

BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Now that the hatchery is to stay open, moneys have been given to help renovate and update the hatchery including the residences of the workers. Last fall of 2002, Jeff Seeger came to me at the "Smith House" museum, informing me of his intentions to start hatchery museum, dating from its beginning to the present. For such a worthwhile project, and in order to protect and to preserve this historical site, we, the Big Butte Historical Society are willing to work with him to establish the museum on the hatchery property.

Photo is of James Wendall Berrian
31 years old, 1903
The first supervisor of the fish hatchery.

Butte Falls Fish Hatchery

Then and Now- by NellieAnn Ragsdale

Each Memorial Day in May, when our children were young, all of us, including Grandma, would travel from Eagle Point to the Butte Falls Cemetery to tidy the ancestors grave site, then we would go on to the Butte Falls Fish Hatchery for a picnic. The weather was usually a cloudy, cool and sometimes rainy, but that didn't stop the little ones who loved to play darting from huge tractor tires, to swings, to play in the little stream that ran through the picnicking area. The sound of the running stream and the wind soughing through the huge firs was very soothing and restful. After the lunch, it was time to see the fish.

The hatchery has been in Butte Falls since c.1916. Recently, the state wanted to shut it down, but several people rallied round and the hatchery was allowed to stay open. After all, the Butte Falls hatchery was one of the first three hatcheries that was established in Oregon. The hatchery certainly does grave a memory filled history for all of us "old timers".

The first supervisor was James W. Berrian. He was born in 1872 and in 1903, at the age of 31, he and his family moved to Butte Falls to establish and manage the hatchery for approximately eight years, until his death in 1924. In reminiscence, his wife, Mazzie (Hattie Lenora), told us of the iris bed that he planted and cultivated so carefully. Interviewing her in 1920, she said, "His collection was one of the first in Oregon." And, according to Jeff Seeger, one of the staff at the hatchery, these iris beds are still surviving today.

Big Butte Historical Society

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Thank you!