LIVING HISTORY DAY
AT COLLIER STATE PARK
By Jack Bowden

An estimated 2,000 people made the trip to Collier State Park on Sunday, June 17th to take in the 7th annual "Living History Day." This daylong event, sponsored each year by Collier State Park is free to all who care to attend. Featured among the more than 50 displays and activities were such things as demonstrations of skill at shingle splitting, hatchet throwing, chain saw carving, wood cutting with old time saws and a demonstration of clog dancing provided by the Cascade Cloggers, to mention just a few. Visitors to the park were made aware of the presence of not one, but two, operating, steam powered traction engines by the continual sound of their chuffing, puffing and tooting.

The Klamath County Historical Society and County Museum were also represented at the event, teaming up to present an attractive display of photographs depicting early 20th Century logging activity in the county. The photos were arranged on a screen with a large map as a centerpiece, showing the myriad of logging railroads that once hauled logs to the county's sawmills. The exhibit was prepared by Judith Hassen and Jack Bowden who were also in attendance at the park throughout the day, attired in period costume to greet visitors to the display. Among those stopping to look over the photos and map were a number of people who had themselves been involved in early Klamath County logging activity.
Algoma Locomotive No. 3 waits at the base of the incline for enough loaded cars to accumulate to make the 2 mile trip to the mill worthwhile. Near the top of the photo, 2 cars can be seen passing each other at the halfway point. The loaded car on its way down is the one on the right. As it descends, its weight is actually pulling the empty car back up to the top.
Algoma Incline Railroad
By Jack Bowden

One of Klamath County's most colorful historical landmarks has vanished. Time and the elements have taken their toll on what was for many years one of the most conspicuous reminders of the basin's lumbering heritage. The remains of Algoma Lumber Company's incline railroad which was once used to lower log carrying railroad cars, down the steep face of Naylox Mountain, 15 miles north of Klamath Falls has almost completely faded away. When the light is just right, those who know where to look can still spot a few decaying pieces of wood here and there, but for most people, this colorful link with our past has been lost.

"Inclines," and even "declines" were fairly common in early Western Oregon logging operations, but their use east of the Cascade Range was rare indeed, and Algoma's was the only one to be found anywhere on Klamath County's once vast network of logging railroads.

Algoma Lumber Company locomotive and flatbed cars carrying logs along the bottom of the slope that the incline is on.

For the first three years after Algoma Lumber Company moved their plant from its former location near Pokegama to Rattlesnake Point on Upper Klamath Lake, logs were brought in over a short logging railroad which the company built into Plum Valley, southeast of the mill. When the timber in that area began to play out in 1914, the owners commenced making plans to log a large tract of company owned timber lying northwest of Swan Lake Valley.

While this larger stand of timber was located at no great distance from the mill, gaining access to it would not be an easy matter because a large mountain stood in the way. The Naylox Mountain escarpment stretches for more than 20 miles in a northwest to southeast direction, from just south of Chiloquin to Olene, with its western face rising abruptly, 1,000 feet from the valley floor. In order to construct a railroad line to the timber it was going to be necessary to either go over or around this mountain, neither of which was an inviting alternative. Circumventing this large barrier with a railroad was deemed impractical due to the great distance involved, while, going over the top with a conventional line was equally undesirable because of the steep grades which would be encountered climbing the steep, western face of the mountain.

Algoma's solution to this dilemma was to go directly over the top, but not with a conventional railroad. From a point 2 miles northeast of the mill, they would build a line, which would climb straight up the face of the mountain by means of an incline railroad, on which loaded cars would be lowered and empty cars pulled to the top with cables.

Accordingly, the company placed an order with the Washington Iron Works of Seattle, Washington, for a large, steam-powered lowering engine to be placed at the top of the grade to serve as a power source for the project. This impressive machine, which was to be the heart of the entire operation, was
secured to a concrete foundation, set back a short distance from the brink of the hill.

---NEW STYLE---
COMPOUND GEARED YARDING ENGINE

This Washington Iron Works Co. advertisement ran in an early issue of "The Timberman" trade magazine of the lumber industry. Although this company built the large lowering engine which played such a vital part in the operation of the incline, the engine pictured in the ad is not that engine.

Contrary to popular belief, its primary function was not to pull cars up the steep slope, although it was capable of doing that when the need arose, but rather to serve as a powerful brake to control the speed of the heavily loaded cars as they were let down the mountain. Although designed to operate with a maximum load of 50 toms descending and 9 tons ascending, the brakes were actually capable of handling a considerable overload if necessary. Construction of the incline got underway in early 1915 and progressed rapidly. The total distance from top to bottom was approximately 2,800 ft. with a vertical rise of 800 ft., and a grade which varied from 55 to 57 percent. A short section of double track was installed at the half way point to allow empty cars, on their way to the top, to pass loaded cars coming down.

By use of an interconnecting cable system the empty cars were actually pulled to the top by the loaded cars as they were being let down.

