

— SPRING 2019 —



# THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## CONTENTS

ASHWOOD MINING 1898-1905

(ALMOST) FORGOTTEN NEWSPAPERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

FARRIER TO THE RAJNEESHEES

TURK IRVING: LOCAL HERO

THE FIGHTER-JET IN THE PARK

N.S. 11

## Dear Readers—

Issue XI of THE AGATE, our award-winning journal of local history, is here, and ready for your reading pleasure.

This issue engages about eighty-five years of Jefferson County history, ranging from Dan Chamness's examination of the first, pre-1900 mining activity east of Ashwood and the origins of the town itself, and Jane Ahern's survey of the brief but colorful lives of early newspapers hereabouts, to a reminder that back in 1958 Madras's Sahalee Park improbably acquired a surplus Navy fighter-jet as playground equipment.

And, inaugurating a new AGATE series on "Local Heroes," we profile the historically important but sometimes comical doings of Lewis H. "Turk" Irving. And as a follow-up to our review in Issue X of the recent Netflix documentary on the Rajneeshpuram, *Wild Wild Country*, we're pleased to offer Rick Donahoe's entertaining account of his experiences with teaching horse-shoeing to the Rajneeshes. We hope you enjoy the whole issue; and as always we welcome comments, criticisms, and suggestions for future issues!

A correction: in the review of *Wild Wild Country*, we somehow misidentified rancher and Rajneeshpuram neighbor Jon Bowerman as his brother, Jay, naturalist at Sunriver. Apologies to both Bowermans!

At the end of 2018, Carol Leone, Director of the Museum at Warm Springs, officially retired after sixteen years of exemplary service. Under Carol's leadership, the Museum has grown substantially in both local support and regional and national reputation. In 2018, she and the Museum received a coveted Oregon Heritage Commission Excellence Award "for extraordinary work preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the [Confederated Warm Springs] Tribes, and serving as a model for institutions seeking to preserve and honor indigenous cultures." In addition to guiding the Museum over a crucial period of growth and consolidation, she has been a generous friend and adviser to the Jefferson County Historical Society, and we are delighted that she will be the featured speaker at our "Annual Dinner" April 6, 2019. (See details on the Dinner elsewhere in this issue.)

Succeeding Carol Leone as MWS Director is Elizabeth Woody, a native of Warm Springs and the first enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes to hold the position of Museum Director. Among her many

awards and honors as a nationally-known poet and writer, Elizabeth served as Poet Laureate of Oregon from 2016 to 2018. We welcome her, and look forward to working with her on the cause of preserving and celebrating the local history we share, "on both sides of the river."

## Eighty-five Years of White Buffalo Editors

In our coverage in AGATE X of the Madras High School paper, the *White Buffalo*, for reasons of space we had to omit a list of the editors of the paper from its first issue in 1922 to its last issue in 2007, compiled by Margie McBride Lehrman. So, to complete the record, here's the list.

Earle Tucker (1922—"The Golden M")	Sue McCreery (1963-4)	Jamie Clark & Bret Jones (1985-6)
Mona Grant (1937)	Susan Conlee (1964-5)	Randy Whittle (1986-7)
Norman Kennedy (1943)	Ron Nance (1965-6)	Mark Younger (1987-8)
Eddie Hart (1946-7)	Calvin Sumner (1966-7)	Kris Delamarter (1988-9)
Edythe Spafford (1947-8)	Debbie Steele (1967-8)	Marty Schmith (1989-90)
Hattie Choate, Clarice Duling (1948-9)	Bonnie Hillman (1968-9)	Tony Phifer (1990-1)
Lenore McKimens, Charlotte Cramer (1949-50)	Ron Bunch (1969-70)	Amanda Fine (1991-2)
Louis Hilderbrand (1950-1)	Jan Piller (1970-1)	Carrie Burris (1992-3)
Birdella "Birdie" Nance (1951-2)	Kelly Harris (1971-2)	Jennifer Butler & Rachel Clowers (1993-4)
Shirley Cunningham, 1952-3)	"committee" (1972-3)	EmmaLee Brown & Jennifer Cooke (1994-5)
Jan Luelling, L.E. Crecelius (1953-4)	Philip Morrow (1973-4)	Dennis Mannenbach (1995-6)
Jerry Ramsey (1954-5)	Sheila Phifer (1974-5)	Dennis Mannenbach & Marisa Ferguson (1996-7)
Jane Palin (1955-6)	Mark Hansen (1975-6)	Molly Fuentes (1997-8, 1998-9)
Bonita Nance (1956-7)	Rod Cross (1976-7)	Reina Estimo (1999-2000)
Bill Davis (1957-8)	Kevin Stovall (1977-8)	Joy Davis (2000-1)
Anne Piedmont (1958-9)	Mark Foster (1978-9)	Anna Nungaray (2001-2)
Ken Stewart (1959-60)	Eric Lindgren & John Carlson (1979-80)	Anna Nungaray, Sheena Galloway, Spud Miller (2002-3)
Joe Piedmont Jr. (1960-1)	Kelly Miller (1980-1)	Karissa Rice (2003-4)
Connie Hurt (1961-2)	Erin Olson & Kristen Powell (1981-2)	Tiffany Focht (2004-5, 2005-6)
Darrell Maxwell, Gary Harris (1962-3)	Tami Montee (1982-3)	Brandy Short (2006-7).
	Ron Roley (1983-4)	
	Barb Ransom & Bob Sjolund (1984-5)	

COVER PHOTO: BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF ASHWOOD, CA. 1900

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The mission of the Society is to research, gather and preserve the history of Jefferson County and Central Oregon for public education through the display of artifacts and archives.

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# Ashwood Mining 1898-1905

By Dan Chamness

The article "Trout Creek Mines" below first appeared in *Pacific Miner* and was reprinted in the January 12, 1904 issue of *The Ashwood Prospector* newspaper.

## "Trout Creek Mines: The Story of the Oregon King from Its Discovery"

By way of the present wagon road the Oregon King Mine is about 18 miles from Antelope, but by a straight line it is only about 13 miles in a directly southern course. All the supplies and mail of Ashwood come by way of Antelope, thus the interest in the two places are very much in common.

For more than 30 years it was known that a ledge of promising looking rock was in existence at Ashwood, but it failed through ordinary tests to show its contents. At last a sheep herder located it. He left the country without developing his claim and later practical miners discovered the ledge and found that the rock assayed about \$400 a ton in gold. They relocated it, sank a shaft at great expense, and also tapped the vein with a long tunnel. The result of their work was exceedingly encouraging, and they began to realize they had a mine of much value. They named it the Oregon King, and just as they were preparing to complete its development, the original locator returned and instituted a suit against them. For about three years the mine was tied up with litigation, the final settlement being reached last May (1903). It ended in a kind of compromise, the latter claimants retaining the property, although the suit had cost them about \$40,000.

After the discovery of the rich find of the Oregon King, a considerable amount of prospecting began to be carried out in that vicinity, and resulted in the location of a number of claims, most of them valuable prospects. The general characteristics of all these are not exactly alike, but the scientific expert of the Oregon King told me that he was confident that several of them would develop into productive properties.

As yet there is no other prospect in Ashwood so well developed as the Oregon King. Its shaft is now down to 500 feet below the surface, and the quality of the vein is improving with the depth. It might be truly said that it has now passed from the stage of being a mere prospect to that of being a mine of an established value. A description of the mine might give the reader a definite idea of the mineral resources of the locality.

The formation in which the Oregon King Mine occurs is andesite, being thus named from the Andes Mountains in South America, where Humboldt first discovered it. It is in reality a primary lava flow though it is often termed porphrite or porphyry.

There are two distinct ore deposits in the mine, each forming a separate system. One is a massive sulphide and



Birds-eye view of Ashwood around 1900. Trout Creek runs through town in middle; the white school building sits up on the hill west of town.

consists of galena, chalcopyrite, pyrite, and zinc sulphide, or blend. This system is a massive pyrite that occurs in solid lenses, which are encountered below the 300-foot level. The other system is space filial and partial replacement, in which quartz and partially destroyed andesite occur as gang. These ores carry gold, silver, copper and some lead. From the surface to about the 100-foot level the ores are oxidized. Below the 100-foot level to the present bottom of the mine they are sulphides. They carry no arsenic or antimony, except perhaps in minute quantity, if at all present. It is termed smelting ore, and at present is being shipped in its natural state to Tacoma for treatment, but it is probable that a smelting mill will be placed at the mine in the near future.

Values of the ores run from \$10 to \$1,000 per ton. There is a large amount of it on the ground now, stacked and ready for shipment that is expected to average more than \$400 per ton. *Pacific Miner*

The *Ashwood Prospector* was a typical short-lived newspaper that arrived with the discovery of gold, silver or copper and lasted as long as the mines were viable. The names of the newspapers often indicated their connection to mining. The *Ashwood Prospector* was owned by Max Lueddemann, who also owned the *Antelope Herald* and was instrumental in the start or early publishing of a number of newspapers, including the *Madrás Pioneer*. Lueddemann was the U.S. Commissioner for southern Wasco County in addition to owning the newspapers. He also was part owner in several mining claims around Ashwood. The *Prospector* was printed at the *Herald* and published weekly from March 30, 1901 until April 1905. Throughout its

existence *the Prospector* was a champion for mining, ranching, transportation and other businesses. Exaggeration of the value of mineral discoveries was typical for the newspapers in mining camps and the *Prospector* was no exception.

The area now known as Ashwood was settled as a ranching and farming community and still is that to this day. But the area got pretty exciting in 1898 when G.M. Wilson found some pieces of quartz in the area that turned out to have a high gold and silver content. Wilson staked his claim and called it the Silver King. Wilson, J.F. Hubbard and John Knight made claims adjacent to the Silver King. (*Crook County Mining Book No. 1*). Soon after the discoveries, Wilson organized a company composed of John Kirby, Thron Thronson, J.T. Hubbard and John Hubbard, and John Knight. The company, after sinking a shaft to a depth of about 100 feet, sold out their claims, twelve in number, to the Oregon King Mining Company, the original company retaining controlling interest of the stock of the new company. Oregon King Mining Company, a Wyoming corporation, was organized by P.J. Quealley from Wyoming and John Edwards and Charles Cartwright of the Hay Creek Ranch. (*An Illustrated History of Central Oregon embracing Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Crook, Lake, and Klamath Counties*, Western History Publishing Company, 1905). W.S. Thomas was hired as superintendent.

The Oregon King piqued a lot of interest among the mining community in the west, which was very active at the time. The Klondike gold rush began in 1897 and within six months approximately 100,000 gold seekers headed off for the Yukon, of which some 30,000 actually made it to the gold fields. Gold was discovered in the Cripple Creek District on the side of Pikes Peak in Colorado in 1890 and the phrase "Pikes Peak or Bust" resulted. The peak production at Cripple Creek was 1900.

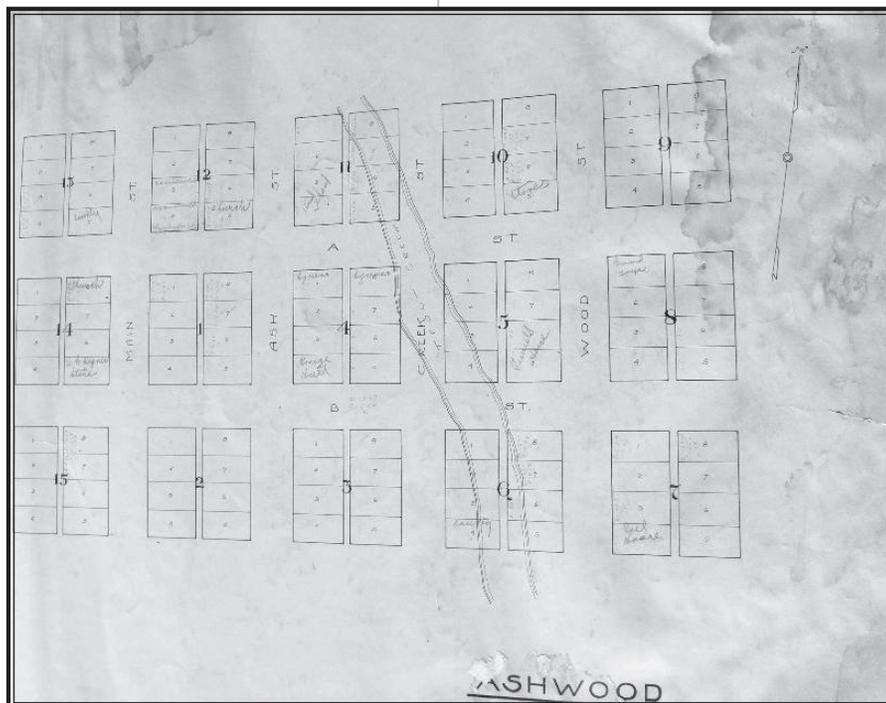
Mining in the Sumpter area had been ongoing since the 1860s but the railroad arrived in 1897 and within a few years several thousand people resided in and around Sumpter. A large strike

was made in the Tonopah District of Nevada in 1903 that was big enough to attract the Earp brothers. A year later gold was discovered near Goldfield, Nevada. The Bullfrog strike was discovered by well-known Death Valley prospector Shorty Harris and his partner, Eddie Cross, and soon thereafter the city of Rhyolite, Nevada was developed and that community grew to 7,000 people and was eventually served by three different railroads.

