— Spring 2022 —

# THE·AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## CONTENTS



N.S. 17

DEAR AGATE READERS—

# Welcome to Issue No. 17!

--which begins our ninth year of publishing Central Oregon's only local history journal.


No, Virginia — contrary to the photo, the Jefferson County Historical Museum is not (yet) open. An episode that might be wryly called "The West Side Story" has ended, and a brief account of local institutional history on that score is in order.

Back in 2012-3, with the Old Courthouse home of our museum up for sale by the county (and long since considered inadequate as a museum space), the historical society board of directors decided that moving the collection into temporary storage was called for, even before a new location was secured. (The JCHS had been planning an ambitious campaign to build a "Central Oregon Heritage Center" on land which it had leased from the county just west of the Fairgrounds, but the national financial crisis around 2008 stopped those plans in their tracks. See "Saving Our History" on page 25.)

Looking for at least an interim location for the museum, the JCHS board was able to strike a deal with School District 509j to move the 6,000-plus items in the collection into storage in Westside School (originally Madras High School), which the district had recently declared "surplus," and was unused except for ESD programs in the central part of the facility and Kids Club in the north end. The "Great Museum Move" out of the second floor of the Old Courthouse took place over one memorable day in December 2012. Subsequently, the possibility of actually re-locating



.....

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
**Graphic Designer:** Becky Stever
**Publisher:** Jerry Ramsey

**Cover: A big steam-powered threshing outfit near Lamonta, 1910 (JCHS photo archives)**

and re-opening the museum at Westside, in and around the library in the south wing, was explored, and looked feasible.

Earlier in 2012 the school district had retained a Portland consulting firm, Center for Innovative School Facilities, to investigate possible ways to re-organize and re-open Westside School for the benefit of the community. Their report, delivered on Sept. 20, 2012 after extensive local research and interviewing, recommended that Jefferson County purchase the facility and take the lead in developing it for community use, including continuation of Kids Club and the High Desert Education Service District as tenants, and adding "the Jefferson County Historical Society [and its Museum], with recommended additional increase in underpinning funds to allow year-round operation and storage space." The report also recommended that additional space in Westside be explored for medical "urgent care," city parks and recreation programming and services, and early childhood programs, including day care.

Prospects looked bright for a transformed multiple-use, community-centered Westside, with Kids Club and the historical society on either end. But the county commissioners declined to accept the enabling role the report had defined for them, and instead of underwriting the Westside plan, chose to launch the construction of a much-needed new county courthouse just northwest of Westside, which was opened in 2016.

Enter the Bean Foundation in 2013, with a bold initiative that embodied one of Al Bean's most cherished goals for Madras—a bona fide *community* facility. The Westside Community Center would follow the main details of the September 2012 CISF report—including tenancy of the JCHS Museum. A thorough engineering study of Westside was commissioned by the foundation, with positive findings (the lead engineer declared that the facility had "good bones"). Many community "interest meetings" were organized by the foundation; a Westside partners advisory group was duly formed (including the JCHS); enthusiasm for the initiative waxed and waned, ebbed and flowed as years passed. Finally, a capital campaign launch looked imminent in 2019—but the arrival of COVID-19 early the next year put that ship back in its bottle.

Back in 2013, when the Bean Foundation set up its Westside initiative, it decided against purchasing the property outright, opting instead to maintain a year-by-year purchase option understanding with the school district, which thereby retained title to the property. As things have turned out, over eight years, this now looks like a regrettable decision for the foundation's good intentions for Westside, and consequently for the historical society's hopes for a Westside museum. On the other hand, the decision turned out to be beneficial for the school district.

Following the success of the recent school bond levy (which incorporated upkeep work in Westside), the district under new superintendent Jay Mathisen reviewed its facility space and determined that it had pressing educational needs for Westside after all, including more room for new Bridges HS programs and for ESD expansion. So, in fall 2021 it in effect removed the "FOR SALE" sign on Westside, and the Bean Foundation bowed out of its well-intentioned but ultimately fruitless role as the sponsor of "Westside Community Center" but never the owner of it. Maybe the historical society could still rent space for its museum purposes in the building's south wing, as envisioned before the Bean Foundation announced its community center plan? Discussions with Superintendent Mathisen have made it very clear that the school district will for the time being need to retain ALL of Westside . . . including the likelihood that the museum collection now in storage in the south wing will have to be moved elsewhere, eventually.

So, folks, the long and the short of it is that high hopes and good intentions don't always come true, at least as far as this long-drawn-out effort to find a new home for the historical museum of Jefferson County is concerned. The "Westside Story" chapter of our efforts is finished, terminated; and now the "Museum Sub-committee" of the JCHS board of directors is back in action, looking into all options and possibilities for a worthy new home for our museum and the historical treasures and records it is supposed to house in and around Madras. In 2022, the search field for that seems pretty limited, whether for existing buildings or for sites on which to build.

To the historical society membership and our well-wishers, whose patience and support through all this has been steadfast, we can only say, "Thanks, and stay with us as we resume the long quest for a new museum location." But to say that we deeply regret that so much time has been lost, and that Jefferson County must now continue even for a few more years to be the only Central Oregon county to lack an open, active historical museum, would be a great understatement.

Is our county's historical legacy any less valuable to the people who live here now, than is the case in Deschutes, Crook, or Sherman counties? And are our county and city officials any less obligated to support when they can the ongoing effort to keep that legacy alive and available for all?

When we decided that we had to put the museum in storage and try to re-locate it in a better place, the JCHS board undertook to compensate for the closing by creating new public programs celebrating our local history –like our very popular history pubs (to be resumed as soon as possible), the dry-land farming operations and threshing bee festival at the county fairgrounds, and THE AGATE itself. We're proud that, with your support, these ventures have been community successes. But we are determined, after eight years of closure, to re-locate and re-open the Jefferson County Historical Museum as soon as possible. With your continued support and involvement, and hopefully with crucial help this time around from the county and the City of Madras, it's going to happen. (JR)

# Working for Fun: the How-to of Dry Farming

*By Jane Ahern*

**The payoff—harvest crew working at antique grain separator (all photos by Katherine Smith)**

*The historical society's threshing bee organizers prepare for their 6th annual event—their last at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds—and look ahead to the next one at a new venue*

It's planting time.

Probably by the time you read this our brief spell of wet weather will have passed, and John Campbell will have planted this year's crop of wheat in preparation for the historical society's sixth annual threshing bee, planned for August 20-21.

By then the wheat will be ready and volunteers will gather under the big shade trees next to the pioneer homestead house at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds to cut, bind and thresh the wheat.

Some people would do that with a combine, but Campbell and the others will do it the hard way on purpose, with equipment made in the early 1900s.

That's because at a threshing bee, the labor is the whole point. It is a rare opportunity for people to see and do what dryland farmers in Jefferson County used to have to do every harvest season. It is difficult to think of a more effective way of teaching and learning about local history.

In addition to being the last threshing bee at the fairgrounds, this year's event will go for two days instead of one and will feature a lot more equipment than usual because the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association (EDGETA) is getting in on the action.

As a historical society board member and vice president of the Central Oregon branch of EDGETA, a national organization, Dave Campbell (brother of John Campbell) is the link between the two organizations. EDGETA local branch number 248 will be hosting the northwest regional meet this year, so it is only natural to make it a joint event with the threshing bee.

EDGETA members will haul their equipment from all over the northwest and display it at the fairgrounds site Saturday and Sunday. The wheat binding will take place Saturday morning; Saturday evening, EDGETA will have a dinner and a meeting at the fairgrounds site in the new shed that the historical society recently put up.

EDGETA members will camp at the fairgrounds overnight and display their engines on Sunday for the general public. If there is any wheat left over from Saturday, Campbell will thresh the rest of it on Sunday for spectators to see.

The EDGETA equipment will be mostly early day gas engines from around 1900-1920. "Real big old heavy things," said John Campbell. "Antique gas engines nicknamed one-lungers because there's only one cylinder. They can be called hit-and-miss or one-lungers," he said.

"A lot of them will just sit there and run by themselves, but a lot of them will be flat belted to a piece of equipment that would be typical of what they'd be used for back then—grain grinders, water pumps, threshing machines—my threshing machine is driven by one," said Dave Campbell.

Both Dave and John Campbell clearly love old farm equipment and it's a big reason why they started the threshing bee — modeled after the

**Green "Sonora" spring wheat**

**Picking rocks, a dry-farming ritual**

one in Dufur which they used to attend annually, and which eventually fizzled out—and it's why they keep doing it.

"Guys—and some gals—will get a connection with old iron, the simplicity, the camaraderie with other enthusiasts, working together," said John Campbell, and Dave Campbell added, "It's fun to answer questions when people come. 'Well, what's this and what does it do?' And showin' off our big boy toys," said Dave Campbell.

***Getting Ready***

What casual threshing bee participants don't see is the extensive preparation needed for the event, which begins in February or March and continues through the summer.

"My brother is the main farmer dude," said Dave Campbell of his twin brother, John. "When it's time to work the field, plant the seed, he is there and does it on time and does it right. And that also is a very hard-to-come-by commodity nowadays. And he has the equipment."

The tractor John Campbell uses to work the field is new by threshing bee standards. It's a two-cylinder, 1957 John Deere 620. "It can't be too old, because I remember when Dad bought it," said Dave Campbell.

From the start six years ago, Campbell divided the available land next to the fairgrounds into two fields, each about 4 acres. Each summer he plants one field and leaves the other fallow. The fallow field then has an extra year to build up moisture to grow the wheat. The top of the field may look dry, but there is moisture down below for the roots to access. This is necessary because there is no irrigation and very little rainfall.

That precious moisture can be stolen by weeds, so Campbell stays on top of them. Before planting, he uses his tractor to pull a 10-foot chisel plow and behind that a rod weeder. The chisel plow loosens up the soil and the rod weeder uproots the weeds and dumps them back on the surface to dry out and die. Campbell weeded in February and will weed again before planting.

He goes over the fallow field at least three times per summer-- and more than that if it rains and causes more weeds to sprout.

In May or so, historical society board member and volunteer Jim Carroll applies a broadleaf herbicide to keep the weeds down as well as a soil-activated herbicide to combat the puncture vine. In past years he has applied a small dose of fertilizer but will probably skip it this year.

Carroll has been able each year to obtain donations of the small amounts of herbicide and fertilizer needed from his employer, Pratum (formerly CENEX).

Dave Campbell plans to help Carroll with the herbicide this year. He said of Carroll, "He always got 'er done. I was never there when he did. He's another important commodity to have—someone who gets the job done, does it right, knows what he's doing."

For planting, John Campbell uses his seed drill with a culti-packer behind it to press the dirt gently onto the seeds. He grows an heirloom variety of hard white bread wheat from Mexico called Sonora wheat.

"We chose Sonora because it is extremely drought resistant. Hence, Sonora desert, Mexico," said Dave Campbell.

"And it's not bred to want a lot of fertilizer, if any" added John Campbell. "It doesn't need spoonfed like our modern hybrid wheats."

Campbell initially bought the seed from someone based in Tucson. In subsequent years, he has used seed produced by the threshing bee operation. He always has plenty because the fields are small and dryland wheat is typically planted more sparsely than irrigated wheat—about 20 pounds per acre.

The Campbells said that the Sonora wheat is technically a winter wheat, meaning it should be planted in the fall and be "vernalized" or exposed to cold temperatures in the soil over the winter before sprouting in the spring. Winter wheat will grow without vernalization, but it typically won't produce kernels.

Despite being planted in the spring each year, the Sonora wheat has been a good producer. The Campbells speculated that our spring weather is

**Mike McIntosh's horse-propelled antique reaper-binder in action**


**A big wheatfield near Metolius around 1911, with bound "sheaves" of cut wheat ready to be carried to the big separator in the background (JCHS/Hedlund photo)**

cold enough for long enough to accomplish vernalization.

