



CENTURY FARMS AND RANCHES OF CURRY COUNTY

By Mandy Keady

Trips along Highway 101 not only present the traveler with breathtaking ocean vistas but also offer a glimpse of some of Curry County's agriculture: sheep and cattle dotting the lush green hills, beds sectioning up cranberry bogs, neat rows in Easter lily fields, and signs inviting passers-by to stop and pick blueberries. While looking through resources in the archives, I found the file on agriculture and thought about those trips, wondering what other types of farming and ranching there were in southern coastal Oregon. In my search, I read about the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program, which reminded me of Oklahoma's Centennial Farms.

The OCFR Program, according to the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program Digital Exhibit on the Oregon Encyclopedia website, was

founded by the Oregon Historical Society in 1958 in preparation for the celebration of Oregon's centennial statehood in 1959. They wanted "to recognize the state's agricultural heritage and to honor farm and ranch families that have...

(Continued on page 4...)



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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
- **WEBSITE:** https://curryhistory.com
- **BOOKSTORE:** Full of great books
- **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.

IMPORTANT DATES

BOARD MEETINGS

April 16
May 21
June 18
July 16

It 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

January 2, 2024

To Our Members and Friends,

In the past couple of years, we have completed several large investments in your museum buildings and improved the grounds and historical displays with your assistance. We have replaced the main building roof, and this Summer completed the siding repairs and painting of the main building. These projects were accomplished with grants from our community and donations from our members. As a volunteer only non-profit, we continue to reach out to the local community and participate in local events to fund monthly operational expenses.

New projects at your museum in the New Year include an upgrade to our street sign, addition of new content on our website at www.curryhistory.com and finally setting up credit card acceptance processing equipment for use at remote events and in the museum gift shop. We will be organizing the museum annex building with several new displays in the New Year, including a new farm and ranch area.

We have several new books on local Curry history available at the museum and you can reach us by phone or stopping by as we reopen to the public in March 2024. Museum members may visit unlimited times with an annual membership cost of \$25 for adults, \$15 for students and \$40 for family memberships. Annual memberships are due in January each year. Daily general admission is only a \$5 donation for adults and children under twelve are free. Businesses can advertise in our Echoes newsletter three times a year at just \$40. Just send in a business card for use in the publication and your new or renewal payment of \$40 made out to Curry Historical Society.

The Museum Board meets every month on the third Tuesday at 5:30P and if you have an interest in what is going on or would like to join the Board, please consider stopping by at our next meeting on February 20th. We always need volunteers to staff the museum front desk and help us keep the building open and available to visitors so they can discover the magic of Southern Oregon history. Shifts run 10A to 2P Tue through Fri. If you have an interest in our local history and would like to get involved, please reach out and contact us. Please consider the Curry Historical Society in your giving plans this year. Donations can be mailed to our address shown above.

The Curry Historical Society Board

Dave Sanders, Your President

(Continued from page 1...) century-long connections to the land.” The program’s co-sponsors, the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon State Fair Commission, felt that “the approach to the state’s 100th anniversary [was] a fitting time to start paying tribute to those who have stayed with the soil generation after generation.” (Landis, 2023, para.1) In Curry County, ten farms and ranches have received the Century award.

Every family has its stories and notable moments; enjoy some from the Century Farm and Ranch families!

WALKER

James Gibson Walker was a native of Toronto, Canada, and came west in 1871 to join his brother, Robert, proprietor of a saloon in Ellensburg. James had taken passage by steamer to the Panama Canal, crossed the Isthmus by horse, then proceeded on another ship on the Pacific side to San Francisco. From there he



Walker Family L – R
top: William, Maude, Robert
middle: Alpharetta, Sidney, Claude
front: Arthur, James Gibson

CHS Archive

Original Owner	Year of Property Acquisition	Physical Location/ Legal Description	Crops or Livestock Historically Raised on Property
Walker, James Gibson & Alpharetta (Zahniser)	1873	not given	dairy and beef cattle, crops for food and cattle feed
McKenzie, Robert	1874	Elk River to North	timber, cows
McKenzie, Robert	1874	not given	cattle, sheep
Crook, Edwin	1879	not given	beef, dairy
Dement, Russell C.	1884	12 miles west of Powers T31S, R15W S16, 17, 22, 23 Call Ranch Prairie Carlton Prairie	beef cattle
Culver Hildebrand, Solomon & Sarah	1896	East of Langlois, adjacent to county's northern boundary T30S, R14W, S24, 25 T30S, R13W, S19, 30 E. Floras Creek	cattle, sheep, timber
Walker, James Gibson	1889	10 miles south of Gold Beach	sheep, dairy cattle, horses
Moore, Thomas Franklin	1900	Upper end of Euchre Creek Valley T35S, R14W, S9, 10	dairy cows, beef cattle, grass hay
Kreutzer, John Joseph	1902	not given	hay, pasture, dairy cows
Jensen, John & Orinnie	1902	South of Langlois, east of Floras Lake T31S, R15W S14 Willow Creek	blueberries, timber, beef cattle, dairy cows

