

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1961

Pot Hole Springs Caravan Travels Route To Modoc County's 'Great Wall Of China'

By RUTH KING

Many of the secrets of man's great migration to the West on the American Continent still are locked in the mists of yesteryear. Many will never be revealed. Many remain to be discovered, as in the Klamath country and neighboring Siskiyou and Modoc counties where some who still live here are linked by blood lines with those who came this way.

Historical societies of this local region, the Klamath County Historical Society and the Siskiyou County Historical Society, united by the common bond of the Applegate Trail, delve a bit further each year into those shadowy days when the wagon trains creaked and rolled across this corner of Oregon and beyond to cut deep the ruts of travel to California and to the Willamette Valley to the north in Oregon.

Some of the physical evidence of those days remain for all to view. Some of the great effort and the faith needed to bring new blood to a new country, and the paths on the trail, continues to be brought to light as contributions to future generations.

Most recent was the discovery of the grave of a 14-year-old boy, Lloyd Dean Shook, after a century of anonymity. A Klamath Falls boy, Mark Runnels, found the grave. His discovery has been heralded as proof that immigrants westward bound actually stopped at Pot Hole Springs in Modoc County on their way to the Willamette Valley.

The trail, still visible near the grave, is proof that wagons traveled that way, but not until Mark Runnels found an upthrust of lava rock embedded in the soil, carrying the deeply carved story of tragedy, had historians been sure enough to say, "they stopped here."

Thus was another link of the long trip from east to west forged.

Early this fall, the Klamath County Historical Society invited the public and the Siskiyou County Historical Society to join an auto caravan to Pot Hole Springs.

Devere and Helen Helfrich, whose cameras have recorded still visible spots on most of the Old Oregon Trail and other wagonways across the land, conducted the field trip. Junior historians and those who are familiar with stories of the old days took sack lunches and cameras.

The caravan stopped briefly at Dry Lake where Kenneth McLeod told the story of the Modoc Indian War battle at Dry Lake on May 10, 1873, first battle of the last

Indian war won by the white man. Here also is the grave of L. A. Clark, marked by a traditional headstone bearing the inscription L. A. Clark, Died May 11, 1911, Age 61, Native of Illinois. Up to this time there is no known record of such a man or his death in this country, except the grave, or why he should be buried at a lonely spot off the beaten path of travel. The grave is 10 miles south of Tulelake in California.

Each year, mysteriously, a small bouquet of flowers of the garden variety is placed upon the grave around Memorial Day.

Beyond, another 10 miles, is the overflow dam which keeps the water in Clear Lake from running away to the Dry Lake country. Pelicans and other birds nest on Bird Islands that center the body of water, now shrunken by the dry years. Here, Lorraine Quillan, a member of the Klamath County

Nature Society and an ardent bird watcher, spoke on Pelicans that nest on the islands and other bird life.

Close by Clear Lake are portions of an old stone wall, one of the most controversial man-made barriers in the days when the white man, eager for gain, had pushed the red man from his hunting grounds and was pitting wit against many odds in the accumulation of wealth.

Here are the remnants of a dream... the Chinese Wall.

Information on the Wall, destined to involve the hopes of one man, Jesse D. Carr, of California, encroaching settlers, congressional action, the lives of hundreds of Chinese laborers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, has been compiled from a number of sources.

The late Edith Rutenic McLeod, of Klamath Falls, delved into old

books, studied newspapers, and talked to oldtimers for facts to write "Modoc's Wall of China, Horse High and Hog Tight," read during the caravan's trek that summer Sunday by Annabelle Newton. Mrs. Newton's continuing interest in the history of the Klamath country has been fruitful in the preservation of those facts that are vital to the Klamath Basin.

Frank Payne, who lived here years ago, the late Robert A. Emmitt, who lived Klamath country history, Devere and Helen Helfrich, Ken McLeod and historical bits gathered from here and yon, information contained in brochures found in museums, all have contributed to the history of the Chinese Wall and the Applegate Trail used here.

Travelers have wondered at glimpses of the wall, seen from highways and wandering by-roads.

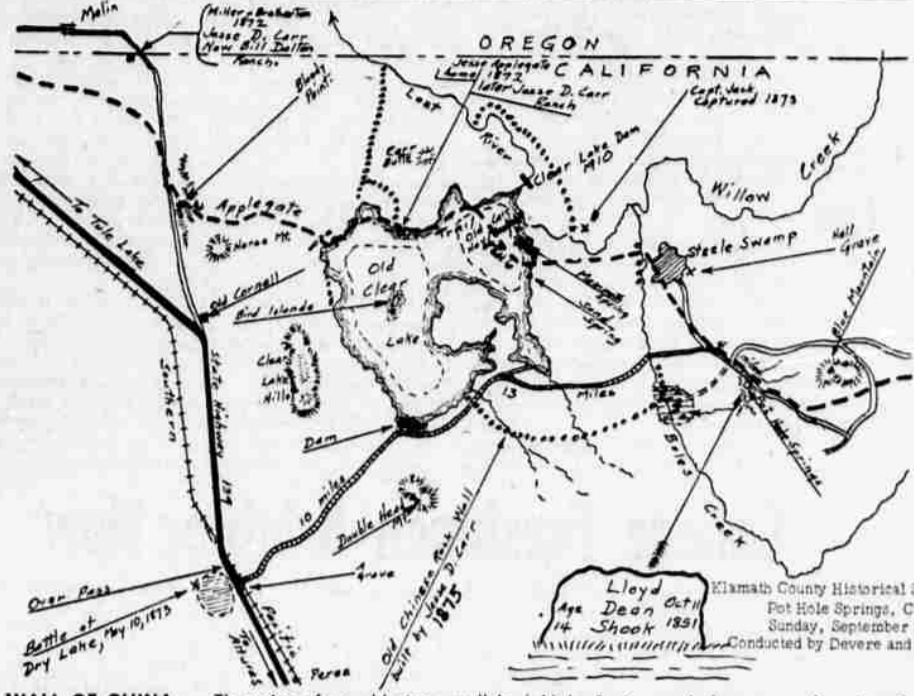
Much of its great length now lies across the arid land, torn down and scattered. The great slabs of lava rock are mute testimony to the back-breaking hand labor of the Chinese brought to an alien and inhospitable land from the San Francisco Bay Area.

