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Meeting Schedule 2021
With this terrible year and not knowing what next year will bring, we are not sure what our program schedule will be.

Regular Membership meetings are at 7 p.m. On the fourth Thursday of March, April, May, September, and October at the Museum

Did you know?—The Echoes and all of the Trumpeters are now online
http://klamathcountyhistoricalsociety.org

The Christmas Tree at The Klamath Commons

We wish you Joy and Health for this New Year

Museum Happenings
Check the Midge for museum details and a list of other cultural happening in the community. To get on the emailing list send an email with your email address to midge@co.klamath.or.us
The Museum Trolley is a replica of the Linkville Trolley. The original trolley was a San Francisco trolley that was purchased by the Klamath Land and Transportation Company and modified for use in Klamath Falls. It was not motorized even though the proposal that was approved by the City Council called for it to be motorized with power supplied by overhead electric lines. That option proved too expensive. So the trolley ran for three years powered by two horses. It ran from July 4th 1907 through 1910. Then the tracks were torn up and the trolley left to deteriorate.

During the time that Harry Drew was Curator of the Klamath County Museum, he proposed building a replica of the original trolley. The county commissioners approved his proposal, and he was able to get another San Francisco trolley. This time it was free. With about 9,000 dollars the trolley was restored. Much of the wood in this trolley was rotten and had to be replaced. Harry Drew oversaw the project and Tony Yancy, with the help of 15 young volunteers from the Conservation Corp and the County Parks and Recreation Department, completed the project. The trolley was built carefully following the blueprints of the original trolley except for the addition of a Volkswagen motor to power it.

This trolley made several trips around town before it developed mechanical problems. There is a story that one of the drivers attempted to go up North 3rd Street and the engine failed. Whatever happened, the trolley never traveled under its own power again. It did appear in some July 4th parades, but it had the original power source.
The Trolley made its last appearance as a motorized vehicle on Memorial Day 1982. It was brought out for some parades and special events, but it spent most of the time in storage.

About two years ago, the museum staff brought the trolley out in front of the museum for show.

It was at this time the idea came of restoring it to its original beauty and purpose. Some museum volunteers and museum staff began looking into a way to motorize the trolley again.

Todd Kepple, museum manager, Jim McClure, museum maintenance technician and Terry Sandusky, a museum volunteer, worked on finding a way to refurbish the vehicle. The breakthrough came when someone suggested using the motor of an electric forklift.

That plan involved replacing the chassis. A small motor home chassis was the answer to that problem. Terry Sandusky and other volunteers dismantled the motor home, and Sandusky modified the chassis for the trolley body. The electric motor was mounted on that chassis.

Then the trolley was separated from its original chassis leaving the Volkswagen motor behind.

The project was paid for with donations from the community. No public funds were used.

The trolley will be ready for use in the spring and summer. Saturday and special occasion tours.
And of course, parades
Early Days in Klamath Country

A Newspaper Article by Myrtle Wimer about Louisa Taylor

Submitted by Ron Loveness

This article came from a story reported by Myrtle B. Wimer, Fort Klamath reporter for the Evening Herald, published July 16, 1936. The heading of the story was WOOD RIVER PIONEER WOMAN RECALLS EXCITEMENT OF EARLY DAYS IN Klamath. Louisa Taylor, the subject of the article, spent most of her life living in numerous locations in the Klamath Basin including Fort Klamath, Swan Lake, Clear Lake, Tulelake, Merrill, Klamath Falls, Nalox, Rocky Point, Algoma, Shaw-Bertram logging camps and other ranches. Most history has been written about the men in the family, so this one caught my attention as an example of a woman’s life in early Klamath country.

The article following is presented in the words and punctuations of reporter Myrtle Wimer to illustrate her ability to present so much information in a relatively short story. (One of Myrtle’s sentences contains 113 words and 12 commas.)

Myrtle’s story written in 1936 begins ……Wood River Valley numbers among its population many interesting people, but none has the striking personality nor has had a more colorful life than Mrs. Louisa Taylor, who is better known to her host of friends throughout Klamath County and Rogue River Valley by the nickname of “Bob”.

