Tentative 2014 Programs and Meetings Schedule

March 27. Oliver Cromwell Applegate, by Carol Mattos and Todd Kepple

April 24. TBA, by Crissy Henderson

May 22. Historic Rail Markers, by John Fortune, Jack Inman, and Todd Kepple

June 28. Butte Valley History Bus Tour

September 25. TBA, by Ryan Bartholomew

October 23. Catastrophic Weather Events in Klamath Country, by Niles Reynolds

See Inside

“Disposition of Fort Klamath Soldiers’ Remains,” by Bill Johnson

KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meetings are held at 7 pm on the fourth Thursday of March, April, May, September and October in the Armory-Museum at 1451 Main Street, Klamath Falls.

Email: klcohiso@yahoo.com

Tragic Fire Destroys Historic Home

On November 25, a tragic house fire destroyed one of Klamath’s historic landmarks in the 100 block of Riverside Drive (photo by Todd Kepple, Klamath County Museum).

The home, later called the “Maples” for the three giant trees that overlook the house, was built about 1903 by Rufus Scudder and Clara A. Moore. Rufus was the son of pioneers William and Margaret Moore who built the sawmill at Klamath Agency in 1868 and a water-powered sawmill on Link River in 1877.

Rufus partnered with his brother Charles and together owned more than 20,000 acres of timberland adjacent to Upper Klamath Lake and Keno. They took over their father’s sawmill on Link River in 1887 until 1907 and then built a steam-driven sawmill on the west shore of Lake Ewauna, near the historic home, which cut 50,000 board feet a day. Moore Park was deeded to the City and is a memorial to the pioneer Moore family.
Disposition of Fort Klamath Soldiers’ Remains

By Bill Johnson

Fort Klamath was a military post established in 1863 when Klamath County was an open, unsettled land. Besides garrison duty, troops were involved in the Snake, Modoc, Bannock, and Nez Perce Wars. After the end of hostilities, settlement followed, and the need for a military presence ended. The last troops departed the fort in 1890. But they left behind a number of their comrades — men, women and children who had died during the 28 year lifetime of the post.

Most writing about burials and graves at Fort Klamath has been about the four Modoc executed in 1873 and buried on fort grounds. This article will outline the disposition of soldiers’ and civilians’ remains from Fort Klamath.

Frontier soldiers led a hazardous life. An 1875 Surgeon General’s report showed that the death rate of the frontier army from disease was more than twice that of citizens of the same age living under similar conditions (McDermott, p. 85).

Causes of death in Fort Klamath records include drowning, pneumonia, suicide, heart disease, typhoid fever, bilious fever, gunshot wound, syphilis, epilepsy, retention of urine, and inflammation of lungs, as well as several “unknown.”

One report lists Klamath Agency Doctor P. C. Munson, who died in August, 1871 “of heart failure while on the way up the mountain to Crater Lake” (July 8, 1892 report). Nearly half of the deaths listed were caused by “gunshot” during the 1872 - 1873 Modoc War. Fifteen were victims of the Thomas – Wright fight at Hardin Butte April 26, 1873.

In 2010 and 2011, Ken Hartell of Boise, Idaho, searched the National Archives for military burial records and correspondence of Fort Klamath. He made copies of many of these records and has generously donated copies to the Klamath County Museum. Also helpful in gathering information were Kevin Fields, Bill Nicholson, and Dave Mattos.

This article is based mainly on the information Ken Hartell has made available. With the exception of the 1892 disinterment report of Lt. W. K. Jones, all reports referred to in the text were written by the Fort Klamath A.A.Q.M. This was the Acting Assistant Quartermaster, the officer responsible for Fort Klamath burials and related recordkeeping and reports.
First Post Cemetery (1863 – c. 1874)

The first death at Fort Klamath was Private McKenzie Packard, who died December 15, 1863, only four months after the fort was established. The post cemetery was first located 250 yards northeast of the hospital. A May, 1866 report lists three graves, each enclosed by a wooden picket fence 8 feet long and 4 feet wide.

In October, Kevin Fields and I used an old aerial photo to try to locate the site of the original post cemetery. We scaled off 250 yards northeast of the fort hospital site and found it to be a small grassy opening surrounded by pine timber. It matched the 1866 description of the site.

In addition, as a kid, Kevin played in the area by the old service station at the junction of Highway 62 and the Sun Pass Highway. Lefty Wild Eagle, owner of the service station, would warn Kevin and other kids to avoid the grassy opening across from his station because it was a “burial ground.”

The reason for removing the remains is unclear, but the original cemetery size may have been too small to accept additional Modoc War casualties. The July 1892 report shows many remains disinterred from the first post cemetery as incomplete skeletons. It is likely that the disinterment was imperfect, and that human remains were missed, and are still buried at the first post cemetery site.

