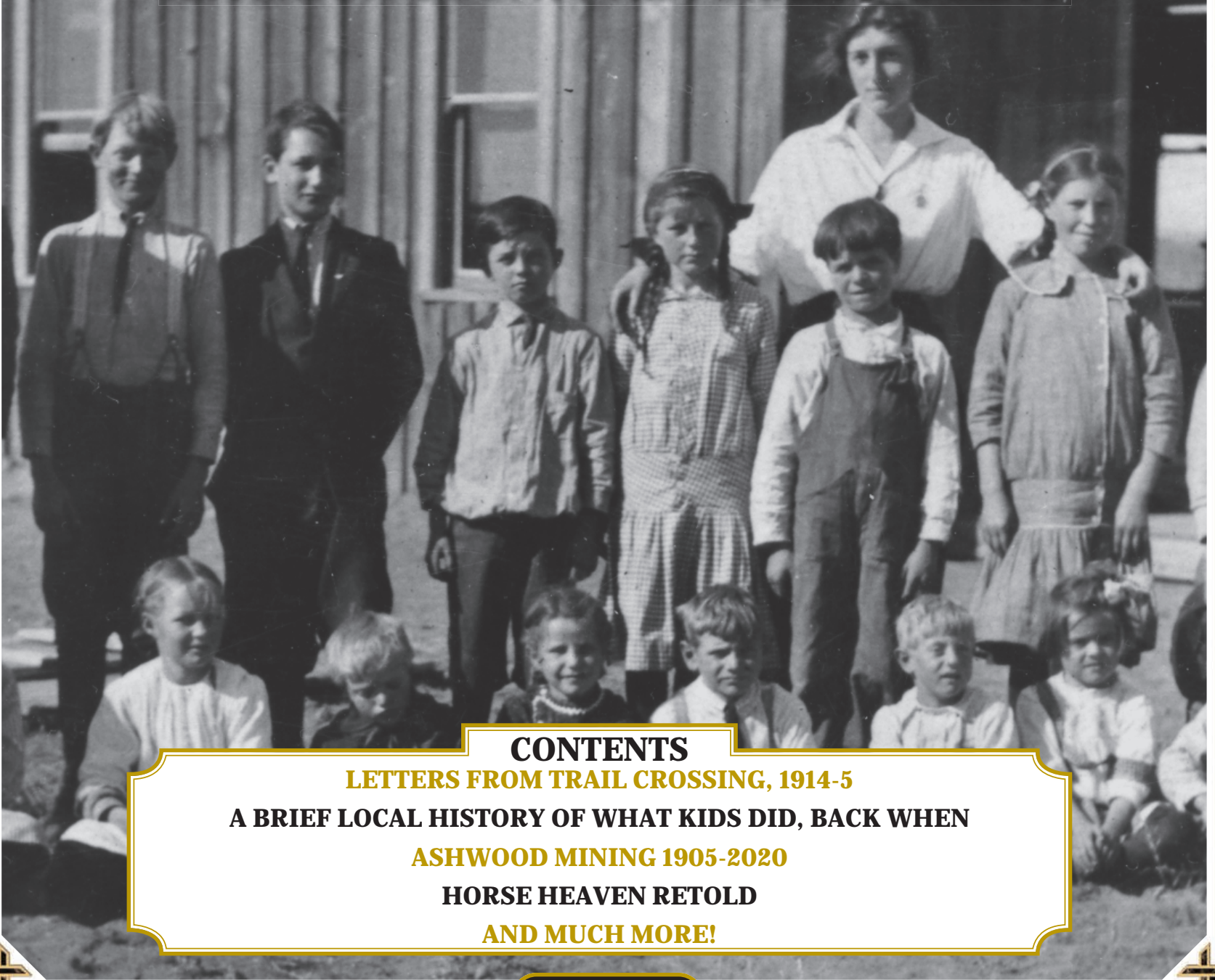


— Spring 2020 —

# THE AGGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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ASHWOOD MINING 1905-2020

HORSE HEAVEN RETOLD

AND MUCH MORE!

N.S. 13



## DEAR READERS

We're proud to offer you Issue No. XIII of THE AGATE, Central Oregon's award-winning journal of local history. Never mind that it's No. 13—any bad luck conveyed by that unlucky number is surely neutralized by the fact that we are publishing on April Fools' Day!

Anyway, in this issue you'll find:

- A selection of letters written in 1914-5 by a young, high-spirited school teacher named Essie Maguire to her family in Portland, over the course of a year's teaching at Trail Crossing School, just north of the Crooked River Gorge on the south edge of Jefferson County. Her reports on teaching and living in a hard-pressed homesteading community over a century ago are vivid, perceptive, and funny—and they bring historically alive the one-room country school experience of those days as well as anything in print.

- Picking up on Essie Maguire's stories about her pupils in and out of school, Jane Ahern ponders what kids DID around here, once upon a time. With an eye on our current pandemic predicament of school closures and "social distancing," she discovers that as kids our local forebears had ways of occupying and amusing themselves that might work even today.

- Part Two of Dan Chamness's history of Ashwood mining carries on from its first part in AGATE XI (Spring 2019), tracing the revival of the Oregon King and Horse Heaven and other area mines in the 1930s and '40s—but now the mother lode was mainly cinnabar, which had to be smelted on-site to produce mercury.

- Tom Manning offers a poignant sidebar recollection of his grandfather's and father's experiences as Depression-era employees at the Horse Heaven mine.

- And further into the issue, you'll find a portion of a report by Lori Gleichman on progress on the Westside Community Campus project, with encouraging indications for our long-delayed plans to relocate the JCHS Museum in Westside; reviews of new books on Jefferson County and Central Oregon natural and human history; and current news and doings of the Jefferson County Historical Society. All yours to read and enjoy, so go to it!

The cause of recording and celebrating Central Oregon history lost a champion last December 1 with the death of Jodi Eagan of Agency Plains after a long illness. Jodi's contributions to her homeland as a county commissioner and energetic activist were



Jodi Eagan receiving the 2014 Beth Crow Award

many and substantial; as a local historian and long-time JCHS director, she helped shape the society's growth in size and scope of purpose. In offering "short-courses" and tours on local historical subjects and in her articles in local periodicals, she contributed much to our understanding of this region's history. And her long, patient, wide-ranging research on Hay Creek Ranch will certainly be an indispensable basis of all future efforts to tell the Hay Creek story. Our condolences to John and their daughters—she was our colleague and friend, and we'll miss her.

- A neighborly salute and three cheers to the local historians of Sisters, who have organized The Three Sisters Historical Society, and plan to establish a museum in an historic Sisters building. With active and well-supported historical societies in Sherman, Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes counties, and top-notch museums like the Bowman in Prineville, the Sherman County in Moro, the High Desert, and the Museum at Warm Springs, the cause of preserving and celebrating Central Oregon's distinctive history has never been stronger!

- We'd hoped to greet you at the Annual Jefferson County Historical Society Dinner, April 4, but regrettably the coronavirus has intervened, and for very good public health reasons the JCHS Board of Directors has decided to cancel the event. We're very sorry, and hope that re-scheduling our premiere social event of the year will be possible, hopefully with hiker and author Stan Pine as our speaker as originally planned—stay tuned.



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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  
**Graphic Designer:** Jamie Wood  
**Publisher:** Jerry Ramsey

Cover: Essie Maguire and her pupils at Trail Crossing School, 1914

# LETTERS FROM TRAIL CROSSING 1914-15

Edited By Jerry Ramsey

Between September 1914 and May 1915, a young woman from Portland named Essie Maguire was the teacher at Trail Crossing School, No. 42, located a few miles northeast of the Crooked River Gorge, near where McPheeters Turf is today. Essie's parents, James and Bertha Maguire, were both immigrants (Ireland and Germany, respectively). As of 1914, her father was a "stationary engineer" (steam engines), and as a prominent union activist had been elected to the Portland City Council in 1912. They had a younger daughter Jennie, still in high school.

Essie had graduated from Jefferson High School, and gotten herself certified for teaching by examination, and probably took the Trail Crossing job because one of her high school friends, Ethel Murray, was already teaching in the area, at Opal City. (My mother, Wilma Mendenhall Ramsey, was one of Ethel's pupils there in 1914, as was her sister Charlcia Mendenhall Moore. Both later taught at Opal City.) Essie's salary at Trail Crossing was about standard for the time and place—\$65 a year, with a supplement for room and board. She boarded with a homesteading couple, Isaac and Josie Martin, and their children. Although their house (about 20 minutes' walk from the school) consisted of two rooms downstairs and an attic, which she shared with the youngest daughter Marie, about 8, she felt that the arrangements were, although cramped, agreeable. She especially liked Mrs. Martin, who was extremely superstitious but kind-hearted, and—unlike most of the local homemakers she encountered—a very capable cook, making the most of very limited local produce.

Essie's letters home, some quite long, were written to her parents and sister, and were mailed either at Opal City or in Culver and carried to Portland on the new (as of 1911) Oregon Trunk and Deschutes railroad line. The presence of the railroad provided Essie with a crucial life-line, for local travel north to Culver (she seems never to have ventured to Madras) and south to Terrebonne and Redmond and (once) to Bend, as well as home to Portland for Christmas 1914. And the regular mail schedule served her well—not just for letters, but also for clothing, books, film, school supplies and other items her family could send up from Portland—once, even, a basket of grapes.

Her letters were donated to the Bowman Museum in Prineville in the

1970s, probably because the director of the museum then, Irene Helms, was gathering materials for her 1980 book, *Remembering—School Days of Old Crook County*. The book includes a portion of one of Essie's letters and photos of her and the school. A typescript of the letters was later transferred to the Jefferson County Museum and is now in the JCHS Archives. In 1981 Thomas Vaughan, director of the Oregon Historical Society, included

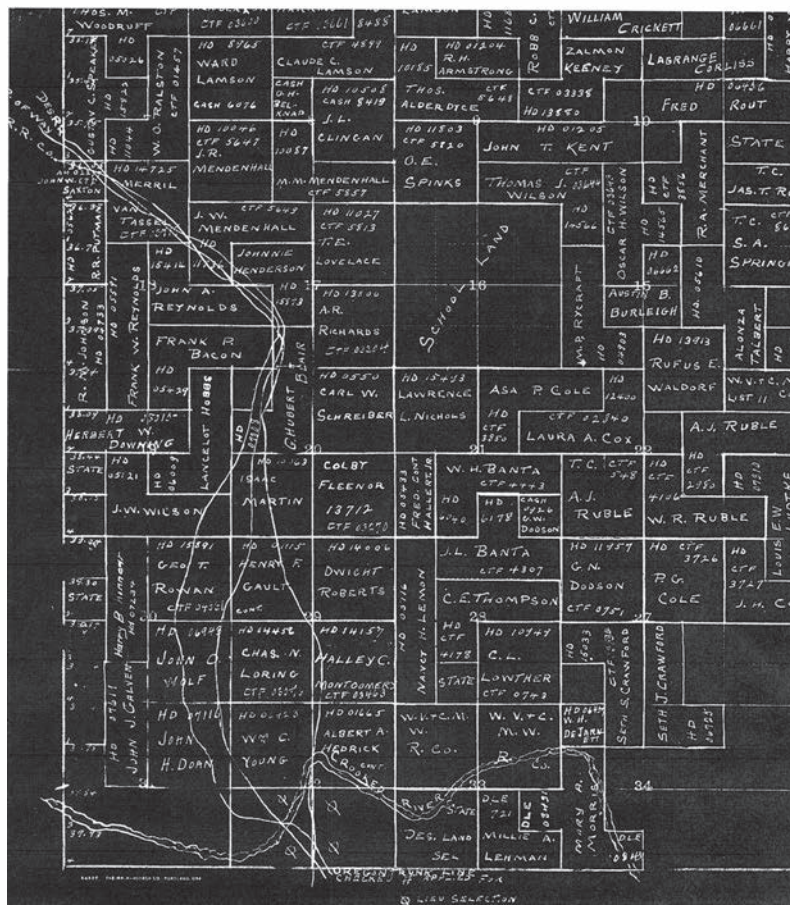
portions of two of Essie's letters in his introduction to *High and Mighty: Select Sketches about the Deschutes Country*, and subsequently Keith Clark used her account of an impromptu Redmond rodeo in his book *Redmond: Where the Desert Blooms* (1985). Both Vaughan and Clark mention plans for the letters to be published by Oregon Historical Press, but apparently that never came to fruition.

Essie Maguire's letters amount to a uniquely valuable addition to the local historical record. First of all, she wrote them as a curious and observant visitor here, at a formative time for Central Oregon. She describes the Opal City town meeting in October 1914 to discuss the upcoming vote on creating Jefferson County out of Crook (oddly enough she neglects to tell her family how the election turned out). She also notes meetings in the Opal City area to discuss possibilities for irrigation—two years before the North Unit project was organized in Madras.

But the heart of what Essie has to show us historically lies in her sharp-eyed but sympathetic observations of her hard-pressed homesteading neighbors. For almost a year, she shared and suffered their daily privations and burdens—hauling water, and re-using it multiple times, including serial baths; cramped and drafty living accommodations, lack

of medical care, and under it all, the heavy uncertainties of raising profitable crops and proving up on their land-claims. To be teaching the children of such families gives her—and us—a privileged access to daily existence as it was at Trail Crossing and elsewhere in this region in 1914-5. More than once, she wonders to herself how, and why, they persevered. Trail Crossing residents wryly called their place "Heelstring Nation."

At the same time, the letters make it vividly clear that Essie's neighbors tried to meet and share their daily challenges by *socializing* intensely. From the first weeks of her arrival and right on through the winter and spring, she



"Homestead locator" map of Trail Crossing area, 1912. Martins' homestead in center-left.



records being caught up in a regular round of community events—grange meetings and programs at Opal City; Sunday school (led by the enthusiastic Mr. Hobbs) and occasional revival sessions with itinerant preachers; the Trail Crossing Literary Society and its readings and debates; athletic events (imagine playing basketball in a railroad warehouse!); frequent dances, featuring pie socials and “bachelor dinners;” and impromptu hikes and outings. If Essie felt any inclination to be homesick or to feel sorry for herself, her weekly schedule of such community doings must have kept her afloat—as they did (or were supposed to do) for her hard-working homesteading neighbors.