The loaded logs were brought from the woods to the incline in trains, where the cars were separated and let down the steep slope, one at a time. At the bottom, they were reassembled and
pulled to the mill by another locomotive. Each log carrying car was equipped with a single bulkhead, placed at one end and these cars were never turned, so that this device would at all times remain on the downhill end of the car to prevent the logs from sliding off.

Railroad cars that have a single bulkhead.

Camp One, was established at the top of the grade to provide sleeping and eating facilities for the men and included among its buildings was a one stall engine house, where locomotives working the upper portion of the line were maintained eliminating the necessity of their being periodically let down the incline for that purpose.

The facility was placed in operation in the summer of 1915 and was a great success from the beginning. That September, the industry trade magazine, The Timberman, reported that, a record daily run of 155,000 board feet of timber had recently been moved to the mill over the new incline railroad.

The incline seems to have functioned safely and efficiently and employees traveling to and from the upper line regularly rode up and down on the cars. Company officials apparently had a great deal of confidence in its safety for when the Pacific Logging Congress held its annual convention at Klamath Falls in May of 1930, a group of delegates was taken up to Algoma for an on site inspection of the plant and while there, 40 brave souls climbed aboard one of the bulkhead flatcars for a ride to the top of the incline, apparently without incident.

There was, however, at least one recorded mishap on the steep grade. For some long forgotten reason, a heavily loaded log car broke loose and went racing down the mountainside, picking up speed as it went. The results were predictable. As it neared the bottom it left the rails and went into a nearby spring at a high rate of speed, where, if the local newspaper report is to be believed, some of the logs were driven 17 feet into the mud. Fortunately there were no passengers on board that day.

In 1917 the Algoma Lumber Co. was the successful bidder on the Middle Mount Scott Unit of timber on the Klamath Indian Reservation near Kirk. After only two years of use, the incline was shut down and logging operations shifted to this new cutting area. Soon thereafter, the rails were taken up to be used on the new railroad at Kirk and the incline was abandoned and allowed to fall into a state of disrepair.

Sometime later Algoma purchased the large Antelope Valley Unit, on the southwest slopes of Swan Lake Mountain and although the company had no intention of logging in this new unit until they had completed harvesting their timber at Kirk, unforeseen circumstances brought about a complete change of plans. During the long, dry summer of 1926 a series of forest fires raged through the western states inflicting heavy damage on thousands of acres of range and forest lands. Klamath County was not immune to this devastation and one of the many local fires charred a large section of Algoma’s timber in the Antelope Valley Unit. Because it was
imperative that this fire-damaged timber be harvested as quickly as possible to avoid further deterioration and subsequent loss of value, the company immediately began making plans for a salvage logging operation. The railroad above the incline had once passed within a short distance of the affected area, but the track had been taken up nearly ten years earlier and the incline had long since deteriorated to the point of uselessness.

In the spring of 1927 crews began rebuilding the incline and laying track on road beds that had not seen a train in ten years. Five miles of track were laid by mid summer and loggers began the unpleasant task of harvesting the dirty, fire blackened timber. Algoma owned a great deal more timber in the area than that which had been damaged by the fire, and this time the incline would remain in service for nearly 15 years.

At the time, the Yawkey tract would be Algoma's last large timber purchase and after it had been cut out in 1943, the mill was closed down and dismantled.

Meanwhile, the remaining unharvested timber lying east of the incline, in the Antelope Valley Unit was subcontracted to the Kesterson Lumber Co. and logged off by that company's logging subsidiary, Klamath Timber Co. This company continued to make use of the incline railway, using it to move logs to the SP interchange at Algoma for shipment to their mill on Klamath River, five miles south of Klamath Falls.

Kesterson was still using the facility in May 1940 when a levee broke, near Algoma, allowing the waters of Upper Klamath Lake to sweep in, flooding several thousand acres of former lake bed to a depth of three feet, halting operations over both The Dalles California Highway (US 97) and the logging railroad. The highway was subsequently raised and reopened, but it is not clear if the railroad was ever used again. If it was, it was only for a brief period of time. After Kesterson had hauled out the last logs, the railroad was dismantled and the incline was never used again.

When construction of the incline began in 1915, the Dalles California Highway (US 97) was also being built through the area. The line of the original highway, as it proceeded south, swung to the east at Barkley Springs, (Hagelstein Park) keeping to the base of the mountain for nearly a mile and passing within a short distance of the base of the incline. This section of the old highway is still in use, now known as Algoma Road. Motorists on the old highway, who were fortunate enough to pass when the incline was in operation, were treated to an unobstructed view of the entire show from top to bottom. In
the late 1940's the highway was rerouted to its present location, a mile to the west, but the remains of the, by then unused incline were still clearly visible to anyone looking in that direction.

Over sixty years have passed since the last load of logs was let down off the mountain and the elements have taken their toll. A growth of juniper trees, wild plum and mountain mahogany now obscures a large part of the old incline while other sections have simply faded and become indistinguishable, but for anyone caring to catch a glimpse of history, it is still not too late.

