



## THE PASSING OF A LEGEND

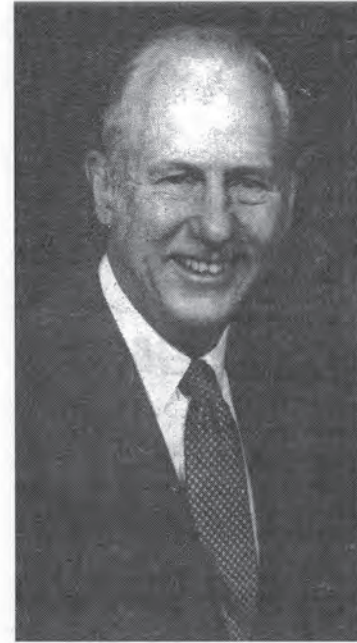
*By Yvonne Pettyjohn*

August- December issue of Curry County Echoes had just gone to print when I received word that Walt Schroeder had passed.

The loss of Walt was devastating for the Curry Historical Society and Museum. He had given so much to us, the loss was personal. No more emails or phone calls to Walt with questions or requests for his thoughts on certain matters of the moment. If Walt did not know the answer, he would say that and would find the answer, come back with it. He always made himself available to us. Some of us schemed of ways to get him back to Gold Beach to give a presentation, I had spoken to someone in Bandon who said he would be happy to come to the Museum and co-present if the other person was Walt who put the kibosh to that idea when he said he no longer drove.

Walt was a major force in the Curry Historical Society, he served a number of times as President and he gave historically informative presentations. I remember one wonderful afternoon when Walt, Reg Pullen from Bandon and a young woman from Ashland who displayed an amazing collection of Native American artifacts, gave presentations about Native American history in Curry County. I made Indian fry bread for those who wished. It was a good day.

Walt could pack a room and he could light a fire! I recall his last visit to the Curry Historical Society Museum. Many of us went to see and visit with him, he sat at the table answering questions from persons in a room full of the inquisitive. The energy spread and soon people were discussing situations and activities they had read about when Walt began naming 10 things that were special about Curry County some of us



Walt Schroeder: State legislator ,Oregon State University Extension Agent, 4H mentor, writer and founder and long time president of the Curry Historical Society.

could not hear him. There was something about him that infused one with such positive energy!

Walt gave the museum books he had authored, photos, slides, tapes of Curry County family histories, written stories and descriptions of his trail trip as well as hikes. There were no bits and pieces, Walt always made the perfect package.

I remember seeing plots of different grasses under some of his apple trees. He had placed a waterproof tag that enclosed a description of the type of grass that was planted under the tag that hung from a low branch of the apple tree. He was the perfect steward, leaving things better than they were before he arrived.

We discussed many topics but those I enjoyed most were about life. Like the time he looked at



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Three publications yearly:  
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### **Reminders from the Board:**

- **ADDRESS CHANGES:** Every bulletin returned costs us \$0.75 plus another \$0.58 to mail it to the new address provided by the Post Office. Also please note the Society's mailing address: P.O. Box 1598 - Gold Beach, OR 97444
- **EMAIL:** info@curryhistory.com **PHONE:** 541-247-9396
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- **HOW YOU CAN HELP:** Please think of us when considering a tax-deductible donation or if you are interested in volunteering — we are looking for people interested in Curry County history.
- **GROCERY RECEIPTS:** We receive cash when turning in grocery receipts to McKay's Markets. Please drop off your receipts at the museum or mail them to the above address. They must be less than 12 months old when we turn them in to receive the rebate.

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### **IMPORTANT DATES**

#### **BOARD MEETINGS**

*April 18*  
*May 16*  
*June 20*  
*July 18*

**I**t is the mission of the Curry Historical Society to encourage and promote the study and understanding of the history, primarily of Curry County, but also the impact of neighboring counties and the State of Oregon as they relate to Curry County.

*To accomplish this mission, the Curry Historical Society shall collect, preserve, exhibit, present public historical informational meetings, publish and make available materials of historical interest, and cooperate with other groups and individuals with similar aims.*

***Our primary focus is The Children of the County and bringing alive for them the History of Curry County.***

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

03 March 2022

Dear Curry Historical Society Members,

Spring is almost here, and as we watch the Spring flowers start to bloom and the trees begin to leaf out, I am reminded that Spring is a time of rebirth. Mother Nature begins her annual renewal of the land and as the pandemic recedes, our personal lives will move forward again as well. We look forward to returning to normal interactions between our communities, our neighbors and our families.