Her descriptions of the experience of one-room country school teaching are valuable contributions to what we can know about basic local education back then. She must have been a conscientious, resourceful, lively schoolmarm, “winging it” day-by-day through her initial lack of experience, coping with the typical wide range of ages and classes, trying to size up and engage each of her pupils as individuals; meting out discipline with barely-concealed sympathetic amusement at her kids’ schoolroom and playground antics. What we have in her letters is a priceless account of a one-room school and how it really operated, at the heart of homesteading communities in our region like Trail Crossing, embodying the dreams and aspirations of the parents for wider horizons and more rewarding and spacious lives for their children, through learning.

Finally, what distinguishes Essie’s letters and energizes them as historical documents now is the effortless charm of her writing, and the funny, intrepid, endearing personality it reveals. Clearly, she came to her year in the sagebrush intending to meet every opportunity, every challenge that came her way head-on. Her sketches of pupils, neighbors, and would-be boyfriends are vividly drawn—and her impressions of the natural beauties and wonders of Central Oregon are memorable by any standard of good writing. They are capable of enhancing, even a century later, our appreciation of the magnificent skylines and vistas around us still.

**Sept. 13, 1914.** My dear mother and sister . . . Opal City consists of a platform where the train stops, a grocery store and postoffice combined and another building whose purpose I have not discovered . . .

The Martins are grand . . . The house is so small that you can hardly see it. It was dark when we got here and they brought me to the kitchen door. I felt something pressing on the top of my head so I waited until Mrs. Martin lighted the lamp and what do you think it was? The ceiling! It is a lean-to kitchen and for about three feet on the low side my head touches and scrapes the flies off. The house proper which is about the size of our sitting room, consists of one room—the parlor and bedroom combined. The windows reach from ceiling to floor and are held in place with strips of moulding. In some places the moulding was a little short at one end and the wind enters gladly . . . In one corner is a table on which sits the lamp and family Bible—which does not show much wear—in the other is a bushel box covered with wall paper—with a lid on—I don’t know what its purpose in life is—in the next corner is the sewing machine—an antique Singer—and in the other corner is a white iron bed covered with a woolen crazy quilt. There is one rocking



Boys ready for baseball at Trail Crossing School

chair—two straight ones, a bench beside the south window on which sets a dozen or more geraniums in blue tomato cans and a “wandering jew” in a large Union Leader tobacco box. A rag carpet and a box stove complete the room . . .

The ceiling is two and one half flour sacks wide by eight long. The sacks have been sewed together and tacked to the beams across. They ran out of tacks before they finished and they sag in the middle to meet my head. When they are tacked all will be well with the height. The roof part is papered with Harpers Weekly Magazines. It is a very neat job—they are even fitted around the two by fours which hold up the roof. The kitchen is papered with a shiny oily paper that can be wiped off—it is blue and white checked and the ceiling is

covered with cheese cloth which also sags . . .

**Sept. 15, 1914.** My dear mother and sister, I am writing this in school for I want it to go out at night. It is twenty minutes after three and I have sent my primaries home and have my fourth and sixth grades working their arithmetic for tomorrow. My school is dear. The building is awful from the outside, but the inside is very cozy. There is an acre of ground with a traveled road on two sides of it, and stubbled fields on the other two sides. The lot is surrounded by a strong wire fence to keep the coyotes out . . . The school is a tiny building built of boards which run up and down and then little narrow boards over the cracks. The inside is sealed and stained brown. There are two windows on each side and a door in the end. A box stove sits in the middle of the room and there are double seats for the pupils to sit in. I have a nice desk just like the teachers at home have and a chair like papa’s desk chair. There are eighteen pupils. Three beginners, four reviewing the first grade, three in the second grade, one in the third, four in the fourth, two in the fifth and sixth and one in the sixth. The two just mentioned are taking part fifth and part sixth grade work. They are all as good as they can be. Only one of my boys ever saw a barber, I believe, and he is the son of a housekeeper from Portland who was married in ten days. All of the mothers cut their boys’ hair—some with a bowl, some otherwise . . .

**Sept. 27, 1914.** Dear mother and everybody . . . I have now ten boys and seven girls. My oldest girl is eleven, and my oldest boy is fourteen. They are all rough and tough youngsters who, with one exception, never saw a city or a street car or a good many of the things we consider the necessities of life. A good many of them were born and have always lived right here.

Actually, mother, if I knew that I should always have to live as these people up here live—with nothing to read but a week old newspaper or a Sears or Montgomery and Ward catalogue, and nothing to see but the mountains and the miserable crops and the sagebrush and nothing to talk about but my neighbors’ business, I would just as soon die this minute. As it is, though, I am just learning how the other half of Oregon is living and am getting all the fun out of it that I can, and know that I can go back to civilization sometime and I don’t mind it a bit . . . The sun is shining warmly and brightly and there is not a cloud to be seen except for a few fleecy white ones along the snow capped mountains on the west. On the east stretching to the north and south as far as I can see is a range of high hills and rocky crags. There is nothing on them but sage brush and a scanty scattering of junipers. At times they look beautiful but at other times they look cold and bleak . . .

. . . Edna [Edna Murray, Ethel Murray's sister or cousin, also from Portland, teaching at Haystack School a few miles north] and I both joined [the grange]. Isn't that a joke? However it is really a good thing for the people out here and it affords almost the only amusement. They give dances and plays and socials and things and have a good time in general. We were given the first two degrees [in the Grange] Saturday night and will receive the next two next meeting which is a week from Saturday. After Grange they danced until midnight. I danced a number of dances and did well or otherwise according to the partners I had. Next Saturday I am invited to a farewell social to be held at the Grange Hall for the Ralstons. You know Clifford Ralston, the one Ethel goes with? His folks are going to move over near Redmond on an irrigated farm. They have lived here about twelve years and have had several successive failures . . . Everybody is going to bring a basket and give them a big blow out . . .

**Oct. 1, 1914.** My Dear mother . . . You asked me what I have to eat. Well, everything is very economical and very plain but there is always plenty and it tastes mighty good to me. No matter what the weather or what the day, there is always gravy. And such gravy! Made of bacon or ham grease and as stiff as ice cream. We eat it with bread—or rather the rest do—I get sick of it about every third day. What do you think? Sometimes on Sunday evenings the only hot thing on the table is a huge dish of gravy. However there is always enough beside gravy. For breakfast we usually have bacon and fried eggs and fried apples or potatoes and gravy, hot biscuits and syrup or jelly or apple sauce, and coffee—with plenty of good cream, and all the milk we want to drink. I put up my own lunch in a yellow tin box. I always have bread and butter and a glass of sauce and most of the time pie or chicken—or both—and a good sized jar of milk. For supper we have potatoes and gravy, and bacon or chicken and macaroni or stewed tomatoes or some sort of an excuse for a vegetable. Vegetables and fruit are almost as scarce as money in this country . . .

**Oct. 5, 1914.** My dear mother . . . Today the County School Superintendent visited my school. I was just hearing the grammar classes when a big grey auto drove up and stopped at the stile, and a well-dressed man of about forty came up to the door and introduced himself as Mr. Myers. My heart stopped for a minute I think but I tried not to show it and I don't believe I did. I soon regained my senses and was able to ignore him entirely. He remained during the fifth, sixth, and seventh grammar recitations, and then it was dinner [lunch] time. He complimented me very highly in the work that I am doing and only made two corrections—One was that the younger ones were restless



Girls at Trail Crossing School.

because they were inside too much, I should give them a recess oftener, and the other that I am inclined to give the older ones too much help in the hard places -- I should let them think it out by themselves . . .

Whenever he visits a school he leaves a little slip of paper with his estimate of the teacher and the school. My grades were as follows: control of pupils—Fair—which is from seventy-five to eighty. The room was very noisy when he was there and he said it was because the little ones had been inside too long. I tried giving them a short recess this afternoon between times and it helped a lot. The next thing he marked was "thoroughness of teaching"—Good, which is from eighty-five to ninety.

He said I had a very thorough way of going at things.

Next was "interest in teaching" which was Very Good which is between ninety and ninety-five. Next was "tact"—which was Good or eighty-five to ninety, and the next was "Teacher's Appearance" which he marked "neat." I had on the blue shirt with the red cord around the neck, and the green plaid skirt. At the end where there is a place for remarks he wrote "Commendable beginning," and then signed his name . . . After he said . . . that the pupils all had "good faces" and that I was doing the right thing, I felt a lot better and I even believe it helped my cold. I love the school and want to do well by it . . .

Tomorrow for the first time we are going to hoist our flag. Mr. Martin put up the pole some time ago and went to Redmond yesterday to get a rope for it and also enough so the girls can have a jumping rope. He also got us a new box of chalk, a pint bottle of ink, some white oilcloth to cover the water bucket shelf with, a dozen grey granite drinking cups, and a new broom, and ordered a hand bell and a window sash. I have been without a bell all this time except for a little one that one of the boys brought me. The window was broken before school started . . .

. . . Saturday night the Trail Crossing Literary Society is going to meet at the school house and re-organize. I expect to have a lot of fun there this winter . . . Mr. Hobbs is quite active in all such work. By the way, if you see anyone hunting for a man, let me know and I'll manage to introduce them to Mr. Hobbs. He is a dear. I imagine that he is about forty five or forty eight; has sort of sandy hair, and heavy reddish moustache and is about ordinary height. He is really quite clever, and very religious—a stiff Baptist. He is awfully jolly and full of fun and would make a splendid husband for some of the widows we know. And the worst of it is, he wants a wife very much, I understand. He has a son, Harry, who is nearly breaking his heart because he dances. He is a good youngster—about nineteen or twenty—but he can't

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see his father's religious views and to tell the truth he doesn't seem to try very hard . . .

The school house is right on the road that goes to Trail Crossing—the trail down the canyon—and dozens of people pass on their way to Redmond and the country over there. One day a bunch of forty three horses went by—another day a great bunch of sheep passed by, and today, and in fact for a couple of days, dozens of Indians have gone past in every imaginable means of transportation. They come from the reservation and are . . . all dressed up in colors of every description. . .

**Oct. 18, 1914.** . . . [the Redmond "Potato Show"]. Redmond is a typical frontier town consisting of a dry-goods store, a couple of grocery stores, a drug store, a post office, barber shop, and two saloons. It reminded me of a moving picture show for there were Indian squaws with brilliant, many-colored shawls with their faces painted red and streaked with black, wearing beaded moccasins and carrying papooses on wooden boards, and old Indian men wearing moccasins and with broad brimmed hats over their long black braids, and Indian boys and girls dressed in every form imaginable. Then there were cowboys with black and red and yellow fur chaps and broad felt hats and bandana handkerchiefs instead of collars and they either rode around on their ponies or walked with their ponies following them just like dogs . . .

In the afternoon the things of interest were the cowboy race and the bucking contest. The race was fine and the ponies ran something awful. I was almost afraid to watch the bucking contest for those men get on those awful horses that have never been broken and how they stick on is more than I can see . . . The thing that scared me the worst, though, was when Mr. Spencer—the father of two of my pupils—was to ride "Sky Rocket," a horse that had never been ridden so far and had thrown any number of men. He was to have fifty dollars if he would ride it so you may know they didn't expect him to do it. It took three men to hold his ears while Mr. Spencer saddled him and then he kicked and acted awful. Everybody expected and hoped that Mr. Spencer would back out but he is the most daring man I ever saw and is known to be the best rider in the country. It was also in the bargain that he was to ride with "one hand free" which means that he must only hold on with one hand.

Everyone held their breath when he put his foot in the stirrup and flopped into the saddle. I trembled from head to foot when the men let go of the horse's ears and he started bucking. He put all four feet together and jumped into the air—then he reared and kicked and tore and finally tore off toward the trees. And all this time Mr. Spencer stuck on with one hand high in the air and his hair, which is rather long and curly, flying in the wind, and the last we saw of him for a few breathless minutes was a white blouse shirt flying backward and forward and up and down among the junipers. Finally a cowboy yelled through a megaphone—"Sky Rocket has been ridden by Spencer"—and you should have heard the cheers as they led the horse back with Spencer sitting calmly in the saddle. It was fifty dollars easily earned for him, but I heard a

number of men say they wouldn't do it for fifty thousand.

. . . It has been a dreadful day. It has poured rain all day and the wind has blown and howled down the chimney something fearful. This house surely doesn't lack for fresh air, for when the wind blows it comes in those places at the sides of the windows where I told you the moulding wasn't long enough—and the window curtains rattle and flop all the time. On the south side the water has poured in from the top of the window all day. It falls in great drops to the top of the lower sash and splashes halfway across the room. Right now everything is shut up as tight as it can be and my hair is blowing right and left. Also the carpet raises up from the floor like an immense bubble. It isn't bad though because juniper wood makes a good hot fire and it is warm and nice—and I have a feather bed and three heavy quilts and a blanket on my bed, so it is warm at night . . .

**Oct. 31, 1914.** Dear Father. . . We all went to Opal City in the "light wagon" last night to a County Division meeting. People are going to vote Tuesday on the division of Crook County. Everyone around here seems to be in favor of it. If divided according to the present plan the Southern boundary will be Crooked River, and we will be in Jefferson County. All of the speeches last night were in favor of division—the opposing side failed to show up. . . .

**Nov. 15, 1914.** My dearest mother . . . We have just had dinner. We had back-bones (pork), mashed potatoes, turnips, coffee, bread and butter, cupcakes, and gooseberry pie. I didn't eat as much as usual—since the bachelors supper last night at Grange, I haven't felt hungry. I wish you could have been at that supper. The bachelors simply blew themselves and of all the whipped cream cakes and salads and fried chicken and homemade doughnuts and pies you ever saw, this beat the whole bunch. We had simply quarts of pure cream for the coffee and—just everything grand. Some of these fellows are grand cooks and

they just tried themselves. Edna and I got right beside an immense whipped cream cake in a large sized milk pan, and a fruit salad with pure whipped cream for dressing. It was the best I ever ate.

Two of the fellows decided to play a joke on everybody, and they made some juniper berry pie. Juniper berries are little blue berries that grow on juniper trees and no one on earth can describe the taste of them—it is something awful. When cooked they look exactly like huckleberries, and they make a delicious looking pie—but Oh the taste! We laughed until I thought I would never recover at people who ate it . . . . .

