

Looking Around the County

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Because there were no improved roads in the area for years, all produce was shipped by local express trains which were often stopped for more than an hour loading crated melons, fruit and cream.

Since the improved highway came, Irrigon has changed considerably. It has several churches, a fine grade school, (A.C. Houghton School, 1952) and several new businesses.

BLALOCK ISLAND

An especially interesting 4,000 acre island, Blalock Island, in the middle of the Columbia was covered by the waters backed up by the John Day Dam. Various attempts were made to mine gold there. As late as 1957, using crude makeshift equipment, Lee Tyler of Edmonds, Wa., took out \$4,000 in gold, unofficial assays running \$1.30 and \$1.70 per yard. Now the gold, many Indian relics, and some ancestral burial grounds are under water.

STRAWBERRY AND COYOTE

1904 saw postoffices established at Strawberry in March and at Coyote in June. Strawberry was discontinued in 1908; Coyote lasted until 1912. Little has been written about these communities. Strawberry's original postmaster was J.C. White. The community was named by dreamer who visualized fields of luscious strawberries there along the projected canal and under constant irrigation. The Strawberry School was north of the Devine School, south of the Juniper School, northwest of the Hodsdon School and southeast of the Lone Tree School according to an early map.

Coyote was a stage coach stop on the Columbia River

rather close to where Boardman now stands. Its first postmaster was not listed.

PARKERS MILL

The Parker Mill is written of in Tim Bisbee's diary by 1876, and was in business for many years before a Parkers Mill Postoffice was established in 1907 under Milt Maxwell. This office was discontinued in 1925 and its mail sent to Hardman. This community had a hotel and a school and was a busy place, according to Mr. Bisbee, during the 1878 Indian War. Around 40 pupils attended the school there under early teachers Mrs. Barker, Mrs. E.L. Freeland, Ada Jones, (Mrs. Ben Parker), Flora Ward (Mrs. Joe Nys). The area was widely known for its three-day 4th of July celebrations, consisting of horse races, bucking contests, bull riding, ball games and dances.

SINNOTT AND SEPANEK

In August 1917 Bertha Sepanek was postmistress at Sepanek, Oregon where the postoffice was discontinued in Sept. 1918 and its mail sent to Echo.

The Sinnott Postoffice existed from April 1916 to Feb. 1918 when it was discontinued and its mail sent to Lexington. S. Osborn is listed as original postmaster. Does anyone remember these postoffices?

The list of Postoffices does not include the names of some of the early communities. Morrow County had 59 school districts at one time; where ever several families with children settled and the need for a school was felt a community feeling developed. Some of these pioneer communities were along creeks or in canyons, and some of them have been included in some early history books.



INDIAN BUCK AND SONS ON STEPS OF HOTEL AT

PARKER'S MILL 1901

BURTON VALLEY, Dist. No. 51, in the mountains south of Hardman was noted for its lumber mill established by Mr. Howston, Mr. Cantwell and Mr. Mallory. At one time there were 60 attending Sunday School there and 50 in the daily school, which operated three months in the spring and three months in the fall, starting in March and ending in November because of weather conditions in the mountains. The last session of school there was taught by Marguerite Glavey who teaches in Heppner now.

CAMAS PRAIRIE, DIST. NO. 7, is south of Burton Valley. Some early families in that area were: Steers, Junkins, Grahams, Robinsons, Medlocks, Hastings, Harry Frenchs and the McDonalds.

DEE COX, No. 59 was east of Hardman.

FAIRVIEW community about 10 miles south of Lone was settled in the 1880's. Some of the early families there included the Menzo A. Oldens, the Sam Warfields, the Robert Simpsons, Thomas Morgan and his brother-in-law Hamelet and Downing, John Peterson, Jerry Barlow and John Cox.

Other early districts south of Heppner were no. 3 Willow Way, no. 6 Golden West, no. 49 Hall Ridge, and no. 19 Rood Canyon. Toward the east were McDonald Canyon no. 24, Pleasant Point no. 48, Upper Willow Creek no. 34, Twin Pines & Balm Fork no. 42, and no. 33 Gurdane, quite a community with a store that lasted for many years.

Some communities north and east of Lexington were—Strawberry no. 18, Devine no. 23, Blackhorse no. 17, Alpine, no. 27, Sand Hollow no. 46, Juniper no. 20, Galloway no. 55 and of course, Pine City, which even had a four-year high school.

East of the highway and north of Lone were—Lone Tree no. 9, Ella no. 16, Four Mile no. 28, Cecil no. 8,

Willows no. 39, and Boardman no. 25, and Irrigon no. 10.

In the west going north from Golden West, which must have been near Ruggs, were: Eight Mile Center no. 31, Democrat Gulch no. 22, Missouri Ridge no. 21, Rocky Bluff no. 29, Gooseberry no. 36, Liberty no. 11, Clarks Canyon no. 15.

Continuing in a northerly direction from west of Heppner were: Fairview no. 37, David no. 4, Bunker Hill no. 38, Social Ridge no. 53, Rhea Creek no. 32, Shiloh no. 30, Pleasant Vale no. 14, and Hardesty no. 52, and Morgan no. 41, (Lexington was no. 12 and Lone no. 35.)

The map showing the school districts on pg. 14 of Yesteryears does not show no. 13 Coplinger, no. 45 Wilmot, and no. 50 Hodsdon, which later consolidated with Lexington.

1959 Morrow County was the first county in the state of Oregon to operate under the County Unit System, and cut down from 59 different school boards to just one.

BOARDMAN

The newest existing postoffice was established July 13, 1916 at Boardman, with Mrs. Olive Payne in charge. Boardman is named after its first settler, Sam Boardman, who filed on his homestead there in 1903. He and Mrs. Boardman, who joined him there later, waited through many dry years for irrigation water which finally arrived in new cement ditches in 1916. After a long tenure as the first state park superintendent, Sam Boardman died in January 1953 at the age of 78.

The families of five who worked on the cement ditches stayed in the area. The

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