THE ISLANDS IN KLAMATH LAKE: BUCK AND BARE

The Indian Perspective:

According to Gatschet, Bare Island was known to the Klamaths as A-ushme. Buck Island was called Uxotuash. (Albert Samuel Gatschet, Ethnographic Sketch of the Klamath Indians, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1890, p. 30.) Spier refers to Bare Island as Awsmi; Buck Island as Wgotwas, which means "knotted-in-water". (Leslie Spier, Klamath Ethnography, University of California Publications, Vol 30, 1930.)

Both islands were used by the Klamath Indians for village sites and food gathering; Buck Island probably saw more activity than did Bare Island. Over the years, a large quantity of artifacts, primarily fishing points and stone grinding tools have been removed from Buck Island. There is also evidence of a burial ground on the northwest shoreline of Buck Island as well as evidence of pit houses on the northern end and along the eastern shoreline. Trade beads have also been located on Buck Island, indicating habitation after about 1840.

The Klamath Indian’s version of the creation of the islands goes thusly:

"There was no land, only a great lake. Kamukamts (the Creator) came from the north in a canoe. It floated along. It stopped. He shook it, but could not move it. He looked down, and in the water he saw the roof of a house. It was the house of Pocket Gopher. Gopher looked up. Then Kamukamts went down into the house, and they talked....

That night Gopher caused his companion to sleep, and he burrowed under the bottom of the lake and made it bulge up into
hills and mountains, which raised their tops above the surface. In the morning he said, 'You had better go and look around!' When Kamukamts went out he was astonished. Gopher asked what should become of his house, and Kamukamts replied, 'It will always remain as the oldest mountain' [Modoc Point].

'What will our children have for amusement?' asked Kamukamts. They played the game of throwing spears at a mark. They threw them, and their targets were hills. Kamukamts' spear knocked off the top of Bare Island, and so it is today....


**The Settler's Perspective:**

Editor's note: The following information about the islands is being used with permission from the Herald and News. The article appeared in the Monday, February 24, 1992 edition, "Klamath Roots". The original article was written by Paul Deller for that edition and is reprinted here.

**Buck, Bare Islands Have Colorful Histories**

**By Paul Deller**

This story, a series of anecdotes, concerns two islands in Upper Klamath Lake: Buck Island, the one closest to Klamath Falls, and Bare Island, farther north. Some dates are essentially true and others supposition. To get things into perspective datewise is historical fun. Bare Island, as we first knew it, was called Annie's Island. It also is shown on some maps as Peterman Island, actual reason unknown.

In 1871, a short six years after the close of the Civil War, a young lady married Ivan Applegate in the Rogue Valley. In order to get to Yainax, the sub-agency of the Klamaths which Applegate administered, the wedding party journeyed over a fairly new (Dead Indian) road to Pelican Bay on the Upper Klamath Lake.

Here they decided to cross to Agency by use of a barge with
oars and a large sail. The barge was used in hauling supplies from Pelican Bay across the lake to Agency.

The party ran into a fierce storm and was nearly lost twice as the barge was blown onto a rocky island the first day and again the second day. The party stayed two nights on this island, and the third day finally rowed their way to Agency landing.

History records the island as "Annie's Island," the earliest name we have for Bare Island.

Mrs. Willeska Loosely wrote me the following concerning, no doubt, Bare Island:

Sometime in the 1890s, even possibly sooner, an uncle of my husband's, Phil Loosely, homesteaded a tract of land on one of the islands in Upper Klamath Lake (the island having the best farming land), where he built a small cabin, planted a fine garden, as he didn't get as many frosts, possible because of the nearness to the lake. I do not know why he left that island but perhaps because of the death of his wife in the late 90s."

I think it is interesting to herein mention the physical characteristics of the island. Bare Island is about 425 feet high above the lake and 3/4-mile long and 1/2-mile wide.

Buck Island is around 325 feet above the lake a mile long by about 1/4-mile wide.

These figures were given to me by Mr. Jim Kerns who has a great knowledge of Upper Klamath Lake waters.

And now to try to get some of the dates in line. This taken from the Klamath Republican, Aug. 1905: "Jack Kimball and Floyd Baldwin were moving some hogs from Bare to Buck Island and had loaded them onto a barge. The steamer Winena had stopped to take the barge in tow.

When some distance from the Bare Island shore, the waves from the boat pushed one end of the barge under water. The hogs, finding it more easy to go down an incline than up, were forced into the drink.

It may be that they were upset about leaving their rooting grounds for they immediately struck out for the island (Bare),
all arriving safely but three." (This is the Jack Kimball for whom Kimball State Park, head of Wood River, is named.)