The Museum Board would like to personally thank each of you who sent in your 2022 dues and membership fees over the last few months. For those members who may not have taken care of this, please send in your dues when you are able. These donations are the life blood of your museum and are needed to keep the lights on and the history of Curry County preserved for generations to come. Board members will be reaching out to our membership and advertisers over the next few weeks to check in and remind folks to pay their membership fees.

A few projects are in progress at your museum, including remodeling the annex for safety and future display expansion with grant funds. We are also upgrading security in the Museum main building with new door locks and pass codes. We are moving forward with adding a commercial dehumidifier to the main museum building this Summer thanks to a recent donation, to eliminate the smaller units that require water buckets to be emptied by staff.

As always, we would like to encourage you to volunteer in your community and if you have a soft spot for history, we can always use volunteers to man the front desk as we reopen to the public in March. If you have greater ambitions, please consider attending one of our board meetings and volunteering your time to your local museum board.

As always, stay safe and look forward, to the new year ahead of us.

Best Regards, Your President

Dave Sanders

## THE PASSING OF A LEGEND, CONTINUED

*By Yvonne Pettyjohn*

me and declared that in the past he would observe old men walking around humped over and Now he was one of them! This was many years ago and I still laugh. Then there was the time he told me about courting Sally. He said as a young man he would get off work happy, full of energy and joy driving for hours to see he. Now a trip that consists of four hours driving time does him in. I still smile at that one.

Walt shared with me that he loved the people of Curry County and he missed us terribly when he left Gold Beach. He was such a terrific force within our Curry Historical Society, we will continue to remember him well.



---

## BOOKS FOR SALE FROM THE MUSEUM BOOKSHELF

THEY FOUND GOLD ON THE BEACH – A HISTORY OF CENTRAL CURRY COUNTY

*By Walt Schroeder* ..... \$30.00

CHARACTERS, LEGENDS AND MYSTERIES OF CURRY COUNTY OREGON

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*By Walt Schroeder* ..... \$15.00



## MINING STORIES

*By Yvonne Pettyjohn*

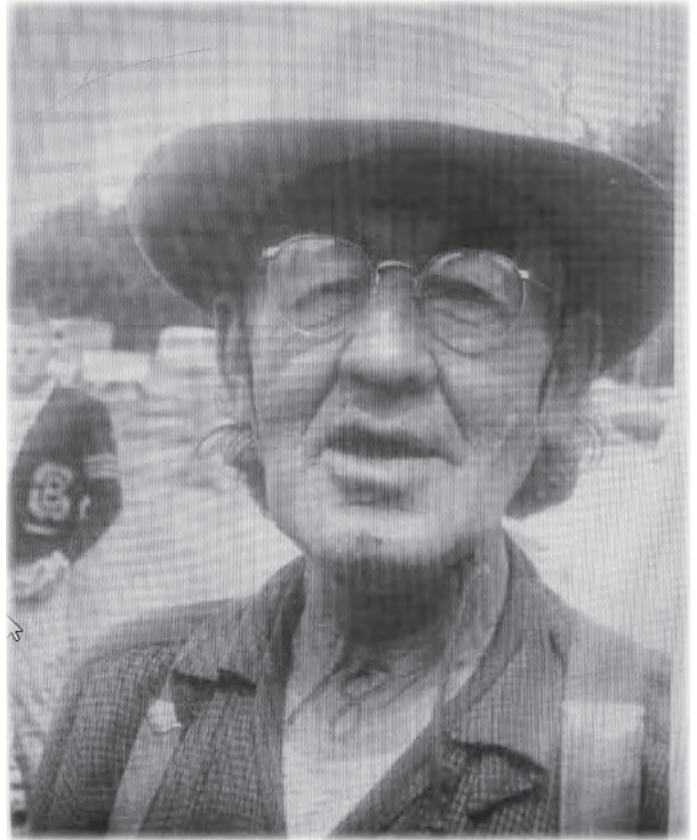
A new member of Curry Historical Society requested some stories about mining in Curry County.

My mother owned a mine "Blue Dawn" on the Rogue River. My father had passed away and she hired a man to prove the mine for her because she had many children, she could not leave home. This was some time in the mid 1950s.

