Local Man's Birthday Goes Almost Unnoticed

Old Miner Born In Shasta County 102 Years Ago

By EVELYN OUSTERHOUT
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There's a charming gentleman on Thomas road who celebrated his birthday recently — his 102nd — and the event went almost unnoticed.

Friends didn't call. No special mail arrived. But M. James Kennedy has hardly stopped long enough in his 102 years to acquire the steady, conventional friendships most of us accumulate.

He lives at the home of Mrs. Georgie Ann Bond, whom he married in [illegible], when he was 87. He has even left home once since [illegible]; but the couple has [illegible] forces to take advantage of her cooking, his gardening, and the companionship of [illegible] in their late [illegible].

[illegible] his shaggy head [illegible] his heavy gray beard, Kennedy recalls the [illegible] of his many years with sparkling [illegible] wit.

His English has no [illegible] quality. The accent is [illegible]? Or maybe Scandinavian "v's" sound like "w's." He [illegible], and he might, as [illegible] vernacular, [illegible] with sailors and [illegible] hands.

Though he may have a bit [illegible] with the times and [illegible], and might even [illegible] with people, Kennedy is one of a [illegible] number of men with [illegible] stories to tell.

He says he was the first [illegible] to sleep in the Jacksonville hotel, was a scout for the United States government in Europe and Asia, and [illegible] in the gold [illegible] of Gold Hill and [illegible] — and what's great to [illegible] to the spot of the [illegible], [illegible] people and events [illegible] seem so [illegible] to his [illegible] memory.

Born in California

The old miner says he was born [illegible] in 1858, in Shasta county, Calif. His mother [illegible] family [illegible], and his father, Fred, died when [illegible] were small [illegible].

"Too Many Kennedys [illegible]," he chuckles. "Too Many James Kennedy, [illegible] there were already too many Kennedys."

He [illegible] school for one [illegible] — "Only learned A, B, C" — [illegible] "turned out to a [illegible]" [illegible] While still a youngster, about 10, he went to [illegible] to work for a Dutchman [illegible] a month.

"Oh, he was mean," Kennedy recalls with disgust. One day he left and, by a circuitous route, returned to California.

When he was 18 or 19, Kennedy tells, he rode horseback from Shasta to Jacksonville, paying 75 cents for a ferry across the Klamath river. "Not so many around Jacksonville in those days, mostly Indians and Chinamen," he says.

One day in a Jacksonville saloon, Kennedy was accosted by a big miner who hollered, "Kid! What you doing here!"

"What YOU doing here?" he spat back. He could lick anybody in those days. And in these days, 82 years later, there's a feeling he still might try.

Kennedy declares that he owned a mining claim on Jacksonville hill which he sold for $100, before it brought in thousands of dollars in gold ore? Why? "Because I wanted to move on, see new things," he explains.

He says he was the first man to sleep in the old Jacksonville hotel, having spent the night there in 1880 before it was completely furnished. "Yep, I did," he muses with a nod. "I just took my bedding into a back room."

He moved on from the Rogue valley after a gold strike at Gold Hill was successful enough for further "speculatin'."

There is a silver plate in Kennedy's left leg which has an incredible history. He says he got it "mail order from Uncle Sam."

A veteran of the Spanish American war, 1898, Kennedy says he was wounded in action and was sent to Chicago for hospitalization. There, after a year in bed, he managed an escape from a hospital upper floor to avoid a leg amputation.

Unable to walk, but with the help of a taxi driver, friends and a "nursie" he traveled, at midnight down a rope of knotted sheets. By morning he was in Toronto, Canada, he relates, and before long, by train, had gone to the end of the line into Saskatchewan.

Seen by Stationmaster

"The station master looked at me," Kennedy recalls. "There I sat, injured, no extra clothing."

"Where are you going?" he asked. "No place, I stay here," Kennedy declared. And a reluctant stationmaster fixed a bed on the lower floor of the station house.

"The next morning," Kennedy relates with a smile, "he says to me, 'You come with me,' and he puts me in a rig with a driver and a four-horse team, and sends me down the road."

"Those horses pulled through mud up to their knees until we came to a hospital—$1 a mile it cost for the trip."

"They took me to a lady, a 'natural doctor'," and the old veteran describes the treatment he got from the "doctor."

Wooden Barrel

"She brought a wooden barrel, cut in half, full of boiling water. I looked in. 'Put it in,' she ordered, and in went my leg."