**Dec. 11, 1914.** My dear mother . . . It has been very cold all week and it seems as if all the youngsters have been on a rampage. This morning there was about three inches of snow. At recess the boys all rushed out preparing to snow ball. I headed them off in the front yard and told them that if their parents allowed them to play in the snow it was all right with me but that they had to be very careful about throwing hard snow balls and in no case were they to throw one at a girl. I was just winding up my speech when Ira



Essie Maguire on her horse near the Martins' homestead

Crawford, who had been around the corner and had not heard me, whizzed up and hit Horace Tolbert with a snowball as hard as a bullet. Horace was holding a snow ball in his hand at the time and he fired it at Ira. Ira dodged behind me and the snow ball hit Julia Crawford, the littlest girl in the school, square in the ear. I never was so angry in my life but I have laughed about it ever since. Poor Horace is so big and awkward and tries so hard to be manly that I do hate to scold him. I made him keep to his seat during recess as punishment. For a while I thought I would make him stay in all day or attempt to whip him or something awful—but he was so good about it and seemed real sorry so I said no more about it. But I threatened the life of anyone who threw a snowball.

Then I was away from my desk about five minutes all during the noon hour and when I returned my pointer was broken and a bottle of ink was upset on my desk. I was so angry that if I had started in on someone or even found who did it I might have half killed them so I waited a while and made a rule that **no one** was to dare to come to my desk during my absence and fumble things over. With these and other similar only smaller things do you wonder that I am glad it is Friday? I don't get discouraged though for they are only like this about every fifth or sixth week . . . .

**Jan. 17, 1915.** Dear folks . . . Our play [at Opal City Grange] went off splendidly. There was a big crowd—nearly the biggest I have ever seen at Opal City. There were so many rigs that when we arrived on the scene there wasn't a place to tie the horse—we had to unhitch Topsy and tie her to the buggy. Everybody seemed to think the play was good. . . . the name of it was "Sackett's Corners." [*Sacketts' Corner Folks* by Harry M. Doty, a rural newspaper editor in upstate NY whose comedies about country life were very popular for Grange productions—even in Central Oregon!] I was a city boarder—an old maid who had always engaged in the cause of prevention of cruelty to animals. One of the bachelors of Sackett's Corners overheard me say that I wanted a husband to share my lot. Taking for granted that the lot was in New York—where I was from and that it must be worth at least twenty-five thousand dollars he decided he was the fellow to share it. There was a touching little love scene—at the end of which we fell awkwardly into one another's arms. He called me his "hunk of maple sugar" and all sorts of foolishness. There was a crazy fellow in the play—Mr. Tolbert took that part—and he saw the whole thing. After we left the stage he came on with a high tin churn. He set the churn down on one chair and he sat in another—and said the same things to the churn that "Mel" had said to me. He called it his "can of maple syrup" and hugged it and acted ridiculous in general. He nearly brought the house down—every one laughed until they cried.

I forgot to say that I wore the black dress and puffed my hair at the sides and did it in a high knot on top—then powdered it. I received lots of compliments on my stunt but I'm sure it was because I talked loudly enough. They have the weakest voiced bunch here I ever saw—one of the leading characters simply whispered—nobody could hear her . . . .

. . . I just wish you could see the sunset. It is a very clear day and there are eleven snow capped mountains in view along the west. They all stand out dark blue against the yellow sky and there is a new moon and one star right above the Three Sisters. There is hardly a cloud in sight, only a few long narrow ones along the east that are the most beautiful pink. We always plan on a windy day when the clouds are long and thin like that. I hope our sign fails this time, though, for I hate those windy days. We had one the other day—the worst I have ever seen—we could hardly see across the road for dust. Then besides we get so dirty and there is no water to bathe in . . . .

**Jan. 25, 1915.** . . . It is cold again—dry and cold . . . during the day it ranges around twenty. There was a heavy fog nearly all week and it froze all over everything. It was a lot prettier than snow—which only falls on the upper side of everything—for every tiny needle on the junipers and every

little leaf on the sagebrush was four or five times its natural size with frost—there was two inches of solid frost on the fence posts and every barb of the barbed-wire fencing looked like a huge chrysanthemum. The frost forms in points on everything. It just looked like an ice and snow world. I have never seen anything like it before—but I am told that it is quite common here . . . .

**Jan. 31, 1915.** Dear mother and father . . . I said that Mr. Martin had staked off a mining claim. That is all the rage. It has been reported that gold has been found along the Deschutes River and the whole country has gone crazy. Hundreds of people I guess have located claims. I don't know whether there is anything to it or not, I have heard a lot on both sides. I am crazy to take up a claim, but I don't suppose I will . . . .

**Feb. 14, 1915.** . . . We went to Grange in [Jim] Read's auto. We had some speakers at Grange—who talked about better farming methods and one thing and another. After that we had a program and eats. I spoke a piece entitled "Tom's Little Star"—I didn't have as much time on it as I should have, and didn't do as well as I should have liked to. After that a crowd of us played games—such as "Skip-to-my-Loo"—"Marching round the Levee," "Suzie Brown," "Marching Down to Old Quebec, etc. Actually the kids here play the foolishest games—those I have mentioned along with a few other similar ones are commonly called "Party Games." Isn't that a joke? We got home about half past one or quarter to two [a.m.]" . . . .

. . . Edna and I saddled our horses and went up on top of Haystack—a huge mountain just back [south] of Reads.' Edna rode horseback all the way up but I felt sorry for my horse so I got off and tied her to a tree and climbed up afoot. It was quite a climb I'll tell you. But it surely is worth it. I just wish you could see the view from up there. On the north way off in the distance are blue mountains and stretching from the immediate foreground to them are thousands of acres of land as level as a floor all checkered off in fields of various sizes, shapes, and colors. The whole space seems to be absolutely without trees, the only thing that breaks the sameness are two towns, Culver on the western side and Metolius—way off in the North. On the [west] the view is altogether different. In the distant west can be seen thirteen snowcapped mountains—among which are Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson, and the Three Sisters—and a lot of smaller ones. You can also see the Deschutes canyon and the Crooked River canyon and can see where the two canyons run down below Metolius. On the south everything seems wilder. There are huge rocks and buttes and junipers and sagebrush with here and there a place cleared for a farm . . . .

**Feb. 23, 1915.** Dearest Father . . . The afternoon was lovely and we rode about eight miles through juniper woods and hills and everything. I am getting so I can almost ride, I am told. I always had an idea that one must sit stiff and straight when riding—but one soon learns to relax and "swing with your horse" when one of these cow-punchers takes you off and shows you how you look. Earl Ralston gave me a riding lesson yesterday—and I find I didn't know as much as I thought I did. I tried a couple of little stunts that I never tried before and probably wouldn't have tried them only I didn't want to be too much of a tenderfoot. I "galloped sideways," that is rode at a gallop with one foot thrown over the front of the saddle—I nearly lost my balance, but didn't quite. Another thing I did was ride on a run. I gallop often but I never had a horse run with me before. We surely cut the air for about a quarter of a mile. I liked it immensely. The only things I didn't try were riding backward, facing the tail in other words, and picking up a stick off the ground. Earl did both but I was a little skeptical. Someday when I have someone to hold my horse I'll practice them, maybe, for I would love to be able to do them, but I'm not in any hurry to break my neck . . . .

**March 15, 1915.** Dear sis . . . [I]t is a lot prettier here now than I ever thought it could possibly be. Things are beginning to "green up" as these folks say. In some places the rye fields look like beautiful green lawns—acres



and acres big. Flowers and weeds and bunch grass and new sprouts on the sagebrush all lend a bit of newness to the scene. I say flowers, but I mean little plants which the children tell me will be flowers. As yet I have seen but one species of central Oregon flora—and it had a wonderful effect on me—I was just like new for a long while.

This morning little Ira and Julia Crawford came in ready to burst from pure excitement. Poor little Ira carried, in addition to his lunch pail, a tomato can that had been opened at the wrong end . . . it was filled with loose, damp dirt and in it were crookedly planted two “yellow bells” which he had transplanted from the field. One was somewhat smaller than the other but he had succeeded in getting clear to the bulb of it, while the bigger one he had broken off and had only put there for looks. I emptied them out and fixed the little one up and have great hopes of it growing. The larger one—which has three blossoms—I have in a glass of water right in front of me. They have leaves a lot like those of daffodils and the little flowers are bright yellow and droop under on their stem, and smell just like violets . . .

. . . I still have my tender spot for college, and I have the biggest notion in the world to be stingy this summer and save my money and start to Reed in the fall . . . Really, kid, if I thought that if by chance I should always have to make my own living and could do nothing but teach school, I should be ready to die in a few years from now. It is all right for a while, and I never will be glad enough that I have taught this much. And I should as soon teach another year or so—but that is all. I can simply feel myself getting crazy already. And up at Institute [Teachers Institute in Bend] I saw the worst looking bunch of old maids I ever saw. I would as soon be an old maid—but not that kind. I want to be in some thing or another where I can learn something from someone around—and not have to teach everybody all the time. Anyhow I think I’ll go to college and learn something more if possible—and then teach high school or something. Grandma Squires [a Trail Crossing neighbor] wants me to try writing for a magazine. Wouldn’t that be funny? Perhaps I will . . .

**March 23, 1915.** Dear mother, father, and sis . . . Lots of people are moving both into and out of this country. Hardly a day passes but at least one covered wagon drawn by a couple of lean, peaked-looking horses and inhabited by a tired looking family goes by the school. Hambys—one of our school directors—moved to California—or rather started for California—in two covered wagons Saturday morning. They took two children from my school. Jacksons—another family over the hill that have one little boy in school—are preparing to go. Earl Ralston has moved to an irrigated ranch across the river—near Terrebonne. Spencers and Martins are thinking of leaving before another year—and Nichols want to—if ever he gets the ambition . . . Really there won’t be much of a school in this district if everyone carries out his present plans . . .

**April 18, 1915.** Dearest folks . . . As I predicted, we are down in the canyon [Crooked River Gorge, below Trail Crossing] today . . . I wish you could see us now as we sit on the rocks in the shade of a huge juniper tree with the river rushing and foaming just in front of us, but I am truly glad you didn’t see us on our way here. We scaled rocks and jumped down precipices and I fell down and rolled over and—oh everything! It was one continuous round of graceful movements. We feel as if we are the only persons in the whole world. The river is about fifty feet wide and on the other side there is a perpendicular wall of solid rock. It is all cracked up and split off in places



Essie Maguire in Portland, in the 1950s

and all sorts of birds are flitting to and fro. Evidently they have nests in the crevices. We watched three or four big hawks slowly circling round and round. Back of us the wall is not so steep, but is dreadfully rocky—nobody knows how rocky until he attempts to descend. This river is rightfully named “Crooked” for on either side of us a sudden turn makes the canyon seem to end right there; so you see we feel as though we were down in a huge well. We risked our lives one at a time to leap from rock to rock to a big flat boulder away out in the river and have our pictures taken. It was all for you, homefolks, too, and I hope you will appreciate it . . .

**April 29, 1915.** Dearest folks . . . I’m going to work . . . all week so that there will be nothing to think of after I dismiss school Friday. Goodness knows, there will be enough. I have to give about twenty examinations, grade all the papers, figure up averages, make our report cards, close up my register, and make out a state annual and a county monthly report. And the worst of it is that it can’t be done until nearly the end of the week until I get all the grades etc. However, I’ll manage and if anybody ever slid

out from under a million pound weight—I’ll do it. Not that I have disliked teaching—I haven’t at all—but it is a responsibility and it is always on one’s mind—and it will be mighty good to get it off for a while—that’s all. I’m surely glad that I shall never again have to teach my first school. I just know that I’ll be able to do better another year—at least I’ll feel a lot better about it, for I’ve learned by experience that I never could have learned otherwise . . .

What Essie Maguire did do, in fall 1915, was to enroll in the University of Oregon, where she became President of the Campus YWCA, and graduated in the Class of 1919 with a degree in the then-new field of sociology. After graduation, she received a scholarship to go to New York City to train as a YWCA administrator, which involved doing graduate work in religious studies and earning a master’s degree at Columbia University. Travel in England and Europe followed (she also visited abroad in 1951); and after holding YWCA positions in Ft. Worth, Chicago, New Bedford, Indianapolis, and Tacoma, she returned home to work for the Portland YWCA. From 1946 to her retirement in 1960, she was Executive Director of the downtown “Y,” and spearheaded construction of its headquarters at 10<sup>th</sup> and Main. She died in 1979 and was celebrated in the Oregonian as “a mother of mothers, and an inspiration to women and girls throughout the city.” In the courtyard of the downtown YWCA, a magnificent elm tree still grows in living recognition of her long career of teaching and guiding young people—which began out here in sagebrush country with her roughneck pupils at Trail Crossing School.

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# A LOCAL HISTORY OF WHAT KIDS DID, BACK WHEN

by Jane Ahern

As I write this, Jefferson County parents are wondering what they are going to do with their children for the next couple months while the coronavirus pandemic has closed schools, child care facilities and most forms of public entertainment. The question is not only who will supervise the children, but what will they do to fill all that extra time?

Parents of earlier generations would not have had to ask themselves those questions because at least one parent was usually working at home regardless of whether the children were in school and because there was more expectation that children would find themselves something to do.

No doubt many children will spend spring of 2020 glued to one screen or another. If “social distancing” stretches on longer, perhaps families will take some inspiration from the following information on how children passed their time in the past.

## Work

Your kids won’t thank me for pointing this out, but in the homesteading days (and for that matter, in later times) children learned to work at the same time they learned to play, beginning with very simple tasks at around 3 years old. Work was a substantial part of their lives.

Memoirs of early days in what is now Jefferson County describe the work done by children. Many of the tasks were the same ones performed by farm kids everywhere—helping in the kitchen, feeding and watering livestock, collecting eggs from the chickens, milking cows, churning butter, cleaning out stalls, driving cattle to pasture and watching over



Ellen Luelling watering the cows, ca. 1912

them while they grazed.

Other tasks were more particular to the challenges presented by the Central Oregon high desert. Chester S. Luelling in his *Saga of the Sagebrush Country* (Madras, OR: C.S. Luelling, 1964 ) describes how he and his siblings helped his mother clear their land for farming while their father was earning extra money hauling freight with horses and wagons.

While their mother, Cora Luelling, was “grubbing” out the sagebrush, the older kids would entertain their baby sister in her baby carriage and gather dead and uprooted sagebrush into piles for burning. (*Saga*, p. 12)

Rocky fields are not unique to Jefferson County, but the farms near the rim overlooking the Deschutes River canyon are particularly

prolific. More than one generation of Jefferson County farm kids remembers picking rocks out of the fields and hauling them away in a wagon or stone boat pulled by a horse.