Original Owner	Who Farms or Ranches Today (as of date of award application)	Name of Farm or Ranch	Crops or Livestock Currently Raised on Property	Year of Century Farm/Ranch Award
Walker	Walker, Marion Walker, Mildred		beef cattle	1993
McKenzie	Wahl, Georgina		sheep, cattle	1974
McKenzie	McKenzie, Scott McKenzie, Robert Jr.	Seaview	cattle, sheep	1985
Crook	Crook, William V. Crook, Ron J.		beef, sheep	1998
Dement	Dement, Samuel Simon, Gary Simon, Diane Harpole, Ron Harpole, Joan	Dement Ranch LLC	beef cattle	2009
Culver Hildebrand	Kalina, Steve Kalina, Deborah	Hildebrand Ranches LLC	timber, cattle	2002
Walker	Fendrick, Virginia E. (Walker)		horses, beef cattle	1993
Moore	Dishner, Lyle Dishner, Diane	Lazy J Moore Ranch	grass hay, sheep, dairy goats (prize-winning Toggenburg dairy goat herd)	2000
Kreutzer	Kreutzer, Lloyd and family	Lloyd Kreutzer Ranch	feeder cattle, feeder lambs, pigs	2002
Jensen	Jensen, Charlie	Jensen Farm	blueberries, timber, beef cattle	2002

**Source has not been updated with the deaths of owners.

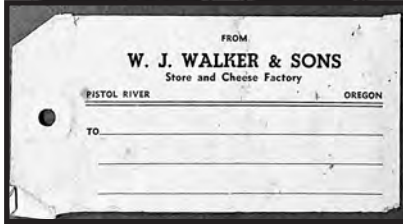
(Curry County, Oregon, n.d.)

Curry County, Oregon. (n.d.). *Curry County Geographic Information System*. Curry County Community Development. Retrieved February 17, 2024 from https://www.co.curry.or.us/departments/community_development_department/gis.php

Landis, L. (2023, July 3). *Oregon Century Ranch & Farm Program*. Oregon Encyclopedia. <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon-century-farm-ranch-program/>

(Oregon State University, n.d.)

Oregon State University. (n.d.). *Century Farm and Ranch Viewer-Curry County*. Century Farm and Ranch Viewer. Retrieved February 10, 2024 from https://ocfrp.library.oregonstate.edu/public/farms?field_name_of_farm_or_ranch_value=&field_original_owner_value=&combine_2=&field_county_value=Curry



**Charles Walker,
cheesemaker
CHS
Archive**

sailed on a small schooner to Ellensburg. He married Alpharetta Zahnizer, and they settled in Pistol River in 1877. Their daughter, Maude Morse, explains, "At that time. . .the government permitted a man to take up vacant land of one-hundred sixty acres, called a preemption. He could also take up a homestead of another one-hundred sixty acres by filing with the clerk of the county, but must live on it and improve the land for a period of five years, before he could call it his own. [My parents] built a house on it, mostly like a cabin. . .and had sheep and cattle, a few of each."

Homesteading involved constant effort, and it was often difficult to get away. Maude recalled a childhood incident. "When the first bridge was built across Pistol River, my mother begged father to take her to see it. Although it was only about a mile away, with everyday chores keeping both of them busy, she never made it. When the rains came that fall, the river rose over its banks. One day Papa, standing by the window, called out, 'Come here Alphonse, look at that; since you didn't get to visit the bridge, it came to see you.' We all ran to the window, peered out, and sure enough, there it was floating down the river, headed toward the ocean."

The Walkers' oldest son William James, took over the farm and around 1926 bought the Pistol

River cheese factory, which was located about half a mile up the Pistol River. Will sent his two oldest sons, Jay and Charlie, to Oregon State College in Corvallis to learn to make cheese. Many pounds of cheese were shipped directly from the cheese factory and store throughout the United States, England, Germany, and other countries.

Friendship Hall was built in the late 1940's on land leased to the Pistol River Friendship Club by the Walker family.

from *Pistol River Recollections* by Ella M. Sponaugle

MCKENZIE

Robert McKenzie bought a 480-acre claim at the mouth of the Elk River for \$2,200 in October 1874; the house was about a mile back from the beach along the river. McKenzie called the claim Seaview Ranch and over the next eleven years four children were born there. On the ranch, Robert and Georgina raised a few sheep, about 100 cows, and some hogs. Butter was preserved in brine for use at home, and the remainder was shipped to San Francisco in 64-pound cubes out of Port Orford on the *Arcata* or the *Elizabeth*. The McKenzies also brought the first donkey



Lambs raised by 4-H members are shown at the 1935 Fat Lamb and Wool Show. Participants are Edward Lindberg, Georgina McKenzie (Wahl), Ted McKenzie, Rod McKenzie, and two unidentified. from *Extension Annual Report, 1935*



Seaview 1870s, CHS Archive



Seaview House 1880s, CHS Archive

engine to the area for harvesting timber on their farm.

