

THE AGGATE

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • Fall 2024 N.S. 22



**V.S. 'Doc' Howard:
The People's D.A.**

**The CCC in
Jefferson County**

**A day on the farm:
the '24 Threshing Bee**

**Grandview area's
historic roads**

WELCOME, READERS —

Welcome to issue 22. We have an eclectic mix this time which includes a ballad by local poet and historian Jerry Ramsey about a local man who vanished while returning home from a sheepherding stint near Silver Lake. Ramsey listed Louie Volrath's 1914 disappearance among a dozen local history mysteries published in this year's spring issue of The Agate. "The Ballad of Louie Volrath" tells the story in an alternative format that is factual but more personal than conventional prose.

Ramsey also provided for this issue an article on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Jefferson County. Established as part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal to provide employment for men during the Great Depression, the CCC built trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, and fire lookouts all over Central Oregon.

The piece is especially timely as the Crooked River National Grassland, together with the 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Historicorps, is currently restoring the old Resettlement Administration headquarters built by the CCC adjacent to Rimrock Springs on U.S. Highway 26. The facility will be repurposed as a wild horse adoption center.

Historicorps crews from Bend and Lincoln City and Heart of Oregon's High Desert Conservation Crew have put new wood shingles on the roof



Carol Leone painting donated to the JCHS.

of one of the few remaining buildings and will replace any rotten wood they find in the rest of the building while trying to repair and maintain as much of the original structure as possible.

My own article on V.S. "Doc" Howard, a local optometrist who served a term as a controversial Jefferson County district attorney, is set in the same time period as the CCC article. In fact, the CCC camps and the men who worked there played a role in Howard's downfall as DA.

Former JCHS board member Dan Chamness has contributed an article on roads to and from Grandview, a short-lived community near what is now Lake Billy Chinook. Grandview was near three different rivers, but they were all devilishly difficult to get to — a fact which contributed to the settlement's demise. Accompanied by his friends in the informal group he calls the Dry Side Hikers, Chamness has explored the area in search of remnants of old roads and trails. Supplementing his explorations with information gleaned from written sources, Chamness has written up his findings and submitted them to The AGATE under the title "Historic Grandview Area Roads."

In addition to these articles, you will find the usual updates on JCHS activities. We hope you enjoy the issue — *Jane Ahern*

The cause of local history in these parts lost two champions recently in the deaths of Carol Leone and Patricia Moore Howard.

As the longtime director of the Museum at Warm Springs, Carol Leone ably assembled and laid the foundations of what has become one of the premier Native American museums in the West . . .

and all through her years at the helm of the museum on Tenino Creek she was a generous and active member and supporter of the Jefferson County Historical Society. In retirement, Carol, a gifted painter, took up her art in earnest, often depicting historic buildings in country settings, and before her untimely death she donated to the society a particularly fine painting in this vein (see photo), which we will display with pride in the new museum — when we get there!

Patricia "Patty" Moore Howard had deep homesteading roots here — her mother's family the

Mendenhalls and McCoins of Opal City and Gray Butte, and her father's family the Moores, who homesteaded on Agency Plains and operated the first hotels in Madras. She was an accomplished genealogist and local historian of Central Oregon and collaborated with JCHS genealogist and historian Beth Crow. Over the years, from her home in Arizona, she and her family donated many historical documents and artifacts to the society.

Hail and farewell, Carol and Patty!

— *Jarold Ramsey*



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

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DOC HOWARD: THE PEOPLE'S DISTRICT ATTORNEY

By Jane Ahern

Over the course of six days in July 1934, citizens of Jefferson County were enthralled with the trial of Victor S. "Doc" Howard, who had been accused of corrupt campaign practices in the May Democratic primary for district attorney.

"The case ... was one of the most spectacular ever to be tried in this county. The trial was held in a crowded courtroom and in spite of the heat onlookers came day after day to listen to the testimony and later discuss pro and con the merits and demerits of the case," a *Madras Pioneer* editor wrote, reporting on the outcome on Aug. 16, 1934. During the trial, the court heard testimony from at least 50 witnesses.

Circuit Court Judge Arthur D. Hay, of Lakeview, dismissed 11 of the 15 initial charges, but in his ruling found that Howard had committed four counts of three different infractions. He was guilty of one count of campaigning on election day, one count of paying a voter's expenses related to obtaining an absentee ballot and two counts of voter intimidation for using his position as incumbent district attorney to bully at least two — and possibly more — voters into thinking they were not properly registered to vote and that if he lost, he might prosecute them.

The price for these violations was that Howard forfeited the election to his opponent, Bernard H. Ramsey, and had to pay Ramsey's attorney fees.

The trial concluded a strange episode in Jefferson County history that featured the county's first recall election and inadvertently launched the political career of Boyd Overhulse, who represented Jefferson County in the State Legislature, first as a representative and later as a senator.

The race for district attorney

The whole thing began four years earlier, in 1930, when Doc Howard decided to run



Dr. V.S. "Doc" Howard in his optometry office in Madras. JCHS photo

for district attorney. To modern eyes, it was a puzzling decision because, though Howard had graduated from the University of Oregon law school and passed the bar exam in 1910, he had not practiced law in the 20 years since. Instead, he had served 18 years in the Oregon National Guard, bought a ranch near Vanora and another 160 acres near Cloverdale that were overseen by a paid ranch manager, and he had an optometry office in Madras.

When Howard announced his candidacy for district attorney as an Independent in October of 1930, his rationale for doing so was short on specifics, but smacked of populism. In a *Madras Pioneer* ad, he wrote, "In accepting this nomination I do so with the presumption that I am responding to the call of the people, that I am the people's candidate and in a position to solicit your support regardless of your party

affiliations; therefore if elected, it shall be my pleasure to serve the people impartially as one can only do when not bound by any political promises or party obligations. I reserve the right to use my best judgment in the administration of the office."

The newspaper doesn't explain why "the people" were calling for a new district attorney, why they called Howard specifically, or why Howard answered the call, but if Howard was the people's candidate, his opponent was the perfect foil, a candidate for the establishment.

Bert C. Boylan had all the conventional qualifications for the job. He was an experienced attorney who had already served a term as Jefferson County DA from 1917-1925, participating in the famous raid on the Culver courthouse when local officials transferred the county seat to Madras. Vine Pearce succeeded him in 1926,



Howard, far left, playing shuffleboard at a Madras tavern. He eventually won a state grange horseshoe championship. JCHS photo

but Gov. Isaac Patterson appointed Boylan to the role again in 1929 upon Pearce's unexpected death.

There will probably never be a definitive answer as to why Howard challenged Boylan. Boylan might have gotten sideways with some big farming names in his first term when he challenged their eligibility to serve on the domestic water board, and maybe with some others when he got the state attorney general to declare that the county treasurer was the treasurer of the Suttle Lake Irrigation District, not someone chosen by the district.

Despite Howard's allusion to political parties in his candidacy announcement, there is no ev-

idence that Boylan was overly partisan. In fact, he was listed at various times in his career as an Independent, a Democrat, and a Republican.

Voters must have known something more about the situation than was explicitly reported in the newspaper because they turned out heavily at the polls. "Considerable interest centered about the candidacy of district attorney," wrote a *Pioneer* editor. "B.C. Boylan, present incumbent, was defeated by Dr. V.S. Howard by 24 votes. Howard polled 315 and Boylan polled 291" (*Madras Pioneer*, Nov. 6, 1930, p. 1).

The recall attempt

Howard was three years into his term when

Lewis "Turk" Irving launched the first recall attempt in Jefferson County history against him.

Irving was himself a lawyer, and from his arrival in Madras in 1909 until his death in 1949, he was involved in just about everything that went on in Madras. He served a term as Madras mayor, was for many years the attorney for the North Unit Irrigation District, was the first president of the library association, and was a charter member of the Madras Garden Club. After the railroads were built, he operated several grain warehouses at area depots and in the 1930s, he opened a Texaco station at the corner of Main Street (now Fifth Street) and C Street (see Jarold Ramsey, "Turk Irving: Local Hero"

The Agate n.s. 11, Spring 2019, pp. 17-19).

Having done all that and more, Irving must have felt protective of his community, which was already in dire straits because of the drought that had dragged on all through the 1920s and into the '30s and the Great Depression. Residents had no money to pay taxes, so local governments were struggling to function, and the population of the county was draining away.

Irving published his reasons for the recall in the *Pioneer* on June 23, 1933. He wrote that Howard's knowledge of law was so "rudimentary" that he was not able to give legal advice to county officials, that Howard knew so little about court procedure that his prosecutions were "a farce," that Howard spent more time practicing optometry and pitching horseshoes than acting as district attorney, and that the recall was necessary for the welfare of the county.

Irving collected 186 signatures on his recall petition and drove to Salem on July 4, 1933, so he could file it on July 5. He took his attorney, Bernard H. Ramsey, with him to meet with the secretary of state and the attorney general to ascertain whether the July 5 filing date was in time for the recall to be included in the already-scheduled July 21 special election. If not, Irving would choose not to file the petition because he didn't want to impose any extra expense on the cash-strapped county.

While the recall was hotly contested in Jefferson County, it was by no means the most consequential issue of the election. Also on the ballot was the repeal of the 18th Amendment, commonly known as Prohibition. Voters favoring Prohibition could vote for William Boegli to represent them at the state convention to determine Oregon's position in the matter; those



Photo of Bernard Ramsey accompanying his candidacy announcement in May 18, 1934. *Madras Pioneer*

opposed could vote for Irving. Voters were also asked to decide whether to repeal the statewide alcohol ban in the Oregon Constitution, whether to institute a sales tax, and whether to allow counties to adopt a county manager form of government.

Regarding the recall, the *Pioneer* published statements by both parties on July 6. Irving pleaded with voters to keep personal feelings out of it and make the best choice for the county. "You and each of you should consider the casting of your vote in this matter carefully and

you should use the same business judgment in casting this vote that you would in selecting your own private attorney to personally represent you in your business."