After planting, the wheat is on its own. "It's strictly dryland. It never gets any irrigation," said Dave Campbell.

"Never irrigated it, always got a crop, even on the really dry years," added John Campbell.

The brothers explained that most varieties of wheat, when exposed to heat and drought, are prone to shriveled kernels, but their heirloom Sonora is tough. "You never got a shriveled kernel. And I've never seen that before," Dave Campbell said.

Being all about labor, the threshing bee could not happen without volunteers. In addition to Jefferson County locals, the volunteers come from Bend, Redmond, the Willamette Valley, Prineville, and elsewhere. They learn about the threshing bee through a loose network of history buffs, primarily historical society board members and their spouses, and "old iron" aficionados like the members of EDGETA.

Each year of the event, the agriculture classes from the high school have helped pick rock out of the fields—an experience shared by generations of local farm kids.

"All of them for about 15 minutes would really enjoy the novelty of picking rock and throwing it into the front end loader of the tractor. And in about 15 minutes, some of them would go off and out come the cell phones and then you could see the ones that were future potential because they stuck to it the whole period. It was pretty cool," said Dave Campbell.

A lot of work goes into making the threshing bee happen, but not a lot of money is needed because so many people volunteer their time and materials.

Campbell says Mike Lockling from EDGETA branch 248 donates about $500 to the event each year. The money is used for things like renting a porta-potty and purchasing food for the lunch that is served.

Lunch this year will be a sandwich with chips and a beverage. Campbell said in past years they served heavier meals, but they were too much for a hot August day. Volunteers eat for free and the general public is charged a nominal fee for the lunch.

***Harvest Time***

Some of the most critical participants in the threshing bee hail from Terrebonne. Retired Redmond School District superintendent Mike McIntosh and his family do the wheat binding each year.

Readers might know McIntosh because he worked in our school district for several years, first as a sixth-grade teacher at Buff Elementary starting in 1990 and then as a vice principal at the middle school when it opened in 1995.

The McIntoshes use a WWI-era horse-drawn John Deere binder, which cuts the wheat, collects it in bundles, and ties the bundles together with twine.

Dave and John Campbell explained the significance of binding machines: "They changed the world, binders and reapers. People don't realize it but they're as big a deal as Ford's Model T, I guess, or sliced bread," said Dave Campbell.

Binders became available in the 1880s. Before that, there were reapers.

"Rather than you standing out there with a scythe, bending over, a reaper would cut the wheat onto a platform and then it would sweep the wheat off

**Dave Campbell checking thrashed wheat from his rare antique wooden separator**

onto the ground and then you tied it by hand," explained Dave Campbell.

And then when you got a self-tie binder, all you needed was one guy riding on it. And he had a basket that the bundles would fall into and you could time it so it would drop on the ground and they'd all slide off in one spot. Super handy," said Dave Campbell.

"It's a year's work to raise say five acres all by hand," said John Campbell. Once binders became available, "You'd go from five acres was all you could do to 50 acres. Ten times the production with a binder," he added.

For McIntosh, using his horses to drive the binder at Jefferson County's annual threshing bee is just the tip of the iceberg. Working and showing horses has been a big part of his life since he was 10 years old, when he learned to work and show Belgian horses.

That same year, he began showing the horses at Dufur's annual threshing bee, which was a very extensive event for over 50 years. There, he and his horse team did a variety of tasks, including pulling the binder and pushing a header.

McIntosh started out showing horses for a family friend, but eventually he, his father, and his sister and her family got their own hitch of Belgian horses. They continued showing them at Dufur and also at the state and county fairs.

McIntosh's interest in horses and vintage farm equipment was passed down from his father and now he is passing it down to his own offspring. McIntosh's two sons, Jacob and James, also work and show horses. "My kids have got the bug bad," he said. He has three young granddaughters and he said, "We'll let that blood-born pathogen enter their bloodstreams too."

McIntosh said Jacob will be doing the binding at Jefferson County's threshing bee with his team of black Percherons.

McIntosh uses his horses to work his own fields in Terrebonne. He enjoys the work and says it also prepares his horses for the shows they do. "If you're going to take your horses to a show, they need to have done something for conditioning, just like an athlete," he said and added that they perform well at shows and competitions because they get plenty of practice.

Dave Campbell said of McIntosh, "Someone with trained horses and a working binder and a way to haul it, with a family that works with him—might be the only guy in Oregon, so we're lucky to have him."

The McIntoshes' participation is important enough to the Madras threshing bee that Campbell changed the date from the second to the third weekend in August so that the McIntoshes can also go to the Dufur threshing bees, which is starting up again this summer after a hiatus of several years.

The threshing bee organizers are highly knowledgeable about the farming practices of their forebears, and they do their best to adhere to tradition, but they have made some concessions to expedience.

Initially, the threshing bee was carried out on two separate days a few weeks apart because that's how they did it in the early 1900s. Farmers would cut the wheat when it was still green and use a green straw to tie it into bundles (or, a little later, their binders tied them with twine) that they stood up on end with the kernels off the ground, leaning against each other in shocks. It was better to handle the wheat when it was green because the kernels didn't fall off the stalks and get lost in the dirt as readily.

Then they left the shocks in the field to let the heads finish developing for a few more weeks. Standing up, the kernels could dry more efficiently, especially if it should happen to rain during that period. The length of the drying period was partially determined by the availability of the threshing machine. "Normally a farmer didn't own his own thresher. If there was one in the area a bunch of farmers might own one. Or a custom threshing outfit might come through your area and when they get to your farm, then that's when you bring the bundles in from the field and thresh 'em. And it would make really nice straw. It had green color to it still, but the wheat was all finished and perfect," said Dave Campbell.

So, for the first couple years, the threshing bee leaders did the cutting, binding, and shocking of the wheat during the fair and then the threshing two weeks later. But the shocking was hot and strenuous work because the bundles are heavy when they're green.

"To get volunteers to do that and volunteers to come to the threshing bee was a bit much," said Dave Campbell. They decided to do it all in one day and it works out better for everyone.

"We have found that by binding the day of the threshing bee all the spectators that come for the threshing bee can actually see the horses in the field, which is a big part of threshing bee. Those horses pulling that binder is really a big thing to me. That's just something you don't see—horses pulling a piece of farming equipment, out in the field, working. And the horses are just magnificent."

On the day of the event, the threshing bee is indeed a hive of activity. After the McIntoshes cut and bind, volunteers from the local Model T club use their antique vehicles with pick-up boxes on the back to haul the bundles of wheat from the field to the thresher. Other participants help load

and unload the wheat bundles from the trucks.

They pile the wheat next to the thresher and someone else forks it up onto the deck of the machine. Another volunteer standing on the thresher takes that wheat and feeds it into the machine.

The function of the thresher is to separate the kernels from the straw. It was another innovation that radically improved farm production.

Before that, Dave Campbell said, "You'd put it all out on the ground and then you walked your animals across it and that's how you ground the kernels out. Then you scooped it up and threw it up in the wind and the wind would blow the chaff away. What a bunch of work."

The threshing bee uses Dave Campbell's Ellis Keystone threshing machine. It is all wood and about 120-140 years old.

As wheat is fed into the thresher, the machine spews the straw out the back, where another person is waiting to pitchfork it from there into a baler. "You have to keep moving that straw away from the back because it will pile clear up and plug up the machine," said Dave Campbell.

The baler they use belongs to John Campbell's daughter, Sara Vollmer. Last year the baler was powered by an antique tractor owned by someone from Bend.

"He brought his tractor, and it had a PTO drive on it, so we used it to run the baler. He also was the guy who pitchforked straw into the baler. The whole time, he did that job," said Dave Campbell, adding that it's a dusty job and it was hot that day.

"And then you have someone that's collecting the grain as it comes out into a bucket, and he bags it so that the bags are not so heavy you can't pick them up."

The Sonora wheat has always produced a crop for the threshing bee, though the yield has varied based on the amount of rainfall received.

The brothers haven't made an effort to measure the yield. "We never needed to because we just play with it. We've always had enough to play with and show the public how it was done in yesteryear," said Dave Campbell.

Both are experienced dryland wheat farmers, however, so they do have an estimate, which is that the yield of the threshing bee's wheat has ranged from 30 bushels per acre in their best year—around 2019-- down to 15 bushels per acre in their first year, which was their lightest because the soil had been weedy for a long time and hadn't a chance to build up water.

The county average is 18 bushels per acre for

**After-harvest supper at a recent JCHS "Harvest Festival" at the Fairgrounds**

dryland wheat and on irrigated land a farmer can get up to 200 bushels per acre, according to the Campbells.

When the threshing is done, the Campbells set aside some wheat for next year's planting and gives the rest away to the volunteers. They use it to feed their farm animals. The baled straw is similarly shared with the volunteers.

By the end of the day, about 200 spectators will have come and gone throughout the day to watch the harvesting and the threshing, ask questions, visit with acquaintances, peruse the old iron equipment, soak up some history, and maybe have some lunch.

***"In the field of opportunity, it's plowing time again"***
**--- Neil Young**

The threshing bee has been very much at home at the fairgrounds. The homestead house and surrounding shade trees have provided an appropriate and comfortable setting. The storage sheds on the property house some of the equipment needed and the wheat field is adjacent. The setting is just about perfect.

But the historical society has had to come up with a new location for the bee because the Jefferson County Fair Board says it needs the fields for parking during the fair in July. The 2021 fair drew record crowds that overflowed the existing parking lots and created a traffic nightmare for the fair board volunteers.

To avoid a recurrence of that situation in 2022, the fair board initiated discussions with the historical society about its use of fields. The sometimes contentious talks resulted in the historical society's reluctant agreement to plant two acres of wheat this year instead of four and to move to a different location in future years.

In casting around for an alternative location, the Campbells found a few options. One was in Deschutes County, but the Campbells were reluctant to move out of county.

"We want to keep it in Jefferson County. We'd like to keep it in Madras. We want this to belong to Madras," said Dave Campbell.

**"I'm trying to figure out how a homesteader maybe would have brewed back in the day. And so I'm going to try and get my own homestead brewing set up and kind of brew with hot stones and that kind of sutff."**
**— Seth Klann, Mecca Grade Estate**

Fortunately, the Klanns, another family with deep roots in the county, stepped forward.

"Klann Farms asked if we could bring it out there. They would be delighted to have us," said Dave Campbell.

The Klanns are highly invested in local history. They are the descendants of two early homestead families: the Klanns and the Luellings. Their property is a state-designated century farm and the home of Mecca Grade Estate. Their tasting room, where people can sample beer made from the malt they produce, prominently features photos of the Klanns' pioneer ancestors.

The tasting room will no doubt be an attractive draw for the event and the Klanns will be able to incorporate the threshing bee into their existing marketing, likely bringing new participants to it.

Being farmers themselves, the Klanns will take over the growing of the wheat. Seth Klann said they would probably use a white spring wheat.

The threshing bee at the Klanns' will occur the second weekend of August—about the time they usually harvest their grain—so they plan on harvesting with modern equipment alongside the horsedrawn binder. Spectators will get a side-by-side comparison of old and new farming in real time.

An avid brewer, Seth Klann is dreaming up a way to incorporate his own beer into the event.

"I'm trying to figure out how a homesteader maybe would have brewed back in the day. And so I'm going to try to get my own homestead brewing set-up and kind of brew with hot stones and that kind of stuff. I think the goal is to try to use the white wheat unmalted in the brewing process, so it'll be kind of like making it a two-day event where people will come out and see the harvesting and have beer and music and food and make it kind of a bigger celebration," he said.

"It's going to be open to the general public and anyone interested in harvesting and brewing and just history in general," he added.

***A Bit of Nostalgia***

The Campbells appreciate the Klanns' willingness to host the threshing bee and they know the Klann farm will be an excellent setting, but they are still a little sorry to lose their place at the fairgrounds.

