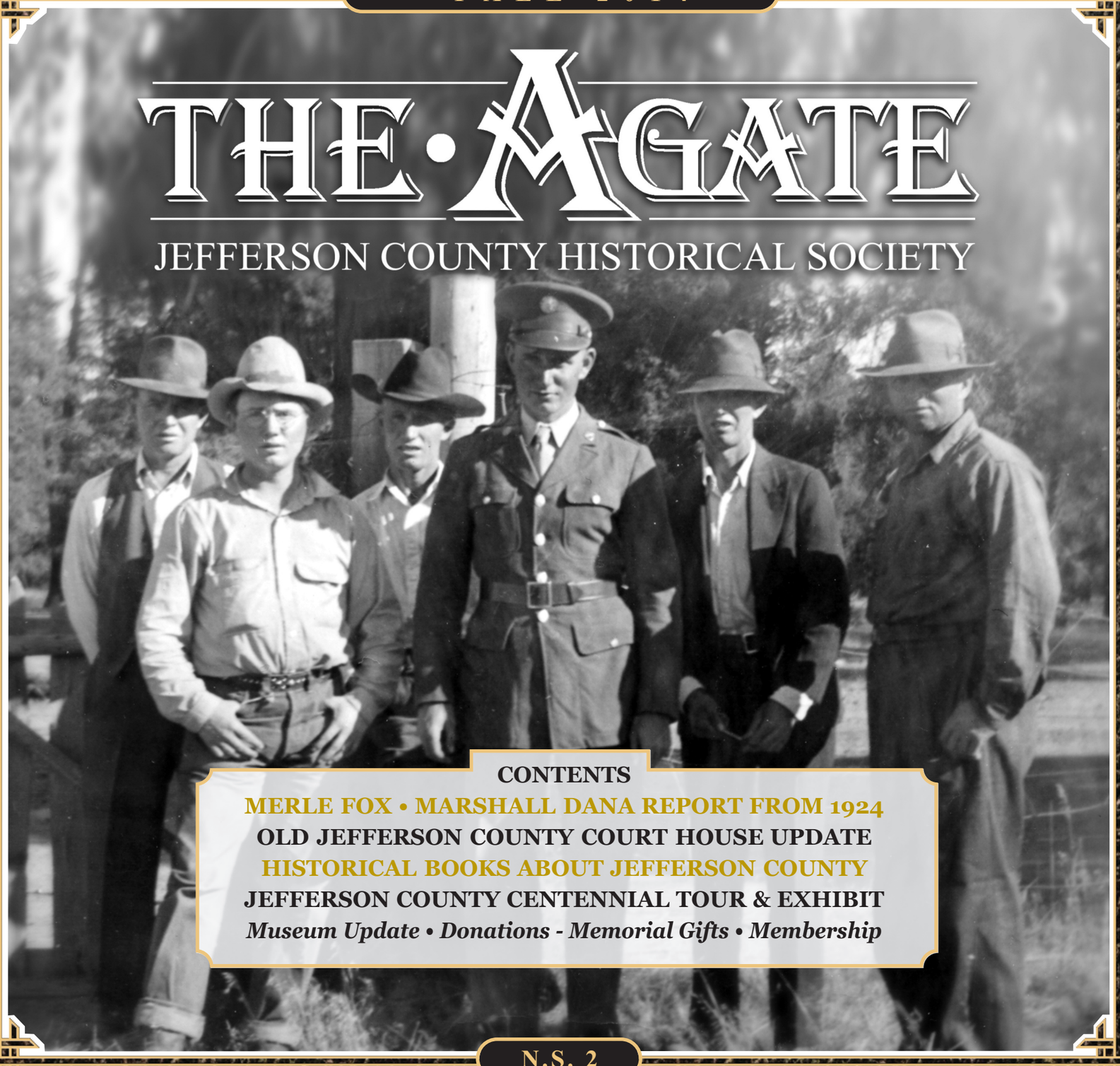
— FALL 2014 —

THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CONTENTS

N.S. 2

Welcome to the New Agate!

The Jefferson County Historical Society is proud to resume publication of its popular biannual journal of Jefferson County and Central Oregon history, THE AGATE. Founded in 2007-8 by JCHS Historian Beth Crow as an outgrowth of the Society's "Newsletter," THE AGATE was published until Beth's retirement in 2011, and featured in-depth, illustrated articles on local history topics ranging from the beginnings of the Opal Springs/Deschutes Valley Water system, the pioneer Madras photographer Ole Hedlund, and the history of Madras Airport, to the origins of the community of Gateway. It played an important role in the celebration of the Madras and Railroad centennials of 2010-11, and again during this year's Jefferson County Centennial celebration.

All members of the JCHS will receive issues of THE AGATE as part of their membership in the Society; copies will also be donated to libraries, schools, and other cultural institutions in the area.

Editor of the new AGATE is Jane Ahern, Madras freelance writer and former children's librarian of the Jefferson County Library. With a new larger magazine-style format, THE AGATE will be able to present more articles and photos in a much more readable layout. It will be published in late March and September; the March 2015 issue will as an experiment, go out to subscribers of the Madras Pioneer, as well as to JCHS members.

In our coverage of local history, we take a wide, inclusive view of what counts as "history"—from pioneer homesteading and railroad days, to recent developments in our area. And we welcome your comments and suggestions, and ideas about topics for future articles. If you're interested in writing for THE AGATE, please let us know by contacting the editor at janeahern@rocketmail.com or by phone at 541-475-3610.

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.

Editor: Jane Ahern
Designer: Tom Culbertson
Publisher: Jarold Ramsey

Agency Plains Native Shares Centennial with County

By Jane Ahern

Fox family harvesting wheat using a header pulled by mules

This year, as Jefferson County celebrates its centennial, present-day residents have been invited to contemplate the county's past, to learn about its beginnings, and perhaps to imagine what it might have been like to live here 100 years ago.

There is, however, at least one person who does not have to imagine because he can remember.

His name is Merle Fox and though he has passed most of his life in and around Prineville, he has a unique connection with Jefferson County that all the years spent elsewhere cannot erase: He is likely the only living person to be born in what is now Jefferson County before the county itself was formed. He is celebrating his own centennial this year.

Born near Paxton on Feb. 17, 1914, Fox was already nine months old when Crook County residents voted to establish Jefferson County by lopping off the northwest portion of Crook County.

If you had the pleasure this past summer of watching some of the Centennial Players' skits depicting episodes from Jefferson County history, it is interesting to consider that Fox was nearby for all of them. Though he was too young at the time to remember the election, the choosing of the county seat, or the great courthouse raid of 1917, he did have first-hand knowledge of many of the people and events the rest of us can only read about. Just as significantly, his many stories illustrate the day-to-day life of the county's founders.

Fox's father, Miles Fox, came from Missouri and his mother, Florence Fox, was from Illinois. Their chance meeting in Oregon City led to a 77-year marriage. They spent their first years together in Ellensburg, Washington, where Miles worked on a dairy farm and their first two sons, Dee and Don, were born. In 1902, they homesteaded on the Agency Plains near Paxton and began growing wheat on the then-unirrigated land.

Miles Fox's parents (who would have been Merle's grandparents), Calvin and

Cynthia Fox, homesteaded nearby.

For the Foxes, as for their homestead neighbors, the absence of water was a presence in their lives. Both Fox homesteads were lucky enough to have a little bit of water on their property, but even so it was not nearly enough for their needs.

"There were two ponds," says Fox. "And each one of them (meaning patriarchs Miles and Calvin) took a pond. That was good until about June and then we had to haul water from Madras."

It was Merle's job to hitch the horses to the wagon, drive into Madras, fill up a 500-gallon tank of water, and drive it back out to Paxton—at age 7!

Miles and Florence Fox and four of their children

"We were pretty stingy with water," Fox says. "You know what I mean—you wouldn't take a cup of water and take a sip and throw it out."

To further illustrate how precious water was, Fox tells the following story: One year when he was a boy, it snowed on the 4th of July and Fox's father used some of the snow to make ice cream. By the time he was done, the snow had mostly melted and Fox's mother, not wanting to waste any water, gave it to her chickens.

"In a little while, there were dead chickens everywhere," Fox said. The salt used in making ice cream was dissolved in the water and had been too much for the chickens.