Howard's defense was that his way of doing things saved money. Regarding his inexperience as a trial lawyer, Howard wrote, "... that is due to the fact that I settle most controversies out of court and thereby deny myself the practice I would otherwise get if I were to take everything to court at the expense of the county."

Howard also said he preferred punishing criminals with fines rather than jail sentences because "the jail sentence punishes the taxpayer as much as it does the prisoner."

Despite all the important measures on the ballot, only about half of Jefferson County voters turned out for the special election. They voted to repeal Prohibition both nationally and statewide, voted down the sales tax, and rejected the county manager form of government.

The recall lost by a strong margin: 126 to 423. Howard lost the Madras precinct, but won big in Culver, Metolius, and Kutcher precincts. Only 30 total voted in the Madras precinct, compared to 52 in Culver, 39 in Metolius, and 85 in the Kutcher precinct.

The establishment takes another swing

Having easily overcome the recall attempt, Howard filed for reelection in the Democratic primary the following May of 1934. He soon had an opponent, Bernard H. Ramsey.

The campaign would be another matchup between the well-liked people's candidate who handled his district attorney duties frugally, however he saw fit, and an establishment figure with all the right credentials who would follow best practices as determined by the legal pro-




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Ramsey was associated with Lewis Irving and had helped him mount the recall effort against Howard. He was the son of a prominent homesteader, W.H. Ramsey, who had recently died, a well-known defense attorney, and the law partner of Bert C. Boylan, whom Howard had defeated for district attorney in 1930.

In his campaign announcement, Ramsey touted his 12 years of legal practice and his experience as a trial lawyer. Howard's message to voters was brief. He promised to continue his thrifty ways if elected to a second term.

In the runup to the primary, the *Pioneer* reported that the race was a tossup. Voter registration was up and people who were living out of the county but still claimed permanent residency were signing up for the newly instituted absentee ballots. There were an unusual number of voters changing their registration, perhaps so they could vote for either Howard or Ramsey in the Democratic primary. There were no candidates for district attorney in the Republican primary.

Ramsey won the Madras precinct solidly, 45 to 27, and the Kutcher precinct more narrowly, 34 to 30, but Howard won enough of the other districts to carry the election by 25 votes.

After the election, both candidates ran gracious ads in the *Pioneer* thanking each other and the voters, but any goodwill they might have professed toward each other was soon belied by Ramsey's next move.

About a month after the primary, in June 1934, Ramsey filed a petition in Circuit Court accusing Howard of corrupt campaign prac-



Boyd Olverhulse wikipedia.org

tices. Ramsey's allegations included bribing voters with boxes of chocolate, "treating" members of the Warm Springs election board, paying voters' expenses to travel to the polls, intimidating people into not voting, and filing a false campaign expense report.

Howard engaged George H. Brewster of Redmond to defend him; Ramsey's attorney was N.G. Wallace of Bend.

While their attorneys were jockeying over details of the case, a fresh face slipped into town. "He will be remembered as the son of the late C.K. Overhulse, who served as principal at Culver for a number of years and later taught in Metolius," wrote the *Pioneer* in its community news column (June 28, 1934, p. 2). Just a year out of law school, young Boyd Overhulse moved back home to Metolius, ostensibly to open a law office in Madras.

After all that had gone before, residents of Jefferson County had

a keen interest in the trial of Doc Howard. The court record does not include a transcript of the 50-some witnesses interviewed on the stand and the *Pioneer* did not attempt to record what was said, but it did print the judge's decree in full.

Of the charges, the ugliest was intimidation of Native American voters in Warm Springs.

Because of the Great Depression, some Warm Springs Native Americans had gone to live and work temporarily in New Deal work camps in Wasco County. Ramsey made campaign stops at the camps and helped 46 people who were permanent Jefferson County residents register to vote.

When Howard noticed the increase in registration in Warm Springs, he became suspicious that something shady was going on, so he visited two of the camps and questioned some recent Jefferson County registrants about their residency. Though he told some of the voters that it was legal for them to vote in Jefferson County because that was their permanent residence, he managed to muddy the waters and create some doubt in voters' minds, leaving an impression that he, as current district attorney could contest their votes and that they could get in trouble for voting in Jefferson County.

As it turned out, only 27 people voted in the Warm Springs precinct and Ramsey won it 19 to 8.

In his Opinion of the Court, Judge Hay discussed the difference between an ordinary candidate doing what Howard had done and a sitting district attorney doing it. He wrote, "The district attorney holds an honorable and very important public office. In my opinion, when he uses the prestige

and weight of his official position to further his candidacy at an election, he betrays his official trust."

Ted Metcalf, Dowd Franklin, Herbert Wabno, and Robert Smith all testified about their conversations with Howard. Hay found that the allegation of voter intimidation was true in at least two instances.

The other charges involved well-known members of the Madras community. Lawrence Evick, son of Agency Plains farmers John and Bertha Evick, was living in Portland at the time of the primary election. At the request of Evick's mother, Howard mailed Evick an application for an absentee ballot and enclosed a check for \$1 to cover the cost of a notary public if needed. Evick ended up coming to Madras to vote in person and returned the money to Howard, but Judge Hay found that it made no difference whether the dollar was a gift or a loan. Howard had attempted to pay Evick's expenses related to voting, a violation of state law.

The last of the charges involved campaigning on Election Day. In Warm Springs on the morning of Election Day, Howard encountered Ben Bellamy Jr., son of a Madras hotel owner. Bellamy was working at a CCC camp in Warm Springs but was registered to vote in Madras. He asked Howard to get him a certificate of registration that would enable him to vote in Warm Springs because he wouldn't be able to get to Madras to vote. Howard resisted, saying that Bellamy's father was bitter toward him and had signed the recall petition against him, but he eventually agreed to help Bellamy.

Here is where Howard's ignorance of the law shows itself. In

his opinion, the judge noted that there was no provision in the law for a certificate of registration that would allow Bellamy to vote in Warm Springs. He was eligible to vote only in Madras because that is where he lived and was registered, and he had not applied in time to obtain an absentee ballot. As district attorney, Howard should have known the law, but he did not.

That was only tangential to the issue at hand, though. When Howard returned to Warm Springs with the spurious certificate of registration, he told Bellamy that people in Madras had teased him that it would be a “dirty trick” if Bellamy voted for Howard’s opponent after Howard had gone to so much trouble to help him vote. The judge ruled that Howard’s remark was intended to influence Bellamy’s vote, which amounted to campaigning on Election Day, a violation of state law.

In court, Howard had the temerity to turn around and argue that if Bellamy was not eligible to vote in Warm Springs, then he was technically not a voter and so he, Howard, had not tried to sway a voter on Election Day. The judge did not buy Howard’s silly defense, saying that Bellamy clearly was a registered voter in Jefferson County.

In summarizing his decision, Hay wrote, “I cannot concede that contestee’s [Howard’s] violations



Lewis “Turk” Irving JCHS photo

of the Act were trivial, limited or unimportant. They were, on the contrary, deliberate, serious, and sufficiently numerous to be designated as general in scope.”

He went on to write, partially quoting William H. Lecky, the author of *History of European Morals*, “From my observation of the contestee [Howard] during the hearing, and from the evidence, I am persuaded that he is a man of many excellent qualities of character and disposition. No doubt he is one of those whose ‘moral standards are much lower in political judgments than in private matters.’”

The same day that the *Pioneer* printed the full text of the Circuit Court’s opinion, Irving purchased some column inches for an unbecoming I-told-you-so address to county voters, reminding them that he had tried to recall Howard a year earlier. “By following his own legal advice, Dr. Howard has been led into very serious difficulty and it is only by the grace of God and the business judgment of other county officials that Jefferson County has escaped heavy loss by reason of Dr. Howard’s lack of basic legal knowledge and ability to properly interpret existing laws.”

The judge’s ruling meant Howard forfeited the primary election and Ramsey would be the Democratic candidate in the general election. Howard appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court, which reviewed the case quickly so that voters could know who would be on the ballot in the November general election.

The Supreme Court ruled that Howard’s gift or loan of \$1 to Lawrence Evick to pay a notary public was not a violation of the law, but it affirmed the other findings of the Circuit Court. In addition to the forfeiture of the election, Howard had to reimburse Ramsey \$500 in attorney fees and pay another \$128.50 in court costs.

It was over for Howard, but there was yet another twist in the

story. Within a week of the Circuit Court’s judgment against Howard in August 1934, Boyd Overhulse filed to run for DA as an Independent. He would face off against Ramsey in the general election in November.

In reporting the results of the 1934 general election, the *Pioneer* wrote, “Termination of one of the most bitterly fought political contests ever staged in this county resulted in the election of Boyd R. Overhulse, Independent candidate, for district attorney of Jefferson County, who won almost two to one over his Democratic opponent, Bernard H. Ramsey. The result was Overhulse 465; Ramsey 253” (*Madras Pioneer* Nov. 8, 1934, p. 1).

Overhulse was reelected as district attorney three times. He founded a Madras law firm and served several terms first as a state representative and later as a state senator. He was president of the Oregon Senate during the 1957 legislative session, skillfully presiding over a body divided equally between Democrats and Republicans.

Ramsey and Boylan moved their law firm to Bend, and each had long legal careers. Boylan was elected district attorney of Deschutes County and later moved to Portland to be the deputy U.S. attorney for Oregon.

Ramsey was soon working for

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the federal government, helping facilitate its purchase of marginal farmland in Jefferson County. By 1940, Ramsey was based in Portland as a special attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice in the government lands office. During World War II, he oversaw the acquisition of Oregon land for defense projects and later served as a special U.S. Attorney for Eastern Washington.

