KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TOUR OF
DAIRY, HILDEBRAND AND BONANZA
PART 2

We boarded the buses and left the Shook/Horton Ranch and drove up Highway 140 East to the Hildebrand road where we turned left at the old Bliss Store. We went approximately 3 miles to a junction where we veered right and continued about one quarter mile further until we came to the old Manuel Vieira home, store and postoffice and the remains of the school in District 13. Manuel and Rosa Vieira had five children and with the help of all, they provided room and board to the local postmaster, teachers and cowhands. It was a well known stopping place for ranchers moving their cattle to the shipping point on the railroad at Midland.

Jim Flowers was our first speaker and told us about the old store. "As you went inside you'd find a Post Office and counter and a candy case covered with glass so the kids couldn't get at the candy. Mostly the kids were poor in those days and they'd sit and look at that glass just dreaming that their folks might buy them a nickel candy bar. They had a lot of bulk candy too. One more thing you'd always notice in these country stores was a stove. In the winter time all the "guys" that weren't working would sit around that stove and tell their stories and so forth. They had free heat all day because I had to pack the wood".

Jim then introduced Jack Rogers to tell us about the Post Office. I have the Post Office down at my Museum and I think that is what it is going to be is a Museum rather than anything else. My wife
and I came up here one day to talk to Mr. Brown about getting some of these old boards for some of the work we were doing on different things. I looked inside and here is the full cage of chicken wire that was the Post Office. The counter and all the way around was in it and most everything was in good shape. The old mail boxes were just cubby holes in back of the cage. So immediately I found Mr. Brown and asked if we could salvage that out of there. He said somebody should salvage it and to go right ahead. So, we did! We took it out and moved it down to my place. I built a little piece onto the back side of a small cabinet that used to belong to the Log Cabin Museum. I took all the boards out of here that I could salvage without the building falling down on me and built a cabin. That is where the Post Office is now. We have the boxes and part of the store counter, just as a replica, there also. So some of you people who lived around here, and have any information, we'd like to have you come down and see if you can locate your mailbox. One of them has a name on it that we can recognize and that is Vieira. We'd like to have you stop by sometime and give us what ever information you have."

Jim Flowers then introduced Jean Drew Angel and she told us about the school. "The first school was built about 1910 by E. J. Pool. Later it was a two story building and some people remember going to dances upstairs in that building". According to Jean Angel, that store was torn down and moved to Langell Valley and added to some homes there, also owned by the Pools. She said, "Bliss' built this store but I don't know when. Then they also built the store on the corner of 140 and Squaw Lake Road that we came by.

They wanted to move the Post Office down there but the people thought that was too far to go to get their mail and Matilda Challis took the Post Office for several years. Then later Ursula (or Ursilla ?) Chambers had it. Then in 1942 it was closed and people went to Dairy to get their mail. Some of us still go to Dairy to get our mail.

The first school was built about 1884 in a bachelor's log cabin. Then the people decided they wanted a real school and built one in about 1891. I think it was on the same site as the one that those
of us here who went to the Hildebrand school remember. Just a 
little bit south and a little to the right. Mr. Meyer donated the 
land for that school to be kept for as long as there was a school. 
Bob Callahan remembers going to that one in 1916. It was two rooms 
originally and then as the population dwindled, only one. 

There was a hall or a gym, we always called it a hall, that was 
also built by the people of the community. 

Several of us who rode horses to school kept our horses in the 
barn on the northwest corner of the school yard. Pools bought that 
barn after school was discontinued and moved it to the place that 
we have. Later, Jesse changed it into a grainary and we still have 
it.

The teacher's house was moved to Bonanza and when Stebers moved 
there, Mr. Steber added it to the house they lived in. That is 
still used for classrooms.

Jim then introduced the Smith girls, Helen Smith Schreiner and 
Mary Smith Porter. Helen was the first to speak. "Our grand-
parents came here to Hildebrand in 1892 and they built a Stage 
House or a Road House up the road here about two miles", she said 
pointing in the direction the house had been. "My grandmother's 
Uncle was Postmaster here at Hildebrand at that time and I'm sure 
that was why they came here.

Jean talking about the school and the hall or gymnasium, you'll 
see some of the remains of the Hildebrand school down here on the 
corner. Don moved it down there and we lived in it for 30 some 
years and we just sold the ranch and moved to town the 1st of 
April.

That two story store that Jean was telling you about, we have a 
picture of it in our family. We weren't quite sure where the old 
Hildebrand store had sat.

The Post Office, we know three different locations where the it 
was. When my great Uncle was Postmaster, it was in the Vierra 
house here. Then I believe when the Slacks were Postmaster it was 
over near where Grant Brown lives now and then this location here".

