MORE TRAVEL ON THE APPLEGATE TRAIL

Fourteen vehicles gathered at the State Line Road off highway 97 south, past Worden, at 9 a.m. It was raining pretty hard but the hardy souls who came on this tour were dressed for it. After waiting a short time for any stragglers, we drove down to Indian Tom Lake where Verland Huff and Jim Flowers talked about the tour and where we would be traveling.

Indian Tom Lake was named for an Indian named Tom who had settled there. Emma Otey told Devere Helfrich in an interview: "the old emigrant road ran about 150 feet in front of our house. Indian Tom changed the location of the emigrant road at the State line when he built the rock walls for fences around his pasture and caused the road to pass over the hill instead of around the point and following the water level. Indian Tom also worked for the ranchers and farmers in the area.

From this point the vehicles trailed through water and mud to the head of Hot Creek. There were artesian springs and wells around which the Indians used to camp. These were the Hot Creek band of Modocs. From the diary of Virgil K. Pringle on Friday, October 2, 1846 Devere Helfrich quotes in the Klamath Echoes #9: "Still crooking round the inlets of the lake, made 8 miles and camp at a fine bold springs but not cold". This was the head of Hot Creek. It was settled during the 1860's as the headquarters of the Dorris "D" Ranch. The Applegate Trail circled around the
head of Hot Creek, between it and the rather steep hillside from which the creek flowed.

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. In 1865 they made a treaty with the Modoc Indians for range land in exchange for cattle, horses and other supplies.

Presley Alexander Dorris was born in Tennessee on November 8, 1822, one of the ten children born to Josiah and Lucy Dorris. In 1846 Presley Dorris, his brother, Cyrus and his father, Josiah enlisted in the U.S. Army and were in California around Beneacia during the Mexican War. After the war they were mustered out and returned to the East. Presley made three trips west. The third time was to bring the family overland by wagons to California to raise cattle. Several of the family died of mountain fever during this trip.

Presley Dorris was in the stock raising business, buying and selling cattle in Sonoma, Solano, Trinity and Siskiyou Counties and owned land in Scott Valley, Shasta Valley and on Hot Creek. In the early 1860's he passed through the Pit River Valley near the present site of Alturas, on his way to market beef cattle at the mines in Idaho. In 1870, Presley Dorris and his partner, John Jackson came through the Pit River Valley looking for new cattle range. Dorris drove a number of cattle and horses from the Siskiyou Ranch and turned them out on his claim on the Pit River. In order to cross the river they had to build a bridge for the cattle so they cut poles from juniper trees to form the bridge. Presley's brother, Carlos and their nephew, Jim Dorris came to settle here. This first settlement was called Dorris Bridge but the name was later changed to Alturas.

When Josiah Dorris died at the ranch at Benicia, California, son Columbus made the trip to the Pit River country in search of Presley and Carlos. Carlos told his brother about the large body of swamp land that he, Presley and Henry Fitzhugh had claimed and taken possession of. Henry Fitzhugh wanted to sell his claim and Presley and Carlos persuaded Columbus to buy Henry out, which he did. He returned to Solano County and made preparations to move
his family north. They started out November 8, 1871, he, his wife and their four small children and his mother, Lucy Dorris, for what was considered a wilderness.

The three Dorris brothers went into partnership with adjoining claims. They built a three room house that was so constructed that each brother actually lived on his own land as the Government Homestead Law required but still were able to enjoy family life under the same roof.

The years of 1887 and 1888 were very dry years and not more than half a crop was raised, barely enough to carry the stock at the "D" Ranch through the winter. The year 1889 they could not raise enough hay to winter the stock and Presley Dorris could not buy hay at any price. He lost from 5,000 to 7,000 head of cattle that winter in the snow drifts. This caused the old man to have to dispose of the "D" Ranch after 40 years. He returned to the Dorris Ranch in Modoc County to spend his last days there with his brother, Carlos and sister-in-law, Rachel Dorris (widow of Columbus) to care for him. He died in 1901. Carlos died in 1906.

