

AROUND

with Justine Weatherford

Seventy-five years ago, in June 1903, several tremendous happenings took place. The warm, muggy, Sunday afternoon of June 14, more than 250 persons were drowned in Morrow County in Oregon.

On Tuesday, June 16, in an old wagon factory in Detroit, Michigan, the Ford Motor Company began making "tin lizzies" which for a time sold for less than \$300.

Quite a few local folks can personally recall Heppner's most horrible day, and I have talked with several of them about their memories of the great flood.

Lena Hughes Kelly told me her family was then living about 20 miles south of town. She says the big thunder shower and heavy hail storm was frightening—"it broke windows in our house."

For several weeks now I have been collecting flood stories from friends at Senior Citizens' dinners. Ed LaTrace is one of the best authorities on the flood. He was six years old then and remembers the day vividly. He and his mother and his sister Pearl (Wright) watched the debris-laden water roll north of town toward Lexington where it was joined by more rushing flood waters from Black Horse Canyon. Several persons were drowned near Lexington.

The evening's heavy waterfall continued its intensity northward down Willow Creek and Hinton Creek and caused flooding in both Black Horse and Sand Hollow, too.

Where Balm Fork's water joined Willow Creek "The waters were at least 20 feet high, that being the lesser of many estimates made by those who saw it and lived."

Each of the bridges across Willow became temporary dams as collections of loose boards, pieces of buildings, farm equipment and the bodies of animals and humans and much fresh cut hay jammed against them. As these temporary dams gave way, great new walls of water surged through town.

Etta Devin Parker and Ella Smith, neither of whom personally experienced the flood, have both increased my understanding of that supertime event. They explained that Heppner's Chinatown was right along the creek back of where the Beckett and McBride homes are now. The Chinese families operated a laundry and several restaurants. They each kept family pigs penned near the water which that Sunday evening washed out their homes, the pens and pigs and drowned seven Chinese.

Heroic deeds were performed that evening. Two Revere-like young men, Bruce Kelley, 31, and Leslie Matlock, 30, appropriated horses from the Stewart & Kirk livery stable, broke into Gilliam & Bisbee's hardware store for wire-clippers and rode off cross country down Willow Creek shouting the flood warning to residents.

In the few hours before darkness overtook the area so many homes and business establishments were destroyed and so many families shattered by death. The local photographer, Mike Galloway, wrote an excellent minute-by-minute account of his actions during that lightning-lighted evening and until he fell into bed at 4 a.m.

On the next day, Monday, June 15, Galloway took a fine series of pictures which Bert Sigbee developed. Bert (Elaine George's father) had purchased Galloway's photographic business a month earlier and was ready to take over that day.

ABOUT

Some of their pictures and Mike's story are in "Homesteads and Heritages."

Several senior friends recount how their parents helped restore order in the hot, stench-filled community after the disaster. Ola Ruggles says that her father brought his team over from Sherman County and spent a week working here.

Catie Padberg told me about her father's efforts in cleaning up the area. She still treasures a little table that no one claimed and which her dad brought home and restored.

Rachel Scherzinger Harnett has given the museum an excellent picture of her father and other men and horses working at pulling the Methodist Church back into position after it had been washed northward.

Francis Doherty's home was once the Methodist parsonage and stood east of the church. The waters carried it north and then west and it settled and was repaired about where he now lives in it at the NW corner of Gale and Church streets.

My Butter Creek friend, who will turn 90 this July 8, Zetta Hager Brosnan, then a friendly mid-teenager, knew everybody in the devastated community and spent that sad, sleepless Sunday night mourning with friends and family on higher ground above the mud, debris and death that filled the town.

Heppner's 1903 population was just over 1100. That fatal, hot week in June it had rained some on Thursday and the folks hoped for more rain. Their hopes were realized when rain began again Sunday. Soon they noted black clouds to the southwest and soon heavier rain and hail hit.

Giles French reports "out Balm Fork the black cloud released tons and tons and tons of water; water in such amounts that great gashes were cut in the rock on the north side of that canyon."

The Oregonian's Leslie M. Scott at the close of the dispatch he sent out on Wednesday, June 17, wrote "The beauty of Heppner is gone, but not its pride. No community could rise more bravely under adversity."

