KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TOUR OF DAIRY, HILDEBRAND AND BONANZA

Three school buses loaded with Historical Society members and many others interested in the history of the Dairy, Hildebrand and Bonanza areas left the Klamath County Museum shortly before 9am, Sunday June 23, 1991.

Our tour coordinator, Verland Huff was ably assisted by Jim Flowers and Paul Fitzhugh with Janis Kafton ever ready to tell some of the history of schools in the area.

As we rode along we were given tidbits of information which some of you may or may not know. Such as: Did you ever wonder about the "Y" junction? W.D. Miller had the contract to pave south of 6th Street as far as the Merrill-Lakeview Junction. To finish the job he paved 100 feet towards Merrill and 100 feet towards Lakeview thus forming the "Y".

Did you know that in 1898 Lost River went on a rampage and the water rose as high as the flume?

The Stray Horn Railroad was completed in 1919 as far as Dairy. A spur went into Swan Lake Junction and timber from the mill was loaded there.

We were also told that if Swan Lake were to fill up it would cover the land from Pine Flats clear to the rise of the hill just before you turn down into Dairy.

Our first stop on the tour was at the old Dairy School which is a yellow residence now, on the right side of the road after turning right off of 140 East at the present Dairy Store. The school had
started as a one room school house but had additions later that included an upstairs which was removed when it was modernized as a home after it ceased to be a school.

The first speaker introduced by Verland Huff was Lucille Ward Estes who told us that she had come to Dairy at the age of three to live with her grandparents, Gilbert George and Lyda Anderson who had the Yonna Valley Hotel. The Yonna Valley Hotel was on down the street from the school house and on the opposite side of the street. Part of it burned later so the present building is not quite the way it was when Lucille first came to Dairy.

The school was a two room building at the time Lucille started first grade. "You heard what everybody said" and at the end of the school year you were given a test and having passed that you went on into the next grade. Lucille completed eight years there.

"My grandparents had the Post Office. I can remember many, many stories of things that happened there. I remember when we got electricity in Dairy and the people who stopped over. I have the books my grandmother kept. Ivan Applegate and his team of horses would be there.

They would charge 25¢ a night and one story my Uncle George told me, Uncle George is 84. This one couple of old fellows came all the time to stay overnight. At 25¢ a night I don't know how they divided that as they stayed in the same room. One morning one of them came down to breakfast and my grandmother asked, "Where is Jack"? And the old fellow said, "Well, that old so and so died last night". Grandma went upstairs and sure enough he was dead. So I guess that the one fellow had to pay the whole quarter then.

I personally remember the indians coming from Beatty and Bly and they would camp in our corrals overnight and then go into Klamath Falls. Then on the way back they would stop there again. My grandfather taught many of them to speak English. He wrote a little phonetic book about english to the Klamath language which I loaned to Beulah Stone and she never returned and I can't find it anyplace.

I remember one time Mrs. Liskey was visiting my grandmother and they were standing out in front of the hotel. There was a couple that had been staying there in one of the lower rooms and they never
came out. My grandmother said she took all their meals to them. All of a sudden a bullet came flying out of their room, through the wall of the hotel, and just missed her and Mrs. Liskey as they were standing there visiting. He was trying to shoot his wife apparently.

This was a really rugged area. A lot of loggers in the later years stayed there. This was kind of a half way stop when you went on to the Bly or Beatty area".

When asked about the stores that were there during that time, Lucille told us that the present Dairy Store was not there at that time. "On the same side of the street (right side) and cater cornered from where my grandparents had their post office, my grandfather was postmaster, there was a general mercantile store and they had everything---yardage and thread and flour and all those good things".