For one thing, they put some effort into improving those eight acres of land. Before they got the threshing bee going, it had been largely unused for some time, covered in weeds, with a pile of debris at the north end.

The pile of debris was relatively easy to deal with. Once Campbell told the city of Madras that they wanted to use the property, the city promptly removed the pile.

And, then, of course, the Campbells tackled the weeds. "That was one of our goals, to take that area that was kind of waste ground out there and turn it into a nice looking place. We wanted the fallow side to be clean tilled and we wanted the wheat field to look like a nice, tidy, even wheat field," said Dave Campbell.

"We always felt kind of a warm, fuzzy satisfaction having taken that area and really tidied it up," he added.

Besides all that, the historical society's homestead site has special meaning for the Campbells. "My grandad headed up the whole history house that's there and I feel like I'm continuing his work by making use of that area. The big shade trees he planted," said Dave Campbell.

Regardless of the location, the threshing bee connects the Campbells with their roots as descendants of some of the first farmers in this area. Their sister, Jennie Smith, who also helps make the threshing bee happen, said, "I think there's a little bit in all three of us that feels like we were maybe born a little too late and it feels pretty good to go back and do something the way Grandpa did it."

# Casey at the Bat in Jefferson County:

## *An Informal History of a Century of 'Town Team' Play*

*by Jerry Ramsey*

When the far-flung country that eventually became Jefferson County was being settled at the turn of the twentieth century, one of the first activities that energized and connected those raw little communities was competitive team sports, mainly baseball, pitting the young men of Madras, Warm Springs, Culver, Lamonta and so on against one another. The historical evidence suggests that "town team" competition was being organized right alongside the clearing of land and the construction of roads and houses. My great-grandmother Nancy Keirsey Mendenhall, newly settled in Opal City (then informally called "Yamhill Flats"), noted in her 1900 diary that her grown sons Joe and Walt had "gone to the ball game in Culver." (This would have been "Old Culver" north of Haystack Butte.)

Presumably the young men of Culver and Opal City had played baseball somewhere else, before moving to Central Oregon, and so it didn't take much trouble to lay out ball-diamonds, gather such equipment as was needed, and organize teams to carry emerging community pride and spirit into competition with other new settlements nearby.

It's possible that the first organized sports in what is now Jefferson County involved baseball games between Indians from the Warm Springs Reservation and early settlers across the river.

**1913 Lamonta town baseball team (JCHS photo archives)**

One such match, probably around 1906, was remembered by John Campbell, who grew up near the mouth of John Brown Canyon nearby and would have been a teenager at the time, and probably a participant in such games:

"Vanora was a busy little town . . .. A baseball diamond was roughed out from the sagebrush flat, and at one of the hotly contested games between the Warm Springs Indians and their white brothers, a bolt of lightning hit a juniper to which a team of horses was tied. The result was a pair of dead horses hitched to a perfectly good wagon. Some of the occupants of the wagon were out for a while, but were soon revived, and the game went on." *(Jefferson County Reminiscences, p.76)*

The fact that the ballgame was resumed after the sports-fans in the wagon regained consciousness surely indicates that the players and the crowd were very serious about their baseball. A few years later, in 1909, the cross-Deschutes sports competition was expanded (with help from school officials in Warm Springs and Madras) to include both baseball for young men, and basketball for young women, on a "home-and-home" basis. *The Madras Pioneer* covered these matches enthusiastically. For a full account of them, see THE AGATE (Spring 2016 and

**Rare glass-plate photo of a 1909 outdoor basketball game between Madras and Warm Springs girls (Ed Mason photo)**

**Members of the "Grizzly Bears" town baseball team ("G B" in lower left), at 1915 Elkins 4th of July celebration (JCHS photo archives)**

Fall 2015). The girls' basketball series (the girls played outdoors and wore bloomers) was clearly a schoolgirls-only activity. For a vivid account of the three games, two in Madras and one in Warm Springs, and the travel to and from, see Ethel Klann's recollections of them as a player in her memoir, *Rimrocks and Water Barrels* (1979).

But the young men's baseball series in 1909 were, at least for the Madras bunch, not limited to students: according to the **Pioneer's** coverage, the team included John Campbell, Tom Dizney, and Perry Henderson, all of whom were out of school and in their early twenties — so it was in effect a "town team." They won the first two games (the second went to eleven innings); the Warm Springers took the third, 5-2. Big, enthusiastic crowds came out for both series; the *Pioneer* highlighted the informal cheerleading of the Warm Springs women in support of the men's team.

By the mid-Teens, basketball had clearly become a popular community sport in these parts — despite what must have been seriously limited facilities. In her letters home to Portland about teaching at Trail Crossing School (north of Crooked River Gorge) in 1914-15, Essie Maguire mentions that basketball was being played over in the new railroad facilities at Opal City ("Letters from Trail Crossing," THE AGATE, Spring 2020). Given rough-sawn un-level pine floors and low warehouse ceilings, it must have been an "approximation" of the game invented by James Naismith — but locals' urge to play it somehow must have been strong enough to overcome such limitations.

Still, it was baseball that prevailed here in the Teens, when townlets and communities were being energized by the new railroad lines and the continuing homesteading boom. In 1913-4, there were at least eleven town teams proudly representing Madras, Culver, Metolius, Warm Springs, Gateway, Shaniko, Antelope, Lamonta, Prineville, Grizzly and Maupin on the ball diamond, and every week in spring and early summer saw local re-enactments of "Casey at the Bat," with each team striving to avoid the fate of "Mudville" in Thayer's immortal poem.

The games of the Madras "Wildcats" were reported breathlessly on page one of the *Pioneer* in the Spring of 1913. On May 1 of that year (probably the season's opener), it was "Madras Wildcats Skin Warm Springs Coyotes 10-5." Next it was Madras trouncing the Culver "Cripples" (?!) 10-7. The game was played at "the Madras Ball Park" (Where was that?). Subsequent matchups led to defeats for the Wildcats — a 15-6 shellacking by Prineville, and a defeat by the Antelope "Antelopes," 13-8.

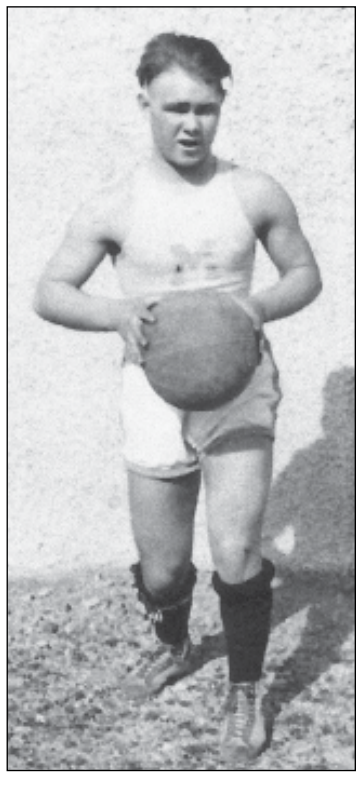
The home team recovered with victories over Culver and Shaniko, and two 6-5 squeakers over the Lamonta "Braves," presumably home and home. The 1913 Madras roster included George Newell, George Jackson, Paul Tucker, Jack Tetherow, Tom Madison, John Baker, Art Shugart, George Choquette, Milton Pillette, and Oliver Kalama—the latter apparently a recruit from Warm Springs? Something of the exuberant coverage of the games by the *Pioneer's* "Sporting Editor" is conveyed by this description of Madras outfielder Milton Pillette, whose day-job was in a local lumber-yard: " . . . Pillette, the fellow who has charge of the lumber to make our coffins, and who has so many slivers in his fingers that it makes him yell every time he tries to catch the ball . . ."

Not satisfied with such over-the-top reporting of the games, the sporting editor offered in 1914 a tribute in purple verse to Madras's "Immortal Nine" position by position, starting with catcher and pitcher:

"Thou who stand'st behind the plate
As the globules deviate,
With thine hands outstretched to show
Whither should the next one go,
Hail, all hail, the stony-wallness
Of thy reaching wide and tall-ness.
Thou, who fling'st the twirling twist,
Steel of arm and wire of wrist,
With thine eye alert to know
Every weakness of the foe,
Hail, all hail, the deep astuteness
Of thy out-drop and in-shootness . . . . ."
(*Pioneer,* July 30, 1914)

This high-spirited competition was halted in 1917 by the U.S. entry into World War One. After the war, town-team play resumed, but by then settlements like Lamonta, Gateway, and Grizzly were fading away, and in Culver and Madras at least, organized baseball in the high schools seems to have supplanted the grassroots inter-community play.

But evidently there were enough sports-minded young men residing around Madras (perhaps because of the Depression) to keep the town-team impulse alive into the 1930s, at least for basketball. Among those who carried on with what must have been very informal hoop play were Houston ("Fat") Hannon, who had played basketball and baseball for Madras High School, Thad Dizney, and others. The Second World War ended local town team play outside of schools, although it's likely that "gamers" like Fat Hannon were able to carry on with their athletic dedication by



**Houston "Fat" Hannon, Madras "townie" sports enthusiast, Madras basketball team early 1920s (JCHS archives).**

**"Resettlement Program" baseball team practice, 1935, near Rimrock Springs (Arthur Rothstein photo)**

participating in the well-organized team-sports programs in the U.S. Military. But early-postwar sports teams for young bucks like those who had turned out for the Madras Wildcats thirty years earlier didn't re-appear—the town-team impulse seems to have been one of the casualties of the war.

If so, around here, such was not the case elsewhere. In the upper Midwest, notably Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and South Dakota, the town-team movement of "townball" had been a fixture of smaller towns since the early 1900s, and resumed briskly after the war, as if the pre-1941 competition had been "called" because of a rain-shower now over. Garrison Keillor's monologues have immortalized the (fictitious) "Lake Woebegon Whippets" in Minnesota, and state townball tournaments continue in the Midwest to this day, apparently co-existing with American Legion programs for roughly the same age-groups. The quality of Midwestern townball play is attested to by the sizable number of major league stars whose careers started at the town level—like Herb Score, Bert Blyleven, and Moose Skowron.

But in this part of Central Oregon, as the post-war era ensued, and local high school athletics in Madras and Culver and Legion baseball advanced here, they seem to have absorbed much if not all of the earlier community-ball spirit, and young men beyond high school kept in shape on their own or engaged in informal "pick-up" sports competition when and where they could, especially basketball, when gyms were available.

In this interval, however appeared a "home-team" unlike any ever seen here before, or since—the Hay Creek Ranch polo team. It began in the 1960s when a lively young Portland couple, Macy and Pat Wall, arrived on the historic old ranch to manage it for its new owners, Macy's family. Macy, a polo player already, took note of the level fields and pastures between the ranch headquarters and the Ashwood Road, and also that there were some impressive cutting horses in the ranch inventory. Why not organize a polo team on the ranch, where English aristocrat "Jack" Edwards once bred sheep and entertained nobility?

At first, reportedly, the H/C ranch-hands were skeptical about the venture—chasing a ball with an elongated wooden mallet around a pasture, riding on sissy English saddles? But Macy and Pat's enthusiasm and perhaps the appeal of "the sport of princes and potentates" prevailed; and if you traveled along Ashwood Road in those days, you could watch Jefferson County's first, and so far only, polo team at practice. For competition, they traveled to Sunriver (in its early days), the Portland area, and into Washington State. A shame that Macy Wall and his cowboy polo-playing teammates were never interviewed and asked about how well cow-horses took to the tactics and demands of polo, and how successful the H/C bunch (did they have a name or a mascot?) was in competition. As it happened, Hay Creek ranch was sold in a few years, and the Walls left, taking their mallets and gear with them. But an improbable local sports precedent was set—with so far no takers. How about an all-Indian polo team on the Rez?

