

KLAMATH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Issue 124

TRUMPETER

Spring 2021

An article in the January “The Homesteader” The Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter by Kelly Cannon-Miller, reminded me that even though this seemed to be the worse time ever, certainly the worse time the most of us can remember, that there have been as bad or worse times in the world before. Imagine living during the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the wars that were fought right here in our country. Imagine being alive for the other catastrophic pandemics, famines, or economic depressions. Our ancestors face terrible times and survived. We will also survive. Many families lost members and struggled financially, and we are extremely sad about that. But hope is not lost. We will find better times for us and our children.

Virtual Programs:

The Historical Society will present some on-line programs this year starting with Women's History Month. *More information inside*

March is Women's History month.

March is Women's History Month. Last year, 2020, was the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment to the Constitution which gave women the right to vote. Sadly, the pandemic caused the celebrations of that great event to be largely canceled. We find ourselves still in the situation where we cannot gather and celebrate all the great work that determined women did to gain this right. But we certainly need to remember it and do all we can to ensure that rights hard fought for and won are never lost. We have been reminded that a working democracy is an on-going job for all Americans. We must not take our freedom and rights for granted, and we should honor those who help secure

Inside:

Help wanted by Bill Lewis

Irene Sleely by Mary Nobel

Mamie Giacomini by Mary Nobel

Early School Teachers by Ron

Loveness

Mrs Paul Bunyan submitted by Ron

HELP WANTED

This page is a call to action. May 28th is the 75th anniversary of the incorporation of the Klamath County Historical Society. While we cannot have a big in-person celebration, we can mark the occasion with a very special edition of the Trumpeter. I will need a lot of input from long-time members of the Historical Society about the many things the society has done over the last 75 years. That will include research along with personal remembrance.

This last year has been a terrible year for anything. Three of the Southern Oregon Historical Societies met the challenge of the pandemic by holding virtual meetings and programs on Zoom. Many churches did the same thing, and they were all very successful.

This year, which is looking the same as last, we are going to try the same type of virtual programs starting with Women's History Month. That program will be March 18th. Those of you with email addresses will receive an invitation via email and an explanation of what to do.

For those of you without an email address, it is assumed that you do not have access to a computer and would not be able to attend this type of meeting. If that is not your case, call me, Bill Lewis, 541 891-7616, and we will try to connect you with the program

The current president of the Historical Society has resigned and our vice president, Bea Naylor, is acting president. We are also one board member short of what the By-laws call for. There are also several committees that have been ignored for the last few years:

Program Committee, Kitchen Committee, Sunshine, Publicity, Tours, Historical Markers, Phone Committee, Auditing, Newsletter, Scrapbook, Nominating, Fund Raising (formerly Friends of the Museum), Membership and Supporters of the Baldwin.

Some of these committees are already covered, others are appointed when needed. Others seem to have gone by the wayside even though our By-laws call for them.

We need people from our membership to help the society by volunteering to head or serve on one or more of these committees.

There is another area of the Historical Society, the website. I am looking for a person to volunteer to maintain the website when I am no longer able. If you are that person or know someone who might be that person, please contact me. I will work with and train the person interested.

Bill Lewis

BillLewis62@Hotmail.com

541 891-7616

Irene Seely by *Mary Nobel*

It seemed like a perfect opportunity. Recent college graduates and newly-weds, Lloyd and Irene Seely, were offered jobs teaching in Beatty. Lloyd would take charge of the older students while Irene would teach the younger children. A definite plus – the job came with a teacherage, so the young couple would not have to worry about accommodations.

Both Seelys were native Oregonians and graduates of Oregon Normal School, now Western Oregon State College.

On October 1, 1932, The Klamath News reported, “Although Bly school was delayed in starting, it is finally well organized and progressing rapidly. A large enrollment is reported, Mr. Seely having the upper grade pupils, numbering twenty-five. The primary grades number thirty pupils, Mrs. Seely having charge.”

After the 1939 birth of their son, the couple moved to Klamath Falls. Motherhood was combined with many jobs. Irene taught at Summers school for a while before turning to other interests. She managed a credit union for two years then focused on history when she took a job as an assistant at the Klamath County Museum.

In 1961, the curator resigned, and the post was offered to Irene. She readily accepted.