At the time that Ashwood was founded, it was part of Crook County. I spent time in the Crook County Courthouse looking through *Mining Books 1 and 2* covering the period from the 1860s through around 1910. Most of the activity

from 1898 through 1905 in all of Crook County was in the Ashwood area and what was later termed the Trout Creek Mining District. It would almost be easier to list the people living in the Antelope-Ashwood area who did not have interest in claims than those involved in mining operations. Historian and newspaper writer Phil Brogan was raised in the Ashwood area in those exciting times and he wrote "At night, miners' campfires blazed on many hills and sheltered valleys of upper Trout Creek." (*East of the Cascades* by Phil Brogan, 1964) The Trout Creek Mining District was formed in July 1898 with W.T. Wood as chairman, Columbus Friend as secretary and Jas. Wood as deputy recorder. A second mining district was formed in February 1900 with Charles J. Bird as chairman and D.P. Shrum as secretary. It was named the Cherry Creek Mining District. Once a mining district is formed, records of locations of claims are kept by the district, but recordings are still required at the county courthouse, though less detail as to location is required in county filings.

The residents along Trout Creek petitioned for a post office in 1896 and it was granted in 1898 with James Wood as postmaster. The post office was named for Ash Butte and W.T. Wood, an early settler on Trout Creek and father of James. James and his wife, Addie, platted and surveyed the community



Early Ashwood town-plat. East-West streets are "A" and "B"; North-South streets are Main, Ash, Creek, and Wood. Notations on the individual blocks include 4. "Grange Hall", 5. "Finnell Store," 7. "Gvt House," 8. "Wood House," 14. "Degner Store."



Ashwood Pioneer Store

of Ashwood on their homestead which straddled both sides of Trout Creek. The plat consisted of 15 blocks and was finished on June 16, 1898 and lots were put on the market. In August 1898, the general merchandise store of J.W. & M.A. Robinson was built and the following month the O'Neill brothers of Prineville opened The Ashwood Saloon. A few months later the saloon was sold to Benton & Grater. H.Y. Huston started a blacksmith shop and W.H. Grater established a hotel. (A. P., March 31, 1901)

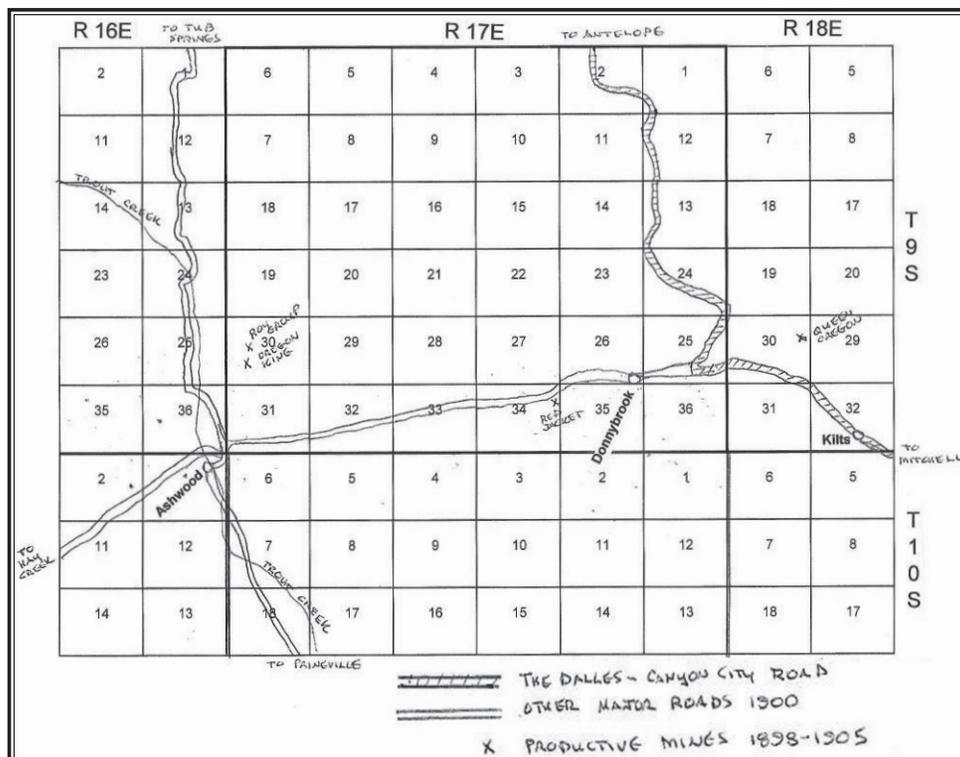
Other businesses soon arrived in Ashwood. E.B. "Frenchy" Estebenet petitioned for a license to sell spirituous malt and vinous liquors and 72 citizens signed the petition. His business was called Miners' and Stockmen's Exchange Saloon. Pete Lehrman set up a blacksmithing and wagon repairing

periodically by Reverend A.N. Sanford, the Methodist minister from Antelope, who held service in the Ashwood School. There was a red light district as well and "nobody bothered the girls." (Interview of Aaron Hale by the author on September 8, 1968)

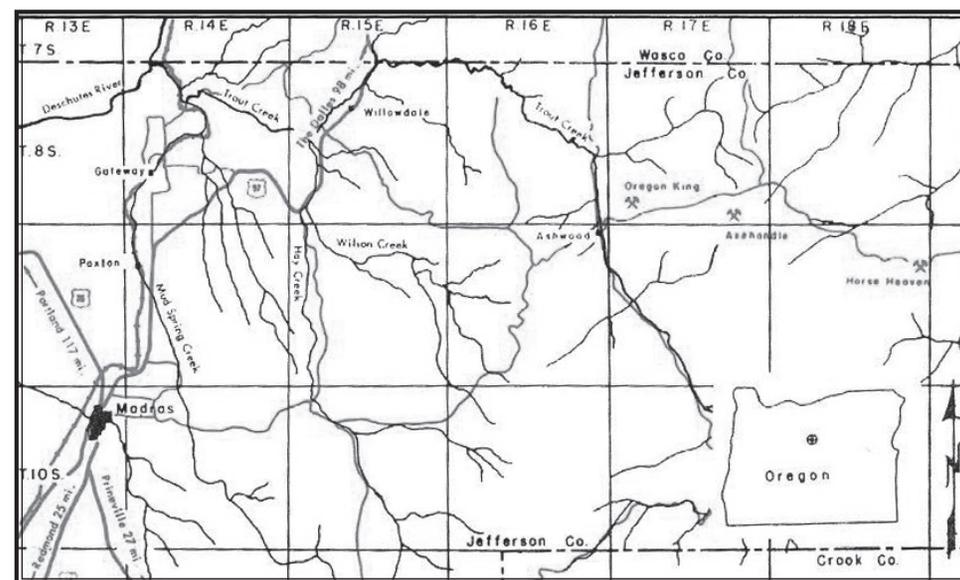
The main north-south route through Central Oregon was The Dalles-Canyon City Wagon Road, which passed through Antelope, Donnybrook, and to the John Day River and then on to the John Day country. A connecting road from Donnybrook served the Ashwood community. There were two primary routes by which Ashwood residents could travel to Prineville, the county seat for Crook County, where citizens had to go for any legal recordings, including claim location filings, mine assessment certifications, timber act petitions,

challenges to patents under the timber act, and other legal matters. One road to Prineville was along Trout Creek over a pass to the drainage of McKay Creek. The other option was over Blizzard Ridge to Hay Creek, to Grizzly and on to Prineville. The wagon roads were questionable in the dry season and often unusable for wagons in the wet season. Poor roads in northern Crook County were one of the major reasons that bills were introduced in sessions of the Oregon Legislature to create a new county. Ashwood residents did not feel they were getting their share of taxes paid to Crook County. Residents in northern Crook County paid to support the high school in Prineville and when that portion of the county wanted a bridge over Trout Creek or repairs on county roads, the work had to be done by private subscription. (A. P., January 3, 1905)

Crossing Trout Creek in the Ashwood townsite was a problem in that there was no bridge and the town was platted on both sides of the creek. The creek had to be forded. The newspaper got into the subject of a footbridge with an article chastising the people who started the bridge some time back and did not complete the project, leaving residents to deal with a narrow board crossing the water. (A. P., January 5, 1904) Later



Ashwood area



Area mining map

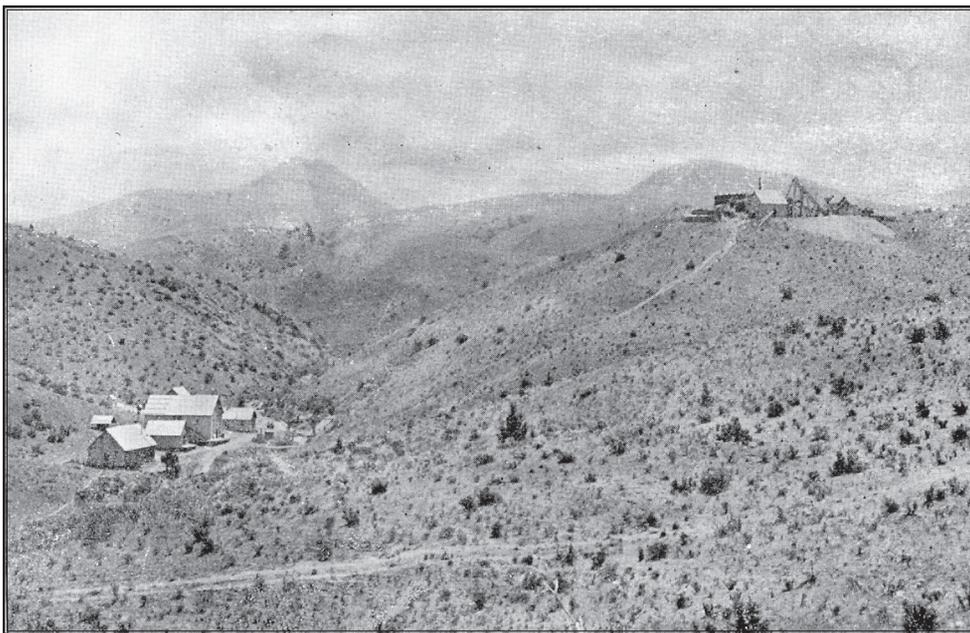
the newspaper reported that a satisfactory footbridge had been completed and even later that the footbridge had been wiped out by flood waters.

Frank Shambeau had a freight company that hauled to and from Shaniko and points south. In January 1904 he was appointed by the Crook County court as road supervisor for the northern Crook County area. The newspaper was very supportive of the appointment because of Shambeau's "perfect familiarity with the roads of this district during all seasons of the year. He should have support of the citizens of this community in his efforts to improve the conditions of our roads, which in their present shape, are a decided drawback to this camp." (A. P., January 19, 1904) Shambeau had issues himself with the roads. He wrecked on the Currant Creek grade and had a runaway with his team when the whistle from the Oregon King Mine scared his horses. He took a log hauling contract with the Dee lumber mill along Hood River and apparently gave up his road supervisor position.

Completion of the Columbia Southern Railroad in 1900 from Biggs on the Columbia River to the new town of Shaniko brought great excitement to Antelope, Ashwood, Prineville and other citizens to the south. The next decade was the boom period for Shaniko, being the terminus for the railroad, and for Antelope, which was on the main access road to the railroad. The hope for Ashwood and its mines was that the railroad would be extended. And those hopes ebbed and flowed.

The announcement by Mr. E.H. Harriman that the Columbia Southern Railroad would be extended into Central Oregon during the next year brings nearer to realization than ever before the hopes of every man's interest in the camp. The twenty-six mile haul from Ashwood to the present terminus of the road has been an insurmountable barrier to the development of the camp, and until better transportation facilities are assured, the camp will work under a decided disadvantage.

