

Pioneer Picnics have grown since 1st in '53

By JUSTINE WEATHERFORD

The first Memorial Pioneer Picnic was held in Heppner in 1953. Those pioneer family members who have chaired these events have kept a notebook which is passed along each year and which contains notes, suggestions and newspaper accounts pertaining to the annual event. Records tell that the picnic was originated and first organized by Mrs. Guy Boyer.

The first three years only a notation and some suggestions and a tentative program are recorded. These were evidently written by whoever hosted the 1955 picnic and remind future chairpersons "to have plenty of ice water available for people when they come down from the cemetery and milk for the children." As to programs "when group singing of popular, patriotic and sacred songs is planned the songs should be pitched low enough for all to sing."

The 1957 committee did a very thorough job, leaving a three-page, typewritten account. "J.O. Turner who served during the past year as President of the Pioneer Picnic Committee, Mrs. Roy Neil, Vice-President and Mrs. Walter Becket, Secretary-Treasurer, organized the program and made all the arrangements for this popular gathering. Officers elected for the coming year are: Dr. A.D. McMurdo, President, Mrs. Lonnie Loudon, Vice President and Mrs. Olive Huston, Secretary."

That year's report also tells that 200 attended, that Judge William W. Wells, circuit judge of the sixth district and a native son of Heppner, gave the address. "A plaque honoring the service men of Morrow County who gave their lives in World Wars I and II and in Korea was dedicated and presented and will be placed in the hallway of the Morrow County Court House."

On May 30, 1958, 222 persons attended. "Officers elected at what may not be called a free election, in that they got the offices whether they wanted them or not—were President Earl Miller, alternate John J. Wightman, Vice-President, Mrs. Claude White and Secretary Mrs. Samuel J. Turner. Marion Weatherford, Arlington, was the day's speaker. That year two guests from the greatest distance were an exchange student from Putney, England, and an IFYE exchange student from Rangoon, Burma."

The 1959 picnic attracted over 236. "An historical talk by former county Judge Garnet Barratt was enjoyed by all. New officers named for next year are: Ralph Thompson, chairman and Mrs. Edna Turner, secretary." In 1960 nearly 300 attended. Ralph Thompson welcomed everyone; Mrs. Norman Nelson lead the group singing. Garnet Barratt was elected president for the following year and Fay Ferguson, secretary-treasurer."

At the 1962 picnic Harold Cohn nominated Don Turner for 1963 chairman and Elaine George nominated Mrs. Edmund Gonty for secretary-treasurer, and they were unanimously elected. In 1963 over 250 registered for the 10th annual event. "A \$20 award went to R.B. Rice, Heppner, for being the oldest pioneer attending and Mrs. Louise Ritchie of Whittier, Calif., received the same reward for coming the longest distance. Colored tags were used for out-of-town guests and white for local guests." Eight boned, rolled hams were served, and other supplies used were listed by Secretary Eleanor Gonty, who along with Chairman Don Turner, was re-elected for the 1964 year.

The 1964 report tells that after serving two years Don Turner was being succeeded by county Judge Oscar Peterson, but that Mrs. Gonty was again re-elected secretary-treasurer. The large 1965 affair where Giles French of Moro was principal speaker



The Currin home, formerly belonged to Kate Johnson Cornett, a sister of Mrs. Jeremiah Brosnan. This house is well maintained and still an attractive residence on the north side of Water Street just below the hill in Heppner.

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The home where Jeremiah and Mary Brosnan lived after 1909 when John and Zetta took over the family ranch. The house, much remodeled, still stands on Water Street in Heppner, just below the greatly changed old Currin home.

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saw Judge Oscar Peterson re-elected chairman and Mrs. Claude Graham chosen secretary.

In 1966 at the well-attended reunion Don Turner was again chosen chairman with Frank Turner as his assistant; Mrs. Nora Turner became secretary-treasurer. At the 15th picnic in 1968, Harold Cohn extended the cordial welcome; Oscar Peterson reported on the coming publication of the history of Morrow County. Carl Troedson, Ione, was chosen committee chairman and Mrs. Wallace Matthews became secretary. The program for 1969 lists the honored war dead from Morrow County. It also urges folks to visit the County Museum. The 1970 program is very similar. There were 252 registered and Roger Campbell and Mrs. Lonnie McCabe were chosen new co-chairmen with Mrs. Mike Matthews continuing as secretary.

The Golden Age Club members handled registration for the 1971 picnic where the prize

for the oldest Morrow pioneer went to Mrs. Gertrude Parker "who will soon be 91." Mrs. George Currin won the door prize. Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Becket were chairmen for the successful 1972 picnic. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Warren served as 1973 chairmen.

