

— SPRING 2017 —

# THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • MADRAS, OREGON



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**TRIBUTE TO  
MARIE HARRIS**

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## Dear friends of Jefferson County history—

**W**elcome to Issue VII of THE AGATE, the Jefferson County Historical Society’s journal of local history! We hope you’ll find much to enjoy and think about in this issue—which features both a study of the historical background of a near-future historic event, the Great Solar Eclipse coming here August 21, 2017, by Jane Ahern; and an account by Dan Chamness of the origins and routes of wagon freighting and travel from the Columbia River into Central Oregon beginning in the 1870s.

Dan’s piece carries on with THE AGATE’s continuing exploration of the crucial subject of early transportation in this country—see Jane Ahern’s “Ways into and out of Madras: A Twisty Tale,” in AGATE IV, and Jerry Ramsey’s “Remembering Trail Crossing” in AGATE VI. We are planning further coverage of the subject in future issues, and welcome suggestions on the project.

Elsewhere in this issue: shorter features on Donnybrook’s gift to the Bend *Bulletin* and Central Oregon journalism, Phil Brogan; on a forgotten 1911 “bird’s-eye view” of Madras that links us with the Big Apple, Philadelphia, and other American settlements; and on a rousing but historically problematic rowboat rescue down the Crooked and Deschutes rivers in 1940. Also, notice of a new book on the old Pioneer Association’s Pioneer Queens and Men of the Year.

### *And please take note of the following:*

- The archiving of all issues of the new-format AGATE on the JCHS website: <http://www.jeffcohistorical.org>. Check them out!
- The recent passing of four Jefferson County pioneers and historians, Edna Campbell Clark, Margaret Lever Dement, Marie Harris (see Kathie Olson’s tribute to Marie in this issue), and Hope Nance of Grandview and Portland. Hail, ladies; thanks, and farewell!
- The nearness of the 2017 JCHS Annual Dinner—Saturday, April 8, starting at 5:30 pm in the, Senior Center. See Lottie Holcomb’s “President’s Message” at the back of this issue for details—and please plan to join us!

COVER PHOTO: Tie-dye styled watercolor “flag” of 1979 OSU Solar Eclipse Expedition team (©Wolfgang Muehle)



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

**Editor:** Jane Ahern  
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# Total Solar Eclipses, 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Style

By Jane Ahern

For the past year or more, Jefferson County and its cities have been preparing for an historic event that will no doubt be the subject of an Agate story many years from now: a total eclipse of the sun on August 21 of this year. The eclipse will be visible all across the United States as the moon's shadow silently glides at about 2,000 mph from the coast of Oregon to the coast of South Carolina. Millions of Americans will be able to see it from their own front yards and millions more will travel to see it. Of all the locations from which to view this natural wonder, prominent eclipse chasers have placed Madras at the top of the list, based on the likelihood of clear skies.

Apparently, the whole world has seen the list and is making plans to visit our small city. Thousands are expected. Thirty thousand! Forty-five thousand! One hundred thousand?! Has Madras ever seen anything like this before?

In terms of crowd size, the short answer is no. For comparison, a May 11, 1911 Madras *Pioneer* headline tells of the first event in Madras history to draw a large crowd: "Nearly 4000 People See First Circus to Visit Madras Today" with the subheading "Largest Crowd Ever Assembled in Central Oregon Celebrates Coming of Deschutes Railway." Subsequent large gatherings have included annual events such as the fish fries in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jefferson County Fair, the Collage of Culture, and the Airshow of the Cascades. But even the largest of these has not come close to attracting thirty thousand or more people from out of town.

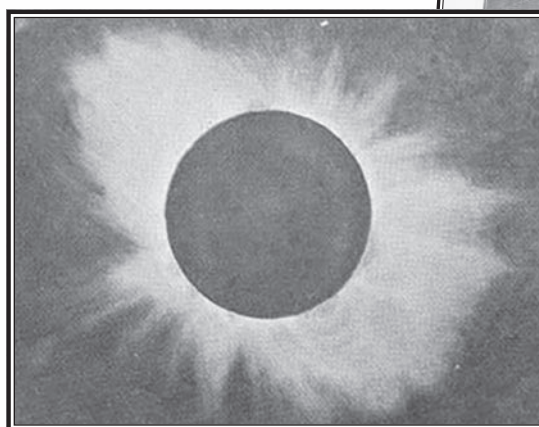
In terms of total solar eclipses, Madras has almost been blessed twice since its founding. *Almost* twice because the city had two near-misses last century, in 1918 and 1979.

## The 1918 Eclipse

The June 8, 1918 eclipse, while seen as a total eclipse in other places, was just shy of a total eclipse for viewers in Madras. The most recent total solar eclipse to cross the lower 48 states from coast to coast, it came ashore on the Washington coast near the border with Oregon and ran in a

line that lopped off the northeast corner of Oregon. The center of the path of totality passed through Baker, then on across Idaho, Florida and all the states in between.

Due to its position on the path of totality, Baker was the place to be in Oregon that time around. The Bend *Bulletin* and the Pendleton *East Oregonian* both reported that scientists from all parts of the United States were heading to Baker, with the *East Oregonian* writing, amusingly, "Over at Baker there has been



ABOVE: A painting of the 1918 eclipse by Howard Russell Butler who accompanied the USNO to Baker to record it. The painter used special painting techniques to get as accurate a picture as possible.

RIGHT: The eclipse of 1878 in the Rockies—cover of Harpers.



quite a notable gathering of astronomers and scientists to make observations of the event. To read the papers from that place one would think they had sole rights for the big show, but Baker need not think they will be able to keep Pendleton out of it." Pendleton residents were advised to drive a little south of town to get inside the path of totality. After the eclipse, the *East Oregonian* continued its friendly rivalry with Baker with this tidbit: "In spite of all efforts to make the eclipse a Baker affair old Umatilla County had the very best seats in the balcony Saturday and saw the full show which it must be said was good though not as fast or thrilling as the Round-Up."

Outside of Oregon, top scientists traveled to Denver to use the Denver University telescope, but the *East Oregonian* reported on June 8 that, "only scientists of high degree will be privileged to look through it during the afternoon." The story goes on to use a description familiar in Madras these days, "Long's peak, in the Rocky Mountain National Park, has been picked as one of the

DENVER POST—FIRST IN EVERYTHING

# THOUSANDS POINT GLASSES AT SUN TO WATCH ECLIPSE

MAP SHOWING PATH of the TOTAL ECLIPSE of the SUN ACROSS the UNITED STATES, JUNE 8, 1918.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, MAY 28, 1900, PHOTOGRAPHED AT WAIDESBORO, N.C. BY THE YERKES OBSERVATORY

Police Enforce Quiet So Astronomers at University May Make Priceless Observations—Movies to Be Taken—Throngs Seek Vantage Points.

AMERICANS PUSH GERMANS BACK IN

Denver Post front page coverage of 1918 eclipse

best places in the world to view the eclipse."

Situated just outside the path of totality, Madras residents were less fixated on the celestial event, though not entirely indifferent. The June 6, 1918 *Pioneer* was filled with stories related to World War I, plus the usual tidbits about who was visiting where, and so devoted only a short, albeit potent, paragraph to the upcoming phenomenon in the "Items of Interest" column: "Day after tomorrow, Saturday, will be eclipse of the sun. It will be the greatest thing of the kind in the life time of anyone now living. Don't fail to prepare to see it." Of course,

said preparation might have been easier had the *Pioneer* told its readers what time the eclipse would occur.

A week later, the *Pioneer* followed up with a brief and decidedly less sensational story reporting that deep twilight had set in during the eclipse, but the lower edge of the sun remained visible and chickens did not roost. The moon had eclipsed approximately 95 percent of the sun.

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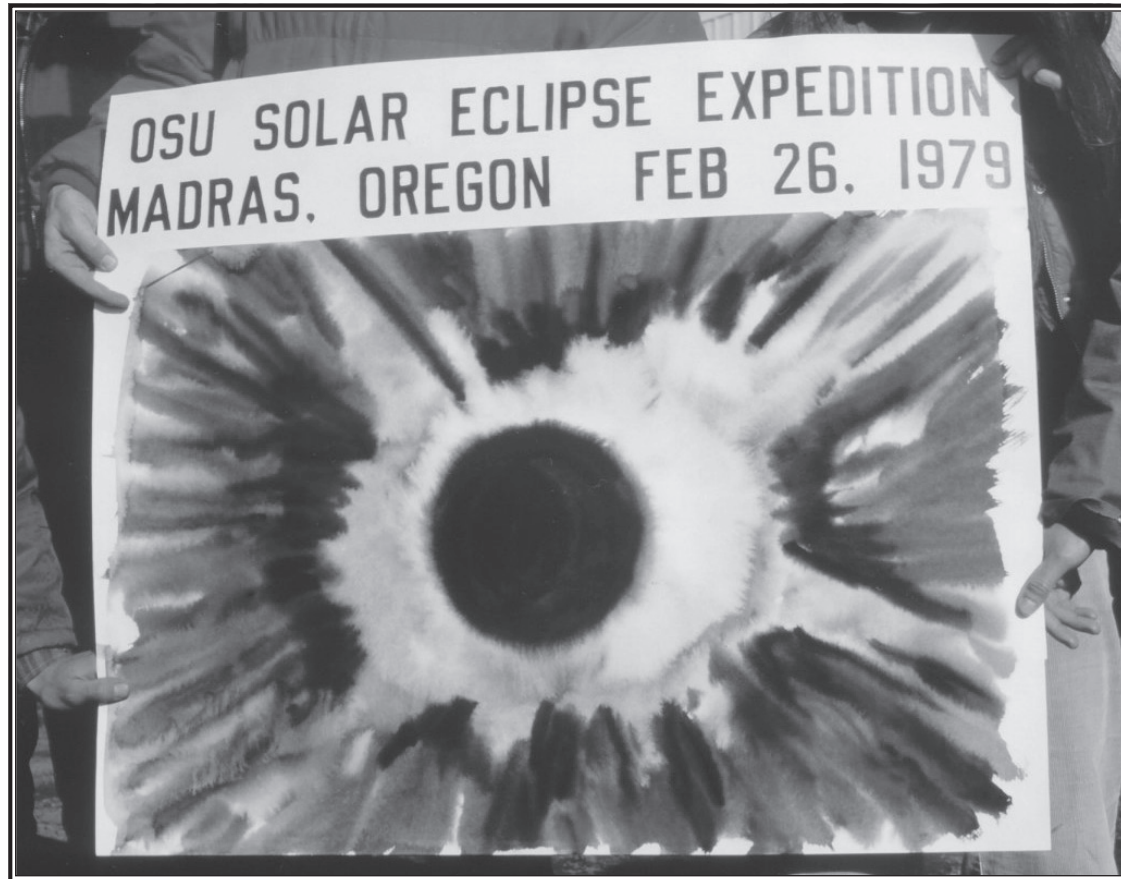
### The 1979 Eclipse

The February 26, 1979 eclipse only visited a few northern states. At the coast, it straddled the Oregon/Washington border, then covered roughly the top quarter of Oregon and a swath of northern Idaho, Montana and North Dakota, and went from there into Canada. Scientists had predicted Madras would be on the very southern edge of the path of the totality—a fact which, along with the likelihood of clouds in the Willamette Valley, made Madras a good choice as a base for the OSU Solar Eclipse Expedition.