She hired Benny Furrows, a man with long gray hair that hung out from under his hat that had a lacing that joined under his neck, insuring the hat would stay on his head, he wore a plaid jacket and one of his pants leg was inside his boot and the other partially hanging out. He smoked Chesterfields. Benny was a "Character", when he came to our house, family and friends would come by to hear his latest news about the mine or news along the river, it seems there was always something. I remember him as a rather exciting individual because people reacted to him. One day he went away and did not come back, I asked my mother what happened to him and she replied that he had gone to Portland. She eventually lost her mine because there was no one to prove it for her.

About twenty years later I asked a friend of our family who knew Benny what had happened to him and she said he had cancer, gone to Portland and passed away.

Several months ago a friend asked me if I knew Benny Furrows, I was taken back! He had heard about Benny from a friend. The story unfolds that Benny was an ace pilot who volunteered himself to fly for Spain during the Spanish Civil War. I researched Benny's name to no avail, however did find there were many Americans who changed their name in order to fly for Spain because the United States discouraged such actions. The pilots were paid well, it appeared they were a sort of renegade



**Benny Furrows**  
*(Photo Loaned by Linda Graves)*

group who led very colorful lives from what I gleaned in my research. A group of real Characters!

That was my mining story, I did use some Walt Schroeder type of research in the following Mining information.

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*The following article was taken from the December 10, 1880, issue of the Port Orford Post.*

*"Mines and Mining"*

In Curry County Since the Discovery of Gold in the County in 1850

Beach gold was first discovered April, 1850, eighteen miles north of Trinidad. Cal., at a point known at the present day as Gold Bluff. The name originated from the discovery of the



***Inman Mine, Sixes***



***Sixes River***



***Dam on S. Fork, Sixes  
Inman Mine***

precious metal in the sand on the beach in front of the table land or bluff. The next discovery of beach gold was made by Simon Lundry and Capt. Tichenor at Port Orford in March 1853. When the discovery was made the citizens of the town claimed that the metal found was brass filings, and that the finders were using deception in order to get up an excitement. F.M. Smith (who is now a prominent criminal lawyer in S.F.) however, gave \$75.00 for the first day's washing, and made money by the transaction. In a short time quite a number of claims were staked off and worked, which yielded from \$75.00 to \$130.00 per man per day.

The next discovery was made directly north of Cape Blanco, in April, 1853, by Capt. Tichenor, who owned and worked the first claim on that beach. He sold his claim not long after the discovery to two young men from Indiana and a Portuguese, who recovered from the sands the following winter \$15,000. The claim is now owned by William O. Sullivan and has been worked continuously from the date of its discovery.

Peter Ruffner, Aaron Dyer, Geo. Dyer, Howe & Company, and Coffee & Co., had claims which they worked during the years 1853-4. The yield on this beach when first mined was from \$30 to \$175 per man per day. The manner of saving the gold was a tom, sluice and blanket.

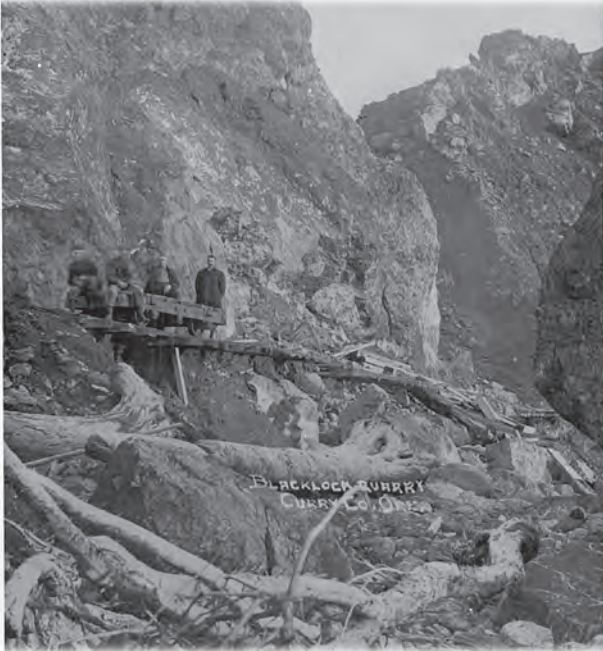
"Gold Beach Diggings", which are situated near Ellensburg, discovered about the 1st of