With the Columbia Southern extended south from Shaniko, it will be a comparatively easy matter to get a spur



Oregon King Mine around 1900 (Mine on top of hill)

up Trout Creek in this district, as engineers who have gone over this route pronounce it practicable. In fact, the road could be cheaply built with the exception of two or three miles at Box Canyon. The timber belt just south of here, together with the opening up of this rich mineral district would justify the construction of this spur. No point south of the present terminus of the Columbia Southern will be more benefitted by the extension than will be

this district. (A. P., December 15, 1903)

The writer for *the Ashwood Prospector* was not so sure of the Columbia Southern spur to Ashwood when he wrote four months later:

C.E. Lytle and A.E. Hammond of the Columbia Southern Railway were in town on Sunday. It is reported that they were investigating the feasibility of a good wagon road down Trout Creek to Cross Keys, to which point the Columbia Southern people expect to extend their road during the present year. Citizens of this camp, who have been over the road down Trout Creek a number of times, say that a good road can be built and that Cross Keys can be reached within a distance of fourteen miles, and that such a road will be practical for heavy teaming. Should the railroad be extended this road will doubtless be built, as it will shorten the distance to the railroad fully twelve miles. (A. P., April 19, 1904)

A new development popped up when the Deschutes Power and Irrigation Company contracted to have an automobile built in Portland to speed travel between Shaniko and Bend. The *Bend Bulletin* reported that the automobile is not for conveyance of the general public but to carry employees of the company (A. P., April 5, 1904). That idea evolved into a commercial venture carrying passengers for a fee on a new eight-foot-wide road that had an oiled surface. The road was to run from Bend to Cross Keys (now known as Willowdale on

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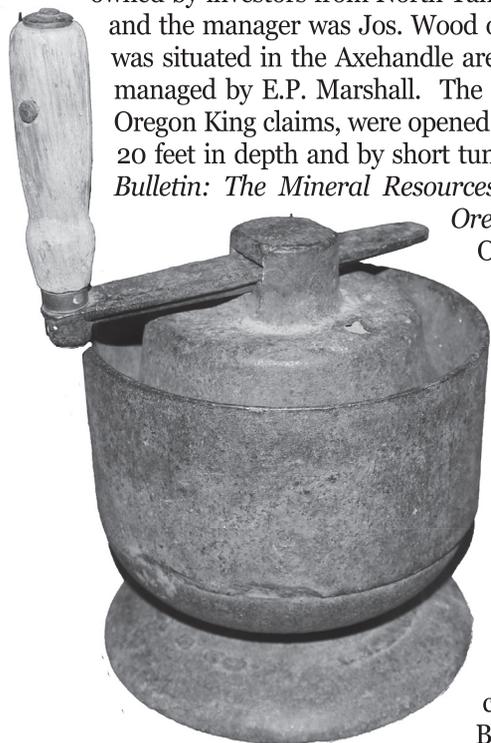
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Trout Creek). The hope of the Ashwood community was that the Columbia Southern would reach Cross Keys because Deschutes Power & Irrigation was run by good businessmen and would not build an incomplete road. (A. P., September 27, 1904) The D.P. & I. Co. ended up contracting with a stage to carry passengers on from Cross Keys to Shaniko, the term of contract being unknown. The Columbia Southern Railroad was never extended. The auto stage began operation in 1905 and traveled between Shaniko and Bend until the railroads built along the Deschutes River began operation in 1911.

The absence of a rail terminus near the ore supply was a disadvantage for the mines of Trout Creek District. Ore from the Oregon King was crushed, bagged and hauled by freight to Shaniko and transferred by rail to the smelter at Tacoma. That is not a good economic model. The *Ashwood Prospector* reported the following potential good news for the community:

Philip S. Bates, chairman of the executive committee of the State Mining Association, has prepared a list of big producing mines of Oregon, and also gives the names of a number of properties upon which treating plants will soon be installed. We clip the following from his statement, which will be of interest to this camp. "In Crook County two plants will be erected, one at the Oregon King and another on property owned by James H. Lithium." If this is true it will be the best news to hit this camp in many a day. (A. P., March 22, 1904)

The Oregon King was the famous property of the mining district but there were other mining operations of note. *University of Oregon Bulletin: Mineral Resources and Mineral Industry* listed three properties for 1903. The properties were (1) Oregon King, (2) Red Jacket and (3) Roy. At the time of the *Bulletin*, Oregon King had developed a 520-foot vertical shaft, 1,000 feet of tunnel and numerous surface cuts. The Red Jacket Mining Co. was owned by investors from North Yamhill in the Willamette Valley and the manager was Jos. Wood of Ashwood. The Red Jacket was situated in the Axehandle area. The Roy Mining Co. was managed by E.P. Marshall. The Roy claims, located near the Oregon King claims, were opened by three shafts of 80, 35 and 20 feet in depth and by short tunnels. (*University of Oregon Bulletin: The Mineral Resources and Mineral Industry for Oregon for 1903*).



Cast-iron portable "arrastra" (ore-grinder) from Ashwood area

Other claims of note include the Ashwood group headed by James Wood. The Silver Queen Mining Company was incorporated in 1903 for claims east of Donnybrook and capitalized ("capitalized" does not mean "cash") for \$250,000. (A. P., December 8, 1903). The Kimberly Company had a number of claims east of the Oregon King. C.C. Randolph controlled several claims on or near Axehandle Butte. Other prospects being developed included Antelope, Gold King and White Butte.

(*University of Oregon Bulletin for 1903*). There were many more mining claims in the Trout Creek and Cherry Creek Mining Districts but there is not much in the way of production records.

Litigation played a big role in the history of the Oregon King and to a lesser extent with other properties in the mining district. As reported by The *Pacific Miner*, a lawsuit was filed by the original locator (either G.M. Wilson or Silver King Mining Company) against Oregon King Mining Company. The reason for the suit is unclear but it appears to be exposed in the Proof of Labor filed on December 30, 1899 in *Crook County Mines Book no. 2*, page 106 as follows:

#### **Proof of Labor of Oregon King Mining Co.**

Thron Thronson being duly sworn on oath deposes and says, that he is the duly elected and acting secretary of the Oregon King Mining Co., a Wyoming Corporation authorized to do business in the state of Oregon, that he is also the duly constituted resident agent and attorney in fact of said corporation in and for County of Crook aforesaid; That the said "Oregon King Mining Co.," is the owner of the following named mineral claims (quartz) to wit: "The Candid," "Gold Bug," "Maggie," "Ella," "Maria," "Dandy," "King," "Bird," "Dude," "Ruby," "Comstock," and "Posey," all situated and being in Trout Creek Mining District, Crook County, Oregon; that W.S. Thomas is the legal superintendent of the said "Oregon King Mining Co.'s" properties aforesaid and the developments thereof; that he has performed and caused to be done on each and every one of the above mentioned claims for and at the instance of the said Oregon King Mining Co., one hundred dollars' worth of work and improvements, and that said work and improvements were so done and made for the purpose of complying with the United States and state mining laws regarding annual assessment work required on mineral claims; and that said work above mentioned was performed during the year 1899 AD.

Signed, Thron Thronson, Secy, Oregon King Mining Co.  
John W. Robinson, notary

On January 18, 1900 there was a second filing in *Crook County Mines Book no. 2*, page 112, entitled Notice of Quartz Location of Thron Thronson which included the wording "This claim is to be known as the "Oregon King" and is a direct relocation of the "Silver King" claim located by G.M. Wilson in 1898 in July and expired December 31, 1899." It was signed by Thron Thronson.

Whatever role Thronson played later on in Oregon King Mine history is unclear. He was involved with the Oregon Mayflower Mine in the Howard area east of Prineville and served as its president. He was "an assayer, geologist and mining engineer of repute" and resided in Howard. (*An Illustrated History of Central Oregon 1905*). I suspect that Mr. Thronson, on December 30, 1899, was standing at the counter in the Crook County Courthouse ready to record in *Crook County Mines Book no. 2* expecting that Wilson was not going to appear to file the appropriate Proof of Labor for the year 1899. This is only speculation on this author's part, but what is clear is that Mr. Thronson knew more about United States and Oregon mining laws than did Mr. Wilson.

Oregon King operated into 1901 before the lawsuit related to the original location of the Silver King was filed in Federal court. A shipment of 14.5 tons of ore to the Tacoma smelter in October 1899 netted \$1,764, or approximately \$122 per ton. Thomas, superintendent of the mine, reported that ore below

\$100 per ton was placed on the dump. By 1901, the shaft had been dug below the second and third levels to a depth of 273 feet. In May 1901, a shipment of 45 tons of ore was sent to the Tacoma smelter which yielded \$52 per ton and a shipment in June 1901 yielded \$35 per ton. The lawsuit resulted in the closure of the mine until 1903, when the Oregon King Mining Co. prevailed in court. (*The Oregon King Mine Jefferson County, Oregon*). A subsequent lawsuit was filed in 1904 and that will be covered later.

Another case involving potential mining property was filed by a Mr. Morgan against the heirs of Frank Brogan, deceased. The Brogan property had been homesteaded under the act of Congress of July 3, 1873 (commonly referred to as the Timber Act) in which property could be acquired from the U.S. Government if it was worth more for timber or stone than it was for agriculture. The Brogan family property was located in the Axehandle area close to where several mining claims had been filed. The Brogans were farming their land and Morgan brought suit on the grounds that the land was mineral in character and more valuable for mining than for agriculture. The case was decided in favor of the Brogans. (*A. P.*, January 5, 1904).

The Red Jacket Mine was the second prominent mine in the Ashwood area but it was dwarfed by the fanfare directed at the Oregon King. The Red Jacket in the Axehandle Butte area was a property controlled by investors from the North Yamhill area of the Willamette Valley but many local investors owned small blocks of stock. (*A. P.*, March 22, 1904). James Wood of Ashwood was the manager and looked after operations and filing requirements. The *Ashwood Prospector* did a good job of keeping the Red Jacket in the spotlight with numerous reports on the progress on the mining operation. It reported that "Lou Tomlinson and wife were down from the Red Jacket camp last Sunday. Lou reports work progressing nicely on the Red Jacket and some extremely fine ore is being taken out." (*A. P.* August 18, 1903). "James Wood left today for Shaniko accompanied by D.H. Lynch and his party of North Yamhillians. The Red Jacket, Mr. Wood says, is looking better than ever, and the owners now feel confident that they have a great mine on their property." (*A. P.*, December 1, 1903).

Problems began at the Red Jacket when water was encountered in the drift from the 300-foot level. The water could not be handled with the present equipment and work was stopped until a pumping plant could be installed. Superintendent Wood reported some fine ore was discovered at the end of the drift. (*A. P.*, April 12, 1904). The Red Jacket was back open when the pumping equipment was installed in July and then the *Ashwood Prospector* reported:

### **Red Jacket Accident**

An accident befell the Red Jacket Mining Company shaft last week. A large portion of the underground workings of the mine have been lost by the cave in which happened just below the 300 foot level and more than a hundred feet of the main shaft is said to have collapsed. The main shaft passed through soft ground at the 200 foot level, and the lumbering was not heavy enough to withstand the great pressure to which it was subjected. The heavy beams were crushed like egg shells and timbers, loose earth and rock piled up in the bottom of the shaft. Had anyone been in the mine at the time of the accident there would have been no possibility of their survival. (*A. P.*, July 26, 1904).

And the value in those large and small blocks of stock were crushed like egg shells as well.

There were water problems at Oregon King as well but the company had

pumping equipment to handle the issue. The company appeared to have the resources to handle all problems short of litigation. There was a boarding house (probably the Oregon King Hotel) that housed about 80 men during assessment time (Aaron Hale interview, September 8, 1968), and housing for mine officials and workers with families. The Oregon King was the darling of the Central Oregon mining community and drew lots of attention from around the west and the *Ashwood Prospector* chronicled those visits.

Albert Geiser, the well-known Sumpter mining man, was a visitor to the camp for several days last week. While here Mr. Geiser inspected the Oregon King property and other properties in the camp. Before leaving he stated that this is one of the most promising camps that he has visited in years, and that he is very much pleased with what he has seen. Mr. Geiser is on the executive board of the Oregon Miners' Association. He is heavily interested in Eastern Oregon mines, and is one of the owners of the Tabor Fraction. The Bonanza, which sold for over \$500,000, was once owned by him.

Angus McQueen, a prominent mining expert from Portland, spent Wednesday and Thursday looking over properties of the camp. Mr. McQueen visited the Oregon King Mine several years ago, before a great deal of development had been done on the property, and he expressed himself while here last week as greatly pleased with the showing that has been made. (*A. P.*, April 12, 1904).

The *Oregonian* ran the article below about the sale of the Oregon King to Albert Geiser and the article was repeated in the *Ashwood Prospector*:

### **King Mine Reported Sold**

The Oregon King Mine near Antelope is said to have been sold to the Geiser-Hendrix Investment Company of Sumpter for \$400,000 by Charles M. Cartwright of Portland, J.G. Edwards of Hay Creek and W.L. Quealy of Wyoming, but the statement could not be confirmed last night. Mr. Hendrix is the only one of the persons concerned who is in the city, and he could not be found. A telegram to Antelope brought the answer that nothing of the deal was known there. Mrs. Cartwright said she knew that the offer for the mine had been made by Mr. Hendrix and Mr. Geiser, but did not know if it had been sold. *Oregonian*. (*A. P.*, May 17, 1904).