The Expedition was led by doctoral student Robert Dale Hall, who was in residence in Corvallis from 1976 to about 1984. The following information regarding the Expedition comes not from Hall but from one of the 20 undergraduate students who participated in the expedition, Wolfgang Muehle. Muehle posted details and photos of this data-gathering field trip on his blog at <http://dermuehle.blogspot.com/2012/02/total-solar-eclipse-1979-in-oregon.html>.

One of the aims of the OSU Solar Eclipse Expedition was to observe and record the exact southern boundary of the path of totality in order to help scientists refine their ability to calculate the path of the totality during a total solar eclipse. Said calculations are complicated by factors such as the irregularity of the moon's physical features and variation in altitudes on the Earth's surface and in the past were sometimes inaccurate by miles. Improvements in calculations had been made by 1979 and this was an opportunity to verify those improvements. The OSU group was just one part of a larger study coordinated by the US Naval Observatory and the International Occultation Timing Association. Other groups of college students recorded similar observations in locations along the shadow's route.

The students and their mentor drove over from Corvallis the night before the eclipse and set up camp on the property of Agency Plains farmers Bill and Vivian Green at the corner of Fir and Boise. Muehle does not mention how they first made contact with the Greens and the Greens' sons Jerry and Richard do not know. Perhaps Hall made a reconnaissance trip to see where the group needed to set up their observation stations and simply asked for permission to camp out.



1979 OSU Solar Eclipse Expedition Poster (©Wolfgang Muehle)

The students went to bed on Feb. 25 under overcast skies, but when they woke up the clouds had mostly dissipated and so they spread out in eight teams at 400-meter intervals along North Adams Drive with their observation equipment. According to Muehle's measurement, the eclipse was total for 19 seconds at his station located 800 meters inside what was expected to be the boundary of the moon's shadow. As it turned out, the southernmost team was slightly outside the path of totality, meaning that all of Madras must have been too. The group

determined that scientists' prediction of the location of the shadow's southern boundary had been off by about a mile.

Wrapping up his account of the Expedition, Muehle writes, "Shortly after totality, all team members gathered at the farm and we exchanged our experiences and celebrated success . . . The friendly farmer's family invited us for coffee and while talking we learned a lot about Oregon farm life . . ." Upon returning to Corvallis they found that clouds there had blocked the view of the eclipse, so they had done the right thing by coming over to this side of the mountains.

As the OSU Solar Eclipse Expedition was being organized, the non-scientific community in Madras and elsewhere was gearing up for the eclipse in its own way. By late February, Madras was coming off a winter remarkably like the one just past. As

the 1979 Madras High School *Hi-Sage* yearbook described it, “There was snow on the ground from November to January. The weather was so cold that every time it snowed, it wouldn’t melt it would just keep piling up [sic].” The *Pioneer* warned in a February 8 headline “Power bills may soar from long, cold month.” Then when it did warm up, rainfall mingled with the snowmelt to cause massive flooding in downtown Madras, just as we feared it would this year. Damages came to \$277,628.46, according to Sheriff Ham Perkins.

There were other distressing items in the local news in late 1978 and early 1979. A 14-year-old Madras High School student collapsed in a school bathroom and died after sniffing Liquid Paper. Another Madras student died in a car accident on the road between Warm Springs and Madras and a school bus carrying Hermiston high school athletes collided with a semi-truck in Cow Canyon, killing an adult chaperone and seriously injuring a student. Former Sheriff and County Judge Henry Dussault died on February 14. And, in a case that would remain unsolved for 15 years, a search was mounted and then suspended for Kaye Turner, a Eugene resident who went missing while jogging near Camp Sherman.

It is difficult to get a sense of how much local fanfare there

was over the 1979 eclipse. If news articles are any indication, the *Madras Pioneer* showed a modest interest by running several stories about it in the weeks preceding the eclipse—offering eye-safety information and instructions for making a pinhole viewer, inviting readers to a couple of lectures held at the Central Oregon Community College campus in Bend, and announcing that the 509-J school district had decided on a two-hour delay on Monday, Feb. 26 because the eclipse would take place at 8:15 a.m., close to the usual starting time.

Even though Bend, Redmond and Prineville were miles outside the path of totality, the *Bend Bulletin* got creative on Feb. 24, 1979 with the following lead:

“The greatest shift in population locally since World War II when armies jockeyed for positions on rugged terrain that involved most of the High Desert, will occur on Monday, Feb. 26.” The story went on to relate that motels in the “blackout zone” had been booked for weeks and that visitors were coming from “all western states.”

The eclipse was awaited with anticipation but also with concern about eye safety, especially for children. This concern led school officials to alter the school day to ensure that children were supervised to prevent them from staring at the sun without eye protection. Central Oregon Community College and all the



Observation station on N. Adams Dr. during the 1979 eclipse (note shadow from eclipse) © Muehle



1979 eclipse panorama, shortly past totality on N. Adams Drive (© Muehle)

Bend public schools were closed for the occasion. The schools in Redmond opted for a confusing mishmash of some schools opening early, some starting late, and some sticking with their regular schedules. The *Bulletin* actually gave more details than the *Pioneer* about school closures in Jefferson County, saying that in addition to the 509-J school district, the Culver school district would be on a two-hour delay. Ashwood schoolteacher Penny Marston was quoted as saying that her school always opened at 9 a.m., so she didn't need to change the starting time; Toni Johnson, clerk at Black Butte School in Camp Sherman, told the *Bulletin* that her seven students would be taken to someone's house to watch the eclipse on television.

On the COCC campus in Bend, then-professor of physics Bob Powell prepared his students and the general public for the total solar eclipse by giving lectures on the subject. Taking advantage of the college closure, Powell led a group of about 50 students and community members from Bend to a pre-selected viewing spot on private property on Bakeoven Road near Shaniko. At their viewing site, Powell had a special telescope that projected the image of the sun onto a screen so that everyone could watch safely and, unlike a lot of other eclipse watchers that day, he also had a good supply of special eclipse glasses for people to use.

Such glasses were not as easily obtained in 1979 as they are now and alternatives like smoked glass, exposed film, or welders' masks were considered a bit risky, so children were taught how to make pinhole viewers in school and adults could find instructions in the newspapers. The most basic pinhole viewers could be made with a piece of cardboard, a sheet of white paper, and a pin to prick a hole in the cardboard. Probably the majority of people in 1979 "watched" the eclipse with their backs to the sun, looking at an image projected onto the white

paper.

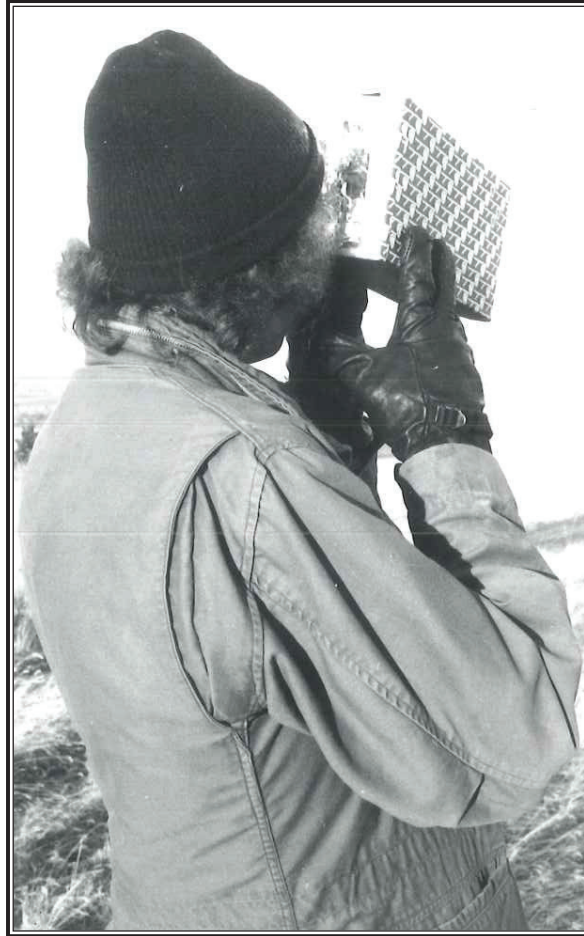
Jefferson County residents' recollections of the 1979 eclipse were mixed. Some, like Robin Gerke and Kelly McGreer do not remember it being a very big deal. "Nobody really got stirred up about it," said Gerke. That's understandable considering that Madras' placement for viewing the total eclipse was iffy; it was not certain that it would reach totality here (and in the end, it did not).

The Columbia River was the ideal location and people did flock there, especially to the Stonehenge replica at Maryhill on the Washington side of the river, which even attracted some druids. Julie Ramsey Talbot was there and shared her recollection: "They were in black, and there was no missing them. They were "dancing" (moving?) around the Stonehenge replica. I think they were chanting. But I'm not remembering 'thongs.' More like a band, a bevy. Maybe 20-30. There were many folks milling around; the druids were just part of the bigger crowd of onlookers. The eclipse itself stole the show. We didn't need the druids for any theatrical embellishment, though it did add a dramatic element, for sure."