"Was it hot?" a thick-headed listener asks. "Hot?" he sighs, "yes-s, it was hot, and a little girl added two hot bricks."

The skin peeled. The dead flesh came off. And the lady gave the leg careful treatment for many days.

One day she said, "I've done all I can. We must have a silver plate." "Silver plate?" Kennedy says he asked. "I can get it." And he declares he ordered it from the U.S. government.

Thumps Shin

Anyway, the plate is there, in the left leg, for you can hear it when he thumps his shin to emphasize the truth of the story, and he shows the knotted veins where he says the natural doctor tied them off.

"You want to know where we got the skin to cover it?" He slaps his thigh. "Right there, she cuts me with a razor blade and I didn't feel a thing."

The leg healed and Kennedy says he tried to walk. "I couldn't," (with a shake of his woolly head) "not after two years in bed." But the "little nursies" helped and soon he walked down the hall and back; later "down the path to the barn and back." It was six months, maybe more, maybe less, before he was ready to leave.

"I asked, 'How much?,' but she wouldn't take my money—I had $700 army pay. There was a little girl peeking from behind her skirts and I called her." Kennedy crooks his finger and motions. "But the little girl said, 'Mama said, "Don't take the money"'"

She Don't Take It

There was a little boy, too. "I called to the boy—he was shyer than his sister—here, take the money," he pleaded. "Mama said, 'Don't take the money'," the oldtimer relates with a shake of his head.

So the veteran left, with a simple expression of thanks and a promise to the natural doctor never to tell where he had been.

"And where do you think I went?" he asks. "To Chicago. Back to the army hospital." At first the supervisor and surgeon didn't recognize their former patient. It was the little nurse who helped with his escape who identified him.

"There!" ordered Kennedy at the surgeon. "Look at that! Look at my leg!" and the story teller pulls up his trouser leg, the long winter underwear, for emphasis. "You wanted to cut it off," he yelled at the doctor—"I wanted to kick that doctor with that good leg."

"Where have you been?" the surgeon demanded. "Where have YOU been!" Kennedy declared.

Joins Navy

The oldtimer had first joined the Navy, sailing from "ocean to ocean" before the government picked him off the sailing ship and sent him to the Philippines and [illegible] into the Spanish American war.

From the natural hospital and the Army hospital (second visit) it was back to California for Too Many James Kennedy. But in 1909 Kennedy says he sailed from San Francisco for Europe, and spent 10 years traveling throughout Europe and Asia as a "scout."

"I know every inch of Russia . . . of Austria . . . and I was shot at by the Germans three times."

Captured in Germany

He tells a story about capture in Germany, an appearance in court there with improvised German [illegible] to prove he belonged, and another story of a clandestine trip through the Chinese frontier.

And then there is [illegible] tale about his cabin in the Applegate, which burned with his mementoes from all over the world.

There is a good story, too, about the miners on Chinese crick and Happy Camp where he met . . .

But that is [illegible] afternoon.

"Seven [illegible] of 17, I spent many night alone on the [illegible]"

"They wanted to amputate my leg, but friends helped me run away . . ."

"It was 1875 or '76, I don't know . . . it's been so long ago."

"There was nothing but Indians and Chinamen in Jacksonville then."

OLD TIMER—M. James Kennedy, who recently turned 102, relates the highlights of a long and varied life as he sits in the afternoon shade in front of his home on Thomas rd., Medford. Though not as spry as he used to be, Kennedy is strong in stature and mind, with a sly sense of humor. To emphasize some of the exciting things he has done in his lifetime, his voice booms forth with an authority that few men would doubt, yet his manner is kindly . . . he is a remarkable gentleman from an era of long ago.

124 Species of Birds Are Counted on Memorial Day

About 18 valley bird watchers pursued their sport of counting birds on Memorial Day from 4:15 a.m. to 8:15 p.m., and came up with the largest number of species to be observed in the county in a single day within the experience of any of the participants.

The total number found was 124 species.

The largest number noted by a single party was the 81 counted by the Hicks-Conway party who started on the Rogue river above Dodge bridge, went through the valley to Pompadour cliffs, up the Dead Indian grade, past Howard Prairie and Hiatt lakes and up to Table Mountain lookout.

The second largest list was compiled by the Reynolds-Sturgis party which covered areas near Ashland, then went over the Anderson Creek summit and down the Applegate valley.