An article in the *Crook County Journal* reported a visit to Prineville by Stanton Black of Ashwood in which he reported that a new vein of remarkable richness has been discovered in the Oregon King Mine. Contrary to rumors the mine had not been sold, he said that there was probably a deal to sell the property but it was probably called off with the discovery of the new vein. (*A. P.*, June 14, 1904).

Word of another lawsuit regarding ownership of the mining property of the Oregon King appeared in the August 2, 1904 issue of the *Ashwood Prospector*:

### **More Litigation in Sight**

It is rumored that the Oregon King Mine is about to be involved in more litigation over the title to that famous property. Last week an attorney from Walla Walla was in Ashwood in the interest of his client, Victor Wilson,

who is reported to be the plaintiff in the new case against the Oregon King. Although nothing definite can be learned from the suit, as no papers have yet been filed, it is surmised that this new litigation arises out of Victor Wilson's claim that he grubstaked G.M. Wilson who located the Silver King claim, and through which location the Oregon King people claim title by purchase.

Whatever the nature of the present claim against the famous mine, one fact stands out clear and distinct above all others, and that is, but for the fact that the Oregon King people opened up a great mine, after spending thousands of dollars on development work, there would not have been all of this troublesome litigation. (*A. P.*, August 2, 1904).

It was reported in *The Ashwood Prospector* that Oregon King superintendent W.S. Thomas returned from Tacoma where he personally supervised the shipment of high-grade ore from the Oregon King (*A. P.*, August 30, 1904) and in the next issue it was reported that Thomas was obliged to resign the position he had held since the mine was acquired by the present owners due to the illness of his wife. (*A. P.*, September 6, 1904). P.B. Geer, an employee of the mine, was appointed as superintendent to replace Thomas. The next issue of the *Ashwood Prospector* reported:

**Oregon King Closed Down**

The Oregon King Mine at this place will be closed down, the machinery removed from the shaft and work of every description stopped. This action on the part of management is doubtless the result of the pending litigation from troublesome lawsuits almost since the time it was acquired by its present owners. (*A. P.*, September 13, 1904).

“Mr. Geer and his wife left the Oregon King property and will not return until the mine is reopened. All of the miners who made their residence at the Oregon King are leaving as well.” (*A. P.*, September 27, 1904) The Oregon King did not reopen until 1929. (*The Oregon King Mine, Jefferson County, Oregon, 1962*).

The loss of the mining jobs at both the Red Jacket and Oregon King had a big impact on the community of Ashwood. The J.W. & M.A. Robinson store started a liquidation sale with the intent of quitting business in Ashwood while emphasizing cash sales. (*A.P.*, November 8, 1904) Robinson moved his business to Madras where it operated for years. The Post Office Store owned by James Wood changed its name to the Post Office Cash Store sometime in the previous months. Charles Derham reported that his sawmill east of town in the timber country would be moving to the Deschutes River on the Warm Springs Reservation. (*A.P.*, February 7, 1905) “Frenchy” Estebenet, owner of the Miners’ and Stockmen’s Saloon has joined the Ashwood colony in Bend, having left this place last Wednesday. (*A. P.*, December 27, 1904)

The *Ashwood Prospector* ceased operation, the last issue being April 4, 1905 without notice. Advertisers in the last issue were:

Irvine & Hamilton	Ashwood
City Market	Antelope
Lower Feed Yard	Antelope
PA. Kirchheiner	Antelope
The Ashwood Saloon, Benton & Grater, Props	Ashwood
Miners’ and Stockmen’s Saloon	Ashwood

Stanford & Fitzpatrick	Shaniko
Post Office Cash Store	Ashwood
Antelope Drug Company	Antelope
Ashwood Livery and Feed Stable	Ashwood

Activity continued on other mine properties with assessment work being done often in the months of November and December each year. Antelope and Ashwood areas raised thousands and thousands of sheep, but the area was never part of the sheep shooter wars that plagued southern Crook and northern Lake Counties. Sheep from the Baldwin Sheep and Land Company were exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition and won prizes. The American Mining Conference was held in August 1904 in Portland and ore samples from regional mines (Oregon King, Red Jacket and Oregon Mayflower) received favorable response. Other events that happened during the period covered in this article include the Heppner flood of 1903 and the Mitchell flood of 1904, both of which did considerable damage to the towns.

The San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 dried up speculative investment capital as resources were needed to rebuild the city. Much of the money that funded the mines of Tonopah, Goldfield, Rhyolite and elsewhere came from San Francisco, the location of the San Francisco Mining Exchange which dealt in mining securities. The Panic of 1907 further squeezed investment funds. Shortage of speculative capital, low-grade ore and transportation issues all had a negative impact on the mining businesses in Ashwood.

The Ashwood area had a resurgence in mining activity decades later and the ore of value in the rebirth was cinnabar from which mercury is processed. The red earth that earned the Red Jacket its name got its color from cinnabar. Oregon King came back to life late in the 1920s and a rich find of cinnabar in the 1930s led to the opening of Horse Heaven Mine east of Ashwood. The second life of mining in the Ashwood area is worthy of treatment in a future issue of THE AGATE.

**SUGGESTED READINGS**

*An Illustrated History of Central Oregon Embracing Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Crook, Lake and Klamath Counties, State of Oregon.* Crook County, OR: Western Historical Publishing Company, 1905.

Many Hands, *Jefferson County Reminiscences.* Portland: Binsford & Mort, 1957. Revised 1998.

Phil Brogan, *East of the Cascades.* Portland: Binsford & Mort, 1964.

Lawrence E. Nielsen, Doug Newman and George McCart, *Pioneer Roads in Central Oregon.* Bend: Maverick Publications, 1985.

Peter G. Boag, “Ashwood in Trout Creek: A Study in Continuity and Change in Central Oregon.” Portland: *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly* 91, 1990.

F.W. Libby and R.E. Corcoran, *The Oregon King Mine, Jefferson County, Oregon: Short Paper 23.* Portland: Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, 1962.

Steve Lent, *Central Oregon Place Names Volume II: Jefferson County.* Prineville: Crook County Historical Society, 2008.

Lewis A. McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names.* Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1992.

John F. Due and Frances Juris, *Rails to the Ochocos: The City of Prineville Railway.* San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1968.

Art Campbell, Antelope: *The Saga of a Western Town.* Bend: Maverick Press, 1990.

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# (ALMOST) FORGOTTEN NEWSPAPERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

By Jane Ahern

The September 2018 issue of THE AGATE featured an excellent article by Margaret McBride Lehrman about Madras High School's erstwhile newspaper, *The White Buffalo*, and the Jefferson County Historical Society last month hosted an engaging history pub on the *Madras Pioneer*, presented by publisher Tony Ahern. What follows is most likely the last in the Society's series, this time bringing to light long-defunct newspapers of other towns of Jefferson County and its environs.

These old newspapers are an indispensable part of the historical record, though they were published before the notion that newspapers are the first rough draft of history gained widespread currency in the 1940s and they didn't do as good a job of consistently documenting public policy and the actions of government and non-governmental organizations as today's newspapers do. To be fair, there was less to document because institutions were sparse in these parts in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Rather than recording history, the main aim of these early newspapers was to promote their communities in the hopes of attracting new businesses and settlers, which usually involved enumerating the assets of their communities with all the optimism they could muster and listing their needs without belying a repellent lack of amenities. Where these newspapers shine is in the glimpse they give of the hopes and dreams of the towns, as well as their disappointments.

They also provided a wealth of information on individuals. In reading these newspapers, we learn the names of community members, who they associate with, where they go, and what they're doing on a personal and day-to-day level.

Even the advertisements can tell us a lot. They indicate what kinds of products and services were available in the towns and how much things cost. They also sometimes convey personality, sense of humor and graphics style.

It is more fun to read the newspapers than to read *about* them, but hopefully the following will impart a sense of the newspapers' distinct personalities and of their roles in their communities.

## The Antelope Herald

Though Antelope is not in Jefferson County, it had strong enough ties to the early communities of what became Jefferson County that its newspaper history is worth recounting here.

Antelope earned the distinction of being one of the first towns in our area

to have a newspaper when its Antelope *Herald* began publication in 1892. Larger, more established cities like The Dalles and Prineville had had newspapers for quite a while by that time. The *Times-Mountaineer* in The Dalles started up in 1860 and the *Ochoco Review* in Prineville started in 1885, absorbing another newspaper started even earlier. But there were no newspapers yet in Madras, Metolius, Culver or Ashwood for the simple reason that those towns did not yet exist or had very little population in 1892.

The first publisher of the *Antelope Herald* was E.M. Shutt, whose brother, S.P. Shutt, published the *Condon Globe*. He held onto the *Herald* until 1897, when he sold it, used the proceeds to buy new equipment, and set up in Heppner all within the month of November. The Shutt Publishing Company went on to operate newspapers in Ione and Hardman in addition to Heppner. (*An Illustrated History of Umatilla County by Col. William Parsons and of Morrow County by W.S. Shiach with a brief outline of the early history of the state of Oregon*, 1902, p. 325)

In his editorial greeting to readers, Shutt pledged to remain impartial in politics, support the interests of the town and surrounding area, and try to provide the current news of the day, while warning that the latter would be difficult because Antelope was 70 miles from the nearest railroad. Underneath that, Shutt went on to do something that was common to the newspapers of our small Central Oregon communities: he listed all the attractive attributes of Antelope he could think of in the hopes that other people would want to move there. "The town of

Antelope has for many years been recognized throughout the northwest as being by far the most important and popular place of its size in the state of Oregon," Shutt raved. According to Shutt, Antelope offered extensive sheep and cattle range; plentiful access to good water; affordable firewood, groceries and lumber; beautiful views; situation in a big, fertile valley; law-abiding, genial citizens; beautiful views of rich fields and pasture; lovely homes with shade trees and fruit trees; and a good location on the road to The Dalles.

In 1905, a subsequent publisher, H.G. Kibbe, detailed what Antelope still needed: a shoe shop, a harness shop, an electric light plant, a plumber, a bank, paved streets, asphalt sidewalks, a railroad and "an elimination of all knockers and



Antelope Herald Dec. 4, 1903

grumblers.”

The *Herald* was four pages that included international and national news and an enviable abundance of advertisements that took up substantial portions of the front page. Some pages had two columns of news and four of ads. Most of the ads were for general merchandise businesses in Antelope and The Dalles, with a sprinkling of ads for hotels, banks, druggists, and even a jeweler. The first page of the very first issue on July 8, 1892 contained ads for three different saloons—the Stockman, the Occidental, and the Snug Saloon. On inside pages there were more of the same, plus ads from Portland for pianos and roofing and an intriguing ad for Lovell Diamond Cycles which invited readers to request a catalog and order a bicycle from Boston for \$85.

Often the ads were intermixed with and barely distinguishable from the columns of filler consisting of short stories trying to be humorous. One example, under the title “Temperance Revival,” ran, “In their annual efforts to dethrone King Alcohol, orators have been arguing for ages against the drinking habit but admit that the strongest thing they have to contend with is the purity and healthfulness of Portland Club Whiskey. For sale everywhere.”

Like most newspapers of the day, the *Herald* ran columns of local news about who was doing what. Names still familiar today included T.H. McGreer from the John Day country; Phil Brogan, sheepman from Little Trout Creek; and Columbus Friend, “who was in town last Monday to buy a hay fork.”

Statewide news was spotty, but there was an occasional gem such as the story about the rabbit cannery in Echo, which aimed to use every portion of the rabbit and grind up the scraps for chicken feed. According to the *Herald*, it was the only institution of its kind in the United States.

The *Herald* changed hands several times and was suspended between 1910 and 1917 before closing permanently in 1925. Max Lueddemann was arguably the most prominent publisher of the *Herald*. Lueddemann owned several newspapers during his time in Central Oregon, including the *Madras Pioneer* and the *Bend Bulletin* as well as newspapers in Shaniko, Silver Lake, Lakeview and Ashland (*National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lueddemann, Max and Ollie, House*).

Lueddemann was a lawyer from Alabama who moved out west for health reasons, buying the *Herald* and settling in Antelope in 1898. He was sworn in as Antelope’s city recorder in 1901 and, as noted in Dan Chamness’ piece on early Ashwood history, Lueddemann was a U.S. Commissioner of southern Wasco County and was involved in some mining interests himself.

In 1905, Lueddemann bought the *Pioneer* and moved to Madras with his wife Ollie. In addition to running the *Pioneer*, Lueddemann opened Madras Realty Company and began selling commercial

and residential property in town and agricultural property near the town. He also sold fire insurance. The Lueddemann’s house in Madras still stands on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and C and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Lueddemanns sold the *Pioneer* and moved to Portland in 1909.