Mary Porter then told us why her father had been nicknamed 
"Coyote Smith". "Well, my Dad used to get up before daylight and 
do his chores before he came to school. He'd go out and howl like
a coyote and everybody around the valley could hear him and he'd start the coyotes howling and that's how he got his name "Coyote".

We had a great time out here. I see the remains of the old well or something over there west of us. If I remember right that used to be 2nd base when we played baseball. There used to be a huge big pine tree there and we used to build sand castles and roads and other great things there during recess".

Mary remembered the candy counter with the glass door on it also. "My Granddad used to bring us down here and buy us a nickels worth of candy and there'd be a pretty good sized sack".

Jim Flowers then introduced Lillias Jean Parker Flackus. "Well, I started to school here in 1932. We lived about three miles to the west of here and I rode my horse. I remember she was about four years old and I was six years old. My Dad brought me the first day but after that I came by myself. Sometimes when I'd get to school the whole barn would be full of horses. I remember I had to tie mine out on a tree half the time. One time, I guess it was in the winter, it was so cold I came up and asked Mrs. Vieira if I could put my horse in her barn and she let me that day.

One thing I remember about the school, we had a well and the teacher pumped a bucket of water and put it on a box in the hallway. We had one dipper and we all drank out of the same dipper. We had a wash pan and when we came in from recess we had to all wash our hands. We generally only had one bucket of water that she brought over.

I married Victor Flackus and the Flackus's were here about 1895, I think it was. My Dad homesteaded about 1913 but he had come a few years before that though. He homesteaded up back of Drews. Then he bought land further back and it was the Shook Ranch".

Janis Kafton then told us, "There were a lot of prominent families who attended here. Louise Kilgore told about her first day at school. Her Dad had brought her and she was real anxious to learn to read. Her Dad told her "if you sit quiet and listen the teacher will soon show you how to read". Well, one little boy got up to read but he kept repeating the same mistakes every time and the teacher got angry with him and gave him a switching and made him sit in the corner. Louise decided right then and there that
she didn't want to learn to read".

Janis told us that she had pictures of the school and they would be available for viewing at our lunch stop at Bonanza.

Jim Flowers told us that his Mother was Postmaster here too. "I remember a postcard was one cent and a stamp was three cents and she got that for her wages. So we think our Post Office system is expensive now, but what about then? All the money went to the Postmaster before the Post Office even got a hold of the mail".

Verland Huff had us all get on the busses again and we went to the Big Springs Park at Bonanza where Paul Fitzhugh was in charge of the rest of the program.

Paul told us the history of the Bonanza Churches. "In 1886 the Ladies Aid held meetings in the one room schools and gave basket socials and quilt socials and such to raise funds to build a church. Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nichols donated the lot, and the deed was made for $1, on September 3, 1902. I'm talking about the white church over here with a steeple on it", he said pointing in the direction of the church. "The first church was the Buelah Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1947 the Nazarenes owned it and later the present owners are the Assembly of God. The Catholic Church is a brick building on the far side of town. We came past it coming in to town. South of that is the new Bonanza Community Church and right across from the Catholic Church is the L.D.S. Church. It looks like a house and it was once". (For more information concerning the Bonanza Churches see Klamath Echoes, Vol. 10, pages 61-62-63.)

Paul continued, "I have an item I want to talk about. This is an excerpt from the Taylor Grazing, B.L.M. banquet that we had. The Bonanza area had the distinction of being Taylor Grazing District #1 in Oregon and in the United States. This came about because of a combination of coincidences. Prior to 1930 Congress mainly passed laws which encouraged private enterprise on, or the distribution of, our public lands. Examples, Homesteading, large wandering bands of sheep or horses etc. with no real home bases. This created much conflict and the mismanagement caused the public lands not administered by the Forest Service to suffer. There was a movement to place grazing lands under the control of the Forest
Service but because of their tight regulations and "unbending" administration, many stock raisers wanted to avoid their administering public grazing lands.

Prior to the Taylor grazing act, an area in Montana was set aside for cooperative management by private users and the Government. By 1933 Oregon stock raisers were looking for similar alternatives and the ranchers around Bonanza area formed the Southern Oregon Grazing Association.

With Roosevelt's "New Deal", many new government programs were enacted, one of which was the "1934 Taylor Grazing Act". Millions of acres of land were withdrawn from possible acquisition by states or homesteaders and private interests. Pres. Roosevelt appointed Farrington R. Carpenter, a lawyer and rancher from Colorado as the first director of the Division of Grazing, which became the Grazing Service, working under the supervision of the Sec. of Interior, Harold L. Ickes. (quote from Carpenter - "Mr. Ickes was an Eastern man, he didn't know which end of a cow got up first. He didn't know anything about the West and he didn't know what to do with the Taylor Grazing Act. Farrington Carpenter figured he did"). end of quote.