One of the biggest hardships of life in Jefferson County used to be the lack of water for livestock and household use, let alone irrigation. Families had to haul water from the nearest springs, wells in what is now Madras, or, after the railroads were built, from the railroad’s enormous water tank at the depot at

the edge of the plains. Filling up the water barrels at the railroad depot was often the job of school-aged boys.

In her book *Rattlesnake Homestead* (Springfield, OR: G.E. Greenhoot, 1988), Gilma Endicott Greenhoot tells of the boys’ hair-raising antics which must have been around 1918.

“Water hauling was a favorite pastime for most of the young boys growing up on the Plains. At a very young age it was something helpful they could do, fun for them, and gave them a feeling of worth. Both Earl Poulsen and Fred [Endicott, the



Chet and Lloyd Luelling “picking rocks,” ca 1910.



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author's brother] remembered that they drove when they were nine years old. . . . The excitement came when they neared the depot. When one young driver saw another approaching at the same time, the race was on to see who could pull in first. The fellow with the fastest team, or who had the head start would most likely win, but that didn't keep the others from trying. There had to be some close calls, and I doubt if the parents knew how daring some of these races were."

Another task necessitated by the lack of running water was cleaning out the water cisterns that families used to store their water. Endicott recalls her brother Fred climbing down the ladder into their cistern to sweep and rinse it out twice a year.

### Games

Unfortunately, social gatherings are frowned upon for the time being, but in earlier days neighboring families spent their leisure time visiting back and forth. When families got together, the mothers would chat while they sewed or crocheted, and the fathers would often help each other with odd jobs around the homestead. Or sometimes the adults would play cards. In the meantime, the children would play together.

Greenhoot listed several games that she and her friends played. Some of them—hopscotch, catch, hide-and-seek, and blind man's bluff—are still common today. Another, "darebase," is a complicated tag game that appears to still be played at school in PE class. But how about these games mentioned by Greenhoot and others:

**Andy-over** (there are lots of variations on the name—ante-over, annie-over, etc.) This game requires a ball and a structure small enough to throw a ball over but large enough that players can't see their opponents on the other side of it, such as a small house or storage shed. The teams begin on opposite sides of the building. The first team throws the ball over the roof calling, "Andy-over! If the other team fails to catch it, they throw it back in the same way. If someone does catch it, the team sneaks around the building and the catcher of the ball tries to tag members of the other team, who then must switch teams. The game is over when one



"Red Rover, Red Rover, send so-and-so over!"

team collects all the players.

**Fox and geese** This is a game to play in the snow. First, trample down a good-sized circle in the snow. Then, stomp down an X inside the circle, with a smaller circle in the middle for a base. One child, the fox, tries to tag the other children, who are the geese. They can only run in the pathways formed by the circle and the X and the geese can retreat to the base in the middle for safety. Once the fox tags someone that person is the new fox and the original fox becomes a goose.

**Mumblety-pegs** Greenhoot mentions this game as one that her brother played with other boys while waiting to fill their water tanks. It might be frowned upon by modern parents because it involves knife-throwing. There are many variations on the game, but they all entail throwing a pocketknife at the ground so that it sticks into the ground.

**Button, button, who's got the button?** A player holding a small object such as a button goes around the circle of players, handing off the button to one and pretending to hand it off to the others. The others must then guess who has it.

**Drop the handkerchief** This is a circle game very much like duck, duck, goose. "It" drops a handkerchief behind one of the players in the circle, who then has to pick up the handkerchief, run after, and try to tag "it" before he or she reaches the vacated spot in the circle.

### Imagination and improvisation

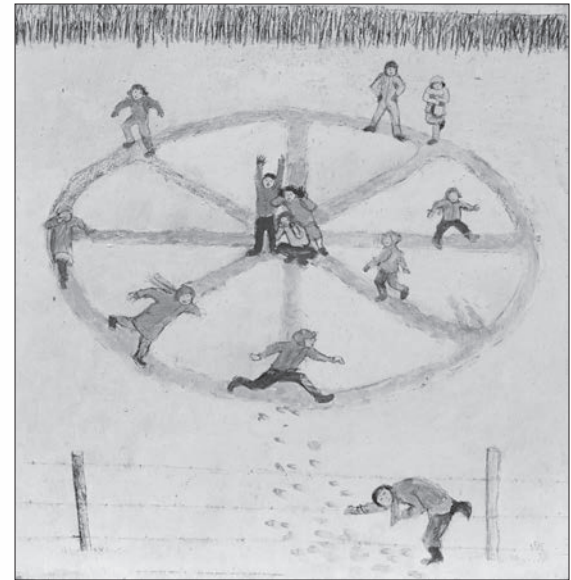
If group games are out of the question for the foreseeable future, maybe some old-fashioned role-playing and imagination games are in order. They are developmentally healthy and can be played almost anywhere and any time using any old things at hand.

Children of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries routinely improvised toys from ordinary discarded objects.

In her book *Around the Cat's Back* (Union, OR: Bear Wallow Publishing, 1989), Daisy Wasson, whose family homesteaded in Eastern Oregon, describes her dollhouse made from a couple of wooden crates with furnishings made from old cigar boxes, tin cans, and scraps of cloth. The children made clothes for their dolls and made a cat for the doll family with bunched-up cloth bound with thread. Making the toys was part of the fun.

The Stangland children used empty syrup cans tied to a piece of string that they pulled behind them, pretending they were horse-drawn wagons.

"We treated them as living creatures and had a make-believe barn against a sage clump where they were fed, watered, and bedded down. Generally we tied them up for the night, though sometimes they were hobbled and turned loose," wrote Bess Stangland Raber in her book *Some Bright Morning*



Fox and Geese, a winter game

(Corvallis, OR: B.F. Raber, 1983)

And in his book of essays *New Era: Reflections on the Human and Natural History of Central Oregon* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2003), Jerry Ramsey describes the elaborate game he and the other boys at school devised and played in the schoolyard at recess. Getting into the spirit of WWII, the boys dug themselves a large foxhole.

"With childish singleness of purpose, we soon roofed it, camouflaged the roof with sod, and installed a periscope and a tin-can stove, brought in our toy guns and some foodstuffs, and became a military brotherhood, a guerilla band known as the 'Red Moles.' Gordon [Links], who was artistic and clever, painted the flag. We had time, and mind, for nothing else." Ramsey wrote. (*New Era*, p. 29)

### Outdoors

As of this writing, playing outdoors is still recommended as long as people maintain distance from others. The children of homesteaders were experts at finding things to do outdoors.

They spent a lot of time exploring, observing and interacting with the natural world. Depending on their age, they might chase butterflies and grasshoppers, watch the antics of burrowing owls, or look for scorpions under clumps of manure.

According to Chester Luelling, he and his siblings caught all sorts of critters. When they were younger, lizards, horned toads, rabbits, and sage rats were their quarry.

In fact, catching sage rats seems to have been a nearly universal hobby using this method described by Luelling: "We used a snare which consisted of a long piece of sack twine with a slip loop on one end. The loop was pressed snugly to the dirt at the mouth of their hole, then we'd sit back, holding the other



end of the string, silently waiting for one to pop his head out. A sage rat was cautious about coming out of his hole without stopping to look first with just the top of his head exposed. This was the moment to jerk the string and break his neck.” (*Saga* p. 17)

Writing for *Jefferson County Reminiscences* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1998), Lela Gard Ramsey said about hunting sage rats, “A boy felt that he was not a real boy unless he owned a long string with a loop at one end tied exactly right. It was his most prized possession. Some girls participated in this sport also.” (JCR p. 299)

The Luellings also had a method for catching rabbits. “One of our favorite pastimes in the spring, especially when we herded cows, was catching young rabbits. We could catch them until they were about one-fourth grown. They would believe themselves hidden and remain motionless, crouched in a clump of grass or at the base of a sagebrush. We’d fall on them with our hands cupped before they were aware that they’d been seen. Ellen was about to fall on an object in a clump of grass when she discovered it was a coiled rattlesnake, and not the fur of a rabbit that had caught her eye.” (*Saga* p. 18)

Later, the Luelling boys graduated to fishing, hunting with rifles, and trapping, from which they could earn some spending money as the county paid a bounty for bobcats and coyotes and they could also sell the hides. They also sold jackrabbits to a wholesale meat company in Portland.

Animals were not the only playthings provided by nature. Gilma Endicott Greenhoot recalls her love of climbing both trees and rocks.

“One of my favorite rocks was in the backyard beyond the cellar. It had the neatest ledges to use as shelves for play, and a nice flat top to dance around on. But across the road, which was in front of the house, was the trickiest one of all. It was a high, jagged rock which had dips in it that made a perfect cowboy saddle, just right to straddle and play you were riding like the wind,” she writes. (*Rattlesnake Homestead*, p. 68)

When they went camping in ponderosa country, the Endicott kids and their friends would collect hardened knobs of pitch from where it had oozed out of scars on the trees and use it for chewing gum.

Greenhoot wrote, “Chewing it was an experience for the beginner. When you first chewed the hard ball, it broke up into small pieces which had a distinctive taste. One might even call it a bit on the bitter side. But that was only the beginning. You stuck with it, the chewing I mean, and finally it began to form a chewy ball. In the meantime, you had to spit out the extra bits. Actually this took



A little Culver girl with a big watermelon—what happened next?



After a bobcat hunt

quite a bit of spitting. On the first try, we lost a few chewers, but for the most part, we all grew to like it and to treasure our can of little, hard, odd-shaped balls.” (*Rattlesnake Homestead* p. 58)

### Indoors

In addition to some of the indoor activities mentioned above, reading was a common evening pastime for both children and parents. Families often read books and magazines aloud to each other as a form of group entertainment. Reading material was scarce, so books and magazines would be shared with neighbors.

The Bobbsey Twins series of books was a favorite among local girls; boys enjoyed the “Penrod and Sam” series and *Treasure Island*.

Greenhoot remembers her neighbor, Mrs. Van Noy subscribing to several magazines that she shared, including *Little Folk's Magazine* for children. Luelling's family had a subscription to the magazine *Youth's Companion*. In the absence of internet, television and radio (radio appeared locally about 1930), such magazines offered a rare glimpse at the world outside of Central Oregon.

The family of former Oregon governor Tom McCall, who grew up on a ranch on the Crooked River purchased by his wealthy grandfather in 1911, stands in contrast to neighboring families in that they had a complete Everyman's Library collection of almost 1,000 books—and that's after some of their books were destroyed in a fire.

The McCall children evolved from readers to writers who produced their own newspaper, which they called *The World*. Their news stories were sensational accounts of everyday happenings on the ranch. In her memoir, *Ranch under the Rimrock*, McCall's mother, Dorothy Lawson McCall, provides excerpts of several of the amusing stories under headlines such as “Big Dog Fight Stopped” and “Tick Discovered!” (*Ranch* p. 141)

Tom McCall went on to have a career in journalism before he became governor.

Another indoor activity that kids sometimes did at parties was taffy pulling, which Greenhoot describes in her book:

“When some of the parents cooked the candy for us, we would have taffy pulls. When pulling time came, two had to work together. One person would pull it out a foot or two then hand it back to the other. At first it would be quite warm and the pulling had to go fast to keep from burning one's fingers. As the candy hardened, the pulling became harder and harder until it was declared 'ready.' Then each individual pulled their piece out into one-half inch thick strands. After that it was twisted and laid out on plates. As soon as anyone thought it was hard enough, it was hit with a hard instrument to break it into pieces. At this point



everyone started chomping. The memory of those hunks of hard sweet candy melting in the mouth defies description. Action and eating combined to make taffy pulling a downright favorite with us all," she wrote. (*Rattlesnake Homestead*, p. 101)

### Sunday School

Surprisingly few local memoirists have written in detail about their religious upbringing, but church was a fact of life for many children as it was for their parents.

There are a few mentions of Sunday school in *Jefferson County Reminiscences*. Lela Gard Ramsey writes in her piece about the south Agency Plains that beginning in 1903 children walked many miles to attend Sunday school at the home of Henry Branstetter. His relative, Mrs. George Branstetter was the teacher and another Branstetter relative played the piano for the group. The next year, their Sunday school began meeting in the Mt. View Schoolhouse. (p. 296)

Writing about the Pony Butte area in *History of Jefferson County, Oregon 1914-1983* (Madras, OR: Jefferson County Historical Society, 1984), Lucille A. Thornton said that families took turns hosting Sunday school in their homes. Later, children attended Sunday school at the church in Ashwood. The church had been a saloon until Ashwood resident Sadie Harbison bought it and remodeled it. It still stands in Ashwood. (History p. 258)

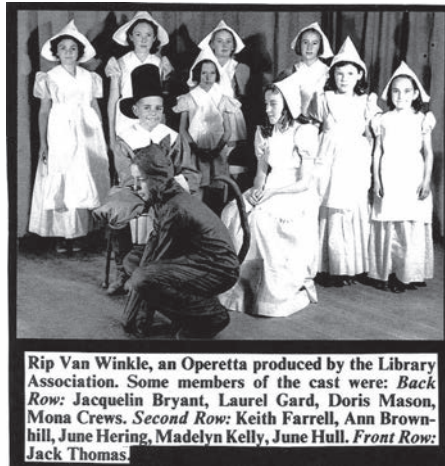
### School

This shortened school year might be one thing our children have in common with their homesteading predecessors.

Perhaps the school calendars were standardized after Jefferson County was formed in 1914 and Lillian Watts became the school superintendent, but before that time each of the myriad one-room schools sprinkled around the county operated on its own schedule and the length of the school year varied widely, depending on whether there was enough money available to keep paying the teacher's salary.

Many contributors to *Jefferson County Reminiscences* mention school terms of just three or four months and in the case of at least one school, they were not the months you might expect.

Former Blizzard Ridge pupil Milo Elkins recounted that the school ran in May, June and July. (*JCR* p. 50) Elkins is contradicted by Victoria Huston Starr's contribution to *Remembering—School Days of Old Crook County* by Irene H. Helms (Prineville, OR: Helms, 1980). Starr says that Blizzard Ridge ran in June, July, and August. (p. 194) Starr is in turn contradicted by former teacher Ellen Telfer Crowley who says that she taught school July, August and September! (p. 195) Maybe the term changed over time, but in any case the summer months were an unusual choice for



1938 Madras Grade School operetta, "Rip Van Winkle"

school.