The basic facts of Doc Howard's tumultuous stint as district attorney are clearly recorded in the *Madras Pioneer* and in the court record of his trial, but the motivations of the parties remain murky. What made Howard run for district attorney and why did the voters support him so strongly despite his obvious ignorance of the

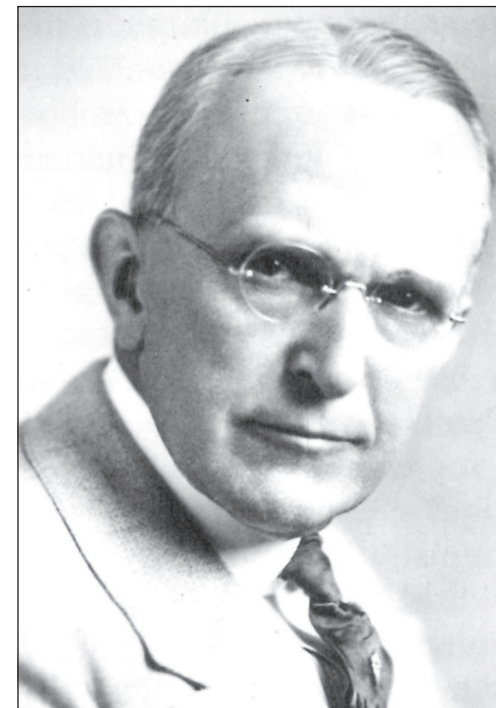
law? One senses something lurking under the surface – maybe something so obvious to residents at the time that nobody thought to spell it out for posterity.

It might simply be an oddball case of a citizen taking on a role he wasn't suited for and a handful of professionals putting him in his place, but it looks more like a mild case of populism, which rears its head in times of economic stress or social unrest. People blame experts, experienced professionals, technocrats, policy wonks – choose your favorite term – and root for candidates who have no background in government and are perceived as having a fresh outlook, caring about the common folks, likely to shake things up, apply common sense, and

break through red tape.

During the same period, in the early 1930s, Southern Oregon was rocked by a populist movement stirred up by newspaper editor Llewellyn Banks, who blamed the legal and political establishment for regional economic troubles. He and his associates formed the Good Government Congress, a political party with fascist leanings, and some were elected to county government. The movement took a dangerous turn when opponents discovered that the GGC had destroyed ballots in order to win the election. Banks shot and killed an Oregon State Police officer who came to arrest him for fraud.

On the national level, a Catholic priest, Charles E. Coughlin,



Llewellyn Banks, leader of the Good Government Congress. *Oregon Encyclopedia*

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had a radio audience of 30 million Americans who tuned in during the Great Depression to listen to him champion the poor and criticize the government. The size of his audience gave him enormous influence in the United States. At first he was a supporter of FDR, but later in the 1930s, he turned against Roosevelt, becoming increasingly right-wing, antisemitic, and supportive of Nazi activities in Germany.

To be clear, there is no reason to think Howard was fascist, antisemitic, or nefarious in any way. Probably the only danger he posed was incompetence, but his stint as district attorney was likely a product of the turbulent times.

The backdrop to the Doc Howard saga was one of the most fraught periods of Jefferson County history and of American history. When Howard ran for district attorney in 1930, the country and the county were one year into the Great Depression, at least 10 years into a period of severe drought, and 11 years into the Prohibition era.

By 1933, when Irving launched his recall effort against Howard, his assertion that county officials needed sound legal advice was not trivial. The populations of the cities in Jefferson County were dwindling and the federal government was preparing to buy up failed homesteads and, in the following year, would even consider a plan to buy all the private land in the county, a move that would render the county government obsolete. An amateur attorney would not have had the legal knowledge to mount an opposition to the plan or handle the legal ramifications if that plan had been carried out.

And while Howard and Ramsey were duking it out in 1934 – the May primary, the July trial, and the October Supreme Court appeal – county farmers were experiencing a near-total crop failure. The federal government was buying up Jefferson County livestock because farmers couldn't grow feed for their animals and men were eking out a living working in New Deal labor camps.

In fact, the labor camps featured significantly in the campaign corruption trial because most of Howard's transgressions were related to voters living in work camps at election time

instead of at their permanent residences.

Given all that, the conditions were right for a populist candidate who ordinary people trusted to work in their interests instead of the interests of the elite. Maybe they liked that Howard saved money by settling cases out of court and seeking fines instead of jail sentences and didn't fully grasp or didn't want to consider how expensive bad legal advice could be for the county.

On the other hand, it all could have had to do with how people wanted the law enforced. They may have felt that previous district attorneys were either too strict or too lax. Prohibition enforcement comes to mind, but it could have been some other area of law.

It would be interesting to see the names on Irving's recall petition. Knowing who signed and who did not sign might suggest who Howard's supporters and detractors were. Unfortunately, neither the county nor the state could produce a copy of the petition.

Whatever motivated him to run for district attorney, Howard moved past the debacle and carried on in Jefferson County until he retired and moved to a Portland nursing home in his late 80s. He practiced optometry and was active in a range of community organizations, including the Mud Springs and Pomona granges, the Masonic Lodge, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (polio), the chamber of commerce, and the American Legion.

He was involved in the Townsend movement, which advocated monthly support of elderly Americans by the federal government and was a delegate to the first national Townsend Plan convention in Chicago in 1936.

There must have been some truth in Irving's accusation that Howard spent a lot of time pitching horseshoes because in 1936 he won the Oregon State Grange Championship horseshoe contest.

Howard never married nor had children. He died on Feb. 23, 1967.

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V.S. "Doc" Howard upon his retirement. *Madras Pioneer*

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WHEN THE COUNTRY WENT TO WORK: THE CCC IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, 1933-1942

By Jarold Ramsey

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the first national “deals” of the New Deal under President Franklin Roosevelt, all aimed at creating worthwhile employment during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Roosevelt actually signed the CCC into existence in his first week in office, in January 1933, and in its nine years of operation (it was suspended in 1942 because of WWII), it was one of the most popular and successful of all the New Deal programs.

By the end of 1933, the CCC had recruited over 275,000 young men between 18 and 25, mostly out of work with no prospects, all over the U.S. After brief indoctrination and training, it sent them out to CCC camps in national parks, national forests, and other undeveloped public lands across America. Under the broad banner of “conservation,” they built campgrounds and roads, cleaned up and reforested bug-damaged timberlands, worked to reduce flooding and erosion along rivers, and so on. Their base salary was \$30 a month, of which \$25 was sent to their parents or families back home — a welcome addition to hard-pressed families in those days. The actual training of CCC recruits was the responsibility of the U.S. Army, with the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service in charge of operations overall. The Depression had seriously disrupted public education across America, and because many CCC recruits were high school dropouts, the CCC offered general education and literacy coursework, as well as vocational training, in its far-flung camps. From the outset, the recruits participated in baseball and other forms of recreation.

Despite opposition from southern states, the Corps created a “Negro Addition” to its ranks; Black recruits worked out of segregated camps in the South but were often informally inte-



Poster showing combined “spirit” of the CCC and U.S. Forest Service.

grated elsewhere. In 1935, under pressure from the Indian Service, and especially its reforming director, John Collier, the CCC established an Indian Division, giving participating tribes broad jurisdiction as to selection of recruits

and projects for them to work on, primarily on reservation lands. Over its nine years, the CCC enrolled over 3 million young men (women were excluded, regrettably). African Americans numbered more than 200,000; Native Americans totaled more than 80,000.

The appeal of the Corps and its projects was widespread from 1933 through the rest of that decade, more truly nationwide than its New Deal creators had dared to hope. A list of its recruits who became American celebrities and successful men in a wide range of careers in their later years would include the actor Raymond Burr (California), the baseball immortal Stan Musial (Pennsylvania), and “The Right Stuff” aviation hero Chuck Yeager (West Virginia). But beyond doubt, it left its encouraging, affirmative mark on countless young American men, helping them find their ways forward.

A hasty survey of the CCC camps across Oregon suggests forcefully that their manpower was actively and effectively used — for example, in the Tillamook Burn areas between the Coast Range and Mount Hood, where they actually fought fires and carried out extensive reforestation projects on USFS lands. They built forest campgrounds and trails in the Mount Hood area along the Mount

Hood Loop Highway and along U.S. Highway 26 and on the western approaches to the Cascades in Lane and Marion counties that are still in use today. Elsewhere, there were “Timber Army” camps along the Columbia River, in Douglas County, in the Oregon desert, and in and around the Wallowa Mountains in the northeast.

Midway in the CCC’s lifespan, around 1938, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation committed to beginning construction of the long-awaited North Unit Irrigation Project here in Jefferson County — and so called on the Civilian Conservation Corps to participate in the massive construction of the Wickiup and Crane Prairie reservoirs in the timberlands southwest of Bend — clearing the sites of heavy timber growth and excavating the reservoirs. A large camp was built near Wickiup, and the work went forward. But as World War II loomed and then broke out and CCC recruitment diminished, Reclamation officials turned to the ranks of “conscientious objectors,” who were required by the military draft to do alternative service, to finish the job. Specifically, they contracted with the Mennonite Church, and the Mennonites’ output of work far surpassed the CCC’s performance and brought the job to completion. (See “The Mennonites and the Building of the North Unit,” *The Agate*, Fall 2019, pp. 10-12.)