In the early Seventies, another somewhat improbable team sport made its appearance here and elsewhere in Central Oregon. I confess I always regarded volleyball as a sissy sport, a lot of standing around on either side of a net, occasionally jumping in place to try to get a ball over the net—suitable for boys' and girls' PE classes. But, possibly because of television coverage of men's and women's volleyball in the 1968 and 1972 Olympics, where the excitement of the real game was on display, a volleyball craze seems to have infected "younger men" (and women) hereabouts. Teams were organized in Madras, Prineville, Redmond, Bend; backyard sand-filled courts were constructed; young farmers and townsmen were drawn into intense organized team competition.

My late older brother Jim Ramsey was one of the prime movers, persuading friends and neighbors like Bruce Douglas, Pat Thomas, Gail Clowers, Larry Kingsbury, Norm Weigand, Harold Siegenhagen and others to join in the strenuous fun—even recruiting "elders" like Dr. Bill Mehlenbeck, the Madras dentist, and Sumner "Rod" Rodriguez, prominent local attorney, to come out and play. The local activity soon became a true "town team" operation when Jim and Volney Sigmund of Bend organized an informal Central Oregon league, with spirited competition between Madras, Redmond, Bend, and Prineville, even though this time there was no "Sporting Reporter" for the *Pioneer* to cover the heroic play. When Jim's playing zeal abated, he continued to support local volleyball as a referee, often working games as far away as John Day with the late Steve Rankin.

And in the late Seventies, he somehow became the coach of a women's volleyball team in Warm Springs, made up of post-high school Native women who took to the real game (not the PE version) with fierce enthusiasm. Under Jim's coaching, with the sponsorship of Kah-nee-tah Lodge, they traveled to volleyball tournaments around Oregon and Washington, winning most of the time. Players included Ginger Johnson, Julie Mitchell Quaid, Priscilla Squiemphen and her sisters, Carole Wewa, and others. Probably

**Jim Ramsey (1932-2020), volleyball enthusiast and master angler**

their finest moment came in winning the championship for Warm Springs at an All-Indian Tournament in Toppenish. After the title game, they hoisted my brother on their shoulders and carried him off the court, silently and unsmiling. Onlookers (and my brother himself) wondered where they were taking him, and for what . . . .

A few years before this, sports fans, the drive to organize local athletic teams and competition had already manifested itself, again in Warm Springs. The sport was basketball, and the players were mainly young Native American men, post high school, many of them veterans of informal hoop play on Agency playgrounds and courts, and likewise of playing on the well-coached Madras High School teams of the 1950s and 1960s.


**The Warm Springs Magpies, champs of the 1964 All-Indian Basketball Tournament. Standing L-R, Levi Kennedy, Byron Patt, Jim Macy, Satch Miller, Vernon Tanewasha. Kneeling L-R, Junior Danzuka, Lyle Rhoan, Kanim Smith (Pioneer photo)**

They called themselves "the Warm Springs Magpies," and their emergence coincided with both the appearance of circuits of Indian basketball teams throughout the Northwest, and the launching of all-Indian basketball tournaments in the area—including (in January 1960) the "Warm Springs Holiday All-Indian Basketball Tournament," which has carried on to the present (although suspended in 2021 because of the pandemic). It was a happy intersection of enthusiasm and opportunity and around the Northwest and in their own and other tournaments, the Magpies became the most celebrated and successful community "town team" in local history.

Never blessed with much height, the Magpies didn't let defensive play get in the way of a relentless, up-tempo, run-and-gun offense. Even in their early years, they regularly scored 100 points or more. In their Sixties heyday, their charge was led by Delano "Satch" Miller, Jim Macy, Lyle Rhoan, Kanim Smith, Byron Patt, Vernon Tanewasha, Junior Danzuka, and Norman Red Bird (a Lakota Sioux, he was discovered playing for Roosevelt High in Portland, and "imported").

In their busy prime, the Magpies had some coaching help from Dick Souers of Madras High but were mostly self-coached. The logistics of keeping up a very ambitious schedule of games all over the Northwest (Portland, Chiloquin, Fort Klamath in Oregon; Yakima, Toppenish, Wapato in Washington; Lapwai, Idaho; Fort Browning, Montana and so on) were handled by Roscoe Smith. In the 1964-5 season, by mid-January of '65 the team had already put together a 19-1 record!

But it was the year before, 1964, that the Magpies outdid themselves, by winning their own Warm Springs Holiday tournament (their first of several titles). They defeated the Fort Peck Warriors, 117-63; the Toppenish Papooses 102-58; and in the close title game, the Wapato Hawks, 79-73. Jim Macy and Kanim Smith were chosen for the All-Tournament Team and big crowds (at the Madras High School court) also enjoyed Native dance competitions.

The original Magpies pretty much stayed together through the Sixties. They are elders now, but their achievements are warmly remembered on both sides of the river, and a mural is underway at the Warm Springs Community Gym to honor them and the long, ongoing tradition of organized, tribally sponsored athletics for young people on the reservation. Local artist Charlene Dimmick is in charge of work on the mural, assisted by young artists on the Rez.

As for the spearhead of the Magpies in their prime, Satch Miller, after his playing days were over, he served for a number of years as treasurer and then president of the National Indian Athletic Association, an organization for supporting and coordinating Native competitive sports nation-wide. In retirement, he works for the Warm Springs Recreation Department, helping to keep local sports activities alive, and maybe fostering successors to the legendary Magpies of sixty years ago!

There's no evidence that any local "town team" athletes have made it into major league baseball, or the NBA in basketball, or the Olympics in volleyball or polo. (An exception might be made for Jacoby Ellsbury, but his remarkable career consisted of school play, for Madras High and Oregon State, before he turned pro.) But if our community sports impulse over more than a century hasn't yet produced all-stars like Herb Score and Moose Skowron in baseball or their equivalents in other sports, it ought to be a source of satisfaction and pride to know how persistent that impulse has been here, and how diversely it has manifested itself in our communities. To Milton Pillette, the sliver-fingered Madras Wildcat outfielder, and Satch Miller and Lyle Rhoan and other Warm Springs Magpies, and Fat Hannon, the high school jock who never lost his love of hometown sports, and the Hay Creek cowboy polo players, and all the other grassroots athletes over the years:

Three Cheers!
Well-played for the Home Team

**Sources and Further Reading:**

Nancy Keirsey Mendenhall, "Diary for 1900," personal collection
John L. Campbell, "Vanora," in *Jefferson County Reminiscences* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1999), P. 76
Ethel Klann Cornwell, *Rimrocks and Water Barrels* (Monosha, WI: Lakeside Press, 1979, pp. 153-4
THE AGATE: "Girls' Basketball Game in 1909, Madras vs. Warm Springs," Fall 2015, pp. 17-8; "Further Light on 1909 Girls' Basketball Game," Spring 2016, p. 19
*Madras Pioneer* files
*Spilyay Tymoo* on-line archives
Conversations with Delano Miller, Harold Siegenhagen, Bill Ramsey, Ann Ramsey-Goss: many thanks!

# Recording our history in oil and watercolor:

## *Jeanette Macy's Legacy*

*By Jane Ahern*

**Jeanette and Jay Macy**

If Jeanette Macy could read this story, she'd be blushing. That's according to her daughter, Marilyn Brown. "She was a modest lady. She didn't ever want to be in the limelight. Quiet and always busy behind the scenes," Brown said. "She was a really shy person."

That may be, but as a longtime resident of Jefferson County, active community member, and an invaluable contributor to our historic record, Macy deserves our attention.

Macy's son describes her as a Renaissance woman. Her interests ran the gamut from playing the piano to international finance. Born in 1913, she died in 1994— right before the internet really took off. She didn't live to see the World Wide Web change everything, but she knew it was coming and she was eager for it, Gregg Macy says.

Macy fulfilled many roles in her life, including, but not limited to: farmer's wife, mother of four, college graduate, thrift store volunteer, teacher, school librarian, history buff, and artist.

She combined the latter two interests to create an unknown number of paintings that illustrate historic sites in Jefferson County, many of which have been otherwise erased, particularly schoolhouses and pioneer homestead houses.

"She had a project of painting all the one-room schoolhouse she could get her hands on. She was pretty systematic about it," said Brown.

### *The Artist*

Macy grew up in in Boise, Idaho and earned her degree in education at the University of Idaho. At college she met her husband, J.A. Macy (often written in the press as Jay Macy) and they were married in 1938.

The couple moved to Jefferson County with their four children (Marilyn, age 7; Gregg, age 4; Doug, age 2; and Rebecca, age 6 months) in 1948, joining a parade of farmers from Idaho coming to take advantage of the newly available irrigation water.

Also in that parade was J.A.'s younger brother Dwight and his wife and children. That branch of the family still farms in the Culver area.

**Top: Old barn and landscape — where? Note Three Sisters in background Below: Another inviting Central Oregon landscape, again with the Sisters in background — Grandview area?**

**Original Madras school, 1900s**

Jeanette, J.A. and their children settled first on 80 acres between Metolius and Culver. That wasn't enough land, so they sold that property within a couple years and bought their 160-acre homeplace on the Agency Plains.

"Not much on it but rocks," said Brown of the Agency Plains property.

They needed a house on their new property, so the Macys purchased two buildings—for $1 each—from decommissioned military bases in the area. Their kids think they got the cottage from Camp Abbott, which was a WWII training camp on the present-day site of Sunriver. The second building was a bunkhouse from the Madras Airbase.

J.A.'s brother Dwight also bought a cottage. They went in together on the bunkhouse, used a chain saw to cut it in two, and each took home half. J.A. built a back onto their bunkhouse half and the boys slept there until their parents built a permanent home. The Macys still use the cottage as a rental property and the bunkhouse is an outbuilding on their property.

**Grizzly School, ca. 1946**

Where to place the buildings on their land? "They always looked around for the rockiest part near the road and that's where they put their house because it wouldn't be good for farming," said Brown.

The family lived in those buildings until about 1953, when they were ready to put up a stick-built house. Jeanette designed their new home, and her artistic flair is still evident today. Her daughter, Rebecca Macy, said Jeanette hired local craftsmen to install beautiful built-in cabinets and fireplaces of local stone. The material for the hardwood floors was salvaged from the air base.

While Jeanette's four children were young, she was occupied with raising them and supporting J.A. in his agricultural work by handling the paperwork. "She was Dad's executive secretary. He was on all sorts of state committees, he helped start the research center here. He didn't have to do anything except walk into a meeting. She had him all prepped for it," said Gregg Macy.

Sometime after Rebecca graduated from high school in 1965, Jeanette began teaching creative writing classes at Madras High School. "She was a very successful creative writing teacher down at the school," said Gregg. "She was an excellent writer. She loved words."

One of Jeanette's accomplishments as a teacher was in working with Howard Hillis to get a book of her students' writing published. *The Oregonian* ran a story about it and the book was in high demand for a time.

Macy also taught remedial reading. Brown recalls that her mother motivated her students by adding drivers' manuals to her reading curriculum because driving was something they were interested in.

After a few years of teaching, Jeanette switched to working in the high school library, where she stayed until she retired from teaching in about the mid-'70s. By that time, J.A. was selling cattle all over Oregon and she wanted to be free to travel with him when he delivered the cattle.

It was around the same time she started teaching at the high school that Jeanette took up artwork. Brown said her mother took some classes to get started.

She began by sketching with pencil. When Jeanette and J.A. went places together, he would wait while she stopped to sketch something that had caught her eye.

These were sometimes natural objects such as rocks or juniper trees. "She loved gnarly old junipers. I can't walk by one of these goofy junipers where I don't think of Mom," he said. Other times, she would sketch an old building she saw.

As she transitioned into painting, Macy would sometimes make notes on her pencil sketches about the colors so that she could render the scene in paint later.

Over time, Macy developed herself into an accomplished artist. Though she took some art classes, Rebecca thinks Macy was mostly self-taught.