At some point, the Foxes hired a man named Mathison to drill a well on their property. He charged one dollar per foot plus extra for drilling through rock. The well was 320 feet deep and Fox remembers his father writing out a check for $320. Mathison told them there wasn't enough rock to bother charging extra.

They used a windmill to pump water out of the well, and a motorized pump as back-up when the wind was not blowing. They pumped water into a 1,500-gallon tank for storage and allowed their neighbors to pump water from their well too, including the Paxtons for whom the small settlement was named. Merle's water-hauling days were through.

Of course, by the time Fox started hauling water for his family, he had already been working on the farm for several years. "Soon as we were big enough to get out and walk, we had chores," he said. "My first job was to help take care of the chickens."

Fox would close up the coop after the chickens had gone to roost for the night and in the morning he would scatter some scratch and let the chickens out of the coop.

Fox also fondly remembers teaching the young calves to drink water shortly after they were weaned. He would put his fingers in their mouths and get them to suck and then he would lower their mouths to the trough until they were sucking water instead of fingers.

When he got older, Fox helped his family harvest wheat using a header pulled by mules. During the harvest, his father would go into Madras and hire eight or nine men to help out and his mother

The Fox home near Paxton, built in 1917

The Fox home as it is now, at the edge of a field, set far back from any road but visible from NE Fir Lane

would cook for the whole crew. Fox says his family never owned a tractor—all their farming was done with mules or horses.

Despite their hard work, the Foxes found time for enjoyment. Fox remembers the family going to parties at a different house every Saturday night. They would roll back the carpets and dance.

"Old man Paxton was an old-time fiddler," Fox said. Fox himself learned how to play the fiddle from hanging around Mr. Paxton. Fox continued playing the fiddle until a stroke in 1978 damaged his left hand and he no longer had the dexterity for it.

By 1917, Fox's parents were well enough established to build a two-story house roomy enough to accommodate their large family. Merle was the sixth of seven children. Dee, Don, Earl, Purl, and Juanita were his older siblings; Vernon was the youngest.

The Fox's house sat atop the rim of a shallow, narrow canyon. Though it's a small canyon by local standards, the drop-off is close enough to the house to make any mother cringe.

"There was a line we were told not to go past," Fox says.

The canyon is just wide enough for the railroad tracks that run through it. According to Fox, the house shook twice a day when the train passed by at 9 a.m. and at 4 p.m.—an engine, a coach and a baggage coach. "You could set your watch by it," he said.

Fox recalls one winter when a heavy snowfall followed by chinook winds brought on a rapid snowmelt that washed out several railroad bridges. The train's habitual punctuality paid off; because the Foxes knew when it was coming, Merle's older brother was able to ride over to the depot to flag it down and warn the engineer of the danger up ahead.

The Fox's house is still standing way out in a field north of present-day Fir Lane. The front porch is in a heap on the ground, the paint has worn off, the windows are empty of glass, and the chimneys are gone. The outbuildings are gone too, but the windmill remains, the blades somewhat mangled.

Inside, there is at least one dilapidated electrical outlet visible in a crumbling wall. According to Fox, their home did not have electricity when his family lived there, so a later owner must have added it.

Standing in front of it, peering inside, it is hard not to wish it whole again. The current owner, Michael Youmans, hoped to restore the house when he bought the property about seven years ago, but it was already too far gone.

When Fox started school, he and his school-aged siblings walked four miles from Paxton to the school at Frog Springs. Later, a school was established at Paxton and the Foxes' walk was cut to less than a mile.

Miles and Florence Fox, 50th wedding anniversary, 1948. They would live to celebrate their 77th anniversary.

When he was 13 years old, Merle Fox faced an important decision—whether to continue his education at the high school in Madras or quit school and work in the family business. His older siblings had married and moved away, so their parents needed Merle's help on the farm. Though Merle's father did not forbid him to go to high school, he made it clear that he would prefer Merle to stay home and work.

Eighty-seven years later, Fox still remembers the day he made up his mind. Merle and his father Miles happened to meet each other on the path between the house and the barn.

"I've decided I'm not going to go to high school. I'm going to stay here and drive the header box for you," said Merle.

"Well, I sure am glad," said Miles.

With that brief exchange, Fox's fate for the next 20 years or so was sealed. Of Merle's six siblings, only his sister Juanita went to high school.

The same year that Fox decided to forgo high school, 1927, the Foxes sold their property to Kenneth Binder and left Paxton. They had begun raising cattle in 1919 and now they moved about 5 miles east of Madras to an area off of Ashwood Road.

Fox's impressive memory readily produces the name of the family from whom they bought their original plot of land—Rice—and the names of some of the springs on their land—Parkey Springs and Ringo Springs. Fox does not remember how much land they had, just that "We had gobs and gobs of it."

The Foxes put up a barbed wire fence between their property and the adjoining Hay Creek Ranch. Fox says it took three men—four when Fox's father worked with them—30 days to build four miles of fence. The fence had seven wires, the lowest one three inches from the ground.

"At Hay Creek, Sanderson was the foreman. He came over to see the fence and I remember him telling Daddy, 'Well, when we come to this fence, we went fur enough, we don't have to go no further,'" Merle said.

Fence in place, Fox and his parents ran about 800 head of cattle on their ranch year-round for the next ten years. In 1937, the Foxes sold their property to the federal government as marginal lands and left Jefferson County for good.

Since then, their former property has been used by the Gray Butte Grazing Association, a co-op sanctioned by the U.S. Forest Service. A remnant of their ranch, Fox Corral, still stands on the south side of Ashwood Road alongside Hay Creek Ranch's western fence line. The corral is marked as a point of interest on the Madras/Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce's Official Chamber Map.

Though not entirely relevant to Jefferson County history, it is worth mentioning that the Foxes next bought a ranch located about 20 miles south of Bend on land that later became Sunriver Resort. The Foxes were forced to sell the property to the federal government in 1942 so that the army could establish its Camp Abbott. The military training base

only operated for two years before being shut down and almost completely razed. Resort development began in the late 1960s.

After that, the Foxes purchased an 11,000-acre ranch near Mill Creek in Crook County. In the ensuing years, Merle was married three times and had three children. He participated in long-distance cattle drives from Sisters to Redding, California, was a construction worker for a time, worked as a logger for Ochoco Lumber, and owned a saw shop near his current home on the outskirts of Prineville. The aforementioned stroke forced him to retire in 1978.

The sons of Miles and Florence Fox, from left to right: Earl, Merle, Purl, Vernon, Dee, and Don. Vernon served in Germany in WWII.

Since then, Fox has lived in a trailer on the property of his daughter and son-in-law, Jo and Don Barber. He says he has "a whole washtub full" of grandchildren, great-grandchildren and even great-great grandchildren.

Though he has done a lot of living since he left Jefferson County many years ago, Fox's oldest memories are still remarkably clear and they encompass some of the most significant people and events in Jefferson County history.

When Merle and Madras were both young, one of the biggest social events of the year was the annual fish fry at Cowles Orchard on the Deschutes River in May or June. Fox's older brothers were among the fishermen who would spend several days catching the trout that would then be dipped in batter and cooked until golden brown.

The first fish fry took place in 1914 and the event grew in popularity each year. The Madras Pioneer reported that approximately 1,200 people attended the fish fry in 1926. According to Howard Turner's account in the book *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, the event was a victim of its own success because it became impossible to catch enough fish to serve the droves of people who came from all over Central Oregon and even from The Dalles or Portland. The last fish fry was held in 1929.

Fox also recalls the instigator of the fish fries, Lewis "Turk" Irving, who was a prominent figure in early county history. Among other things, Irving owned a Texaco station, played a role in the establishment of Jefferson County, was a founding member of both the Rod and Gun Club and the Library Association, and served for a time as an attorney for the fledgling irrigation district.

History buffs of later generations might feel a certain reverence for someone who contributed so much in his day, but as a contemporary, Fox was less than awestruck by Irving, describing him as "a kind of a lawyer."

Fox particularly remembers Irving working as a volunteer firefighter during the conflagration of 1924 that gutted downtown Madras. Fox says he can still hear Irving calling, "Tuuuurn on the waaaaater!"

Fox and other family members had spotted the blaze all the way out in Paxton. They piled in their Model-T Ford

Old Fox corral on Ashwood road east of Madras.