Despite Gerke's apathy about it, plenty of Jefferson County residents were excited to see the eclipse. Madras High School science teacher Rob Hastings was interested enough in getting a good look at it that he arranged to take the day off so he and his children could go stay with

his mother in Wasco, not far from the Columbia River. They made themselves some pinhole viewers and watched the eclipse on an open hillside near Wasco. While there they saw school groups all around that probably came from The Dalles.

Lee Grantier, another science teacher at Madras High School, took about 20 science club members on a school bus to a gravel yard near the intersection of Bakeoven Road and Highway 97—



Paul Drury looking through a homemade pinhole viewer at the Forman's eclipse party (© Lloyd Forman)



probably not far from the COCC group—where there was open ground good for viewing. Grantier’s group had constructed an extra-large pinhole viewer about 4 feet long that made it easy for them to watch together. Grantier had also ordered special slides through which the students could safely look at the sun.

The Formans—especially siblings Teresa, Lloyd and Chuck – were another local family who made special plans to enjoy the 1979 eclipse on their family ranch out around Antelope, well within the path of totality.

Lloyd invited some high school friends to camp out on the ranch—he remembers Donnie Wright and Paul Drury in particular—and Chuck invited some college friends.

They had an invite list and invitations made by Chuck’s wife, Shelley, but there were some party crashers too, friends of friends. The group built a wood-fired sauna for the occasion and, of course, they had their pinhole viewers. “We had a big, gigantic free-for-all party,” says Lloyd Forman.

Following up on the eclipse, the March 1 *Pioneer* ran large photos of the eclipse taken in Shaniko. It reported in its accompanying story entitled “Eclipse ’79 Draws Rave Reviews from Viewers throughout Area” that as early as 4:00 a.m. on the morning of the eclipse, there was an unusual amount of traffic moving through Madras going north towards good viewing locations. It said that the Willowdale rest area on Highway 97 was full and that thousands swelled the minuscule population at Shaniko, with cars pulling over at every wide spot. At Shaniko, the eclipse lasted more than one minute and moving shadow bands were observed on the ground. The story reports that the eclipse reached totality in Madras for a brief time, a fact which is contradicted by Muehle’s report and by the recollections of local residents.

There is no mention of what people did immediately following the eclipse, but presumably they got in their cars and went home. They probably resumed their normal lives before lunchtime. Compare that to the frenzy that will engulf Jefferson County before, during, and after the impending 2017 total solar

eclipse and marvel at what a difference 38 years can make.

Those who made the effort to watch the Feb. 26, 1979 eclipse were rewarded with a spectacular experience. Watching on the rim above Maupin, John Stubbe recalls seeing the Bailey’s beads—beads of light visible around the perimeter of the moon—and also the moving shadow bands that are often seen during an eclipse. “It’s a quivery kind of light. It’s kind of eerie and it’s cool as heck,” he said.

Those are the things we know we can look forward to seeing this August 21—those plus the solar flares shooting out around the outline of the moon and the equally thrilling sight of the moon’s shadow swooping over Mt. Jefferson and charging right at us.

Everything else about that day is harder to predict and the 1979 experience is probably not much of a guide, much less the 1918 experience.

For one thing, Madras is near the center of the path of totality this time as opposed to just outside the boundary. More significantly, the days when people stayed home and waited for eclipses to come to them are gone. Thanks largely to globalization and social media, solar eclipses have become an international attraction. If the anticipated crowds materialize, the eclipse will be only one part of a larger drama that will include fun stuff like educational opportunities, beer gardens and concerts—but also gridlocked streets, a massive amount of litter and the potential for extensive property damage. Whether it turns out to be the best party or the worst disaster in Madras history, the 2017 total solar eclipse will easily overshadow the eclipses of 1918 and 1979 in the annals of Jefferson County history.

*“Not until  
August 21, 2017 will  
another total eclipse be  
visible from North America.  
That’s 38 years from now and  
may the shadow of the moon fall  
upon a world at peace.”*

Those were the words spoken by ABC News anchor Frank Reynolds in wrapping up the network’s special coverage of the 1979 total solar eclipse which took place on Feb. 26 at about 8:15 a.m.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

Marc Nussbaum, *Total Solar Eclipse 2017*. Irvine, CA: Audible Rush Learning, 2016.

NASA has put together a comprehensive website detailing all aspects of the 2017 eclipse. Check it out at: <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/>

For detailed information on other eclipses, see this NASA website: <https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html>



# The Dalles To Canyon City Wagon Road

By Dan Chamness with much assistance from Evan Taylor and Bill Dickson

**E**van Taylor was an 8th grade student in Madras in 2009-10 and worked on a History Day project with his grandfather, Bill Dickson. The subject of the project was The Dalles to Canyon City Wagon Road. Bill was a long-time Jefferson County Historical Society board member and also served as our president. Evan and Bill drove the length of the The Dalles-Canyon City Road in preparation for History Day and were able to identify sections of the road that are still visible today. The version of the road they reported on was the Sherars Bridge route. Some of the photos in this article are from the display put together by Evan and Bill.

Bill passed away in 2012. Today, Evan is a student at Oregon State University. The display compiled by Evan and Bill will be on exhibit at the Jefferson County Museum when we get our museum up and running again. The Historical Society is in debt to Bill and Evan for the excellent work on the display and Evan's presentation for History Day.

## History of the Wagon Road

The Dalles was the commerce center for all of Eastern Oregon in the 1850s. The community started as a Methodist mission in 1838 and Fort Dalles was established in 1858. Wasco County included all the lands east of the Cascade Mountains and into what is now Idaho. As more and more people came into Central Oregon in

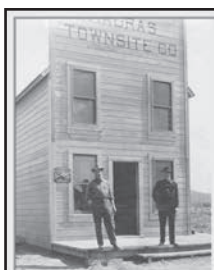


Bill Dickson and Evan Taylor in front of Evan's "History Day" exhibit

the mid-nineteenth century, the greater was the need for roads. Gold discovery in the John Day region was a primary stimulus for roads into the interior of Oregon and so was the need for military access. William H. McNeal, in *History of Wasco County Oregon* (The Dalles: self-published, 1953), reported that a pack train served Eastern Oregon on a regular basis as early as 1850. In 1851, Newell & Co. and Adams & Co. advertised that

express services (pack trains) from The Dalles to Eastern Oregon were available. Eastern Oregon mining camps were served from 1852 until 1854 by Todd & Co. (John Y. Todd) express.

A major barrier to access from The Dalles to the interior was the canyon of the Deschutes River. Nathan and Cyrus Olney operated a ferry at the mouth of the Deschutes River as early as 1853. The route from the ferry was south into what



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## THE AGATE

is now Sherman County past the future communities of Grass Valley and Shaniko. The William Nix Bridge was built across the Deschutes River four miles upstream from the mouth of the river in 1862 and the original route of The Dalles to Canyon City Road utilized the bridge. The route left the river via Gordon Canyon and connected with the trail from the Olney Ferry and on south through Sherman County and on to Bakeoven. Much of the path through Sherman County has been obliterated by plows. The trail/road continued on south from Bakeoven to Cross Hollows (now Shaniko), to Antelope Valley, and close to the present community of Ashwood. Then the route

went in an easterly direction to the John Day River, past the Painted Hills to the Mitchell area and then east through what is now known as Antone Ranch and into John Day Valley and along the John Day River to the gold fields of Canyon City.

There were several routes heading south from The Dalles in the 1860s but the route that was used most to get to Eastern Oregon utilized Sherars Bridge. John Y. and S.E. Todd filed a petition to build a bridge on the Deschutes River at the site now known as Sherars Bridge in 1860. The bridge was constructed and operated for a toll by John Todd. The approach to and from the bridge crossing the Deschutes was improved by Todd but still

was quite difficult. Todd sold the bridge to Joseph Sherar and later owned the Fairwell Bend Ranch near the community of Bend. Todd Lake in Three Sisters Wilderness is named after John.

Sherar improved the grade on the east side of the river with a crew of Warm Springs Indians. He built a road, or improved the existing trail, for some distance. The route out of The Dalles passed close to the present town sites of Boyd and Dufur and went up and over Tygh Ridge and down into Tygh Valley before dropping down to the crossing at Sherars Bridge. The road then went south along the river toward the present day community of Maupin before climbing



Closeup of Evan Taylor's wagon-road route map and photos

away from the river to Bakeoven and on to Cross Hollow and the junction with the route that had utilized the William Nix Bridge. The wagon road can be seen today upstream from Sherars Bridge toward Maupin on the east side of the Deschutes River.

Stage stations on the portion of the route utilizing Sherars Bridge were Eight Mile station, Eleven Mile house, Nansene, Chicken Springs, Keen, Sherars Bridge, Salt Springs, Bakeoven and Cross Hollow. Stage stations south of Cross Hollow include Antelope, Cold Camp, Burnt Ranch, Mitchell, Camp Watson, Dayville, John Day and Canyon City. Information on the routes of early roads comes from *Pioneer Roads in Central Oregon* by Lawrence E. Nielsen, Doug Newman and George McCart (Bend: Maverick Publications, 1985).

The William Nix Bridge was destroyed by a flood in 1870 and was not rebuilt. The bridge built by Todd was destroyed by flood in the winter of 1861-62 and rebuilt to better handle wagons. The route that was known as The Dalles to Canyon City Road used the William Nix Bridge. The road had been used a number of years before.

“In 1861 a company was incorporated called The Dalles Military Road Company, under an act passed by Congress granting to such companies lands adjacent to such roads.

This road was necessary to facilitate the moving of troops and stores and to establish posts and render it possible to punish and control the renegade Indians who made themselves a terror to whites passing over the trails,” according to Elizabeth Laughlin Lord in *Reminiscences of Eastern Oregon* (Portland: Irwin-

Hodges Co., 1903, pp. 190-191). Thus started one of the largest scams in Oregon history, as the Military Road Company did little to improve existing roads but

Farm and ranch land got into ownership of individuals by the various homestead acts but a lot of prime bottom land was sold by the Military Road Company in the

years after Congress made land grants in exchange for a road. The case would make a suitable article for a subsequent issue of *The Agate*.

The best-known of the people who traveled the roads from The Dalles to the Canyon City goldfields was Henry H. Wheeler, the namesake for Wheeler County. Wheeler was living in the Mitchell area and noticed the volume of business the pack trains were doing. The year 1862 was a big one for the gold fields of Canyon City and Idaho, so much so that a mint was started in The Dalles. The next session of the U.S. Congress put a halt to the mint in The Dalles and the building constructed to house the mint became a grain storage structure. Wheeler foresaw the need for a good road to replace the trails used by pack strings.