Seaforth post office was established November 12, 1890, in the McKenzie home on the Elk River with Robert McKenzie acting as postmaster for almost a year and a half.

On September 6, 1936, the McKenzie home, which had been constructed by J.P. Lindberg in the 1880's, was totally destroyed by fire. Most of the items which had been taken from Scotland to Australia to America were burned. The only items that were saved were the family Bible, some prized elk horns, a chest containing household items, and Georgina's piano. The piano had been shipped around 1883 from

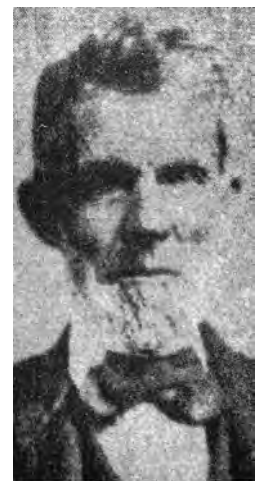
Scotland and around Cape Horn to Oregon, where it was put on a raft and taken ashore at Battle Rock in Port Orford then transported by wagon to Seaview Ranch.

In addition to timber harvesting, the McKenzies raised sheep; and since the 1960's they have been top sheep producers in the county.

from Curry Historical Society archives

CROOK

Old Theron, as Theron Crook is referred to by his descendants, came to Oregon in 1852, leaving his family in Illinois. It wasn't until 1859 that he was able to send for his eight children, his wife having passed away a few years earlier. They took a flat boat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans and caught a steamer around the Cape to San Francisco; from there they took a coastal schooner to Crescent City and rode by horse to Pistol River. The older sons homesteaded the family ranch while Theron was the U.S. customs agent for the southern Oregon coast, stationed in Port Orford during much of the 1860's, beginning a long line of public service to the county. Asa Crook, one of Theron's homesteading sons who served as Curry County Sheriff for one year, is credited with the installation of Curry County's first roads in the 1870's and 1880's during his terms in the Oregon Legislature. According to Harvey Crook, Theron's great-great-grandson, "In [Asa's] first term he wanted the appropriations for county roads because all they had at the time was trails. . . The other members told him that if he voted for what they wanted, they'd vote for what he wanted; but when it came time for his appropriations, they all told him there wasn't any money left. After



THONER CROOK

CHS Archive



***Crook Ranch in Pistol River
CHS Archive***

learning how the game was played, Asa got the first Curry road built in his second term.”

The Crook family was involved in the running the government program Production Marketing Administration in the early 1950's when the focus was on soil conservation along major streams, and they were noted top sheep producers in Curry County in the late 1990's.

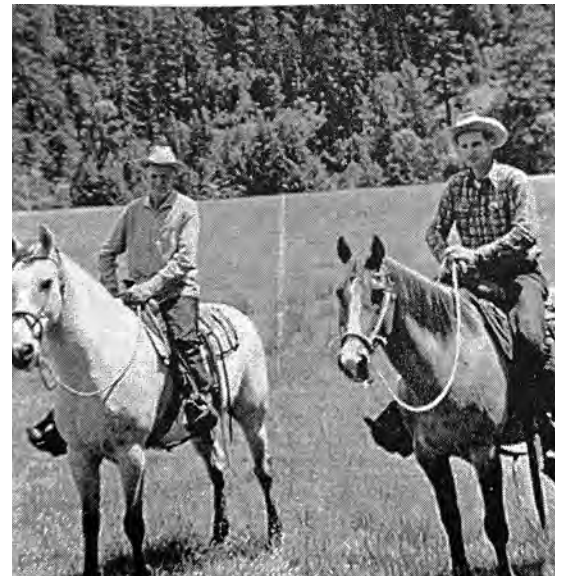
from Curry Historical Society archives and *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder

DEMENT

Russell Dement, born in 1847, writes that his parents, Samuel and Caroline, got the “Oregon Feavor” and headed west in 1851 by wagon train and started a cattle ranch a few years later. He was the first to register a livestock brand in Oregon. Samuel and later Russell were responsible for much of the improvement of beef cattle in the area through a carefully planned breeding program. Around 1911, Russell's son Ellis contributed by bringing in Hereford bulls. Sam Dement, Russell's grandson,

was a very respected cattleman, representing livestock producers as president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Western Oregon Livestock Association. As a fourth-generation cattleman, Sam continued the breeding tradition and “focused on breeding cattle that do well on the open range. Over the years, Dement cattle have foraged on the south slopes of the ranch year around, in contrast to the normal practice of being fed hay near barns in wintertime.”