Part of her duties was spreading the word about new museum exhibits via writeups in the Herald and News. She not only chronicled new exhibits but told of their donors and detailed the items. For example: “Anonymous, can opener for condensed milk cans, 1895.” (Herald and News, July 29, 1963)

Another newspaper column talks about an antique shoe collection, donated by Mr. and Mrs. John Hein, featuring shoes from all over the world. In another case is an insect collection from Dwight and Toby Schuh. “There is a grasshopper that must be seen to be believed and a black beetle that is literally big enough to choke a cow.” (Herald and News, Jan. 30, 1959)

In addition to working, Irene was the leader of a 4H sewing club and a member of the Juniper Garden Club. That interest in gardening led to her next career when, in March of 1973, she started writing the weekly garden column for the Herald and News.

In her column, Irene chronicled her gardening activities for the week, sharing knowledge accumulated after many years as a Klamath Basin gardener. Some of her gardening was quite advanced. For example, she not only grew irises, but she also bred them creating different color combinations and bloom times.

In addition to writing the newspaper column, her expertise was much in demand as a speaker at local garden clubs and other groups.

Education can take many forms as Irene Seely's life illustrates. She was a teacher, a historian, a gardener always anxious to share her knowledge.

Irene Died January 5, 1986. Her husband died in February of that same year.



Mary Elizabeth Giacomini *by*

Mary Nobel



The piano – for Mary Elizabeth “Mamie” Giacomini it was always about the piano - and no wonder. The precious item was purchased as a wedding gift from her husband, Antonio Modesto Giacomini. It came from New York to Petrolia, Humboldt County, California, via a ship traveling around the horn.

The piano wasn't through traveling though. After the 1906 earthquake in California, the young Giacominis decided to move to Merrill, Oregon, to establish a dairy. Getting to Merrill was not easy in those days. It involved a boat to San Francisco, rail to Pokegama, stage to Keno, another boat to Linkville. Another boat took them from Linkville to Merrill via White Lake.

The piano took a different route. It was shipped to Laird's Landing and then by team to the Giacomini's Merrill home.

That piano and her music were well known in the Klamath Basin as was her pride in her students. On June 28, 1960, the Herald and News wrote, "She is as proud of her beginners who tap out, '1,2,3,4,5,6,7, All Good Children Go to Heaven,'" as she is of the student in concert who has mastered the technique of Mozart and Beethoven."

Other activities largely revolved around music. She played organ for the Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic churches and the Moose Lodge and was a member of the Malin Orchestra. She was also a member of Business and Professional Women's Club, the Women of the Moose and the Catholic Daughters.

Community activities kept her busy as did raising her three children. Still, she found time to teach piano for generations of children from Merrill, Malin and Tulelake. After all, when you teach for 71 years, you are likely to teach the first pupil's children and grandchildren.

Her students frequently exhibited their skills. A May 22, 1938, Klamath News article tells of a recital hosted by Mrs. Giacomini. "Mrs. Giacomini was assisted by Mrs. Frances Gray Connell, violinist."

Merrill High School was the site of a May 12, 1940, recital and another in 1942.

In 1940, St. Augustine Catholic Church was dedicated, and the Evening Herald gave credit, "Mrs. M.E. Giacomini, well known musician, has during all the years, donated her services to the choir and is the present director."

The church appreciated it too. On her 89th birthday, Father Vincent Egan presented her with a scroll, a personal blessing from Pope John XXIII of Rome.

Mrs. Giacomini, born June 6, 1872 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, died in Merrill April 20, 1966, at the age of 93.



EARLY SCHOOL TEACHERS *by*

Ron Loveness

I learned about the schooling of the Lemler brothers from Loretta Cheyne, my family friend and the daughter of Elmer Lemler. Elmer and his older brother, Harry, attended the one room Horton School in North Poe Valley at the end of WWI. Both boys were taller than their 18-year-old teacher, Elvine Flury. Harry was a year older than Elvine and Elmer a year younger. The Lemler boys could only attend school part time as they took care of the family farm after their father, Henry, died from the Spanish Flu.

More information about their school-teacher, Elvine Flury came from the book MY OREGON LIFE by Gienger and Proctor. Elvine was one of twelve children raised in Jackson County and one of only two in her family to graduate high school. The summer after high school she attended Southern Oregon State Normal School in Ashland to get a teaching certificate. The Normal School later became Southern Oregon University. At that time there were no buildings, so classes were held in the Ashland high school. Elvine studied children's literature, Oregon history and other things she needed to help her teach. Elvine had to go back to school for six weeks every summer to renew her teaching credentials.



ELVINE FLURY
Basket Ball, 4.
Glee Club.