"In later years I worked at the Federal Land Bank and Silvan Crume (an indian man) came in and he was so stoic. So I was trying to talk to him and I said, "You know I grew up in Dairy". And he said "Humph!" So I went back to my desk. A few minutes later he said, "If you grew up in Dairy how did you get soda pop at Sedges' Store?" And I said, "Oh, there was a well inside his store and it was in a caged crate. You'd pay your nickel and you'd wind up the pulley rope and take whichever one you wanted". And he said, "You really did grow up in Dairy!" The Sedges used to live across the street from us but those houses aren't there anymore.

I remember Billy Shook, I looked for him to come up the lane because he always had apples in his saddle bag. He always had some thing for me.

Mr. Jim Wight used to live out between here and Bonanza but later he moved into town. He had a great white beard and drove a sleigh and his wife always rode in the back of the sleigh. And one time he came into the Post Office and when he went out his wife wasn't there. He'd dumped her off in the snow someplace. Every body thought Mr Wight was a very strange gentleman. But I remember one time I was having a temper tantrum and was laying on the floor kicking my heels and he came into the Post Office and laid right down beside me and started kicking his heels".
"It just seems like we had a flow of traffic through our house all the time and we did you know, renting the rooms. I figured out the other night, there were five bedrooms upstairs and then a parlor downstairs and that's where people were laid out after they died. Everyone called my grandmother, she was a midwife and then when they were ill or died she went and took care of things too.

We had meals for fifty to seventy people sometimes. Always had big meals on the 4th of July and on Christmas". They had what was called a canning kitchen in the back that was screened in and they cooked there in the summer time on a Home Comfort Stove. Lucille said her grandmother was renowned for her wonderful food.

"My Aunt Mable was born in 1905 and the barn which isn't there anymore was built about 1903 and my grandmother dated everything by, "Well, the barn was built in 1903 and Mable was born in 1905" and whatever else happened after that was the date".

"It was an interesting time and I am so happy I was raised in a small community like this and inherited the heritage of my grandparents who were positively wonderful people. We had church in the parlor on Sunday. The house was just a community center and everyone came there and loved them.

My grandparents were Gilbert George and Lyda Anderson. My grandfather came on the covered wagon when he was three years old to Jacksonville. I have a whole book about his family and he came to Klamath County in 1872. He worked with O.C. (Oliver) Applegate and his sister married Oliver Applegate. Some of his other sisters were married to the Loosleys and the Wagners and John McCall, who used to be postmaster. It is a long time family in this area".

Verland then told us, "The school was on the upswing in 1927. It was just a one room school and they drew a line down through the center and had two teachers. The teacher that taught the upper grades was Mrs. Charley Burgdorf and then Josephine Honsig was the first to fourth grade teacher. Then in the next year, 1928, they added this room here on and they remodeled this into teachers quarters. Then Miss Thomas, later Mrs. A.C. Olson, taught the upper grades and a Mrs. Simmons, a lady from Cottage Grove, taught the other four grades. Then the next year the Woods girls taught.
There wasn't much change in the school then except they did grub the sage brush off in the back. Then the next year was 1930 and they hung a chemical toilet on the back and we did away with the two "out-holers" out there.

We used to play baseball here. We didn't use a soft ball. We used an old hard ball and had a baseball diamond and played "Work-Up". Nobody had a baseball mitt because nobody could afford one. So that old hard ball when it come way up out there, you let it bounce and then you'd pick it up. Well, Don Merritt batted one way up high and he started loping around the bases and Alden Bruner was standing in the middle of the field and he got under that ball and came down with it and caught it. Don Merritt just couldn't believe he was OUT!"

Verland then introduced Alden Bruner. "The Bruners lived in the old mercantile store that Lucille talked about. Lived there for three or four years and then rented a place across the road from the old mercantile. At that time we moved to Bonanza to school, before that I attended school here while the Woods sisters were teaching and also for sometime later. I graduated from the Bonanza high school in 1938. I went to the seventh grade here in Dairy.