We can glean from the letters of Essie Maguire, teacher at Trail Crossing school, (see this issue of THE AGATE, p. 3ff) that her school ran from September through April—a more conventional calendar, but still shorter than today's schools.

Essie Maguire's letters give a strong sense of what life was like for a young teacher of a one-room schoolhouse in Jefferson County. She was learning on the job, contending with social isolation, and occasionally having to administer discipline to students not that much younger than her.

The students' perspective on schools of that time period are offered in many published works. In *The History of Jefferson County 1914-1983* Bob Johnson tells of goings-on at Pony Butte School

"School behavior posed a problem even in those days [mid-to late- 1900s]. Some pupils were getting along in years and to that bully stage, so it was no surprise that some of the teachers handed down some edicts to be observed. One that comes to mind, was that there was to be no swearing out loud on the school grounds and anyone caught doing so was to have his mouth washed with soap and water. This was all good and well but when it came time to administer the punishment to the first caught, the teacher was at a disadvantage, whereupon she had to muster help from the older boys. Then, not being able to open his mouth, she ended the episode by giving him a few whacks with the blackboard pointer."

Students' experiences in school depended even more than today on what the teacher was like because the teacher was the only adult present and he or she had little guidance or supervision. A strict or unpleasant teacher made for a difficult school year; a kind or fun teacher made happy memories for the student.

If there were any universal school experiences, they had to do with the schoolhouse as the center

of social life. The school sometimes doubled as a place of worship on Sundays and could be used on evenings and weekends for community meetings and social events such as dances. It was common for schools to put on holiday programs featuring plays, music and poetry reading and some schools sponsored debating societies.

When irrigation arrived on the Agency Plains and the community was considering shuttering the New Era school and sending the students to school in Madras, Ramsey wrote, "Our parents fought it angrily, knowing that our little community, like many another, would lose its traditional center if the school closed. But when it came to a vote, the newcomers, who claimed to speak for the future in all things, won overwhelmingly. We would all go to town next fall, riding buses, to become 'new kids' among strangers." (*New Era*, p. 32)

There's no telling when people will be able to gather in schoolhouses again, but don't despair. Put the kids to work around the house, pick up some boxes at the grocery store for them to make things out of, encourage them to write their own news stories about this unique time in our history, and send them outside to play. Maybe they can catch some sage rats.

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# ASHWOOD MINING 1905-CURRENT

By Dan Chamness

This article is a continuation of “Ashwood Mining 1898-1905” that appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of “The Agate.”

The year 1904 started with the view that the gold and silver mines of the Ashwood area represented the next great mining strike in U.S. history. The Oregon King Mine, the darling of Oregon and well known throughout the nation’s mining community, was operating with some 80 miners. The Red Jacket, the second mine with enough outside capital to hire workers, had a shaft that was more than 300 feet deep and it looked as though this was another paying mine. Both mines had been patented, meaning that title to the claims had been transferred from the federal government to private ownership.

The town of Ashwood was platted, and the community started receiving mail on a daily basis. It had its own newspaper, *The Ashwood Prospector*, which promoted the mines and called for the Columbia Southern Railroad to build a spur to the camp.

Businesses invested in the community to serve the mines and ranches. Schools operated in Ashwood, Donnybrook and on Blizzard Ridge. There were two hotels, at least two saloons, stores, and even a small red-light district. It was an exciting time for gold and silver mining all over the American west and it appeared to many people that the Oregon King was as big, or bigger, than the other strikes around the country. At least, that is what a reader of *The Ashwood Prospector* would be led to believe.

By the end of 1904 the prospects for the mines of the Ashwood area were much different. The Oregon King Mine had been shut down in September over a second lawsuit brought by a person who claimed to have grubstaked the original Silver King claim in 1898. The Red Jacket Mine had been shut down for more than a month because of water in the shaft and drifts. Pump equipment was brought in to handle the water in the Red Jacket, but in July the mine shaft collapsed without loss of life.

The loss of mining jobs at both the Red Jacket and Oregon King had a big impact on the community of Ashwood. The miners left Ashwood, stores and saloons closed their doors, the Durham Sawmill quit operations and moved the mill to Warm Springs Reservation. *The Ashwood Prospector*, the great supporter of the mines of the Ashwood area, printed its last issue on April 4, 1905 without notice.

Not all news from 1904 was bad, though. The American Mining Conference was held in Portland in August and ore samples from the Oregon King and the Red Jacket received favorable reviews. The view was that the Oregon King would prevail in the lawsuit and the mine would soon reopen. (*Ashwood Prospector*, August 2, 1904)

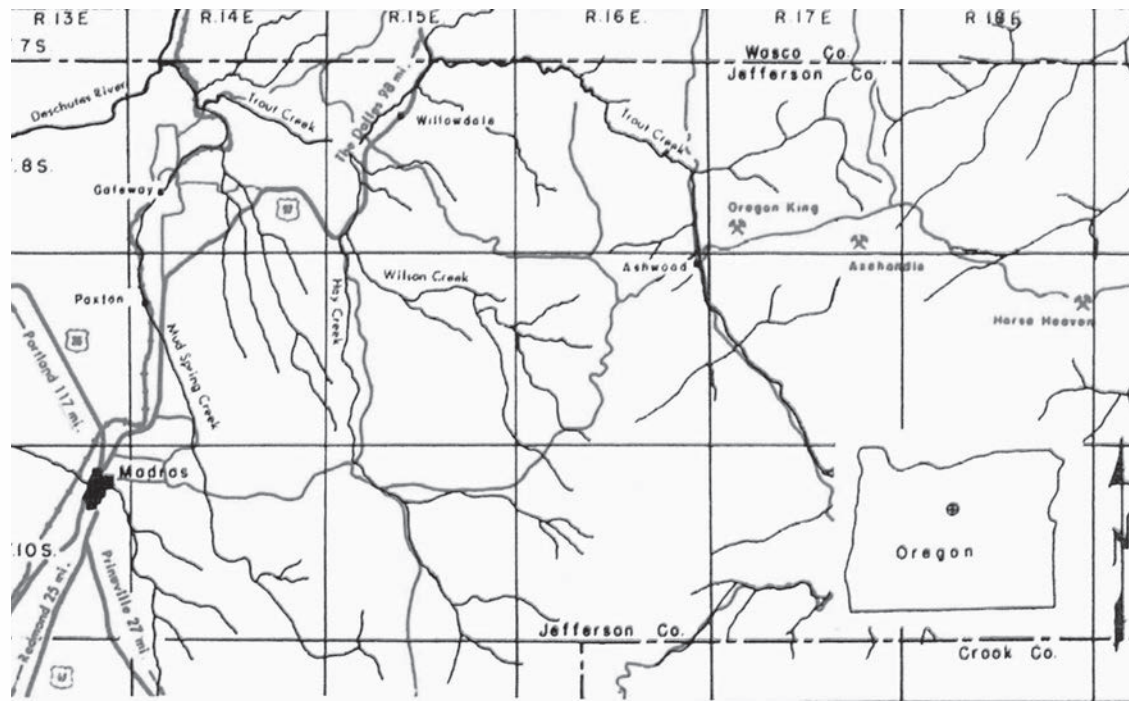
The Oregon King Mining Company did prevail in the lawsuit, but the mine did not reopen for

years. Significant production did not begin again until 1929. (*The Oregon King Mine, Jefferson County, Oregon*, page 8). Reasons for not reopening the mine upon settlement of the lawsuit included shortage of labor, the cost of shipping and processing ore relative to the value of the ore and changing interests of the mine owners. The mine owners never again operated the Oregon King themselves but leased or optioned operation to others.

The owners of Oregon King Mining Company were P.J. Quealy of Wyoming and John Edwards and Charles Cartwright of Hay Creek Ranch. Edwards and Cartwright purchased the Hay Creek Ranch in 1898 and in 1905 Edwards became sole owner of the 70,000-acre sheep and cattle ranch. Edwards brought in Louis Enderud as business manager for the ranch. (Enderud shows up later in this article.) In 1910 Edwards sold the Hay Creek Ranch to Harry Pittock and L.B. Menefee and moved to Portland where he lived out the rest of his life.

Most of the claim activity after the closing of the Oregon King in 1904 was on land near the Oregon King. The Roy Mining Company, Ashwood Gold and Silver Mining Company, Antelope Gold and Silver Mining Company and Kimberly Mining Company continued filing annual proof of labor notices on existing claims and new claims were also filed.

The railroad war on the Deschutes River came to an end in 1911 when the railroads of Hill and Harriman reached their completion in Bend, leading to the decline of Antelope and Shaniko. Ashwood residents did most of their business in Antelope but county business for mining claims was in Prineville until Jefferson County was formed in 1914. Recordings for mine activity were handled in Madras from then on. As Antelope



Map of Ashwood-area mining operations



declined as a business center, Madras became a more important commercial center for Ashwood area residents.

The Red Jacket Mining Co., a corporation, was sued by creditors in Crook County Court in July 1911. On August 12, 1911 the sheriff sold the Red Jacket group to N.W. Sanborn, agent for H.K. Sargent for \$4,412. Sanborn and Sargent quit-claimed their interest in the property to Vine T. Pearce. The sheriff deed was issued to Pearce on June 7, 1913. On June 15, 1915 Vine T. and Phase E. Pearce, husband and wife, sold their interest in the Red Jacket group of quartz claims to Lige C. Pearce for \$1. (*Jefferson County Mine Book 1*, pages 114-115)

On July 8, 1915 Oregon King Mining Company deeded the patented and unpatented mining claims of the Oregon King to L. Enderud and W.H. Moser, Trustees. The deed was signed by J. G. Edwards, Vice President, and W.H. Moser, Secretary. (*JCMB 1*, page 117-118). There was apparently no mining activity done on the Oregon King claims and on July 11, 1923 Enderud and Moser deeded the Oregon King property back to Oregon King Mining Company for \$10. (*JCMB 2*, page 73)

By 1929 both J.B. Cartwright and P.J. Quealy had died and in the settlement of their estates Edwards became the sole owner of the Oregon King. The mine began operation that year with W.S. Thomas as superintendent. There were improvements to the surface plant and a 125-horsepower diesel engine and an electric generator were added. The shaft sinking below the sixth level began in April 1930. Operations ceased on April 20, 1930. Thomas reported that "engine trouble had now come to be frequent and a source of annoyance, delay, and impossible expense." (*TOKM*, page 10)

It appears the Oregon King remained inactive until 1934 when Edwards optioned to Livingston Wernecke the rights to the mining claims. The option was to continue through July 21, 1937 unless sooner terminated. (*JCMB 2*, page 301-302). Thus began the Alaska Juneau Mining Co. period of operation of the Oregon



Mr. and Mrs. "Jack" Edwards at Hay Creek Ranch, about 1901

King Mine. Smelter records show that in 1935 Alaska Juneau shipped six rail cars of ore to the smelter with a value of \$15,374. The company gave up its option on the mine at the end of 1935. (*TOKM*, page 10)

Central Oregon did not escape the pain of the Great Depression. Interest in mining on public lands increased as unemployment rates continued to rise. There was renewed interest in mining claims in the Ashwood area. Charles D. Swanson was active in locating claims during the Depression and was in a partnership with Gordon Finnell, L.C. Swanson, F.A. Wood, James Wood and Ed Finnell on a number of claims

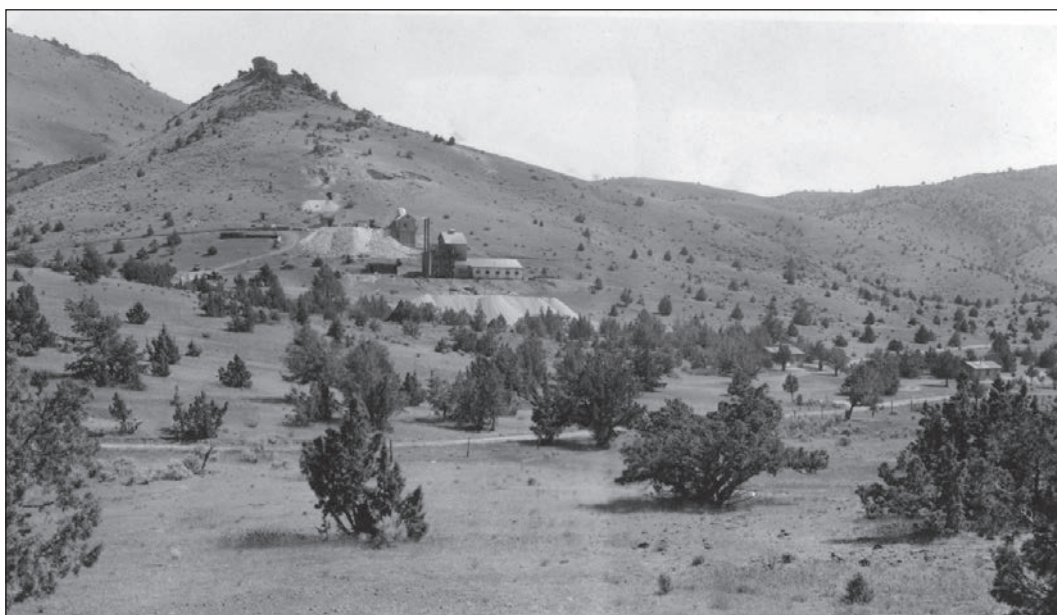
near the Oregon King. (*JCMB 2*, page 172)

Dr. W.D. Wilkinson, chairman of the Geology Department at Oregon State University, was in the Horse Heaven area in the early 1930s with other young geologists. I was a student in a "Geology of Oregon" class taught by Dr. Wilkinson in 1968. When he found out that I was from Madras he told me about walking over the top of the future Horse Heaven Mine, failing to recognize the potential.

### The Cinnabar Mines

The second great phase of mining activity in the Ashwood area began in 1933 with the discovery of cinnabar in the Horse Heaven area east of Ashwood. Early miners knew the Axehandle Butte area contained deposits of cinnabar and the Red Jacket Mine was so named because of the reddish soil which contained cinnabar, though it began as a gold and silver mine. The one advantage of a cinnabar or quicksilver mine over a gold and silver mine was the ease of processing the ore. Cinnabar can be processed on site by use of a furnace or a retort.

Mercury, the end product of cinnabar processing, is nearly pure coming out of the furnace or retort. It is stored and shipped in



Oregon King Mine, 1930s



cylindrical steel or iron flasks with 76 pounds of mercury. The gold, silver, copper and lead ore from the Oregon King had to be shipped by wagon, and by truck in later years, to a rail terminal and shipped by train to Tacoma, an expensive process compared to handling of quicksilver.

