

Whispers from the past...

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Several pieces of early Sisters history from the Edgington Ranch, that had been stored in longtime resident Georgia Edgington Gallagher's garage, now have a new home with the Three Sisters Historical Society — including a wicker-and-leather chair belonging to Georgia's father, Ellis Edgington, a large kitchen "dough boy" used as a baking center with pull-out flour drawers, and a small cabinet.

The name Edgington has been familiar in Sisters Country for 130 years, and is memorialized today in Edgington Road, which runs up into the woods off Highway 242.

Ellis Hartley Edgington came to Wasco, Oregon, from Indiana in 1888 at the age of four with his parents, Dr. and Mrs. Jesse Edgington. He attended elementary and high school in Wasco before enrolling at Oregon Agricultural College (now OSU) where he played football as a Beaver in 1903 and 1904.

In 1905, Ellis came to Central Oregon, establishing a homestead on Bull Ridge in the vicinity of Plainview, southeast of Sisters. Seven years later, in 1912, he left

Bull Ridge and, with his cousin Howard Hartley, went in on a 1,200-acre deeded ranch on Three Creek Road. Part of those 1,200 acres had been homesteaded by William Cox in 1882. Cox ran one of the first sawmills in the Sisters area.

Two years after acquiring the homestead outside Sisters, Ellis married Martha Ellen Crawford on September 2, 1914, who was a teacher for a year in the Plainview School. She had come with her parents to Plainview when they left their wheat ranch near Pullman, Washington.

Ellis and Ellen became parents to four children: Robert (1916), Martha Jean (1917), Jesse (1918), and Georgia (1922). Robert died at the age of 14 in 1930.

The Edgingtons raised cattle on the Circle E Bar ranch, allowing them to graze freely until later when Ellis procured a grazing permit during the summer months in the Deschutes National Forest.

Ellis had a road construction business for eight years with Mel Harrington. According to an April 1964 *Ruralite*, they used "horse-drawn equipment to clear and grade the road from Sisters to Plainview, Prineville Junction to the Crook County line, Alfalfa Market Road, Buckhorn Canyon Road to

Tumalo, 15 miles of The Dalles-California highway from Beaver Marsh south, and others. The roads were not paved until years later.

Service to the community was an integral part of Ellis's life for many years and Sisters reaped much benefit from his volunteerism. In 1928 he organized one of the earliest 4-H Clubs in Deschutes County, with the young members winning multiple ribbons for their dairy animals.

He served for 16 years as a member of the Sisters School District board of directors, helping to construct its first high school and gym as well as a new elementary school building. He was also one of the founders of the original Sisters Rodeo Association and served as a member of the Sisters City Council.

The Deschutes County and Oregon Cattlemen's Associations both benefitted from his memberships, with him serving as president of the state organization. Other board positions included as a director for eight years of Central Electric Cooperative and for many years on the county fair board.

Ellen and Ellis both played musical instruments, him the banjo and her the accordion. Ellen also played the organ for the church where they attended services. They were founding members of the Plainview Grange.

Ellis died in 1966 and Ellen in 1973, and they are buried in the Greenwood



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ellen and Ellis Edgington shared a love of music with their instruments, the accordion and mandolin.

Cemetery in Bend.

Following Ellis's death, his son Jesse began to subdivide the ranch into one-acre parcels. However, a change in land-use laws required the parcels to be at least 10 acres. At that same time, the Corps of Engineers constructed a portion of gravel road from Highway 242 that joined the Brooks-Scanlon main-line road where it ran at the bottom of the hill where the Edgington ranch was located.

That road became Edgington Road and went on up the hill where there are now 10-acre or larger properties with homes on them. Jesse lived on Edgington Road until moving into Sisters where he lived in the house Ellis and Ellen had lived in when they left the ranch. After returning to Sisters, Georgia lived in that same house, and her daughter, Norah, is now living there. As with so many houses in Sisters, the house was moved from another location to the lot purchased by Ellis and

Ellen.

A portion of the ranch, where the remains of the old ranch house were located, was purchased by Don Frisbee, CEO of PacifiCorp in Portland, and his son still owns it.

Georgia kept a number of mementos and pieces of furniture from the original house on the ranch. Georgia's children, Norah, Dennis, and Vince Gallagher, recently contacted the Three Sisters Historical Society when they began to divest themselves of some of Georgia's belongings and offered them to the society, which happily accepted their offer.



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The original Edgington ranch house in 1950 on the 1,200-acre Circle E Bar Ranch originally located off Three Creek Road. Today, there are only a few remains of the house left.

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