Merle Fox at 100 years old, in his trailer on daughter Jo's property

and drove into town to see what was happening.

Juanita Fox was working at the phone company that day. Fox says she stayed at her post as long as she could. "She pretty near stayed too long in there," he said. "It got so hot and smoky." Fox says Juanita and other workers escaped with nothing but the headsets still on their heads.

Fox also knew Howard Turner, the first mayor of Madras, onetime owner of the Madras Pioneer, a U.S. Commissioner and, as Fox puts it, "a big-shot of Madras."

The Foxes were customers of Turner's at the First National Bank in Madras, of which Turner was a director. Fox recalls a time when people were required to "turn in" their gold coins (perhaps during the suspension of the gold standard in 1933, when people were no longer allowed to hold large quantities of gold coins?).

Fox's mother, Florence, had a gold coin given to her by her father. Florence asked Turner whether they had to exchange it, but Turner kindly told her that she could hold onto her family keepsake.

The same year that the Foxes saw Madras burn down, 1924, journalist Marshall Dana toured Jefferson County and wrote the essays about the precariousness of farming on the Agency Plains with no irrigation which are reprinted in this issue of THE AGATE on pages 10 thru 17.

"'29 and '30 was really rough," he said. "Nobody had any money."

Fox well remembers those times, when homesteaders were going broke, giving up, and leaving the county in droves.

Although just about every year was a drought year on the Agency Plains, and every drought year was hard, Fox says that the first years of the Great Depression were even worse for the people of Jefferson County.

"'29 and '30 was really rough," he said. "Nobody had any money."

One way the Foxes got by was to milk their cows and send the cream on the train from Gateway to Portland. Fox's mother received a regular "cream check" in the mail and used it to support the household.

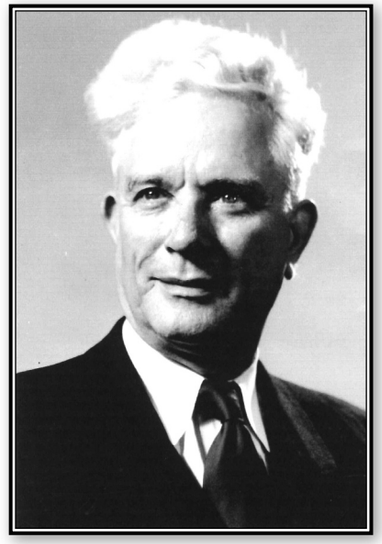
Despite the hardships, Fox said his parents never considered giving up ranching. "Dad just stuck right through it," he said.

Merle has stuck right through it too—100 years old and still surprisingly sharp, still able to share his personal experiences of county history. "When my wife died in 1994, he says, "I thought I wouldn't see the year 2000, but I'm still here."

A Portland Editor Visits Jefferson County in 1924

Edited by Jarold Ramsey

In Jefferson County's centennial year, while we are celebrating a century of progress since the county was created in 1914, it's instructive to consider that only a decade after their brave beginnings, our forebears here were already in really dire straits. By 1924, a severe drought had begun, making dry-farming increasingly marginal at best; and the prospect of irrigation that had brought so many homesteaders and settlers here before World War One was fading away—in the view of many, a cause already lost. The northern Deschutes Basin country that had boomed with the arrival of the railroads and throngs of eager land-seekers was rapidly losing its population and its hope.



Marshall Dana

In early June 1924, the Associate Editor of the Oregon Journal (Portland), Marshall Dana, visited Jefferson County, interviewed scores of farmers and businessmen and community leaders, and wrote a series of articles about the agricultural and socioeconomic crisis here, with special emphasis on the failure of the North Unit irrigation project to get underway, despite broad local support, and energetic promotion of it by local leaders like Howard Turner, A.D. "Dick" Anderson, and Harry Gard. In the face of the drought (which would actually worsen, and continue into the early '30s) it seemed clear to Dana, as to most of the people he interviewed, that dry-farming had no future locally, and that the country's only salvation lay with irrigated farming through the North Unit plan. His perspective was no doubt sharpened by his earlier visit to the county in 1917, when farming and irrigation prospects were brighter.

Unfortunately, as Dana reported to his Willamette Valley readers, all efforts to obtain financing for that plan from private, state and federal sources had so far failed, no doubt in part because the local North Unit advocates were novices in dealing with bankers, financiers, and bureaucrats on such a grand scale (the estimated cost of the North Unit project in 1924 was reportedly at least $5,000,000). At the time of Dana's visit, North Unit proponents were waiting anxiously for a verdict from the State Securities Commission, accepting or rejecting a $5,000,000 bond with which construction of the project could begin. Clearly his sympathies were strongly with the locals, and one of his main purposes in the series seems to have been to stir up support in Portland and the Valley for the project.

In this, Dana was following a career-long commitment to conservation and development of Oregon's resources—he was an early champion of highways, inland waterways, and electrical power in the Northwest (in 1958, he was given the U.S. Interior Department's "Conservation Service Award"). His articles on the North Unit amount to a unique and neglected historical document, giving us vivid first-hand details of life and people in Jefferson County during its worst crisis ninety years ago, and offering important insights into the prolonged struggle to bring Deschutes River water onto our farmlands. In 1924, as hindsight tells us, that achievement was still twenty-two years, a terrible depression, and a world war away from completion.

[Editor's note: Dana's articles appeared in the Oregon Journal in four installments between June 5 and 9, 1924, and they were reprinted, presumably verbatim, in the Madras Pioneer of June 12. The Pioneer chose to change their order, beginning with the June 6 installment, followed by those of June 5, 7, and 9. I have retained this revised order because it seems more readable than the original order. I have corrected typos and other obvious errors, and omitted passages where Dana repeated what he had already written in earlier installments, no doubt because of the serial publication.]

Madras Pioneer, June 12, 1924

Farmers Driven Out By Lack of Water

By Marshall Dana

Madras, June 6. –"Dad" Miller is dead.

"He died of a broken heart," insisted J.O. Youngstrom, the grain grower.

On the other side of the dusty street it chanced that as we talked "Dad" Miller's widow was sitting in a battered flivver.

"He did," she confirmed quietly, but into her eyes leaped the pride that is a woman's when her man has died in action facing the guns.

For 23 years this man fought for a foothold in the valley of the Deschutes. His last words were a repetition of what he had predicted much of that time. He knew the water would come. He knew this wide region which is now rapidly reverting to the desert would be reclaimed by irrigation. He saw his neighbors one by one give up. He saw them move away, abandoning their homes, sometimes their tools and occasionally their livestock. But he stuck by the stuff. He never lost hope. He was like Kipling's man—

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them "Hold on" . . . .

Though "Dad" Miller is gone, somehow he has stayed. While he sleeps under the tombstone on the hill his last words are repeated time and again by those who still stick here, just as some believing souls repeat the 23rd Psalm.

But there is another big man on the Big Agency Plains who has been in the country the same length of time who doesn't agree with "Dad" Miller's convictions. He is "Dad" William Ramsey, Jefferson County Commissioner. He was sitting on his front porch as we drove up, but insisted on leading the way to the front room "where the dust won't be so bad."

"Irrigation would be the making of this country," he admitted. "But the irrigation isn't for those here now. The wheat is burned up this year. There can't be a crop. The farms are pretty nearly all mortgaged. The North Unit project, with its present owners, can't stand the expense of getting water on the land, paying interest on the mortgages and buying the machinery to carry on irrigation farming. It just looks to me as if the new crop of settlers will have to come on after these are all gone, hard as it is to say, and succeed at the expense of our failure."

There you have two points of view in this country where the sun shines 320 days a year, where eight inches of precipitation in the form of snow or rain means a crop, but where a crop once every four

Abandoned cabin in the North Unit.

years is about the average because of the uncertainty of moisture.

Dad Miller's belief, however, is that of the majority. They have shown it time again as they voted to bring the water from the Deschutes. Now they have got to the point where the state securities commission will give them a decision within a short time, and on the basis of that decision the abandonment of the country will be completed or a new start will be made.

Much as the element of human sympathy sways one's mind as he confronts this spectacle, the decision itself must be based not on sentiment but upon economics.

If reclamation isn't economically sound for the 106,000 acres of the Jefferson County Water Conservancy District, the last state of the settlers will be worse if possible than at present, and they will have drawn investors into their disaster.