But in fact, the CCC was already well-established in Central Oregon and Jefferson County by the time its crews went to work at Wickiup and Crane Prairie. It was the first New Deal venture to arrive here, in the fall of 1933, followed the next year by its rangeland equivalent, the “resettlement” program which bought up abandoned and failing homesteads and farms in the southern half of the county and worked to establish what is now the Crooked River National Grassland “Marginal Lands” grazing and recreational area. (See *The Agate*, Spring 2018, pp. 1-19.) The main CCC camp in Central Oregon was created as “Camp Sisters” along the Metolius River a few miles upstream from Camp Sherman in the northwest corner of Jefferson County, on the eastern edge of the Deschutes National Forest. Built for a capacity of 125 recruits, with a sizeable staff of cooks, project supervisors, mechanics, and vocational



The Black Butte fire watch tower, built by men from the CCC camp, Camp Sisters. JCHS photo

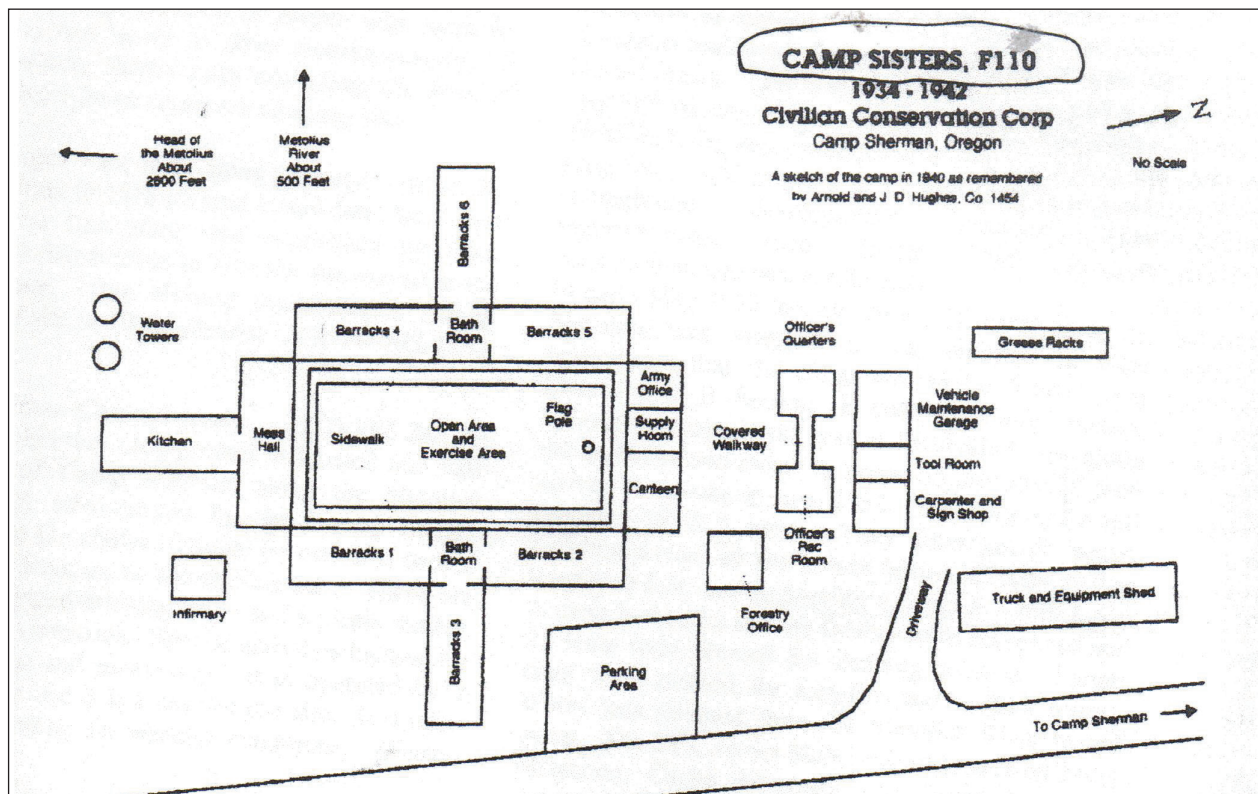
and general education teachers (mostly recruited from the Sisters school system), it was one of about 60 primary camps in Oregon, covering every region of the state and drawing recruits from faraway places like New Jersey, Arkansas and Texas.

What did they think of life along the Metolius River, and elsewhere in our state? The idea of a “great American mixing pot” of young outlanders from all over was a leading theme in early CCC promotions. Did some of them like what they saw here enough to settle down in Central Oregon, as happened in other areas? There seem to be no records bearing on this question;

likewise for its opposite: did young Central Oregon men join the CCC and at least briefly relocate to do CCC work elsewhere in America? Again, information seems to be lacking.

The only local CCC recruit I know about was my Uncle Max Mendenhall, who spent his time in a camp on the Oregon coast near Bandon, where he had relatives. He said that he enjoyed his time working there and making friends in the dense woods — except for the abundant poison ivy! But he returned home after his term with the Corps ended and spent most of his long life at Opal City. (In Jane Ahern’s lead article on the 1934 trial to remove “Doc” Howard from his district attorney position elsewhere in this issue, she mentions that a local man, Ben Bellamy — son of the owner of the Madras Hotel — was working with the CCC on the Warm Springs Reservation as the 1934 election approached, and when he mentioned to Howard on a visit to Warm Springs that he would be unable to vote in Madras because of his CCC job, Howard improvised a “certificate of registration” to allow him to vote anyway — one of the extra-legal actions on Howard’s part that led to his removal from office. Ahern’s article also mentions that one of Howard’s opponents for the office of DA, Bernard Ramsey, made campaign visits before the 1934 election at a CCC work-camp at Simnasho, on the reservation.)

Camp Sisters seems to have been as busy and productive in its projects as any camp in Oregon. It left behind a remarkably diverse and lasting legacy of undertakings. Many of these, especially along the Metolius River, were focused on promoting recreational uses of USFS lands — trails, especially between the river and the Cascade crest, and forest campgrounds, along the meadowy east side of the river above and below Camp Sherman. In this work, the CCC was building on and extending local history. As early as the 1890s, farm families from Sherman County were coming over to the Metolius country for extended campouts



The layout of the Camp Sisters CCC camp. Steve Lent photo

after wheat harvest — hence “Camp Sherman.” Probably some of the still-in-use campgrounds on the river’s east side were based on these pioneer sites.

On the river’s west side, where tributary mountain creeks — Abbot, Canyon, Candle — flow down to the river, well-chosen and carefully-cleared campgrounds were laid out and constructed, with big, sturdy log tables and benches, commodious privies (unisex, but usually with four holes), and big stone, concrete and iron fireplaces, usually with a cooking unit and an open fireplace on opposite sides of a massive stone chimney. My family’s favorite camp was the uppermost unit on Abbot Creek (originally called “Eagle Creek,” but renamed in the 1930s for Lt. Henry L. Abbot, who explored this area in 1855), which comes rushing down out of the wild woods, as they seemed to us, and which, below camp, was teeming with catchable small cutthroat trout. Alas, the Abbot Creek campgrounds were destroyed in the B and B Complex fires in 2003, and the Sisters Ranger District has no current plans to rebuild them.

A measure of the well-designed and built-

to-last CCC construction in our local forests can be seen today in the massive timber and stone gazebos or picnic shelters at sites along the Metolius on either side of Camp Sherman. Several of these open-sided and inviting structures have recently been refurbished by local citizens — a measure of their continuing value after almost 90 years.

While this camper-friendly work was going on near Camp Sisters, other CCC crews were ranging out in other directions. One project involved roadbuilding, including the basis of today’s route from Camp Sherman to Suttle Lake (where CCC men also worked on an earlier version of Suttle Lake Lodge). And of course there was widespread trail-building through the northwest reaches of the Deschutes National Forest ... for example, the still very popular Jack Creek/Jack Lake Trail, the Candle Creek Trail, and the long trail north by Abbot Butte and past Cabot and Carl lakes, connecting with the “Oregon Skyline Trail” running from Crater Lake to Mount Hood (see review of a new book on the history of the Skyline Trail elsewhere in this issue).

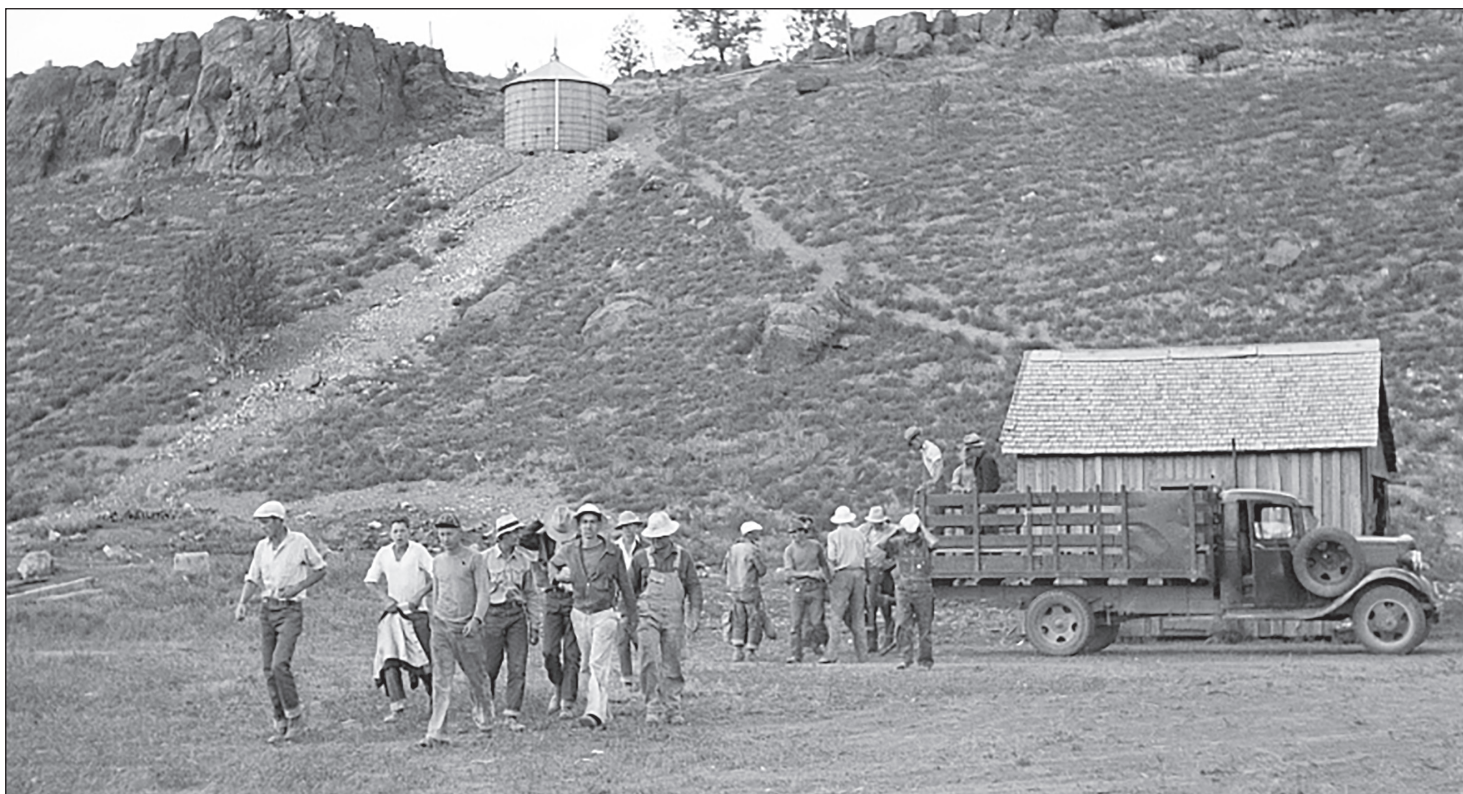
Probably the most arduous and time-consuming CCC projects in our area were the building of Forest Service fire lookouts, notably on Green Ridge, Abbot Butte, and Black Butte. First, trails had to be built to the lookout sites, and then hefty poles and lumber had to be mule-packed up there to build the lookout towers. On Black Butte (which became the key fire lookout for the whole region), a local hostler from Terrebonne, Cliff Ralston, somehow succeeded in mule-packing eight 30-foot fir poles, one at a time, to the summit, to make up the four legs of the tower. The feat made Ralston for many years the go-to packer and wrangler both for the Forest Service projects and for private recreational pack-trips into the mountains.