Sept., 1853. The first located, was 'Simon Beach'. Capt. Tichenor having taken Col. James and Col. Simon down on his boat to the 'Devil's Backbone', from which point they proceeded on foot to the field of their labor, where they took out a large quantity of gold dust. In October of the same year "Kelly's Cove" was occupied and



***Bridge to Camp  
Inman Mine***





***Blacklock Quarry***



***Break Time***

worked by French Jo. and Enos, the renegade Indian who was executed on 'Battle Rock" in Oct. 1855. Jo. and Enos sold their claim to a man named Kelly, from Elizabethtown, N.J., from which the cove received its name, and the few cabins erected there received the name of "Elizabethtown" . In one of these buildings, Geisel and his three sons were murdered by the Indians on the morning of Feb. 22d, 1856. During the summer of 1853, a great number of people came up the Coast from what is now Crescent City, (which was first settled that summer), in search of gold.

To "Randolph or Whiskey Run" mines were discovered in the last of May, 1853, Capt. Tichenor, who was being escorted to the mouth of the Umpqua river by a portion of Company C. 1st, U.S. dragoons, under the command of Capt. A.J. Smith, U.S.W.A. On the return of Captain Smith to Port Orford, the discovery was announced. Ben Wright, Indian Agent, and Frank Purrier, Jo.Crolous, Peter Crolous and Andrew Hubert, (half breeds), and two Indians from the Willamette Valley, having arrived at Port Orford prior to Capt. Tichenor's departure



***Black Sand Mining at Bailey Beach, 1916***



***Sluice Box  
Made By Cleve LeClair***



***Black Sand Mining***

for the Umpqua, rushed immediately for the new diggings. A few days later, McNamara and a number of others arrived at Port Orford, where they tarried but a day, and then pushed ahead for the new mines at Randolph. It was nothing unusual for the half-breed company to fill an oyster can full of gold dust from a single day's working. One evening, Jo. feeling somewhat discouraged, hid an oyster can filled with gold dust, and to this date has been unable to find his cache of the precious lucre.

"Johnson's Diggings" were discovered in 1854, by a man named Johnson, these being placer mines, and the gold much coarser than any before discovered in this section, Johnson was dubbed "Coarse Gold Johnson", he retains that name, and will his death. "Sixes Diggings" were discovered in 1856 by an Indian woman who afterwards became the wife of Ralph E. Sommers. He was living with the woman at the time of the discovery. Ralph, or Jake, as he was usually called, succeeded in obtaining a very productive claim. He said that it was "old John" before the discovery, but now people addressed him as "Mr. Sommers". It was at this mine that Bill Winsor erected that saw mill. It was at this mine, also, where Mr. Riley held a three days miners meeting for the purpose of being permitted to throw up a deep hole in his claim

and obtain other ground in its stead. The miners finally allowed him to do so. Geo. T. Sullivan took the obtained ground, which contained all the money that was in the original ground claimed by Riley.

The mines being worked at present are—The beach mines being worked at Cape Blanco, by William O. Sullivan, Patrick Hughes and Michael Duffey. Gold Beach—William Bailey, John Gauntlett, Dennis Cuniff, Cromwell & Co. Black sand at Randolph, Cyrus Madden and William Ferris at Port Orford, and Will Huntley at Rogue river. Bank and placer diggings by Aiken & Co. at Johnson's; Green & Co., Salmon Mountain; Lewis & Bros. Wilson & Co., Deadmond & Co., Wasson & Co., and Madigan on Sixes."

-----

*Following is another short article that appeared in the same issue of the "Post"*

"Black sand mines were first discovered by Hich, three or four miles from the beach at Randolph; three or four miles from where the first discovery was made on the beach in 1853. Afterwards, other black sands mines were discovered on the south side of the Coquille river, five miles from the ocean. Still later, William Ferris and Cyrus Madden found black sand mines six miles north of Port Orford. About the





***Black Sand Plant in Gold Beach, 1911***



***Thirsty***

same date William Huntley discovered black sand on the bluff a short distance north of Rogue River.”

---

*From “Port Orford Post”, May 26, 1881*

“Black Sand Machine”

Our exchanges speak of a new machine for saving fine gold from black sand, the invention

of a gentleman named A. Kenton, of Albany. The machine is based on strictly scientific principles, is very simple, easily handled and can quickly be set up at any point where the miners desire to work. Magnetic power is used upon the sand as it passes through the sluice boxes in such a way as to lift it from the gold, in fact throwing the black sand into an open or porous condition, leaving a free passage, through which the gold finds an





**Wet Men**



**Hydrolic Mining**

easy way to the quick silver in the bottom of the sluices.

