". It was a very inviting spot on this hot day.

After lunch we convoyed on down to the J.F. Ranch on Cottonwood Creek. Governor Churchill bought squatter's right's to that area and it became the headquarters for the army during the Modoc War. Fairchild then bought it and had horses and cattle. He was friendly to the Modocs and got along fine with them. During the bad winter of '89-'90 most of his stock died and he lost the ranch to the bank which was owned by Churchill. Fairchild Island was named for Fairchild because he had cattle marooned on the island one winter when the water level rose. Hugh Curran's great uncle I.J.Straw, (Ike), was foreman of the Fairchild ranch after the Modoc War. Of interest too, there is a post office down in Modoc County named Straw after I.J.Straw.

Cottonwood Creek heads in a spring on the ranch but the mosquitoes were very hungry so not everyone went to see that. There are two lovely homes built there. The big square ranch home was the banker's home but it has been remodeled somewhat. Setting back in a grove of trees is the original old cabin. We all wondered why it had two separate doors dividing it into two small rooms.

Next we visited the Langer Ranch. It was Modoc land when Albert Langer homesteaded it in 1898. The home was built on a knoll and was reached by row boat when the lake was at its original depth. When Albert Langer set out the poplar trees on his ranch he would put a piece of a stove pipe down by each sapling and every day he would fill the stove pipe with water. Now they are huge old trees giving lots of shade. A spring below the house was named "Jack Springs" and it was said Captain Jack was born somewhere close to the springs.

The Langers introduced sheep raising to the area and Perry Langer went into it very extensively. Albert Langer had a model T Ford in 1914, the first Ford in the area.

The Modocs worked for the ranchers building a rock fence as a dividing line between the Fairchild (J.F.) Ranch, the Langer Ranch and the "D" Ranch.

Pres Dorris claimed all this area at one time. Dorris, California is named for him and was originally called "Dorris Bridge". A story told about Pres Dorris and Walter Bray recalls that one day Dorris drove his buggy to the cabin of Bray and told him that Bray should know that "This is your day to move out of here." However, Bray was not so easily convinced and as he pulled a gun and aimed it at the rather portly middle of Dorris it brought a change to the thinking of Dorris. He later said he figured Bray really meant business when he closed both eyes and
only reopened one.
We passed the Brownell place, a two story abandoned, pink house that at one time was a stopping place for travelers. Then on to see the Oklahoma Flats School House. The area was called Oklahoma Flats because it was being settled about the same time the Oklahoma Territory was being opened up to settlement. Some of the early settlers were the Evans family, the Fogels, the Gates, the Mansfield and Brownell families, the Pryors and Huck families. Several of our group had attended school at the old school house. Mrs. Leona Ady, mother of Doris Peyton, taught a summer term there. At times there were only 5 or 6 children attending. The school closed in the 1920's.
Many had danced all night there and gone to socials at the old school building in years past. Mr. Langer was a fiddler for the dances and the dances lasted from 8 PM. to 6 PM. Twenty-three people used this school for the voting place for many years, we were told by Luceille Thackery Wheeler. There was even a wedding shower held there.
Minnie Andrieu was a baby of 9 months when a Tule fire started on their ranch close to the old school. Her mother escaped with her but her father and another man took the harness from the horses and tied them someway to the well and lowered themselves down into it until the fire had swept by. Her father’s hair was burned off and he himself was badly burned. The neighbors got him to Dorris to the hospital where he recovered.
Ruby Wallin told us her father had cattle but was the first to introduce sheep to the Oklahoma Flats area.
A grove of trees at the tip end of the butte that protrudes out into the lakebed was the site of the William Fogle home. The butte was called Copic Butte because that was the name of a family who lived just beyond there in a flat. The Porterfields own most of the land in this vicinity now.