My own life is strangely tied to the two anniversaries being celebrated this week. Henry Ford, a neighbor of my Peake grandparents, put into effect a \$5-a-day wage for builders of his sensational Model T in 1914, the year my life began at Detroit, Michigan, and here I am writing of the anniversary of the Heppner flood in my adopted community where many of its citizens can hardly recall the Model T or remember details of their community's catastrophe of 75 years ago.

Allstotts to celebrate Silver Anniversary

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Allstott are honoring them with a reception on the occasion of their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

The reception will be held at the Allstott home, Sunday, June 18, from one to three in the afternoon.

All friends and relatives are cordially invited to attend.

Extension Events... with Birdine Tullis



Annual "Pre-Fair" fun day Scheduled June 20

New and different events and activities have been added to the "get ready for Fair" day this year, as well as retaining some of the more popular of the training events for all 4-H girls (and boys too, if they wish to attend).

Scheduled to start at 10 June 20 at Heppner Elementary School, the event will include a Sandwich Contest, which will be the lunch for the participants. Training will include several how-to-do sessions including demonstrations or presentations, modeling and styling, accessorizing for fashion fun, and grooming tips.

Other special added fun will be a puppet show. As a preview of the Favorite Outfit Contest at Fair we are asking each to wear their favorite outfit. They will get some inside tips on getting ready for fair events, and encouragement to participate too.

The training is offered this year on a two-county exchange basis with Hood River. A number of our older 4-H members will travel to Hood River to assist with a similar training event there, and in return, girls from Hood River will be in Morrow County assisting with our fun day.

Both counties have outstanding older members involved, and we felt an exchange offered the older girls additional experiences and opportunities to make new friends, as well as sharing expertise.

We hope to see all our 4-H'ers there for a fun filled and educational day!

4-H Camp

Applications are coming in rapidly for 4-H camp—all interested campers are cautioned to get their application forms to the county office by June 15 or to call to determine if there is space available. Each of the four counties involved has a quota, and attendance is accepted on a "first come" basis. The 4-H

camping experience is one of the highlights of the 4-H year, offering members opportunities for new and growing experiences, having fun in an outdoor setting, meeting new friends, and accepting responsibilities, as well as educational classes and new crafts and recreation. In addition, this year, the camp period will allow members to get acquainted with their new 4-H agent, John Nordheim, and an IFYE from Belgium.

Theme selected by counselors for camp this year is "Space Odyssey". Morrow County counselors who will be assisting with all events at camp are Julie Grieb, Wendy Myers, Heather Winter, Lottie Laughlin, Todd Harrison, Coleman Devine, Mari Evans, Erin Evans, and Bobbie Devine, along with others from Gilliam, Wheeler and Sherman counties.

Reminder to 4-H Project Members

All market lambs must be shorn at least 30 days and not more than 60 days prior to Fair. Call John Nordheim, 4-H and Livestock Agent for more information.

Kilkenny earns straight A's at Oregon

John Kilkenny, son of Robert Kilkenny, Lexington and Vesta Kilkenny, Portland, received a 4.0 grade average last term at the University of Oregon, Eugene. Kilkenny is majoring in business administration. He will be a senior this fall.

4-H Leader Salute

Rudy and Gerald Bergtrom

Two livestock leaders who are well into their first year of leadership, with a big and active group out in the Gooseberry area from Ione are Rudy Bergstrom and Gerald Bergstrom. They have taken over leadership of the club formerly led by Louis Carlson of Ione. Both are experienced livestock growers and have beef, swine and sheep project members in their club.

The Ione club has a long history of excellence and success in competitions, which we expect will continue under Rudy and Gerald's leadership.

We offer our salute to the two! Welcome to the "4-H Family".

WITH LOVE to Dad

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Pettyjohn clan reunion set

A family reunion for descendants of the William S. and Mary Ellen Pettyjohn clan will be held at Anson Wright Park on June 25.

A potluck will start at noon.

Goulds visit at Marquardt home

Mr. and Mrs. Ira Owen and family of Gould, Oklahoma were recent weeklong guests at the Bill Marquardt home at Lexington.

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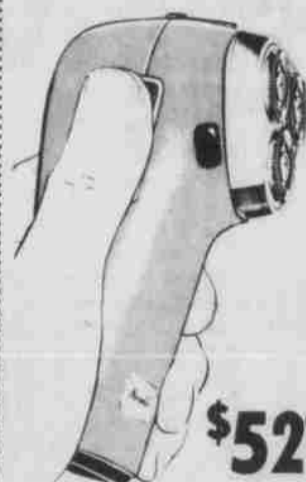
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