The range of work out of Camp Sisters extended even further. Its CCC crews were assigned to build new headquarters just out of Prineville for the Ochoco National Forest — still very much in use today, and now recognized as a “National Historic Building.” And south of Madras, just east of Highway 26 and north of Rimrock Springs, Corps workers in 1934 built the headquarters complex for the New Deal’s Resettlement program starting that year, as noted above. The Grassland still uses some of the remaining buildings as a field station.

One other example of the outreach of the CCC’s Camp Sisters: in the mid-’30s, crews from the camp joined forces with Native American men (presumably but not certainly recruits into the Corps’ “Indian Division” program from the Warm Springs Reservation) to build, among other projects on the rez, a complex of worksites and buildings at Peter’s Pasture, on upper Shitike Creek (still in use), and from there they constructed a remarkably well-graded, rip-rapped road clear to the summit of Bald Peter, right up against the eastern flanks of Mount Jefferson. They finished off their hard work by building the Bald Peter lookout itself — one of the highest in the area, but no longer standing, the victim of either fire, or wind, or both. The CCC also had reservation work camps in the Simnasho area.

The Civilian Conservation Corps, in its Camp Sisters center on the southwest edge of Jefferson County, was clearly a beehive of construc-

tive activity in our homeland during the grim years of the Depression. What they accomplished here was much more than just “make-work,” and in them and their projects, the New Deal was very much alive, active and appreciated in that time. Some of their efforts around here can still be seen and enjoyed, as noted above. What we lack are the names and origins of the probably more than 2,000 young men from all over who lived and worked here, and their stories. Most of them probably served in World War II — but what then? What did they make, later on, of their hard work, adventures, and fellowship here in Jefferson County? If you know any stories about men based at Camp Sisters 1933-1942, please let us know, in the name of Local History!



In 1936, Men returning to the RA headquarters near present day Rimrock Springs, built by the CCC. (photo by Arthur Rothstein). Below, the headquarter building, in both pictures, during recent resoration by Historicorps.

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Historic Grandview Area Roads

By Dan Chamness

Old, abandoned roads make good hiking trails and there are several such roads in the Grandview area that are begging to be visited. Hikes described in this article were conducted by the Dry Side Hikers, an unorganized group of people, including myself, who are interested in the natural history and human history of Crooked River National Grassland and other areas east of the



Old Jordan Road, the west side of the Deschutes.

Cascades. The roads we hiked are shown on USGS maps and on Google Earth.

Settlement of the Grandview area began in the 1880s, and by early 1910s nearly all property had been homesteaded. By the mid-1930s, most of the people had left. The plan for an irrigation project to bring water from Suttle Lake to the lower desert failed to materialize in the 1910s. As late as the 1960s, investors were trying to raise money to bring water from the Three Sisters to

the Grandview area. I remember a promoter visiting my father, Art Chamness, trying to convince him to purchase stock in the project. I don't think Dad bought stock in the water project as I did not find a stock certificate among his papers.

Getting to and from Grandview was difficult in the early years, as access was from the Santiam Wagon Road to the south and there were no roads crossing the Metolius, Deschutes or Crooked rivers. Prineville was the commercial center for Central Oregon in those years and it took two or three days to make the roundtrip by horse and wagon.

Grandview was a dry country with a few intermittent streams but no year-round water sources except for Squaw (Whychus) Creek, Fly Lake and the Metolius River. Squaw Creek was a long drive with horse and wagon, and access to the Metolius River was a steep descent and climb back out of the canyon.

The Cove was settled early and eventually a passable road was constructed with a bridge crossing the Crooked River, but it was decades later that a road and bridge were built to cross the Deschutes River and provide access to the Grandview area.

In a visit to Cove Palisades State Park headquarters recently, I was introduced to the term "water trails" by a park ranger. The term refers to trails and roads built to give access to water. Going for wa-



M.M. Nance carved his name in the sandstone above Old Jordan Road.

ter was a necessity for the settlers in the Grandview area. It applies to early settlers of the Agency Plains, as well. An example of a water trail might be what I am calling Trail With No Name. Another term I will use in this article is "homestead roads," which is a road to provide access to a farm or ranch. Forest Service Road 6400-400 is an example of a road built to give access to a homestead, but the road went on to the Metolius



View of No Name Road just below the canyon rib.

River. The third term is “through road” and a map is attached showing the through roads as of the mid-1930s. The map is from the Resettlement Administration. The through roads are Jordan Road and Peninsula Road.

In the late 1990s, I led a Hood River Community Education hike on The Island in Cove Palisades State Park. Access to The Island is now restricted. From The Island, we could see two remnants of roads or trails that came down from Grandview and stopped at the edge of the water of Lake Billy Chinook. I knew that the more prominent road was the main road to Grandview before the reservoir was filled but I knew nothing about the road to the north. As you will read later in this article, I know little more about that second road to this day.

Old Jordan Road

The bridge crossing the Deschutes River was constructed in 1912 and the grade from the bridge up to the Grandview area was finished that year or the next. The road was referred to as The Grade or The Hairpin, but its official name was Jordan Road. It was not a road for people

with a fear of heights. I never had the pleasure of riding on the road because my father thought there was no reason to go to Grandview as you couldn't fish, hunting was better on marginal lands east of Madras, and there was no money to be made in Grandview. So I never got to see Grandview and Geneva until I had my own car, and by that time Round Butte Dam had been filled and the road up from the Deschutes was more civilized.

An article in the March 1, 1934 *Madras Pioneer* had this small story: “Late yesterday afternoon Fritz Nance went over the Deschutes grade with his truck about a quarter of a mile from the bottom. Nance jumped and escaped uninjured, but the truck, which rolled to the bottom of the grade, was a complete wreck. Nance was hauling water to his home place at the top of the grade just above the Grandview post office and believed the cause of the accident was due to the wishbone of the truck breaking.”

Not far above the water level of Lake Billy Chinook is the wreckage of a car that appears to be of 1930s vintage based on the part we could see. It was not Fritz Nance's truck.



The sign at the lower end of the Peninsula Road is still legible and outlived the road.



Dry Side Hikers at possible Buchanan Road.

I have heard and read stories for years about how scary the road was from The Cove to Grandview. Steve Summers, a Madras High graduate from 1965, related a story about hunting with his Uncle Harvey Summers:

“My Uncle Harvey was gracious enough to take me deer hunting when I was a boy. He always drove old Jeeps. Since he only had one arm, he would put it through the steering wheel to reach the gear shift. He was as unconcerned about driving the roughest off-road trail as he was driving on the highway. One fall day in the early 1960s, Uncle Harvey decided to take me



Mother’s Garden Trail: The old road is overgrown throughout its length but can be followed if careful.

hunting in the Grandview area. The road down to the Cove and beyond at that time was not for the faint-of-heart. Not long before we took this drive, I had been on a ride with Uncle Harvey when the right front wheel fell off the Jeep. Naturally, that experience didn’t help my anxiety level. Fortunately, nothing fell off the Jeep this trip and we climbed the marginal road without incident. We didn’t get a deer that day, but I’ll never forget the ride.”

The Dry Side Hikers held two hikes on Old Jordan Road in 2023. The old road is a gentle slope for hiking. The section above the hair-pin turn is mostly free of brush, but the section of road below the turn has a healthy sagebrush crop.

Trail with No Name (or is it Old Buchanan Road?)

This is where the confusion begins, as there are two different stories about the road that John Buchanan built. Harry Heising wrote the “Grandview, Camp Sherman and Metolius River” chapter in *Jefferson County Reminiscences* and in that article reported on page 229, “Old John Buchanan with a pick and shovel built the first road down to the Deschutes River. It came down the hill about a mile below [assuming downstream] where the Grandview Grade now [1957] is . . .” Esther Boller was quoted in the *Redmond Spokesman* about the building of the Grade: “A man named Buchanan (John) is credited with building the road with his own tools and at one point advertised in the Madras Pioneer for the people ‘to get out your pick and shovel and get busy.’” (*Central Oregon Place Names: Volume 2: Jefferson County*, page 104-105). Old John Buchanan probably did not build two roads with his own pick and shovel.

The road I saw in the late 1990s from atop The Island is approximately a mile downstream from the Grade. More research is needed, as I don’t feel comfortable reporting that the road is Old Buchanan Road.

We are fortunate that one of the Dry Side Hikers actually hiked the road before it was partially covered by Lake Billy Chinook. Barbara Meyer has resided in Bend since 1988. She wrote:

“It is hard to know the precise year I camped



Steve Moore, Dan O’Brien and Gary Clowers.

with my Mom and Dad, Barbara and Adolph Zimmerman, at the orchard campground along the Crooked River, and it’s too late to ask them. Certainly, it was before the construction of Round Butte Dam and the filling of Lake Billy Chinook in 1964. We drove our blue 1952 Plymouth, so I was at least 8 years old. I think we were there twice. Please remember that this was over 70 years ago.