Another prominent editor of the *Antelope Herald* was H.L. Davis, who grew up in The Dalles and Antelope and later went on to write *Honey in the Horn*, the only novel by a native Oregonian to win the Pulitzer Prize, in 1936. (George S. Turnbull, *History of Oregon Newspapers*, pg. 290) Davis, who would have been in his mid-twenties at the time, revived the *Herald* in 1917 after its seven-year hiatus and ran it for about four years. H.C. Rooper edited the *Herald* for its last four years.

### **The Antelope Republican**

The *Antelope Herald* operated for eight years before getting its first competitor, the *Antelope Republican*, which launched July 18, 1900, under a banner that proclaimed “Perseverance is the only sure road to success.” The *Republican* was published by A.M.F. Kirchheiner for about a year before being sold to Max Lueddemann and absorbed by the *Herald* in 1901. Despite being short-lived, the *Republican* was not a bad newspaper; it was at least comparable in quality to the *Herald* and other small-town newspapers of Central Oregon.

As its name indicates, the *Republican* was unabashedly partisan, but in his page-four “Salutatory” in the first issue, Kirchheiner promised not to criticize personalities, but rather to point out errors where necessary. If the *Republican* had a weak spot, it was Kirchheiner’s writing style, especially when editorializing. His floridity and dependence on cliché is evident in his salutation: “With this number, THE REPUBLICAN is launched on this world’s rough seas, with the aim of pouring oil on its surface in as large quantities as its capacity will allow and thus aim to smooth the rough seas; aiming to do its share in combining the factions of the Republican Party to help bring peace and harmony in its ranks and thus aid in making it stronger and larger, as in ‘unity there is strength,’ making the world’s load easier to bear by prosperity and happiness as a consequence thereof.”

Kirchheiner promised to provide local news and tout the area’s resources to the thousands of families he expected to settle in Antelope. His assessment of Antelope’s strengths, eight years after Shutt’s litany, illuminates the progress made in the town and includes the following: well-to-do stockmen, farmers and miners; a 9-month graded school with three teachers; a church building; a telephone connection; water; a fire department; and location only six miles from the railhead at Shaniko.

The *Republican* started out as an eight-page paper published every Wednesday, but later switched to publishing four pages twice a week—the only one of the small Central Oregon newspapers to publish



H.L. Davis

more than once a week. Page One typically included international news under the recurring headline "Telegraphic News: Interesting Notes from Different Parts of the World" as well as an ad for the Columbia Southern Railway Company giving its passenger timetable. Travel from Biggs to Shaniko took about four hours with stops in Wasco, Moro and Grass Valley as well as lesser-known towns like Klondyke, McDonalds, Erskinville, Bourban, Guthrie and others.

An ad for G.M. Cornett's Shaniko & Prineville Stage Line shows that the stage trip from Shaniko to Prineville took about 12 hours and cost \$6 one way or \$10 round trip. The Antelope & Mitchell Stage Line, operated by Henry Dyce, advertised both passenger and freight service in the *Republican*. His prices for passengers were equivalent to those of Cornett and he charged \$.03 per pound for freight.

In addition to transportation ads, there were ads for the Trout Creek Sawmill, Edmundson's Bakery in Shaniko, music teacher Guy C. Bowman, physician and surgeon R.J. Pilkington, P.A. Kirchheiner's (probably a relative of the publisher) blacksmith and wagon repair shop, and the Eureka Saloon, which had "the Famous Columbia Beer on draught."

True to its purpose, most issues of the *Republican* contained political editorials. Of course, Kirchheiner championed Republican incumbent William McKinley over Democratic challenger William Jennings Bryan in the 1900 presidential election, even going so far as to assert that McKinley would go down with Washington and Lincoln as one of the best presidents.

The *Republican* had the usual local gossip and news items. One interesting innovation was that they printed the names of people who were staying in the town's two hotels. The week of July 25, 1900 there were 32 people staying at the Hamilton Hotel—several of whom had typhoid—and 11 were staying at the Occidental Hotel, including the newspaper's future owner, Max Lueddemann.

Meeting notices in the *Republican* indicate that Antelope had what appears to be a Masonic Lodge, referenced as Virtue Lodge No. 140, and a chapter of the Ancient Order of the United Workmen (AOUW), a mutual benefit society that provided insurance to workers and a venue for socializing. (For more information about Antelope's AOUW hall, which is now a museum, search "AOUW hall Antelope" on Google.)

## The Ashwood Prospector

Dan Chamness covers the Ashwood *Prospector* ably in his story on Ashwood in this issue, so there is only a little to add here.

Visually, the *Prospector* resembled the Antelope *Herald*, but its content reflected some differences between the two communities. The *Herald* clearly depicted Antelope as an established city, small, but poised to grow, whereas the *Prospector* routinely referred to Ashwood as "this camp" as if it were not quite a town.

The most dramatic difference is in the subject matter. The *Prospector* had the usual mix of international, national and statewide news and local gossip, but at all levels it leaned towards stories about mining—a new metal discovered in Germany, a mining conference in Portland, editorials on the taxation of mines, and in touting Crook County, it pointed to the mines: "Crook County is today one of the most promising counties in the state from the standpoint of mineral resources. It is the home of the Oregon King, which every expert who has seen it admits to be one of the biggest properties in the west."

Ashwood Prospector, August 18, 1903

There also seemed to be a greater prevalence of notices of land claims in the *Prospector* than in the newspapers of Antelope, Culver, and Metolius and Madras.

## Culver—The Deschutes Valley Tribune

From 1911 to 1919, Culver was fortunate enough to have in the *Deschutes Valley Tribune* a high-quality weekly newspaper that was in all ways a worthy competitor to the *Madras Pioneer*. The first issue came out on March 23, 1911 with a "Salutatory" promising to strive for accuracy, to be interesting, and to cover the affairs of all Central Oregon, the state, and the nation.

The editor was giddy with optimism for the changes he expected would result from the imminent arrival of two sets of railroad tracks that would soon pass through his city on their way from The Dalles to Bend. He wrote, "While Central Oregon is undergoing the wonderful transformation destined for her during the next few years as a result of the transportation now being supplied, much business and development news will be forthcoming. It will be exceedingly interesting to those acquainted with the erstwhile isolated condition of the country to note the rapid progress from vast areas which are now covered with sage and juniper, to the large neighborhood of fertile cultivated farms dotted with the homes of useful citizens."

The editor further pledged political neutrality and produced this nugget of relevance to us today: "Indeed, we may dub the politics of a few years past as political insanity. It was rather common then to find those really interested in political affairs to be adherents to a political party, father, son and grandson; adhering with a sort of idolatrous tenacity. In fact, one might easily have formed the opinion when conversing with them that they were first, republicans or democrats and secondly, Americans . . ."

It's not clear exactly who wrote those words. The publishers of the *Deschutes Valley Tribune* were O.C. Young and P.A. Chandler, so presumably it was one of them. Chandler advertised himself in the *Tribune* as Justice of the Peace and both publishers advertised themselves Notary Publics. Later Chandler was selling crop insurance. At times only one or the other was listed as publisher and Chandler did a stint at the *Pioneer* for about a year between 1916-17 before returning to the *Tribune*.

Knowing what we know today—that Culver never received the second railroad it was promised because Harriman’s Deschutes Railroad opted at the last moment to stop at Metolius-- it is painful to read the 1911 issues with their full-page ads for lots in “Culver Junction, the railroad center and agricultural metropolis of Central Oregon” and articles speculating on the date of arrival of the second railroad. The Culver Development League, with publisher O.C. Young as president, was planning a celebration right up to the time they learned they would have to drop the “Junction” from “Culver Junction.”

Within a few years, the newspaper had another cause to promote—county division. The *Tribune* was in favor of forming a new county and covered the issue closely, but that too eventually turned sour when Madras replaced Culver as the permanent county seat. “Records of County are Taken by Mob: Lawbreakers enter county seat and loot courthouse,” read the January 4, 1917 headline. For the next few months, there were some bitter bits of text that may or may not have been intended as humor directed at Madras and its newspaper, some of it hard to follow at this remove. The March 1, 1917 issue contained this exemplary tidbit tucked in between miscellaneous pieces of local news, “*Madras Pioneer*—where and what kind of courthouse is it to be, anyhow? You are mighty quiet about your new courthouse, aren’t you, Madras?”

Despite these petty lapses, the *Tribune* continued to provide an impressive assortment of international, national, statewide and local news. It covered World War I pretty extensively, as well as the prohibition movement and the push to bring irrigation to Jefferson County. It printed the county court proceedings, the reports of School Superintendent Lillian Watts, and the jury list. For entertainment, it published serialized novels and shorter pieces of humor. It had the usual ads for snake oil disguised as news stories and a “local and personal” column that included the communities of Gateway and Laidlaw.

The *Tribune* seemed to specialize in agricultural news, much as the *Ashwood Prospector* focused on mining news, because farming was what its readers did. “Importance of Eradicating Injurious Cattle Tick”



Culver Deschutes Valley Tribune, Page One, April 5, 1918

and “Carefully Test Seed Corn” and “The Hogpen Floor” read the headlines.

The *Tribune* was well supported with advertisements from Culver, Madras, Metolius, Redmond and even Portland businesses. The Oregon Trunk advertised its passenger service, with prices helpfully listed. From Culver a traveler could go round-trip to the coast for \$12.30 or all the way to Boston for \$110.

**Metolius—The Jefferson County Searchlight/Jefferson County Record**

Metolius’ *Jefferson County Searchlight* published its first issue on April 15, 1915. It was the last of the Jefferson County newspapers to be established and the most unique. On either side of its name, the newspaper’s banner read, “Devoted to the advancement and development of Jefferson County” and “A newspaper for all the people all the time is your newspaper.”

The *Searchlight’s* oddball nature became apparent in the second issue, dated April 22, 1915, with its recounting of a gunfight that had taken place at Post in Crook County. Three people were shot and yet the tone of the story was flippant, referring to the two shooters ironically as “General Dana” and “General Kizer.” “General Kizer was said to be half shot, while Mrs. Kizer, in attempting to play ball with the active contents of General Dana’s shotgun, was wounded between the appetite and the coiffure, and she was doubled up, holding one arm in a close embrace,” it read.

Further reading reveals that the publisher, Dr. Bailey Kay Leach, and the editor, his wife, Elizabeth Adams Leach, were staunch pacifists, which probably explains their disdain for the participants in the shootout. In the same issue, Mrs. Leach wrote a piece opining that children should be taught by example rather than by punishment and Dr. Adams contributed an editorial criticizing Theodore Roosevelt for criticizing the Women’s Pacifist Movement. World War I was under way, so questions of war and peace were highly relevant.

Another quirky aspect of the *Searchlight* was its series of stories about “Mysterious Gus.” Serialized novels were common in newspapers of the day, but they were written by professional novelists, not newspaper



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# Farrier to the Rajneeshees

By Rick Donahoe

*Rick Donahoe's discovery in the 1970s of a Blizzard Ridge-area homesteader's daily journal in an old building on his Redmond farm led to her identification as Ethel Larkin, in "The Mystery Homesteaders" in AGATE IV (Fall 2015). As a farrier, early in the days of the Rajneeshpuram, he was hired to teach sannyasins the farrier's craft. His perspective on the rapidly-changing Rajneesh scene as a local tradesman is historically valuable, and entertaining. His anecdote about how his wife and a friend actually heard the Bhagwan holding forth after dawn in the Great Hall contradicts the official line, both for the cult and for historians of it, that the guru did not speak in public from his arrival in Oregon in 1981 until 1984, when he broke silence to denounce Ma Anand Sheela and her gang, after they fled. But maybe, early on, he did on occasion lecture to the faithful, in the security of the ranch? For someone so given to contradictions, it seems possible.*

I'll always remember the day I was sitting at my real-estate desk in Redmond when the phone rang and the voice on the other end asked if I'd be interested in teaching horseshoeing up at Rajneeshpuram for one hundred dollars a day.

One hundred bucks a day was a huge sum back in the early 1980's, what White House lawyers charged, and what I would have had to shoe ten horses for when I'd come into the country as a farrier, a horseshoer, a dozen years before.

How they got my name, I don't know. I'd done some horses up that way, though not at the Muddy Ranch itself, before long winters and a growing family had me take a job at the O.S.U. Agricultural Experiment Station in Redmond. During this time I also looked after the station by the Madras airport for several years.

Of course I had read and heard rumblings about the Rajneeshees, followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, leader of the cult that recently purchased the old Muddy Ranch and was turning it into an ashram, a commune of sorts, an hour and a half up the road.

If you recall the farming scene back then, you'll remember that peppermint was king. Having grown it for the state the past five years, I had no sooner quit my job, got my real estate license and planted my own fifty acres of mint roots when the real estate market tanked, the mint market went belly up, and here was somebody asking if I'd take one-hundred dollars a day. Quick as you can say Jack Robinson, here I come!