Portions of it still standing are armpit high to a tall man, reasonably level, the rock is laid close enough together to turn everything except snakes, field mice and insects.

Cowboys who once rode the range called it "The Wall of China," said Mrs. McLeod in her story.

"In that stone wall lies a story of the Old West; a story of one of the old cattle barons, of strong men and vast domains, of thousands of head of cattle and the men who retained their kingships

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WALL OF CHINA — The ruins of an old stone wall in Modoc County have long aroused the curiosity of many persons. Through the generosity of Devere and Helen Helfrich and of Ken McLeod and his late wife, Edith McLeod, the story of the wall is given to the public. Ruins of the wall were visited on a recent trek to Pot

Hole Spring and the grave of an immigrant lad, Lloyd Dean Shook, 14, who died and was buried near the old Applegate Trail in 1851. The trip was sponsored by the Klamath County Historical Society. Dotted lines on map show wall that closed gaps in natural rimrock barrier for livestock. — Map by Devere Helfrich



ONCE UPON A TIME — The old wagon wheel ruts are still to be found where once men and women and children passed by this spot, westward bound on the Applegate Trail. The trail crosses the strip of sagebrush beyond the fence. Pot Hole Spring is in the foreground, marked by forest service marker. The water is warm, 80 to 85 degrees the year around, and the small water area is full of tiny fish, none over two inches long. There

is water cress too, tender and delicious. The grave of Lloyd Dean Shook, who died when only 14 and who has not been identified up to the present time with any family, known to have come west along the Applegate Trail, is to the right from the small juniper tree. It was the finding of this grave, historians say, that definitely places Pot Hole Spring as a camping place on the trail.



YOUNG HISTORIANS — Lots of teen-agers are interested in the happenings of the past that contributed to the development of this community. Several historically-minded youths asked permission to go along on the trip to Pot Hole Spring, taking cameras to record what they saw. These four are members of the Klamath County

Junior Historical Society at spot on Chinese wall. Left to right are Thomas Gospodnetich, Steve Brow, Mark Runnels, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Devere Helfrich, who found the headstone at the grave of Lloyd Dean Shook at Pot Hole Spring; and Douglas Young.



VISIBLE ROAD — Looking west on Applegate Trail to Clear Lake in background. This is the trail between Steel Swamp and Clear Lake. See map. Fifteen men who laid out this trail in 1846 traveling east did not mention in later writings that they had passed Clear Lake or Pot Hole Spring. That year approximately 100 wagons came over the trail west from Fort Hall in what is now Idaho. One man, David Goff, was left to lead the train west. In 1847 Jesse or Lindsay Applegate, leaders of the exploration party, wrote a way bill or guide on the trail and mentioned "Goff Spring," which probably was Pot Hole Spring.



THIRD STOP — This is portion of old Chinese wall near Clear Lake, 40 miles southeast of Klamath Falls, ordered built by Jesse D. Carr, early day California cattle baron, to close gaps in natural perimeter of rimrock. The wall enclosed thousands of acres of range land and Clear Lake. Wall was built by hundreds of imported Chinese. Later, much of it was torn down. A paper on the wall, written by the late Edith Rutenic McLeod, was read at this stop by Annabelle Newton, member of the Klamath County Historical Society.



IF STONES COULD TALK — Probably few persons live today who remember the building of the stone wall on the Jesse D. Carr Ranch near Clear Lake. But the stories of the building of that wall are legion, some fact, some legend. The wall "shoulder high to a horse" kept cattle herds inside on Carr land and near water, but it also kept out other livestock and land seekers, according to all newspaper records. Devere Helfrich stands beside part of wall still intact on north side of Clear Lake near old ranch headquarters. The wall was built between 1875 and 1882.



EDIBLE — These are epaws on Dobie Flats between Steel Swamp and Clear Lake on the Applegate Trail. This looks southeast toward Blue Mountain in the background. Indian tribes once ate epaws, a small, slim bulb. White flowers of plant dot flat land among the small sagebrush.



NOT FORGOTTEN — Within this circle of interested persons who traveled to Pot Hole Spring is a grave. The marker bears the inscription, "L. A. Clark, Died May 11, 1911, aged 61, a native of Illinois." It has never been determined why L. A. Clark was buried at this spot just off the Clear Lake turnout at Dry Lake, how he came to be in this remote part of Northern California or where he was bound. Each year, close to Memorial Day, someone places a few flowers upon the grave. Ken McLeod made a short talk on Modoc War and Battle of Dry Lake at this point. — All Photos by Helen and Devere Helfrich



CONJECTURE — Those who pass this way can only guess at what happened at this spot near the Applegate Trail where Lloyd Dean Shook was left when wagon train moved on. Mark Runnels placed wreath of garden flowers made by his grandmother, Helen Helfrich, upon the grave.