“I remember the camping area as a green paradise with lawn and an orchard with several kinds of fruit trees, so different from the “west side” where I grew up in Vancouver. The dramatic difference in climate and scenery made an impression on me.

“There was a trail along the west side of the Crooked River along the base of The Island. We followed it to the north end of The Island where the Deschutes and Crooked rivers join. There was an impressive spire (Eagle Rock) separate from The Island. Here we looked across the Deschutes River and saw a trail or wagon road leading down from the plateau above. Along this trail, I saw my first lizard, possibly a fence lizard. This was new country for me.

“Later we hiked from the saddle between The

Peninsula and The Island north on an old road filled with sagebrush to the base of The Island. We had sticks and tapped on the sagebrush to scare away any rattlesnakes. I don't remember seeing any snakes. This is the first place that I recall seeing a killdeer doing its 'broken wing' act.

"My parents were members of the Mazama Mountaineering Club in Portland, as I have been since age 15, and were experienced climbers and hikers. I am not sure if we hiked the shepherd-er's trail on The Island that day but we probably did because I recall seeing farm buildings in the Grandview area.

"It was probably my father who decided we needed to hike the road we could see across the Deschutes. We crossed the Deschutes River and drove Jordan Road up to Grandview and somehow Dad and Mom found the trail we saw from across the river.

"I remember clearly seeing a cave at some point along the trail and inside the cave was a sheep with wool so long that it was dragging on the ground. The sheep was alive and moved around in the cave but did not run away. Apparently, the owner did not think to look down

the trail. We reached the Deschutes River at the site of a ram pump taking water up through a wooden pipe wrapped with wire. The water was spouting in places. There was a deep pool where the trail ended and we could see fish – large fish.

"A group of us hiked down this trail in October 2023 and I was excited to return where my parents and I hiked so many years ago. The water level of the reservoir covers much of what I saw more than 70 years ago. Some of us are looking forward to further exploration to see if we can discover where the wooden pipe reached the lower bench, thinking that water wagons were filled by the pipe."

The old road is not in good shape in sections that have been subject to slides. The road would have reached the Deschutes north of The Island after the Crooked River entered the Deschutes. A single bridge, if built at that location, would only need to cross one stream. There is no road climbing out of the Crooked River gorge across from the north end of The Island, but it appears that it was possible that a road could have been built heading south to the Cove road on a bench that is now submerged.

Mother's Garden Trail

Mother's Garden Trail is mentioned several times in local history works. Despite its name, it was a road, not a trail. Harry Heising wrote that the garden was Jim and Mattie Edmonson's, located on the Metolius River near the junction with the Deschutes (*JCR*, pages 229-230). The garden was watered from the river, probably from a ditch originating upstream. Edmonson took a plow down to the garden on a pack horse and it still remained there at the time Heising wrote the article.

It does not appear from the Resettlement Administration map that the Edmonsons ever filed a patent on the property where they built the garden. The road was used by fishermen and Hope Nance reported that it was used most days during the summer by adults and kids to get access to both rivers as fish was about the only fresh meat in summer (*Finding Hope* by Guy Swanson, page 46).

The garden was flooded with the filling of the dam, but the Round Butte Dam USGS map

shows a flat area of good size that would have been the garden site.

There was a small group hike on the Mother's Garden Trail on Nov. 5, 2023 on a comfortable late fall day. The road to get to the start of the trail is rough and requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Mother's Garden Trail starts at the northern tip of Canadian Bench above the confluence of the Metolius and Deschutes Rivers. The road is mostly overgrown with sage, junipers and other vegetation, but the route is easy to follow. There are several switchbacks that are wide enough to have been navigated by a horse and wagon.

Peninsula Road

Peninsula Road at one time connected the Peninsula with the Cove. The road was shown on the Resettlement Administration map of the mid 1930s as a through road. When the bridge across the Deschutes River was constructed and Jordan Road was built in 1912, the Peninsula Road was used to haul heavy equipment to the construction site (*COPN*, page 62).

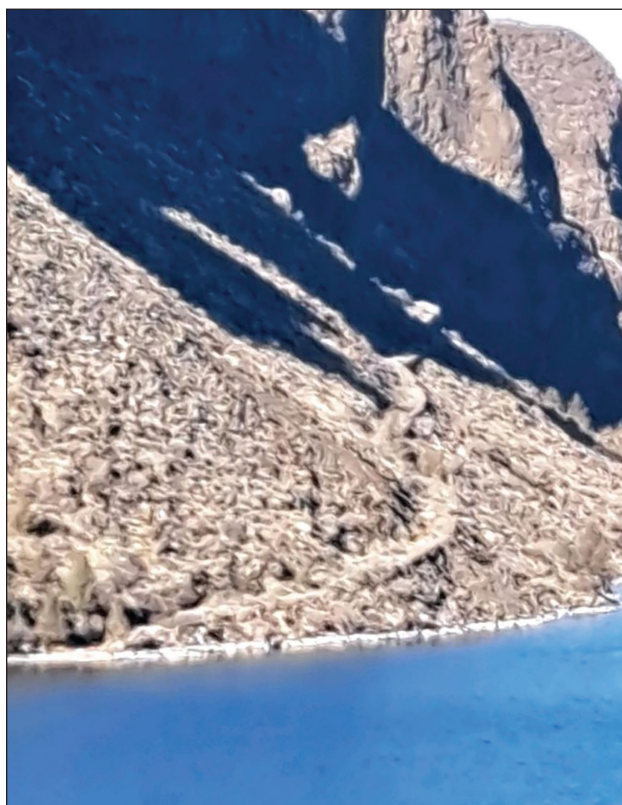
A landslide took out a 200-yard section just above the current crossing of Crooked River. The road can be hiked from the bottom to the slide and from the Peninsula down to the slide. The Dry Side Hikers walked the lower part last fall and the upper part this summer. The two sections are in good shape for hiking but the slide should be avoided to prevent more sliding.

Forest Service Road 6400-400

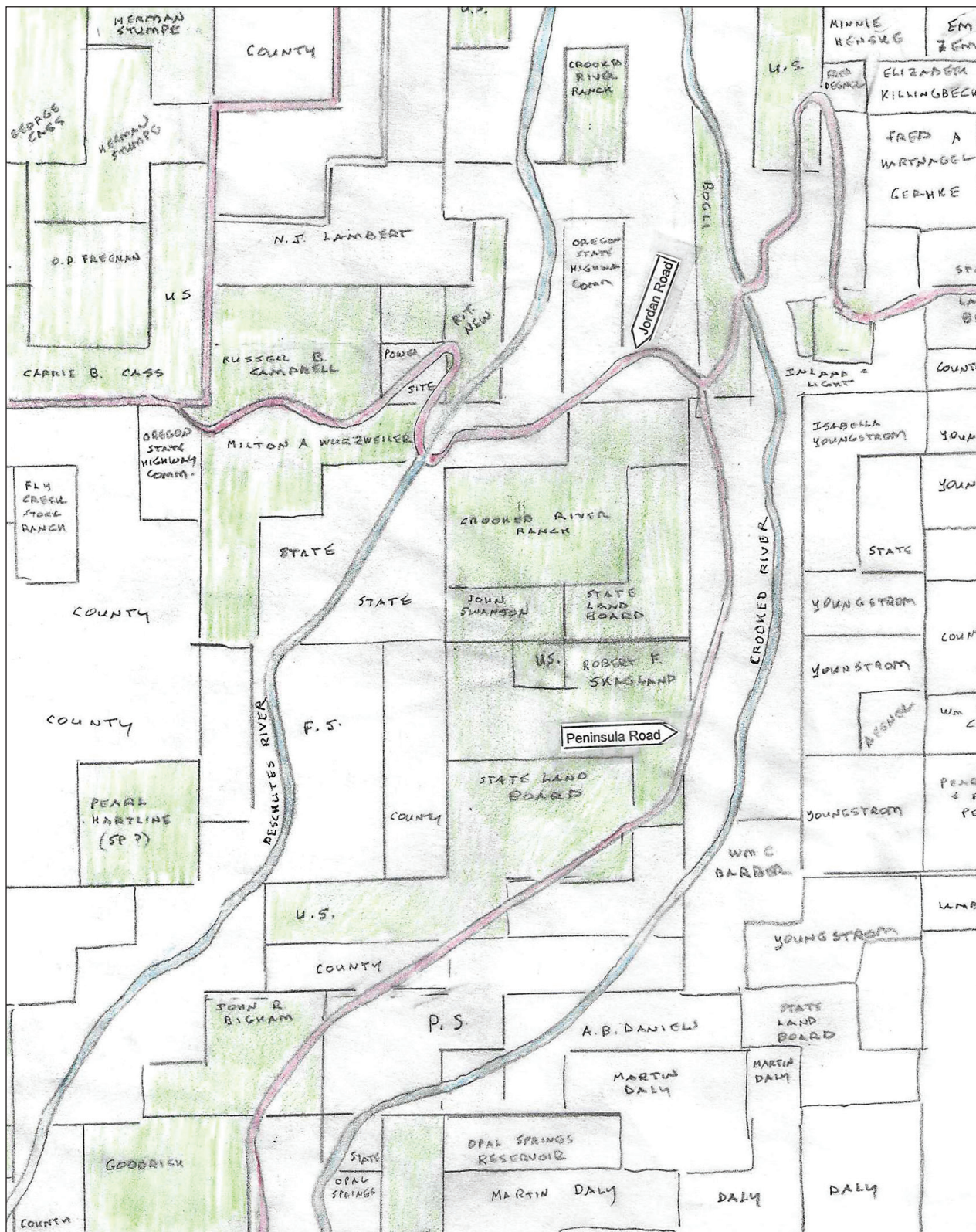
The abandoned Deschutes National Forest road is no longer indicated on Forest Service maps, but it appears on the Fly Creek USGS map from 1962. The road starts near the Balancing Rocks off Montgomery Road and heads north to the Metolius River.

David Riggs homesteaded the property along the Metolius River and patented the property in 1906. The road also went through land that was patented in 1909 by Edwin Graham. There may have been more homesteaders served by the road.

Recent fire roads on Forest Service land



Old road heading up canyon face at Lake Billy Chinook.