Wheeler improved existing trails for the passage of wagons. He made his first run in May 1864 in a wagon with 11 passengers who paid \$40 per person. The next spring, Wheeler began carrying mail, reportedly for \$12,000 per year. The *Oregon City Statesman* in 1865 stated that Henry Wheeler “upon being awarded the U.S. Mail contract January 16,

1865, purchased a crack Concord Stage Coach from Hay & Co of Portland for The Dalles to Canyon City mail and express run.” (*History of Wasco County*, p. 144) According to McNeal, “The passenger compartment rolled instead of bounced. The center of gravity was low, making it harder to tip over. It would accommodate



ABOVE: Stages climbing up Cow Canyon in mud, around 1900  
BELOW: Stage passengers at Heisler Station, near Lyle Gap, early 1900s (Jefferson County Historical Society)



still ended up getting ownership of vast acreage. There were several changes in ownership and names for the company. There were a number of lawsuits against the various military road companies questioning the legitimacy of the land donations in exchange for making only minor improvements to an existing road.

nine passengers on three inside seats, two on the driver's seat, and a dozen in the dicky seats (seats atop the coach). Passengers were strapped in to keep from being thrown out on rocky or chuckhole roads." The Concords weighed a ton and were pulled by four or six horses.

Later, Wells Fargo gold stages were used when service to Eastern Oregon became daily. The Wells Fargo stages were fast and drivers preferred them over the Concords. The Wells Fargo stages usually carried gold and supplies with a driver and one or two guards, but usually did not carry passengers or mail.

In September 1866, a stage driven by Wheeler was attacked by some 15 or 20 Snake Indians as he was driving a gold stage along Bridge Creek near present-day Mitchell. H.C. Paige was the only passenger. Wheeler was shot through the face, from cheek to cheek, cutting his tongue severely and knocking out some teeth. Paige kept the Indians at a distance with a rifle. Despite being wounded, Wheeler was able to unhitch the lead horses and the two men escaped. The stage was carrying some \$10,000 in greenbacks, corn and the mail. The Indians cut off the top of the stage, opened the mail sacks, scattered their contents, and threw the money aside. Wheeler was taken to the Umatilla House in The Dalles, where he recovered from

his bullet wound.

When Wheeler first started his stage business in 1864, there were few inhabitants between The Dalles and Sherars Bridge. There were few, if any,



Big three-wagon 14-mule freight outfit in Madras, about 1910 (Jefferson County Historical Society photo)

people between Sherars Bridge and Antelope where Howard Maupin kept a horse station for Wheeler. James Clark, one of his drivers, kept a station on the John Day River at Burnt Ranch. There were people living in Mitchell and there was a military post at Camp Watson, but from there on to John Day Valley it was a long, lonesome road.

Henry Wheeler maintained his stage company for several years. He is indirectly responsible for providing the nucleus for some of the towns that later grew in Central Oregon. Thomas Ward moved to

Cross Hollow and started a stage station. Later, August Scherneckau settled in the region and operated the stage station and added a store. The town of Shaniko (a shortened version of Scherneckau)

developed with the coming of the Columbia Railroad a mile north of Cross Hollow in 1901. Howard Maupin was the first permanent settler in the Antelope Valley. Wheeler established a stage station two miles east of the present site of Antelope and Maupin served as caretaker. Antelope was moved to its present site in 1871 when the route of the road changed.

G.M. Cornett specialized in hauling mail and freight from 1876 and into the early 1900s after Wheeler sold his business. Cornett's mail contracts in 1902, according to the *Shaniko Leader* newspaper, were Shaniko to Prineville; Prineville to Burns;

and Shaniko to Antelope and Mitchell. "Mr. Cornett had the best of coaches, good horses, and careful and experienced drivers on all the stage lines," according to the *Leader*. (*History of Wasco County*, p. 145). The Wenandy Stage Line ran between Shaniko and Bend via Trail Crossing over Crooked River. (*Jefferson County Reminiscences*, Portland: Binsford & Mort, 1957, p. 356).

These roads received heavy use. An account of what it was like to live at one of the stage stations in Central Oregon is related by Mrs. Putnam in Lewis

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McArthur's *Oregon Geographic Names* (Portland, Binsford & Mort, 3rd edition, p. 231). Mrs. Putnam lived at Grade, near Burnt Ranch, and she related,

“Mother was postmistress; served meals to freighters at twenty-five cents and collected the toll for Mack Cornett, who was interested in the road. The toll was twenty-five cents for each horse, regardless of number of wagons or their weight. We could not charge Indians and preachers, and naturally there was no charge to the neighbors. In good weather there were often ten, twelve or even twenty freighters camping along the road from the house far up past the blacksmith shop.

It was a sight to remember to see the grade at starting time, lined with freight teams pulling out toward The Dalles loaded with huge sacks of wool. Not a few outfits had as many as three wagons and ten to twelve horses. Most drivers sat on a high seat and deftly manipulated a line for each horse and drove the leaders. Some horses were sleek and strong, well harnessed, others were pitiful creatures, victim of cruelty and ignorance. You could almost read a man's character by his team and wagon.”

Other roads were developed over the years. A road from Maupin traveled to Bakeoven and on to Cross Hollow. Cross Hollow was an active stage station for more than three decades. Several roads led from Cross Hollow to Prineville, Central Oregon's oldest city. One road went through Antelope to Ashwood and to Prineville via Trout Creek and McKay Creek. Another road went from Cross Hollow to Ridgeway (at the top of Cow Canyon) and down Cow Canyon to Cross Keys and to Hay Creek, Grizzly and on to Prineville. Another route from Antelope went down Antelope Creek to Cross Keys (Willowdale) and to Prineville via Hay Creek.

The Red Jacket Mine began operation as a quartz mine (gold) near Donnybrook some seven miles east of Ashwood around

1900. Other mines opened seeking precious metals and mercury proved to be in economic quantities. The stage routes did not go directly through Ashwood but forked off the Canyon City road south of Cold Camp. Louis Dickson, an early resident of Antelope, and father of Bill Dickson, drove freight from Antelope to Ashwood starting when he was 14 years old (around 1900). The Ashwood mines were operating at the time. Louis said he had no bad experiences while driving stage, other than drinking a lot of bad whiskey. (From a 1967 interview with the author).

The route taken by Louis Dickson in carrying freight from Antelope to Ashwood was rugged. He went through Trail Hollow, down Little Trout Creek to Ashwood, and then back up Trout Creek. This route is much the same as traveled today between Antelope and Ashwood. Louis carried freight to the mines but did not haul any ore or mineral. Minerals were hauled by mining company wagons. Aaron Hale, a long-time Ashwood resident, remembered seeing tracks of the stage route the last time he visited Cold Camp which would have been before 1967. (From a 1968 interview with the author).

### Early Roads Today

It is possible today to drive the approximate route of The Dalles-Canyon City Road from Antelope to Mitchell, a lot of which is in Jefferson County. Leave Antelope on Highway 218 heading east toward Clarno and turn off onto the county road toward Ashwood. You will drive by what little remains of Cold Camp Station, past the Dickson Ranch. Take the turn toward Muddy Ranch, now Young Life, and drive through the Ranch and take the narrow county road toward the John Day River and the Cherry Creek Ranch. There was a recent, unsuccessful, attempt by Young Life to have the Jefferson County Commission close the road to public access from Muddy Ranch to the junction with the Ashwood road

near Cherry Creek Ranch. Drive past Cherry Creek Ranch to Burnt Ranch, to the Painted Hills and on to the community of Mitchell. There is a good chance you won't meet other vehicles between Muddy Ranch and the Painted Hills. It is difficult to visualize that this was once a busy thoroughfare but it was “the road” for four decades.

The modern Bakeoven Road from Maupin to Highway 97 near Shaniko is close to the wagon road. You can see a couple of remnants of old roads on the west side of Highway 197 between Tygh Valley and Tygh Ridge. If you hike the abandoned Harriman Railroad bed from the mouth of the Deschutes River to Gordon Canyon, you can see a portion of the wagon road east of the William Nix Bridge climbing above the river before being obliterated by farm lands.

The Columbia Southern Railroad was completed between Biggs Junction and Shaniko in 1901 and decreased traffic on the road north of Shaniko to The Dalles but it led to increased traffic from eastern Oregon into Shaniko. The heyday for Shaniko and Antelope was from 1901 until 1911, when Shaniko claimed the title of “wool capital of the world.” Those glory days ended when the railroads coming up the Deschutes River reached Central Oregon. The commercial importance of The Dalles-Canyon City Road diminished. Another death knell for Antelope and the road to Canyon City was the paving of the state highway 97 through Cow Canyon and on through Central Oregon.

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# Rowboat Rescue on the Deschutes, 1940

By Jerry Ramsey

The mountains, cliffs, canyons, and rivers of Central Oregon have drawn outdoor adventurers for well over a century and inevitably there have been accidents, leading to major rescue efforts, both successful and unsuccessful.

This story, originally reported in the *Madras Pioneer* for August 1, 1940, was well-known in Madras and Culver through the 1960s—I grew up with it—but is all but forgotten now. For sheer do-or-die drama nothing equals the rescue of a badly-injured young fisherman by rowboat, down the as-yet-wild Crooked and Deschutes Rivers, in 1940.

Sadaki “Doc” Akiyama grew up in Opal City and Culver, and attended Culver High School in the 1930s with three brothers, Yasamasa, Utaka, and Minoru, and a sister, Tokiko. They were the children of Japanese immigrants from the Hiroshima area; Mr. Akiyama worked for the railroad.

July 28, 1940 was a Sunday, and Doc and some Culver High chums (including Ted Freeman and Rex Barber) decided they would go fishing below The Cove at the bottom of Crooked River Gorge, where the tidy fields and orchards developed by William Boegli (first Judge of Jefferson County) had just become a state park. The boys, each probably carrying a wicker creel, bamboo fly rod, and a tobacco can of grasshoppers, parked by the Cove Bridge and started fishing down the rocky east bank. Somewhere near Kettle Rock on the way down to the junction with the Deschutes, Doc slipped while negotiating one of the numerous “shut-ins,” river-side cliffs that made for hard going along the

Crooked River, and fell thirty feet to river-level. When his fishing buddies reached him, he was in agony, with what seemed to be serious injuries to his back and one hand.