These are part of the figures that must be considered.

In 1911 the state adopted a law providing for the forming of irrigation districts by the people of the land, and in 1913 and again in 1915 the law was amended. The North Unit was formed by vote of the people in the district in 1916. A water supply for the district was set aside by the state under contract with the federal government in 1913 when the project was being advocated. It includes an allotment of 401,000 acre-feet of storage at Benham Falls to be delivered from the Deschutes and calls for 317,000 acre-feet to be delivered into the main ditch. The difference between these two figures represents the estimated loss from leakage and evaporation. The system as planned would deliver two acre-feet to each acre in the district, or the equivalent of 24 inches of precipitation.

The people of the district voted $5,000,000 in bonds in March 1917, and the issue was invalidated by the state supreme court. Two bonds were re-voted in 1919 and sustained in litigation taken to the supreme court. Of this amount, $70,000 was sold at 90 in 1920, and the proceeds used for surveys, investigations of the reservoir site and other preliminary expenses. Another $20,000 of the bonds were delivered to Ralph Schneeloch, Portland bond dealer, in exchange for an option he had for the sale of the entire issue at a time when it appeared that another bond dealer could market the securities quickly. Schneeloch stated he had been put to an expense of some $30,000, and the bonds given him represented partial reimbursement. There are thus $4,910,000 in bonds for which certification is now sought from the state securities commission, and a possible $3,000,000 additional bond issue is estimated as necessary to complete the system. The directors of the district recognize that the commission may control not only the terms of the entire deal, but govern the deposit of the money and absorb interim interest payments to reimburse the state for amounts it will advance to meet general interest payments under its guarantee.

The system as planned would deliver two acre-feet to each acre in the district, or the equivalent of 24 inches of precipitation.

Should the remainder of the issue sell at 90, the debt per acre would be $70,000; if at 85 the debt per acre would be $74,112. The interest charge per acre would be $4.20 in the first instance and $4.40 in the second. The maintenance charge is estimated at $1.00 per acre. There would be in addition be local taxes, interest on mortgages, and so forth, bringing the estimated fixed charge per acre to a figure in the neighborhood of $7.80 per acre per year. If a production of four tons of alfalfa an acre could be relied on, one ton would carry the fixed charges, leaving three tons to carry the cost of production and profit. If a production of 100 sacks of "netted gem" potatoes could be relied on under irrigation, and this is rather low, sale at 90 cents a sack would carry the fixed charges and leave a substantial residue for cost of production and profit.

Into the cost of reclamation must be figured the debt already on the land. This must be considered in another article.

Madras, June 5--This is Armenia minus the Turk. It is a battlefield held by the barest handful of survivors. Here are several of Goldsmith's deserted villages. Here is a vast valley, made like a great garden of Allah, girt by snow mountains, with crystal streams rushing a thousand

feet below the general level, answering the sun's steady smile with a grin of despair.

Eighty thousand acres of wheat land are here and the wheat is burning up for lack of water. Since January 1 the rainfall has been only 1.27 inches. In April the rainfall was one-fiftieth of an inch, and in May three one-hundredths. All hope of a crop is gone. Livestock couldn't pick sustenance from many of the fields. From the very best the yield will not exceed five bushels to the acre. This is not said on the basis of rumor or report, but from the writer's observations.

Chester Luelling and Carlos Randolph, Irrigation Manager of the North Unit of the Deschutes Project, inspect a field of Federation wheat on land that was watered for the first time during the growing season of 1949. Dryland wheat in this area suffered seriously due to lack of water during the same season. (Bureau of Reclamation Photo).

For nearly a quarter of a century, the battle has been waged here to reclaim this area of 150,000 acres by dryland farming. The farmers acknowledge defeat. The rainfall isn't enough. Since 1908 there have been six crop years. One hundred and six thousand acres of that part of the valley which lies like a gently sloping floor, was designated for irrigation, and is included in the Jefferson Water Conservancy District, otherwise known as the North Unit project. One disappointment has followed another. The project has suffered from mistakes at home and from exploiters whose influence refused to let the plan proceed until they got their cut. The last appeal is now pending before the state securities commission at Salem and before the Portland Chamber of Commerce.

Most of the people have given up. They are gone. Some have left the country to work for enough to eat, in Portland industries or elsewhere. They are holding the titles to their lands until a final decision has been made as to reclamation.

In 1916 there were 600 families on the land here. There are now 100 families. These figures were given by Dave B. McBain and John McTaggart, the men who made the last assessment.

In the project proper are four towns—Madras, Metolius, Culver, and Gateway. Madras at its height had 500 people; it now has 200. Business has shrunk, according to various local estimates, from 30 to 50 per cent. In 1909 and 1910, the Madras School, according to W.R. Cook, the principal, had 165 children enrolled in the grades. There are less than 100 today, and some come from country districts where schools have been discontinued.

Metolius in 12 years has shrunk 90 per cent. The lumber company is gone, the warehouse is closed, the Metolius Central Oregonian newspaper is gone except for a name painted on the side of an empty building. The store, one pool hall, one garage, and one bank are open. The town had a population of 250. It now has 60.

Culver had a population of 150, which has shrunk to 43. It has two hotels closed and two stores open. It has a pool hall closed, a printing press stopped, a livery barn, confectionery, and meat market suspended. Gateway started out with two stores, a lumber yard, post office and water tank, and it still has them.

On the way from Prineville one reaches Lamonta on the edge of the district. It looks like quite a town. But it is populated by memories of days gone. J.C. Rush

and his mother are the only residents left, unless one counts a man named Blanchard just outside. Two years ago you would have found open in Lamonta a hotel, three stores, a telephone station, garage, and post office besides the homes.

Down in the canyon of the Deschutes was Mecca. There isn't any Mecca now.

There have been families here whose men and women, too, have worked from 4 o'clock in the morning until 11 at night, trying to establish a secure home on the soil. They are of the sturdy stock that anthropologists like Lathrop Stoddard say must hold America up to its ideals and its principles.

Apart from sympathy aroused by the plight of these survivors, one must see that one of two things will happen. Their plea for credit with which to bring water from the Deschutes will be granted within the next few weeks. Or this handful of people still sticking it out must go with the rest, and the wide valley, once with a family on every 160 acres, will revert into sage brush and range.

The district has voted $5,000,000 of which $90,000 have been sold at a price of $90, leaving $4,910,000 yet to be sold. The completion of the project, it is said, would take from $1,500,000 to $3,000,000 more than has already been voted.

The state securities commission must decide. A favorable decision will require the certification of the bonds of the Jefferson Water Conservancy district and such decision, as it involves lending the state's credit, must be determined from a business viewpoint divorced from all sentiment created by the plight of these pioneers of the desert.

Madras June 7.—Seventy per cent of the families in the region around Madras, Metolius, and Culver have abandoned their farms. There was formerly a family on every 160 acres. Now three of every four farm houses stand vacant. Some of these places are tiny, the first efforts at home-building of people trying to establish a foothold on the land. Some are pretentious, large two-story structures with elaborate outbuildings. Combine harvesters and other machinery have been left where the last day's work stopped. This is the effect of continuous drought. It is the climax of a year without any rain to speak of. It is the concomitant of hope for irrigation, which has so far been disappointed.

Seventy per cent of the families in the region around Madras, Metolius, and Culver have abandoned their farms.

On the road 10 miles long across Big Agency Plains, an area of 15,000 acres and part of the 106,000-acre North Unit Project, each quarter section has its home and outbuildings. On this road now lives but one landowner, Frank Stangland, and one other man who is renting some land.

Within six miles of Madras is a large school house [Mt. View School, still standing along Columbia Drive at Fir Lane] rapidly falling to pieces. In 1908 it had 65 pupils. In the whole district now there are but two children of school age and they are sent to the Madras schools.

On Big Agency Plains there were originally four schools with a total of 120 pupils. There are now two schools with nine pupils. In three of the four schools there was preaching and Sunday school on Sunday, but no divine services are now conducted outside of Madras.

As stated before, the towns have shrunk from 80 to 90 percent. In Oregon the ratio has long been one family in outside towns and one family in Portland. If withdrawal of local farming population has thus shrunk local towns, it would be interesting to know what has been the deterrent effect on Portland.