Not knowing what to expect, my first trip to the ranch found a peaceable scene. There were a few temporary buildings with a few dozen sannyasins, mostly gentle and welcoming women dressed in shades of pink, colors of the rising sun, talking about organic gardening and pursuing a lifestyle very different from which most had come.

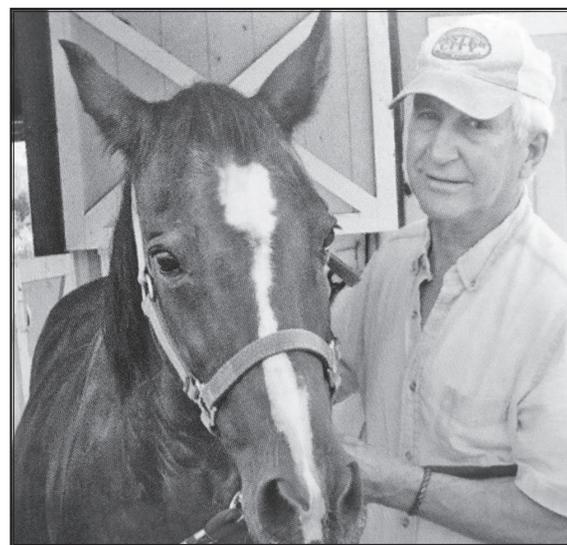
The sannyasins I'd teach to shoe a horse, a handful of guys and two younger women, had come from all over: Great Britain, Germany, Texas, the Bronx! All chomping at the bit, we went right to work going over the tools, leather aprons and other

supplies they'd need; and looking over the horses, which were mostly well-broken ranch geldings, plus a little Arab mare once owned by Priscilla Presley. As few in the group had prior experience with horses, we practiced how to approach an animal, pick up and hold feet for best leverage, and most importantly, how not to get hurt. A few days later, would you believe, a check in the mailbox!

Although my wife Mary and I didn't know quite what to think about the whole Rajneesh thing, we were probably more open to the idea of an ashram than most Central Oregonians. For one thing, it wasn't in our backyard, like it was for our Jefferson County neighbors to the north. Being recent newcomers ourselves, having known only the realtor who sold us our forty-acre farmstead a few miles northwest of Redmond (it was supposed to be 240 acres, but that's another story), it wasn't hard to empathize with others who found Central Oregon a tough nut to crack.

It hadn't hurt that I got around and met a lot of people in connection with my shoeing business, or that Mary, arriving in Oregon to find no public kindergarten for our four-year old, started her own. Still, coming from Boulder, where we both went to the University of Colorado, neither of us was prepared for the pall of scarcity still hanging over the high desert since homestead days, when Central Oregon was advertised as a "banana belt," a "bread basket" where irrigation water soon coming in would dissolve the rocks into fertilizer. Hard times were followed by the Great Depression, which old timers said went by pretty much unnoticed, poor as things already were. Who did these Rajneeshees think they were to come barging in, throwing money around, having all that fun!

Back-to-the-landers ourselves, Mary and I had been excited about moving to the country where we'd raise our children with down-home values that included "making a little and spending less," the first part which we got pretty good at over the next almost thirty years. Our excitement got cold water thrown on it when I called the previous owners to ask about the mousetraps nailed to the tops of fence posts around the raspberry patch that



Rick Donahoe (recent photo)

had paid their taxes. The traps, the woman was proud to tell me, were for the robins eating her berries. "It was just snap, snap, snap, all summer long."

Up at the ashram, the shoeing was going along well, the gals especially undeterred by getting leaned on, stepped on and yanked around. Or by what gave most people pause, I'd learned from teaching workshops for COCC: driving nails into a live hoof. As time went on, I'd go up every week or so to check on my charges, who in spite of low nails, dubbed toes and lost shoes, were doing surprisingly well at "hanging on iron." By now, the ashram had undergone a new set of faces, with many more men, as friction with the outside world brought fewer smiles and welcomes for this obvious stranger in their midst.

Still, it was welcome change from the everyday grind. If something special was going on that involved live music, I'd sometimes take Mary, who by now was teaching at the high school. Impressed by the clean composting toilets that supplied free feminine products, she had made gardening connections with several women who had been out to our place and who we liked very much.

After all these years my chronology might be a bit sketchy; I don't remember if the Bhagwan had

arrived just yet, but it was like somebody kicked the hive with a cafeteria suddenly under construction, followed by a Great Hall in which Rajneesh would address his disciples, buildings so well designed and insulated they'd be heated by the bodies occupying them.

It was around this time that we were visited by an old Boulder friend who was familiar with the Bhagwan's teachings and wanted to hear straight from the guru's mouth. More than once he talked Mary into getting up in time to sit cross-legged in the Great Hall as the sun came burning over the buttes. Skeptical at first, I was glad to hear that the Bhagwan had a good sense of humor, that his talks centered mainly on how the major religions connected and intersected, and how a global understanding of this would lead to world peace. On that note, neither Mary nor I had been prepared for the endless parade of religious militants that came marching to our door in Redmond, much less the peer pressures our two children felt at school, the parental pressures Mary faced, especially when teaching the classics, at work.

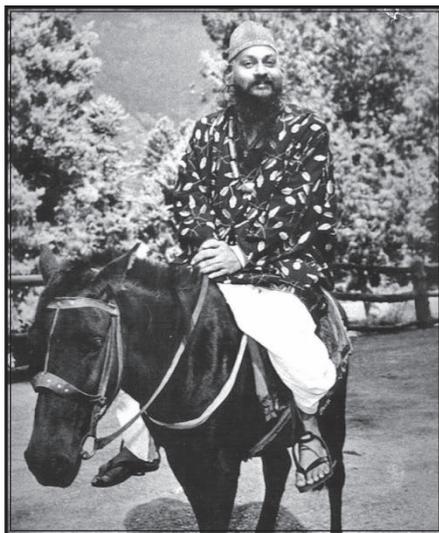
On one early morning trip, Mary and our Boulder friend had no sooner crossed onto the ashram than a coyote came loping up alongside; a sign, ventured our friend, a Viet Nam vet, of the peace Rajneesh already was bringing to the world.

Although we had cattle and chickens and lots to tempt a coyote, we seldom had trouble so long as we left plenty of grass, and therefore had plenty of mice, a coyote's preferred diet. If we had room for coyotes in our lives, not so our neighbor, an old sheep man from out east who hated everything—hawks, eagles, badgers, and coyotes most of all. Mary and I liked to hear them in the night, like children spilling onto a playground, taking special note when their cries continued into the dawn, a sure sign, old desert rats say, of a change in the weather.

"I don't like a coyote," our neighbor let us know early on, "and I don't like anybody that *likes* a coyote."

Soon after our arrival in Central Oregon it was discouraging that our "Another Family For McGovern" sign, which may as well have pictured a hammer and sickle, kept getting torn down and trashed. Upsetting too, were middle of the night phone calls with a little old voice seething, "Why don't you go back to Russia where you belong?"

From what I saw and heard, things at the ashram went quickly from bad to much worse when the Bhagwan, vowing a year of silence, handed off the reins to Ma Anand Sheela, a small, attractive East Indian dynamo in her mid- to late- thirties. I had



Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh on horseback, pre-Oregon, in India (Nismar photo)

also met Jay Silverman, her husband-to-be, a nice enough guy, very much the businessman with his crisp suit and manner.

Mary and I were pleasantly surprised to receive an invitation to their wedding. Held in an old hotel the ashram purchased in Portland, it was a gala event with everything provided where we danced into the wee hours.

Up in Wasco County, lawsuits and legal issues were compounding as fast outside the ashram as paranoia grew within. There was talk about closing the dirt road to keep the public from driving through the ashram, which was a favorite pastime of local cowboys supposedly looking for strays. Later, I learned firsthand that a sannyasin, ejected for not toeing the line, got shoved out on the sidewalk in Redmond with just the clothes on her back. Luckily it was across from the Chinese restaurant, whose owner gave her a job and a place to stay until she could make her way back to Ohio.

Some time before, I was having lunch at the café in Antelope when a large van with out-of-state plates pulled in across the way with what was said to be the Bhagwan's first Rolls Royce. If the rumor was true that he eventually owned more than ninety of the cars, given to him by a wealthy widow, Mary and I saw only one. And one day here it came, ever so slowly through the ashram with the Bhagwan driving, barely visible above the wheel, the burgundy Rolls parting the crowd that showered its hood with flowers, leaving a trail of sannyasins, overcome with ecstasy, collapsed in its wake.

"Wow, did you feel it?" someone was saying over and over. And yes, I *did* feel it, except what I felt

was fear, fear of the men with bullet proof vests and assault rifles walking alongside the Rolls, Mary more frightened of the helicopter above, scanning the crowd for signs of trouble.

Not wanting to drive at night, Mary and I had made plans to stay at the new B&B, which, as with most everything at the ashram, was beautifully done. Our room featured a perfectly round, bigger than king-sized bed, although after witnessing what we did earlier that day, we didn't take advantage of it as we might have, thinking the room might be bugged.

Of my original shoeing class, two students remained—the gal from England and the guy from the Bronx—both doing well on their own. As for my checks that arrived later and later, my final check never arrived at all. I finally called the ashram to find myself explaining at length what the check was for, only to be asked, "How to shoe horses? Do we have horses?"

Following this brief interlude in our Central Oregon lives, Mary and I didn't know much more about Rajneeshpuram than what we heard on the grapevine or read in the news; a bizarre, drawn-out series of events that ended with the Bhagwan, by now a frail and broken old man, his teachings hijacked and distorted, wanting only to go home and instead winding up in jail.

Looking back, I see Rajneeshpuram as a present-day, real-life parable about money and power, a microcosm of empires rising and falling since the beginning of time, only instead of taking 1,500 years, this one taking about that many days. Although I've yet to see *Wild Wild Country*, the review in the recent issue of THE AGATE reminded me of how much I'd both forgotten and never knew at the time.

One thing, however, has stuck with me all these years. I can still see in my mind's eye the large gray boulder next to the pond sannyasins so lovingly created in the midst of it all. Etched onto its surface, "*ANCIENT POND, FROG JUMPS IN, PLOP!*" Not that I know what it means, except maybe that here we are, each of us poised for the briefest instant on the edge of this ancient human sea, hoping to make our own little ripple.

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# TURK IRVING: LOCAL HERO

By Jerry Ramsey

As far as we know now, there was no magical charm or charter, no how-to manual available to the intrepid men and women who took it upon themselves more than a century ago to improvise our Central Oregon towns—Madras and Culver, for example. Considering what they had to work with at the start, they must have been a remarkably capable and resourceful bunch, all of them raw newcomers to a raw country. Their invariable answer to any and all skeptical questions about what they were undertaking —“But why THERE?”—must have been “Why not?”

Few of them were educated beyond the public-school requirements of the time, or had big-city experience and connections when they came here. Neither did they come with much in the way of *capital*—other than the skills they brought with them, and a willingness to work together to accomplish big things. Farmer-homesteaders, tradesmen, would-be businessmen, housewives, schoolteachers: calling them “local heroes” of our early history now would probably embarrass most of them. But what they did to establish our towns and counties, and the agricultural basis of our economy, is surely heroic.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer from the above that as they went about laying historical foundations our forebears were all uniformly sober, singleminded, self-effacing citizens. On the contrary: certain individuals stand out in the historical record and in oral tradition as colorful, even eccentric figures—“real characters,” as we say. Of these, one man especially deserves attention—Lewis H. “Turk” Irving (1876-1949).

Turk Irving came a long way to his Madras destiny. He grew up on his prosperous family farm in central Virginia, near Amelia Courthouse. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Hampden-Sydney College (where he earned his lifelong nickname, after a pass-word he and his mates used when playing penny-ante poker). After a stint of work in the coal mines of West Virginia, he returned home to help his ailing father with the farm, and in his spare time there “read law,” earning his lawyer’s credentials. He also served for a time as the Amelia County School Superintendent.

What impelled him to move all the way out to Albany, Oregon, in 1907 is unknown—but in 1909, after teaching school in Albany for a year, he came to Madras, where he lived for the rest of his life. Bear in mind that in 1909 Madras was still in its infantile pre-railroad state, not incorporated, still in Crook County. It’s easy to imagine how a dapper college-educated single man of 33, from the State of Virginia with attorney-at-law credentials, might stand out amongst the homesteaders and speculators who were already flocking to Madras. He kept his Southern drawl and vocabulary and courtly manners to the end of his life—part of the essence of “being Turk.”

Having opened a law office (was he the first lawyer in Madras?), Turk plunged into the civic work at hand. Presumably he advised the town officials on setting up to incorporate, arranging to extend the legal boundaries of Madras with “additions,” and negotiating with the Oregon Trunk and the OWRN/Union Pacific railroads as they began their famous “race” up the Deschutes



Turk Irving as a college graduate in Virginia, 1898

Canyon to Madras. On the side of *culture*, he became an early and life-long advocate of the local library (for the details of his dedication to this cause, see Kathie Olson’s excellent history of the Jefferson County Library).