Fort Klamath Vicinity Map

A June, 1873 report describes the cemetery as nearly surrounded by pine timber, and containing 15 graves, 9 identified, and 8 enclosed by an individual picket fence. The July, 1892 report shows that 23 graves had been disinterred from this original post cemetery and reburied at the second post cemetery “about 1874.”

The author of this article presently is working with the Chiloquin Ranger District to develop protection measures for the site.

Possible site of first Fort Klamath post cemetery, with Kevin Fields, October 2013.

There is no obvious physical evidence to confirm the grassy opening as the first post cemetery, but the location is right, and anecdotally, it fits. It is on U. S. Forest Service land, and its identification as the first post cemetery could possibly be confirmed by ground-penetrating radar.

The author of this article presently is working with the Chiloquin Ranger District to develop protection measures for the site.
Second Post Cemetery (c. 1874 – 1892)

The second post cemetery was established about 1874, 400 yards west of the hospital. It measured 45 yards long (east to west) and 35 yards wide. Remains were removed from the first cemetery and reburied in the second. In addition, Modoc War casualties were also interred. After 1874, this continued to serve as the post cemetery, but when the town of Ft. Klamath began about 1885, the area adjacent became the civilian cemetery for the town and area ranches. Today, the site of the second post cemetery is a grassy area surrounded on three sides by the community cemetery.

In 1886, forty-eight headstones were ordered for graves in the post cemetery. These permanent headstones were the uniform style of white marble, with the inscription in raised lettering inside a recessed shield.

In June, 1890, the last soldiers at Fort Klamath left the post for good. All fort buildings as well as the post cemetery were left abandoned. Two years later, in April, 1892, Solon Shattuck from Ft. Klamath, wrote his congressman to complain about the “dilapidated condition” of the fence enclosing the post cemetery. Fence repair was foregone, though, since the remains at Fort Klamath were to be disinterred that fall and sent to the new national cemetery at San Francisco.

Disinterment (Fall, 1892)

After the Civil War, Congress authorized a location and reburial program for soldiers buried in the thousands of scattered Civil War burial sites. By 1870, over 90% of Union dead had been reinterred in national cemeteries (nps.gov). This reburial program was later extended to remove remains from abandoned military posts (mainly in the western states) and reinter them in the newly-created national cemeteries.

The Fort Klamath disinterment work was to be done by a civilian contractor, under supervision of a commissioned officer. In June, 1892, an advertisement for bids was released for “the disinterment of fifty-three (more or less) bodies at Fort Klamath, Oregon, boxing and delivery of same with headstones or monuments at Ashland, Oregon.” Remains were then to be transported by railroad to the national cemetery at the Presidio in San Francisco. The officer in charge was to record, for each grave, name, condition of remains, headstone details, and any other observations.

Site of the second Fort Klamath post cemetery, with Bill Nicholson and Cassie, October 2013.

A March 1883 report shows 53 officers, soldiers, and civilians buried in the post cemetery. A subsequent report in August 1888 notes the cemetery is fenced, “with one officer, 22 soldiers, and one citizen killed by Modocs,” and 15 other soldiers, one citizen employee, and 15 other citizens, for a total of 59 graves.
After bids were opened on July 7, 1892, the lowest bidder backed out, the second lowest couldn’t be found, so the third lowest bidder, a Mr. Curran, was awarded the contract at $8.75 each grave.

The disinterment was completed by October, 1892. The remains in each grave were placed in wood boxes, disinfected with carbolic acid, and transported by wagon to Ashland. Lt. W. K. Jones compiled a list of 56 bodies removed, with a description for each. Two examples:

“Roberts, George W. Citizen. Died Feby. 9th, 1873. Was found buried in a full sized coffin. No skull was among the bones and only about one third of the remains could be found. Bones were removed from old post cemetery about 1874.

O’Brien, Richard, Pvt. L 1 U. S. Cavvy. Died April 5th, 1879. Was buried in a coffin. Skull and four fifths of bones found entire also portions of clothing and cap intact. Autopsy of brain had been made as skull was sawed into two parts. Government headstone at grave, also one erected by his comrades, both shipped with remains.”

The list also describes two graves that were left undisturbed. One was Nancy Moyer, an 18 year old laundress and wife of J. Moyer, a soldier at the fort. She died in 1876. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. John Loosley from Fort Klamath; they requested the remains stay in place. Her headstone also shows an “infant son” was buried with her. This headstone marks the only identified grave left in place after disinterment work was completed.