In 1916 some 780,000 bushels of wheat were shipped from this district to Portland for export. Lewis H. Irving owns two warehouses at Madras having a capacity of 140,000 bushels, one at Metolius that holds 35,000 bushels. He says he will not open his warehouses this year, that there would be nothing to put in them if he did. This means corresponding subtraction from the business done in Portland not only in exchange for money paid for wheat.

Fred Degner owns 320 acres and has lived in the country for 20 years, but he said the other day that he couldn't raise $3.00 to pay for having his watch fixed in Madras.

We passed Robert Osborn hauling water from the foothills seven miles

away. While these farmers have been trying to establish their homes they have hauled water seven to ten miles for livestock and for domestic purposes. Part of the time water hauling has taken the time of a man and a team six hours a day.

But experiences of this kind have counted as only the natural incidents of the wait for water. The land was settled on the presumption that it would be irrigated. Dave McBain said, "I lived in Vancouver, Washington. I heard that this sunny Deschutes valley would be irrigated, so myself and family just hustled right in. We have been here 12 years. Last year I went out and picked hops in Polk County and apples in Hood River to get a grub stake for the winter. I have lost all but a small part of the original farm. But I believe in the country. I'm going to stick until it is all gone or the water comes. That, however, one way or the other, can't be long."

Agency Plains, Deschutes Project 1949. A view of the K.A. Harris farm under irrigation. The water to this potato field was set to run for eight hours. (Bureau of Reclamation Photo).

It ought to be clear that in discussing the North Unit or the Deschutes project as a whole, it is not presented in the terms of the usual reclamation project. The usual reclamation project involves land covered with sagebrush and inhabited only by jackrabbits and sage rats. Colonization is fully as great a feat as getting water to the land. In this case the land has been cleared, fenced, cultivated, and homes built on virtually every quarter section. The average farm in the district comprises 160 acres. It is not a question of colonizing a tract, but whether it is economically worthwhile to keep on the land those who are left and to bring back those who, while they have been crowded out by famine years, are working elsewhere to get money on which to live and pay their taxes in the North Unit.

W.E. Johnson, publisher of the *Madras Pioneer*, told the writer that more than half of his subscribers are former residents of the district who take the paper chiefly to learn if the campaign for irrigation is to be successful. They hope to return.

A man named Strasser, whose goods were on his car as we drove up, said, "I am leaving because I can't let my family go hungry. But you can just bet I'll be right back if they get irrigation. This country has the finest climate in the world. The land is the richest. With water it will produce anything. It will be the garden spot of Oregon. Why, one acre here with water will produce as much as the best two acres in the Willamette Valley." You can see that it is not loss of faith that is causing the depopulation of the country. But you must be reminded that under present conditions one acre is farmed two years for one crop. It is dry fallowed alternate years. The years that moisture is denied increase the ratio so that one acre produces a crop once in four or five years.

The development of the North Unit to its present stage has been accomplished by three methods. First, the application of human energy of exceptional quality in many instances. Second, the use of funds brought into the country, together

with money earned by occasional crops. Third, the use of money loaned on mortgages. In a region of normal productivity what has been done here by manpower and money would be valued at $40 to $50 an acre.

A great deal of the land is mortgaged. The average loan per acre does not exceed $10. The principal mortgage holders are the federal land board and the Pacific Coast Mortgage company of Portland.

This information was given by Howard W. Turner, abstractor, justice of the peace, and official of the First National Bank of Madras. The federal land board loaned at $20 an acre, and loaned up to 50% of the appraisal value. The state land board has loaned up to 75 % of the assessed valuation of $10 an acre, or $7.50 an acre. The Pacific Coast Mortgage company has loaned on the same basis as the federal government.

The federal land bank has foreclosed 12 mortgages involving 2500 acres. The state land board has foreclosed three mortgages involving 500 acres. The mortgage company has made several foreclosures, but in virtually every instance has allowed the farmer to make a new deal and try it again, if he had the courage. "We do not want the land, and our operations as a whole in this district have shown a profit," John L. Karnop, head of Pacific Coast Mortgage , said to the writer.

If this is a problem not of land settlement but of arresting de-population by bringing water to land which now has fertility and 320 days of sunshine a year, but lacks moisture, there is a fair way of visualizing the issue for people west of the Cascades. Suppose you should hear that three-fourths of the people had abandoned their farm homes on 106,000 acres of the Willamette Valley, and that towns like Canby, Aurora, and Hubbard had shrunk 60 to 90 per cent, would it be considered just and proper to study the situation? Would active concern on the part of Portland be warranted? If it was found that an element was missing without which the land was untenable, would an effort to supply the missing element be approved? If together with interest on debt already incurred, and taxes, the cost of supplying the missing element created an annual charge of approximately $7.80 an acre, would the amount seem more than the land could carry?

They weren't discouraged by hauling water seven to ten miles with which to wash dishes and slake the thirst of the livestock.

These questions which are suppositions when applied to the Willamette Valley are realistic when applied to the Deschutes Valley. The region spoken of is a night's ride from Portland, and Portland is the only city with which the people of this district do business. It is likewise the only large community in which they can look for consideration in their extreme emergency.

Madras June 9.—Men and women who gathered here from the four corners of America in response to the appeal, "Get back on the land," are being scattered again among the cities and among the older farming districts.

They weren't discouraged by hauling water seven to ten miles with which to wash dishes and slake the thirst of the livestock. But successive droughts which have robbed the naturally fertile soil of its power to produce food, coupled with successive disappointments in plans for irrigation, have so far defeated their hope to establish homesteads for themselves and their children.

The breadth of representation was shown in a group of brief interviews. Lewis H. Irving, weather observer, lawyer, and warehouse owner, came from Virginia. This year his warehouses will not open, for there is no wheat to put in them. Harry Gard came from the west foothills of the Cascade Range in Oregon. A.T. Monner was born in the Willamette Valley. J.O. Youngstrom came from Nebraska, and so did J.N. Davis. Thomas Burns came from New York by way of Nebraska. Hiram Links was born in Clay County, Kentucky. I.H. Law came from Ohio by way of Idaho. He says that no lands he has seen, even in the best of Idaho's irrigated section, compares with the North Unit, provided it ever gets water.

John McTaggart is a Canadian, born in Ontario, but determined to stick here until the last. John A. Billups, the hotel keeper, was born in Seattle. Frank Tate

was born in Oregon.

Hiram Links is credited with owning the best farm in the district and of being the best farmer. He and his wife were thrilled alike by the love of the soil. For years their work day began at 4 o'clock in the morning and ended at 11 at night. Gradually their accumulation of land has grown until the Links farm covers 960 acres. For some of the property he paid as much as $50 an acre cash.

"I want to keep just 40 acres if irrigation goes over," said Mr. Links. "When I know that irrigation is a certainty, I will offer the other 920 acres at $30 an acre. I have no desire for more. I believe a man can start in here at $100 an acre for land and water rights, and prosper." Links' children as they grow up have been settling around him. "I won't leave," he said, "until conditions force me away. I figure that I will last five years at the present rate. When I go to make a start elsewhere, I will go with nothing. But I'm going to keep up the fight as long as I have a penny."

Nearby is the Campbell home. Campbell owns five quarter sections. He is discouraged. He offered to take $1000 and turn his 800 acres over to anyone who would assume the debt now on the property of about $13 an acre.

Alf Parkey was a director of the North Unit District. Foreclosure brought an end to his fight. He has gone to Redmond where he is milking 12 cows on a rented farm. "Life is easy now," he says.

John Evick is another exceptional farmer. He summer-fallows and keeps his place "as clean as a flower garden." But the wheat on his beautiful farm is a spotted brown that looks like plague and reveals barrenness.

George Rodman's farm of 1400 acres is near Lamonta. He still thinks that dry farming will win out. He is willing to stick to prove his theory. Eugene V. Ness, who came from Nebraska, has gone back and has a job on the railroad. From his paycheck he sends enough to keep up the taxes and interest on his farm, because he intends to come back if irrigation succeeds.

Harry Gard (with daughters Lela and Verda).

R.T. Olson, head of the Madras State Bank, said, "I believe irrigation is the only salvation for this country, provided the water can be impounded so that we can get it here and that the lands can be re-colonized."