"I cannot tell what the truth might be,
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

The local school board in Poe Valley oversaw just Horton School as there were no superintendents or support staff until consolidation came later. The state gave teachers the course of study to follow for each grade. The Horton board almost didn't want Elvina when she showed up the first fall. This was when women had just started to wear short hair, and she had a Dutch cut that barely reached her shoulders - too new for Poe Valley. This was the beginning of the roaring twenties, and people thought you were a floozy if you had short hair.

Elvine's first teaching job was at the Horton School in Poe Valley where she taught all eight grades in a little temporary-looking school with a pot-bellied stove in the middle of its single room.

Water came from a hand pump in the school yard, and there was an out-house. She was also the school janitor, earning \$25.00 per month the first year and \$35.00 the second year. She paid board out of that, staying with the Brotherton family one-half mile away the first year, and the Sullivan family about three-quarters of a mile away the second year. Being farm country, everyone walked or rode horses to school. Elvine walked to school to arrive an hour early to get the wood and start a fire. Sometimes students helped if they got there early, and sometimes they stayed late to help clean up. They cleaned the erasers while she put the fire out and got the place ready for the next day.

The Lemler boys were very intelligent but needed extra help to finish all eight grades because they had to work at home and didn't get to school regularly. All students in Oregon had to take state exams. In seventh grade they took tests in geography and physiology. In the eighth grade they were tested in the rest of the subjects. They were tough tests. Eighth grade back then was like graduating from high school now. Both Lemler boys got their eighth-grade certificates, but neither was able to attend high school. Harry became an engineer for the Klamath Irrigation District, and Elmer became a successful Merrill potato farmer and subsequently the agricultural specialist for the First National Bank.

Other fascinating students Elvine had in Poe Valley included a Russian family that couldn't speak English. Three students were all in the first grade because it was their first year of school. Elvine made it a rule that they couldn't speak any Russian at school. It was harsh, but it worked. The other students helped them, and they learned very quickly. That was one advantage of having all grades together: The older helped the younger. It also reinforced the value and need of learning to the older. The father of the Russian family didn't like it that Elvine was teaching that the world wasn't flat, because he didn't believe it. The youngsters told her he said, "That teacher's crazy. How can the world be round?"

After teaching two years in Poe Valley, Elvine took a job in Coos County from 1922 to 1924 where they offered to pay her more – another \$15.00 per month. Elvine taught school for four more years including in San Jose where a California certificate would bring more money. Elvine returned to teach in the Rogue River valley until getting married at age 24 to Roy Gienger of Chiloquin. Elvine reported that when she and Roy attended Harry Lemler's 80th birthday party at the Lost River Grange in Olene, Harry still called her Miss Flury after all of those years.

My family

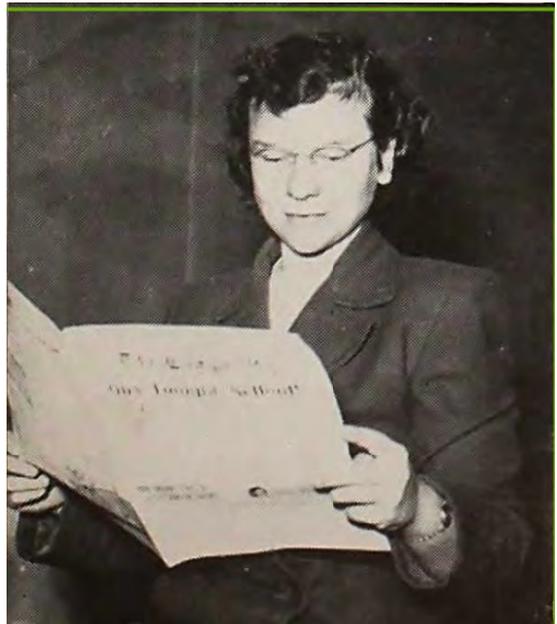
In those days work was scarce, so jobs were saved for single women and married men. My mother and her college roommate, my future aunt, were schoolteachers in the Sacramento Valley where school board policy didn't allow married women to teach. When my mother and aunt married brothers, they had to do so secretly by going out of state to Nevada. My mother quit teaching two months later at the end of the school year to start a family (me). My aunt and uncle kept their marriage secret for a couple of more years as he was a logger in the Sierras, and they could visit away from home on weekends. The owner of the local gas station noted the weekly trips my aunt was taking and told her, "You should marry that man; you'd sure save a lot of money on gas." The gas station owner's daughter later also became my aunt when she married my father's youngest brother.