From the same source and November of the same year we have this story: "The steamer Winema will go to Bare Island Sunday to take a crowd for a coyote chase. Bring all the dogs you can but no guns, as in that respect no one will be accidentally shot. The round trip is $1, lunch can be had on board or you can bring your own. Boat will leave landing at 9:30."

Here is a short story concerning this former businessman taken from Klamath Echoes: "In 1900 George Grizzle came to Klamath Falls. He had learned much about the monument business. It was he who finally erected a modern brick building at the corner of 11th and Main for his monument business known today as "Ed's Western Wear and Shoe Repair." [Ed. note: No longer in business.]

"One time he discovered a large deposit of high grade granite on the west side of Bare Island. As freight was extremely high, he decided to quarry this material himself for monument bases. He filed a stone claim on a few acres, bought a motor launch, and constructed a large barge to haul men, equipment and stone.

"There was already a dock and a cabin on the island in good enough condition for batching. They would go up in the fall and break off huge slabs of granite which they would cut down to base size before bringing them down to the barge.

"He spent his winters in cutting and shaping the bases, also carving. Many of the praying hands and little lambs in the Linkville and the Old Calvary cemeteries were carved by him.

"He always had a good Indian trade. They would come in with $5, $10 and $20 gold pieces tied up in a red bandanna kerchief or trade him horses which he broke and sold to the government for cavalry horses!"

This from Devere Helfrich's research: "J.C. and Charles Mason left in a sail boat from Pelican Bay to Klamath Falls two weeks ago last Sunday. They were last seen off Eagle Ridge point. A few days ago their boat was discovered near the mouth
of the Williamson, their bodies, later. J.C. had farmed Bare Island for several years." (July 1909)

Justin D. Swift is the name that later pops up in local island history. Mrs. Lihs, who resides in Klamath Falls, remembers that Mrs. Swift died and J.D. moved his youngsters and himself to Bare Island. Here he built a small house, planted a large garden and started an orchard.

They all helped water the trees to get them started. In the winter he farmed out the three children, Howard, Frank, and daughter, Lucille, in town in order to have them get their schooling.

How long that went on was uncertain. Now, the name Swift commands quite a portion of island history as both of them remained in their possession for many years.

Mr. O.R. Schroeder of Bonanza told me, "At one time the islands belonged to the Justin D. Swift family; he had a grant signed by Calvin Coolidge and homesteaded and lived there. He raised a large family of children.

"He also drove freight from here to Jacksonville and Medford." (If Coolidge signed a grant it was possibly in the '20s or 30s.) He raised horses there and traded all over -- fast and beautiful ones."

Recently I had the pleasure of visiting with Howard McGee of Dairy. Howard, as a lad back in the '30s, worked for old Mr. Justin D. Swift on Bare Island several summers. His brother worked for him for several years.

He said that Mr. Swift did plant an orchard on an upslope of the island. He did have horses and also a tank wagon with which he took water from the lake and kept a wonderful garden also.

"If I remember right there were about 140 some acres on the island. However, there is more land than that as the tillable land slopes upward. There is a large rock near the southeast corner of the island.

"Someone burned the old house to the ground some time ago. The buildings were near the rock. That picture up there on the
wall -- I made the frame out of a piece of board from the old corral. It still has the moss that was growing on it."

Howard went to school at Modoc Point. The late Ann Rife was his first-, second- and third-grade teacher.

This writer once talked to Sam Rife about some local history. Among other things, he informed me that he swam the full distance from Modoc Point without stopping or getting in a boat on the way. The distance is 3 3/4 miles, one way.

Howard corroborated this statement saying, "As kids, we would swim, get in the boat and again swim.

"J.D. Swift did have two boys and a girl. Later, son Frank had Buck Island. He used to put pigs on the island, lots of pigs. The island had lots of rattlesnakes on it.

"I never saw but one bullsnake on Bare Island. Those pigs pretty well killed them out, but they didn't get them all. The snakes will strike them, but due to their fat bodies the poison evidently doesn't get into their blood stream.

"The last year that Frank had pigs on the island he had a very hard time getting them fed. The weather turned cold, and the lake temporarily froze over, but not enough to walk the pigs out. When he did get out there with the boat, they were so hungry that he gave the feed from the boat to them. Finally, due to the weather and iced conditions, he had to dispose of them all.

"Bare Island was the most productive; had a warm spring on it. Right on the southeast corner amongst those willows there is a warm spring, and that is where the old man got his drinking water."

I asked Howard if he could recollect even small things that would be interesting.

"As a kid of around 12 or 13, I would never forget some of those things. Well, I was out in front of the cabin there one day on Bare Island doing something or other when all at once the old man told me to get into the cabin.