N.A. Burdick, the banker at Metolius, where only 10 per cent of the people are left, could see no hope for the land or the people or business, without irrigation.

L.A. Young and W.J. Stebbins differed with this point of view. "I own half a section of land," said Young. "I'm farming 1200 acres this year, however. I have raised eight children on these dry acres and I'm not in debt. I can stick it out."

"So can I," said Stebbins. "I have no family but my wife, but we're getting along. Some of our neighbors lost out because they did not farm right. They drilled wheat right into the stubble of last year's crop without plowing or summer-fallowing. I don't think irrigation as it is planned will pay. Dry farming in the end will pay better. Of course, if the government would take over the project it would be different."

Harry Gard, John Henderson, and Jerry Sothman are the directors of the Jefferson County Water Conservancy district, or North Unit project, and Judge N.G. Wallace is their attorney. With Gard, fighting for irrigation of the North Unit is a religion. He has pledged everything he has in the world, and frankly admits that final disappointment would leave him flat broke. "But I won't quit until they carry me out," he declared, with the light of battle still shining in his eyes.

EPILOGUE

At the time of Marshall Dana's 1924 visit to Jefferson County, he notes several times that local North Unit proponents were nervously waiting for a decision, expected in a few weeks, from the State Securities Commission accepting or disallowing the project's crucial $5,000,000 bond. Evidently, the verdict was negative—but instead of giving up for good (as Dana suggests they might) the North Unit directors and their diehard supporters simply dug in, considered other options and strategies, including seeking federal support, maybe through the "Reclamation Agency" of the Interior Department (later, the Bureau of Reclamation). When the Crash of 1929 came, and the economic free-fall of the Great Depression, that angle seemed impossible—but with the advent of the Roosevelt "New Deal" in 1932-4, and the surge of federal interest in "public works" projects around the country, the North Unit dream took on new life, all the more so in governmental terms because it was recognized in Washington that the North Unit had been seeking federal along with state and private backing since 1916!

In 1934, the Bureau of Reclamation assigned a brilliant B of R engineer, C.C. Fisher, to draw up a feasibility study, including basic construction plans. Fisher's study and recommendations were accepted by the Bureau in 1937 (including a new price-tag of almost $10,000,000). From then on, after so much delay, the project moved along with seemingly unstoppable momentum. The original construction force, starting with the reservoirs at Wickiup and Crane Prairie, was drawn from the newly-created Civilian Conservations Corps (CCC); when their ranks were depleted by the outbreak of World War Two, the Bureau resourcefully turned to members of the Mennonite church, assigned to "alternative service" during the war as conscientious objectors, and by all accounts they performed superbly, leaving a positive mark on the Central Oregon landscape (especially from Smith Rock on north) that has never been properly recognized. When other irrigation districts in Central Oregon raised legal challenges over water rights, the Bureau got them resolved on behalf of the project in hand, and carried on.

The dream was that 50,000 acres of the Jefferson County plain might be wedded to the waters of the Deschutes ...

On May 18, 1946, before several thousand cheering onlookers, long-time North Unit directors Dick Anderson and Johnny Henderson turned a valve that officially allowed irrigation water from Wickiup and Crane Prairie to flow onto Jefferson County fields just east of Culver. One of the guests on that day was Marshall Dana, now long-time Editorial Editor of the *Portland Journal*. In that newspaper the next day, he looked back to his visits to the County more than two decades before, in 1917 and especially in 1924, when the "coming of the water" seemed nearly hopeless, and remembered his encounters then with stubborn visionaries like Harry Gard, who had died in 1941, with the project at last underway but still far from completion. Here is what Dana wrote:

"One December morning in 1917 this writer came by train to Madras and spent the whole day in the company of Harry Gard, reviewing a dream. The dream was that 50,000 acres of the Jefferson County plain might be wedded to the waters of the Deschutes and turn the scene of dry farming defeat into the lush success of irrigation.

We climbed Juniper Butte. It was one of the most discouraging scenes I had ever looked upon. But it was in company with the most enthusiastic man I ever met. They say Harry Gard would even borrow a suit in order to be dressed properly for reclamation meetings to plead the cause of what is now known as the Jefferson Water Conservancy.

The piece I wrote for the *Oregon Journal* nearly 30 years ago ended with this paragraph. 'Some day I want to go back to the North Unit and help the people celebrate their realization of their dream.' Saturday May 18 was the day of celebration. The dream was fulfilled. I heard the water ripple and splash as for the first time it ran from the Cascade Mountains by way of the Deschutes River and the big main-line canal . . . . "

Courthouse Project Continues

Steve Jansen's purchase and renovation of the original Jefferson County courthouse, onetime home of the museum, has been amply chronicled in the Madras Pioneer. However, as Jansen's project evolves and new information about the building's history comes to light, it is worth including the following update in THE AGATE.

Recent photo of courthouse with new fence and foundation and sign on top reading "The Original Court House."

Downstairs ready to rent

Jansen has not attempted to restore the first floor of the courthouse to its original state because the placement of the heating ducts and wiring makes it impossible to substantially change the walls or ceiling.

Instead, he has completed necessary upgrades to the plumbing, wiring, and heating and cooling system and subjected the floor to one final procedure—a thorough cleaning of the carpet. With that, the downstairs is ready to rent.

In order to preserve the building in the best possible condition, Jansen is selective about his tenants. "The only people I will consider renting it to are professional types," he said. He is hoping to find a lawyer or a medical professional to rent it.

In the meantime, Jansen has had a lot of interest from would-be tenants, including a marijuana distribution center, a martial arts school, second-hand stores, and brew-pubs. According to Jansen, renting it as a restaurant or brew-pub would be considered a change of use requiring him to make major changes to meet code "and you couldn't do that without ruining it," he said.

While he is waiting for just the right tenant, Jansen is working on the outside of the property. Passersby will have already noticed the new fence in the front of the building; Jansen will soon add another fence in back, enclosing some of the parking lot and the old jailhouse that sits back there.

Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

At a meeting in Newport on October 9, the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation will consider whether to nominate the courthouse to the National Register of Historic Places.

Oregon State University student Lindsey Stallard worked with Jansen to compile the necessary information to present to the state committee. Stallard's nomination document is 38 pages and includes photographs, maps, and information on the building's history and architecture.

If the courthouse is added to the National Register, Jansen will be eligible for state and federal tax benefits and building code leniency, but he says his main motivation is preserving a piece of history.

"I'm trying to save it after I'm gone," he said.

Close-up of possible jury chairs

Drama in the courtroom

The changes taking place at the original courthouse have revived a charming story about something that occurred there almost 55 years ago.

In November, 1959, the Madras High School senior class was allowed to stage a play about a fictional murder trial in the real-life courtroom.

The play was "The Night of January Sixteenth," written by Ayn Rand and directed for Madras High School by Barton Clements, Abbie Andrews, and Sonia Binder.

In the play, the prosecutor, played by Al Zemke, and the defense attorney, played by Stephen Hillis, laid out their cases before Judge Heath, aka Marvin Root, and a jury selected from the audience.

Local resident Ken Lydy, who played detective Homer Van Fleet, remembers sitting in the audience at the beginning of the play, dressed in the suit and tie that were his costume. When called to testify, he

got up and walked through the gate in the railing separating the audience from the trial participants to take his place on the witness stand, just as a witness in a real trial would have done.

Probably the most unusual aspect of the play was that the jury made up of audience members was actually asked to leave the room, deliberate, and come back with a verdict.

"They could reach any decision they wanted," said Stephen Hillis.

Hillis and others had to learn two sets of lines and stage directions for the end of the play so that they were prepared for either a guilty or a not-guilty verdict. Hillis said it was exciting waiting for their decision and he proudly notes that the defense won its case on all three nights.

Hillis said the small venue was pretty full and jokingly added, "As a cast member, I'll say it was pretty well received."

