

Discover Stories on the Land

Below is another excerpt (from pages 25 - 26) from the unpublished 1996 book, Stories on the Land: An Environmental History of the Applegate and Upper Illinois Valley, by George McKinley and Doug Frank. The Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., plans to publish the book in its entirety in 2019.

The mining life

Haines and Smith, Sterling Creek's historians, give us a portrait of a miner's habitation that was left by James M. Sutton, one of the earliest Applegate Valley miners: "The cabin was a commodious structure eight feet wide and ten feet long. The logs that composed it had been hacked down by brute force using the old root axe. As this was the only tool that the partners had for carpentry, the resulting structure was lacking in elegance. A few nails driven in the wall of the cabin served to hold the gum boots and the clothes of the men when they came in at night.

"The furnishings of the cabin consisted of a rude table, benches, and bunks. The bunks were built against the walls, saving in space and in construction time and were filled with fir boughs for comfort and warmth. The fireplace was a crude structure of mud and sticks rising from a stone hearth in one end of the cabin and served for heating and cooking both.

"The cooking was as primitive as the arrangements for shelter. A camp kettle and a frying pan were the sole utensils employed and proved sufficient for the culinary activities of the men. The diet was beans and bacon. (This was augmented by bread purchased from the bakery.) A batch of beans was prepared once or twice a week. The pot of beans was warmed slightly for breakfast. If the men were not too tired from the day's work, it was warmed again in the evening. Frequently the toll of the day's activity was so great that the men could not bother to heat the beans at night but gulped them down cold from the pot."

After weighing their day's take in gold and hiding it in a hole bored with an auger into one of the logs of the cabin, the men "just crawled into their bunks. There was no time for night life and no energy even if there had been time. They had to be up at work on the claim by

dawn the next morning. The mining season was short, and no one could afford to waste a minute of it."

Most men worked in partnership with one or several others. But in time, new methods of organizing human labor were developed, and large groups of men worked single claims as wage laborers for an entrepreneur or company. Sutton observed that these men worked their required hours, and no more. It was these men, he thought, who generated the rowdy nightlife of the saloons, dance halls, and gambling houses of boom towns like Sterlingville and Waldo.

The miners brought to the land, and often left on the land, the basic equipment required for sifting gold from dirt. An Althouse Creek miner put on his equipment list "a five-pound pick, a long-handled shovel, two long, twenty-pound crowbars, one three-pound Collins stone hammer, twenty pounds of 10d nails, two good chopping axes, one hatchet, twelve square feet of tom irons, twenty pounds of inch rope."

It is startling how little, in terms of human artifacts, one can find of these mountains of equipment, tent cities, log cabins, and ramshackle towns today. Natural processes and human scavengers have caused the material remains of once thriving communities to entirely disappear. Recurrent flood damage has washed away flattened areas once excavated into streamside slopes for tent and cabin sites and most of the pots, bottles, nails, and tools abandoned there. Later mining enterprises destroyed signs of earlier mining when they reworked the ground. In addition, written documentation of the area's mid-nineteenth century mining is sparse.

If material debris is hard to find, it may be easier to speculate on debris of a different sort deposited in the minds and spirits of the human beings who witnessed these years of frenzy, who lived the contrasts, the sudden reversals, of dream and reality, profit and loss, boom and bust. Haines and Smith say, "The Pacific Northwest has never recovered from the gold rush. There is still an abiding belief in the big bonanzas.... Every town has its great bonanza just waiting for the capital to develop it."

Woodland Charter School to host Winter Faire

BY SIMONA FINO



A Winter Faire will be held at Woodland Charter School on Saturday, December 8.

The Waldorf-inspired Woodland Charter School will host its annual Winter Faire on Saturday, December 8, from 10 am to 2 pm, at Pacifica in Williams. This magical event, which is open to the public, is a delight for all ages, but it is especially geared for children and families.

With a focus on creativity and the wonder the winter season offers, the Winter Faire provides plenty of opportunity for everyone to get involved. Children will be able to create several beautiful, nature-based holiday crafts, such as making tin punch ornaments, one of the most popular craft activities for children at the Faire.

Little ones and older children alike are welcome to shop in the Elven Wonderland room, which will be filled with appropriate items that they can select and wrap as gifts for family and friends. This special "no adults allowed" shopping area is priced just right for kids—tables are arranged by value of tickets, with most gifts ranging from \$1 - \$5 in tickets—allowing children a unique chance to shop for special gifts for parents, siblings, or friends. Kids of all ages love to select gifts to proudly give to others.

Adults and children will enjoy perusing vendor tables displaying a variety of handmade goods. Several of these vendors' tables will showcase student creations. The funds raised from the sale of students' items will go toward their class graduation trip. Last year we saw knitted cat toys, hand-felted

wool dryer balls, and beautiful holiday ornaments—all designed and created by students.

Among the local vendors showcased this year is Sapphire Star Arts, featuring upcycled wool and velvet garments made in an array of healing colors and vibrations. JadeBlossom Designs will be bringing precious stone jewelry made with gold fill and sterling silver as well as gorgeous feather earrings. Visit the Rainbow Garden for Waldorf-inspired toys made with all natural materials such as wool, silk, and wood. Or buy natural crafting supplies to create your own toys, costumes, or anything else your imagination desires.

Throughout the event Faire-goers can enjoy live music, purchase a home-cooked meal from hard-working students, or pick a treat from the pocket fairy.

We look forward to seeing you at the Faire and celebrating the magic of winter!

Winter is a time of silent beauty and reflection, so we'll finish with a beautiful Waldorf winter verse.

*Now King Winter calls the snow
To come and dance as cold winds blow:
"Now, my snowflakes, come to me,
See this bare and lonely tree.
Come and dance for its delight,
Clothe it in the purest white.
Come little snowflakes,
Dance through the air,
Making the world so pure and fair,
Light and bright, sparkling white,
Soft as the wings of the dove in flight."*

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Applegate River Lodge & Restaurant



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HOLIDAY EVENTS AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

- **December 1, 6 pm:** Hidden Valley Jazz Band, Grants Pass Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting
- **December 2, 3 - 5 pm:** Three Rivers Community Orchestra and Rogue Community College Community Choir lead the "Messiah Community Sing-Along" under the direction of Joe Green, Hidden Valley High School and Lincoln Savage Middle School band teacher. River Valley Church, 7th and D Streets, Grants Pass.
- **December 12, 6 pm:** Lincoln Savage Middle School Band concert
- **December 14:** Three Rivers School District high school choirs holiday caroling at nursing homes and assisted living facilities throughout the day.
- **December 18, 5:30 - 7 pm:** Madrona School Winter Program presented by K-2 students
- **December 18, 6 pm:** Applegate School Holiday Program
- **December 19, 7 pm:** Williams School Holiday Program
- **December 21, 6 pm:** Ruch Outdoor Community School Winter Program