In 1974 Mr. and Mrs. Orville Cutsforth were chairmen, and Sam McMillan, historian, a former resident of Lexington was the speaker. McMillan said that the annual picnic was an outgrowth of picnics started in Lexington in 1892 in the grove there. Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Steers, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Steers and Grace Buschke were the committee in 1975 and Mike Sweeney, county Bicentennial chairman was master of ceremonies. The color scheme was red, white and blue and 254 persons attended.

At the 23rd picnic on Sunday, May 30, 1976, Mr. and Mrs. Roy W. Lindstrom, Ione, were chairmen. People were encouraged to wear pioneer

costumes. The Olaf and Eric Bergstrom families were named to chair the 1977 picnic.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Green, Mr. and Mrs. Cornett Green, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bryant and other members of the Alex and Mattie Green family were chairmen in 1978. Mrs. Carl Haphold (Lillie Currin) was a courthouse plate for being the oldest guest present; Lillie was 91 in April. The 1978 picnic was the 25th annual affair.

The 1979 chairmen were members of the families of Burton H. and George N. Peck. More than 300 attended. Last year's Sunday, May 25, picnic-reunion was chaired by Darrell and Sue Vinson of Little Butter Creek; 373 persons were registered.

For many years members of the Heppner Garden Club have arranged the flowers on the tables and platform, and members of the Soroptimist International have supervised the registration.

Obituaries

Janet Wightman

Janet Wightman of Concord California died in an auto accident May 8, 1981 at Sacramento, Calif.

She was born Dec. 15, 1940, at Heppner and lived in Heppner until 1956 when the family moved to Tamalis, Calif. She graduated from Tamalis High School and Mill College, Oakland, Calif.

After graduation she moved to Concord, Calif., where she was on the staff of the chemistry department at Diablo Junior College for seventeen years.

She was an active member in the Ladies 99 Flying Club. She held a private pilot license, a commercial license and an instructor's pilot license.

She was a member of Saint Columbia Episcopal Church at Martenz, Calif.

Survivors include her father and mother, Marvin and Claudine of McKenzie Bridge, Ore.; brothers, James Wightman, Greeley, Colorado, and Marvin R. Wightman Jr., Santa Rosa, Calif.; a sister, Margaret Crapuci, Sacramento, Calif.; and five nieces and two nephews.

Memorial services were held at Saint Johns Episcopal Church, Concord, Calif., on Thursday, May 14, 1981.

John F. McLaughlin

GRASS VALLEY, Calif. — Funeral services and burial were held May 13 at Grass Valley for John F. McLaughlin, 57, formerly of Heppner. Mr. McLaughlin died May 8, 1981, at Grass Valley.

He was born at Heppner May 15, 1923, to Cornelius and Mary McLaughlin. He attended schools and grew up in Heppner. After World War II, he left the area, and lived at Baker, in Idaho, and in California for about 20 years. He worked as a roofer.

Mr. McLaughlin was a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

His wife, Betty, died earlier. He is survived by a stepdaughter, Betsy Corbin, at Santa Rosa, Calif.; sisters, Kathryn Wright, of Kodiak, Alaska, Nonie Pointer and Virginia Conlon, both of Pendleton, and Sarah Connelly, Gig Harbor, Wash.; brothers, Dan, of Rhinebeck, N.Y., Jim and Hugh, Spokane, Wash., Joe, Herb and Mike, all of Pendleton, Bob of Pilot Rock, and Terry, Huntington Beach, Calif.

Death Notice Public Meetings

Blanche Thomson

Blanche Thomson, Heppner, died May 11 at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner. Mrs. Thomson was 71. A complete obituary will be published next week.

Mon., May 25 - Memorial Day.

Wed., May 27 - Heppner Public Library Board, Library, Heppner, 8 p.m.; Morrow County Court, County Building, Irrigon, 10 a.m.

TEEN OF THE WEEK JOHN MURRAY



John Murray, this week's teen is an active student at Heppner High School. A junior with a GPA of 3.54, John is the son of Fred and Meg Murray. Not only does he offer time and talent to HHS, but also character and examples on the athletic field and in the classroom. John has participated in varsity football, basketball and baseball. He is a member of National Honor Society, Outdoor Club, H-Club and the Methodist Youth Group. John will serve as Student Body President next year.

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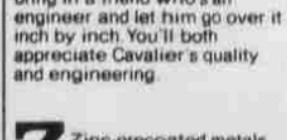
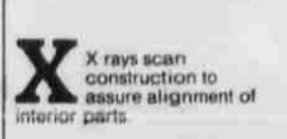
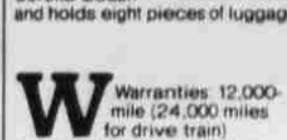
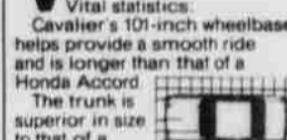
V Vital statistics: Cavalier's 101-inch wheelbase helps provide a smooth ride and is longer than that of a Honda Accord.

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X X rays scan construction to assure alignment of interior parts.

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