"Well, you always did what he said. I didn't remember at the time why he said it, but I did remember that when we boated
over to the island the last time we tied the boat up around
behind the willows and the spring instead of the dock.

"There he had supplies including his gas for the boat at
the dock. Then I heard this boat coming, and it slowly pulled
right up to his dock. It seems that someone had been stealing
the old man's gas lately.

"Reaching over to the wall there inside the cabin, Mr.
Swift took down his octagon-barreled rifle and loaded. Sure
enough, one guy got out of the boat and walked over to the gas
supply.

Right there Howard asked me if I remembered the old
outboard motors with the half-curled aluminum gas tank around
the flywheel. I had.

"I can see the old man yet, one arm leaning against the
door jamb and slowly taking aim -- WHAM! He hit the gas tank on
the motor squarely. Then he stepped out the door, and the air
was temporarily blue with a special language. He hollered at
them and told them to get to rowin' and never come back or he
would put that boat someplace else.

"I can still see them two fellows rowin', headed for Algoma
just as fast as they could go."

McGee continued with another narrative: "One fall old Mr.
Swift had sheep on the island. He had an old 20 foot, one-
lunger motor. He used this and a scow or barge to get them back
to the mainland.

"When we would leave from Modoc Point for Bare Island at 6
in the evening, towing the old barge, we would get to the island
about daylight.

"Well, he got all those sheep off the island but this one
buck. He couldn't catch him to get him in the barge so he just
left him. It was in the latter part of November when he asked
me and my other two brothers to help get the buck off the
island.

"It was a miserable mid-November, cold day with the wind
blowing, when we went over with the boat. We finally chased him
into the corral, tied a rope onto him and tied him down.
"We were just backing away from the dock when that animal got loose in the boat. All heck broke loose, and was he wild as he floundered out of the boat and onto the dock, then into the water.

"He was running as he got out of the water and up the bank. The old man by this time had the rifle in his hand and just as the old buck topped the bank, he let fly -- one shot laid him low. I can still remember we got him home all right laying across the bow -- but he could just as well shot him in the first place."

I asked Howard why no rattlers on Bare Island and lots of them on Buck Island. His theory sounds good:

"The way they tell me was that the water was real deep between Bare Island and Eagle Ridge shore -- now you take down here on Buck Island, a long time ago before they put in the Link River dam ('21 or '22), the lake used to dry up on occasion so that between Cove Point and Buck Island it was practically a mud flat."

Howard said that at one time his family ran cows on Cove Point, and that he and Jack Gillette killed many rattlers.

Cleo and Alma Dunlap referred me to Mrs. Franklin. Mrs. Franklin was the sister to Warren Bennett, also a prominent citizen in Klamath Falls in his time. The Bennetts lived out on Bennett's Point or on some maps it was called Ritchie's Point -- directly across from Buck Island on the western shore of the lake.

"Cy Hamilton or K.P. Hamilton had a home on Buck Island. This, it seems was about 1911-12. At one time Mr. Hamilton planned a resort on the island but later gave up the idea and moved to Santa Clara, Calif."

"Mrs. Franklin and her brother Warren, when younger, would get in their gas launch and go over and visit the Hamiltons. They had quite a flock of goats on the island at one time. They rented the island out to Charles Swift at one time.

"There were no roads to Bennett's Point. Bennett was a carpenter and used a boat to get to Klamath Falls. Came winter
and he would skate to Cove Point, then into Klamath Falls. At times Buck Island has been called Goat Island -- perhaps for the above reason.

"The Hamilton boat was called the 'Madame'. Metzger's atlas of Klamath County shows that in 1936 the Hamilton name was still on Buck Island. Rattlesnakes were plentiful."

In the earlier days, Rufus Moore, who owned a lumber mill just below the downtown Link River bridge, sent some of his men to Buck Island to get good oak limbs which they cut from the trees there, to be used for ax handles.

Several people have told me that when the ice was thick that they skated over to Buck Island.

Ray Telford once made an iceboat powered by an old motor taken from the boat "Elispoppin," mounted it on skis and at one time Bryant Williams told me that Ray towed him, Ken Hall, Kent Hamaker and others around the island on the ice.

According to some source, Dr. Massey took a group of Boy Scouts for an overnight campout at Buck Island. After getting half of the duffel unloaded and a good start at picking out a campsite, three rattlesnakes were observed.

Needless to say they chose another day and another place for the campout.

Paul Fairclo said that his dad ran sheep on Buck Island, towed out and back by power company boat spring and fall. Jack O'Connor remembers that his dad did the same thing at one time or another, sending stock to Buck Island.

