

# Marker To Note Arrival Of Fur Trader At Link River In 1857

## Features

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1963

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By RUTH KING  
The journey had been a long one for fur trader Martin Frain before he arrived on the west bank of Link River on that April 30 in 1857 with his train of five mules laden with trinkets and blankets to barter for furs. The mountain trails had been winding and narrow. The forests had been dense, and snow deep as a man's hip bones, still

lay with icy glaze in the hollows to torment unwary mules. Ice-rimmed streams and lakes still fretted at winter's bondage and it was with relief that Martin Frain led his animals through meadow grasses showing hint of new growth beside the stream. The arrival of Martin Frain, first permanent fur trader, is to be commemorated by Klamath Chapter Daughters of the Ameri-

can Colonists with the dedication of a handsome marker on Oct. 12. It is to be placed near the spot where Frain reached the east side of the river in Veterans Memorial Park across Main Street from Payne Alley and the historic Baldwin Hotel. The ceremony at 10:30 a.m. will be open to the public. The marker will be the first one placed

by the DAC since the local chapter was organized. Martin Frain's life from his birth on Dec. 17, 1832, in New York was a series of minor events leading up to his arrival in California in quest of gold as a young man, after a stormy sailing trip around the Horn.

This interlude in his life, the History of Central Oregon said, was of fleeting concern. He left the city beside the bay where men tossed off strong whiskey and tinny tunes lured them to part with fortunes. So he bypassed the saloons below Nob Hill, the gambling houses and the dance halls. On a day in spring when a morning fog lifted and disappeared over the Pacific, he left behind the horse-drawn trolleys, the Mission Dolores, the Tin How Temple and the salt marshes on the peninsula to mine gold for a time near Yreka.

But stories trickled in from passersby of the fortune to be had in furs further north, of the growing interest of women in furs for adornment and of men's pocket books that opened to pay for them. So he bought his mules and loaded them and set foot to the trail. It was a clear day when he arrived in the Klamath country and smoke from his two tiny barter fires spiraled up with no resistance from the wind. In the rarified air of the mountain country the signals carried far and since it was the time of the moon that promised a good fish run in the streams, the Indians came in numbers—the Klamaths and the Cayuse, according to a story gleaned from an old newspaper. An Indian woman paddled his wares across the river and Frain swam his mules. He went to higher ground beneath a rocky ledge and there he lay out the merchandise he would trade for furs. Later, the Martin-Reames Store was built on the spot. His beads were bright and the blankets he unfolded to customer gaze were brilliant red. By nightfall he possessed 1,200 skins, a small fortune in fur, destined for a firm in San Francisco known as Liebes. From that beginning he established a trading post at the pres-

ent junction of Payne Alley and Main where he continued to trade for furs. A chapter in the "History of Central Oregon" relates that on barter days Indians brought for show, stuffed white deer. They rarely sold these albino prizes that then were worth from \$75 to \$150 a skin. They were tempted sometimes by Indian money "Allico-chick," a shell that came from Queen Charlotte Island (still quoted in the History of Central Oregon).

A piece of shell reaching from a hand's palm to the middle joint of the little finger was worth \$5. The tribesmen had a scale of measurement marked on an arm from shoulder to elbow. Ten pieces of shell that reached from end of a thumb to a given arm mark was valued at \$100, the smaller and less valuable bits brought only \$25 a fathom.

This shell was so highly prized that gold in large amounts was traded for even minute pieces. Martin Frain, through fairness and awareness of Indian ways, earned lasting friendships. He experienced no difficulties in his trading and his word was known as "good." On those whites who took a redman's life, the redman had no mercy. Revenge started with the killing of the white man's family, one by one, until time ran out for the man who had taken a life, and he, too, was sent to join those who had helped pay the penalty. The theory—the transgressor suffered more seeing others die than he did when his own time for death came. Martin Frain, playing a "fair game," kept his scalp and his life. His comings and goings took him through the Shasta country and there he found his future wife and helpmate, "Bitsy," sometimes written Betsy, daughter of Rising Sun and cousin of Sitting Bull, who mothered his five sons, Frank, Frederick, Roderick, William (Wren), still living in Klamath Falls, now 90, Alfonso, and one daughter, Nettie. She had absorbed many of the ways of the white men and combining this knowledge with her

native ability, she taught her brood to live as upright citizens, to give a day's work for a day's pay, to share the gifts of nature, to honor authority and be conscious of forces greater than man

and water, fire and lightning. Martin Frain lost Bitsy before the youngest of her children was grown and lived alone the re-