From there we drove on to the Vernon Cross Ranch where we sat on the lawn while Vernon told the history of that place. Sheepy Creek starts from springs just a short distance from where you turn into their ranch gates. The ranch was once owned by the Morris family but they moved away after a great tragedy struck their family.
Lumber for the houses in the area came in mostly by barge. The lumber for the Cross home was floated in from a point of land that would have jutted out into the lake bed itself about a mile to the west. The old home where Vernon’s father and mother lived and where Vernon was born is still there and in quite good condition. It is fenced from the yard of their new place. The Cal-Ore post office was on this ranch and Mrs. Cross (Vernon’s mother) was postmaster. The mail came on Monday and Friday.

Four boys were the entire student body of the little school named the Prosperous School. Perry Cross once attended there. On the other side of the ridge was the district called Poverty Flats.
Vernon and Delma Cross have fish tanks where they were raising sturgeon until the power went off and the fish died from lack of oxygen. They haven’t
started raising sturgeon again yet but do have one pond with huge catfish in it. We enjoyed seeing the very interesting Indian artifacts they had collected too.

We were also invited to visit the McKay Ranch and Nightfire Island. This area was named Nightfire Island by Carrol B. Howe in his book “Ancient Modocs of California and Oregon”.

The Modocs camped here from time to time and as long ago as 6,000 years ago. Mullet ran up Sheepy Creek and the Modoc Indians caught and dried them there. Chief Sheepy had an encampment where the trees and older buildings still stand. Margarite Laird Dayton recalls that Chief Sheepy received that name because he often wore a sheepskin draped over his head and shoulders. It was also a good place to get ducks and geese and deer. The Indians had to carry rocks to the island and over many years there were many laid down. Carrol Howe was given permission by the McKay’s to investigate an area on Nightfire Island, and later in 1966 the archeologists from the University of Oregon were allowed to make a dig there.

Terry McKay Flower’s great grandfather bought these many acres to ranch. Terry was an interested, curious girl of 14 at the time the digging started. She was able to tell us more history than I can remember.

4’ by 4” test holes were carefully dug. Each layer of strata yielding up its history to be sorted, tagged and studied and carbon tested. Many bones were found to verify the diet of the Indians. Some of the ancient Indians had been buried there too. In one place there was a log and skeletons were found setting in an upright position against the log with their knees against their chests. The heads had dropped between the knees. These remains tested to be 4,000 years old.

Another grave was curious because the one skeleton (maybe the chief) was complete but the other skeletons were without heads. All of the bones were buried again after they were studied and tested. Naturally many Indian Artifacts have been found in that area.

The McKay Ranch house burned in the ’50’s but the neighbors and friends from Dorris and the surrounding areas came and together they had an old-fashioned house raising. The house was put up in just one day.

The McKay Ranch was our last stop and we returned to our homes by way of Indian Tom Lake, so named for an Indian whose name was Tom and who had worked for the ranchers around there.

We came to the junction of the State Line Road #161 and turned onto highway 97 North arriving home shortly after 6 PM. very hot, dusty and dirty and thirsty.

What a trip! We all enjoyed it and wish we could do it over again so we could remember more of the history we were told, there was so much to remember.

At last count there were 87 names signed on our tour attendance sheets! We are not only grateful to our tour guides, Vernon and Carolyn Huff and Jim and Freeda Flowers but to all those wonderful people who allowed such a
large group onto their land to be able to stand on such historical ground. Our thanks to the Porterfields, Langers, Cross and McKays. Another vote of thanks goes to all those nice people who shared their recollections with us.

By Mae Smith from the notations of Mae Smith and Janis Kafton.

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THE EVENING HERALD--THURSDAY JULY 13, 1916

NO WHITE MEN HERE WHEN HE FIRST SAW CITY

For the first time since the spring of 1862, when he passed through what is now Klamath Falls on a mining trip, Dan Morris is here on a visit. He now resides in Los Angeles.

In March of 1862, Mr. Morris and 14 others started from Yreka on a prospecting trip, their destination being Washington. At Butte Creek they saw a few camps of cowboys, but from there to The Dalles they did not meet a white settler. On the ground where now stands Klamath Falls, Mr. Morris says, one lone Indian family was living.