During the summer of 1934 Henry Gerber, Sec. of the Southern Oregon Stockmen's Association, kept a running correspondence with the Department of Interior. As Carpenter and his staff started holding hearings in the West he decided this group of stockmen was a ready made grazing district and potential advisory board members. Thus was born the Bonanza Taylor Grazing District #1, the first Taylor Grazing District both in Oregon and the U.S.

To quote from a letter written to Henry Gerber by Carpenter years later, "Be assured I will always have an especially warm spot in my memory for Grazing District #1 in Oregon and (also in the U.S.). It's kinda like a feller's first love.

Here is a list of the first Advisory Board members from Bonanza.

W.D. Campbell, Bonanza
William J. DeVaul, Bonanza
F.P. Grohs, Bonanza
John S. Horn, Bonanza
Elmer Stanley, Bonanza

W.H. Casebeer, Bonanza
Henry C. Gerber, Klamath Falls
Thomas Hefner, Bonanza
Dennis O'Conner, Klamath Falls
E.J. Swingle, Bonanza
My father, L.A. Fitzhugh, served on the board during the early years also. Another early member was Jimmy Doherty and he used to go from Barnes Valley to the meetings with Billie's Grandad, William DeVaul. Bee remembers him saying, "We be off to war". It must have been interesting formative years.

Paul then introduced John E. (Bud) Harris who told us, "Where we are sitting and standing right now, a few years back, say 150 years, was an Indian Village called Nushaltkaga. It was a permanent Modoc Village and during the fishing season was extremely busy. It was also a ritual area because of the big cremation area up here north of town.

After the Indians left here and the white man came in, this area was farmed, let idle, built on and buildings fell down and it was farmed again. Along in the late '40s and '50s this area was all sage brush. Finally a group of citizens decided to try to form a park centered around the spring. After legal advise they formed a corporation. Various families donated property and also the city of Bonanza. People donated heavy equipment and operated it to tear out the brush. A group of Boy Scouts came from Klamath Falls and worked to haul the brush and rock away. It was truly a community project with everyone doing what they could to make a park.

A swimming pool has never been made because of the Liability Insurance. However, the spring is used as a swimming hole.

Numerous money making projects have taken place in order to build the many things in the park; the gazebos, cook house, rest rooms, a shop building and the sprinkler system.

There are many memorials in the park dedicated to people like Esther Brown who was a strong leader in getting the Carnival going. The bridge over the springs was built as a memorial to Bud Warfield who was an "old timer here" who worked on the Park District. The Klamath Historical Society gave a plaque to the park for the 100 year centennial for the town of Bonanza and there are others too.

Mr. Harris finished by telling us about the vandalism that is so hard to control even in a small town like Bonanza.

Florence Horn was then introduced. Florence bought a store in Bonanza and moved in from Langell Valley with her three children, ages 11, 9 and 7 years old. It was a real experience for her and
many funny things happened including the time her two boys tried
the plug tobacco and were sicker than you know what.

Florence has lived in Bonanza for many years and she celebrated
her 94th birthday Tuesday, June 25, 1991.

Billie DeVaul Fitzhugh spoke then about the Bonanza schools.
"I'd like to share a bit about the Bonanza schools. Different
references have conflicting dates for parts of it so we tried to
track down some correct ones. There were older schools, one down
by the river and a one-room and then a two-room one in town. I
will talk about the 3 schools we knew, as our personal history
starts with the tall brick one on the hill.

Digging in newspapers, Paul saw in the December 7, 1905 paper a
school board meeting report that said they proposed a bond issue
for a new school. The December 6, 1906 paper said a bond issue was
voted on in the amount of $12,000.00, and passed 30 to 1. The
school was built and up over the front entrance were large
numerals, 1 9 0 7, so that must be when it was built. The curved
topped gym was built in 1926, the cafeteria was added in 1928 and
indoor restrooms were put in in 1929.

During the Depression a new high school was built where the
present one is. I asked several who were in high school then and
they agreed they started in the new school in September of 1936. A
lovely new gym was added to this school, probably in 1939. It
wasn't in the picture of the school in the 1939 annual but was in
the 1940 annual.

This school was destroyed by fire March 3, 1944. The present
high school wing, built on the old foundations, was barely ready
for use when I was a Senior in September 1945. The new gym was not
quite finished by graduation time, 1947, but they used it anyway,
with canvas on the floors. I think the new grade school was built
that year also and the old building on the hill was vacated. It
was torn down later, I believe by Mr. Puddy. The little round-topped
gym was too good to be demolished so about 1949 it was moved
down to its present location and was used as an auditorium and
extra play area.

The school was becoming crowded so a new cafeteria, library and
Home Ec. building was built in 1966-67, and a music room in 1977"
"Now the school is bursting its seams again, and there are temporary buildings here and there.