Tracing of a Resettlement Administration map showing Jordan Road and Peninsula Road.

made the southern end of Road 400 a little hard to follow. The road is more obvious later on the walk and easy to follow. The road has two grades, the first of which drops down to a bench that was probably farmed. The second

grade drops down from the level area and ends at the Metolius Arm of Round Butte Reservoir.

Four Dry Side Hikers hiked Road 400 on May 2 of this year in a good rain. The hike was advertised as Balancing Rocks to Metolius River.

Conclusion

Information about the history of the Grandview area is skimpy and hard to find. I have questions I would love to ask Hope Nance and Guy Swanson, but they are both gone. Grandview was settled quickly and by World War II most people were gone. The houses where people lived, the school they attended and the stores where they shopped are all gone. There is more evidence of the Roman civilization 20 centuries ago than there is of Grandview a century ago.

Another hike that probably has river access is in Juniper Canyon, but I did not get a chance to hike more than the upper half mile. The Jefferson County Historical Society held a history hike to the Glover homestead on Canadian Bench several years ago and a few of us hiked on an old road as far as a metal pipe that was probably used at one time to pump water to a homestead.

Stan Pine's guidebooks served as an incentive to get boots on our feet and packs on our backs. The books and periodicals listed below should be in your library.

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High desert countryside
near Cyrus Springs.



Cyrus Springs and Orchards Hike

By Dan Chamness

Friends and Neighbors of Deschutes River Canyon (FANs) held a hike on June 5 to visit the three Cyrus Springs and orchards in the Crooked River National Grassland just north of Gray Butte. We met at the Gray Butte Cemetery and drove a mile west to the start of the hike. We walked the route as indicated on the portion of the Gray Butte USGS map that accompanies this article. There is no formal trail and we stayed off the road as much as possible in hopes of finding something interesting. We hiked the drainage of an intermittent stream with an elevation gain of approximately 250 feet over 2 miles through land that once was farmed by Enoch and Mary Cyrus and their family. The Cyrus family also ran a flock of sheep, had large gardens and started three orchards.

The Horse Camp Orchard and Omar Cyrus Orchard are both easy to visit by vehicle, but the Omar Cyrus Barn Orchard is not so simple to find. I had two previous unsuccessful attempts

to find the Barn Orchard in years past, but this FANs group was more persistent and we found the lost orchard. The Barn Orchard is in among a forest of juniper and the lighter green leaves of the apple trees gave the location away. The Barn Orchard is approximately one-half mile southwest of the Omar Cyrus Orchard.

We had help finding the Barn Orchard from three Ochoco National Forest staff who were checking out the Cyrus orchards with potential plans to return and remove juniper from among the fruit trees. The Forest Service workers got their information on finding the Barn Orchard from Jerry Ramsey. Jerry's story "Our Homestead Orchards," in his book "Words Marked by a Place" was my inspiration for trying to find the lost orchard. The orchards have been ignored for a century and many of the trees have not survived.

Juniper and cheat grass dominate the old Cyrus farm. We found a few old juniper stumps, probably cut by the Cyruses, but few of the juniper trees that we see these days were there

during the homesteader era. The wheat fields have been gone for nearly a century.

FANs is a nonprofit organization based out of Crooked River Ranch that offers training in natural history, books, and has a hike program. FANs can be reached at P.O. Box 2107, Terrebonne, Oregon 97760 and by www.fansofdeschutes.org. You do not have to reside on Crooked River Ranch to join.

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Madras circa 1930s

We have ambitious goals, big ideas, hopeful dreams and exciting plans – including a new museum project. Make this the year you and your family become Jefferson County Historical Society members.



Original Oscar's location



A taste of what's up in 2025: Monthly "Team Trivia Nights" the last Wednesday of every month • Spring Meeting • History Pub • Tours of the Homestead House during the fair • Threshing Bee • Fall Meeting in September • Potentially a new museum!

For information on joining the Jefferson County Historical Society, see page 28, or contact a board member, whose names and numbers are listed on page 2.



By Holly M. Gill

Back in 2017, Dave Campbell, a member of the Jefferson County Historical Society Board of Directors, proposed a threshing bee as part of the organization's outreach, but he recalls that other directors were skeptical. Campbell, who lives on a property homesteaded in 1903 by his great-great-grandmother, has always had a keen interest in local history and farming practices. "I went ahead and planted wheat anyway," he said.

That year's threshing bee was such a hit that JCHS has made it an annual event – first held on the west side of the Jefferson County Fairgrounds through 2022, and then moved to its new home at the Casad Family Farms north of Madras for the past two years.

The main feature of the two-day event is Terrebonne resident Mike McIntosh's team of three Percheron horses pulling his antique



John Deere reaper-binder, which cut, collected and bundled wheat on 3 acres at the Casads' farm on Northwest Elm Lane.

New this year was a small 1940 McCormick Deering/International Harvester combine, pulled by a 1937 John Deere tractor, which

cut and bagged the wheat in an adjacent field. Campbell discovered the combine on a farm in the Gray Butte area and persuaded the owners to donate it to the Historical Society. With the help of his twin brother, John, he replaced the boards on the platform, made a new conveyor belt draper, and tried it out on his brother's farm in Prineville prior to the threshing bee.

"This little combine has a bagging platform; a person rides on the platform and sacks the wheat right there on the combine," said Campbell, adding that the bags are then flipped onto a chute and down to the ground. "It's a rare little combine; it operated faultlessly out

there and finished up the field."

When both the wheat from the reaper-binder and the small combine was transported back to the main staging area, volunteers loaded it

into Campbell's antique Ellis Keystone wooden thresher, which separated the wheat kernels from the chaff.

The eighth annual event, held Sept. 14 and 15, saw a constant stream of visitors. "All in all, it was successful, with a lot of new people – locals who hadn't ever come," said Campbell.

Members of the Northwest Regional Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association Branch 248, which covers Central Oregon, returned to the event, with tractor and gas engine displays, while the Champions Trokita food cart was available for meals.

Following the reaping, binding and threshing, in the

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early evening of Saturday, Sept. 14, participants were able to participate in a “jam session,” or just enjoy the music. On Sunday, threshing concluded at 2 p.m.

Although he didn’t get a tally of the total harvest from this year’s crop, Campbell said that participants were allowed to take a bit of wheat. “I took two bags of wheat to clean and use for seed for next year; most of rest went to Chris Casad for chicken and hog feed.”

“The threshing bee was a huge hit again,” said JCHS Director Margee O’Brien, who praised the Casad family for hosting the event. “Dave and the old engine crew put on a great show. Visitors loved what they saw.”



On Sept. 14-15, the Jefferson County Historical Society’s Threshing Bee took place at Casad Family Farms north of Madras. The eighth annual event featured Terrebonne resident Mike McIntosh’s team of Percheron horses pulling his antique John Deere reaper-binder, which cut, collected and bundled wheat on 3 acres. The event also showcased historic farming equipment and vehicles. “It’s like a time machine,” one visitor said of the event.

Photos by Tony Ahern and Holly M. Gill



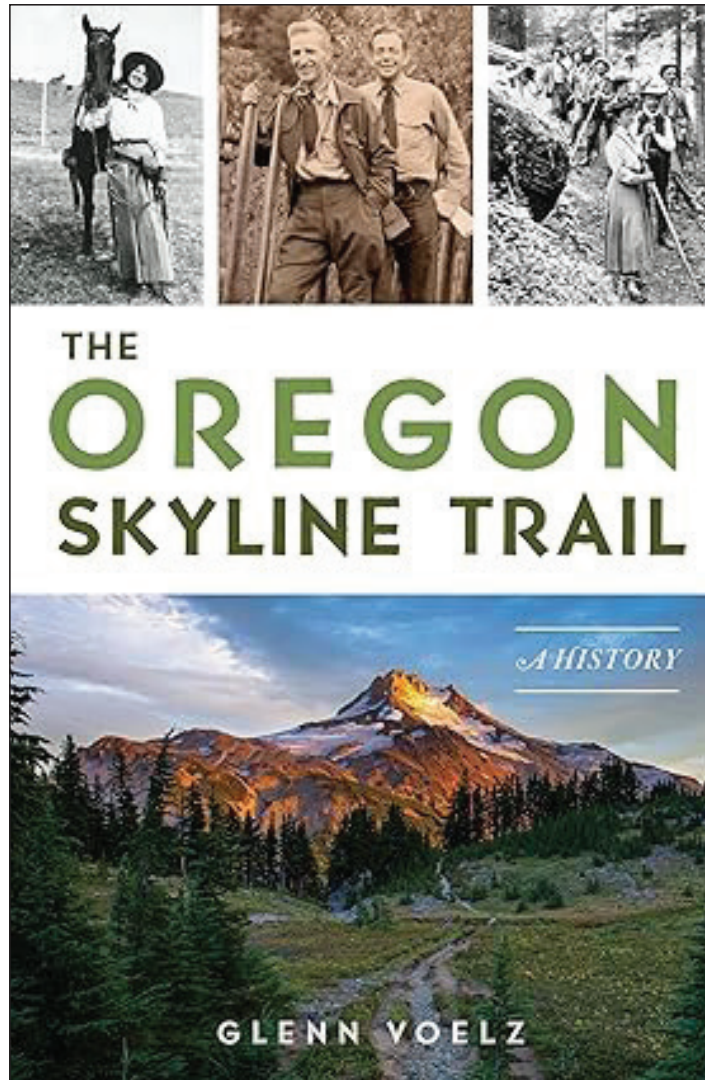
BOOK REVIEW: On the trail

Glenn Voelz, *The Oregon Skyline Trail: A History*. Charleston: The History Press, 2024

By Jarold Ramsey

This compact and well-illustrated book covers a lot more ground than its titular subject — Oregon’s beloved but now largely forgotten “Skyline Trail,” along the Cascade Range crest from Mount Hood to Crater Lake. It was the first “official” extended scenic trail in America, preceding the famous Appalachian Trail by several years. Glenn Voelz skillfully tells the story of the Trail’s inception, starting with the enthusiastic explorations of its scenic wonders by Oregon Supreme Court Judge John Waldo and early promotions by William Gladstone Steele, the “father” of Crater Lake National Park, and the actual four-month survey of its route for the U.S. Forest Service by Fred Cleator and his crew in 1920.

