

# Historic ranch on quilt garden tour

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

A historic treasure southwest of Sisters will be a stop on the Quilts in the Garden Tour on July 11, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., sponsored by the Sisters Garden Club.

The Black Diamond Ranch began as the 160-acre homestead of Prentiss and Lula Van Tassel in 1902. They raised their six children on the homestead, which had 1903 water rights out of then Squaw Creek (Whychus) through the Plainview Ditch.

Allen Harrington bought the ranch in 1935 from the Federal Land Bank, which was created in 1916 to provide low-cost credit to farmers, ranchers, and rural America. In the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, many farmers defaulted on their loans. Speculation would say that Van Tassel lost the farm to the bank and Harrington then purchased it.

Allen shared the ranch with his father, Mel Harrington. They added to their holdings in 1948 when they purchased 160 adjoining acres in 1948 from Jesse South. That same year, Allen's brother Ray bought out Allen. Ray and his wife, Gladys, moved to the ranch with their two children Mike and Darlene, who grew up on the ranch.

Ray farmed with his father, Mel, until Mel retired in 1955 and Ray bought his father's half interest. Ray raised 225 tons of hay annually. He had a five-month grazing permit on Brooks Scanlon land for 90

head of cattle.

On February 16, 1918, while farming on a different parcel of land in Sisters, Mel had applied for and was granted a brand featuring a quarter circle lazy four. Ray had Mel's old branding irons so he applied for and was granted the same brand, exactly 33 years to the day of Mel's original registration.

The Harringtons sold the ranch in 1961 to people who owned it for over 20 years. In the late 1980s, the Sharps of Vancouver bought the property to breed and raise cattle. They redid the barn, put in all the white fencing, and added white metal siding to the house and farm buildings. The ranch, which is now 136 acres in size, was purchased from the Sharps by the current owners.

At some earlier point in time, 30 acres were sold to Brooks Scanlon for constructing a portion of their logging railroad between Bend and the ponderosa forests to the west. In the 1950s they reconstructed the old railroad grade into a modern fast logging truck route. Some blasting was necessary to widen the roadbed.

Gladys Harrington complained to the road crew she feared the blasting would keep her goose eggs from hatching. An agreement was reached between Gladys and Brooks Scanlon. For any eggs that didn't hatch, she would receive a gosling. Brooks Scanlon ended up having to give Gladys nine goslings for the nine of 15 goose eggs that didn't hatch. From that day forward, the rocky promontory has been called Goose Egg Point, from which a beautiful view is available of the pastures below and Mt. Jefferson, flanked by Black Butte.

The original saltbox farmhouse, although enlarged and modernized, still sits on the property, with a graceful large front porch. For the garden tour, the Three Sisters Historical Society will have two Sisters historic quilts displayed on the porch along with historic photos. The quilts were made by the women of Cloverdale Grange No. 623 in 1935 for baby Viva Lucille McDaniel and Plainview Grange No. 623 in 1913 for Etta Fryrear.

Gardens for viewing at the ranch include old-fashioned



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

The Black Diamond Ranch will be featured on the Quilts in the Garden Tour during Quilt Show week.

perennial beds, including lovely heirloom rose bushes and old lilacs, as well as a verdant vegetable garden bordered by sunflowers.

A special feature on the shaded lawn in front of the house will be a collection of succulents for sale by Five Feathers Farm. Raffle tickets may be purchased for a chance to win a succulent arrangement.

From the Black Diamond parking lot, shuttles will ferry tour-goers a half-mile up the hill to the lodge-style home and gardens of the current ranch owners.

Tickets are \$20 (children under 12 free) and are available for purchase at Sisters Chamber of Commerce office and The Gallimaufry.

*Note: Some information for this article came from a 1957 Bulletin article, and information was also provided by Mike Harrington.*

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## ABBENHUIS: Public Works employee is departing

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tours for a total of 33 days, one all Dutch. Then she'll come north to take Orry to Eugene for school, and get her belongings out of storage. At this point in time, she plans to live in Summerlin, a master-planned development outside of Las Vegas, near Red Rock Canyon.

She said given the nature of Las Vegas with their hotels, airlines, tourists, and convention center, jobs for people with multilingual skills are plentiful.

"I am excited for what's coming but I will miss the good people of Sisters — my co-workers and neighbors," she concluded pensively. "But I'll be coming back. Orry will be in Eugene, and this is home."

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