I guess you could call the classes Paul and I graduated from Bonanza, the Phoenix classes. We kid his class of 1944 about burning down the school and it arose from the ashes for my class of 1946. Paul started first grade in the old school, went down to the new high school in the 7th grade, then went back up the hill to graduate.

Kids laugh and make jokes about the school burning down but it sure isn't funny when it happens".

A lot of families didn't have phones, nor even radios so it was a real shock when the buses arrived that Friday morning, March 3, 1944 and they saw the smoldering pile of rubble that had been the school. Part of the walls had collapsed. "I remember the front wall with the gaping hole where the front doors had been, the mess of charred boards and twisted metal, and our lockers all burnt and warped. You could read the titles on your books but when you touched them they turned to ashes. Patsy Tofeil Langley at the Olene store said she was about a 3rd grader then and she remembers the little kids all started crying when they saw it.

School started again Monday, March 13th. The second floor of the old grade school had to be braced so the High School kids could be up there. The 7th & 8th graders were downstairs. There weren't any books but most of them arrived the next day. Some of the Poe Valley and Harpold Road kids were rerouted to Malin and Henley, according to Patsy Langley.

The next year was hard on us also. The first 9 grades stayed in the old school but the other 3 were bussed to Henley, where Carrol Howe was principal. We were somewhat without an identity, neither Bonanza nor Henley, especially the seniors. Also that was a long bus ride". In 1945 the Seniors were back at Bonanza again even without the frills. The class of 1946 were the last to graduate from the little gym.

The old bell in the belfry of the old school on the hill wound up at St. Barnabas Church when the school was torn down and was placed in a rock tower out in front which was dedicated to the memory of Tommy Lindsey in about 1958.
Carolyn Monroe Dearborn was next and she told us: "I rode the first bus to Bonanza in 1927 when it started out in Langell Valley driven by Mr. Ben Brown. We went around by the old Cheese Factory, by the Lorella Store and back into Bonanza. It was a model "T" flat bed truck build up with little isinglass windows, with benches around inside and there was no heat. So you sat the rest of the winter scratching chilblains. But anyway, it got us there and the roads were so bad that my Dad used to lead the horses harnessed until the bus came by so they could pull it through the mud holes by our place. But that was the beginning of the consolidation at Bonanza—the Model "T" truck".

Chet Hamaker then told us, "the old Methodist Church over there by Uncle Ol's (J.O) old place, well one of the early preachers there was Hugh Currin and Bryant William's grandfather. He was one of the early people here.

Incidentally, I was born just across the spring here in 1913. In 1916 my Dad had a good crop of wheat out there and everything just looked beautiful and then a freeze came along and froze it and a wind came along and blew it away and that was the end of my Dad's farming and we left Bonanza in 1916 and moved to Edenbower near Roseburg.

My Mother, Hattie Brown Hamaker lived right close to the Indian Village when she was a girl here and she remembered all the Indians coming down and pouring ashes over their heads. It just scared her to death.

My brother, Kenton, who is 5 years older than me had the whole side of the barn over there lined with morters and pestels. No telling whatever happened to them when we moved.

I am going to mention one of the first saw mills out here. A man called Pappy Gordon (he was Chet's grandfather's first father-in law) had a Sash Mill in Keno and he moved out here and had a Sash Mill, that's an up and down saw. W.E.(Wilfred) Lamm said he was quite a saw mill man. He'd put the log in the saw and let it be sawing and he'd go off fishing while the log went through the saw.

You mentioned that Bob Horton told all about his family. William Horton was a three time widower. Mrs. Elizabeth Poe was
his second wife and she died in 1875. My great grandmother, Rebecca Hamaker came here in 1875 with my grandfather and his brother, Wes, and she was the third wife of William Horton and he was her third husband."

As the thunder boomed and the wind blew, Paul added a few last words before we called it quits. "I just wanted to mention that this is an Island we're looking at here on the other side of the water. That's where they used to have baseball games and the 4th of July picnics and such as that. The picnics in the upper area and baseball below there. It is quite a good sized island, 5 acres or something like that".

The lightening was striking the surrounding mountains and the rain started to fall. We were glad to get back on the bus to get warm and dry. It rained on us most of the way back to Klamath Falls but was dry at the Museum as we got off the busses to go home.

transcribed from tape and written by
Mae L. Smith.

No one has ever said transcribing from a tape recording was easy nor typing from same was a cinch.

In order to start the New Year out right, I want to correct two typing errors in the last Tumpeter.

The O.C. & E., Klamath Municipal Railroad or the Strahorn (not Stray Horn) Line (System), which ever you prefer, was completed, we were told, as far as Dairy in 1919 and a spur went from the Swan Lake Junction into Swan Lake to a mill there.

Another misspelling was the name of Buena Cobb Stone (Buena not Buelah).