It has been my privilege to know Bob intimately for a good many years, and it is always a pleasure to visit her in her cozy home near Wood River bridge just before entering Fort Klamath where she lives with her daughter Mrs. Eva Ellis. On one of those recent visits, Bob told me many interesting highlights of her life, which include vivid memories of pioneer days in the Rogue River Valley and Klamath County.

A true Oregonian, Bob was born in Talent, Ore., on November 25, 1859, and was the oldest of three children, her parents being Mr. and Mrs. D.P. Brittain. With the exception of a few years spent in California, she has lived all of her life in Oregon. Her father crossed the plains from Pennsylvania in 1845, coming west with the Garrison and Yale wagon train, a caravan of more than 50 wagons. Garrison being Bob’s maternal grandfather.

After coming out to Oregon, Bob’s father settled in Rogue River valley, the white inhabitants of which were at that time in a state of constant warfare with the hostile Rogue River valley Indians, who bitterly resented the intrusion of the white settlers into their territory. Brittain served as a volunteer soldier in the forces.
organized to combat the attacks of the Indians.

In this connection, Bob related an interesting event of these troublesome days, which she said she has often heard her father tell. He drove a pack train from Rogue River Valley to Red Bluff, Cal., country at the time and on one of the return trips, the pack train was waylaid and attacked by warring Indians, who were stealing everything of value on the train, killed all of the oxen, scattered the pack horses by scaring them off, and murdered all of the teamsters with the exception of Brittain, who owed his life to the fact that shortly after the attack started, he had climbed on the old bell mare of the pack train horses, and dashed off down the mountain in a precarious flight to safety, the Indians being too busy with their looting, burning and massacre to pursue him. The bell mare took him home safely, and it was his sad duty to report the fate of all of his companions and the loss of the pack train and animals.

After the Indians had subsided and white people could live in Rogue River valley in peace, Brittain worked for Curtis and Myers, who had claims on Bear Creek, across from Ashland. While working there, he went to the Umpqua Valley, and married Mary Kennedy, who, with her parents, had crossed the plains in 1845 in the same wagon train that he had come west in. At that time, there was no such beautiful city as we see in the present-day Ashland.

It was then a mere settlement, consisting of a grist mill built by the pioneers, two or three dwellings houses, a general store, and a church which also served as a schoolhouse during weekdays. Here Bob spent her childhood in the primitive surrounding of a pioneer outpost, and when a young girl she left Ashland and came to Klamath County where she worked at the Captain D.F. Free road station at Nalox, located on the old-county road near the site of present day Hagelstein’s dairy at Algoma.

This road station combined a wayside inn where travelers could find accommodations overnight, and a feed and livery stable for their horses. In contrast to conditions of today, at that time the country in this vicinity was very sparsely settled, there being no mill there then, and only one house between Captains Free’s station and Williamson River. A garrison of white soldiers was stationed at old Fort Klamath, which was situated a little over a mile south of the present town of Fort Klamath.

Incidentally, Bob recalled a very amusing happening which took place during the time she stayed at the road station. It seems that Fred Loosley, pioneer rancher of Wood River Valley, then quartermaster at the Fort, came by horseback one evening to Captains Free’s road station, accompanied by Grit Tollman, a mutual friend of his and Bob’s from Ashland, with the intention of spending the evening visiting Bob, who was at that time a very attractive young lady.
Bob, however, had other ideas as to how she was going to spend the evening. As she had worked hard all day, she and a girlfriend living nearby had planned that they would go ice skating that night.

Accordingly, Bob slipped out the back way and joined her friend for an evening of healthy recreation on the adjacent skating pond, leaving her discomfited visitors to be entertained by others at the station. Bad luck, however, stalked Bob’s footsteps that evening for in going through the pasture to the skating pond, the two girls were chased by a herd of steers, and were forced to climb a fence to reach safety. They abandoned the skating idea, and Bob spent two hours visiting at her friend’s house, returning when Loosley and Tollman had started their long trip on horseback to the Fort. Fred Loosely vowed that he would “never forgive nor forget,” but at a birthday party given in Bob’s honor here a few years ago in the clubhouse, he jokingly recalled this incident of their youth to Bob’s memory, and the pair had a good laugh over it.