Returning to the road leading from Indian Tom Lake, we turned right on to the Dorris Brownell Road passing large herds of cattle grazing on fenced pasture land. We stopped at the site of the old Mount Dome school. The mountain was first named Van Brimmer Mountain and later changed to Mount Dome. Petitions were signed to have a school there and money donated to build a school building. Twenty four children attended school in 1907.

Willow Creek runs behind where the school was. The Applegate Trail and the Yreka cut-off are on the other side of it.

By the time we arrived at Laird's landing the rain had stopped but the grass and weeds were too wet to walk through. Laird's Landing is also on the Applegate Trail.

The tall grove of Cottonwood trees still stand that were planted by Dock Skeen near his cabin. Dock Skeen, whose real name was Franklin Norris Skeen, was born about 1850 near Greenhorn which was near Yreka, California. He was of Holland Dutch descent and his parents came across the plains in a covered wagon. Dock Skeen married a daughter of Chief Sheepey, named Kate or Kitty. They had several children two of whom were Dave, born
in 1872 and William born 1876 at the homestead near what later became known as Laird's Landing.

Dock Skeen raised horses and sold them and also was buckaroo boss on the "D" Ranch for a number of years. The boys worked for the near by farmers earning enough silver and gold to pay for shoes and other things they needed from two peddlers who came through twice a year. Kitty Skeen made most of their clothes. They went to Yreka once a year, it being a three day trip just one way.

There was a large Indian encampment before so many white people came. The families moved in the winter to the ranches where school was being taught and stayed there for the time that school was in session.

Kitty died in the spring of 1889 and is buried on the homestead beside four or five of their children. We visited this little cemetery while at Laird's Landing. Dock Skeen died in August 1890 and is buried in Yreka. C.J. Laird bought the homestead from the heirs.

Charles and Elva Laird moved to the area in the 1890's to homestead on 1,300 acres. They raised cattle and grew hay. The Lairds had four children. The original house was added on to twice and had seventeen rooms some of which were rented to travelers coming through on the old wagon road from the Tule Lake Merrill area to the Shasta Valley.

In 1905 Charles had Frank J. Adams dredge a channel from Lower Klamath Lake to Laird's Landing. With a water way opened for traffic the steamer Klamath could carry passengers and freight and Laird's Landing became a transfer point from stages to boats and from there to the railroad. This lasted until the spring of 1908 when the railroad was extended from Grass Valley to Dorris. Business at Laird's Landing decreased then in favor of the railroad. The building of the Klamath Irrigation Project, when completed changed things too. The homestead deteriorated and eventually burned on January 30, 1961.

While at Laird's Landing Adra Goeller Turner told us that her great grandmother, Lavina Merriman was age four in 1852 when her father, William Merriman and the family traveled with the Isaac Constance wagon train west from Illinois. Lavina's mother died
at the beginning of the trip, her brother died near Goose Lake and is buried there. The cow had eaten some poisonous weed and her milk contained the poison which killed the little boy when he drank it.

They stopped at all the Forts along the way out here and had no trouble with the Indians. They traveled the Applegate Trail through Laird's Landing to settle in Jacksonville, Oregon.

Adra's Mother, Maude Ripey became a teacher and came to Langell Valley to teach at the District #14 school about 1911. She married Harry Goeller August 12, 1914 in Jacksonville.

Harry Goeller, was three years old when his family moved from Kansas in 1897 to Klamath Falls. He remembered coming to Laird's Landing by a row boat in later years. Harry and his father, J. Fred Goeller were in business together and helped to build the Winema and the steamer Klamath besides many buildings in early Klamath Falls. They also built the school at Olene. They opened a window and door sash manufacturing business and were the ones to make them for the Baldwin Hotel.

The Dolan sisters, Marie (Rosemarie Blind) and Lorraine Bettencourt also mentioned that their Mother, Mrs. Hickman and small son Lyle came to Klamath Falls, by way of Laird's Landing in 1909. Mr. Hickman had come by way of Topsy to Teeter's Landing in 1907 and later sent for his family. Mr. Hickman died in 1910. Mrs. Hickman went to work at the ranch of Martin Brother's who also had the flour mill.