Macy painted with oil and with watercolors, sometimes using pen and ink on top of the watercolors. "First she'd put the color in, then she

**Old Madras Methodist Church (1909) with "conjectural" original setting?**

would draw the mountains with pen and ink," said Brown.

"She liked oil because she said it was forgiving," added Brown.

When the Art Adventure Gallery opened in 1986, Macy was one of its most active volunteers. Camille Green was the gallery director at the time, and she said of Macy's artwork: "Her compositions were good. You could tell she had a good eye for composing something. She was kind of a treasure for Jefferson County."

Always modest about her painting, Macy didn't initially think about selling her work. She was managing a volunteer thrift store in downtown Madras in the early 1970s when the owner of the leather shoe and boot repair shop next door offered to display and sell her paintings in his shop.

Macy went for it and was pleasantly surprised to find that people would pay money for her paintings, though they didn't bring in a whole lot of money. "Thirty-five dollars was always just a really high price," said Gregg. Rebecca said the price inched up over time.

According to Rebecca, Jeanette sold her paintings mostly through commissions. Some were sold at the Art Adventure gallery in Madras and Jeanette also donated paintings to be sold at the Methodist Church's annual Christmas bazaar.

Green, the gallery director, said that Macy always showed her paintings at the Jefferson County Fair and at Art Adventure Gallery's annual locals-only art show.

Macy's success did not make her immune to a little ribbing from her family. Brown recalled: "Dad would come in for lunch. He'd make sure she had straight fence posts in all her pictures. He'd say, 'Now, Jeanette, those are a little on the crooked side.'" Rebecca remembers J.A. critiquing the cattle in her paintings as if judging cattle at a fair.

Perhaps that explains why Macy preferred to paint by herself. "I never, ever saw her paint," said Brown. "She just liked to paint when nobody else was around."

Macy was a prolific painter. Her children don't know how many paintings she did in the approximately 30 years that she painted, but Gregg estimates it must have been at least 60 or 70.

The family has about 40 of the paintings. Some of them were sold or given as gifts but came back to the family as their owners passed away. Rebecca Macy said the Habitat for Humanity thrift store used to call them if they received one of Jeanette's paintings as a donation.

***The paintings***

Macy enjoyed painting outdoor scenes, with or without buildings. Cascade mountains, streams, trees, deer, horses, cattle, and geese are all featured in her work. What she did not paint was portraits.

"She really never did people. She just didn't feel like she wanted to do people," said Brown. "People liked her paintings, and they would ask her to do one of their dog, but she would po-

**New Era School on Agency Plains, ca. 1948**

**Vanora School, 1920s**

litely say, 'No, I just don't do that kind of thing. You wouldn't want me to do that because you may not recognize your dog.'"

Brown said her personal favorites are her mother's "palette-cleaning" paintings in which Macy did a quick painting to use up the paint on her palette. She has one that Macy did of weeds blowing in the wind and another of fall trees seen along the pass between Sisters and Eugene.

"She would do the free-est, most lively paintings that she ever did. She just had a freer hand when she went to clean her palette," said Brown.

Macy's paintings of natural scenes may well show an environment that future generations in Jefferson County won't recognize. While she probably didn't set out to document climate change, Macy did deliberately try to create a visual record of the remnants of the homestead era.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, one-room schoolhouses dotted the Jefferson County landscape as farmers moved into the area to claim homesteads and raise families. Well before Jefferson County was formed, neighboring parents would cooperate to provide a schoolhouse, employ a teacher, and support the operation of the local school. After the establishment of the county in 1914, the first Jefferson County school superintendent, Lillian Watts, oversaw all these tiny schools and was famous for traveling all over the county to visit them regularly.

Most of the schoolhouses are long gone or are no longer in their original locations. Brown explained that once the schoolhouses were no longer used as schools, people could buy the buildings from the school district for use as sheds and outbuildings. They would sometimes move the schoolhouses to another property.

"They were very simply made and so they were easy to nail back together if they got wobbly when you moved them," Brown said of the schoolhouses.

"She'd (Jeanette) find out where they'd been moved to, and she would get ahold of the people and then she'd go out and talk to them. And sometimes the people living there didn't know anything about it," said Brown.

Photographs exist of some of the old schools, but they are rare, so Macy's paintings are an important contribution in documenting them.

Rebecca Macy says that her mother took pains to portray the schoolhouses accurately. She said of her mother, "She connected with some of the people who had grown up and who had gone to those one-room schoolhouses, and they helped her with the details of where the door was, where the bell was . . . so she could get the chimney in the right place . . . So, they would remember things from their childhood and help her with the details because she wanted to make it as accurate as possible."

Brown said, "She always got the biggest kick out of the fact that there would always be a big discussion about where the rose bush for the school was put. The reason they put the rose bush there-and at many of the homesteads—out by the back door or the front door was you always threw out any water from your dishes, or washing, or your face washing or anything on your rose bush. You didn't waste water. So, somebody would say it was on the left and somebody else would say it was on the right and there would always be a big discussion about where the bush was."

Macy's schoolhouse paintings are in various hands. Four of them hang in the school district 509J administration building, each helpfully labeled as follows: The first Madras school, 1902-3; the Vanora school, 1912-29; New Era School (on the Agency Plains), 1914-1949; and the old Culver School 1936-7.

The dates given are a little confusing because the first Madras school and the old Culver school were each used more than one school



**Old "combined" brick Culver school, 1940s?**

**Unidentified — possibly Bolter place, Willowdale?**

year. It is possible those dates (1902-3 and 1936-7 respectively) indicate the years depicted in the painting rather than the years the school was used, especially in light of information included on the back of the Culver School painting.

The note on the back explains that Macy had given the painting to Margaret Jahns as a birthday present in 1982. Jahns' grandfather, James Hodges of Culver, had helped build the school and Jahns herself had taught grades 1-4 at the school in the 1936-7 school year. Jahns donated the painting to the school district with the blessing of Macy's daughter, Marilyn Brown.

**Mendenhall homestead, Opal City**

It makes sense that Macy would give Jahns a picture of the school as it had been the year Jahns taught school.

Another of Macy's schoolhouse paintings, of Grizzly School, still hangs on the wall of the old Family Finders building which, along with its contents, recently came into the possession of the Jefferson County Library. That building is being used for storage right now, so the painting is not accessible to the public, but library director Jane Ellen Innes said that the library's two Macy paintings could grace the walls of the new addition the library is planning for the future.

A note on the back of the Grizzly School painting provides details about the school: "The first school building was erected in 1900 [*Jefferson County Reminiscences* says it was built in the 1870s] and sessions were held for 3 months a year. The second school building was built in 1925 when Grizzly was in Crook County still [This is an error. Grizzly became part of Jefferson County in 1914]. Students attending were from families of Rufener, Moore, Monroe, Kaufman, Vincent, Bland, Hamilton, Newbills, Chitwood, Joslin, McKenzie and others. Teachers remembered by pioneer people were Delia White and Eliene Killingbeck."

There is no indication of who wrote the note. It is the kind of information that Family Finders would have collected, but Macy could have written it too.

In addition to the schoolhouses, Macy painted quite a few old homes in various states of repair in order to produce a record of them. Gregg said, "She was a history buff and could sense that history was fading and that these houses would be going, and they were

**Farrell Homestead, in its original setting near Gateway**

**Same house (?), different setting, with porch as added after it was moved to fairgrounds in 1970s**

a place in time . . ."

Rebecca said that her mother loved all aspects of local history. "She loved all the books about the history of Central Oregon like *Jefferson County Reminiscences*. She'd read up about something and then we'd go try to find it. Sometimes it wouldn't be there. She liked all the old homesteads we'd find. Sometimes the house was gone but you could tell it was there because of where the trees had been planted."

As with the schoolhouses, Macy learned as much as she could about the homestead sites. "She loved doing the research and talking to people and learning about what it was like to grow up there. She loved hearing the old-timers' stories."

Unfortunately, there is no written record or collection of Macy's homestead paintings like there is with her schoolhouse paintings. An unknown number were requested by landowners or descendants of landowners. Brown said they sometimes provided a photo for her to work

**Can anyone identify this farmhouse, with its distinctive massive stone chimney?**

from, so they could have been gone even before she painted them, or substantially altered from the way they look in the picture.

The homestead paintings in the possession of the Macy family are unlabeled and thus difficult to identify, especially given Macy's practice of incorporating her sketches of trees and other natural objects into her paintings of homesteads. This combining of unrelated images probably made for a better composition but could also make it more difficult to recognize the site.

One mystery involves a painting owned by the Jefferson County Library. The painting is in storage now but used to hang in the director's office. The house in the painting is very similar to the Farrell homestead house that the historical society maintains at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, and of which Macy made a painting. A photo of her painting of the Farrell house was on the front cover of the last AGATE. (Fall 2021).

According to Gregg Macy, the Farrells were close friends of the Macys, so it is not surprising that Jeanette gave them a painting of their homestead. What is surprising is that the Farrell house painting is almost identical to the library's painting. The main difference is in the vegetation surrounding the two houses and the fact that one house has a tire swing hanging from a tree. Even the hills and fence in the background are the same.

Of course, that style of house was not uncommon in the early 1900s. There could easily have been two or more such houses in the county. But Macy's practice of incorporating different elements around the main subject of her paintings introduces some doubt about the identity of the site in the library's painting.

Are they two paintings of the same house? Or two different houses of very similar design?

Accompanying this story is a photo of one of Macy's unidentified paintings. It is distinctive because of the massive stone chimney – unusual for Jefferson County homesteads. If you recognize this house or think you might have some insight into its identity, please let us know.

It is worth noting a couple of other Macy paintings that found distant homes. One once hung—and may still hang—at the national 4-H organization's conference center in Chevy Chase, MD.

Brown said her mother learned through the local extension office that 4-H was soliciting paintings from counties all over the U.S. for the conference center they were renovating. The extension office was looking for a painting to submit to represent Jefferson County, so Macy recruited Amy and Lindsay Carroll, the two elementary school age daughters of neighbors Jim and Melanie Carroll, to pose for her. She took a photo of the girls in front of a bank of rural mailboxes, with farm fields and a barn in the background to work from. Her painting was accepted and was displayed at the conference center.

When the Lieuallen family—close friends of the Macy's—took a trip to Washington, DC, Doug and their son Aaron made a side trip to see the painting and snap a photo of it to give to Jeanette.

And later, when Marilyn was working for the YWCA in Portland, they sent her to a conference to learn about financial planning. She was strolling through the halls of the conference center when she stumbled upon her mother's painting.

"I was going down the hall and I was kind of looking at the pictures as I went along. I had forgotten that Mom did this and there was Mom's painting, and I went, 'Oh my gosh!' This is by my mother!' It's probably still hanging there," Brown said.

Another of Macy's paintings was given to the Japanese crew who filmed the television show *From Oregon with Love* as a going away present when the series wrapped up. Her children remember the basic fact of the gift, but not the details. Given the content of the TV show, which was about a young immigrant from Japan adjusting to life on a Central Oregon farm and which emphasized the scenery, it seems likely that the painting was of the local landscape.

Even unidentified, Macy's paintings of homesteads are valuable historical records because they offer a glimpse into how white settlers lived in these parts a century and more ago. They illustrate different types of construction and what resources were available, and they highlight the landscape in which people lived, worked, and played.