Time passed on, and on July 3, 1878 Bob (then Louisa Brittain) became the bride of Robert Taylor, who was employed at that time by Lucian and Ivan Applegate, who were pioneer cattle ranchers of Dairy and Swan Lake. Years passed, bringing their share of sunshine and sorrow to the couple who became parents of five children, two girls and three boys.

The oldest boy, Jay, grew up and fought in the Spanish-American war then raging in the Philippines, where he was killed in active service in April 1899, his body not being sent to the United States until the following February. At the time of her son’s death Bob and her husband were employed at the Jesse D. Carr’s ranch at Clear Lake, California, where her husband was foreman for three and one-half years and she was employed as cook. Coming close on the severe shock of her son’s death and burial was the additional sorrow of losing her husband, whose death occurred in December, 1900. Left a widow with four children to provide and care for, Bob carried on bravely, making a living for five years by keeping a boarding house in Klamath Falls, then renting the Gwuin Butler ranch, one and one-half miles from Ashland, where she milked cows, pastured cattle and kept chickens and turkeys.

Later returned to Klamath County, coming to Merrill, where she cooked for 18 months on the N.S. Merrill ranch, and also worked as cook on the Shook ranch at Dairy. Called back to Ashland by illness of her son, Ray Taylor, she remained there for a while, and ultimately returned to Klamath Falls accompanied by her son and his wife. Bob worked thereafter for a time in the old American Hotel, which later burned down, following which she was employed as a cook at various places including the Tom Lynch ranch on Tule Lake, at Shaw-Bertram logging camp for two years,
and for three years at the Alexander ranch at Rocky Point, then the Doak ranch. By this time, her son and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Taylor had left Klamath Falls and moved to the Cox ranch at Barclay springs, near Algoma.

Attacked by the dreaded disease, arthritis, Ray (better known as “Babe”), became bedfast for a while, his wife taking care of all the ranch work. He gradually improved in health, and became able to walk again, and 14 years ago (1922), he and his wife bought the Fort Klamath Hotel from Mr. and Mrs. Ed Hoyt, moving to Fort Klamath and making their home there. Bob cooked at the hotel for six years, and her cooking was famous all over the county, the hotel being especially noted for its wonderful chicken dinners served every Sunday.

As time went on, however, the long hours and arduous work of cooking became too much for Bob to stand, and as she planned to retire, to this end buying some land in a beautiful spot on Wood river where she lived quietly and contentedly ever since. Her great hobby is raising of flowers, and in the summertime her garden is a veritable mass of lovely blooms. Next comes quilting, and she told me she has sufficient pieces cut out to make eight quilts. She also raises vegetables and keeps chickens.

Possessing a wonderful vitality, hale, hearty and very active, with no afflications of any kind whatsoever, in spite of her 76 years, this amazing pioneer woman told me that she has never been in a hospital in her life, in fact, she confided to me that should she get sick and be taken to a hospital, she is sure she would die immediately, as she has a great fear of hospitals. She does all of her own sewing, having excellent eyesight, and does a daily round of tasks also, “Time goes so fast,” she sighed, “I don’t have nearly time enough in one day to do all I want to.”

This story would not be complete without further mention being made of Bob’s daughter, Mrs. Eva Ellis, who makes her home with her mother in Fort Klamath. A helpless cripple from arthritis, she has been an invalid for the past 15 years, spending her days in her wheelchair, reading, chatting with visitors, or listening to the radio. Many afflicted as she is would be morbid and disagreeable, but the contrary is true in her case. No doubt she has her moods of depression and fits of blues, but no one is ever aware of it from her outward appearance, for she is invariably cheerful and welcomes company, hers being very sweet, lovable nature which has not become warped and soured by her misfortune. In spite of her crippled condition, she writes a fine hand, and keeps up quite a correspondence with friends and her only daughter, Mrs. Milton Thomas, in Sacramento.

