

Bicentennial Forum

1902

FAMILIES OF ELLA

By Justine Weatherford

Ells, OR, a busy pioneer community of Morrow County was located near Wells Springs on the Old Oregon Trail about 7 miles east of Cecil. Now its location is near the south corner of the U.S. Navy bombing range. The name "Ells" was chosen to please Ella Oviatt, a daughter of John Frank Oviatt the community blacksmith, at the time the Ella post office was established in April 1882. The post office was discontinued September 1910. Ella Oviatt married E.J. Lord. Her parents had come to Morrow County from Sheridan, OR, in 1879; Ella's sister Rita Merle Hapold resided in Heppner until her death in 1958.

In the 1880s several families lived there, and some of their descendants have been writing to the county museum for information about them and the community. Mrs. Harnett has not collected a great deal of information, but cheerfully sends what she has.

About 1960 when the Morrow County Extension units prepared the booklet "Yesteryears of Morrow" they were able to gather some first hand information about Ella. It was a changing place for horse-drawn coaches that ran from Castle Rock (on the Columbia west of where Boardman is located today) to Heppner by way of Blackhorse Canyon. Mr. Oviatt, Ella's father, was also instrumental in the construction of the community school (Ella School No. 16).

"Yesteryears" states the John R. Lord family which came from Maine, after serving in the Confederate Army as a doctor, were leaders in the community. It lists early settlers as: John Handy; John Troedson, who purchased land from Handy and lived there 40 years; Charles Jaynes who settled in Six Mile Canyon about 1/2 mile from Ella Center and later sold his holdings to Johannes Troedson; the Van Cleves who settled on the Oregon Trail near Ella on what is now the Charles Doherty ranch; and William Parsons who settled south of Ella.

The Ella school was built in 1888 with lumber hauled from a mill at Hardman. W.B. Beach held Sunday School and preached there shortly after it was built. The community's first teacher was Clarence Shurtz who boarded with the Wishard family and later married Florence Wishard. Other teachers were Miss Etta Reed, Charles Reed, Della Reed Corson. Some of Mrs. Corson's pupils were Carl F. Troedson, Clara and Ann Troedson Smouse, Joe and Edward Handy, Elmer, Nora and Claude Crow and Earl Lord.

In 1960 some people of the area still recalled when the famous trail master Ezra Meeker came through Ella in 1900 or 1909 on his second passage west and again by automobile in 1918.

A yellowing, undated newspaper story written by Idus Raines, Forest Grove, OR, tells of a visit to Ella some years ago. She went out there with one of the Graybill sisters of Ione (Ida Graybill is 94 and Ione's oldest citizen). They visited the old school yard and found some of the rock foundation of the school building which burned several years before.

She writes, "In 1905 R.R. Grabill was active on the school board. Miss Alda Byham was the teacher that year, and Miss Grace Davis taught there in 1906. Miss Byham became Mrs. J.A. Troedson.

Carl W. Troedson, died in 1972. He was the son of Johannes Troedson and although he never married he established the Troedson Scholarship Fund which has helped deserving young people of the county go to college.

Families who have ranches in the Ella area today include: Charles Doherty who is on the old Johan Troedson place, Arthur "Sam" Crawford just east of Ella where his father Wate Crawford was until his death last year; Bob Rietmann at Ella Butte, Roy and Art Lindstrom on the Glock place, Eric Anderson on the former Ed Rietmann-Troedson place, Dave Baker on the Old Gorgier Ranch, and John Proudfoot on the Gorgier homestead.

Today this pioneer farming community has only a green and white roadside sign marking its location on the Ella Road and the Old Oregon Trail.

CONTROLLING THE ECONOMY

"The economic royalists complain that we seek to overthrow the institutions of America. What they really complain of is that we seek to take away their power. Our allegiance to American institutions requires the overthrow of this kind of power." Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"When hundreds of millions of dollars are given to bankrupt railroads, failing defense manufacturers, shipping interests and the like, the words 'welfare' or 'relief' are not used instead, such things are done to 'strengthen the economy.'" Earl Warren.

The government of business has become the business of the government. From the beginning, government assisted in the economic development of this country, but for much of our history, "free competition" was not just a slogan but a reality. Nothing—not even the depression of 1873, the conduct of the Robber Barons, or the deepening disaffection of the workers—spurred effective government action against what Teddy Roosevelt called the "malefactors of great wealth"—until the Great Depression hit America with oceanic force. "Leave well enough alone" no longer seemed sufficient. Now government is deeply involved in controlling and regulating business—not only to protect consumers but also to reduce risks to businessmen. Are these proper functions for government? When does government control become interference in free enterprise? When does business interfere with free government? Does government paperwork create a burden that drives small businesses out of the market? Does regulation set standards only big firms can meet? The government significantly supports business by means of subsidies, price supports, tax breaks, depletion allowances, and purchasing power. Should it also insist on a voice in the management? What has support done to our notions of competition, the market place, free enterprise?

Theodore Roosevelt creates a Department of Commerce and Labor and a Bureau of Corporations in 1903 to investigate business corporations. His first victory as a trust-buster comes against Northern Securities Company which controls the Northern Pacific and several other railroads. The Supreme Court rules in 1904 that Northern Securities is a combination in restraint of trade.

On Oct. 29, 1929, the stock market crashes and stock losses total \$15 billion in 1929. Under FDR and the New Deal, banking and finance are reformed; the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation is set up to insure bank deposits; all securities are required to be registered; the Securities and Exchange Commission is given broad powers to regulate stock exchanges.

