



ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST TRAIN in the Klamath Falls vicinity was captured by this early day photograph which shows the celebration that took place on that day, June 14, 1909. About 2,000 persons were on hand to commemorate the occasion which, in the words of then Mayor Fred T. Sanderson, "annexed" Klamath County to the rest of the outside world. (Picture Courtesy Hal Ogle)

Arrival Of First Train Kicked Off Celebration

(From the Herald and News of July 24, 1909)
By NORM CARDOZA

People of Klamath County were having a wonderful time 50 years ago this year.

Nearly all good things people ever dreamed would happen to the Klamath Basin were happening, just like everyone always knew they would.

In that year two major developments that would change the area's economic picture completely took place. The first Southern Pacific train tooted into town. And in the same breath, the federal government launched its \$4,500,000 reclamation project that would release more than 300,000 fertile acres for farming.

The railroad captured the fancy of people who lived in the Basin then. For several years they suffered through one disappointment after another waiting for rails to span the mountains between Klamath Falls and Weed. When the big project was completed, they staged one of the biggest and wildest celebrations the town had ever seen. They felt relieved from exile and ready to make the Basin the garden spot of the nation.

They honored the man who brought the railroad by exalting him only slightly less than God. E. H. Harriman, president of Southern Pacific, had streets and landmarks named for him, and the mayor in a welcome speech called him "Brother Harriman."

A new era was born and an old one was dying during the celebration. Throngs of people boarded the steamer Klamath and rode to Ady, a few miles down the Klamath River, on the passenger boat's last run. There they boarded the first northbound train and rode triumphantly back into town.

The Klamath used to steam passengers and freight to Laird's Landing, 50 miles below Klamath Falls on Lower Klamath Lake. From there the payload was transported to Bartles, 45 miles further southwest, to make connections with the McCloud River Railroad and finally the SP line running between San Francisco and Portland.

At the same time, rumblings of rage were between cattlemen and sheepmen still were circulating. Rumors had it that men were shooting at each other, but newspaper accounts of the period indicated sheep—dozens of them—were the only casualties.

Big lumber companies were buying large tracts of timber, previously considered worth something, but not much. The city was building a library, a high school and other public works.

The official celebration heralding the arrival of the railroad was saved for June 14, 1909, just under a month since the first train arrived.

Said one newspaper writer: "Nature in all its beauty clothed in glorious sunshine and kissed by the gentle breeze from off the snow-capped peaks and shimmering lakes gave cordial welcome to Klamath's greatest day, and by its gentle touch gave stimulus to the enthusiasm that has been held in bay for this occasion."

About 2,000 people attended. That was nearly double the population of Klamath Falls. Dignitaries from Sacramento and San Francisco were present. "The only delegation missing," the reporter snickered, "was from poor old Portland."

It would be another 17 years before the Southern Pacific completed the circuit from Klamath Falls to Portland.

In his speech to the assembly, Mayor Fred T. Sanderson said, "Today marks the passing for all time, so far as Klamath Falls is concerned, of the stagecoach and freight team."

"It is as though we had today been annexed to and made a part of the great commonwealth of Oregon."

"My friends, we are grateful to Brother Harriman for his efforts to eliminate the beautiful distances that have for years intervened between us and civilization. Let us not forget that today they (nearby counties and communities without railroad) in their isolation and deprivation, are rejoicing with us, confident that Brother Harriman has heard their prayers for deliverance."

Here are statements by Judge J. B. Griffiths who prophesied: "The marshes that are richer than anything you ever saw will someday grow the finest celery you ever saw."

"Klamath County will soon be supplying the East with lumber and cattle."

Previously, W. H. Holabird, a key instrument in finagling that won for SP a clear track into Klamath Falls, foretold that Klamath County contained enough room for 100,000 people, and that Klamath Falls would become a community of 20,000.

Latest estimates by the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce (which was formed in 1906 to subscribe \$100,000 to lure the railroad) places county population at 51,112, the city's at 20,200, and the South Suburban area at 16,000, excluding approximately 5,000 at Kingsley Field and Capehart Housing.

To celebrate the occasion, schools were recessed and business ceased. The Klamath Falls Military Band and the Peterson Brothers Band, which was traveling with a circus brought to town for the celebration, played.

Railroad excursions to Ady and back cost 55 cents. There were trapshoots, an old settlers' reunion, a baseball game between Klamath Falls and Lakeview, a tennis tourney, a "bronco busting contest," a "Calithumpian" parade, and a water carnival on Lake Ewauna.



...IN A GROWING COMMUNITY THEN

SINCE 1918

Klamath Falls was just starting to grow when Mr. and Mrs. N. B. Drew decided to leave their D&M Cleaning business partnership, which they had been in since early 1918, and open the first Drews Manstore pictured above. The first store was located on the present First National Bank corner at 6th and Main, and was called N. B. Drew "Mens Togs."

In 1925 the store was moved to the present location at 733 Main Street. After the war the four Drew brothers and their wives bought in as full partners, and in 1946 the Gun Store was added. In 1947 they doubled the size of the present Drews Manstore operation.

The Town and Country branch was added in 1956. Down through the years, through wars, depressions, recessions, good times and bad, these stores have moved ahead with the growing Klamath Basin. All four Drew brothers: Greer, Frank, Lloyd and Cecil are active in the daily business of the three stores. The combined stores now have an annual payroll, and other business expenses that put \$190,000 into the community each year.

Yes, along with the Basin, we will continue to grow as we think this country is just getting a good start.



DREWS MANSTORE
THE GUN STORE
DREWS Town & Country

From left to right:
Drews Manstore at 733 Main
Drews Boyswear and western wear shop, downstairs at 733 Main
Gun Store at 714 Main
Drews Manstore, Town and Country Shopping Center