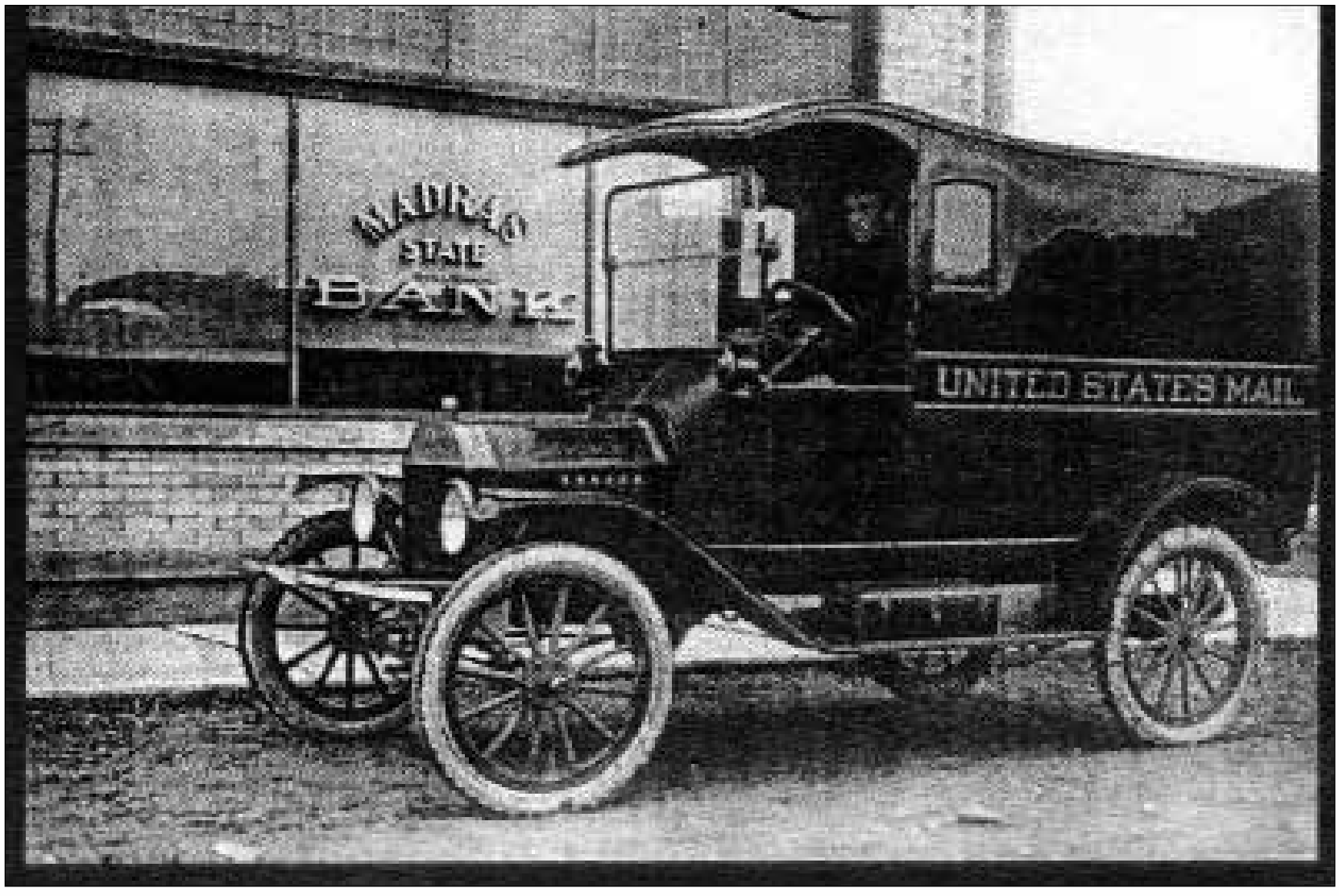
Macy gave a lot to her community as a teacher, as a supporter of her husband in his community endeavors, and as a faithful volunteer in the Methodist Church and Art Adventure Gallery. Her paintings of historic sites are another form of service to Jefferson County. They are a lasting gift from a remarkable woman.

Readers, if you have a Jeanette Macy painting at home and you feel like sharing, you can email us a photo of it, along with any information you have about the painting, and we will post the collection of them on our website at www.jeffcohistorical.org.

Also, if you think you recognize her unidentified paintings, please let us know.

# The Story of a Mail Delivery Man

*By Beth Crow*




**Joe Warren in his new 1915 Model T mail truck**

***Editor's note:*** *Beth Crow's entertaining profile of Joe Warren, one of Jefferson County's pioneer RFD mail-carriers, originally appeared in the fall 2006 issue of the Jefferson County Historical Society's newsletter, a predecessor of today's AGATE. We've edited and are reprinting it here as a tribute to Beth, a dedicated educator, genealogist, and local historian (the JCHS Beth Crow Award honors her), and also as a tribute to Joe Warren and his RFD successors here, for their service in getting the mail through wherever in our sprawling county it needs to go.*

During Joseph Willis Warren's 31 years of service in Jefferson County, he purchased 14 cars, averaging 26,000 miles per year and totaling 520,000 miles over his mail-carrying career. "Joe," as he was called by customers on his rural mail routes, was a well-respected man. Patrons and neighbors said they would grieve when he took his last trip as a carrier.

He was born in Red Cloud, Nebraska, on the 3rd of August, 1882, the son of Joseph Wesley and Julia Peirce Warren. His father owned a livery stable and had homesteaded in 1873, and later became sheriff and assessor of Webster County. Nebraska.

Young Joe at age 16 began working in a mercantile store, but wanting to see the Northwest, came out in 1903 to Portland, where his mother's sisters were living. He worked in grocery stores and by 1908 he was a partner with his brother-in-law in the grocery business. The store was not the ordinary corner grocery, but rather one that was modern and up to date in every respect.

Joe had married Flossie Viva Cooper on May 5, 1907. She became ill in 1909, and her

physician ordered her to go to a drier climate. So Joe sold his share of the store and moved to Madras, and applied for a homestead northeast of Madras. Their son, Willis, who was born on Sept. 16, 1908, was left in the care of his grandmother (in Portland) for about a year while his mother recuperated.

Along with farming, Joe sold produce and worked at Central Oregon Mercantile. When Willis was about 7, his father . . . took a civil service examination and was appointed a rural mail carrier for "Route A." There had been two horse routes around Madras: one, on the Agency Plains, was operated every other day by W.F. Sherrod, and the other one, a southern route serving Metolius and Culver, was operated daily by Gillis Dizney. A survey of the two horse routes was made, and the two were consolidated into one motorized route of 57 ½ miles, with a starting salary of $1800 a year.

Joe's appointment in 1915 came with specifications for the type of motor vehicle he was to obtain to operate the route. Mr. Warren arranged for the purchase of a 1915 Model T Ford, which he had shipped to Madras from Portland by train. The Oregonian ran an article on Dec. 12, 1915, underlining the historic importance of what was underway in Madras:

**Uncle Sam Orders Motor Car Sent over Rural Route Formerly Covered by Two Horse Teams**

"Tomorrow Joseph W. Warren, of Madras, will inaugurate the first official rural motor route in the Oregon post office service by covering 57 ½ miles which heretofore have been handled by two rural carriers with horses and buggies. So far as is known, the route out of Madras, Jefferson County, is the first compulsory motor route installed in the Northwest as a result of the recent ruling by the Post Office Department. The machine must have a carrying capacity of 800 pounds and 80 cubic feet of space. 'The roads near Madras are usually in pretty fair condition all year round, and I feel certain that I shall be able to make a trip every day during the year,' Mr. Warren said."

**There had been two horse routes around Madras: one, on the Agency Plains, was operated every other day by W.F. Sherrod, and the other one, a southern route serving Metolius and Culver, was operated daily by Gillis Dizney.**

At this point a little history of the U.S. Postal Department might be interesting. Benjamin Franklin was the first Postmaster General, in 1775. In 1896 the first experimental rural delivery routes were begun in West Virginia. Critics of the plan claimed that it was impractical and too expensive to have postal carriers trudge over rutted roads and through forests trying to deliver mail in all kinds of weather.

**Rural free delivery did cause the development of the great American system of roads and highways. Farmers were delighted with the new service and the new world open to them.**

But the inception of "RFD" (Rural Free Delivery) was from the start a great step forward for the nation, and it led on to further progress:

"Rural free delivery did cause the development of the great American system of roads and highways. Farmers were delighted with the new service and the new world open to them. After hundreds of petitions for rural delivery were turned down by the Post Office because of unserviceable and impassable roads, the local governments began to improve existing roads. Farmers labored and even paid money for improvements. One Missouri farmer looked back on his life and calculated that, in 15 years, he had traveled 12,000 miles going to and from his post office to get the mail. Thus the rural mail carrier played a big part in the development of our country. Today it is hard to imagine the isolation that was the lot of farm families in early times. In the days before telephones, radios, or television, the common links to the farmers' outside world were the mail and newspapers that came to the local post office. Because before RFD the mail might not be picked up for a day or a week or even a month until a trip could be coupled with the need for food or equipment, you can imagine what rural delivery meant when it came." [Source? Unfortunately, the Newsletter text omits the documentation of this quoted passage, and we have not been able to find it]

In *Jefferson County Reminiscences,* there are references to mail in most of the community chapters .

**Here are a few:**

**HAY CREEK:** "[Jim] Clarke and his sons, Day and Bert, helped build a 28-mile rural road from Madras to Ashwood. The road was finished in 1916 and the mail was carried from Madras to Ashwood with as many as sixty families receiving mail." (p. 44)

**MADRAS:** "The mail service into Madras, around 1902 and before, was very limited. The first mail to Prineville, Hay Creek, Willow Creek, and the surrounding country came through 'the Basin' [site of Madras]. One of the earliest carriers was Ed Campbell, who carried mail from The Dalles by way of Dufur, Wapinitia, Simnasho, and Warm Springs." (p.151)

**LYLE GAP AND GATEWAY:** "First mail was put in large boxes by stage drivers who drove between Hay Creek and Warm Springs. The box was set in the middle of Agency Plains and people would come from miles around and sort their mail from it." (p.192)

**PONY BUTTE:** "There was a post office called 'Maud,' named after Sam Sandvig's wife. This was from 9 May 1912 to 31 March 1914." (p. 256)

**MUD SPRINGS:** "Farmers had to drive to Madras until a 'Star Route' was established. Mr. Lockard was carrier. [In ] December 1925 it became part of J.W. Warren's motorized RFD route." (p. 272)

After the postal appointment, Joe, Flossie, and son Willis moved from their farm into Madras, in the "Depot Addition," and their new home was built on the property . . . .

In the winter of 1916, a snowstorm blocked

the east and west roads, and it went down to 40 degrees below zero, so Joe hired a livery stable team and drove his route for 30 days. He had to hire an extra carrier for half the route. Sending a letter to Washington D.C. asking what he should do if it went to minus 50 degrees, he received a response, "The mail must go out." He managed to make it to the post office but on some occasions, he just put up the mail in case someone called for it. During the years, he delivered the mail practically every day. But in the winter of 1919, with four feet of snow on the ground and the mercury around [minus] fifty degrees, there was a period of eight days when there was no mail service.

Joe had many rules and restrictions that he had to obey, and the slightest deviation would not be tolerated by Riley Cook, the Madras postmaster [early principal of Madras School and County Judge in the 1930s). He could not carry passengers and often when he found someone in distress, he told them to stand by until he could go home and get his own car and come back for them.

When farm wives ordered meat to be delivered on hot summer days, he carefully took the packages to their door although he was required only to leave [parcels] in the mail box. If he found a cow or horse had gone through the fence, he would drive it slowly home ahead of his vehicle. If mail was piling up in a mailbox and he could not contact the patron by phone, he would make a trip back on his own time to see if there was a problem.

Gene Cook, son of the Postmaster, says that one day Joe, by whom a clock could usually be set, was late for work. Mr. Cook was getting worried. Joe finally arrived about an hour late and explained that his glass eye (from a childhood injury) had frozen in a glass of water and had to be thawed out before he could come to work.