The afternoon drew to a close, and I reluctantly took my leave, with cheery invitations from both Bob and Eva to come again. As I walked the short distance home, I thought of the words of a poet,
“Age cannot wither, nor custom stale,
her infinite variety,” and mused how true
they were in Bob’s case.

Instead of sitting with folded hands, enjoying a well-earned rest in her declining years after a lifetime of service and unselfish devotion to others, she still continues her works of kindness and service each day—truly a beautiful, inspiring example of well-spent life.

Note – Subsequent articles in the Herald and News reported that Bob’s daughter, Joanna Taylor, continued to operate the hotel in Fort Klamath for 11 years after her husband, Ray, died in 1938. In 1949 when Joanna sold the hotel to M/M J. Quinn Buell, she continued to operate Jo’s Motel which she had built across the street from the hotel. Joann sold the motel in 1960 to M/M Jack Simington.

In 1965, (29 years after the article about Bob), the same reporter, Myrtle Wimer, further reported in the Herald and News that the Buells sold the hotel to M/M Walter W. Richards who had previously operated the Early Hotel. (Myrtle Wimer’s husband, Harold, operated Wimer’s Garage in Fort Klamath).

Book Reviews

By Mary Nobel

Still want more information on the Modoc War? You are in luck because Klamath County Museum has two recent Shaw Historical Library Journal reprints:

Volume 3 Number 1 is “The Modoc War – A Symposium” first published in 1988. The journal includes a native view, the fields of battle, a panel discussion of the war by military historians and more.

$15 continued
On the same subject, double Volume 23-24 is “Unforgiving Landscapes, Lava Beds National Monument and the Modoc War” from 2009-2010. The journal explains:

Although it is famous as the most costly American Indian War, the Modoc War occupied only a short interval in the history and significance of Lava Beds National Monument. Lava Beds was the longtime homeland to an ancient people who valued for centuries the ability to sustain life on a harsh volcanic landscape. Lava Beds’ distinctness as both an important cultural and accessible volcanic landscape afforded it recognition as a national monument in 1925. This Two Volume Journal explores some of the history of this unique American region.

Although not new publications, Klamath County Museum has obtained limited copies of two books of interest locally. The “Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890” by Gregory F. Michno is a chronological listing of every significant fight between Indians and both the Army and civilians. This book contains data, maps, photographs and tables. Amazon writes, “This detailed study is more than a reference book: it’s an illuminating portrayal of a violent era and a compelling examination of the machinations of frontier warfare.” $30

The museum also now has additional copies of Cheewa James’s book, “Modoc – The Tribe That Wouldn’t Die.” Publisher, Naturegraph Publishing in Happy Camp, CA, was tragically lost in the recent Slater Fire.

Those interested in local history, especially the Modoc War, would find both these volumes valuable additions to their library. $20
Thankfully, the owner escaped the fire but will not resume printing, so possibly the museum has acquired the last print copies, unless Cheewa James secures another publisher. $19.95

Klamath’s own Niles Reynolds shares his love of history and music in “The Intersection of History and Musical Practice.”

The introduction tells us, “Music and music making can take many different forms. The Klamath Basin has been home to a wide variety of music, from community efforts all the way to high profile and professional events. Though this musical history exists on a wide spectrum, each sample of music tells us something about Klamath’s colorful history.”

Reynolds writes of many musical groups up to the 1960’s and focuses on those that “played integral roles in the socioeconomic development of the community…”

These groups were encouraged by community leaders who “recognized that a thriving art scene would increase the visibility and attractiveness of the community.” To further this belief, local musical groups were sent to out-of-town competitions and events so others could appreciate the thriving art scene in Klamath Falls.

The book is illustrated with photos of many of the groups contributing to Klamath Falls’ musical history throughout the years.

It is for sale in the Klamath County Museum for $10.
It is time to renew your Membership

Membership fees are due at the end of each year.

Individual $15.00
Supporting $30.00
Life Member $125.00

Make checks payable to the Klamath County Historical Society
Mail to or drop off at the Klamath County Museum
1451 Main Street
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Are you updated on your KCHS dues? Please check and if not please catch up. The Historical Society needs your support!

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