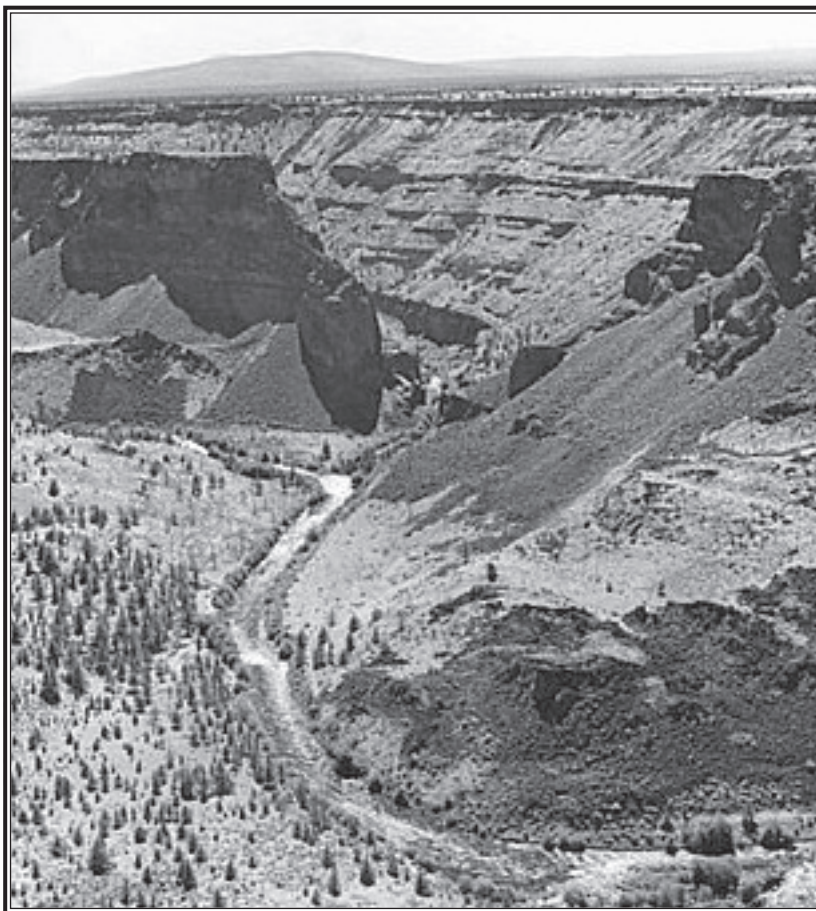
trail had recently been built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)—but it was a long, switchbacked trail out of the canyon from there, and Doc’s injuries must have seemed too serious for rescue by horse and litter.

So one or two of his friends scrambled back up to The Cove, and from there drove into Culver and then Madras to alert the authorities—including Jefferson County Sheriff Henry Dussault. The others, including Ted Freeman and Rex Barber, stayed on the river to do what they could for their injured friend. As time wore on and night came, they built a warming fire in a thicket of bushes nearby. It’s not clear from contemporary reports, but apparently some men from Culver, including Virgil Messinger and Merritt Freeman (Ted’s dad) hiked down to the accident site to offer support.

Meanwhile, Sheriff Dussault had contacted his friend Thaddeus “Thad” Dizney, Madras City Watermaster and an experienced river-boatman. Carrying Doc Akiyama out by boat—down into the Deschutes and so on down fifteen miles of wild water to the Dizney Place above Cowles Orchard (today’s

state raft-and-drift boat ramp, just off Highway 26)—seemed, given what they knew about the boy’s condition, the only alternative for getting him out.

Had Dizney or anybody else ever attempted to run that stretch of swift and rock-studded water, especially in summer’s low water-levels? Possibly Dizney had—certainly he knew the stretch from having bank-fished along it. Another candidate would be my late uncle, Max Mendenhall,



Confluence of Crooked and Deschutes, with “The Island,” in pre-dam days

What to do? In those days, before the building of the Round Butte and Pelton dams and the flooding of the Crooked, Deschutes, and Metolius rivers, there was no easy prospect of rescue by water—and there were no service roads downriver from The Cove, or up the Deschutes. Several miles below on the Deschutes, near where Round Butte Dam is located, there was a famous fishing “glory hole” named Big Eddy, to which a well-made livestock

of Opal City, who in 1937 had acquired an early model of the German-made Klepper “Folbot” for the express purpose of running local rivers; family tradition has it that sometime before World War Two he set out from The Cove in this collapsible, light, elegant rubber-hulled kayak, with a companion, possibly a friend from Max’s recent stint with the CCC near Bandon.

The nameless companion was soon so terrified by the unpredictable power of the river that he demanded to be put ashore at the next stretch of quiet water. So somewhere near the confluence with the Deschutes Max landed on the east bank, and his distraught passenger was last seen scrambling up the steep slopes towards the rim, not looking back.

With no place to take out and retrieve the Folbot, it appears that Max continued his now-solo run all the way down to Disney’s Place or Cowles Orchard. He never attempted it again, as far as anybody knows, and the Klepper was thereafter relegated to occasional light-duty fishing use on lakes. Eventually he gave it to me, and after eighty years, it’s still a sea-worthy work of art. Extremely long, narrow, with canvas decking, it would not have been usable for a river rescue even in its prime.

But now, in our story from 1940, it’s the morning after Doc Akiyama’s accident, July 29, and at dawn Sheriff Dussault and Thad Disney have arrived with Thad’s rowboat and a stretcher at The Cove Bridge. They make an awkward launch into the river, and almost immediately Thad loses control and the boat crashes into a boulder, knocking several big holes in its

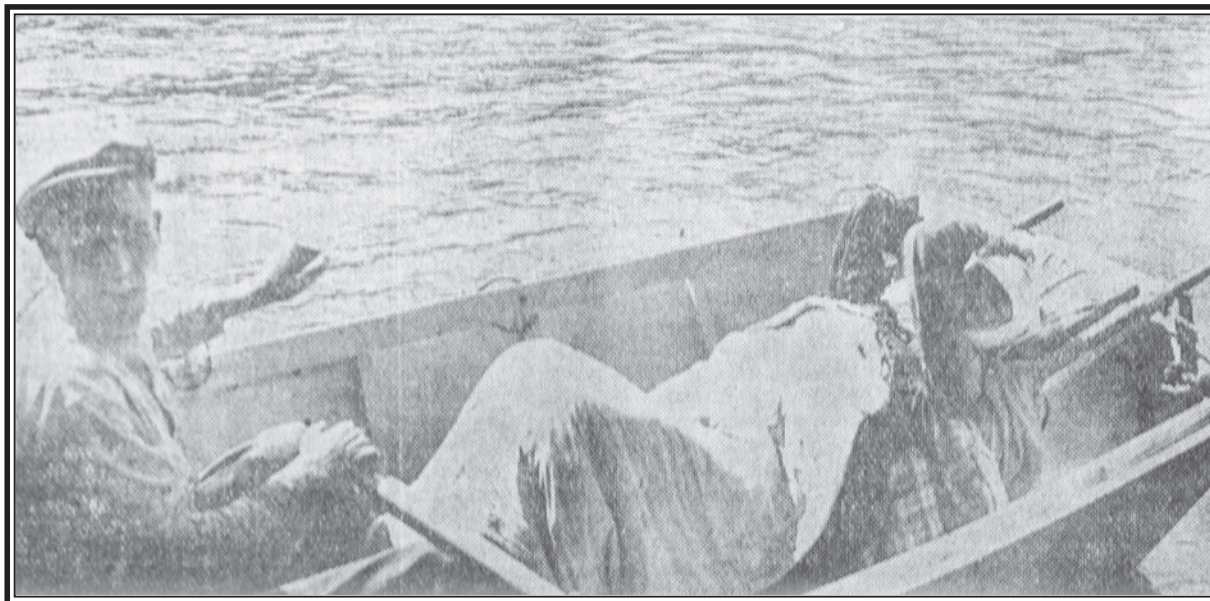
flat plywood bottom. Somehow getting it back to shore before it sinks, they hoist it up on rocks to dry, and run back to their car. An hour or so later, they’re in Madras, loading pieces of plywood and some tools, and sometime around 10 or 11 they’re back at the boat, patching it the best they can.

For the second try, Disney apparently decides that the rescue’s chances will be improved this time if he goes alone. Both

downstream with the blunt stern forward, to create some drag. And it was just as well that, if he was looking around at all, poor Doc could only look upstream, where they’d been, not downstream, the perilous way they were going.)

The others got them launched, irretrievably—down in rapid water past the mouth of the Deschutes, and another mile-and-a-half or so past the influx of the

Metolius, and by now the volume and force of the combined rivers were substantially increased. This would have been both advantageous—more water to maneuver in, around rocks—and disadvantageous—more sheer hydraulic force to cope with. What was Thad Disney thinking about, in the occasional calm stretches when he wasn’t flailing



Thad Disney and “Doc” Akiyama at the Disney Place: “rowboat rescue” completed (*Pioneer* photo)

he and Dussault are big rangy men, and at least until he reaches Doc Akiyama, he’ll navigate better without a passenger. This time he’s able to oar his way through the initial rapids and swells and around the rocks, and reaches Doc and his friends under Kettle Rock about noon.

One of the friends, Ted Freeman, remembers that when the injured boy understood that the plan was to carry him out by rowboat, he adamantly refused—until Thad, a steady man with a calm manner, told him that under the circumstances he didn’t have a choice, if he wanted to get out. So somehow he was eased into the stretcher, and placed as gently as possible in the stern of the boat, with his head against the transom, looking back over his feet at Thad amidships at the oars. (Almost certainly, Thad ran his rivers as modern drift-boaters do, facing

with his oars between boulders and whirlpools? Whatever he was thinking, underlying it all was the visceral certainty that if they capsized, or were caught broadside against a rock, he couldn’t possibly save his injured passenger, or himself, for that matter, and there would be no witnesses. Did he, avid angler that he was, try to calm his nerves by prospecting for good holes and riffles as they flew past? Did he try to converse with Doc, to keep his spirits up?