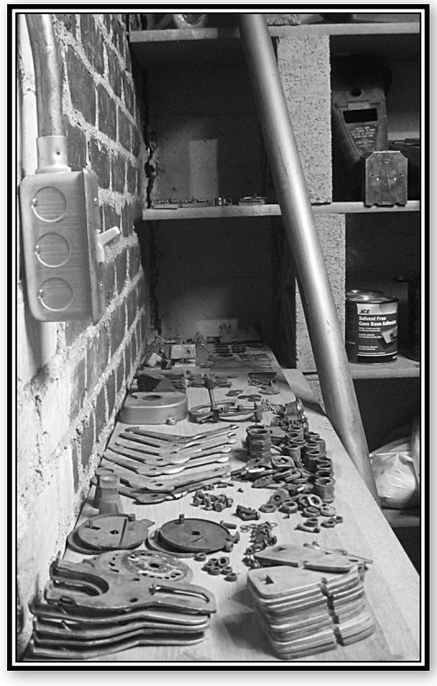
Though this play would be unique in any setting, both Hillis and Lydy say it was special being able to put on the play in the courthouse. "I think it was a real education for a lot of us because most of us had never been inside the courthouse before. It was quite a thrilling feeling for me that we got to do it there," said Lydy.

Unfortunately, neither Lydy nor Hillis is aware of how the arrangements were made for the students to use the courthouse or whether real-life Judge Henry Dussault was in the audience. The students had most of their play practices at the high school and then a dress rehearsal at the courthouse.

Upstairs courtroom showing the original railing, plea bench and chairs which Jansen thinks might be the original jury seating

Even more unfortunately, there were no photographs of the play in the Madras Pioneer, the student newspaper The White Buffalo, or even the high school yearbook.

It seems astonishing to us in this era of smart phone cameras, but Lydy said nobody really thought about taking pictures. "I don't think there was a lot of that back then," he said.



Parking meter parts waiting to be assembled in courthouse storage room. Jansen plans on installing two more antique parking meters to go with the two already in front of the courthouse. People will be able, but not required, to feed pennies into them.

Photographs Needed

Though the first floor of the courthouse will retain its modern features, Jansen plans to completely restore the upstairs courtroom in time for the building's centennial in 2017.

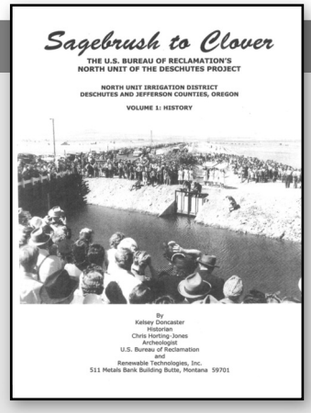
Ultimately, Jansen would like to be able to rent out the courtroom for special occasions such as weddings or plays like the one described above.

Jansen is hampered in his efforts by lack of old photographs of the courtroom because without pictures he has no way to know what the room and its furnishings used to look like. He found some old wooden chairs in the basement of the courthouse that he thinks might be the original jury seating, but he needs pictures to confirm his theory.

Any readers in possession of photographs and willing to loan them are asked to contact the editor at janeahern@rocketmail.com.

Four New Books on Local History

Four very different books touching on Jefferson County and Central Oregon history have appeared recently, and should be noticed here for AGATE readers. (Readers: if you know of other recent books with local interest, please let us know about them—or better yet, write short reviews of them for THE AGATE!)



Kelsey Doncaster and Chris Horting-Jones,
Sagebrush to Clover: the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's North Unit of the Deschutes Project , Vol. One. USBR: Butte, Montana, 2014.

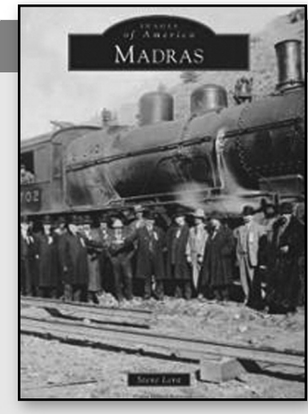
Despite the huge impact of the North Unit Irrigation Project on Jefferson County, and the heroic campaign by farmers and local leaders over three decades to make irrigation a reality, there has been no extended, in-depth study of the Project. Until now, that is—*Sagebrush to Clover* is the first, "historical" volume in a two-volume series prepared and published by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Authors Doncaster and Horting-Jones tell their story well, and document it usefully, with many photos of the Project from its beginnings at Wickiup and Crane Prairie in the late 1930s, to the "coming of the water" in 1946. They also present lavish topographic maps showing the route of what was once called "The Fabulous Furrow."

It's too bad that the authors don't offer photos of leading figures in the struggle for the North Unit, like Harry Gard of Agency Plains (see elsewhere in this issue) and C.C. Fisher, Bureau of Reclamation engineer, who got the Project firmly underway before WWII. And one wonders why more use wasn't made of the fullest and most thoughtful account of the North Unit until now—Harold Eidemiller's informative essay on "Irrigation in Jefferson County" in the JCHS's volume, *Jefferson County Reminiscences*.

But as it stands, this is a fascinating study of the Project, from the Bureau of Reclamation's perspective—perhaps it will lead to other studies of the North Unit, its rich farming and crops history for example, and the untold story of the young Mennonite "conscientious objectors" who actually built the most difficult portions of the Main Canal, from Smith Rock to Haystack. (Vol. Two of *Sagebrush to Clover*, expected in 2015, will cover the infrastructure of the North Unit.)

Readers of THE AGATE and devotees of County history will already know Steve Lent's excellent, indispensable book, *Central Oregon Place Names: Jefferson County*—the second volume in his projected three-volume series, which began with Crook County and will conclude with Deschutes. This new book by Lent (who is Associate Director of the Bowman Museum in Prineville) is a more modest undertaking—a brief history of the City of Madras through historic photos, following the formula of Arcadia Publishing's voluminous "Images of America" series.

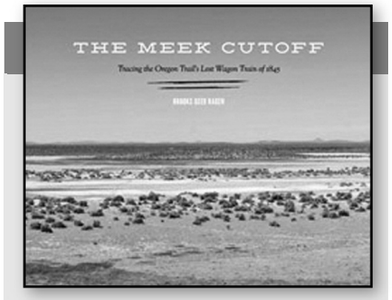
In his acknowledgments, Lent pays grateful tribute to the late Beth Crow for her contributions to the book in spite of illness, and likewise to Phyllis Lange, then Coordinator of the Jefferson County Museum. His selection of photos of people and events important to the telling of "the Madras Story" are on the whole astute. One wishes that there were fewer errors in the photo captions, and a more consistent attribution of photos (many of which are by pioneer



Steve Lent,
Madras (Images of America).
Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2012.

photographer Ole Hedlund, who is given a photo in the book, but his own photos are not identified). More attention to the importance of roads leading into and through early Madras would also have been helpful, perhaps by means of a set of maps.

But it's a handsome little book, worthy of its subject, and well worth owning or giving as a gift "in the name of Madras."



Brooks Geer Ragen,
The Meek Cutoff: Tracing the Oregon Trail's Lost Wagon Train of 1845. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013.

One of Brooks Geer Ragen's ancestors was Joseph Carey Geer Jr. , a member of the ill-starred "Meek Cutoff" wagon train that intended to follow a new, more direct route from the Snake River to the Willamette Valley . Their epic wandering and suffering in August and September 1845 under the dubious guidance of "mountain man" Stephen Meek is an essential part of Oregon's folk history, as are the tales of the "Blue Bucket" lode of gold they supposedly found en route.

The Meek Cutoff story was meticulously researched and told some years ago by Keith Clark and Lowell Tiller, in their *Terrible Trail*. Ragen's book is the end product of what he calls "The Meek Research Expedition," organized and apparently funded by him, with a team of historians, photographers, cartographers, and trail archaeologists (including Steve Lent and Bob Boyd of Bend), attempting to trace out the actual routes and camp sites of the Meek party as they divided and re-combined in their increasingly desperate efforts to find a viable route, with water. The Ragen expedition proceeded overland day-by-day in 2006, and went over the route by air in 2009.

The result is a visually compelling large format book, with superb photos (mainly by Ellen Bishop, formerly of Madras) of bleak Harney and Crook County terrain probably unchanged since 1845; and detailed multi-colored maps, keyed to the emigrants' diary and journal entries. It is in the main a worthwhile addition to the Meek Trail literature, and a useful complement to Clark and Tiller's *Terrible Trail*, but in one important respect it is a disappointment, at least for readers who know that the Meek parties traveled through what is now Jefferson County and on north, on their painful way to meeting rescue parties sent out from The Dalles.