Before we moved down here, we lived on the old Sutton Ranch which is about five miles south of here. We rode horses and buggys and cars and everything right past the old Shook Ranch for a period of four years so we knew that area quite well. I can vouch for the apples that Billy Shook grew. Every time we'd drive by we got a sack of apples so we had plenty to eat all the time. And I can vouch for the baseball out here. I remember particularly when the Savages taught here. Mrs. Savage was on one team and Mr. Savage on the other team and everybody played baseball from the first grade on up through the eighth grade. It took the whole school to make two partial teams. And we really got out there and played ball hard for the fifteen minutes to a half hour".

The next speaker Verland introduced was Jeanette Smith Jackson who told us that she had been in school when there was only one room in the school building and her teacher had been Grace Lytell. In remembering the baseball games she said: "For bases we used rocks so you had to be very careful. If you fell, it was just too
bad, you hit a rock". Jeanette also had fond memories of her years there.

Verland then told us that Dairy was named by a man whose name was Roberts. "He was the first postmaster here in 1876 and he thought it looked a lot like a place he'd come from in the East so he named it Dairy and the name stuck".

Janis Kafton told us: "the Dairy school was on the University of Oregon list as early as 1876. However, it was 1883 when it was adopted into the County". Janis has a mystery that she would like someone to help her solve. It seems that Alice Applegate Peil taught here in 1895 and she described the school as setting out in a sagebrush flat. Victoria McClellan said she taught at the Dairy school in 1895 but she said it was on the old Shook Ranch.

Question: Was there a school on the Shook Ranch in 1895 and one here in Dairy also in 1895? Anyone having any information that would help solve this mystery is asked to please contact Janis Kafton.

Lucille Estes remembered the old pump at the Dairy school and told us that all the students were issued wooden handled tooth brushes and all the students stood in line at the pump after eating their lunch to wash their teeth.

All the people who had attended the Dairy School were asked to line up to have their pictures taken before we boarded the buses again to go to the Shook Ranch.

On arriving at the Shook Ranch Verland introduced Jack Rogers. He told us: "We had an old 1927 Buick and my Mother drove it back and forth taking us to school. Sometimes the running boards were dragging mud on the road. If there was too much snow we rode horseback. There was another family living down the road here, the Dunn family, at that time. They had two girls and a boy and we picked them up and took them on to school too. They went to Bonanza.

I had a lot of fun on this hill and as near as I can remember, right there was a pond", he said pointing towards the place. "They've built this house since I was here. There was a water tank up on the hill here beyond those trees where the old houses were. They had an old water ramp in there and we'd pump water up into
that tank and then it came down through a boiler which was right below it. That was where we got our hot water for washing clothes, washing dishes and stuff like that. Because the pond was where the cows ran around and drank out of it and the pigs, we only washed in the water that came out of there. There was a big smoke house up there and in the fall of the year we'd kill fifteen to twenty head of hogs. Billy Shook was in charge of smoking and curing the hams, most of it. We had a big cold room and we put the sausage down in the barrels. Mother would render out the lard and put it down in with the sausage and we had sausage all the time.

There was an oil well way off over there. I think it was on some property that later belonged to Virgil Smallen but it was on this ranch at that time. Warm water came up, it was an artesian well. Everybody said there were little red fish in there but I wouldn't believe them until I rode over there one day, and there they were. They were from one half to three quarters inch long and looked like little gold fish. The ground out there where they came up and the water had cooled and they had died was actually sort of a pink color from these little fish. I had a lot of fun on this place and a lot of good memories.

Verland then introduced Bob Horton. "Welcome to the old Horton Ranch, ladies and gentlemen. I lived here for twenty five years. I built this house we are standing next to in 1949 and '50. My wife and I were married before the house was finished and we moved into it in the spring of 1950. We had two sons, Dan and Mike and those two boys were raised here until 1972 when we sold this property.

On down the road, approximately a half mile, is the old Colahan homestead. James H. Colahan was my great granddad. Alice Thomas is here today and she's a Colahan and James Colahan was her granddad. We are second cousins.