Mercury has another advantage over gold in that the price for gold was set by the U.S. government while mercury fluctuated with the market demand. The United States was on the gold standard until 1933 when President Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order forbidding the hoarding of gold coin, bullion or gold certificates and required gold to be turned over to the Federal Reserve for \$20.67 per ounce. The Gold Reserve Act in 1934

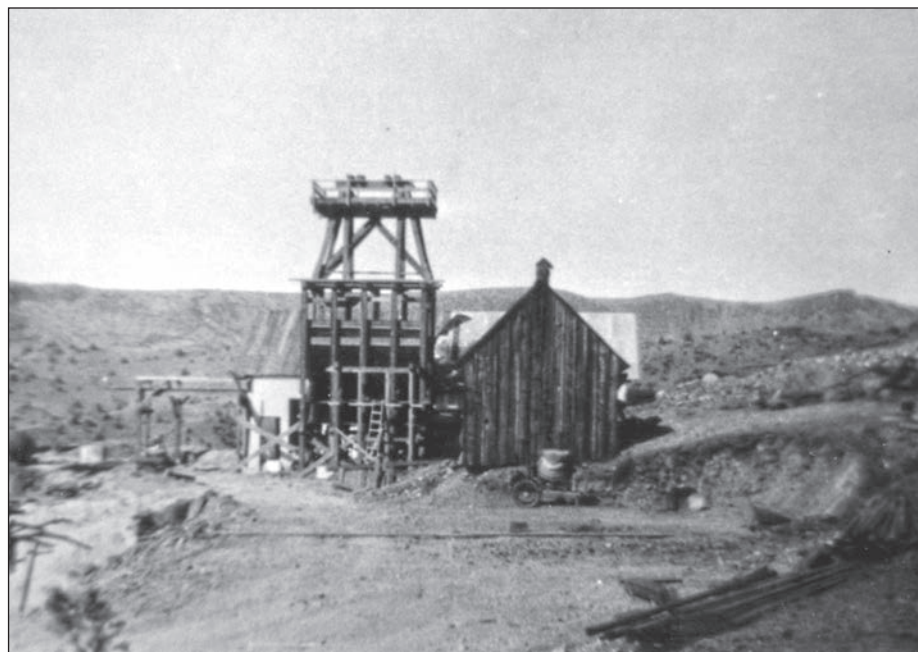
allowed the President to raise the price of gold to \$35.00 per ounce. Getting off the gold standard is credited by economists as being a factor in ending the Great Depression. (JM Bullion, June 2016) Mercury, on the other hand, brought \$59 a flask in 1933, the year that cinnabar claims were filed in the Horse Heaven area. The value of mercury in 1943 in the middle of World War II was \$195 per flask.

The disadvantage of mining mercury is the toxic nature of the liquid metal and vapors. The common method for separating mercury from cinnabar is to crush the ore and then heat it in a furnace to vaporize the mercury. The vapor is then condensed into liquid mercury form. If done improperly, mercury vapor, which is highly toxic, can escape into the atmosphere. Waste rock and tailings created during the mining process can release toxins if not stored properly. Exposure to mercury toxins causes tremors, reduces cognitive functioning, and damages nervous systems, kidneys, and respiratory systems.

Mercury has many uses including in the gold extraction process as an amalgam for separating gold from ore. Mercury switches are used for many purposes, including bombs and depth charges involved in the war effort. Mercury switches are also used throughout industry and in our houses. Mercury was a component in dental fillings for years before its toxicity became known.

Art Champion and Grover Keeton are credited with locating cinnabar near the present site of the Horse Heaven mine in April 1933, but other people deserve credit too. Champion and Keeton sold the prospect to R.R. Whiting and C.C. Hayes. Ray Whiting, Jr. and Harry Hoy discovered cinnabar in ledges. A body of high-grade ore was found in what is now Number One level of the Horse Heaven Mine. (*Quick Silver Mining in Oregon*, page 119)

The first recording of the claims with Jefferson County listed the locators as G.L. Keeton, C.C. Hayes, Arthur Champion, R.R. Whiting, Mrs. Isabel Whiting and Ivy Hayes and the claims were named Muddy Divide, Summit, Muddy, Crystal #1, Juniper, Rocky Point, Purple Sage, Clear



Oregon King mine-head

Water, Red Dust and Crystal #2. (*JCMB 2*, pages 229-234)

More claims were filed by G.L. Bernier, R.R. Whiting, Meta Hoy, Marie Hoy and Harry Hoy which were named Contact, New Deal, Mustang, Roosevelt and Saddle. (*JCMB 2*, pages 235-251) There were other claims in the Horse Heaven area honoring FDR's Depression era programs besides New Deal and Roosevelt.

On December 31, 1934 Horse Heaven Mines, Inc. was incorporated by Harry G. Hoy, Robert E. Ellinwood and Arthur G. Prag. The capital stock was \$75,000 which was 75,000 shares at \$1 each. The principal place of business was Portland. (*JCMB 2*, page 319) R.R. Whiting was manager. The claims controlled by the corporation are

the same as listed in the paragraphs above. (*JCMB 2*, pages 362-363)

R.R. Whiting and C.C. Hayes also had claims in their names in the Horse Heaven area. On February 8, 1934 26 claims were quit-claimed to Whiting and Hayes by more than a dozen original claim locators. (*JCMB 2*, page 345) On March 12, 1936 C.C. Hayes of Port Orford, Oregon and R.R. Whiting of Ashwood, as trustees, sold to R.R. Whiting, trustee, the same 26 claims. On March 19, 1936 12 of those same claims were recorded as quartz locations originally recorded in 1934. On April 9, 1936 ten of those claims were quit claimed to R.R. Whiting. The other two claims had been made by Whiting. (*JCMB 2*, pages 415-419) It is unclear why filings were made this way but not everybody came out of the transactions happy. (See below).

In 1936 Sun Oil Company purchased the claims of Horse Heaven Mines, Inc. and the individual claims of Ashwood area residents Elmer Shrum, Raymond Crowley, Clyde Telfer, Harry Hoy and Ben Hinderman. At some point in 1935 C.C. Hayes sold his 21% interest in Horse Heaven Mines, Inc. for \$5,000 to Edward and Autrey Kelly, husband and wife. Later the Kellys sold the stock they bought from Hayes to Sun Oil for a profit of \$44,800. Hayes sued for the \$44,800 profit but the judge threw out the case saying that "mining is an enterprise of speculative nature." (*The Mining Journal Pink Sheet* from the internet)

Operation of the Horse Heaven Mine continued with some interruptions for the next eight years. Periods of interruption were caused by a shortage of men to keep the mine and mill in production because of the war. (*MJPS*, September 16, 1943) By 1944 total production had reached 15,097 flasks of mercury. In November 1944 the Herreshoff furnace, power plant and other structures were destroyed by fire. In 1945 after a recovery operation produced 74 flasks of mercury, the mine closed. (*QSMO*, page 119)

The owners of the Red Jacket by 1933 were the heirs of C.M. Epply, Ben Laughlin, D.H. Leech, J.T. Patterson, Byron Shuck, William Busbee, Mike Dragich and the heirs of Vine Pearce. In that year the owners leased the mine to Charles Swanson and L.C. Swanson. The terms of the lease were that the Swansons were to pay 5% of the gross value of ore worth less than



\$50 per ton and 10% of the gross value of ore worth more than \$50. The Swansons agreed to develop at least 50 feet of shaft per year. (*JCMB 2*, page 210). Processing of mercury was done at the Axehandle Mine. Dan Swanson reported that several flasks of quicksilver were produced. (*OSMO*, page 124)

The Swansons developed the Axehandle Mine beginning in 1936. Others involved in the Axehandle were Mrs. Frances Johnson, Guy Wharton and Tom Autzen. Production is estimated at 150 flasks through 1940. The Swansons installed a Champion rotary retort in 1937 and produced several flasks of mercury each year. In 1940 a 20-ton Lacey rotary furnace was installed but it was used only a short time. The property was leased to International Engineering and Mining Co. in 1956 and that lease was assumed in 1958 by John Hoffman with discouraging results. (*OSMO*, page 124)

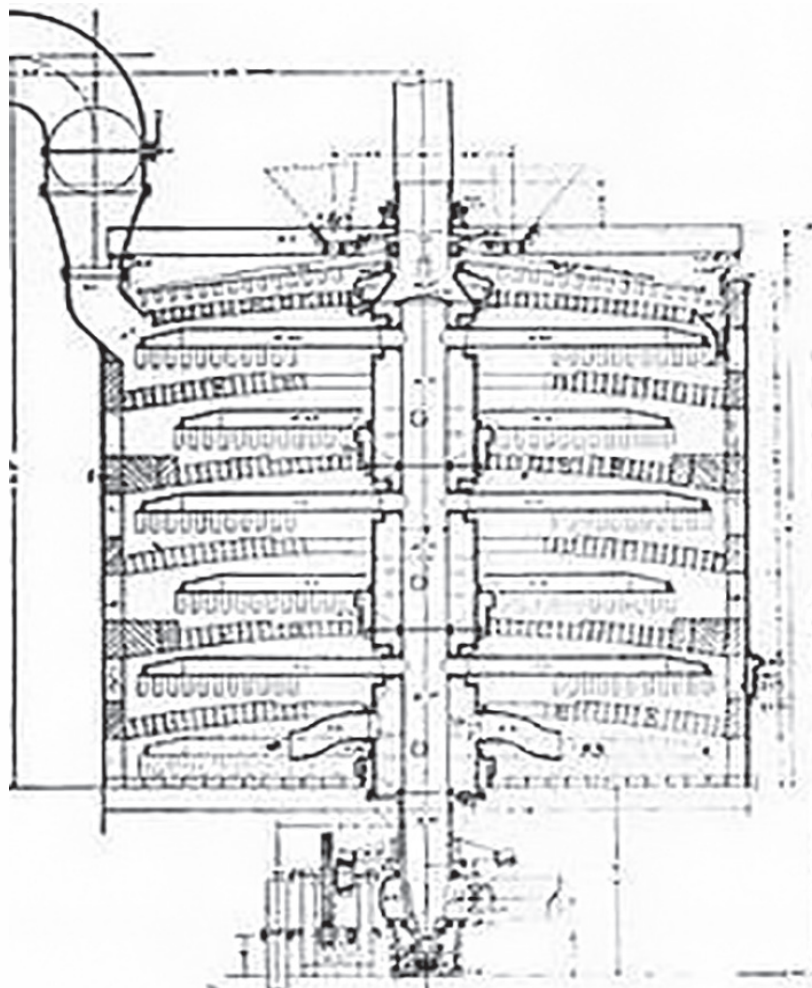
#### The 1940s and beyond

The Oregon King Mine was idle after Alaska Juneau stopped work until 1940 when J.G. Edwards leased the property to Ernest Rohlfing, a Portland wheat broker with a history of doing business with Edwards, with an option to purchase the Oregon King for \$150,000. Rohlfing had Custer Young of Ashwood and Frank Dahlquist of Boise as partners. Smelter shipments were started in October 1940. A mill was purchased and installed in 1942 which decreased the cost of shipping ore. Rohlfing took over full ownership of the lease from Young and Dahlquist in August 1942. (*TOKM*, page 11)

Rohlfing subleased the Oregon King to George Fenton and Charles Silbaugh in October 1942 along with the option to purchase the mine from Edwards for \$150,000. There were several supplemental agreements between Fenton and Silbaugh to Frank Dahlquist and Vernon Smith that were cancelled by court order. (*JCMB 3*, pages 11-15). The reason for the court orders overruling the supplemental agreements is unclear. Fenton and Silbaugh gave up their sublease in March 1943. (*TOKM*, page 11)

Rohlfing operated the Oregon King intermittently into 1945 when he sold his lease to Henry Anderegg. Young returned as superintendent and stayed about a year. There is no record of production in either 1948 or 1949. Frank McMenamain of Portland became associated with Anderegg and there was some activity. The last car shipment to Tacoma was in August 1950.

In the period 1935 to 1950 the Oregon King had produced 2,419 ounces of gold, 232,402 ounces of silver, 59,076 pounds of copper and 110,071 pounds of lead.



Schematic drawing of Herreshoff furnace

In September 1950 a fire apparently started in the second level of the mine. The fire traveled up the mine timbers and burned the shaft house containing the hoist, compressor and bunkers. The fire burned in the sulfides for some two weeks until a large charge of dynamite was used to shut off the air currents. The fire stopped all mining operations at Oregon King for a decade. (*TOKM*, page 13-14)

Interest in the mine later picked up again, and in the early 1960s Oregon King Consolidated Mines, Inc., headed by President Roy Culligan of Vancouver, Washington, paid \$50,000 for a lease option from First National Bank trust. Debris from the main shaft was cleared in 1962-63.

Increased value of silver was one of the factors in reopening the mine. (*The Oregonian*, March 17, 1963) Oregon King Consolidated Mines, Inc attempted a stock offering of 100,000 shares at \$1.00 each for operating capital, but Lehman Brothers was not interested in underwriting the offering.