One of O. K. Puckett's tug boats arrives at the mill with another large log raft from the Yawkey tract near the head of Wood River. The logs were hauled to the log dump on Agency Lake by truck where they were formed into rafts and towed directly to Algoma. The body of water to the right of the railroad grade is the mill pond. Although the pond is still in existence, its size has been greatly reduced since this photo was taken by the construction of U. S. Highway 97 which now parallels the railroad at this point.

Many of the building you see, including the old grade school on the right are left over from the towns lumbering days. At a point 2.4 miles from the Highway 97 turnoff, a private, gravel road exits to the right. Do not take this road, your best view is from the pavement. All but a short section of the gravel road was originally the railroad grade leading away from the base of the incline. Looking up to the top of the Mountain, a natural notch in the profile of the ridge can be seen. The incline descended from this notch to the vicinity of the two-car garage which is now located near the end of the gravel road.
This recent photo, taken from modern Highway 97 a couple of miles north of Algoma, clearly shows the location of the Algoma Lumber Company incline. The white stripe has been superimposed on the picture as an aid to readers who may wish to locate the incline. Note that the top terminates in a slight, natural notch in the profile of the mountain. The road descending to the right, across the face of the mountain was built in later years.

As you stand in this serene setting, let your mind wander back to the exciting drama that was once played out on this very spot. Imagine, if you will, the smells of locomotive smoke, valve oil and steam, all mixed together with the aroma of fresh-cut pine. Listen for the clanking of chains, rattle of cables and the squealing of flanges against steel rails, all interrupted at regular intervals by the shrill toot, toot of a steam whistle and the occasional shout of a man. It is all part of our history and it happened here.
Historical Tour
Gerber Dam-Langell Valley
and Horsefly Irrigation
June 16, 2001
Reported by Paul Fitzhugh

The itinerary of the annual historical tour was as follows: We left Klamath Falls and headed out for Harpold Dam on the Lost River, our 1st stop. Our speakers here were Paul Fitzhugh, and Bruce McCoy, Manager of the Horsefly District. Our 2nd stop was the Horsefly District Office in Bonanza where Bruce McCoy continued the narrative. Our 3rd stop was the Langell Valley District Office in Lorella where our speakers were Paul Fitzhugh, Mazine Conley Cox and John Hancock, Ditchrider. At the Haynesville site (our 4th stop), we read the historic marker, paused for identification and looked around the area of Lorella school which closed in the fall of 1938. Our 5th Stop was the George Noble ranch (Eldon Kent). George built this house for Novie after the birth of the twins, Wilfred and Willard. The 6th stop was the well for water for wildlife.

Gerber Dam was the 7th stop. Here we had a Lunch /Rest Stop. We looked at the Historical Marker for the Gerber ranch. Talks were by Paul Fitzhugh, Marilyn Gerber Livingston, Sylvia Gerber Bruce and Maxine Conley Cox. At the 8th Stop we visited DeVaul Lake where Billie’s grandfather homesteaded. It is dry this year. Paul Fitzhugh spoke at the 9th and last stop: Malone Dam in Upper Langell Valley. We returned to Klamath Falls by 4:00 pm having covered 115 miles.

Langell Valley Irrigation District

A contract was signed by the Langell Valley Irrigation District with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation on March 27, 1922 for the irrigation of 16,300 acres of land. Water supply will come from Gerber (Horsefly) dam being constructed at the mouth of Miller Creek Canyon supplying water to the east side of Langell Valley. Malone diversion dam will be constructed to supply water to part of the west side of Langell Valley from Clear Lake Dam. Water will be released also through this structure for Horsefly Irrigation District, Bonanza.

Project Operations:
Project operations, at least in the early days of the project, was rather loose, with the ditchriders mainly watching for leaks from squirrels and excess weeds or moss in the waterways. For the most part, the farmers turned their own water on and off. Sometimes they ordered their water and sometimes they didn’t. The ditchriders had certain checks and gauges they...
watched to try to keep enough water in
the ditches, or keep them from
overflowing.

A few of the early ditchriders were

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<th>East Side</th>
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<td>Dad Peatross</td>
<td>Constance</td>
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<td>Leo Lewison</td>
<td>John Turnage</td>
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<td>Merle Settle</td>
<td>Les Leavitt</td>
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<td>Bill Burnett</td>
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Maintenance: Early Managers:

| Howard Shelley     | Thompson      |
| Alfred Keller      | Hopkins       |
| Charlie Revell     |               |

don't know the amounts.

The East side was constructed as a
complete gravity system with a siphon
crossing Miller Creek going south and a
siphon crossing Lost River going west
into Dry Lake area. This siphon has been
discontinued and a pump installed in the
river to replace it. The siphons were
banded wood staves and leaked. I don't
know Miller Creek siphon's condition or if
it has been replaced. The West side was
contracted gravity to the lower end where
a water operated turbine pump pushed
water to the highline canal. It took 2
gallons of water to lift 1 gallon of water to
the highline canal, very inefficient. It was
eventually replaced with an electric pump.
Also it wouldn't deliver enough water to
the highline so a bank of 2 pumps was
installed about a mile up the canal. This
worked much better. The highline canal
runs back toward the southeast, past the
old Fulkerson, later Wilkerson, then Kent
place, and west around Dry Lake.