It’s about fifteen miles on the map from The Cove down to their destination of the Disney Place—probably a fair bit more than that, given the zigs and zags of the river’s route in its canyon. It’s possible that Thad briefly put ashore at Big Eddy, to stretch himself and attend to Doc. But if so, it was quickly back into the river, with some of the most dangerous stretches lurking ahead, where the river narrows and

accelerates through the Pelton dam-site.

Probably it's in this long, harrowing passage that they encountered the near-catastrophes that the *Pioneer* mentioned in its August 1 front-page news coverage: "The trip nearly ended disastrously several times in turbulent rapids, and only Dizney's skill and knowledge of the river brought the craft safely to the landing 15 miles downstream."

But finally they were through the worst of it and into more civilized waters, past the mouths of Seekseekwa and Campbell creeks, and at last in sight of the Dizney Place, where Thad had grown up and first learned to manage rowboats on the river. A waving and cheering crowd welcomed them ashore. It was by now mid-afternoon.

The *Pioneer's* page-one photo in the August 8 issue is fuzzy, but shows the little boat apparently at the moment of arrival, with Thad still grasping the oars, and Doc Akiyama with his knees bent under a blanket, and his arms raised, shading his face, the poles of the stretcher under him sticking out over the transom. From here on, Sheriff Dussault must have taken over: Doc was rushed to the hospital in Redmond, where his broken back and broken hand were diagnosed and treated. In its follow-up in the August 8 issue, the *Pioneer* reported that he was "recovering nicely."

Remember his Culver friends, Rex Barber and Ted Freeman, building a warming fire in some dry bushes the night after his accident? The bushes were actually poison oak, and after a night of inhaling poisonous smoke the boys soon had their own medical problem, as serious, short-term, as their friend's injuries. Their air-passages swelled up to the point that they had extreme difficulties breathing, and both needed medical attention after they got out. In an item from "Culver News" in the August 8 *Pioneer*, it's reported that "Rex Barber was released to his home here Saturday from Redmond Hospital, where he was a patient for several days with a severe case of poison ivy [sic]." For some reason, the circumstances of his affliction—his part in

the rescue of his friend Doc—is not mentioned.

So the Great Rowboat Rescue of 1940 came to a happy end for everybody involved. But the details that make up what we think of as "local history" sometimes communicate mysteriously with the forces and patterns of history-at-large, and this story, seemingly complete in itself, soon took on larger meanings for some of its players. Before his rescue-mission, Thad Dizney was locally well-known as a Deschutes river-man and guide, but in the '40s and '50s his renown grew, maybe in part because of his exploits late July 1940, and he gained numerous celebrity clients, notably the famous stockbroker and investment guru Dean Witter, who regularly came up from San Francisco to fish the Deschutes and other Oregon rivers with him. In his memoir, *Meanderings of a Fisherman*, Witter wrote gratefully about his fishing outings with Dizney—who died in 1961.

And Rex Barber: three years after helping to save his Japanese-American school friend, he was flying P-38 "Lightnings" against the Japanese in the South Pacific. He became an Ace, and is credited with shooting down the mastermind of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto. After an illustrious career in the Air Force, he moved back to Culver, served as mayor, and died in 2001.

And Doc himself? A few months after Pearl Harbor, and less than two years after his adventure on the river, enactment of the "War Relocation Act" of 1942 meant that he and the entire Akiyama family were forced to leave their home in Culver and go into a Japanese internment camp in Tulelake, California and then to another camp in Idaho, where they spent most of the war behind barbed wire. After



"Doc" (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) as a second-grader at Opal City School

the internment camps were closed in January 1945, the Akiyamas came back to Culver to reclaim the family car and other possessions, which they had left with the Freeman family, and moved to Spokane, where Mr. Akiyama and three of his sons worked for the "SP&S" railroad. Doc, however, moved to Chicago, where he worked for the Japanese consulate there until he retired and moved back to Spokane to be with his family. He never married, and passed away in 2003.

The "War Relocation Act" was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court (a few days after the internment camps were closed), but Doc Akiyama's story still, after three-quarters of a century, conveys a painful irony. His life was once saved, unconditionally, by his friends and neighbors, and by Thad Dizney, who probably didn't know him before the accident. And yet his government thereafter suspended his rights as an American citizen and incarcerated him and thousands of others without due process for being Japanese-American. That's what happened to him, in 1940 and 1942-5; and it's left for us to try to make sense of the raw historical contradiction in his story.



# Phil Brogan, a Donnybrook Native Son

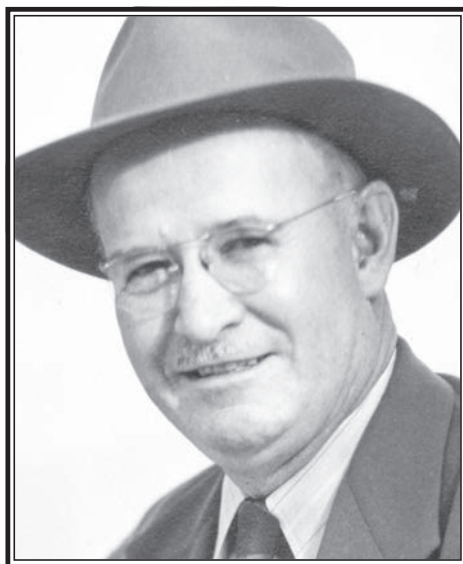
**P**hil Brogan (1896-1983) lived in Bend for the full extent of his illustrious career as a reporter and features writer for the *Bend Bulletin*—but he was reared on a ranch east of Ashwood in what became (when he was fifteen years old) Jefferson County. To be exact, his roots were in the Donnybrook country, and he cherished them.

Current plans to honor him at the “Fossil Exhibit” at Juniper Hills Park east of Madras, spearheaded by fellow naturalist and paleobotanist Mel Ashwill, suggest that a local review of his remarkable life and achievements is in order.

Brogan was by all accounts a versatile, capable writer, with wide-ranging interests, and so fast in composing that one of his editors liked to say that, if need be, he could easily write the copy of an entire *Bulletin* issue—local and national news, editorials, sports, justice court, weather—with time left over for society news. From the late 1920s on, he regularly wrote feature essays for the *Bulletin*, on both the human and the natural history of Central Oregon, often delving into geology, paleontology, Indian pre-history, and archaeology. Beginning in the 1930s, his work was syndicated to the *Oregonian*, and he became that newspaper’s official Central Oregon correspondent.

In the 1950s, his *Bulletin* editor, Robert Chandler, began to urge him to organize his popular pieces on Central Oregon into a book, and ultimately forced his hand by assigning him free time to get the job done. The result was *East of the Cascades* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1964, now in its third edition), the first comprehensive history of Central Oregon; and, after fifty-plus years, it’s still—supplemented by Steve Lent’s excellent *Central Oregon Place Names*—this region’s indispensable historical guide.

Brogan also co-authored (with Gladys Keegan) the section on “Ashwood” in *Jefferson County Reminiscences* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1957, 1998), touching there on his family’s roots in the



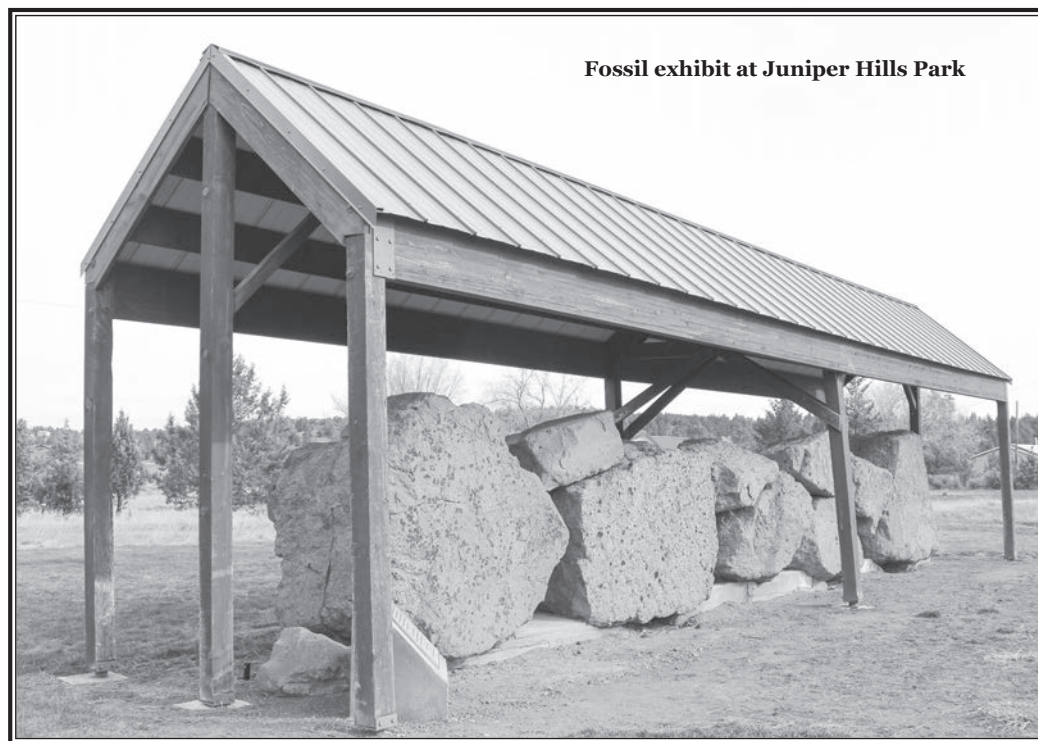
Phil Brogan of Donnybrook and Bend (*Bulletin* photo)

Donnybrook/Axehandle area east of Ashwood. His father, John C. Brogan, a native of County Donegal, Ireland, homesteaded in the early 1890s on 160 acres in the vicinity of Axehandle Springs. The extended Brogan family was numerous in the area—several parcels of land over there are still known as “Brogan Places,” and maps still show a “Brogan Road” running from Antelope east and north into the countryside.

Sometime after 1900, young Phil and his family suffered a terrible loss when Mrs. Brogan and their youngest daughter were killed in a runaway horse-and-buggy accident. But Mr. Brogan stayed on the place, and Phil and his older brother Daniel and younger sister Cecelia attended Donnybrook School, and later apparently went to school in The Dalles.

