KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TOUR OF
WILSON DAM, GALE TOWNSITE, STONE BRIDGE,
WHITE LAKE CITY, ADY, MIDLAND AND MERGANSER.

Once again we were fortunate enough to be able to rent the school busses for our tour. Our very able coordinator, Verland Huff and his assistants, Jim Flowers, Paul Fitzhugh and Janis Kafton have done it again and we are very grateful to them for all the research and work they put into making each tour such a success.

So off we started at 9 A.M. to view more of our Klamath County history, some of which will no longer be visible in a few more years. The busses rambled along South 6th Street to the "Y" junction where we turned right onto highway #39. We received our first history lesson as we passed Hager. It came into existence because the O.C.& E.or Strahorn Railroad passed through the Hager land and the name "Hager" was given to the loading station there. There was never a post office or school but there was a store. The children went to the Pine Grove School about 2 1/2 miles away.

We turned left at the Klamath Irrigation sign and drove up Short Road to turn right onto Reeder Road to the bridge across Lost River. Paul had the keys to the gates across the canal and we turned left to the Wilson or Horseshoe Dam. Paul was our first speaker. The Wilson Dam was constructed in 1912 and the diversion channel completed soon after. It is a multiple-arch-type dam construction to divert water from Gerber and Clear Lake Reservoirs,
plus Lost River flows accumulated below these reservoirs, to the Klamath River through the Lost River Diversion Channel. The channel was enlarged to 3,000 CFS capacity in 1947-1948 and electrical radial gates installed. A sluice gate at the bottom can be opened to clean it out.

The diversion channel flows to the Klamath River and the river elevation at Keno can effect the flow of the diversion channel. 1,500 CFS flows from Klamath River to Lost River.

The river above Wilson Dam (Lost River Diversion Dam) is not considered as a reservoir although it assists the river pumping installations. There are 57 bays in Wilson Dam averaging 4.5 feet for an over-all spillway crest of 256.5 feet. The dam is capable of passing 10,000 CFS. The method for getting water by Wilson Dam for irrigation water for Tule Lake diversion (a distance of 8 miles) is to release it into Lost River by a spillway farther down the channel. By this method they can supply water either from Lost River (Gerber-Clear Lake) or Klamath Lake. This prevents excess upper Lost River water from accumulating in the Tule Lake Sump and over-flowing to inundate the reclaimed lands in the Tule Lake Basin. It also reduces operation and maintenance costs by reducing excess inflow to Tule Lake. Excess waters in Tule Lake must be removed by pumping against a total head of about 90 feet. Also the diversion dam maintains uniform upstream water
levels, facilitating considerable project irrigation pumping in the western half of Poe Valley.

Prior to the dam a huge water wheel was used to lift the water on to the land for irrigation.

Our next speaker was Janis Kaffton who told us about the Russian Colony that settled in the Crystal Springs-Reeder Road area in the 1913-1914 years.

Between 1913 and approximately 1918 several Russian families came in to the Klamath Basin and were persuaded by the Klamath Development Co. to purchase farming land in the Stukel Mt. area. Although there were several scattered families in the Crystal Springs-Mt. Laki area also, the bulk of the colony seem to have selected land on what at that time was called Kilgore Lane. So called because the previous owner of most of that particular block of land had been Silas Kilgore who was one of the very earliest settlers of Upper Langell Valley and was, so far as is known, the first to build a home on that piece of land.

The bridge on the northwest tip of Stukel Mt. on Lost River was called the Wilson bridge because they were owners of the land that had once belonged to Kilgores, at the time the bridge was built. Wilson has been said to be the one that brought in the poplar saplings which were planted the length of his section of land on this lane now known as Reeder Road.

"Old Timers" have told Janis about how this mile of trees lining both sides of the road leading north from Wilson Bridge made a wonderful race track for horses. The soil was deep sand and of course no "bar" pits then to mar the edges of the road under the trees. Onlookers came to picnic and to enjoy the horse races. The Liskey brothers are said to have participated in these community horse racing events in a pretty big way.

The Slivkoff family purchased the farm land that was nearest the Wilson bridge and the Diversion Dam. The family still has descendants here, one being the operator of the Sliv-co Bag Co. in Malin.