**COURTLY GENTLEMEN** — Martin Frain, first permanent fur trader in the Klamath country, bought five mules in Yreka and arrived on the banks of Link River April 30, 1857. It was in the afternoon, say historians, and Indians in the valley had been alerted by "two smokes" that they could trade furs for beads and blankets. Indian women on tightly woven mats paddled Frain's wares across the stream with their feet thrust through holes in the mat used as paddles. He set up shop under a rocky ledge. The Indians, gathered at the "right time of the moon," were ready to trade their skins for the trappings. By sundown they had disposed of 1,200 furs, a fortune in those days, and were ready for a night-long "odd or even" game using beads for money. By morning, most of the men and women had lost to a lucky few. Martin Frain, who lived to be 70, is buried in the Way Cemetery on the top of Topsy Grade.



**BITSY FRAIN** — Mrs. Martin Frain of the Shasta Tribe became the wife of the fur trader and mother of his five children. She remained with them while her husband traveled after on business while they were young. She died before the last two children were grown.



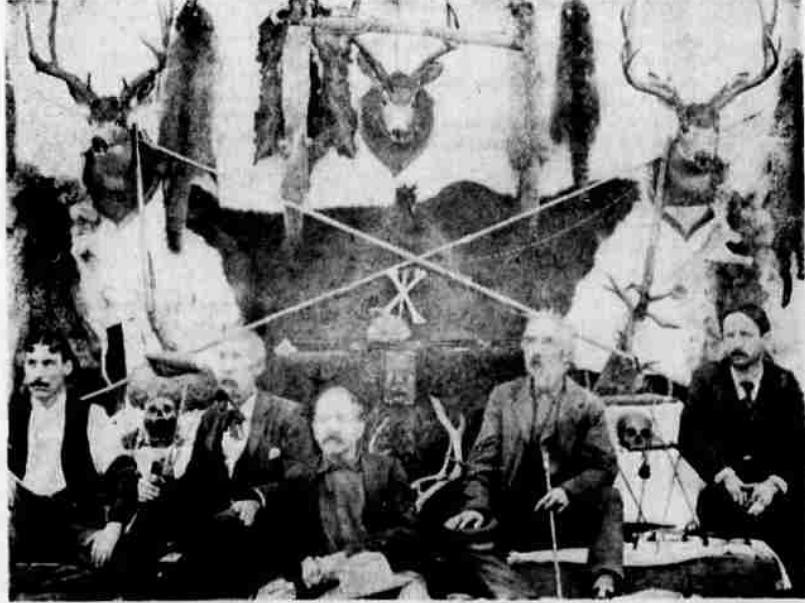
**A GREAT LAKE** — Martin Frain, fur trader, saw Klamath (Tlamath) Lake just 11 years after it was discovered by the explorer John C. Fremont on his second expedition into Oregon country in 1846. It is probable that many of the furs, coyote, raccoon, fox, bear, bobcat and other species he bought by barter from the Indians, were caught on the shores of this lake and in the surrounding forests and marshes. The picture was drawn by a man named Kerns who accompanied Fremont on this expedition. The drawing was made from a point probably near Moore Park where the explorers were then gathered. Wocut Bay is to the left, the high promontory to the right is the present site of Shippington and Link River flows from the lake nearby.



**WARES FOR TRADING** — This picture was taken about 1898 at Klamath Hot Springs in Northern California when that country and Southern Oregon were good hunting grounds for fur bearing animals. Look closely and determine the variety of pelts that Martin Frain, right, had purchased to be sold later in city markets. Large black skin at right is bear. Also note huge trap at lower left. Youth at left is Alphonso Frain, Martin's son. Man in center is unidentified. Picture is from collection of Wren Frain, Martin's son who lives in Klamath Falls.