When the U.S. entered World War One in 1917, Phil joined the Navy, and served in the Signal Corps. After the war, he worked on an uncle’s ranch and was tending sheep in the Cascades in 1919 when another shepherd was murdered, and he was called to court in Eugene to testify. While there, he looked into enrolling at the University of Oregon, and although he lacked a high school diploma he was admitted. He was supported as a veteran by an early “GI Bill” stipend that gave him \$25 a month for college expenses.

At Oregon he concentrated on journalism and science, and began his professional writing career with the Eugene *Register-Guard* as a student, filing features on local natural history topics, especially geology, for which he capitalized on the field trips he



Fossil exhibit at Juniper Hills Park

was making for his science courses. In 1923, out of money, he left the University two courses short of graduating. (In 1952, the University awarded him his degree, in recognition of his achievements, and the diploma was formally presented to him by two of his UO classmates, Oregon Governor Paul Patterson and Idaho Governor Len Jordan!)

Soon after leaving the University, Phil Brogan was interviewed and hired by Robert Sawyer, Editor of the Bend *Bulletin*, and one of the pioneers of Central Oregon historical research and writing. Sawyer was a demanding and encouraging mentor to Brogan. The popularity of his features, first in the *Bulletin* locally and then through *The Oregonian* statewide and regionally, increased steadily through the 1940s, and brought him many honors and prestigious appointments. He was a long-time member of the Oregon Geographic Names Board, and Chairman of it between 1947 and 1968. He served as an early director of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI); and when NASA brought its Apollo astronaut-candidates out to the Lava Butte area south of Bend to practice moon-walking on the lava fields there, Phil Brogan was fittingly invited to be their official guide.

In 1959 he received the Amos Voorhies Award, naming him Oregon's "Outstanding Journalist" for that year, and in 1963 he was given both the Oregon Historical Society's "American Heritage Award," and the University of Oregon's "Distinguished Service Award." After he had spent decades faithfully collecting and reporting the official weather data for the City of Bend, in 1960 the U.S. Weather Service gave him its first "Thomas Jefferson Award for Outstanding Service."

He and his wife Louise had one son, John Philip, who became a geologist.

It's accurate to say about Phil Brogan and his writing that he became in his time Central Oregon's premier journalistic voice, patiently educating Central Oregonians and outlying readers alike about "the lay of the land" in these parts, both historically and scientifically. He was very proud of his Ashwood and Donnybrook connections, and wrote about that wide country extensively. In Jefferson County, we should recognize him as a native son who took up the early episodes of our collective story, and told them well.

## Bird's-eye View of Madras Links Us with Boston, New York, and So On

By Jerry Ramsey

On the front page of the *Madras Pioneer* for May 4, 1911, at the height of local excitement about the recent arrival of the Oregon Trunk railway (on Feb. 11), there appeared a remarkable but long-forgotten panoramic "bird's-eye view" of Madras. Its perspective is aerial, from the east and looking west over town, approximately from where the aquatic center is located today. We have reproduced the picture here the best we can, but need to acknowledge that the original, on *Pioneer* newsprint, has faded and deteriorated over 106 years.

But the depiction of the town of Madras, less than a decade old but growing like a squash vine, is still fascinating—and revealing. Try to look at its details closely: what it shows is an exuberant mix of historical details that you would have seen in 1911 and also features that existed only in the artist's imagination, and/or in the civic dreams of the town fathers.

The basic street grid corresponds to the town as it was then. In the lower middle the then-new Methodist Church (now the Madras Gospel Mission) is shown accurately on "D" St., and the new two-story Madras School appears to the south (lower left), on 10<sup>th</sup>. The center of town along Main St. (5<sup>th</sup>) appears plausibly; likewise the Madras Milling Company's multi-storey flour mill stands out farther west. Main Street runs north of downtown and crosses over Willow Creek, as it always has, and the roadway heads on up the grade to Agency Plains.

Top billing in the view is given to the railroads, with an Oregon Trunk train steaming past the OT station on Madison, heading for Willow Creek and the Deschutes River, and the Des Chutes RR train crossing the Willow Creek trestle southbound. On this last point, the artist is stretching his factual basis a little—in point of fact, the trestle was not completed until June, 1911.



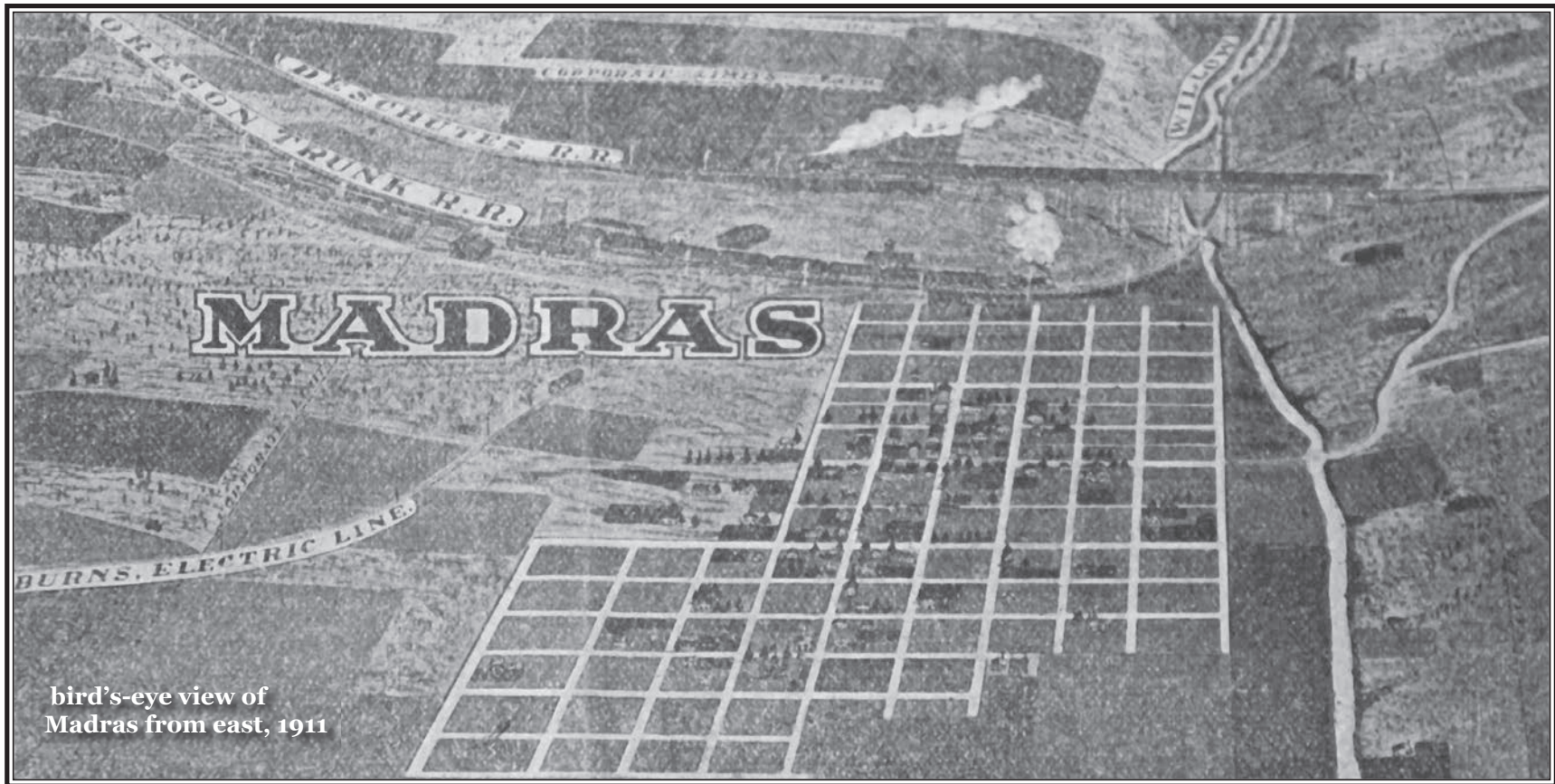
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bird's-eye view of  
Madras from east, 1911

Where artistic license (and civic boosterism) really takes over is in the depiction on the left side of the view, just under the “Madras” legend, of a small train running smokelessly along a track leading east and then south from the OT station, labeled “Burns Electric Line.” How this wholly figmentary development got into the picture is anybody’s guess. The same impulse seems to have drawn the western “Corporate Limits” of Madras clear over the western rim and onto the Little Plains . . . .

Who was the artist? No clues are given, but it’s a very capable, even elegant sketch as if from the air, of our town as it was in 1911, and as it might be. As printed in the *Pioneer*, it’s only about 8” by 4”, but given the detail in it, the original view must have been much bigger. Creating it must have cost more than a little, surely more than the *Pioneer* had in its budget for graphics. Maybe it was commissioned by one or both of the railroads as a promotional effort.

We’ll probably never know, but one thing can be identified historically about the picture for sure: that it’s a late, small-town example of a very popular artistic trend that ran through the last quarter of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth. “Bird’s-eye Views” were all the rage, starting with New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, and extending westward, offering “enhanced” aerial vistas of towns, their street layouts, rivers, major buildings, parks, and so on. Typically the views were lithographed in rich colors, and sold or given away in large-

format prints, suitable for framing.

Portland ended up being featured in several of these, as did Seattle, and views were made of Spokane and even Pendleton in the 1880s. The whole trend is beautifully represented in John W. Reps’ book *Bird’s Eye Views: Historical Lithographs of North American Cities* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998). Civic pride and commercial interests seem to have combined in all this to show residents of a given city, and prospective businesses and prospective newcomers, how beautiful and well-situated Our Town is, if seen from the air!

Madras’s late “bird’s-eye view” of itself is not included in Reps’s book, nor anything depicting any other small town in the Northwest. But it’s certain that there were a lot of them produced in the early years of the twentieth century, for other boom towns here in the West. According to John Lienhard, a Houston scholar, “the American West really took to the new medium. Itinerant artists went from town to town making bird’s-eye views. They were immensely popular with settlers who’d just built a new town.” (*Engines of Ingenuity*, University of Houston TV series, No. 834, no date, online)

If Boston and New York and even Pendleton boasted of their aerial views in the 1880s, so could Madras 30 years later. What about Bend, Prineville, Redmond, Burns, Lakeview, Klamath Falls? And where is the original print on which the *Pioneer*’s view was based?