When the drive to create Jefferson County out of Crook got underway in 1914, Turk was a prominent and vocal partisan of the cause of separation, and argued for the “Westside” claim in public debates between him and a

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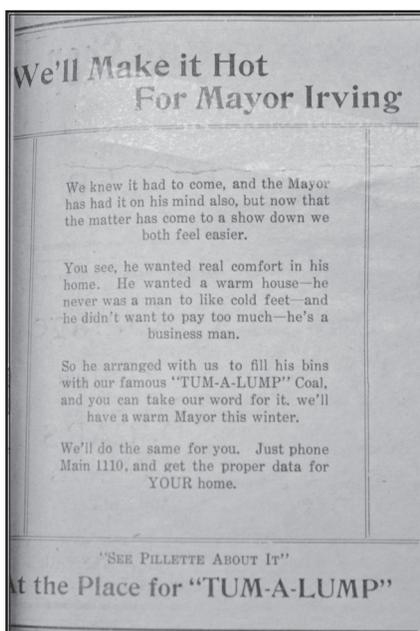


Prineville attorney, over there and in Madras and elsewhere. And when the new county was voted into existence in late 1914, but the county seat was temporarily given to Culver instead of Madras, he took up the controversy on behalf of Madras, accusing Gov. Oz West of stacking the political deck in favor of Culver, where he had friends, and joining Howard Turner on a mission to Salem to plead Madras's case in the State House. When the celebrated (or infamous) "Court House Raid" took place in Culver on Jan. 1, 1917, whereby Madras claimed the county seat, the *Oregonian* noted that "Lewis Irving" was on the scene in Culver that memorable morning.

By this time (in addition to serving a term as Mayor of Madras), Turk had taken on another of his causes. When Jefferson County farmers met in 1916 to organize a campaign to bring irrigation to local farms, he agreed to serve as their attorney—a position he held, sometimes officially, sometimes informally, for many frustrating years, into and through the Great Depression, until the "North Unit" finally acquired federal support in 1938. In his 1957 history of irrigation in Jefferson County, Harold Eidemiller noted that Irving was "of inestimable help until the project was completed" (*Jefferson County Reminiscences*, p. 340).

In the late 1920s, Turk went into business as a grain broker and warehouse operator for local wheat farmers, a lucrative trade that continued until his death. By the 1940s, he owned and operated warehouses (where grain was stored, mainly in sacks, for rail shipment to Portland and other markets) at the Madras Depot and in Culver, Metolius, and Paxton. In the late '30s he somehow connected with a new national gasoline producer and distributor, the Texas Company, "Texaco," and opened what was proudly called "the first modern service station in Madras," a mission-style stucco building on Main Street (today's Fifth), whose site is occupied today by the Madras Pub and Deli. One of the station's "ultra-modern" fixtures was said to be the first neon sign in town.

Early on, Turk (a country boy at heart) took enthusiastically to the natural attractions of Central Oregon, delving into both our wet and our dry features. He



Pioneer ad in 1918 teasing Turk as Mayor of Madras

became a legendary early fly fisherman on the Deschutes River, eventually buying some riverside land below the Highway 26 Bridge as a retreat (it became known as "Irving's Camp"), and genially presiding over the famous annual Deschutes "Fish Fry" there and at Cowles Orchard in the '20s and '30s, until the event had to be cancelled because it was drawing unsustainably large crowds from Portland and elsewhere.

On the dry, mineral side, he developed a passionate interest in local geology, and specifically in our wealth of fossils and gemstones. Setting up as a lapidary, he mounted exhibits of polished specimens at his Texaco station that attracted tourist interest from all over, and no doubt helped establish this area as a rockhound mecca.

When a group of forward thinkers formed a "Madras Radio Club" in the early 1920s, Turk was an eager member, although he impishly noted in the *Pioneer* that "we let Howard [Turner] do most of the tuning in search of stations because he likes to do that." Around this time, extending what must have been a keen interest in the natural history of his adopted homeland, he took on the duties of Official U.S. Weather Reporter for Madras, and kept us on the weather map, so to speak, for many years.

Given his Virginia rural origins he was probably a Mason when he came to Oregon. Once in Madras, he became a pillar of the

local lodge, and was famous in Central Oregon Masonic circles for knowing most of the secret rituals of Freemasonry by heart. When a group of town and country women organized "the Jefferson County Garden Club," he was a charter member.

In a 1938 feature on notable oldtimers, the *Pioneer* said of him: "Probably it would not be possible to mention a public enterprise in which Mr. Irving has not been wholeheartedly engaged." ("Turk's Collection," August 15, 1938). So the historical record indicates, revealing a gregarious, generous man with many interests and enthusiasms who, as soon as he arrived in Madras, became indispensable to its growth and sense of identity over his four decades as an active resident. The same claim might be made, of course, about other figures of that era—Howard Turner, A.P. "Dick" Anderson, Tom Power, Millie Morrow, John Campbell, and others. But—there seems to have been nobody quite like Turk Irving, an outstanding citizen who was also, and not coincidentally but essentially, a vividly colorful local character, still remembered for his quips, pranks, and whimsies. To appreciate that dimension of Turk, we need to consider a few anecdotes, some as reported in the *Pioneer*, others part of local folklore.

There was a time in the early 1920s when the dependence of Madras on wells for its domestic water was coming up short, and women in particular were increasingly upset about the unpredictability, and often the scarcity, of water for washing and other household needs. The city government was scrambling to placate their critics (especially the women, who were threatening to vote in an all-female City Council at the upcoming election), and find at least a stop-gap solution to the water crisis. Finally they announced that a new, much deeper well had been drilled, maybe as deep as the Deschutes River, and when connected it would solve everybody's water problems.

Soon after this proclamation, Turk Irving and a friend were observed at the site of the new well with their fishing poles, their lines running into the well-casing. Asked what he was doing, Turk replied to the effect that the city fathers had supposedly dug a really deep well, and so he and his friend thought it might be worth trying out as a new fishing

hole. He added, "Haven't had any bites yet, however . . ."

In the late 1930s, excavation for what became the Highway 26 grade on the north side of John Brown Canyon uncovered a sandstone deposit, bearing fossil leaf prints from the Pliocene era. Ultimately, a distinguished paleobotanist from the University of California, Professor Ralph Chaney, came all the way from Berkeley to inspect the fossils. Turk Irving was, inevitably, one of Chaney's guides into the canyon site (it may very well be, given his scientific curiosity, that he was first to report the find), and when Professor Chaney declared that this was a scientific discovery of great importance, Turk reportedly became so excited that he choked on his customary quid of chewing tobacco, and had to be sluiced out with the last of the expedition's limited water supply. Chaney thought he had found a new variety of prehistoric plum, and was going to name it in Turk's honor, "prunus irvingii." Unfortunately, the professor subsequently decided that his initial identification was incorrect, and so Turk's chance at paleobotanical immortality had to be rescinded.

The late Jack Watts, who grew up in Madras during Turk's heyday, had many stories about him, if I could only remember them. In one, Turk is showing off his latest lapidary creations of polished Friday plume agates and so on. One of his guests is moved to exclaim, "Why, Turk, they're *beautiful!*" Turk replies, with unhesitating immodesty, "I know it."

The late Earl Poulsen, son of early Agency Plains homesteaders (immigrants from Denmark), remembered Turk fondly in his privately-published memoir *The Family of Neils and Dora Poulsen* (1992). "[He was] a colorful character from Virginia. He chewed the tobacco they grew [there], and he always had a streak of brown tobacco-juice on his tie and shirt. However, he was as honest as could be, and you could believe what he said. My [high school] buddy, Leo [Burns], boarded with him for a couple of winters when the roads became hard to get through because of the snow. I stayed with them several times . . . always we were treated to a piece of fruit cake from Virginia. You knew he liked you if you received a piece of that fruit cake. . . . He was a good lawyer, and



Wedding of Lewis H. Irving and Louise Rumohr  
March 1937 in Wenatchee, Washington.

acted as an auctioneer at many auction sales. He was also licenced to buy wheat from farmers, and they were assured that they got every penny that was due to them. He was one of the best fly fishermen in that part of the country."

In March 1937, when he was 61 and seemingly a fully-confirmed bachelor, Turk astonished the community by getting married. His bride, Louise Rumohr, was in her late thirties, and had worked for him in his grain-and-warehouse business for several years, and was well-known in town. My father and uncle, wheat-farmers then and later, always spoke respectfully of Louise's business prowess and honesty. There was delight and approval in town at the news of the marriage, as well as surprise. They were married in her home town, Wenatchee, and immediately set off on an epic three-month honeymoon that took them by train to San Francisco, and from there by ocean-liner to Panama, through the Canal to Cuba, and so on to New York City, and from there by train to Turk's boyhood country in rural Virginia. After a leisurely stay there, visiting with family and old friends, they proceeded by train across

America and so home to Madras in late July, arriving there, according to the *Pioneer*, "bearing a good coat of tan."

The *Pioneer* went on to add that "after covering the town to greet friends, the Irvings settled down to the routine left behind when they took up their new course of life." Considering Turk's popularity and his own reputation as an instigator of pranks and revels, it's tempting to conjecture that his Madras chums arranged a traditional post-honeymoon "shivaree" for the newlyweds, but alas there's no record of it. Even without such a raucous aftermath, their marriage and by local standards extravagant honeymoon were clearly the Social Events of the Year in Madras in 1937.

As a boy, I knew about Turk in his last years, when Louise was running the businesses and he was free to follow the style of a retired Southern country gentleman, so far as that was possible in Madras. I used to see him downtown in good weather, barefoot, usually holding forth at the Texaco station, wearing a white straw hat, as if back in rural Virginia. One hot summer day, when I was maybe 10, my father and I were walking past his house on Main Street south of downtown, and he hailed us from his "stoop" (as he called the porch). "Gus—why don't you just come on up for some bourbon and branch? Bring the boy along, too—I'll make him some lemonade!" So we went up the steps and, yes, he was barefoot and chewing and spitting tobacco, and no, he did not offer me any fruitcake. But the lemonade he made for me that afternoon was the tastiest I ever drank.

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## THE FIGHTER-JET IN THE PARK

Thanks to our dry climate and (usually) clear skies, and hospitable city and airport officials, Madras has become the home of one of the nation's finest military aircraft historical displays, the Erickson Aircraft Collection. Visiting Erickson's museum now, oldtimers here might remember how, sixty years ago, a single war-surplus jet fighter was for a time located in Sahalee Park, where it attracted a lot of local attention, especially from boys.

City of Madras records as to how the plane came to the park have apparently been lost, but the *Pioneer* for October 9, 1958, recorded its arrival on a big truck, with a photo and a caption explaining that the Madras Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce, very active then) had "made arrangements" with Consolidated Freightways, which provided the truck (and presumably its driver) to bring the plane from California. Jaycee members Glenn Eidemiller Jr., Ray Ayres, and Ron Bryant are shown standing on the truck alongside the plane, which seems to be wingless, no doubt for highway transportation—to be re-attached upon arrival.

What plane was it? Pretty clearly, it was a Grumman F9F "Panther," painted in Navy or possibly Marine dark blue. The Panther was the Navy's first-line jet fighter in the 1950s, and despite its old-style straight wings and modest power it earned a solid reputation during the Korean War, with a creditable "kill" record against North Korean and Chinese MIG-15s. It was flown by astronauts-to-be John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, and served as the designated plane of the Navy's "Blue Angels" aerobatics team. It was withdrawn from first-line service in 1956.

Would that we knew what inspired the Madras Jaycees in their campaign to acquire a military jet for the City Park, and how the money for it was raised. But a little online research reveals that, with the Korean War over and with surplus Navy and Air Force aircraft apparently available in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they were



Arrival of ex-Navy F9F "Panther" at Sahalee Park in Madras, Oct. 9, 1958 (*Pioneer* photo)

popular additions to city parks and playgrounds all over, especially in small and suburban communities. In California, West Covina, Oxnard, Anaheim, Lakewood, and San Francisco all had military jets in their parks and playgrounds; likewise in Maryland (Montgomery County), Indiana (Muncie), Wisconsin (Wausau), and so on. Soon, however, with the expansion and persistence of the Viet Nam conflict and the growth of anti-militaristic feeling in the U.S., the trend for "playground warbirds" faded.

But back to 1958, and *our* fighter jet in Sahalee Park. Ron Bryant (now a prominent Redmond attorney) recalls that he, "June" Eidemiller, and

Ray Ayres followed a big Consolidated Freightways truck all the way to the Alameda Naval Air Station near Oakland, where the plane was loaded aboard for the long trip back to Madras. He remembers that the California Highway Authority gave them very specific orders to be on the freeway heading out of Oakland by a certain time, to avoid causing a traffic tie-up. "In any event," he says, "it was a great project."