The Colahan property and the Shook property, there was always some controversy on just where the boundary lines were and I never did know exactly. We didn't care that much.

My Dad was raised in Poe Valley and the Colahan families lived on this side of the hill. Nettie Colahan was my grandmother, who is Alice Colahan's aunt. And the Horton family at one time ---
William Harrison Horton, came into the country in 1866 and homesteaded that year. He was a widower when he came here and he had two youngsters, I believe, at the time. He married Elizabeth Poe who was of the Poe family for which Poe Valley was named for. Then his second wife, Elizabeth Poe Horton passed away. Mrs. Colahan, my great grandmother, took in my granddad, who was Charlie Horton, one of William Harrison Horton's youngsters. She took in four youngsters and she had twelve youngsters of her own. So you can see what kind of a lady she was. She must have been a hard worker to raise and bring up sixteen youngsters.

My grandmother used to tell me that when she was a youngster that her mother would take the kids from the cabin and go back on the hill, there's kind of a draw back there, a rocky draw. Her mother would take the kids up on the hill when there was a possibility of an indian uprising and she'd hide them away from the indians. That must have been back in the 1860's. The Modoc War started in 1872.

Anyway, this property has changed quite a bit since we were here.

There's a big spring here, a natural spring, where you see the two swans down there on the water. The little red house is an irrigation well. Dad drilled it in 1939 and we combined it with the spring along with other wells on the property and increased the production of the property. I enjoyed living here very, very much and there are a lot of memories on this place for me."

Verland reminded Bob to tell us more about his great grandfather. "J.H. Colahan was my great granddad and he homesteaded a ranch south of Dairy quite by accident in the later part of the 1800's. That's where he raised his family of eleven children. My grandmother was a Colahan and my dad was a Horton. The Horton ranch is directly over the hill here and the two ranches were connected with a road we built over the top of the hill. Anyway he went to old Mexico with a covey of saddle horses and a hired man and bought a herd of cattle which he intended to drive to the Willamette Valley. On the way back from Mexico they stopped at the big spring about a mile east of what is now the Lakeview Junction on Highway 140. (This is on the right hand side about 1/4 mile from the present
Shield Crest Golf Course which is on the opposite side of the highway, near Boothe Road. You can tell the place by the amount of moisture there). He rested for a day or two and let the cattle graze. While they were camped by this spring a frontiersman rode into their camp. When he found out they were going to homestead, he suggested they go take a look at a big native meadow east of where they were that could be homesteaded.

Colahan liked the idea and did file a homestead claim on the place the frontiersman was telling him about. He settled down there and began raising his family also cattle and horses and oats for the United States Cavalry.

After several successful years of endeavor, the hard winter of 1889 and '90 financially devastated the family along with most of the pioneers of the time. However, they did overcome their hardship and almost the entire family spent their entire lives in Klamath County, like my great uncles, my grandmother's brothers and sisters spent the rest of their lives in the Hildebrand and Fort Klamath areas and there are still quite a few Colahan and Horton descendents in the area.

Bob Horton finished by telling us that his great grandfather Horton's homestead was declared a "Century Ranch" by the State of Oregon in 1968.

Verland Huff then gave us some more information. "There were three original land owners in here. On the south end was the Shook Ranch and the Colahan Ranch and then Ivan Applegate on the north.

Amos Shook, the old man, was born in 1814 and his wife Katherine was born in 1821. She was called Kate. Their oldest son was born in 1842 and the next son, David, was born in 1852 so there is a distance so two of the girls could have been born in there.

David Shook who was born in 1852 and another son, Peter Shook, was born in 1853. Now, Newton, we don't know where he comes in, but they were all born in Davis County, Iowa, that's in the south eastern corner of Iowa down next to the Missouri border.

They crossed the plains in 1864 and came to the Rogue River Valley. They stayed there four years. They heard a lot about this country over here. So John, at the age of twenty six, and a man by the name of Frank Smith came over here. Apparently they came right
to this area here because there was a spring built down there and they liked what they saw. That was in the spring of 1868 and in the fall the Shooks came here.