At the other end of the lane was a family by the name of Evanikoff that later became the Mallard ranch. This family was the last to leave the area. Evanikoff later became a well-to-do
farmer-business man of the Nappa Valley area. He was so grateful to his new homeland of America that he made arrangements for his estate to go to the government at his death as an expression of his gratitude.

However, most of the colony experienced some difficulties in meeting the cost of necessary farming machinery and irrigation taxes. Some moved to dry land sections of land in the Poe Valley and Bonanza area in the later teen years.

One of the difficult times they went through was a severe epidemic of diphtheria or scarlet fever, that took a good number of the colony. Dr. George Wright was very helpful to these people during this time. They had their own very strong religious beliefs and men in the group were assigned to be responsible for weddings and funerals, etc. They held their own funerals and buried their dead on the point of land that formed the "toe" of Stukel Mt. just across the bridge from the Slivkoff home.

Sometime later it seems the county road department discovered some of these burials while looking for some gravel or fill dirt. The families were notified that the graves would have to be removed to a proper cemetery such as Mt. Laki. The county probably expected to take care of the matter, but during the night members of the colony took care of the matter themselves. The coffins were carried to Mt. Laki and placed in the southwest corner of that burial grounds. Workers of the cemetery have been very careful in the placing of more internments in that corner of the grounds.

One farmer who grew up in the area of the cemetery recalls the Russians coming in later months, walking in a solemn group, carrying the casket of a loved one on their shoulders and chanting their funeral dirges as they came to the Mt. Laki cemetery.

These people had some very strict observances about the foods that were acceptable to eat or not eat. Pork was strictly forbidden and though they loved the apple pies that their new neighbors baked, they could not make a good crust because they could not use lard. But some kindly person showed one mother how a good crust could be made by using heavy cream. From then on they indulged in all the apple pies they desired.
These people were a hard-working people, and expected their children to take on many of the chores at an early age to free the older men and boys for the field work. Women had only the very briefest time off for child birth. Many were back at hard work the day after the event. They deeply appreciated the freedom from the fear of the ever-watchful eye of the government in their daily lives.

Many families in our present day Klamath county have their roots in some families that came with so little in money but so much in high hopes and determination and remained to make their dreams come true,---that of becoming a part of our history.

Some of the names of the families known to have been in the Basin in the 1913-1920 era were: Slikoff, Evanikoff, Pudoff, Sohrakoff, Hozin, Sohriakoff, Churnikoff, Affanasoff, Drobshoff, Kosloff, Melnikoff and Romanoff.

Our next speaker, Carol Matus, told us that her mother and step-father, Ken Wallin, lived at the Wilson Dam from about 1972-1982. Mr. Wallin was the water master during that period however he had lived in that area since 1935.

After the crowd had viewed Wilson Dam and taken pictures, we returned to our buses and once again traveled down Reeder Road to Hill Road and then turned left onto Anderson Road to view the former townsite of Gale. There is little left now to show that it once was a thriving little community, except for the old Gale school near the curve of Anderson Road as it heads towards Merrill.
The Gale school house was built in 1910 and the small barn at the rear used to stable the children's horses during school hours. The school building was remodeled into a house and it and the land were owned by Henry Anderson. In 1941 Robert and Vlasta Petrik bought this farm which is 3 miles northwest of Merrill. They had four children. The house still stands and Vlasta Petrik continues to live there. Vlasta's parents, Frank and Marie Zumpfe, came from Czechoslovakia and Frank was one of the scouts for a location to establish a Czech Coloney in 1909 and bought 80 acres northwest of Malin in August 1909.

The buses continued on to Merrill and Malone Road where we stopped to hear the history of Stone Bridge at the Anderson-Rose Dam on Lost River. The D.A.R. and the Historical Marker Committee both have Historical Markers there.

Frank Paygr, whose parents were among the original Czechoslovakian families to settle in Malin in 1909, told us he remembered many of the schools and post offices of the area. He said the schools were about 5 miles apart before they were consolidated into school districts. There was Lone Pine, Gale, Libby, Malin and a small one out in the sage brush called Shasta View which he attended. Shasta View and Malin schools combined and before long they were all into school districts and things were changed.
Then Verland told us the Applegates left St. Louis, Missouri in 1843 and pioneered the trail to the Columbia River and down the Columbia into the Willamette Valley. This was called the Oregon Trail.