The other grave left undisturbed was that of David McKay, a 3 year old child. The entry on Lt. Jones’ list reads “…died May 1878. Son of Thomas McKay, an Indian Scout in the service of the United States during the Modoc War, and who is now living at Fort Klamath with his family. He desires that the remains be left in the cemetery in his care. Remains were left.”

There is no marker for the David McKay grave, and its location has been lost. However, McKay’s remains still lie somewhere in the old military section of the Fort Klamath Cemetery.

During his August 2013 dinner talk at Fort Klamath, historian Jeff LaLande identified Thomas McKay as Modoc War Scout Donald McKay’s nephew. He also described their relationship to Alexander McKay and John McLoughlin. This makes David McKay’s unmarked grave a concrete link to Oregon’s earliest fur-trading period, dating from the 1790’s.

Military graves in other locations near Fort Klamath were also exhumed, and remains sent to San Francisco. In the Lava Beds, some soldiers were originally buried together in a rock enclosure. A December 1892 report states that “there was no possible means of identifying the individual bodies. In fact, even the skulls were so disintegrated as to render it impossible to locate the exact number of bodies found in the small enclosure.”

At Camp Warner (northeast of Lakeview), sixteen remains at the post cemetery were exhumed and sent to the San Francisco National Cemetery (Elder). A Klamath Falls newspaper cites a Lakeview Examiner article:
“the remains of the soldiers buried for over 30 years in the military cemetery at Fort Warner are now being exhumed...They were in a splendid state of preservation, the bones all intact, and the uniforms of the dead heroes looked as new as when they were buried with them. The hair of one soldier was combed as smoothly as when the brave fellow was alive. The remains mentioned above passed through Klamath Falls last Sunday on their way to San Francisco for burial” (Klamath Republican, June 14, 1900).

Final Resting Place - San Francisco (1892 – )

The San Francisco National Cemetery, located within the old Spanish Presidio, was established in 1884. It contains remains from many frontier military cemeteries in the western states, including Fort Klamath (cem.va.gov).

The website findagrave.com has photographs of headstones for individuals queried. Going through names on the October 1892 disinterment list, most military remains were reburied in Presidio Section WS, sites 423 to 458. Several civilian or family members are found in the adjacent Presidio Section PPE. Checking the headstone photographs on findagrave.com, at least 17 of the graves are marked by the same white marble headstones originally placed in the Fort Klamath Cemetery and shipped south in 1892.

Sources

Acting Assistant Quartermaster, Fort Klamath burials and related recordkeeping and reports. Copied from National Archives in Washington D. C. by Ken Hartell, on file Klamath County Museum.


Welcome New Officers for 2014

Officers
President: Liz Budy
Vice President: Polly Tickner
Secretary: Sally Bailo
Treasurer: Mickie Vandenburg
Past President: Sue Fortune

Board Members
Phyllis Goebel
Jack Inman
Carol Mattos
Bruce McCornack
Mae Rutherford

My Sincere Thanks to All
As former and continuing President, I want to extend my personal and sincere thanks to the Board Officers who have served our Society for the last four years: to Polly Tickner for her work on Merrill Cemetery; to Phyllis Goebel for her careful secretarial work and unending volunteerism; to Jackie Bonner for her careful keeping of the financial records; and to Past President Sue Fortune who helps edit and produce the Trumpeter and always is ready to help with any project at hand.

Special appreciation also to the Board members at large who have assisted with all our society projects, including our treasured historian Carol Mattos for her outstanding walking tours, Mae Rutherford for helpful coordination with the Museum, and Gary Mattos for solving every imaginable logistical issue.

Thank you, Jane Barnes, for all the get well and sympathy cards sent from the Sunshine Committee.

Sincere Gratitude to the Calling Committee who keep our members informed: Pat Boyer, Ann DuPont, Shirley Tipton, and Angie White. You are wonderful!

Special Recognition
To our retiring Treasurer Jackie Bonner, we can only express our sincere gratitude for your careful attention to our finances and to all your contributions to society tours and projects. You are exceptional!

To retiring member at large Gary Mattos, we thank you for your help with so many logistical details, from sound systems and walking tours to good advice and always helpful assistance.

To Kathie Inman, our Refreshments Chair, we express our deep appreciation for all. Special thanks for your outstanding organization of volunteers to serve the 150 people at the Paisley Caves talk.

To Bridget Burns, our essential copy editor, we thank you for your sharp eye and careful attention to grammar and formatting of every Trumpeter article.
**Memberships for 2014 are due!**

Membership fees are due at the end of each year.

Check your mailing label. The date above your name indicates whether you are paid through the year.

- Individual $15.00
- Supporting $30.00
- Life member $125.00

Make checks payable to the
Klamath County Historical Society.

Mail or drop off at the
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**2014 KCHS Officers**

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