

## ***History of Butte Falls***

Compiled by Ernest Smith  
(Not dated and typed exactly like he typed)

The earliest inhabitants we know of in this area were the Indians, but I do not know what tribes they belonged to, or if they lived here more or less permanently or if they just came here to hunt or seek other food such as camas roots, which were generally abundant in many meadows. The finding of many arrow and spear heads and mortars, etc. prove that they frequented certain parts of this area.

An Indian massacre of 4 or 5 white men was reported at Rancheria Prairie in 1859, but from evidence found it is more probable they were killed by renegade whites, outlaws who blamed their ravages on the Indians. Most of the land between Butte Falls and Rancheria was surveyed by government surveyors in 1855 and no mention is made in them of any Indians being encountered.

Most of the early white settlers took what was called Preemption Claims by which they could get 160 acres of land by making their home on it. So, they generally selected good open meadow land where they had good hay and farm ground, often near a creek or spring. Among the early such homes were the Geppert place, now the Pingle Ranch, the Dailey place, now occupied partly by the Medco log pond now used by the Fish and Game Commission, the John Cook place now owned by Givans, the Lee Edmondson place, the B.F.C Edmondson place, the Thompson place, the Doc Parker place, back of where Medco's Camp 4 was, the so called 80 Acre place, owned by Aaron Beck and later by Mr. Elson. Just east of Butte Falls the Ben Fredenburg place. Then on Willow Creek the Alvin Bisbersteadt place which is now mostly covered by the south half of Willow Lake. Then below that was the Stanley place, later the Pennington place, below that was the Tungate place near Frank Edmondson's and the Beal place nearby. The Charley Parker place was NW of where the County had a rock crusher near Bowen Creek. The Poole place was where Remson's lived in the older house.

I don't know who first owned the field back of town but Dave Dunlap, and Hukill & Kelley were involved in early days, West of town on the Obenchain Road was the Perry place, the Edsall place, the Bob Wright place and the Obenchain place was just over the summit of the mountain, and on toward Round Top was the old Chambers place. Then down Big Butte Creek were the Higinbothams, Coffmans, McKees and Cobleighs among others.

—Continued Next Month—  
Cory Hamann  
Big Butte Historical Society