LEXINGTON & VICINITY

By S.E. Natson

Lexington is situated nine miles northwest of Heppner, on the O.R. & Railroad. Willow Creek flows through the town and furnishes water for the irrigating orchards and gardens and also for the flouring mill. The region about Lexington is a farming country. The land is the famous bunchgrass land. The soil being of volcanic origin, is practically inexhaustible. The longer it is cultivated, the better it seems to be as vegetable matter which remains after the crops are removed seems to be the thing needed to improve the condition of the soil.

Wheat is the principal crop. The yield for the 1901 summer fallow land was 15-25 bushels per acre, the average being about 18 bushels. The volunteer crop ranged from 8-14 bushels per acre, averaging near 10 bushels. Although the season was unusually dry at the time the grain was filling, the quality of the wheat was good. With a little more favorable season, the yield would be considerably increased and the quality somewhat improved.

While the yield is not so large in this section, as in some portions of the wheat growing regions, the returns to the farmer are quite satisfactory when the amount of labor necessary to produce a crop is taken into consideration. It would be hard to find a region in which a man could cultivate more land than he can here. When these facts are taken into consideration, we think, this section will compare favorably with sections which boast of larger yields.

Barley is grown here and boasts of yields from 20-25 bushels per acre. It is usually of excellent quality. Rye and oats are grown here and the yields are light. On the land that can be irrigated, alfalfa produces three crops a year. The aggregate yield is from 6-8 tons per acre, and the quality is first class.

A fine quality of fruit can be produced in abundance on land that can be irrigated. Apples, plums, prunes, peaches, cherries and all kinds of small fruit do well.

Stock raising receives some attention in this section, but as most land has been converted into farm land, this is not as profitable an industry as it was a few years ago. The winters are so mild that stock require very little attention during this season.

The prices of land area steadily increasing and those desiring to purchase land would do well to do so now.

Lexington has two churches, the M.E. church, south and the Congregational. The Christian Church will probably be organized in the near future. The pride of the town is the elegant four room school house. The building occupies an excellent site, and is surrounded by ample ground, which are enclosed by a substantial fence. Three teachers are now employed in the school, but in the near future the fourth room will be occupied. Miss Ada Gentry is the principal of the school.

In the business line the store of Nichols and Leach stands first. It is a good business house that would be a credit to a much larger town. It has a floor space of 2500 feet. They carry a complete line of dry goods, staples and fancy groceries, boots, shoes, hardware, patent medicines, paints and oils.

Dave Porter is proprietor of a neat little confectionary store. He has built up a thriving business.

We have two good hotels. One owned and managed by Charles Barnett and the other Mrs. Sommers. The traveling public are well taken care of at these hotels.

Uncle Sam's representative at the post office is Mrs. E.J. McAllister.

Our vulcan is J.R. White, he has a well equipped blacksmith and wagon shop. He is a first class workman and does a good business.

J.M. White is the proprietor of the livery stable.

The Lexington Flouring Mill is owned and operated by Joseph Burgoyne. His Snowflake Flower is such a favorite with the people that he is unable to meet the demand.

The large warehouse at this place is owned by Mrs. Jane Penland. It is managed by Mr. W.P. McMillan, who is a thoroughly competent man in this line. The warehouse handled about 110,000 bushels of wheat this season, and 130,000 in 1900. The difference in acreage sown in the region tributary to Lexington, Mr. McMillan does a good business in fuel, posts, etc.

W.B. McAlister is one of the oldest residents in the town. He has brought wheat in the market here for twelve seasons. He is notary public and deals in real estate.

Lexington has the population of about 200, and is making a steady growth.



Students of Heppner High School in Construction Class 2 are putting wooden shingles on the roof of the Democrat Gulch schoolhouse. The students are interested in construction and this is part of their training program. The instructor is Ed Heimstra. From the left, Rob Eckman, Mike Orwick, Doug Harris, Dave Brandhagen and John McLean.

Truckers insurance

Legislation slated for the next session of the Oregon legislature, proposed association insurance plans and other issues of vital importance to members are expected to be discussed at a meeting of the Northeast Oregon Chapter of the Oregon Log Truckers Association at Dave's Woodshed Restaurant, LaGrande, Saturday, Feb. 21, according to Larry Cribbs, chapter president.

Members attending the 6:30 p.m. meeting are expected to discuss specific legislation which is likely to be introduced into the next Oregon legislature, and hear reports concerning proposed Association group pension and dental insurance plans.

Other items of business expected to be discussed will include the selection of a chapter "first lady" to represent the local organization at the association's upcoming Spring Conference in Eugene, and the nomination of OLTA State officers to take place at the conference.

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ATTENTION FARMERS !!!

You are cordially invited to attend an all day fertilizer, chemical and feed seminar, Friday, February 20, at the Lone Grange Hall.

The session will start at 10:00 a.m. sharp, with lunch on us. A social hour is scheduled to begin at 4:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

- 10:00-10:05 . . . Welcome & Introductions Herb Ekstrom, Jr.
- 10:05-10:30 Chemical Fallow Don Rydrych, Research Agronomist, O.S.U.
- 10:30-11:15 . . . Importance of Sulphur in Bill Aldworth-Agronomist the Fertilizer Program Western Area-Cenex
- 11:15-12:00 Soil Testing Marr Waddoups—Marr Waddoups & Associates
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:45 GTC Feed Division Kay Knudsen
- 1:45-2:15 Chemical Follow with Paul Mallory- Dist. Sales Representative Paraquat Ortho Chemical
- 2:15-2:45 Bayfolan Larry Boyd-Sales Manager Helena Chemical Co.
- 2:45-3:00 Coffee
- 3:00-4:00 Panel Discussion
- 4:00 Social Hour

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