In Report on the Oregon King Mine on June 17, 1969 by David E. Loughran, E.M. Oregon King Consolidated Mines, Inc. defaulted on the lease option. First National Bank, Trustees, then sold the mine property

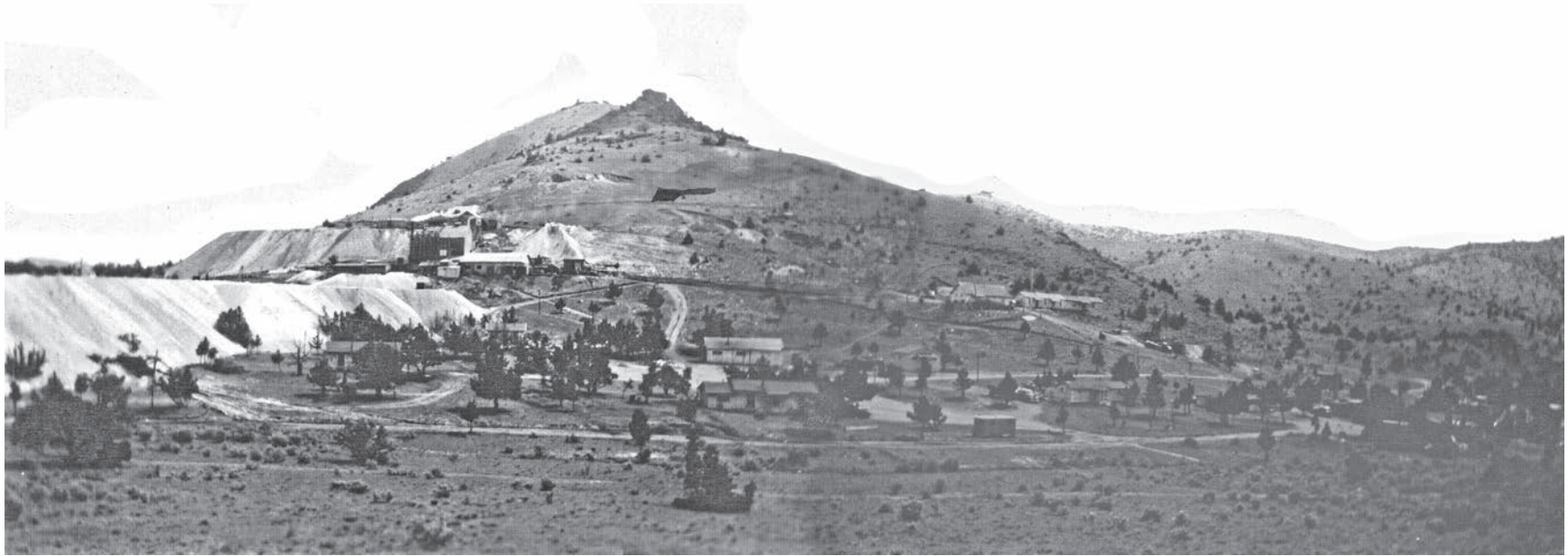
to Terrance Gaither, Sr. of Newport, Oregon. Gaither gained clear title to the Oregon King and then sold the mine property and equipment to Jerome Willis, Trustee, who resold the property to Silver Metal Mines, Incorporated.

The deed records at Jefferson County get a little confusing at that point but Gaither got the mine property back at some point and in 1976 sold to Gamble. In 1979 the property was sold to Felix Seidel who in turn sold to ORECO. In 1979 ORECO leased the patented and unpatented claims to Ashwood Mines, Inc. Ashwood Mines gave up the lease in 1981. ORECO sold a few of the claims in 1993 but owns the bulk of the Oregon King Mine today.

Horse Heaven Mine was owned for a period of time by Rajneesh Investment Corp and later by Connecticut General Life. The property ceased to be taxed by Jefferson County in 1999 as mining property. The Horse Heaven Mine is in the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Voluntary Cleanup Program. Cleanup took place in two phases during 2006 and 2007, addressing the presence of mercury and arsenic in contaminated soils and groundwater as well as physical hazards left by mining operations.

The Red Jacket leased to Ocelot Mining Corp in 1983 and some core samples were drilled, but the lease was given up according to Hugh Dragich of Prineville, an owner of the mine until his death. That was





Panoramic view of Horse Heaven Mine, 1930s

probably the latest mining activity around Ashwood.

The area still has gold, silver, lead, copper, antimony and cinnabar in “them thar hills” and mining activity might resume if commodity prices are attractive. There is less public land around Ashwood these days than in 1900 and even though mining laws have not changed much since the Mining Act of 1872 was passed, access to lands available to prospect has decreased. The Red Jacket and Oregon King are the only two mining properties now listed by the Jefferson County Assessor as Ashwood area mines.

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# HORSE HEAVEN RETOLD

by Tom Manning

There are times, I know, when any one of us wants to kick ourselves for not writing down or recording family history as it is being dispensed from the source. We just miss on those prime opportunities. An old acquaintance from the prior generation stops in, a gathering at a funeral, even just over the dinner table; a spark takes hold, memories light up and begin to dance. Stories take off; some with light, some with heat, some smoldering and dark. As time passes, memories and colors fade and we become less able to match the vibrance and details of the original.

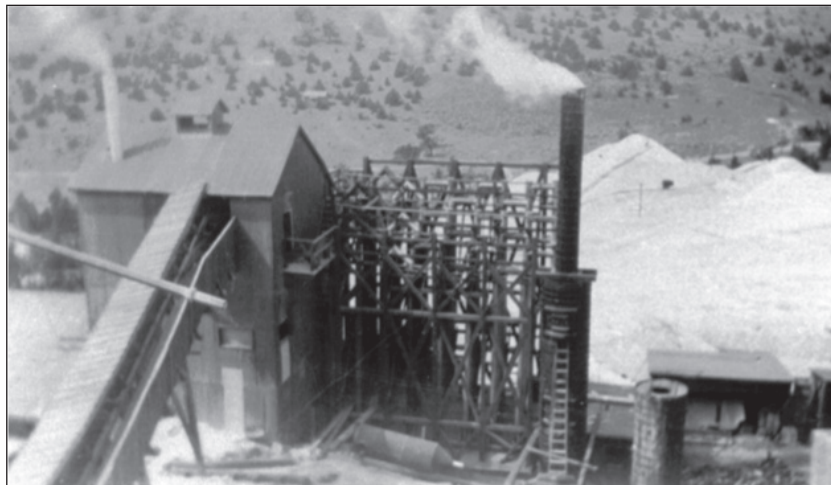
My grandpa, John Joseph Manning, and my dad, John James Manning worked together in the Horse Heaven cinnabar mine in the mid 1930s. When talking about their experience, there was little in the way of nostalgia or adventure in their voice. Mining was a dangerous occupation. Even in the depths of The Great Depression, jobs were usually available in mines for those who found it necessary and were willing to take the risk.

On September 1, 1932, Mitchell State Bank closed its doors. Savings on deposit, needed for the mortgage payment, were locked away. Years later those deposits were eventually paid out "...a hundred cents on the dollar..." my grandpa would say. But that was too late. Foreclosed from their Bridge Creek ranch, they held things together as best they could. John Joseph herded sheep in the Ochoco. His wife Margaret cared for the three girls, Mary 14, Elizabeth 11 and Theresa 5, making their home that first summer (1933) in a tent near Rager. She kept several pairs of overalls on the clothesline, a warning to passers-by that in spite of appearances; there were men at around. John James, 18, (named in typical Irish first son tradition after his father, but with an appended identifier to help with the confusion) drove delivery for Wasco County Grain Growers and did demolition and salvage work in Portland. The need for more security, especially through the winter, led them eventually in 1934 to Horse Heaven.

Cinnabar, a reddish mineral containing mercury sulfide (HgS) is the most



Horse Heaven 'Herreshoff' furnace for smelting mercury on-site



common source of mined mercury or quicksilver. It is often found in areas of increased volcanic activity. Samples had been found in east Jefferson County as "float" or chunks of surface rock on the slopes of Horse Heaven Mountain between Muddy Creek and Cherry Creek, but a source deposit had never been located. In 1934, two college students, Ray Whiting and Harry Hoy finally identified the primary lode source in the remains of a volcanic plug. A discovery adit or entry hole proved high-grade ore of sufficient quantity to make it feasible for large scale mining at the site.

Grandpa, in his early 50's, became a powder man. His task was to lay out and ignite the black powder safety fuses that burned precisely at two feet per minute. This meant measuring, notching and connecting the cords, crimping them to blasting caps attached to each charge. The network created should then ignite, in a precision choreography, dynamite placed in the face of the "drift" or ore bearing surface, first from the "breakers" across the top, then the "pushers" laterally and across the face and then finally "lifters" across the lower edge creating a heap of ore-bearing rock to be mucked and carted to the top. Most critical was listening for the count, assuring each charge detonated at its appointed time. A charge failing to go off brought mine activity to a halt while the rubble pile was carefully dissected in search of

the unexploded charge.

Dad worked with hammer and steel, pick and shovel, pounding and drilling holes in the rock for the charges, loading out the ore cars that carried cinnabar to the surface for smelting. He worked alongside Ray Whiting and Harry Hoy, the two men about his age who had a few years earlier successfully identified the elusive lode. There were other locals who worked in the mine as well, sometimes as ranchwork slowed at the end of the season. Crowley, DeShazer, Gill, Hinderman, Shrum, these were names I had heard many times, and met a few times as a youth, not realizing the connection they all had as young men.



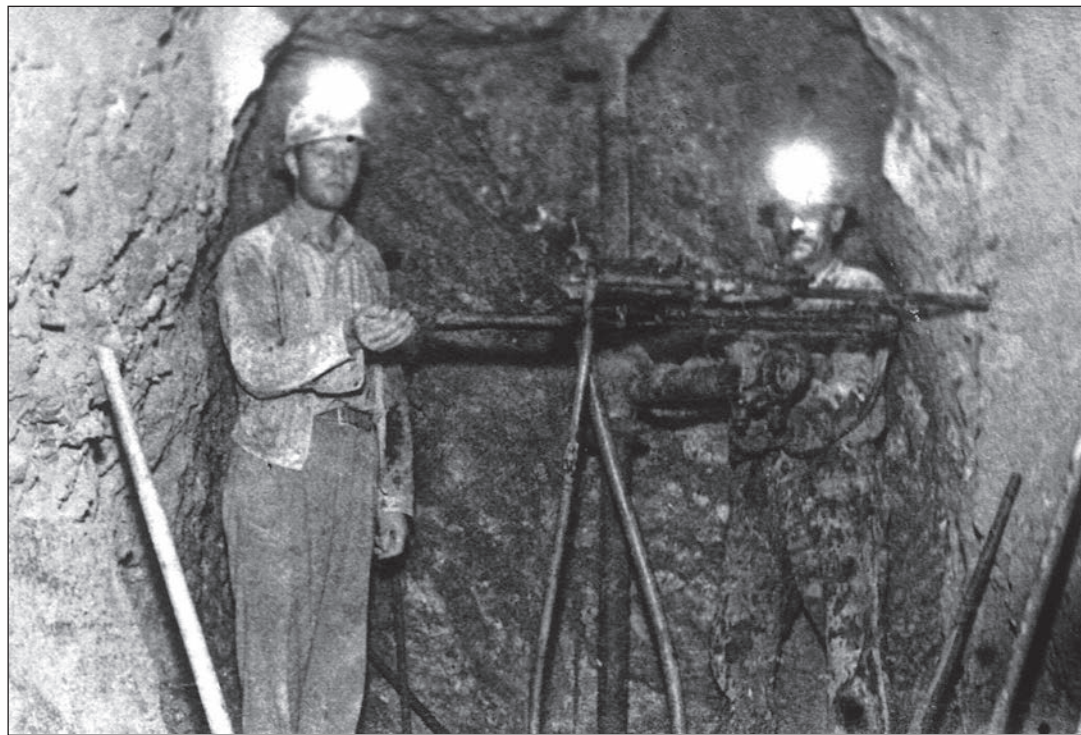
It was 12-hour round-the-clock shifts, 7 days a week. Going to a Saturday night dance in Redmond meant trading turns sleeping and driving to get home before the work shift started as the sun rose.

A Herreshoff furnace for smelting cinnabar was constructed at the mine shortly after it opened. The furnace consisted of three large ovens constructed one above the other for the crushed cinnabar. As intense heat was applied and the ore filtered down through the ovens, mercury vapor was released. The vapor was subsequently captured and condensed into the thick fluidic metal, which was then collected into flasks. Each flask held 76

pounds of mercury in a volume of not quite 2 1/2 quarts. The flasks were shipped out on flatbed trucks with one layer of flasks at most—all that could be loaded for transport. Drivers would get quizzical and/or frustrated looks as they crept up Cow Canyon with a seemingly minimal, low profile load.

The size of the flasks goes back centuries in Europe, primarily in Spain, where the cinnabar mines at Almaden date back 2,000 years. The greatest demand for mercury came from its ability to extract precious metals from raw ore. Significant amounts of mercury were shipped to the New World in the 16th and 17th century to assist Spain in the pursuit of gold and silver.

The Herreshoff furnace had to be kept continuously burning or the firebrick lining would collapse. While that meant a constant need for ore production and smelting, it also allowed for no interruption in fuel supply. One bitterly cold winter day, oil was running low. Fuel trucks had made it as far as Ashwood, but frozen, drifted snow covered the



Horse Heaven miners at work in a shaft

road from there to the mine. Dad and Raymond Crowley were assigned the task of clearing the road down to Ashwood. The one resource in abundance at Horse Heaven to do the job was dynamite. Blasting the drifts, they accomplished their task with little to eat, and a gallon of cherry wine to keep themselves fortified.

The mine was purchased from the original owner operators by Sun Oil in 1936 to assure a steady source of mercury for their oil refining process. It was now run by Cordero Mining, a



John Manning (?) and co-workers at Horse Heaven, 1930s

Sun Oil subsidiary from Texas. As is often the case, a larger company with an interest more in increased efficiency and production created a change in attitude and culture, with perhaps less emphasis on some safety concerns.

A particularly rich pocket of cinnabar was uncovered rising vertically above the drift or horizontal passage into the mountain. It was being blasted out in an expanding dome shape overhead, at times using high-pressure water hoses to wash down the loose rock and ore. Men were coming out of the mine caked in red dust and mud as the intense run or ore vein was vigorously pursued. (There was at the time, little knowledge

or concern with the toxic effects of mercury on the human body, other than an awareness of veteran miners often losing their teeth along with their faculties the longer they worked in the ground.)

Grandpa, not keen on continued blasting as the overhead space enlarged with less and less supportive rock, told the foreman his concern. He was advised that if not prepared to continue setting charges as instructed, there would be little else for him to do there at the mine. And, it was assumed, that if he left, his son would likely be leaving as well. But, there was plenty of work to be had, and plenty of others looking to sign on.

“Well, what should we do then?”

“Something else, because I’m not going back in there.”

No longer willing to take the obviously increasing risk, that was the definitive conversation my dad and grandpa had in the fall of 1938. In mid December they moved on to the ranch near Redmond that became the Manning place for the next 50 years.

For Christmas that year, they



# WESTSIDE SCHOOL POISED TO BECOME WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CAMPUS

by Lori Gleichman

After a planning hiatus in 2018-2019, the leadership group for the Westside School project reconvened in fall 2019 and began working with Teresa Hogue, principal of Eastslope Inc.; Courtney Snead, owner of Boring but Important; and Lori Gleichman, strategic planning and fundraising, to develop a plan to move the Westside School campus idea forward. Using information and data collected over the past few years about desired uses for the Westside School, the team also reviewed recent work done by the City of Madras regarding a more accessible and inviting downtown, and began discussions about what meaningful change in Jefferson County needs in terms of support and resources.