In 1846 Jesse Applegate decided to pioneer a road called the Southern Road. It came from the Willamette Valley, through the Rogue River Valley and over the Greensprings to Keno, then around the Lower Klamath Lake and around the point and was here at the Stone or Natural Bridge in June 1846. That was 146 years ago! The banks of Lost River sloped down about 10 feet and the Stone Bridge was under from 2 feet to 6 feet of water and then sloped back up 10 feet on the opposite side. They crossed the Natural Bridge here and went down along Tule Lake, over the north end of Clear Lake and on over to Winneumucca and from there on up to Fort Hall, Idaho. That was a successful trip because in the summer of 1846 there were 100 wagons, 500 people and cattle that crossed this Natural Bridge on their way to the Willamette Valley.

In 1853 it continued to be used—sometimes called the Southern Oregon Trail and sometimes the Applegate Trail. Wilburn Beeson was one of the ones to travel this trail and left a diary about the trip. He stated that he came across this Natural Bridge on August 24, 1853.

In 1855 the Secretary of War decided there should be a road surveyed from Sacramento to the Columbia River. He commissioned Lt. Williamson, that's the one for whom Williamson River is named, and his assistant Lt. Abbot. They came up the Pitt River to Clear Lake and to this area here. Lt. Abbot told in his account that they crossed "the bridge" with no problems. However, Surveyor Major lost one of his wagons over the side and retrieved it from 28 feet of water.

In 1864 the Reservation was established at Fort Klamath and the Indians were gradually coerced to go there. Things were going pretty smoothly after the Treaty of 1870. Captain Jack and his band of Modocs didn't get along however, with the Klamaths so in November of 1872 he and his band of about 100 Modocs left and came down here and settled again on Lost River near the Stone Bridge. Hooker Jim was about 1/4 mile from them on the opposite
(north, left bank) side of the river with his small group of about 15. Hooker Jim and his people were called "Hot Creeks", as their tribal home grounds were in the area of Hot Creek, Butte Creek, Willow Creek and Cottonwood Creek, all in northern California. The Modocs did not all belong to the same group. Captain Jack and his people were called Lost River Modocs because they were generally located on Lost River, Clear Lake and Tule Lake and the "Gumbatkini" or Rock Indians were also included with this group.

Captain James Jackson from the Fort was given orders to bring the Indians back to the Fort---by force if necessary. He left Fort Klamath with about 40 soldiers and rode all night in pelting rain and were here on Lost River at daybreak. They surprised the Indians, although they knew the soldiers were coming, they didn't think they would travel that fast nor get there that early.

None of the Indians liked the idea of having to go back to the reservation but Scarfaced Charley is said to have jumped out with a gun and told the soldiers, "You'll never take me back to the reservation". Captain Jackson ordered Lt. Boutelle to disarm Scarfaced Charley. In that fray Lt. Boutelle fired and Scarfaced Charley fired at the same time. This was November 29, 1872. Several soldiers and several Modocs were killed but that number was small compared to those slain by Hooker Jim's band in retaliation for the citizens surprise and unwarranted attack on his camp in which Wendolen Nus and James Thurber were killed.

So began the Modoc War which did not end until the capture of Captain Jack in the Lava Beds near Clear Lake June 3, 1873.

After the Modoc Indian War people began to settle in this area when they were allowed by the government to hold land in here. A few of the early land owners were: Daniel Colwell--1877, Fannie Adams owned two pieces--1889 & 1898, Mary Laird--1889, Daniel Van-Brimmer--1890, Charles Ager (Julian Ager's uncle) --1891, Elizabeth Bryant--1891, Eugene Hammond--1892, J. Frank Adams--1895. The Czechoslovakian Coloney came in 1909.

The many Lombardy Poplar trees in the area are attributed to J. Frank Adams who brought them in from Nevada. People planted them to help hold the sandy soil.

Paul Fitzhugh then told us about the dam. This is the head
works of the "J" canal which irrigates the Tule Lake division of
the Klamath Irrigation District. That is the reason for the dam
being here. The Anderson-Rose Dam was completed in 1921.

This dam is on an automatic control and that is why suddenly the
dam will turn on or off. When the water drops or raises to a
certain level the gates will open or close. The float mechanism
is over here in this little cage. That took away the necessity of
having someone live here at the dam to regulate it manually.