After the sand passes through quite a number of sluice boxes, being carried along by a stream of water that runs in at the head of the sluice,

it finally comes in contact with a magnetic cylinder that separates by a revolving brush the magnetized portion of the sand from that which is not magnetic, it is claimed that with the use of this machine fully 80 per cent of the gold in the black sand along the sea beach of this Coast can be saved. Hitherto no method of working has resulted in saving more than 15 or 20 per cent. From this it will be seen at once how valuable the invention of Mr. Kenton must prove to be, if it will do all that is claimed for it.

-----  
"From The Port Orford Post 1880-81

June 3, 1880

Mr. Ferris informs us that on his mining claim on Sixes river, fossil woods, sea weeds, etc., are found at a depth of thirty feet and upwards."

Mining information will be continued in the next Echoes issue.



## ... FROM THE MUSEUM NEWS DESK

By Yvonne Pettyjohn

Thank You Linda Graves for the wonderful gift of books you gave the museum. We are so pleased to receive 4 new books of Illahe by Kay Atwood and 2 new copies of Until the Last Arrow by Percy Booth. These books are out of print at this time. Our museum is very pleased to be offering these copies for sale.

Overheard at Walt Schroeder's Memorial Saturday, March 5th, a man saying he had not met Walt, he attended Walt's Memorial because he had read Walt's book They Found Gold On The Beach. He was so impressed in the read, he had hoped to meet Walt someday and ask when the sequel to that book would be written and printed!

We are advertising Walt Schroeder's books he gifted the museum in this issue of the Echoes.

Article taken from Curry County Echoes July 1975. Printed exactly as written... Editor

*From Curry County Echoes July 1975*

*Tom Owen Pioneer of the Month a small story of mining*

*"Mined on Lobster Creek at the Old Diggins about 7 or 8 years—had a hydraulic giant in there. Came a big storm and we were out of food, so we hiked out to Wedderburn where the main store was. We got our food and headed back, only to find there had been a big slide. It took our cabin, went right over the mining outfit and covered it all up—that was 1918. It's all still buried—last time I was there, I found the nozzle and a couple joints of pipe, but that's all."*



***Beach Mining S. of Hubbard's Mound, 1938***

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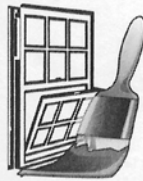
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**ARTIFACT DONATIONS**

Mark Kramer – Document on Moritz Fritzsche homestead in Curry County with photos.

Marsha Prevics – Two salmon canning jars from Wedderburn Cannery, map, aerial photo view of pre-jetty mouth of Rogue River, receipt book from Wedderburn Store, drawings of Port Orford and negatives by Howard Sands.

Unknown Donor – 3 R D Hume posters

James Leith – Oregon Russet Potatoes Sack

IN GREAT APPRECIATION –

Marian Davis, Accessions Director





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*To honor a friend or loved*

\_\_\_\_\_ **MEMORIAL PLATE \$25 AND UP**

*one with an engraved plate*

**Name of Recipient:** \_\_\_\_\_

*on the Memorial Wall:*

**Name of Donor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWED BY THE IRS\***

**Curry Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 1598  
Gold Beach, OR 97444

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Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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Gold Beach, OR 97444

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**Keeping History  
Alive!**

## **Curry Historical Society**

**The museum is located across from the Fairgrounds, and although we are small, we are organized. We do not have a Curator, but depend entirely on willing volunteer help. We are open from March through December.**

**We have many wonderful historical donations, which enhance our exhibits. Since this was once the home of the first Indian nation, we have an exhibit to honor them. We are also a county that at one time was a mining and early logging area with fishing, farming, and cheese factories. Our other exhibits represent these industries.**

**Note the watercolor presentation of the Rogue River and all its tributaries and lodges and a historical exhibit of our Isaac Lee Patterson Bridge, judged as the most beautiful bridge known at that time. It opened in 1932, and reconstruction was finished just recently.**

**We have a small gift shop and some interesting books for sale by local authors about our early pioneers and Indians. We welcome all visitors, and look forward to your visit. We share with our members the Echoes, a newsletter publication with historical stories.**