Joe knew the route like the inside of his hat, but he had problems during the big dust storms in the 1930s. He drove into a field and became lost until he hit a line fence, which he had to take down to get back on the road. There were times when the car got stuck in mud holes, and since regulations demanded that he never leave the mail unattended, he had to carry the mail bags to the nearest farmhouse to call for help.

**There were times when the car got stuck in mud holes, and since regulations demanded that he never leave the mail unattended, he had to carry to mail bags to the nearest farmhouse to call for help.**

Patrons who lived near the roads where the mail was being delivered would watch for Joe and meet him at the mailbox. This kept them in touch with the outside world, and it was a welcome stop for Joe as well.. . .

[When Joe Warren retired in 1946, the Madras Pioneer covered the local celebration marking his years of devoted service with the following headline and story:]

**Pioneer of Postal Service Paid High Honor by Patrons Saturday**

"J.W. Warren, a pioneer in postal service of Central Oregon, learned Saturday night that sometimes in a man's life a greater satisfaction can be claimed in performing well the tasks assigned to him than come from the money pay of the job. . . . Mr. Warren and his wife . . . were honored guests at a party given him Saturday evening at the Madras Community Hall by patrons of Madras Rural Free Delivery Route No. 1, which he served for more than 30 years. . . . He was made to know of the love, esteem and respect held for him by those he had so faithfully served.

No event in Madras has ever been marked by a greater spirit of friendly neighborliness. A.D. 'Dick' Anderson was chairman of the committee which arranged for the party and was master of ceremonies. Approximately 150 were present, enjoying the gathering so much that they didn't seem to want to go home when the formal program had ended." (Madras Pioneer, Feb. 28, 1946)

**1946: "(Postmaster) J.W. Warren, a pioneer in postal service of Central Oregon ... and his wife were honored guest as a party given him Saturday evening at the Madras Community Hall by patrons of the Madras Rural Free Delivery Route No. 1, which he served for more than 30 years. He was made to know of the love, esteem and respect held for him by those he had so faithfully served."**

Joe and Flossie retired in Medford, Oregon. They celebrated a golden wedding anniversary in 1957. Flossie was a member of Juniper Rebekah Lodge in Madras, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Episcopal Church. She was also a first cousin to Cecil Moore, Vern Moore and Mrs. Roscoe Links. She died May 15 1961 in Portland. Joe was active in Odd Fellows and Masonic lodges, and also in the Mud Springs Grange. He served on the Madras school board, was a Budget Board member, and a Mt. View Cemetery custodian. He died on February 8, 1971, in Newburg.

Their son Willis went through all grades in Madras and graduated from Madras High School in 1925. He graduated from the University of Oregon, and then attended University of California, attaining a graduate degree in librarianship there, and a second degree from Yale University. He was a senior librarian at the University of Oregon for nineteen years . . . He married Elizabeth Emily Knowles in 1932. Two boys were born to them: William and James Warren.

Most of the material for this story was gathered by James Warren's wife Jennifer from Joe's scrapbook and family records. And so, we have the Joe Warren story of the mail carrier with 31 years of service in our county. In the course of his career with the U.S. Postal cars, he used and wore out a total of fourteen cars—six Model Ts, three Star-Durants, one Model A Ford, one V-8 Ford, and three Chevrolets.

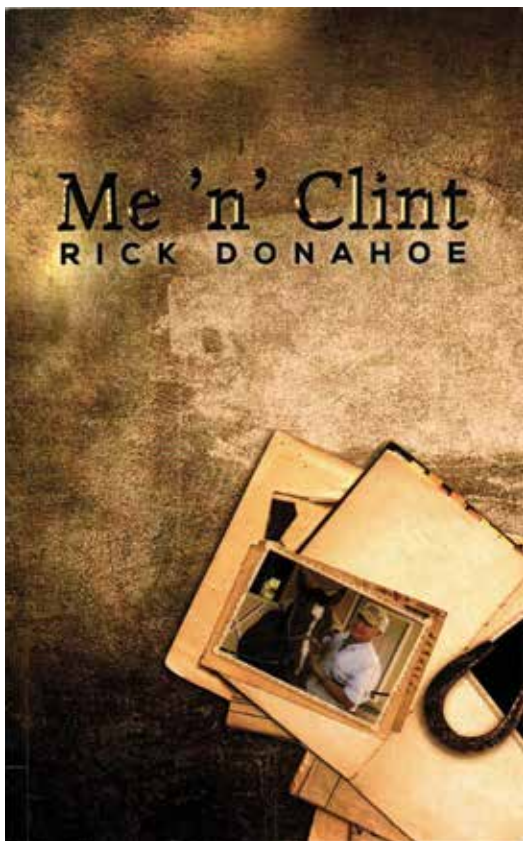
# BOOK *PREVIEW & REVIEW*

Book Reviews
by Jerry Ramsey

## *Me 'n Clint*

by Rick Donahoe

AGATE readers will remember Rick Donahoe's lively account in AGATE No. 11 (Spring 2019) of providing farrier (horseshoeing) services to the horses of the Rajneeshpuram. They may also recall that it was his discovery of an early homesteading journal in an outbuilding on his farm north of Redmond, and his transcription of it, that led to one of our most widely read local history articles, on the homesteading lives in 1913-1926 of Gay and Ethel Larkin, in AGATE No. 4, "The Mystery Homesteaders" (Fall 2015).




*Me 'n Clint* is all about the art and lore of horse-shoeing, as the author pursued it in Colorado, Texas, Florida, and finally in Central Oregon. (Clint is the name of a companionable old horse he now hangs out with, and occasionally shoes, in their mutual retirement in Ohio.) As an informal hands-on guide to the farrier's trade, Donahoe's book ought to be read by anybody who's new at owning and caring for horses.

But along with its wealth of equine know-how, *Me 'n Clint* is a memoir in the fullest sense—a warm and readable recollection of the author's life around horse-people and horses of every kind and size—show horses, draft horses, dude-ranch nags, kids' ponies, racehorses, mules and donkeys. Horseshoeing is a physically demanding and sometimes dangerous and not very lucrative calling, but the author obviously loved what he was doing, most of the time, around big and sometimes-uncooperative animals, and his effortless style makes it easy to imagine how and why he did.

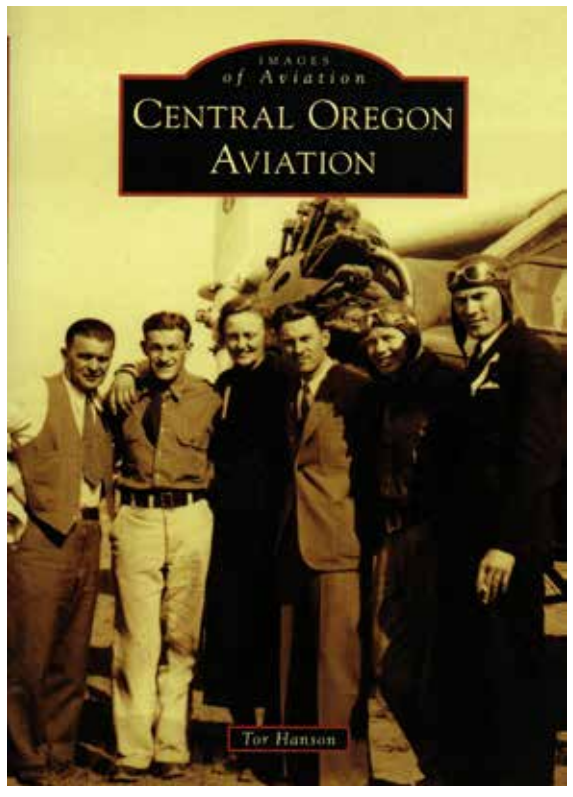
Horse-shoers have plied their trade here in Central Oregon since our first ranches appeared in the 1880s, and *Me 'n Clint* is an important contribution to our appreciation of that neglected part of our region's history.

Rick Donahoe, *Me 'n Clint*. New York: Austin Macauley Publishing, 2021

## *Central Oregon Aviation*

by Tor Hanson

Tor Hanson's *Central Oregon Aviation* (in the Arcadia "Images of America" series) is a detailed and fascinating survey through photographs and captions and short texts of this area's aviation legacy. Readers may well be surprised to learn how rich and extensive that legacy is—covering the first "aeroplane" flights in Prineville in 1912, to the local barnstorming exploits of "Tex" Rankin and others in the Twenties, and so on through the unflagging efforts of Redmond businessman J.R. Roberts in the '40s and '50s to promote flying and commercial air-service here, the WWII aerial occupation of Redmond and Madras airfields by training squadrons of the U.S. Army Air Corps, the growth of the "smokejumping" and aerial forest-fire-fighting operations at the Redmond Air Center, and so on.




Jefferson County readers may regret that Hanson's coverage omits notice of the very active "Flying Farmers" hereabouts, and of the conspicuous activity of aerial crop-dusting on the North Unit irrigation farms, and especially of local "duster" and aerial entrepreneur Ace Demers (who once bought a B-17 bomber in another state and flew it back to Madras solo. Another time, when a Stearman duster he was re-filling with chemicals got loose and begin to careen around the tarmac, Demers had to shoot it dead with a rifle, stopping the plane but causing a fire which consumed it).

But no popular survey like this one can ever be exhaustive, and Hanson's readers will be glad to see generous coverage of local aviation icons such as Central Oregon's premier WWII aviation hero Rex Barber of Culver; our Erickson Aircraft Collection/Museum; and the annual "Airshow of the Cascades," both located at the Madras Airport.

Tor Hanson, *Central Oregon Aviation*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2021

# Miss S.D. Wolf and her 1920 Misadventure in Bend

**Unidentified 1909 Agency Plains equestrienne. Would the Bend cops have challenged *her* in 1920? (Luelling/JCHS photo)**

On August 14, 1920, a young woman named S. D. Wolf, a resident of Madras, was entering the northern outskirts of Bend on her horse when she was stopped by Bend policemen. They told her that she could not proceed into Bend because she was wearing "male attire" (meaning, apparently, riding pants).

The officers also found that she was carrying a pistol, which they confiscated. She protested that she intended to pass through Bend only to cross the Deschutes River over the bridge downtown, on her way south. She explained that she was carrying the pistol for her personal protection "against wild beasts."

As reported in the Bend Bulletin and later in the Salem and Portland newspapers, Miss Wolf (however she navigated her way around Bend and over the river) managed to send a telegram to Oregon Governor Ben Olcott complaining about the confiscation of her pistol and requesting that he order that it be returned to her. Gov. Olcott's public response (as reported in the newspapers) was to praise Bend Mayor Eastes and his policemen to the effect that "your efforts merit commendation rather than criticism from her."

When this very peculiar story turned up a century later in 2020 in the *Bulletin's* "Looking Backwards" feature, Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director of the Deschutes Historical Society and Museum, contacted THE AGATE to ask what we knew about the intrepid Ms. Wolf. Our answer, alas, was, "Nothing." We could find no record of anybody by that name living in Madras in those years. So, her story sort of just "dangles" historically — puzzling, suggestive, but undocumented and indecipherable — except that it did happen. Can anybody help us identify Ms. Wolf?

One of the really odd things here is that the Bend cops would have pounced on her for her unlady-like attire, in 1920—eight years after Oregon voters had emphatically passed its women's suffrage measure, which was followed by the passage of the federal women's suffrage amendment in 1920 (on August 16, only 12 days after Ms. Wolf's encounter in Bend, in fact!). By 1920, surely, attitudes about the rights and privileges of women were rapidly changing en route to the "Roaring Twenties," flappers, and all that. But maybe not in Bend, already the metropolis of Central Oregon? Kelly Cannon-Miller has observed (personal communication) that Mayor Eastes and his city administration were notably conservative, perhaps part of a backlash (at least in Deschutes County) against suffrage, Prohibition (1919) and other drastic measures that roiled the male-centric Old Guard in the decade of the Teens.