Paul went to the Bureau of Reclamation to ask them about the
ledge, or Natural Bridge, that had been here. The Bureau told him
it was a sandstone ledge and that was not the proper foundation on
which to build a dam. They dug out most of the sandstone and
carried it away so there are no remnants of the Natural Bridge
left here but it was about 10 feet in back of this dam.

Running late as usual, we continued on Malone Road toward the
White City site. What was once White Lake City is bisected by
paved California Highway #161, (State Line Road) connecting U.S.
Highways #139 and #97. According to Klamath Echoes #15, White
Lake City lay north of this road and north of the curving north
shore of the lake. The nucleus of the town was in Section 16,
Township 41 South, Range 10 East, the northeast corner lying 1/2
mile west of the junction of the Merrill Pit Road and Lower Lake
Road.

Verland told us, "The State Line Road is about 1 1/4 miles down
here and there was a town along the ledge over there that was
started in 1913 by George Bradnik and that was also the name of
the town. At one time there was a school and post office and he
was the post master. He built there because the road was going to
built on down to the Lava Beds and he thought he would catch the
business of those traveling to and from there. The post office
only lasted about 2 years though".

After the Civil War many changes took place, relocating various
tribes, etc. On April 22, 1889 a large segment of land around
present Oklahoma City was opened to white settlement and then on
September 16, 1893 the Cherokee Strip was opened. So was bred
the idea that the Klamath Indian Reservation might also be opened.

Verland told us that White City came into existence by a real
swindle. When the developers found out the Klamath Reservation would not be opened up to settlers they felt they had to start a town somewhere rather than return the money already paid down on lots so they bought 350 acres of land down here on White Lake where there was the possibility of a branch railroad being built from Bartle, California on the McCloud River Railroad (begun in 1897) coming through here. At least a survey had been started.

Lots were advertised all over the east and middle west. They had a grand opening here June 1, 1905 and 250 people attended the drawing for lots. Several investors put up buildings and started businesses. Stilts & Henry started a lumber yard. The White Lake Times moved into it's building as soon as a few buildings were completed and settlers began to arrive. It had a circulation of 900 customers although White City only boasted of 200 population. People around the Merrill area waited eagerly for news from the White City Times.

There was a school with an enrollment of 30 students, among whom were Leon Andrieu and Maudie Liskey. The White Lake School was in newly formed District #33.

In it's hey-day White City had a post office, bank, restaurant, furniture, hardware store, grocery store, a real estate office and even a millinery shop.

The Railroad did not come through White Lake City and the town faded away. People around took some of the cabins and tore lumber from buildings and used it in various other buildings around. It was quite a deal while it lasted but it could develop no further.

Years later E.B. (Bert) Hall, owner of the Hall Hotel at the corner of Main and Fourth Streets in Klamath Falls, (now called the Stevens Hotel) said he didn't want to be known as one of the promoters of White Lake City but rather as one of the "suckers".

The Historical Society put in a Marker for White Lake City, "White Lake City -- A Townsite promotion in 1905 on the north shores of White Lake, 3 miles west of Merrill, Oregon".

We continued our bus trip this time towards Worden and Midland. We stopped 4 1/2 miles south of Midland, turned left across the highway to the railroad tracks where we could view the site of ADY which was first called HOLLAND.
The name Holland had to be changed because another post office in Josephine County, Oregon (established in April 1899) also had the name Holland and this was causing a mail mix up. It was given the name Ady because Abel Ady owned the large tract of swamp land on Lower Klamath Lake or Klamath Straits as it was also known. Ady came to Klamath County in 1906 after the San Francisco earthquake. Mrs. Ady took over the operation of Teeter's Landing which was a stage stop and from there travelers went by boat to Klamath Falls. They had three small children at the time, one of whom is Doris Ady Peyton.

The Southern Pacific Co. tried to negotiate with Ady for a 300 foot strip, 26,200 feet in length (approximately 800 acres), for which they offered $30. per acre. Ady held out for concessions which the Southern Pacific thought unreasonable, therefore they started a condemnation suit, according to a quote from The Republican and reported in Klamath Echoes #16. On June 6, 1907 they reported the suit between Southern Pacific Co. and Abel Ady settled and the suit withdrawn. It was further agreed that S.P. would pay $30. per acre, build five crossings and a Hog-Tight fence along the right-of-way, not bad for the way in which he had come by this land. Klamath Echoes #15 tells us that Abel Ady got a rich doctor to finance him in order to get the Lower Klamath Swamp land. The doctor took 1/2 the land at $2. an acre. Ady was a surveyor and did his own survey work alone cutting lines through the Tules, and finding corners on each side. He bought the land from the State at $1. per acre (for each 2 acres Ady got one and the doctor got one).