There are perhaps, scores of stories yet to be told of these two islands.

Compiled by Susan Rambo
Starting with this issue of the Trumpeter and all following issues, Memorials made to the Endowment Fund will be published. There are many others who have been generous in giving to this fund over the years, however, space and time doesn’t permit the listing of these names. These contributions benefit the Museum and are thoughtful and fitting tributes to those special friends and family who are remembered and honored.

IN MEMORY OF...

MARGARET BAILEY
M/M Oscar Anderson
Ethel Goeller
Larry & Betty Klahn
Jeane MacBeth
Dorothy Turner
Wiloin Family

BILL FEDERHART
Paul & Billie Fitzhugh
Virgil & Mae Smith

CHARLES HOUSTON
Virgil & Mae Smith

VICTOR MURDOCK
Jeane MacBeth
Clif & Pat McMillan

DORIS A. PALMER PAYNE
Rock & Arrowhead Club

MINILLA ROSE SMITH
Bruce & Pam Smith

NEVA WEAVER
M/M Bert Morgan

VIRGIL 'RED' SMITH
Dorothy & Oscar Anderson
Melissa Bernadou
Mariana Bridges
J. Orton Buck
Charles L. Clark
Marcia L. Clark
Irene M. Currin
Paul & Billie Fitzhugh
Letta Goehring
Chester & Marie Hamaker
Janis Kafton
Bruce & Avis Keilsmeier
Jeane MacBeth
Gary & Carol Mattos
Clif & Pat McMillan
M/M Bert L. Morgan
Carole Childs Orendorff
Robert & Constance Pallies
Richard & Susan Rambo
Robert & Marilyn Riggs
Dale & Virginia Ring
Jack & Betty Rogers
Bruce & Pam Smith
Don & Connie Wildfang

The following prose was composed by Mae Smith following Red’s passing. Mae related that "the words woke me up in the middle of the night after he had died and they just seemed so right. I couldn’t sleep again until I had written them down." She gave permission to print it in hopes that "it might help someone else to get through a difficult time". We’ll miss you Red!!

GONE FISHING

RED LEFT TODAY for green meadows sprinkled with wild flowers where the rippling streams flow. Where cool water hides trout under the cut banks and in rocky nooks. There they wait for him to cast out the fly he has tied so craftily to fool them and watch for ripple as it gently lands on the water.

THE SKY IS BLUE and the sun is warm as the gentle breeze sighs through the trees and the birds sing.

HE WAS HAPPY to leave behind his wheelchair, oxygen mask and his frail, thin body and the mind that no longer functioned properly as he stretched out his hand to grasp the hand of the Lord. Then to be led across the divide into the woods and valleys, streams and mountains of Eternity. April 21, 1997
CELEBRATE ETHNIC AWARENESS WEEK

July 27th-August 2nd, 1997

Proclaimed by
The Governor of Oregon,
The Klamath County
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Ethnic Street Faire III

Saturday, August 2, 1997
9:00 am-6:00 pm

Veteran’s Park
Klamath Falls, Oregon

To benefit the Museum Endowment Fund

Entertainment

Food

Antiques & Collectibles

Antique Auction

Classic Car Show

Sailboat Rides, and More...

Raffle
$1.00 each or 6 for $5.00
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Prizes:
Raft trip for one, 4 guest passes to
Oregon Coast Aquarium, Ski Mt. Ashland, Camera,
Boom Box, Gift certificates, Dinners for two,
Rounds of golf, plus many more prizes.

Please plan to attend and support your museum!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Our next gathering will be July 24, 5:30 p.m. The Scott’s will be our hosts. Their address is 4462 Sycamore. (Take Homedale to Villa, East to Lombard, Right on Lombard, then Right on Sycamore.) It will be potluck. Bring your favorite food and table service. If you need a ride for this event or any future meeting, call 884-2899 or 882-8853.

MUSEUM NEWS

Sincere thanks to each of you for your generous contributions in memory of loved ones and friends to the Museum Endowment Fund. What better way to "give" something to the person who has everything, than a donation in their name just to say, "Happy Birthday, Happy Anniversary or Thanks for being there for me!".

During the Budget process for 1997-98, budget chairman, Dick Miles, told those who were there to support the museum not to expect any General Fund money for 1998-99. With the uncertainties of Measure 50 and its impact upon County funds, all departments were asked to be creative.

Creativity is a state of mind. I would appreciate each one of you submitting ideas -- no matter how fantastic they may sound-- by phoning them in, 883-4208, or sending them. Your idea could be the one to keep the museums viable.

Thanks for the volunteer support and your kindness.

Pat McMillan, Director