Ward Dolan came to Klamath Falls by way of the Topsy to Teeter's Landing in 1907. He was foreman of the Martin Brother's Spring Lake Ranch when Mrs. Hickman came to work. They were married August 14, 1913. The Martin Brother's ranch was sold to O'Conner and was then called the "O'Conner Ranch".

Ward Dolan bought land just north of the O'Conner Ranch on Spring Lake. That was his home ranch.

The Dolan Sheep Ranch and well was our next stop. The day had turned sunny and warm making this stop ideal for a lunch break.

Marie told us the cabin was built by Ward Dolan, their father, for his sheep camp. He had the first well run by a gas motor. The well was 600 feet deep. Their home was a ranch in the Spring
Lake area. Every Sunday the girls came here with their father by car to look after the sheep. Ward Dolan had 1,200 sheep and a shepherd dog. In March or April they would trail the main band of sheep from Lower Klamath Lake to Laird's Landing, stay overnight and then drive them on over to the sheep camp to range. There was good feed there early in the spring. They sheered the sheep in June. When selling time came, they shipped from Tionesta, California.

Mr. Dolan wanted to sell the Spring Lake ranch and move permanently to the Dolan sheep camp but Mrs. Dolan objected because the girls would have to travel too far to go to school. Finally Dolan sold the Dolan camp and well to Jim O'Conner.

Our next stop was back at Mount Dome. We were traveling the same old original road that was first made through there many, many years ago. After quite a climb up the side of the mountain we were shown the site of a bootlegging operation which was carried on there during the prohibition years between 1917 and 1933. It was a good place for one because no one could find it.

The men who had the still went to a lot of work to carve the three small rooms into the side of the mountain through the rock. There had to be a vent in the ceiling leading upward through rock and soil but it had to be made so that any smoke or steam going out could not be seen by anyone, especially the "Revenuers". Rye was grown abundantly in the area. Sugar came by the carload to Dorris and was picked up in a way so as not to arouse any suspicions. So far so good but---- how did they manage to get all of this, plus wood up the side of that steep mountain? I doubt if we ever find out how they did that.

Our next stop was at Teeter's Landing on the Flowers' ranch. We trailed down to the Klamath River where Jim Flowers gave us the history of Teeter's Landing.

An Indian Village had at one time been right where we were standing. The Applegate Trail was just over the ridge about one mile from here.

Teeter's Landing was established about 1889 and was used as a landing by about six families, the Teeter's, Hall Miller, Charlie Burris, Oliver Sly, Jack White and a Mr. West as a way to get
wood and hay to market in Linkville. It was hauled by the scows, the Lottie C and the General Canby up the Klamath River. From 1906 to 1908 the landing was of vital importance as a depot for freight, mail and passengers. It was also a wood refueling place for the steamers until the railroad got as far as Ady, May 20, 1909.

Mrs. Abel Ady and small children came to Teeter's Landing after the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco to join her husband here. She was a very hard working, efficient lady and managed to feed the travelers going through Teeter's Landing. Sometimes there were overnight guests too. All the white table cloths, napkins, sheets, towels and of course their own clothing had to be washed by hand and ironed with an old "sad" iron. No matter how early or late the passengers came through, Mrs. Ady had a hot meal ready for them. Abel Ady, her husband was very busily engaged with the Southern Pacific Railroad Co. at the time.

Mr. Ady owned a large tract of swamp land on Lower Klamath Straits and the Southern Pacific had to negotiate with him for approximately 800 acres in order to get to their destination, a point called Holland. This name was later changed to Ady when the troublesome swamp was conquered and the tracks finally laid. Abel Ady had planned to run about a two mile spur line to Teeter's Landing along Dowase Butte but Teeter's Landing closed in May 1909 without a spur line.

After the death of Mr. Ady, his wife became postmaster at Merrill.

Our tour ended here and we all went our separate ways after a very wonderful tour.

----Mae L. Smith--