# Tribute to Marie Harris, a North Unit Pioneer

By Kathie Olson

*Marie Harris was a much-valued Historical Society member, and in 2009 she participated memorably in our “Pioneers of the North Unit” symposium, recalling the crucial role of women in the early years of irrigated farming here after World War Two. At her memorial service this past January, her long-time friend Kathie Olson gave the following tribute, which eloquently evokes for us the historical importance of intrepid farming women like Marie Harris. By permission of Kathie Olson and the Harris family.*

**T**hey came with the water. When I moved here over 55 years ago as a new bride, we would drive past farm after farm and my husband would tell me, “They came with the water.” But it was a long time until I realized just what that meant. I heard all the stories about leveling the land, digging the ditches, and getting that first money-making crop. But I eventually heard the stories from those brave farm WIVES and what it meant to them. I saw the home movies of my dear mother-in-law, hiking up her billowing skirt and pacing off the location of the home they planned to build . . . and after each step she disappeared into a cloud of dust.

These women lived in basement houses, machine sheds, and small trailers. Marie started in a tiny rental house in Madras in which there wasn’t even room for a washing machine . . . they kept it outside and ran a hose through the window into the kitchen sink. Then they moved to a rustic cabin on the Agency Plains with no water. These women cooked under primitive conditions until proper kitchens were built, drove the kids to bus stops in knee-deep snow or mud, canned and preserved food in un-air-conditioned kitchens, helped in the fields, and fed hungry men **big meals all summer.**

Yet, like women everywhere, they found and created beauty and friendships by forming garden clubs, sewing clubs, dance clubs, bridge clubs, and even an “Idaho Club.” During my later association with the Jefferson County Library, I discovered that each member of the Idaho Club donated a book to help build up the collection, as well as collecting \$21 for new children’s books. They donated an exterior sign (that still hangs in the basement of the Library Annex), then volunteered to **clean the building.**

These pioneer women were active in the “Mothers’ March of Dimes,” had their babies delivered out of town before there was a hospital here, were thankful for 8-party telephone lines, and were here when a “translator” delivered fuzzy black-and-white television into farm



Marie Harris at JCHS “Pioneers of the North Unit” symposium, 2009

homes at last. And in the 1950s, for the first time, these women’s names appeared in the minutes and newspaper articles using THEIR first names, instead of MRS. Someone!

I still remember one of the first things Marie ever said to me. I was about to have my first baby and she gaily asked, “When is your party?” She always referred to the birth of a baby as a party, and I figured then that if she could call it that, I would be OK.

Her cinnamon rolls were absolutely divine and I’m sure I’ll never taste another one as good . . .

When Leslie Weigand, Susan Stovall, Sandy Jackson and I were busily working for library funds to build and finance the

current building and district, Marie went door to door with me all over the Plains helping to get signatures. We made her an honorary member of our “Pub Group” as we gathered some afternoons to celebrate successes or agonize over failures, and she would toss back a Mike’s Hard Lemonade with us, giving us more encouragement. Some of us even took her to the Rialto once and she had a ball, though it was quite early in the day! Later Gloria Comingore joined our little group and we will always cherish our friendships with these older, wiser women.

Her door was always open to everyone, with a Coke and some Cheezos at the ready. Every Christmas she would sing “Silent Night” to me in German . . . without missing a word.

Her memory was phenomenal right until her 99<sup>th</sup> year and I could call her and ask about something or someone from many years past and she almost always could answer.

She was one of the few remaining residents who “came with the water.” Hopefully some young farm wives today will remember those women who raised the bar so high back in the ’50s that perhaps few of us ever managed to meet it. I know that everyone here has a favorite memory of Marie, but I’m sure that one of the things we’ll miss the most is never being called “kid” again . . .

# President's Message

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I have the utmost confidence you are going thoroughly enjoy this issue of *The Agate*. We are so fortunate to have such a talented mix of writers who can make the stories they write about come alive. You feel as though you were there!

For those of you who missed the History Pub in February, it was a rallying success. The Mecca Grade Maltery was the perfect mix of new and old. Stay tuned for more events like this from us.

I think everyone in this community is gearing up for the solar eclipse in August. What an opportunity for our little town to shine! But before that happens let's not forget the Historical Society's Annual Dinner on April 8th at the Senior Center here in Madras. This year we will be featuring Bing Bingham, a rancher, writer, and storyteller who lives in Central Oregon's high desert country. He has a writer's ear, a photographer's eye, and a soft heart



JCHS President Lottie Holcomb

for community. Many of his stories are about ranch life in the Central Oregon high desert. This event should be quite entertaining. For more information call me at 541-475-7488. Don't miss it.

Thank you to all of you who have supported us over the years and welcome to some new members. If you haven't had the chance to join, please take a moment and fill out the membership application on the back of this issue. Your support enables us to keep bringing old, as well as, new projects to educate and entertain our community about the wonderful history of our little piece of heaven we call Jefferson County.

**LOTTIE HOLCOMB**

*President*

*Jefferson County Historical Society*

A crowd of over 130 turned out to see the new maltery and view the early-day photos of Agency Plains. (Pioneer photo)



HOLLY M. GILL/MADRAS PIONEER

# ANNUAL DINNER

Join Us for the  
2017 JCHS  
ANNUAL DINNER!

Saturday, April 8  
Madras Senior Center  
Social Hour - 5 p.m.  
Dinner - 6 p.m.

## HOME-STYLE ROAST BEEF DINNER

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Jefferson County Historical Society

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*Tickets will be held for you at the door.*

### **New JCHS Members since Fall 2016:**

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LU CAVENAUGH

PAUL AND LOU ANN COWSILL

MARLA RAE VIBBERT WATSON

RUTH ANN HOPPS  
.....

### **Donations and Memorial Gifts to the Society since Fall 2016:**

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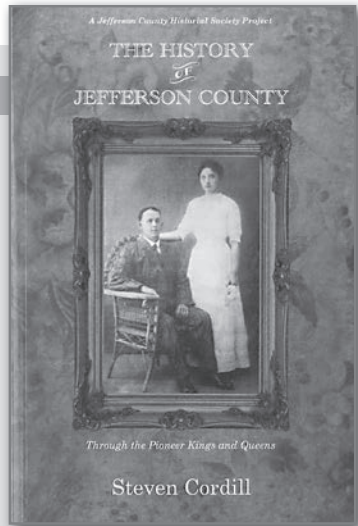
JERRY AND DOROTHY RAMSEY

RON AND KATHIE OLSON

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SYLVAN ROBB

# Book Review



Steven Cordill,  
*THE HISTORY OF  
JEFFERSON COUNTY:  
Through the Pioneer  
Kings and Queens.*  
Jefferson County Historical  
Society Project, 2016.

When local historian and genealogist Beth Crow passed away in 2014, she left unfinished the editing of a book on the “Pioneer Queens” and “Men of the Year” who were honored by the County Pioneer Association between 1953 and 2007. Subsequently, the project was taken up by one of her former pupils at Madras Elementary, Steve Cordill, and it has been published as *The History of Jefferson County*, subtitled “Through the Pioneer Kings and Queens.”

The book is a welcome addition to the local historical bookshelf, and it is gratifying

to have Beth Crow’s work completed and brought into print. It does have some flaws. Titling it *The History of Jefferson County* (with the subtitle given below in smaller print) seems overstated and misleading enough to distract from the authentic historical value of the actual contents—short, informal biographies, mostly written by family members, of some of the county’s notable women and men during its formative years.

The book would also have benefited from more careful attention to copy-editing and proof-reading. And it’s too bad that the “Introduction” does not explain the relationship between the Pioneer Association, which was organized in 1952 and dissolved in 2007, and the Historical Society, which was created in 1979 and which in 2008 received the Association’s records, including the basis of this book. (A disclaimer: it was not officially a “project” of the Society.)

It’s probably idle to regret the lack of *photographs* of the pioneer royalty here—photos may not have been part of Beth Crow’s original plans—but the work of collecting them for inclusion would have greatly enhanced the book’s value for posterity.

But what really does count in this book are the homespun profiles of the 55 Jefferson

County women and 45 men it gives us. The editor’s assertion that “perhaps no other method of understanding history is as full, enriching, or insightful as hearing the stories of those who lived it” is amply borne out in the course of the book. It is the same personal, anecdotal engagement with local history that produced our still widely-admired *Jefferson County Reminiscences*, with chapters written by some of these same old-timers.

Some had lived long, prominent, consequential lives here before they became pioneer “royalty,” like John Campbell, Lillian Watts, Chet Luelling, and Helen VanNoy Hering; others lived quietly, unassumingly—but made their own indispensable contributions along the way. For real “old-time” local color and spirit, read the entries on Katie Rufener of Grizzly, Charlie Keegan of Ashwood, Eleanor Cram Kennedy of Trout Creek, Homer Alexander and Fannie (Haberstich) Regnier (father and daughter), and for post-WWII Madras, Sumner and Adele Rodriguez.

For the flavor of the earliest days of homesteading here, Verl Ramsey Rice’s childhood recollection 80 years later (in 1980) is historically priceless. “The early days on the Plains were like a continuous picnic, with the whole outdoors as a playground. After being

thoroughly cautioned to watch constantly for rattlesnakes, the children roamed the canyons and the sagebrush areas at will, none of them ever suffering a broken bone or snakebite! [Verl] remembered the joyful evenings when the sagebrush, which had been cut with grubbing hoes by the men and stacked in piles by the children during the day, was burned after dark. They could see many fires like their own, scattered all over the Plains . . .” (pp. 88-9)

And in Lura Green McCaulou’s profile for 2001, the mystery of how Madras High School acquired the “white buffalo” as its distinctive athletic mascot and its school colors of blue and white, is definitively solved! “Lura attended the new high school [late 1920s] and was part of the naming of the new mascot, the White Buffaloes. At the time, Leslie Priday, who had a herd of buffaloes, had a son in the school, and that’s how the name came about. The students also changed colors from [gold] and black, to blue and white.” (p. 160) So now we know, ninety years later, thanks to Lura’s memory as preserved in this book.

Copies will be available for \$15 at the 2017 Annual Historical Society Dinner (see “President’s Message” in this issue), and through JCHS Directors.

# THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741

## THE AGATE • JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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

Yes, I'm interested in becoming a History Volunteer

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

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