But if Ms. S.D. Wolf and her horse ever made it back home to Madras and complained to her open-minded neighbors here about her official mistreatment in Bend, we've so far found no record of it. And did she ever get her shooting iron back? It's an exasperating story in its present rudimentary form. Maybe we should stage a contest-- who can make the best short story or poem out of it?

**Conjectural sketch of Miss S.D. Wolf and her horse, by Maddy Bland, Seattle,Washington.**

# SAVING OUR HISTORY THROUGH ARCHIVING

*By Jarold Ramsey*

*(Note: this article originally appeared in the Chamber of Commerce Newsletter in 2012, and is re-printed now in reference to the termination of the JCHS' plan to re-locate its museum in Westside School, and in terms of how museums like ours can serve their communities, and what they should strive for.)*


**The new office on 5th. (Note: There is no mail delivery here. Send all JCHS mail to our official address: JCHS, Box 647, Madras, OR 97741**

Since last October, Jefferson County Historical Society volunteers have been working in the society's museum in the unheated second floor of the old county courthouse, methodically inventorying and packing up the museum's artifacts to move them to storage in Westside School and eventually to display them in an interim museum setting when the "Westside Community Center" formally opens.

The work of processing the museum's 6,000-plus items of every imaginable shape, size, and significance is slow and painstaking. It's a job that can't be rushed, even when it has entailed slogging through what must be one of the world's biggest collections of nearly identical metal spice canisters, or a seemingly endless assortment of cast-iron "sad-irons" from our great-grandmothers' laundry-rooms a century ago. But the museum teams have been resolute in keeping faith with both the original donors and the museum's founders, who together started the museum back in the 1970s, and with what might be called "the historical future," when Jefferson County residents may wonder at and learn from such homely tokens of Long Ago.

And, since we began sifting through the museum five months ago, we have regularly discovered (or more exactly re-discovered) real treasures—pieces of our local history whose immediate appeal and value has been obscured or "foregrounded" over the years by the sheer proliferation of stuff on the walls and shelves of the museum. This process, whereby visitors can't see the trees for the forest, so to speak, is the bane of most small local history museums as they grow and run out of both display and storage space; and the historical society is seeking professional advice on how to avoid it hereafter, in the planned interim museum at Westside, and eventually in the Central Oregon Heritage Center that we are committed to build next to the fairgrounds.

Just recently, to illustrate our "Gee Whiz" excitement in turning up misplaced or forgotten museum artifacts, we came upon what may very well be the hefty iron knife that Chief Paulina or one of his braves carried when they were ambushed in Paulina Basin by Howard Maupin and his posse back in 1867. And, under some clutter in a side-room, we found a couple of odd black wooden cabinets labeled "First Radio in Madras." It turns out that the label is correct: the primitive set was in fact the pride and joy of the Madras Radio Club, including Mayor Howard Turner and other town notables, who strung their aerial wire across Main Street (5th) in 1922-3 and reported in the Pioneer listening over the ether to stations in San Francisco, Denver, and Kansas City!

Another set of historical treasures have come to light under the heading of "archives"—that is, historically significant documents that are probably not as appealing to the eye and the touch as Paulina's knife, but may be more valuable for the understanding of our local history . . . and more vulnerable to neglect and loss. A case in point involves the personal papers of Howard Turner, generally reckoned to be "the Father of Madras" for his crucial role in the early and middle years of our town. During the recent Madras Centennial celebration, while our early history was being ransacked for details, Turner's name was frequently invoked, and more than one centennial planner wondered whether his personal records had been preserved. Well, yes, they've been kept safely if not accessibly in six boxes in the museum's storeroom since the museum's founding, and they appear to be a treasury of materials on which the history of Madras might be written. But regrettably, they've never been inventoried or archived, and so none of us involved with planning the 1910-2010 centennial thought of looking for and delving into them. Getting the Turner papers properly archived and indexed ought to be a post-centennial priority for the historical society and the City of Madras.

Another mislaid archival treasure came to light last summer through the diligence of Mu-

seum Coordinator Phyllis Lange, in response to the recent surge of interest in the origins of Madras Airport as "Madras Army Air Base" during World War Two. It's been hard to do anything historically with this interest because of a nearly total lack of military records for the Airbase—when the Army Air Force moved out in late 1945, they seem to have left behind no personnel or operational records. Perhaps they simply destroyed their files as they left, or, if the paperwork was duly transferred to a higher command, it seems to be irretrievably lost now, nearly 70 years down the line.

**Moving in, Feb. 2022—L-R: Jim Carroll, Margee O'Brien, Dave Campbell, Jennie Smith, Dean Roberts, Becky Roberts, Tom Manning.**

We do know (from newspaper records and USAAF accident reports) that the base was occupied first in 1943 by the 318th Squadron of the 88th Bombing Group of the 2nd Air Force (B-17 "Flying Fortress" bombers), and then in 1944 by the 546th Fighter Squadron of the 475th Fighter Group of the 4th Air Force (P-39 and P-63 fighters). But what were the supporting units, made up of the mechanics, the weathermen, the base supply units, the military police, and so on? And where are the rosters of the GIs who came to Madras to man these units in support of the training of pilots and air crews at MAAB?

What Phyllis Lange found (hidden in a "military" display-case) has made such basic questions at least partly answerable. A registry book, donated by the late Leita Richardson, covers GI visits from 1943 to 1945 to the Madras USO Center (in the old Community Hall on 6th St.), recording hundreds of names of visitors from the base, with their ranks, military units, hometown addresses, and even in some entries their dogtag numbers and previous military deployments elsewhere. The registry, kept by a Sgt. John E. Nichols, is thus an unexpected treasure-trove of local military information that is otherwise hopelessly lost; it was probably preserved precisely because it was not militarily "official," and thus could be passed into civilian hands when the base and the USO closed. A few of the support units identified in the USO registry are the 432nd AAA Base Squadron, the 21st and 24th weather squadrons, the 8th Det. B Squadron of the 88th Bombing Group (radar), the 126th Service Squadron (military police), and the 852nd Signal Detachment.

Alas, the GIs who signed the USO guestbook—mostly enlisted men, not officers, from virtually every state in the Union—did not record what actually went on at the USO during their visits for weekly dances, traveling and local stage-shows, etc. The Madras USO was the biggest in Central Oregon and drew GI visitors from bases in Redmond and Camp Abbot (now Sunriver), with as many as 500 crowding the hall on weekends. There is a list of "Junior Hostesses"—local high school girls who came to the USO to socialize and dance with the GIs, under the chaperonage of "Senior Hostesses" (including Leita Richardson). Would that we knew more—but to have these names, and their Army units, and home addresses, takes us a long way toward recreating the military and social conditions of the brief but intense "military occupation" of Madras in World War Two. And all because of the forward-looking museum donation of Mrs. Richardson! [See Jane Ahern's "The USO in Madras," AGATE 3, Spring 2015, pp. 3-9]

These are two valuable resources in the museum's archives, and the list of such "paper treasures" is extensive—our unique collection of Hay Creek Ranch records, for example, and our extensive county-wide photo collection, including the largest known gathering of photos by the pioneer railroad photographer Ole Hedlund, and glass-plate photos by early local photographers Cora Luelling and Ed Mason. But it needs to be said that every year, important documentary pieces of our local history—diaries, letters, business, school, and farm records, family scrapbooks, photos, etc—are lost because the people who happen to hold them don't think they are worth keeping, or don't know what to do with them.

If you doubt this unhappy statement, ask yourself: do you know the whereabouts of complete files of the nationally-honored Madras High School newspaper, *The White Buffalo?* Would you know where to find local phone books from the 1920s? Is there a collection somewhere of family and official documents relating to the first settlements of Latino families in Jefferson County? If we do have Howard Turner's precious papers in safe keeping, what about the personal records and papers of influential Madras figures like Lewis "Turk" Irving and his wife Louise, Oregon legislative leader Boyd Overhulse, early irrigation advocate Harry Gard, prominent rancher Andy Morrow, and influential local philanthropists like Al Bean and Sumner "Rod" Rodriguez?

The mission of the Jefferson County Historical Society—"to gather, research, and preserve the history of Jefferson County and Central Oregon for public education"—embraces the goal of collecting and archiving written and photographic materials, as well as "artifacts" per se. It's sad to consider how much of our shared history has been lost, and is being lost, because of public indifference, careless record-keeping, and lack of archival facilities. But as we prepare to move the JCHS Museum into new, more spacious quarters in Westside, and eventually into the Central Oregon Heritage Center, we want to re-affirm our commitment to collect and archive what we can—but it's a commitment that we can only keep with your active help. If you have artifacts, photos, or documents that have local historical significance and you'd like to donate them to the historical society, please call 541-475-5390 or write to the Jefferson County Historical Society at P.O. Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741.

# President's Message

JCHS President Lottie Holcomb

The last two years have been quite a challenge for the historical society as well as all of you. We had less events and feel the pain of wanting to get together. On that note, we have decided to postpone the Annual Dinner. At our last board meeting we voted to combine (if possible) the Annual Dinner and the Annual Meeting, which is in September. We hope to have lots to report, some fun entertainment and a great meal with friends.

The historical society has rented an office space in downtown Madras. It is located at 226 SW 5th St., right next door to Step and Spine. We hope to utilize the space for meetings, society business and promotion. Madras has really been promoting our downtown businesses with many events throughout the year. So, if you are downtown for any of these events, please stop by and say hi. Come see what we have been up to lately.

The Annual Threshing Bee has been happening the last few years on the property next to the Culver Highway and adjacent to the fairgrounds. We have come to an agreement with the Fair Board to utilize a portion of the grounds for this year, as they are needing more parking. We hope that we can celebrate this event as it was intended this year, so watch for news about the Threshing Bee this summer.

You ask about a museum? We are busy working on vible choices for a Jefferson County Museum. The years of waiting on Westside are over. We are now weighing all our options to move forward with building or refurbishing something for all the wonderful artifacts that have been collected over the years. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact us.

Thank goodness for The AGATE! We will be forever grateful to Beth Crow for starting this years ago. The AGATE has grown into an award-winning publication and all due to some very fine writers, editors, researchers, and historians.

Your support of the Jefferson County Historical Society is how we keep our history alive.

Thank You,

**LOTTIE HOLCOMB**
President
Jefferson County Historical Society

## New JCHS Members:
## September 14, 2021 - March 25, 2022

John P. Farrell
George Kramer
David Milholland
Madtown Fitness,
Joe Robbins
James F. Quinn
Jeff Scheetz
Michael Hall

## Donations and Memorial Gifts to the society:
## September 14, 2021 – March 18, 2022:

### Money Donations:

**Alpha Omicron Chapter 3115**
**Kris Anderson and Michael O'Brien**
**Charles Cunningham**
**Michael Hall**
**Judson and Barbara Hyatt**
**Mike Lockling**
**Barbara Lokting**
**Macy Family, Rebecca Macy**
**Kathie Olson**
**Charles Skean**

### Memorial Gifts:

**In Memory of Daniel Roark Abrams:**
**Linda Smeltzer**

**In Memory of Mark Hagman:**
**Jerry and Dorothy Ramsey**

**In Memory of Dr. Douglas William Lieuallen:**
**Jerry and Dorothy Ramsey**

**In Memory of Graceline Carter Quinn:**
**James F. Quinn**
**Shannon Quinn Landstrom**
**Darcy Quinn Mundorff**

**In Memory of Bill Robinson:**
**Nicole Birch**
**Tom and Barbara Manning**
**Jerry and Dorothy Ramsey**

**A surviving specimen of a pointed fence post — 110 years old. A salesman came through with a wagon load, with a pitch that farmers could drive them without digging holes, not realizing how hard our ground was. He sold some, at a reduced price, and a few are still standing, points upright.**

# THE•AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741

## THE AGATE • JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# *PLEASE JOIN US!*

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

**MEMBERSHIP DUES 2022:**
(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