Future site of Westside Community Campus and JCHS Museum

“Our goal is to create a vision for the school that will resonate with residents of Jefferson County and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, downtown Madras businesses and shoppers, and visitors traveling through on Highway 97,” said George Neilson, president of The Bean Foundation, which is spearheading the initiative to restore and renovate the Westside School. “In general, we envision a community campus where programming and services address existing and emerging needs for education, recreation, arts, workplace development, and community initiatives. We see it as a ‘place where change will happen.’ In addition, it is exciting to imagine the revitalized Westside School as an appealing anchor at the south couplet.”

“We have done some necessary work to bring us to the point where we can take next steps,” he said. These include ongoing discussions with the Jefferson County School District about the option to purchase the property; working with architects on a design of the premises to identify

key spaces, their uses, and initial budgets; and initiating some conversations with key change agents in Jefferson County. What this means to the future of the property will be revealed later later this year.

In the meantime, The Bean Foundation will become a tenant in the Westside School, establishing an office staffed part-time by Gleichman, Snead and Hogue to further develop the vision, plan fundraising and marketing campaigns, and to continue discussions with future potential partners.

“We’d like to thank the Jefferson County Historical Society and its members for their patience on this journey,” said Neilson. “We are grateful for the continued partnership.

We believe the Westside School has the potential to be a tremendous asset to our community. It is taking time to define what that means and how our partners will benefit, but we believe it is time well spent.”

Other Partners in the Westside Community Campus initiative are:

- The Bean Foundation
- Jefferson County School District 509J (Bridges High School, Transitions, Early Childhood Education)
- Madras Aquatic Center Recreation District
- City of Madras
- Jefferson County
- Kids Club

Please visit [www.thebeanfoundation.com](http://www.thebeanfoundation.com) for more information about The Bean Foundation and its initiatives in Jefferson County. The office phone number is 541-350-3106 or email [info@thebeanfoundation.com](mailto:info@thebeanfoundation.com).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Hiking Historical Jefferson County, Oregon:* 130+ HIKES, WANDERS AND STROLLS

(by Stan Pine, Maverick Publications, 2019, 210 pp.)

Review by Dan Chamness

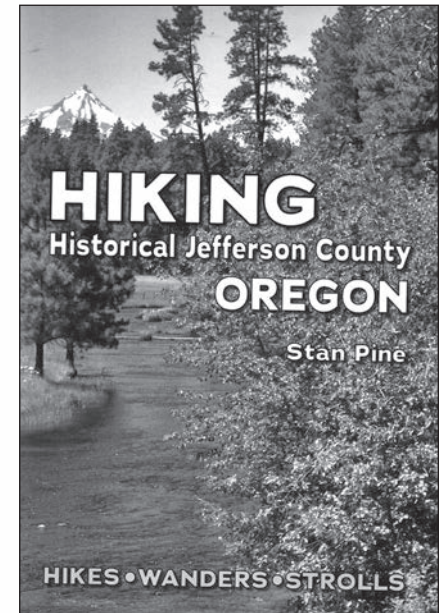
This book is hot off the press with many new ideas for hiking trips in the Jefferson County portion of Central Oregon and includes information on the history of each area to be visited. The author covers quite a few walks that are not listed in other guide books and those other books seldom offer information on the history of the area visited.

Jefferson County is huge, with the western border on the crest of the Cascade Mountains paralleling the Pacific Crest Trail and part of the eastern border provided by the John Day River. Smith Rock State Park is on the southern boundary and the northern boundary includes a portion of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. There is great hiking in Jefferson County and this book opens up more opportunities to explore.

Many of the walks described by Pine are not on typical hiking foot paths but instead are overland jaunts which the author describes as “wanders.” Access information, a brief description of what a person will see and the

history of the area are included with each hike. This book can be enjoyed by the armchair hiker interested in learning more about this vast county in which we live without actually putting on a pack.

If you want to explore Jefferson County, check it out from library or buy yourself a copy at Mail Copies and More in Madras, Paulina Spring Books in Sisters, Camp Sherman Store in Camp Sherman, Bowman Museum in Prineville, or Dudley’s Bookshop Café in Bend.

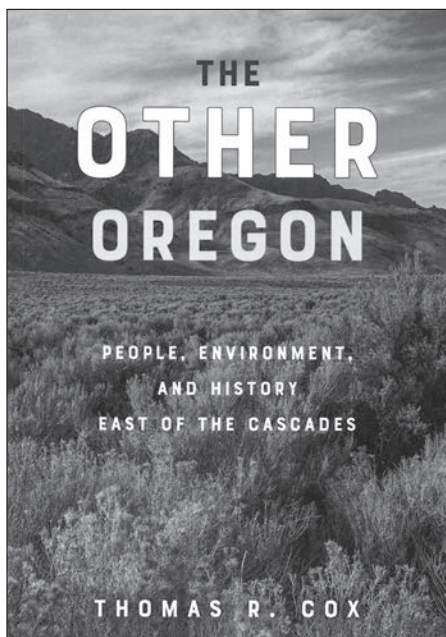


### *The Other Oregon:*

PEOPLE, ENVIRONMENT, AND HISTORY EAST OF THE CASCADES

(BY THOMAS R. COX, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2019, 432 PP., \$29.95)

Review by Jerry Ramsey



This book is what used to be called an omnium gatherum—a big, somewhat sprawling assemblage, reflecting the huge, sprawling, diverse country from the Cascades to the Idaho border and its multifarious natural and human history. In its best parts, this is a clearly and engagingly written study, impressively researched, and well worth adding to your shelf of go-to books on Oregon.

But Cox’s big book has an inherent if not fatal flaw. There is certainly a need for a twenty-first century historical study to succeed Phil Brogan’s beloved *East of the Cascades* (1964), at least in terms of the history of Central Oregon as it looks now. But does it make historiographical sense in 2020 to attempt to cover in one book ALL of our state east of the mountains—that is, both central and eastern Oregon? Early on (p. 15) the author says, “How a dominant sense of identity and value could emerge in such a varied land, with little population and uniformity, and whether in fact it did so, are the central issues addressed in this book.” By the end, he seems to conclude that, yes, a profound shared identity has evolved from the Cascades to the Snake River, from the Willows to Klamath Lake. But the claim is, finally, not convincing—ask yourself, do residents of say Redmond or Madras or Sisters really intuitively identify with folks in say La Grande or Union or Nyssa in the way the author suggests?

No doubting that Oregonians living “over here” are often united in resenting the political and economic dominance of the population “over there” in the metropolitan centers. But Cox’s



argument supposes that “over here” we share a deeper, more positive Eastern Oregonian identity than that. I wonder what the author would say if asked whether the residents of Portland, Roseburg, Medford, Coos Bay, Eugene, Newberg, and Astoria share an equivalent Western Oregon mystique of place? On that score, what about the persistent “State of Jefferson” secessionist movement in our state’s southwest corner, and now another one leaning east toward Idaho? (It might have helped Cox sharpen his rather fuzzy notion of regional identity if he had engaged the geographical concept of *topophilia*, as developed by theoretical geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan and others.)

Maybe the best that can be said about Cox’s “Other Oregon” thesis is that it is really more of a frame of reference than a central thesis to be validated. But given the book’s main working emphasis on historical themes that mainly pertain to what is in common usage Central Oregon (a wide north-to-south swath of country from the Columbia to the California border and logically including Harney and Grant counties), it’s regrettable that in his efforts to press his thesis, in trying thereby to cover the whole “other Oregon,” he seriously neglects or even ignores important elements of his working “central” focus. Cox tells us that he grew up in Redmond and after college taught in Sisters: simply put, *The Other Oregon* would have been a much better book if he had concentrated his study of the “otherness factor” in our state on his native ground.

Without that concentration, the book comes up short on several unavoidable topics. Its coverage of the evolution of ranching and farming in Oregon’s interior, from big unfenced cattle spreads, sheep, and homesteading to agribusiness now, much of it based on irrigation and world markets, seems hurried and incomplete. Remarkably, he mostly ignores the rural land-use/development furor at the turn of this century that made LUBA, LCDC, and Measures 37 and 49 fighting terms. The active presence of the U.S. military in the central interior of Oregon during World War Two, with active airfields in Madras, Redmond, and Pendleton, and the staging in 1943 in the High Desert of the largest “war games” in the nation’s history goes unnoticed. Cox offers scanty details on the developing cultural life of the region, ignoring the impact of institutions like Central Oregon Community College, OSU-Cascades, Blue Mountain and Columbia Gorge Community Colleges, and popular local-cultural establishments like the High Desert, Tamastlikt, Warm Springs, Bowman, and Sherman County museums.

And the rapid (if spasmodic) recent emergence of Bend as the dominant demographic, economic, and cultural center of Central Oregon (of all of “Other Oregon?”) is mostly disregarded by Cox. Surely his well-researched account of Bend’s colorful early and middle years, energized by outlanders like George Palmer Putnam and Robert Sawyer, deserves to be carried on by him into an accounting of the city’s freewheeling unpredictable present, with its proliferating craft breweries and other

entrepreneurial start-ups, devotion to the strenuous outdoor life, and far-flung population draw. How does Bend as it looks now (including a new Democratic voter majority) figure in Cox’s formula for the identity of “Other Oregon?” He doesn’t consider the question.

This much said critically, there is much (in fact more than enough) to commend in *The Other Oregon*. As a veteran historian, Cox is a very capable story-teller, with a wonderful way with anecdotes and quotes that brightly illuminate his subjects. When Gov. Oz West turned his rather prudish and Prohibitionist attention in 1912 to Redmond, then a wide-open frontier town where the mayor ran a gambling parlor in his own hotel, the mayor was arrested, and one of his angry supporters wrote in the *Oregonian* that “the trouble [with Redmond’s leadership] is that we have three or half a dozen well-meaning but misguided old women of both sexes . . .” (p. 163) Touching briefly on early-day Madras, Cox quotes Tom McCall’s Bostonian mother to the effect that “Madras consists mostly of homesteaders and dust.” (p. 114)

The same appreciation for the sayings and actions of colorful players in our historical episodes lights up Cox’s commentary on remarkable Oregonians like Sam Boardman, who repeatedly failed as a homesteader along the Columbia and then near Bend, but ended up as the visionary founder of Oregon’s state parks system, and “Cactus” Smyth, a cow-man on the High Desert who left a memorable record of his active refusal to give up his dedication to running cattle on a range without fences or government restrictions.

In his coverage of many aspects of our region’s history (if not all), Cox is thorough and perceptive. Drawing on his earlier work as a historian of Western forestry and logging, he gives the fullest account I know about, of the origins of the timber industry and way of life in Central Oregon, including a ground-breaking sub-chapter on the widespread land-and-timber fraud cases here in the early 1900s that young Oswald West cleaned up, on his way to becoming Oregon’s most innovative one-term governor. Equally interesting and useful is his account of the uncertain growth between the 1870s and the 1930s of transportation—roads, railroads, highways—throughout the Oregon interior, and connecting it to the “Westside.”

But the most impressive portion of *The Other Oregon* is its well-informed and clear-eyed treatment of the recent notorious armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by Ammon Bundy and his band of would-be “constitutionalist” land-reformers, and related conflicts and confrontations in Grant County involving local residents (and as in Harney County, outside agitators) and the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Cox provides a solid historical context for understanding these disturbing and destructive episodes in our neck of the woods, showing how they have grown out of tensions and conflicts inherent in our collective history “over here”—and indicating how and why they may repeat themselves in our future, as “other Oregonians”



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— CAMPBELL’S CORNER —

**It’s an old fashioned barn raising!**

*By Jennie Smith*

Oops, it is actually a “barn lowering.” David Campbell, board member of the Jefferson County Historical Society, and his group of volunteers have dismantled the fairgrounds livestock barn. The barn was due to be taken down and replaced. David heard about the plans, and since the historical society was investigating putting up another barn at the homestead house location, he thought it would be the perfect solution.

Due to a lack of space for storing donated antique farming equipment, another barn was needed. David contacted the county and they agreed to donate the old livestock barn. It will sit west of the present homestead barn that is currently filled to capacity.

David and his volunteer crew have taken the barn down with hand tools, placed it on pallets, and are preparing for the move over to the area of the old homestead house.

The project started in November 2019 and hopefully will be completed this spring.



Cow-barn at Fairgrounds being re-cycled as a JCHS antique farm-machine display shed

The volunteers include Dean Roberts, George Hawes, Paul Cowsill, Dan O’Brien, Ed Chotard, Kim Wojtusik, John Campbell, and Kim Campbell, with David coordinating the project.

The next step is getting approval from the county to pour concrete footings for the barn. Once the footings are in place, David and his crew of volunteers will rebuild the barn. Along with the barn raising, trees are being

trimmed to prepare for the addition of the pole barn. The old, dead poplars are also being removed to make room for new trees to be planted.

David is following in the footsteps of his late grandfather, John L. Campbell, who had the vision of the pioneer homestead at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. David helped his grandfather with moving the old Farrell homestead from its original home into the fairgrounds in the late 1960s.

**Recent Donations to the Museum and Archives**

PATRICIA MOORE HOWARD:  
Old county maps; Opal City School records; photos

BOB AND MARCIA KEATING:  
Antique “Angle” kerosene wall-lamp

BRAD KLANN:  
Transcript of May 18 1946 Mutual Network radio broadcast of  
“Water Festival” Program at Lateral 43 gate, when NUID water  
was first turned on

**New JCHS Members since September 2019:**

JAMES “DAN” DULANEY  
GREG HORN  
CHRIS HORTING-JONES  
CRAIG LESLEY

MACY FAMILY RANCH  
(MARILYN, REBECCA, GREGG)  
KELLY RYAN

**Donations and Memorial Gifts to the Society since September 2019:**

**DONATIONS:**  
KATHIE OLSON  
GARY HARRIS  
EDNA TANGEMAN  
ALPHA OMICRON  
CHARLES CUNNINGHAM  
MARILYN FIVECOAT  
JUDSON AND BARBARA HYATT  
DEBORAH JORGENSEN  
TODD AND JANE MCGUIRE  
KATE RAMSEY AND TIM WATSON

**MEMORIAL GIFTS:  
IN MEMORY OF JODI EAGAN:**  
CAROLYN WOOD; JERRY AND DOROTHY RAMSEY



# THE AGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Box 647, Madras, Oregon 97741

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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