Florence Turner

Another first-year teacher that I have been told about taught at the Big Lakes Box logging camp south of Canby, Modoc County, California, in the late 1930s. Miss Florence Turner from Palo Alto took the job sight unseen at the remote logging camp. The school had insisted that Florence sign a two year contract as they feared she might not come back. Barney Hoyt's father had a nearby ranch that supplied the logging camp with milk and meat. Mrs. Hoyt

took a liking to Florence and would have her over for Sunday dinner.

Mrs. Hoyt had a flourishing vegetable garden that was admired by the city girl. When Florence came back for her second year, she told Mrs. Hoyt that she had raised a small garden in Palo Alto that summer and thoroughly enjoyed it. Her only problem was that she was not able to find any pickle seeds.



Don Mesner, who's father Harry was the logging superintendent at Big Lakes had Florence for a teacher and reported that she arranged the eight grades into three groups. Don talked to Florence many years later and learned that she'd returned to Palo Alto and taught until retirement..

Florence Turner died on January 6, 2005 and her obituary published in the Palo Alto Weekly was a glowing remembrance of her career by some of her students.

MRS PAUL BUNYAN

Submitted by Ron Loveness

Because little has been said on the subject, most people think that the mythical Paul Bunyan was a bachelor. Paul did have a wife however, and the way he got her was also mythical. Passing a waterfall near one of his camps one day Paul heard a woman screaming. Investigating, he found the woman he afterwards would marry standing on the bank of the river. Out in the swift flowing river heading for the falls, was her sister. Paul wasted no time. He saw that before he could swim the rapids and reach the woman she would be over the falls, so he took his big shovel and began throwing big piles of dirt in the river. The woman who was to be his wife got the idea and joined with him by throwing rocks in the river and in a minute it was dammed up and the woman in the water was able to walk to shore. So right afterward Paul married Lucette Diana Kensach.

Lucette wasn't as big as Paul, but the 17' tall buxom lass was a pretty good mate for him. It took 13 Hudson Bay blankets to make her a skirt and the sails of a full-rigged ship to make her a shirtwaist. As for shoes – she would just step into an extra-large moosehide with each foot and have it sewed around her ankle. She wasn't any different than other women, but just her measurements were different – feet instead of inches.

Lucette was always referred to as Mrs. Bunyan, rather than by her first name. She helped cook in Paul's camp and would call the men to dinner by blowing into a woodpecker hole in an old hollow log. To enhance Paul's appearance, Mrs. Bunyan would comb his hair with a dull cross-cut saw and part it with a dull hand-axe.

As a result of pitting so many prunes, Mrs. Bunyan needed false teeth. She worked them overtime on fried chicken, of which she was extremely fond—so fond that for her to eat 2 ½ dozen at a setting was no unusual feat. One Sunday she was down by the log boom on the river and tried to walk a log for the fun of it. While she was out on the log she sneezed and into the water went her teeth. Mrs. Bunyan cried for the first time in her life. The teeth were made for her by the Krupp Iron Works of Germany and she didn't know how she would ever get them replaced.

None of the men could figure out how to get them, but Paul, as usual, solved the difficulty. He stood looking down at the teeth in the bottom of the river for a long time then left for shore. He came back with a cable and tied to the cable was a chicken drumstick. Without wasting any time Paul went out on the boom over the teeth and taking the cable in his hand lowered the drumstick in front of the teeth. When the drumstick was directly in front of the teeth, habit asserted itself and the teeth snapped onto the drumstick so Paul could raise them to the surface.

It is for Mrs. Bunyan as it is for Paul – NO TALE IS TOO TALL.



It is Women's History Month!

Trumpeter Staff

Bill Lewis

Sue Fortune

John Fortune

Mary Nobel

Ron Loveness



Are you up to date on your KCHS dues?

Please check and if not, please catch up.

The Historical Society needs your support!

KCHS Officers

President: Vacant

Vice President: Beatrice Naylor

Secretary: Mary Nobel

Treasurer: Richard Touslee

Members at Large:

Doy Touslee

Cindy DeRosier

Bill Lewis

KCHS Website :

klamathcountyhistoricalsociety.org

Bill Lewis— Webmaster

Email the Society at:

BillLewis62@Hotmail.com (Webmaster)

Did you know?—The Trumpeters and Echoes are now online and can be viewed at:

<http://klamathcountyhistoricalsociety.org>

Museum Happenings

Check the Midge for museum details and a list of other cultural happening in the community. Get on the list by sending your email to midge@co.klamath.or.us

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

Update your information: Mail to: KCHS at the address above.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____