

# DID YOU KNOW?

Historical notes from Big Butte Historical Society  
Abstracted by Charleen Brown

Once upon  
a time.....

Forms of entertainment enjoyed by early settlers included dancing, marbles and story telling. Levi Mattox, teacher in the Mt. Pitt School District describes local entertainment as follows; "The recreation for the young people was the square dance which, I understood, they had quite frequently in the cabins. The chief recreation among the men seemed to be playing marbles and sometimes playing poker for some chewing tobacco. Of course, most of them were hunters and with few exceptions, they were all hard workers. There were no debates or other entertainment at the schoolhouse. When the men got together, there was usually a lot of story telling, mostly relating to hunting experiences, and if any of them had been someplace outside of the woods, they told about the country and people they saw."



Dances were so popular, that anyone who could play the fiddle would be quickly welcomed into the community. George Watkins in *Tales of Early Settlement* recalls his early dance experience as follows; "One neighbor, Martin Perry, gave the first dance I ever attended in Oregon. I could play the fiddle some and Frank Simpson could play one to beat the band as the saying is. Simpson played by ear and I, well, I played by random. So we went to the dance. Talk about your pretty girls, they were there." He continues, "Our best times were the dances. They were held every other Friday night and were called basket suppers. Each family in the neighborhood would take something to eat and some coffee so we had a big supper. We would always arrive before dark and we wouldn't leave until sun up the next morning and we always ate breakfast before leaving".



So, it is not surprising that as Butte Falls was becoming a thriving community, any new business offering recreational activities would flourish. These included; Frank Carson's Confectionery-Card Room-Barber Shop, Poole's Billiard Hall, Hildreth brothers Confectionery-Pool Hall-Dance Hall, Mary Albert's Restaurant, and Bull Pine's Mexican Restaurant. George Albert built an Athletic Club on the corner of Oak and Fee Streets. This club hosted sporting events, dinners and dances. One might ask, what prompted such development for a settlement with a local population of approximately 350 people? Transportation!



Transportation was vastly improved with the completion of the Pacific and Eastern Railroad. Things changed when the first train arrived in Butte Falls on November 15, 1910 followed by the first excursion train in 1911, carrying tourists up from the valley. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, the only road to the valley had been over Obenchain Mountain. This was steep, rocky and barely passable during bad weather. With easier access, Butte Falls was expected to become a resort town. It was highly advertised in the valley newspapers as a "week-end retreat for tourists, a scenic wonderland for fishing, camping, picnicking and relaxing while getting away from the valley heat". Visitors brought picnic lunches, played ball games, and enjoyed music in the park while relaxing in the cooler air of the mountains. Two resort hotels were built and for several years, tourists continued to travel to Butte Falls.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM - \$5.00 per household

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Send to: **BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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