**MODERN DAY FURS** — Members of Klamath Chapter, Daughters of American Colonists, will dedicate a marker on Saturday, Oct. 12, in memory of Martin R. Frain, "Pioneer Fur Trader." The plaque will be set in Veterans Memorial Park near the site on Link River where Frain landed. Wearing modern furs, left to right, are Mrs. Arch G. Proctor, Oregon State regent and member of Klamath Chapter DAC; Mrs. Charles K. Wells, Klamath Chapter regent; Mrs. Charles J. Martin, marker committee member, wearing a silver fox fur from animals caught on shores of Upper Klamath Lake, and Mrs. Roland E. Wright, Klamath Chapter chairman of markers and memorials. The dedication will also honor Mrs. Proctor and Mrs. Wells during Patriotic Education Week, beginning Oct. 12.



**MORE FURS EXHIBITED** — Left to right are King Quadsworth, Martin Roderick Frain, in later years of his life, Mike Haley, man by the name of Kessler, and George Frain. The picture was taken by J. S. Wintemute, "Portrait and View Artist," probably in Yreka. Skins of two raccoons hang among other skins on the wall. Mounted head in center holds Indian bow and arrow. Implements used by Indians are also in the picture. White men frequently found skulls of tribe members killed in battle or who had lost their lives by other means.

## National Fire Prevention Week Starts Today; Human Carelessness Causes Most U.S. Fires

By TOM NOLAN  
Newspaper Enterprise Assn.  
WASHINGTON (NEA) — The United States faces its worst forest fire toll in many years.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports over 86,000 forest fires in the first six months of 1963—22,900 more than the number reported during the same period a year ago. The area burned is almost double what it was a year ago—up to 2 million acres. Pennsylvania reports its most severe drought in 24 years. In neighboring New Jersey, some residents are forbidden to water their lawns more than once a week.

A series of dry lightning storms originating in northwest Wyoming and shooting off to the Canadian border have left behind a trail of 200 forest fires in Idaho, another 100 in Washington and Oregon. In an effort to reduce the tremendous destruction during the fall—traditional danger time for the Western forests—President Kennedy has proclaimed Oct. 6-12 as National Fire Prevention Week. The basic aim is to make every citizen aware of elementary safeguards which could eliminate most of the human carelessness causing over 90 per cent of America's fires.

Despite the hope of reducing carelessness, the U.S. Forest Service is leaving nothing to chance. In research centers around the country, new tools for fighting and controlling fires are being developed.

Innovations now being tested on actual fire lines include an air-conditioned helmet, a two-wheeled motor scooter and portable lookout towers.

The helmets, weighing 50 pounds, have a refrigerating unit which keeps it 20 to 30 degrees cooler inside. A filter keeps out the smoke. They are used mainly by operators of heavy equipment such as bulldozers, enabling them to work fairly close to the flames. The Los Angeles Fire Department, using the helmets to fight brush fires, discovered one drawback. One bulldozer operator, cool and secure, backed his machine out of a fire with burning debris on the blades, promptly starting a second fire.

The department now orders its helmet-wearers to remove their gloves from time to time so they'll know when they're still in a danger zone. The two-wheeled scooter, now being used by the forest service

in Montana, comes equipped with both front and rear wheel drive to help it climb logs and other obstacles. Reserve fuel tanks in the wheels, when empty, give the scooter enough buoyancy for a man to float it across a small stream while wading beside it.

Portland lookout towers are 11-foot-high trailers equipped with eight-foot extensions which can be erected in 15 minutes. Each trailer can sleep three men. A realistic training aid is an

electronic simulator system now being tried out by the forest service at Iowa State University.

In the 24-by-30-foot simulator enclosure, five projectors flash pictures of a raging forest fire onto a curved panoramic screen. A staff man broadcasts imaginary weather and wind conditions. The trainees, seated at nearby tables, give orders over telephones and radios. As their commands are received, trucks, planes and other equipment appear on the screen.



**SIMULATED FOREST FIRE** — Forestry trainees direct fight against a fire viewed on screen. With knowledge gained in classroom they will be better able to cope with the real thing. With the start of National Fire Prevention Week today, the U.S. is faced with its worst forest fire toll in many years in many years.



**SMOKEY** — Symbol of forest fire protection.



**FIRE TRAILER** — Portable lookout station features tower which can be raised in 15 minutes.