Ragen abruptly terminates his expedition's elaborate coverage at Cline Falls (near Redmond) on the grounds that once the wagon trains reached the Deschutes River there, they were no longer "lost", and had access to water. The fact that the Meek party still had 150 arduous miles to go, over several weeks, through the dry hills and canyons of Jefferson, Sherman, and Wasco counties, with deaths and burials of sick and worn-out members occurring along the way (four at Rim Rock Springs south of Madras, six a few days later at Sagebrush Springs east of Gateway, and three more soon after on Shaniko Flats), is arbitrarily minimized in the scheme of Ragen's expedition. Given the importance of what he does cover, and the excellence of the coverage, it's regrettable that he and his team didn't finish the job, clear to The Dalles, where the poor Meek Trail survivors stumbled into town looking, so it was said, like ghosts. Who knows what these modern, well-outfitted followers along their trail might have discovered beyond Cline Falls?

Despite the promise of its title, this book offers next to nothing about the "Railroad War" that transformed Central Oregon in 1909-11, climaxing with the arrival in Madras of James J. Hill's Oregon Trunk line in February 1911. Haeg's focus, instead, is on the fierce decade-long rivalry between Hill and Edward Harriman, centering on their competing railroad

Larry Haeg,
Harriman vs. Hill: Wall Street's Great Railroad War (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

empires, Hill's Great Northern and Harriman's Union Pacific, with J.P Morgan, the Rockefellers, Teddy Roosevelt and others as major players. As such, the book provides a fascinating background to Hill and Harriman's Deschutes River confrontation; in particular its account of the May 1901 Wall Street Panic over the attempts of Harriman and others to gain control of the Northern Pacific and its affiliated lines, at the expense of Hill and his empire. The dynamics of unregulated capitalism in those years are depicted vividly, shedding light on what was driving Hill and Harriman in Oregon nearly a decade later.

How to Celebrate the 100th Year of Jefferson County

When the ad hoc planning committee for the 2014 Jefferson County Centennial began to ponder what form the celebration should take, members looked for leads and clues from other Oregon counties—and found virtually nothing. Madras, Culver, and Metolius had already observed their town centennials in 2010, and there were also the memorable "Railroad Day" festivities in Madras and Metolius in February 2011—but how to properly recognize one hundred years of a county? Especially ours?

The scheme worked out by Chairman Joe Krenowicz of the Chamber of Commerce and his planners (including County officials and staff, directors of the Historical Society, and representatives from Culver, Metolius, Gateway, Crooked River Ranch, Warm Springs, Ashwood, and so on) was ingenious and very ambitious. Recognizing that our country is farflung geographically (try driving from Ashwood to Camp Sherman), and very diverse in its communities, it was decided that a centralized celebration (say in Madras) wouldn't do. Instead, we needed to carry the Centennial out to the communities where the county lives, when possible joining one of their own festive events. A sort of "historical road show" evolved, traveling in pickups and trailers, with a big canopy, banners, digital photo and video displays and posters depicting county history (where possible focused on the communities being visited), recorded music from 1914, and—when feasible for the hard-working actors—live skits bringing to life episodes in Jefferson County history, staged and performed by the "Centennial Players" from Madras and Culver.

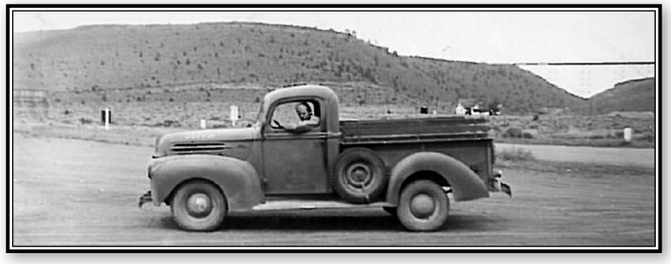
The repertory of skits included "Choosing the County Seat in 1914," "The Great Courthouse Raid of 1917," "The Singing Moonshiner of Camp Sherman," and "The Women's Revolt in Madras in 1922." The company included Mike Ahern, Tom Machala, Marsha Casey, Royce Embanks, Jerry and Dorothy Ramsey, John Casey, Teri Drew, Joy DeHaan, John Jacob Urrutia-Rasko, Dan Phillips, and Drew Correa.

The Road Show began in Ashwood (in rain and some snow) on May 10 (Mother's Day), and went on to Camp Sherman May 24 (Memorial Day weekend), Warm Springs June 28 (Pi-Ume-Sha), Madras and Gateway July 4, Crooked River Ranch July 5 (Independence Day Event), Jefferson County Fair July 23-6, Culver August 16 (Crawdad Festival), and Metolius Sept. 13 (Spike 'N Rail). The consensus of the gallant volunteers who planned and mounted the Centennial Road Show is that it was all great fun, very well received across the county, and a valuable testimony to the local history we share—with a collective sigh of relief that there seem to be no other local centennials in view!

TOP CENTER: Early day lawmen, portrayed by Royce Embanks, center, and Mike Ahern, right, arrest a moonshiner, John Casey, during a Centennial skit at the Madras-Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce Banquet. BOTTOM LEFT: Tour's first stop in Ashwood. BOTTOM RIGHT: Centennial skit, "Women's Revolt," about Madras women running for office, featured, left, Marsha Casey, and Teri Drew as Madras housewives.

Schawo's daughters at Airbase Memorial

Honored guests at the recent dedication of the World War II Memorial at the Madras Airport, were Mary Schawo Gleason of La Vista, Nebraska, and her sister Julie Schawo Naegele of Salina, Kansas. Their late father, Leland Schawo, was in the first deployment of U.S. Army Air Corps personnel at Madras Airfield in 1943; his first wife, Marjorie Johnson of Pendleton was tragically killed in November of that year in a gasoline explosion in an office building where she was working at the Airfield. Corporal Schawo's daughters have donated their father's photos of MAF and Madras in 1943 to the Historical Society.



Leland Schawo in Army truck in "downtown Madras" 1943.

Leland Schawo, Madras Airbase, 1943.

Toast to re-naming of John Brown Canyon

JCHS Directors gathered with members of the Oregon Geographic Names Board June 20 near John Brown's homestead site below Highway 26 to "toast" the official re-naming of John Brown Canyon. The name, and information about Brown, an African American who settled along Campbell Creek in the canyon in the 1880s, will be included in both state and national geographic names registries. Chair of the OGNB at the time of the re-naming was Sharon Landreth Nesbit, who grew up in Madras.

Memorial Gifts to the JCHS

One way to remember and honor a relative or friend who has passed on—especially someone who has had an interest in local history—is to make a memorial gift in that person's name to the Historical Society. Often newspaper obituaries will list the JCHS and other organizations and charities to which well-wishers are invited to make contributions in honor of their late relative or friend. The JCHS is a non-profit organization, registered with the IRS, and donations to it are generally tax-deductible. Families of the deceased are always notified by the Society of donations made in honor of their loved ones.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS AND GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY SO FAR IN 2014:

IN MEMORY OF BETH CROW
Albert Tabor
Glenda Holzfuss
Shirley Robb
Ray and Betty Fretheim
Jarold and Dorothy Ramsey
Francis Juris
Anonymous Donor
Valarie Ann Hudspeth

IN MEMORY OF HAROLD MOORE
Jarold and Dorothy Ramsey

IN MEMORY OF GAIL CLOWERS
Dave and Kay Wiles
Valarie Ann Hudspeth
Carole Alley
Walt and Aurolyn Wolfe
Don and Elanie Henderson
Ruth Matthews
V.L. and D.J. Hopper
Jarold and Dorothy Ramsey

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE DEJARNATT
Don and Elaine Henderson

IN MEMORY OF DORIS VIBBERT
Robert Victorin
Barbara Hill
James and Toni Mountain
Phil and Ginny Lang
Don and Elaine Henderson
Myrleen and Regi Christensen
Jarold and Dorothy Ramsey

DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY
Glenda Holzfuss
Dorothy Thomas
Charles Cunningham
Katherine Smith
The Archaeological Society of Central Oregon

THE•AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741

PLEASE JOIN US!

Jefferson County Historical Society
Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741
541-475-5390 • Website: www.jeffcohistorical.org

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2014:
(Individual: $25 Family: $50 Patron: $150 Benefactor: $500)

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership (please check box):

☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Individual

☐ Family ☐ Patron ☐ Benefactor

(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