

AROUND ABOUT

with Justine Weatherford



The historic and decrepit round barn located on the Fred Hoskins, Jr. property on the outskirts of Heppner will soon exist as only a fond memory. Built soon after the Heppner Flood in 1903, the 75 year-old structure survives as a literal shell of its former self. A local artist will soon dismantle the old barn for its fine weathered lumber.

This week instead of writing items that fit this column's heading, I'm writing "about a round"—about a round barn that is historic and is one of this county's most unusual buildings.

Like the vanishing wooden, covered bridges that are so admired by history buffs of Oregon's more-populated, wetter, western third, the few round barns of the state's less-populated, colder, dryer two-thirds are outstanding landmarks. Probably the most famous and best publicized of the barns in-the-round is the one on the fabled Pete French Ranch in the Steens Mountains vicinity.

If you have not yet observed the large round structure on the Hoskins Ranch just north of Heppner, you had better take a look at it soon as its life expectancy is very short.

The regular use and the weathering during its 75 years of existence have weakened it considerably, and now its complete destruction has been given over to Heppner art teacher Ron Forrar and his family by the Hoskins and Parkers. Forrar will undoubtedly make some artistic uses of the old wood.

When I first visited this county and was being shown some of its attractions, Bill Weatherford took me along "Slaughter House Road", actually Dutton Road, so that he could show me this large, round structure, that he admired. He told me that there were not very many round barns in existence. In some cases, he thought, they were built so that they could be used for winter-season horse breaking and training.

When I learned that the big barn was to be demolished, I had a short chat with Kathryn Parker Hoskins. She confirmed that the razing of the building has been agreed to and that Ron Forrar will be taking it down soon.

Kathryn told me she felt sure that this barn was never used for horses—just for cattle, and she recommended I talk with J. Ed LaTrace, "who knows a lot more about that barn than I do." She also suggested that Stanley Minor, who is in the hospital here could tell me something about the barn, but said that it is now difficult for him to talk.

When I reached Ed LaTrace, I found how right Kathryn was about Ed's knowledge. He told me that he watched the barn being built "very soon after the great June 14, 1903

flood." He told me that was the year that Stanley Minor was born, Ed explained many things about the barn and the flood that led to its building.

He said that the Oscar Minors, well known for their great prize-winning cattle, owned the ranch then. "They had a series of small barns along Willow Creek and a house on the place, although they didn't live there. Their home was on North Court Street in town."

The raging Sunday flood waters washed away the barns and house along the creek and did a great deal of financial damage to the Minor enterprise, Ed recounted.

The Bill LaTrace family townhouse was across the road from the Minor Ranch where the city's gravel yard is now located. Their homestead ranch was beyond the Paul Brown place out Bunker Hill way. Ed says that his mother and the three LaTrace children were out at the ranch that day when they heard the news of the flood. They went up on the hill and watched the rushing waters carrying pieces of buildings, animals, people and much assorted debris downstream.

Ed was then six years old and says he particularly recalls seeing a white horse struggling as it was swept by them.

Bill LaTrace, the father, happened to be in Heppner. He managed to get into a railroad engine there and stayed with the engine wiper in the cab until the worst of the flood was past.

When the LaTrace family was able to return to the location of their home—they found it had been swept away.

Mr. and Mrs. LaTrace were then employed by Oscar Minor and were invited to move into a small shed remaining on the Minor place with their children. They lived there the rest of the summer while a great rush of re-building was taking place throughout the Heppner area as the community recovered from the devastating flood.

The Minors had the large, round barn built and also the "new" house in which the Fred Hoskins Jr. family is presently living.

The Bill LaTrace family was the first family to live in this post-flood home. Young Ed watched the round barn being built and has described its interior to me. "There was a hay loft in the center from which the hay was fed to the Minors' many cows. The Minor plan for raising prize-winning animals was to put outstanding calves to feed on two or three cows—thus they kept feeding extra cows inside the perimeter of the big barn."

Ed opines that the 75-year-old barn could still have been repaired. He regrets seeing it being demolished.

I am remembering that a few years ago I heard Orville Cutsforth talking to my husband Bill about the possibility of converting the unusual barn into an antique farm machinery museum. Orville has done much to help preserve this county's past, such as restoring and mounting the mill stone from the old Sperry flooring mill and bringing the little old schoolhouse into the Main Street Park in Heppner.

He wanted to contribute his wood-burning threshing machine and other old equipment and would have collected antique implements from various sources to be put on display in the barn.

However his suggestion didn't appeal enough to enough people and so for various reasons was dropped—at least the idea of using the round barn as a museum seems to have collapsed.

I am thankful that my life in Morrow County has included a good acquaintance with the Swinburne-Gilliam house before it was demolished in 1975, and that I have also been acquainted, although from a short distance, with the old, round, flood-year barn.

As I conclude this column "about a round", I feel sad that this local landmark will soon be no more: However, I understand the absolute right of its owners to have made the decision to have it torn down.

Sgt. Willard Elliot wins military honor

Sgt. Willard C. Elliott, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Elliott of Irrigon, has been awarded a Distinctive Service Ribbon for being a part of a military group that recently received the U.S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

A munitions maintenance specialist at Aviano AB, Italy, Sgt. Elliott belongs to the 40th Tactical Group, which received the Outstanding Unit Award. He is a 1973 graduate of Union High School.

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Hospital Notes

Admitted and discharged from Pioneer Memorial Hospital during the week of Tuesday, May 9, to Tuesday, May 16, were David Slagle, Condon, and Gerald Dean Thomas and Norm Rickert, both of Heppner. Also admitted were Charlie Sumner, Lexington, and Rose Marie Buschke, Heppner who remained patients on Tuesday.

BIRTHS
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Kendall, former Kinzua residents now living in Eugene, became the proud parents of a daughter named Dana Marie on Tuesday, May 9, at 10:56 a.m. She was born in Pioneer Memorial Hospital, weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces. A brother welcomed the new baby into the Kendall family.
Grandparents include Mr. and Mrs. Wayne R. Barber, Ukiah; Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Mitchell, Athena; and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kendall, Kinzua.
Great-grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Donald Sheff, Ukiah; and Mrs. Wayne R. Barber, Stanfield.
Rene was born to parents Mr. and Mrs. Terry Hersel, Molalla, on Wednesday, May 10, at 1:53 p.m. She weighed in at 7 pounds 5 ounces, joining big sister Tera Jean at home.
Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Carpenter, Drewsey; and Dorothy Hersel, Molalla. Great-grandparents include Evelyn E. Brown, Eugene; and Mr. and Mrs. Forest Bottom, Willamina.

Senior Menu

Tuesday, May 23
Braised liver with onions
Scalloped potatoes
Cauliflower & cheese sauce
Tossed green salad, muffins
Peach cobbler with topping

Wednesday, May 24
Pot roast and vegetables
Cottage cheese and fruit salad
French bread and garlic butter
Pudding cake and topping

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Gardner's MEN'S WEAR

The 25th Annual Morrow County Pioneer Memorial Picnic Will Be Held Sunday, May 28 At The County Fair Pavilion Registration 10 a.m.-12 Dinner 12:30 p.m. Meat, Potatoes, Rolls & Beverages Will Be Furnished

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