Bryant and some of the once-kids who played on the plane remember that it was installed on the west side of the Park, facing north, and that it was mounted on a base, so that it was tilted at a slight upward angle, as if taking off. No one seems to recall any signage identifying its history or restricting access to it—but clearly it must have been easy for kids to climb onto, over, and into.

In those days, Sahalee was smaller and less manicured and outfitted, and altogether more casual, parkwise, than it is today—and it was just across "B" Street from a large apartment complex that was originally built in WWII to house married GIs and their families stationed at the Madras Army Air Field north of town. In later years, the facility always seemed to be the home of throngs of children, earning it the nickname "the lambing sheds." The park was a well-established magnet for kids when the jet plane arrived.

Barron Hillis, who grew up not far from Sahalee Park, has fond and



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vivid memories of the Panther jet, and has generously given permission to quote his recollections here:

“I couldn’t believe it when the plane inexplicably showed up in the park for us to play on. Someone said the Jacyees bought it. I didn’t know who that was but I didn’t care. One person could sit in the cockpit and the stick was still there to imagine flying with. There was a button on it, which I imagined was for firing at enemy planes. When pressed, a six-inch-long spring-loaded shaft in front of the cockpit would pop up—if it had first been pressed down into place. That was the only thing that functioned . . . I just remembered a trick that we used to play on kids who didn’t know about the spring-loaded shaft in front of the cockpit’s windshield. One of us would be in the cockpit, and another kid would maneuver our target so the pilot would release it, surprising them. It was only the size of a toilet-paper roll and didn’t have much spring, so no one was hurt.

“There weren’t many gauges left on the control panel. Seems to me the [cockpit] cover still slid into place, but I can’t say for sure. The fuselage was big enough to crawl into and there were mazes of colored wires in the walls. Maybe it was surplus from the Korean fiasco. One day it was gone, but we’d had our fun with it and didn’t miss it.”

Another “Panther-player” in the park recalls that he was “about 12 when they installed it. I crawled up the exhaust of the thing.” (Evidently the jet engine had been removed; still, one cringes at the thought of a boy that age getting himself thoroughly wedged in the Panther’s belly!)

There seems to be no official record of the plane’s removal, neither of the date nor of the reason; but an informed guess would be that it was after three years or so, sometime around 1961 or 1962. Why did the City remove it? Clearly, it had gotten hard usage in play from town kids from the beginning, never mind that it had been built to endure the rigors of aerial warfare. Some of its devotees must have brought

screwdrivers, pliers, and wrenches when they came. Inspection hatches and whole sections of the aluminum skin seemed to disappear over time, their military “Dzus” fasteners merely a passing challenge to eager fingers. Barron Hillis notes that “there wasn’t anything on the plane that I wanted, but it does seem



Ex-Air Force F-84 “Thunderjet” in a playground in the LA area, 1960s

to me that it was being harshly dismantled. Maybe the [military] wanted to get the planes taken apart, and putting them in public parks was a cheap way to do it: free child labor.”

The same fate of attrition-by-play came sooner or later to other specimen warplanes sited in parks in this time-frame. The F-80 “Shooting Star” that Muncie, Indiana, installed in its Westside Park in 1963 had to be hauled away three years later because of wear and tear, and outright vandalism. Another F9F Panther that first graced Elm Street Park at East Carolina University in North Carolina in 1959, actually lasted a decade before being removed in a ravaged state, eliciting this heartfelt tribute from one of its former “pilots”: “At 10-11 years of age, I flew many missions and destroyed many enemy aircraft in this plane. We all played on it all the time. Proof that kids can destroy aircraft!”

You have to wonder: did the experience of having a bona fide full-sized (if grounded) jet fighter as a plaything inspire any of these kids, in Madras and elsewhere, to go into aviation careers—maybe even in the Air Force or Navy? Trying to replicate such installations today (for the grandchildren of Baby Boomers?) would no doubt face insurmountable challenges: public-space liability coverage, contemporary playground philosophy, and the sheer cost and unavailability of today’s or even yesterday’s impossibly expensive warplanes. Only imagine trying now to acquire an A-10 “Warthog” or an F-14 “Tomcat” for playground duty . . .

Maybe the Erickson Air Collection could loan Madras a non-flying spare specimen WWII fighter-plane, for today’s kids to play with at Sahalee Park? But on second thought, considering Jack Erickson’s mission of preserving our military aviation history plane by plane and given what happened to that F9F Panther back in the early 1960’s, NOT a good idea! But the Sahalee Panther must have been great fun while it lasted.

(We’re grateful to the following playground historians for help with this article: Jim Ramsey, Dave Green, Ron Bryant, Barron Hillis, Stephen Hillis, Margie McBride Lehrman, Sharon Landreth Nesbit, Dan Chamness, Mike Chamness.)



Another playground F9F in California, 1960s.



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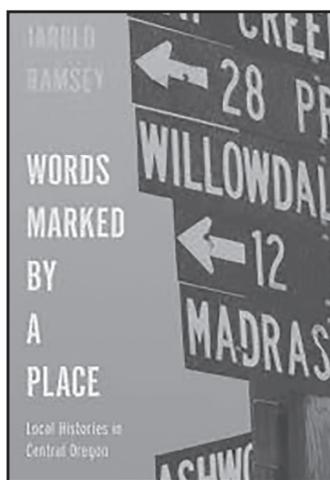
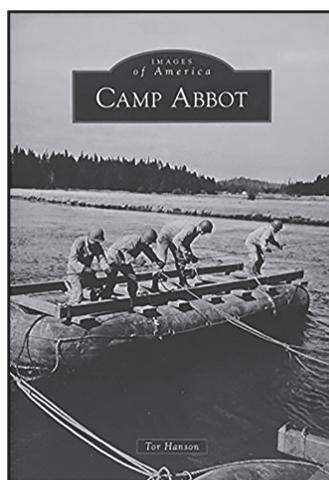
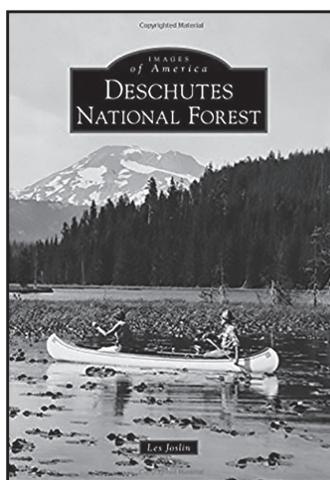
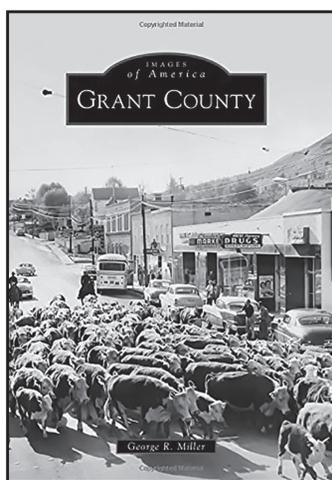
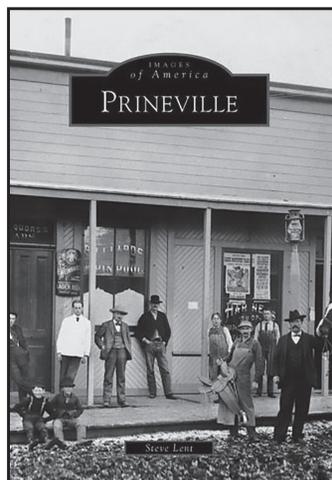
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## “Recent Books on Local and Central Oregon History”



Steve Lent, *Images of America: Crook County*.  
Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2013

George R. Miller, *Images of America: Grant County*.  
Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2017

Les Joslin, *Images of America: Deschutes National Forest*.  
Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2017

Tor Hansen, *Images of America: Camp Abbot*.  
Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2018

Jarold Ramsey, *Words Marked by a Place: Local Histories in Central Oregon*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2018

Arcadia Publishing’s ambitious “Images of America” series is endeavoring nothing less than to cover the whole United States with attractive and generally accurate brief photographic histories of our diverse American *locales*: towns, counties, historic neighborhoods, national parks and monuments, regional railroads, military sites, and so on, and on. If it’s an historically important place, Arcadia has probably covered it, or is aiming to do so. (In their coverage of Portland, they have run amok, with titles like *Vanishing Portland*, *Lost Portland*, *Wicked Portland*, and *Murder and Scandal in Prohibition Era Portland!*)

Here in Central Oregon, with strong historical societies and capable writers to draw on, Arcadia has on the whole served the local places and subjects (and readers) very well so far. These recent volumes on the area are well-edited and worthy of

their subjects, and worth the cost (generally \$21.95). They join earlier Central Oregon entries in the series: on Crook County (Steve Lent, 2013), Prineville (Lent, 2007), Madras (Lent, 2012), Redmond (Leslie Pugmire-Hole and Trish Pinkerton, 2009), Bend (Deschutes Co. Historical Society, 2009), and Harney County (Karen Nitz, 2009). Where next for the series in our big neck of the woods? How about covering Jefferson County and the Warm Springs Reservation? And the North Unit Irrigation District, and the Ochoco National Forest, and the Crooked River National Grasslands? And how about our county neighbors to the north: Wasco, Sherman, and Wheeler?

Jarold Ramsey’s *Words Marked by a Place* carries on with the informed attention to Central Oregon stories and people that marks his earlier book, *New Era* (2003)—but the new book also takes up a *theoretical* interest in “local history” as a subject unto itself. What does it *do*? How is it related to “academic” history? What can professional “wide-angle” historians and local historians learn from each other? What can historians of local subjects contribute to their communities?

Along with interpretive essays on early explorations, the railroad and homesteading eras, the contentious creation of Jefferson County, the possible emergence of a “Central Oregon” dialect of distinctive “place-conscious” words and expressions, and other topics, *Words Marked by a Place* also includes a piece of historical fiction by the author (set on the northeast flanks of Gray Butte in the 1880s), and a set of local-centennial “historical re-enactment” skits, to illustrate the author’s concern with alternative ways of “doing” local history.

# President's Message

Dear Agate Readers,  
 April 6 is our Annual Dinner at the Senior Center. Our featured speaker is Carole Leone. Carol just recently retired as the Executive Director of The Museum at Warm Springs. Her insights into the inner workings of the daily life of a museum will make for an entertaining evening. The Steve Fisher Trio will be entertaining us with their wonderfully fun Irish folk sound.



JCHS President Lottie Holcomb

If you haven't joined the Historical Society yet, please do. Fill out the form on the back of this Agate today and help us achieve our goal of making History great again!!

Now, enjoy this issue of the Agate.

Thank You,

**LOTTIE HOLCOMB**

*President*

*Jefferson County Historical Society*



At the Feb. 20 History Pub, Tony Ahern, publisher of the Madras Pioneer, outlined the newspaper's 115-year history. It included a PowerPoint presentation featuring various historical photos and Pioneer nameplates over the years. Photo by Holly Gill, THE PIONEER

### Donations and Memorial Gifts to the Society since October 2018:

#### DONATIONS:

CHARLES CUNNINGHAM  
 GARY HARRIS  
 KATHIE OLSON

#### MEMORIAL GIFTS

IN MEMORY OF DANIEL RUARK ABRAMS, BY LINDA A. SMELTZER

#### New JCHS Members since October 2018:

JASON HERTEL

LINDA A. SMELTZER

JUDSON AND BARBARA HYATT

WALT WOLF



## The 2019 Historical Society Dinner

**Saturday April 6, 2019**

Social hour: 5 pm; Dinner: 6 pm

**Jefferson County Senior Center (860 SW Madison)**

**O**ur traditional annual dinner to celebrate local history, open to JCHS members and everybody interested in the history of these parts. Music, exhibits, mystery-tool quiz, 50-50 game of chance, an opportunity to visit and socialize— and a featured talk by Carol Leone, long-time Director of the Museum at Warm Springs. Join us April 6!

**Reservations required. \$45 per guest.**

Dinner catered by Black Bear Diner

Choice of tri-tip or stuffed chicken; also vegetarian entree.

Send checks by Mon. April 1 to "JCHS Dinner," PO Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741. Be sure to specify your choice(s) of entree. Tickets

will be held for you at the door. If you want to try your luck with our "50/50 Fundraiser" game, tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10--include the cost of "50-50" in your reservation check.

**For further information, call 541-777-0778 or 541-475-5390**

# THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741

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#### **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2019:**

(Individual: \$25 Family: \$50 Patron: \$150 Benefactor: \$500)

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*(Make check out to JCHS; mail to address at left)*

Yes, I'm interested in becoming a History Volunteer

Yes, I would like to make a donation to the JCHS (the Society is a registered non-profit organization; donations and gifts to it are tax-deductible)

I have artifacts, photos, written material I would like to donate to the JCHS Museum