Take Part in Count

Those taking part included Maj. Gen. and Mrs. J. H. Hicks, Betty Jo Hicks, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Conway, Dr. John R. Reynolds, Dr. Franklin W. Sturges, Ted Will, Ralph Browning, Tom Turpin, Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Spangler, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Richardson, Mrs. V. A. Turpin, John Hooggerheide, the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas McCamant.

The group felt that this year's list is fairly representative of birds resident in Jackson county, although a few, such as the common starling were missed.

The three kinds of blackbirds were highest in the count of individuals. A nesting colony of tri-colored blackbirds found by the Richardson-Spangler party produced an estimated number of 2,000.

The following is the list:

Western grebe, 3; Great blue heron, 2; green heron, 2; Canada goose, 1; mallard, 8; green-winged teal, 1; cinnamon teal, 6; American widgeon, 3; wood duck, 2; redhead, 2; common merganser, 11; turkey vulture, 48; red-tailed hawk, 8; eagle (species ?), 1; sparrow hawk, 21; osprey, 1; California quail, 90; mountain quail, 5; ring-necked pheasant, 38; American coot, 3; killdeer, 58; common snipe, 1; spotted sandpiper, 14; Wilson's phalarope, 4; ring-billed gull, 6.

Black tern, 4; mourning dove, 382; barn owl, 3; burrowing owl, 1; Vaux's swift, 7; rufous hummingbird, 18; calliope hummingbird, 1; belted kingfisher, 10; red-shafted flicker, 29; pileated woodpecker, 6; acorn woodpecker, 87; yellow-bellied sapsucker, 8; Williamson's sapsucker, 1; hairy woodpecker, 1; downy woodpecker, 3; western kingbird, 60; ash-throated flycatcher, 14; black phoebe, 1; Traill's flycatcher, 2; Hammond's flycatcher, 2; dusky flycatcher, 1; western flycatcher, 1; olive-sided flycatcher, 8; western wood pewee, 34.

Horned lark, 5; violet-green swallow, 11; tree swallow, 59; bank swallow, 2; rough-winged swallow, 15; barn swallow, 63; cliff swallow, 147; purple martin, 5; gray jay, 1; Steller's jay, 22; scrub jay, 36; black-billed magpie, 2; common crow, 53; black-capped chickadee, 2; mountain chickadee, 10; chestnut-backed chickadee, 1; plain titmouse, 6; common bushtit, 21; white-breasted nuthatch, 1; red-breasted nuthatch, 11; brown creeper, 1; wrentit, 4; dipper, 1.

House wren, 14; winter wren, 1; Bewick's wren, 7; rock wren, 1; robin, 119; hermit thrush, 3; Swainson's thrush, 1; western bluebird, 20; mountain bluebird, 3; blue-gray gnatcatcher, 1; ruby-crowned kinglet, 1; cedar waxwing, 15; solitary vireo, 1; warbling vireo, 1; orange-crowned warbler, 2; Nashville warbler, 24; yellow warbler, 8; Audubon's warbler, 3; hermit warbler, 8; MacGillivray's warbler, 4; yellow-breasted chat, 12; Wilson's warbler, 2; house sparrow, 38; western meadowlark, 284; yellow-headed blackbird, 1; redwinged blackbird, 926; tricolored blackbird, 2,100; Bullock's oriole, 19; brown-headed cowbird, 34.

Western tanager, 27; black-headed grosbeak, 93; lazuli bunting, 12; evening grosbeak, 7; purple finch, 15; Cassin's finch, 3; house finch, 82; pine siskin, 7; American goldfinch, 33; lesser goldfinch, 36; green-tailed towhee, 8; rufous-sided towhee, 52; brown towhee, 8; savannah sparrow, 11; vesper sparrow, 4; lark sparrow, 17; Oregon junco, 64; chipping sparrow, 81; white-crowned sparrow, 1; fox sparrow, 3; Lincoln's sparrow, 3; song sparrow, 29.

PROCLAIMS FLAG DAY

Washington (UPI) — President Eisenhower has proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day. In his proclamation Wednesday, Eisenhower urged all Americans to display the flag on June 14 and to "cultivate and inculate in their children the ideals and the qualities of American citizenship."

EAST GERMANS FLEE

Bonn, Germany (UPI) — More than 20,000 East Germans fled Communist rule last month in the heaviest wave of refugees since August, 1958. The Refugee Ministry said Wednesday 20,275 persons sought asylum in West Germany.

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