Somewhere near Modoc Point, Mr. Morris is not sure just where, the Indians had collected a huge pile of rocks and had left only a narrow pass between the rocks and the shore of Upper Klamath Lake. There a few of them stationed themselves, and collected toll from all who went by. It was on pain of having the rocks rolled down on them if they refused, says Mr. Morris, that all white men paid toll.

When his party reached the country north of Klamath Marsh they encountered considerable snow, and were held up for many days. Before they were able to go on, nearly 500 white men, bound northward, had gathered with them, all being blocked by the deep snow.

Mr. Morris and family are here in their auto to see Crater Lake. From there they will go to Crescent City and then down the coast to San Francisco. Mr. Morris is 74 years old.

(This is the first account of a toll having to be paid in this vicinity that we have found.)

----Researched by Billie Fitzhugh

THUMBNAIL SKETCH

Both Museums have been very fortunate in having Susan Leding on the work force. Susan, like Carol Mattos, works so quietly one hardly knows she is there but the accomplishments are many.

Susan Potterton Leding is from Dutch and English ancestry. Her great grandfather, John Forsythe Ingram (on her mother's side), was an early explorer
following in Livingston's footsteps, mapping for Queen Victoria. Sort of a forerunner of the National Geographic. He was also a writer and poet and some of his works are in the Library of Congress. Susan's ancestors settled in Africa instead of the United States and she was born in Salisbury (now Harare), Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

In 1968, when Susan was 11, she and her parents moved to Cleveland, Ohio where they lived for 3 years. Her father is an architect. In 1971 they moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

While still in college Susan and David Leding were married in 1979 and lived in the Student Housing. Susan was a cashier in a grocery store for 10 years while she and her husband were in school and was also Minnesota State Fair Judge of Needlework for six years. While attending the University of Minnesota, Susan received a degree in Design from the Home Economics Department. After Susan had graduated, David returned to college to get his Masters Degree in Forest Products.

Susan enjoys the Fiber Arts, weaving and needlework and loves History. Her interest in Museums began while working as a volunteer at the Minnesota Institute of Art Museum doing tapestry conservation work and cataloging Peruvian textiles. In 1986, she and David moved to Klamath Falls where Susan became involved with the Klamath County Museum helping to inventory the Indian baskets and preparing slides of the area's history for the schools. At the Baldwin Hotel Museum Susan has been working with the clothing collection and in display areas.

Both Susan and David love the outdoors and love to fish. They are trying their hand at fly fishing now (another art form). Susan loves to cook and has tried some of our western Sourdough recipes, still another art form.

At present there are no children but they do have an African Grey Parrot named "Cedric" with a vocabulary of over 100 words.

ONE LITTLE SCHOOL AND HOW IT GREW

It is difficult to imagine as one drives past the huge complex of grade, Junior High and High School buildings now comprising Henley School, that back in 1910, a modest, square-built one-room school house with belfry and front porch, sitting in the middle of a salt grass pasture, was Henley School.

Prior to the turn of the century, this mid-valley area attracted less of the ranch seekers than did Langell Valley, Poe Valley or the Merrill area being
comprised largely of sagebrush and alkali ponds. But irrigation would change all that and by 1910 the big canal had reached into that section and homes and barns were springing up like mushrooms after a rain.

These new families had children and schools such as Lone Pine, Mt. Laki, Spring Lake, Pine Grove or Summers Lane were on the fringes and now the time had come for a school midway between these. Parents with school-aged children got together, a teacher was hired, an abandoned home was secured for the classroom and Alma LaPrarie took charge of about ten young scholars at this school yet not named.

That year of 1909 and 1910, work had begun in earnest to erect a building more worthy of the emerging community and we see this square, one-room building sitting slightly to the rear of what is now the Junior High building in an early photo. It was a neatly constructed white frame of conservative styling. No ornamentation except the belfry.

This Henley School has a story that runs a bit differently than all other schools of Klamath County. It is the only school dating back to the early 1900’s that still is functioning on the premises where it was begun. Even long established schools such as Bonanza, Merrill, Malin and Bly have seen the site of their school moved at least a time or two.