The marshy land was troublesome but finally the tracks were laid and that was the end of the rail-head for awhile. Passengers changed their mode of transportation at this point from rail to stage to continue their journey.

Abel Ady had planned to run about a two mile spur line to Teeter's Landing along Dowase Butte but Teeter's Landing closed when it was by-passed by the new shipping point of Ady. Ady was short lived when the railroad entered Klamath Falls in May 1909.

Abel Ady built a nice home on the north side of Press Hill in Midland. After Abel's death Mrs. Abel became postmaster at Merrill. She was a very capable lady.
At this stop James Flowers told us about the Flowers connection with the land that was once owned by Abel Ady. "In 1917 my family moved here and my Dad built a dairy right on the point of the hill. At that time the river was low and it was all meadow land from here to Keno.

A lot of people came in when the railroad came in here. My Granddad, my Mother's father, James Belloni, and a fellow named Ottolini came and bought 1,000 acres of this meadow land in this area right here. Mr. Ottolini was pretty rich and he and my Granddad were real good friends. Then Mr. Ottolini made a will and in this will he gave the land to my Granddad but he had to divide the land equally amongst all the kids. Ottolini had three and Granddad had three so each of them received 160 acres.

My Dad bought another 160 acres and built a house and a barn across the straits from this drain ditch and had a dairy.

Can you imagine a guy coming out in here from Ferndale, California and leaving all the luxuries of life. There wasn't a road in. The only way you could go to town was by boat or by boat to as far as the tracks and flag a train. But that was the odd part, you could flag a train for 20¢ and be in Klamath Falls in 20 minutes. Then in the afternoon you could catch another train and come back. So it wasn't too bad that way. But otherwise you couldn't even come in here with a wagon only in the summer. The river would go up and down.

Getting to Klamath Falls before the rails came was a pretty difficult fete and the way they used to do it was to come into Teeter's Landing two miles down the road or the boats would go down the Straits. It was real deep as you can see and it is still like it was and the boats would go down to Mount Dome. Then the railroad came and when it got to this point it took them a whole year to get to Klamath Falls. So this was the end of the route. The boats would come here and pick up freight and passengers. They called this Ady and if you walk down there you can still see the pilings where the boat landing was. It used to be in those tules. This whole area was tules.

The Government came in here and made this a drainage district. They wanted to show the people what good land this was so they
built an Experiment Station on the other side of that hill and they tried to raise crops. It was a failure because the land was too alkali so after a few years they abandoned that. The old house and the barn are still there. I haven't torn the barn down yet because I didn't know if I should or not. Anyway, the old house was real bad but we have remodeled it and live there.

You've heard about all the bald eagles. This Butte behind us is called Wild Horse Butte and the eagles like to circle around it. So when the eagles are here you can probably see 15 to 20 all the time. You can see them better from here than down at Worden because the eagles are further from you there.

This drainage system here drains 600 acre feet of water in 24 hours. So there is 1,200 acre feet of water goes out of here a day. That's as big as a lot of rivers. They put in a headgate here in about 1909 so they could control the water.

My brother George was born in 1918 when we lived on this ranch. There weren't any doctors around so our neighbor down on Gore Island, about 2 miles from here, had a motor boat. So he stowed my Mother in the motor boat and took her to the hospital in Klamath Falls and that is where my brother George was born. He will be at the Midland Community Hall when we get there to answer any questions you may have.

Verland pointed out the junipers that had sprung up since 1915 on Wild Horse Butte. He told us he could remember when there were none. He told us that seven juniper trees will saps all the water out of an acre of land.

Verland was hoping a train would come along before we boarded the buses again. He wanted us to see how the tracks went up and down four to six inches all the time the train was traveling over that marshy land. He got his wish and sure enough the tracks did go up and down.

Our next stop was the Midland Community Hall to eat our sack lunches and listen to more history.

To be continued in the December Trumpeter.

Mae L. Smith