But the book also traverses and unites a whole field of national issues and controversies heating up in the early decades of the 20th century, involving the then-new U.S. Forest Service: battles between the emerging conservationism movement on public land and grazing, logging, and other opposing interests; and the emergence after World War I of a national movement to build “scenic” roadways across mountainous and wilderness regions, for automobile



Glenn Voelz explores the trail between Mount Hood and Crater Lake.

travel into and through spectacular places like the Oregon Cascades. How and why the

Skyline Trail and its expanded successor the Pacific Crest Trail (as celebrated in Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012) did not become “the Oregon Skyline Roadway” in the 1930s is an absorbing, cautionary tale that deserves to be read by everybody concerned with Oregon’s — or any region’s — natural treasures and how they might have been ruined, and how even now they require public vigilance.

In these terms, the key chapter of Voelz’s book is Chapter 5, “Selling the Skyline: Outdoor Recreation in the Age of Auto Tourism.” When the *Oregon Journal* editorialized in favor of the “Skyline Roadway” (as did the *Oregonian*), it argued that building merely a hiking trail along the high route from Mount Hood to Crater Lake would unfairly exclude too many tax-paying citizens from enjoying the route’s wonders, contending that “even the wilderness must be pierced by modernness (p. 108).”

Starting in 1940 (always after wheat harvest) my father and older brother Jim made several horseback/packhorse excursions with our friend and neighbor John L. Campbell, from Peters Pasture on the Warm Springs Reservation around Mount Jefferson, using the Skyline Trail as a convenient link between exploring old Indian trails — as located by John Campbell, who



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knew those faint trails as well as the Indians did. They would roughly circle the mountain counter-clockwise, and emerge by way of Abbot Butte down to Abbot Creek Campground, west of Camp Sherman, where my mother and I would be camped, waiting for them.

In 1949 (again, after harvest), our whole family mounted up with our friends Lloyd and Thelma Luelling, and their two older sons, Lee and Tom (who was 5!), for a total of four adults, four kids, eight horses, four pack-mules, a burro, and two dogs. We were gone about 10 days. Again, we relied on the Skyline Trail for major stretches of our way around the mountain — when, that is, my dad and Lloyd as wagonmasters weren't leading our caravan off on what my mother and Thelma took to calling "mythical trails," sometimes leading to thickets, or just disappearing. So, it was always a relief when we found ourselves back on the well-marked (and in those days, well-traveled) Skyline Trail.

If, in the *Oregon Journal's* editorial view back in the 1920s, we were indulging in some sort of "elitist privilege" denied to ordinary folks for lack of a roadway, we nonetheless enjoyed without undue guilt our miles on the trail (and, most of the time, when we were off it) and the magnificent alpine scenery our routes afforded us. And, best of all, whether "privileged" or not, thanks to sober, farsighted planning and policy-making back in the '20s and '30s, the scenery and the wilderness adventures are still there for the enjoying ... without cars, trucks, gas stations, convenience stores, and so on! Voelz's excellent book will tell you how lucky ("privileged"?) we all are, and how the luck was made.

Ice cream sundaes mark annual meeting

The JCHS held its annual meeting on Sunday, Sept. 29, at the Community Center. About 25 people attended the meeting and were furnished ice cream sundaes before getting down to business, presided over by JCHS President Lottie Holcomb.

The first item on the agenda was the annual treasurer's report covering the period from Jan. 1, 2024 through Aug. 31, 2024. The report shows a balance of \$119,316.57 in the JCHS operating fund, which includes about \$32,000 transferred from another account to be used for planning and purchasing a museum building.

The treasurer's report was approved and Holcomb moved on to the next order of business, which was the election of board members. Betty Fretheim, Margee O'Brien, and Cindy Stanfield were all re-elected to the board.

Margee O'Brien told the group that though the JCHS' downtown office is not open regular hours, anyone wishing to purchase a book or other item can phone the number posted on the door and make arrangements to meet a board member.

O'Brien, who organizes the monthly Trivia Nights, announced something special for the upcoming Oct. 30 event. Because it will take place so close to Halloween, each team will receive 5 extra points if the majority of its mem-

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'The Ballad of Louie Volrath'

By Jarold Ramsey

As with "The Ballad of Whispering Smith" (*The Agate* 19, Spring 2023, pp.17-18), the story of Louie Volrath and his 1914 disappearance was one I grew up with on Agency Plains, part of a local oral tradition of stories and recollections that seems too rich and valuable to be allowed to disappear with the passage of time. I first heard the sad tale of Volrath from our friend and neighbor John Campbell; and my aunt, Lela Gard Ramsey, had fond, colorful memories of Louie on horseback with his faithful calico dog somehow riding behind his saddle. As a boy, I was haunted by how it could be possible for someone local – so memorable and well-liked – to utterly disappear! The great Scotch and English ballads are masterpieces of terse, unsentimental, often somber storytelling, and so I thought that maybe Louie's story would be a good fit for the ballad style.

Is it possible that our hero, his work at the sheep camp near Silver Lake about done for the year, and with his wages in hand, actually decided to leave Agency Plains without notice and strike out for a new life elsewhere? Possibly, but given the lack of firm evidence one way or the other, I have to doubt it. A footnote to "Sockless Jerry," the character Louie played in a 1901 skit at Hay Creek Ranch where he was working: "Sockless Jerry" Simpson was a well-known congressman from Kansas in the late 19th century. When a political opponent sneered that Simpson as a Populist probably didn't wear socks, Simpson turned the sneer into a celebrated nickname and political slogan. What the Hay Creek skit was about, and how it featured "Sockless Jerry," is not known.

Most of what is known about Louie Volrath is summarized in "A Dozen Local History Mysteries," *The Agate* 21, Spring 2024, pp. 14-15.

Look out, look out for Louie Volrath,
With his calico dog up behind
His saddle. If you happen to see him please say
We miss him, and drop us a line ...

Poor Louie — no welcome signs for him
As a child. His pa was mean,
And a crook, and early on his boy
Walked Prineville's streets to glean

Whatever he could with his shy smile
And melancholy songs,



Louie Volrath disappeared in 1914. (Campbell family photo)

Until a kindly family took him in
And then moved, and he came along

To a homestead along the lovely Deschutes
Where he could have a horse
And ride like the wind through the juniper trees
And earn his keep with chores.

If he had any schooling we don't know when,
But he was good with cattle and sheep,
And soon was working out as a cowboy
On the range earning his keep,

But coming back home when he could to the folks
On the river, and bringing them favors
To show his love, and always delighting
With his dog the kids of his neighbors.

In Prineville his no-good father died,
And his mother soon remarried,
And died in the awful Silver Lake Fire,
And that's where she was buried.

But Louie kept his spirits up,
And mostly seemed to be merry,
And once in a skit at Hay Creek Ranch
Played the part of "Sockless Jerry"!

He even filed a homestead claim
Close by his "family's" stake—
But then took a job as a sheep-camp boss
Way down by Silver Lake.

For several years to the start of winter
He ran that camp as Boss,
And kept the herders and their sheep in line
And made good money of course.

When he broke up camp, he'd head north for home
Past Fort Rock and Hole in the Ground
And Hooligan Butte and China Hat,
Happy to be homeward bound.

And once when he showed up for Christmas he brought
An armload of yardage creations,
Taffeta and such, for the girls to make dresses
For dances and gay celebrations.

But the next year, 1914, Louie
Didn't come, and was missed on the farm,
But they thought, Well, he's on his own,
And we'd have heard if he came to harm.

But by Summer '15 they were worried,
And the oldest son and some friends
Went out to search along his route
To Silver Lake from Bend.

For Louie, his horse, his dog, his wages
Day after day, in lonely places,
In canyons and coulees and Hole in the Ground
They searched, but found no traces.

They came back home with only questions:
Was he bushwhacked somewhere in the dark
And his body hidden, and his possessions taken?
Or did he on a new life embark?

Look out, look out, for Louie Volrath,
With his calico dog up behind
His saddle. If you happen see him, please say
We miss him, and drop us a line ...

President's Message

Greetings fellow history buffs,
Thank you for reading *The Agate*. We have some talented writers in our community, and I am so glad they are part of our team.

The Historical Society was busy this summer, starting with our tours of the homestead house and schoolhouse at the fairgrounds during the fair. Even though it was the hottest week of the summer, it was well-attended. The Model T Bums were a hit again, as they gave the fairgoers rides to the homestead area.

In September we had our Eighth Annual Threshing Bee at the Casad Family Farms. I think we have finally found the perfect venue for this event. It really gave the visitors the feeling of going back in time to see how farming was done in this area in the beginning.

The Historical Society board has been busy working on securing a site for a future museum.

LOTTIE HOLCOMB

President
Jefferson County Historical Society

Although we don't have an announcement to make at press time, we are hopeful we will be able to break some news soon.

Finally, thank you to all of you who support our effort to preserve the history of Jefferson County.
Happy reading!



JCHS President Lottie Holcomb

Next pub on theaters

Continued from Page 26

bers show up in costume.

Holcomb then showed a video presentation prepared by Jennie Smith recapping the society's activities in the past year. Highlights included Jim Carroll's "Trails to Rails" history pub; Trivia Nights; the JCHS Annual Dinner which this year featured guest speaker Kerry Tymchuk; *The Agate*; Pioneer Homestead tours during the Jefferson County Fair; and the Threshing Bee which took place at the Casad Family Farms.

Diane Green-Hartley announced that she is planning a history pub on movie theaters of Central Oregon. Her grandparents, Denzel and Wilma Piercy, owned and operated several cinemas in the area. Green-Hartley hopes to hold the history pub at the Regal Cinema in Madras. No date has been set so far.

New JCHS members joining between April 1, 2024 and October 1 2024

The Shaniko
Preservation
Guild

Dennis and
Tery Trebino

Montie P.
Soderquist

Travis Marston Robert Timmer

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