The influx of new farmers and ranchers made an addition to this first modest structure mandatory and a room was added on the south side preceding 60 some years of constant expansion and rearrangement.

A second wing was added to the north side of the building in about 1916 following this first addition in 1914, and so the race began to keep up with growing demands. At this time a high school was in the formation stages and facilities for these older students was urgent. In the early twenties a one-room building was moved in to sit behind this growing plant and now the school board could boast of a three-departmental arrangement. The primary children occupied the moved-in building, the intermediates and upper grades the south wing, the high school the north wing and the original room became a study-hall - activity space. One teacher presided over each department.

A cafeteria was unknown of course, but to supplement the lunch pail fare, the older students brought “fixings” for hot soup or cocoa and took turns being responsible for it while it simmered on the heating stove.

By 1930, county schools had undergone much consolidation and some of the smaller schools on the fringes of this district were now closing and becoming part of the Henley district. This made a bigger grade school building necessary and the sturdy 4-room brick structure emerged on the acres just to the south. The little primary building then was moved midway between to make a small, but for-real cafeteria. All this plus the roomy gym erected in 1925 really put Henley on the map.
This fine facility not only served to make the dusty outdoor court for basketball games a thing of the past but also brought an end to the winter-time use of Lum Short’s barn loft no longer necessary. At election times the locals gathered to hear the latest election returns on some fortunate community member’s radio. Box socials and dances sparked the social life of the district.

By 1937, an impressive looking 3-room Junior High building dwarfed the older structure, which it stood to the front of, and made more changes than ever necessary. A 6-year high school was instituted and functioned as one of the few rural 6-year high schools of the state.

It was also at about this time the symbol of Hornets was selected to signify Henley and to emblazon sweatshirts and to appear in sports write-ups. The name of the school itself had come about from its close relationship with the Henley family that lived just across the road and to the south a bit. Sophia Henley had taken a keen interest in all that went on in the little school from its very inception and was an avid fan of the team whenever it went to battle with other teams of the county. She saw to it that palatable water was sent daily to replace the almost undrinkable water from the school’s well, which had an alkaline content. Also was a never-failing supplier of small needs for costumes, pins and needles and even refreshments for the student’s programs or activities.

Moving quickly on through the maze of changes, 1950 stands out since it was then the once proud new Junior High building took its turn at having to accept a humbler status. It was moved to form an addition to the growing grade school complex and a new brick structure was begun to replace it. This structure would boast of many more rooms, and a newer, better gym, and later a cafeteria. It was kind of a sad day for the older community members when the dismantling of the original structure had to come about. It was cut into 3 parts as it had grown in 3 parts. One part was moved over to add to the grade school complex. A second third went across the road to become a small lunch stop and the third part went clear to Midland to become the Midland Grange Hall.

Those same early school board members and citizens that had planned that first modest one-room building, would have a difficult time believing that such a mega-complex could evolve from such small beginnings in so short a time. The total enrollment this year of 1,332 would be even more staggering compared to the 10 or so of that very first student body.

Among the staff members that have served at Henley are some whose names have become very well-known in Klamath County. These include, Fred Peterson, instructor of the high school in 1920, Isabell Brixner Borgman, teacher
of Upper Grades in the late twenties and Lucile O'Neil, high school teacher of
1930 as well as Carrol B. Howe, long time principal and later county school
superintendent and also in the legislature working with educational matters of the
state.

----by Janis Kafton----

Those working on the Klamath Country History Book along with Chester

Beers will be especially saddened to hear of his death in early September.

AROUND THE MUSEUMS

The computer has arrived!!! It is one put out by AT&T, small, compact and
awaiting the touch of the right hands to put it in action.

If you missed the display by the Southern Cascade Woodcrafters Guild you
missed a treat. There were so many lovely things to see. To me, the hand carved
and painted bird display was exceptional. The feathers were so life-like you
wanted to touch them to prove to yourself they were of carved wood and not birds
stuffed by a taxidermist; each a work of art.