I don't know much history about the Shooks but Mr. Shook died in 1901 and his wife died in 1910. The boys seemed to have run the ranch.

During the Modoc Indian War all four of the boys, John, David, Newton and Billy all served in the war. Billy was just a little too young but they used him as a guard up in Langell Valley because the Indians would come out of Clear Lake through Langell Valley and down in to this area.

John Shook, being the oldest, tried lumbering and logging and everything else but his main stay was being a cattleman right here on this ranch.

David Shook died in 1926 and then was followed by John in 1929.

My Father and I were here in 1937 and Billy Shook was in a corral right out here and he was 82 years old. He was sitting on a horse and looked real good and healthy. He said: "When I came here in 1871 (he had apparently stayed over in Jacksonville and worked on a newspaper before coming over here) there was only one place between here and Lakeview". Van Landrum told me that was the Owens Ranch and it is about 10 miles beyond Bly.

A few weeks after that Billy Shook fell off a wagon and broke his leg and from then on, he went down hill and died in November of 1937.

Bob has told you about the winter of '89 and '90 wiping out a lot of the cattlemen around here. Well, Colahan took 300 head of cows up toward the Sycan Marsh and in the spring there were only 85 left. It was a hard lesson for the people to learn that you can't winter cattle on the open range here. This year you may have done it but in 1889 and 1890, not so. So there was a lot of scurrying around and changing brands and this and that to get back in the cattle business.

There were some people by the name of Goodlow living in Langell Valley. There's a mountain named for Goodlow up there. They had boys. So the Shook boys and the Goodlow boys and Colahan's made "8's" out of the Shook Brands and doctored up the "C's" and made
"G's" out of those. In those days there was sort of an unwritten law, if you found a cow that didn't have a brand on it---it was yours. There was a little flaw in that though as it was a legal way of stealing something. The little flaw was that if you had your brand on a calf and that old cow claimed that calf and you didn't have your brand on that cow, YOU WERE IN TROUBLE.

Well, the Shooks and the Goodlows had a little squabble. Old Goodlow came up to Dairy and he was in one of the Saloons and he threatened to come down and shoot old John Shook. So one of the cowboys went ahead and kind of put old Shook on the alert.

Shook was sitting on the porch with a newspaper and a gun concealed under the newspaper. Goodlow rode up and dismounted and threatened John. John walked up toward the gate and they both shot. John shot first and probably deflected the bullet of Goodlow and Goodlow was killed. So he got on his horse and he and his nephew rode up the road here and Alice Applegate Piel said they came into the yard and that John was a white as a sheet. He told her that he had killed Goodlow and he was going in to give himself up."

Verland added: "John was acquitted and went on to serve a term in the State Legislature and was the first postmaster of Bonanza. He lived to be 82 years old and died in 1929."

Bob Horton told us that when his Dad, Lawrence Horton, and Mother moved back after having lived in Tulelake from 1925 to 1939 "they bought the Shook Ranch from a fellow by the name of Marion Barnes. Barnes and Harris owned the property one time in some sort of a partnership and from the time the property went out of the Colahan hands to the time Barnes and Harris had the property was about 39 years". They remodeled the part that had been a granary and had been pulled up and made into a residence. The carpenters were taking out walls and repairing the roof and during this process one of the carpenters saw a piece of paper folded up between the sheathing and on top of a rafter. When he pulled it out it was the subpoena for his granddad to the hearing of John Shook when he shot Goodlow.

The Applegate home was between one quarter to one half a mile from the Shook/Horton Ranch towards Dairy. For further information
on the Applegates please refer to "Applegate Memories" in Vol. 4 of The Trumpeter for April, May and June 1989.

We will continue our tour through the Hildebrand area and Bonanza in the December issue of the Trumpeter.

transcribed from tape and written by

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