2017 HISTORY EDITION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

Section B, 6 Pages

Remembering the hospital in Prairie City



Courtesy photo/DeWitt Museum Dr. Virgil Belknap practiced at the Grant **County Hospital and Blue Mountain Hospital** in Prairie City. Photo taken in 1920.



Courtesy photo/DeWitt Museum Dr. Thesbian practiced at the Grant County Hospital in Prairie City. Photo taken in 1850.

By Angel Carpenter Blue Mountain Eagle

hen Wilma Boyer started working at the Blue Mountain Hospital in Prairie City in 1959, the facility had about 15 patient beds and a three-bed nursing home ward.

She worked as a nurse's

The doctors at the Prairie City hospital, at that time, were Dr. Ted Merrill and Dr. Howard Newton.

"Back then, things were different as far as the responsibilities," Boyer said.

While there were employees to take care of laundry, it was the floor/nurse's aides who would dust mop the rooms and hallways.

Among Boyer's duties as a nurse's aide were bringing patients their meals, and feeding and bathing them, if needed.

Boyer said it's possible she's now the only living person who worked at the hospital in Prairie City.

The hospital moved to a new home in John Day in December of 1960, and the Prairie City facility became a nursing home. Today, it's known as Blue Mountain Care Center, still located at 112 E. Fifth St.

Nurse's aide recalls her duties at hospital



Courtesy photo/DeWitt Museum

This building, constructed in 1902, was a school in Prairie City and later became Grant County Hospital.

She continued working at the facility when it became a nursing home, then transferred to the John Day hospital in

"You were taught by the nurses and nurse's aides that were on duty, and the director of nursing would come around and see that you did what you were instructed," she said. "If you were assigned to accompany the doctor, they would instruct you on how to take care of the patients."

Boyer's second daughter was born at the Prairie City hospital in 1952, and her son was born there in 1956.

When the hospital closed for a short time in 1957, Boyer's youngest daughter was born at the office of Martha and Gerold "Jerry" van der Flugt in John Dav.

"I always enjoyed working in Prairie City and John Day at the hospital and nursing home," Boyer said. "I enjoyed the fact that I could help them and take care of them.

In 1974, she became a certified surgery technologist.

"You were taught by the nurses and nurse's aides that were on duty, and the director of nursing would come around and see that you did what you were instructed."

- Wilma Boyer

She worked in that position until 1994, when she transferred to the purchasing department, retiring in 2003.

She still works at the hospital's gift shop today.

"It's kind of home," she

Jessie Lewis of Canyon City recalls when her youngest daughter, Holly, was born June 27, 1960, at Blue Mountain Hospital in Prairie City.

'They took me in and started my labor, because Dr. Newton was getting ready to leave

See HOSPITAL, Page B6

Lodging for loggers



Hines houses workers

in two-story 'hotel'

Courtesy photo/Adele Cerny

Courtesy photo/Adele Cerny

Bear Valley Lodge, Seneca.

By Cheryl Hoefler

For the Blue Mountain Eagle

the Edward Hines Lumber

Company lived in comfort

at the Bear Valley Lodge.

two-story facility, some-

times called the "Seneca

Hotel," housed single men

who worked for the compa-

ny. It replaced bunkhouses

along the logging road,

used for several years be-

simple rooms, each with a

bed, table, chair and clos-

et. Residents shared bath-

rooms and showers on each

Bear Valley Lodge, Seneca.

The lodge had 45 small,

Loggers working for

Built in 1939, the

up in the Bear Valley Lodge

Growing

Seneca girl, parents lived with Hines loggers

By Cheryl Hoefler For the Blue Mountain Eagle

Few girls can say they grew up in a room-

ing house for loggers. Shirley (Rushing) Harrison can.

In 1953, when Harrison was 7, she and her parents moved to the Bear Valley Lodge in Seneca, which was built by Edward Hines Lumber Company to provide housing for its loggers. Her mother, Billie, managed the rooming house while her father, Shade, worked as a master machinist for the Hines Company.

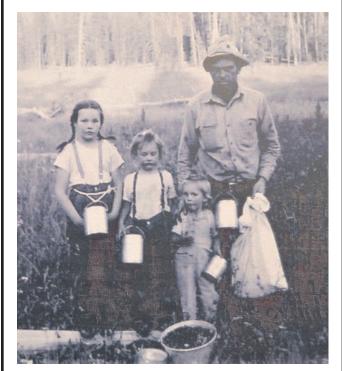
The loggers who lived at the lodge, which Harrison said they called a hotel, were all single men. She and her parents had a separate two-bedroom apartment of their own at one end of the lodge.

While such living arrangements might seem unusual for a young girl, Harrison said she actually wasn't around the men very much and, over all the years there, never experienced an un-

easy moment. "All the men who lived there were very hardworking and mannerly," Harrison said.

She added, "Nowadays, I doubt anyone in

See LIVING, Page B5



Courtesy photo/Reiba Carter Smith Reiba with her sisters, Neila and Neita, and father,

ranch had children," Smith

And, except for school,

'We romped and played all around the ranch," she

turned about

treat to come to town," she

added, which

they did once

or twice a

favorite in-

dulgence for

was an or-

from the lo-

A large

cal store.

trips

pop

month.

Smith

those

ange

"It was a

most of their time was spent

said. "We were very in-

nocent and isolated until I

close to home.

Benton, on a huckleberry picking outing in 1947.

Long life in Long Creek full of innocence and freedom

Fifth-generation resident reminisces about mill days, mud pies, movies

By Cheryl Hoefler For the Blue Mountain Eagle

ifelong Long Creek resident Reiba Carter Smith recalls a childhood of "freedom" and "innocence" in a community she has called "home" her entire life

Smith, fifth generation in her family to live in Long Creek, said she is 'perfectly satisfied with my life and growing up.

She was raised on a ranch a mile east of town, along with three

Long Creek School. younger sisters and younger

brother. Their father, Benton, was a registered Hereford breeder while their homemaker mother, Loraine, kept the home front running.

Several other ranching families lived nearby.

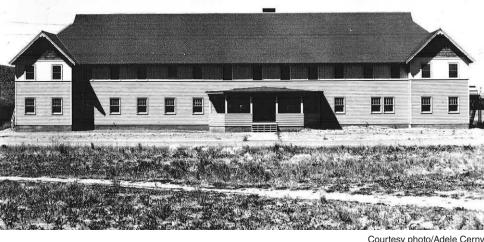
'When I was a kid, every

Courtesy photo/Reiba Carter Smith Reiba Carter, 1957-58,

e x t e n d e d family, which included 18 first cousins on the Carter side, helped contribute to her

rich and happy youth. Major holidays and other special family days meant big dinners at the home of Smith's grandmother, Martha Carter.

See LONG Creek, Page B4



See HOTEL, Page B5 Lobby of the Bear Valley Lodge, Seneca.

Courtesy photo/Adele Cerny