The old-fashioned bicycle display from Ernie Sessom is again in the lobby if
you missed it before.

The latest display is the Covered Bridges. It will be here on loan until
October. There are two models in glass cases along with many photographs of all
the covered bridges in Oregon. Much interesting information accompanied this
display.

HELP!!!! is needed at the Klamath County Museum to cover the lunch
hours. Can you donate 2 hours to answer the phone and make sure visitors sign
the register? If each available person could give some time there would be enough
so each person would only have to work once a month. That wouldn’t be too
much of a hardship, would it?!

Everyone will be sad to hear that JoAnn’s desk will be turned over to
another, but happy for she and David to know of his advancement. September
26th will be JoAnn’s last day as they are moving to Dallas, Oregon where David
will be an Associate Planner for Polk County. JoAnn plans to work or go to school
again as her son Danny will be in the third grade and Billy will be starting in the
first grade. As much as JoAnn likes doing things around home she would miss
working after all these years of being around the public. We all wish them good luck.

The University of Oregon will begin soon and Nadina Rose and her sister Selena will be off to Eugene. Nadina is majoring in business management and business marketing. For Selena it will be her first year and she plans to major in Film Production and Direction as well as studying art for production. They will leave September 20th.

The special exhibit case, which will house the leather bound book with the presidential seal given to George Baldwin by Theodore Roosevelt, has been completed. Since the Baldwin Hotel Museum will close at the end of September, it will be on view at the Klamath County Museum during the winter months.

Our thanks goes to the Country Crafters Quilt Club who have once again made a large donation to the Klamath County Museum. With this donation the coloring book depicting old buildings around our county and birds and animals native to this area, will become a reality. The art work was prepared by Museum volunteers Janis Kaffton, Carol Mattos and June Hood. The book, which will be sold through our Museums to raise money, will also be a useful learning experience for young children.

A new book written by Francis (Van) Landrum pertaining to the history of the old Fort, the graves there and the causes leading to the execution of the Modocs will be published soon for the Klamath County Museum by Smith Bates.

The booklet "Guardhouse, Gallows and Graves" will be in paper binding and sold at the Fort Klamath County Park during the summer season.

We are very grateful to Van Landrum for this gift of literature and history.

AT THE BALDWIN---

Behind the scenes work continues on setting up the Grocery and Mercantile Stores and the Library. Plaster has been patched, plaster board put in place and many gallons of paint used.

Speaking of painting, the murals by Selena Rose in the easement between the first and second floors are very in keeping with the Barbershop and Beauty Shop. There is also a mural of the inside of a Bank (The First National).

Selena plans to again work in the Museums next summer after college is out.
Historical Society past president Michael Kaliher, visited Klamath Falls during the first week of August. He is looking good, nice and brown from the Arizona sunshine.

A number of friends and Society members gave a pot-luck luncheon for Michael so we could all visit with him and learn the latest events in his life.

Michael will attend the University of Arizona where he will study for Elementary Teachers Education to be a grade school teacher. He will also study Spanish and Sign Language. He will also drive bus for the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind. When he completes his training we hope he will return to Oregon to teach.

WHERE IS OUR WANDERING MADGE BY NOW??

That is a good question!! Her plane set down in London on schedule at 4 AM (12 noon their time). Her first tour was a coach tour of Old and New London and a ride on the Thames.

She enjoyed Bristol and Cardiff, Wales. “The old, old buildings were marvelous!”

The thatched roofs in Wales and Ireland were a sight to see and although she didn't kiss the Blarney Stone, she will be full of tales to tell when she gets home.

After all this traveling and shopping at the Blarney Woolen Mill she will be ready for a week of relaxation at the Episcopal Church farm at Stratton-on-the-Floss. Don't know when she will have time for any genealogy research.

Did you hear this one on the TV the other night?
“How does the Man-in-the-Moon get a haircut?”
“Eclipse it!”