In 1990 Sam recalled, “The old house [on part of the Dement ranch] is all handmade out of white cedar and square nails; it was built about 1870 to 1874 and had seven bedrooms. [It] was used as a stopping place and hotel. The old road came from Dement Creek above Broadbent and then on to the Guerin and Bigelow places to the east. Another road went south from Eckley to the Avery place. Dances were held in the big room upstairs. The old barn was put together by a barn raising party in 1890. One interesting thing about that barn, it has a flailing (threshing) floor. They would put down barley, oats, or other grain and walk oxen around to separate the grain from the chaff. There were bins in the four corners of



***Russell C. Dement (left) and Sam and Ellis Dement (right)
from Curry County Agriculture: The People
and the Land by Walt Schroeder***

the room and they would shovel the grain into the grain bins. According to Lewis MacArthur, an Oregon historian, there are only two or three left in Oregon.”

from Curry Historical Society archives and *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder

CULVER HILDEBRAND

Solomon and Sarah Culver Hildebrand came to Oregon from Missouri. The Hildebrand family raised sheep, and in the 1960's and 1970's were among the outstanding sheep producers in Curry County. The Hildebrands, like many other multi-generational farming and ranching families, contributed to efforts to keep Curry agriculture productive. In the late 1940's, the Sixes Grange and the Western Oregon Livestock Association put forth a resolution that resulted in a state appropriation for control of gorse as it was spreading and taking over agricultural land. The Hildebrands also participated in successful predator control groups, such as the pen traps for bears after the loss of over 1,000 sheep in the late fall of 1945 as well as trapper and hunter training established by a consortium of Oregon State College Fish and Wildlife Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Veterans Administration, and the State Department of Agriculture.

from *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder



Frank Moore Ranch, Euchre Creek Rd, c.1925, CHS Archive

MOORE

Thomas Franklin Moore, who went by Frank, was born March 28, 1874, in Wedderburn on the ranch now owned by John Mather. His parents were Davis Layton Moore and Mary Louise Cook; his grandparents were John Moore and Catherine Layton. Frank's grandparents and their six children began their trip to Oregon in 1850. His grandmother died while crossing the Great Plains. His grandfather settled the family on a donation land claim in Linn County near Albany, but sold it in the late 1850's and came to what is now Gold Beach. In 1877 Frank's parents moved to Ophir and settled on the south side of Euchre Creek.

The Moore family was part of the Curry County Dairy Herd Improvement Association that began in 1934. The purpose of the association is to test the production of dairy cows, improve management practices, eliminate poor producing cows, upgrade the quality of future producers through using better bulls, and produce quality dairy products that will command high prices. Through these efforts over the next few years, the Moores and other dairy families increased their dairy production by one-third.

from Curry Historical Society archives and *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder

KREUTZER

Joseph John Kreutzer came to Curry County from Oberwald, Switzerland. Joe built a cheese factory in 1915 and made Swiss and cheddar cheeses until 1930. Grandson Lloyd recalls, “[D]ad (Louis) got us started milking an old cow or two, I was 6 or 7 by then. . . [When I was] 12 years old, [we milked] with milking machines, double units which milk two cows at a time. It took both Lowell (twin brother) and I to set machines out and dump the milk in a can. The barn was 150 feet long, held 50 cows on each



Katherine "Kate" and Joe Kreutzer family.
Louis, Bill, Virginia, Alice and John

CHS Archive



Joe Kreutzer mowing hay with horses,
Tom and Fancy, ca. 1910

**from *More Characters, Legends
and Mysteries of Curry County,
Oregon* by Walt Schroeder**

side, but we got up to about 125 cows a couple years later."

"Sometime in my junior year in school I bought a 1931 Model A truck with 4-speed transmission and 3-speed brownie (an auxiliary transmission to add power), and started hauling milk for Hansen Cheese factory. Got up to 90 cans in the spring of the year and picked up milk before school and took the empties home after school. Also. . . [I was] milking 20 cows before and after school. [On Friday nights, I played basketball] and had to go play usually without supper. [However,] the team almost always ate a

dozen raw eggs before the game, [which seemed to have worked since] Langlois won [the] County Championship three of the four years we were in high school." I kept hauling milk, still going to school, until summer 1946. By [1949-1951 we] run about 600 ewes [and] had the milk cows up to about 60 head. I kept helping Dad and Mom, had 200 ewes and 15 – 20 cows on the hill of my own."

"1950 must have been a good year – Geraldine and I got married. We built a little house down the road on the hill part of [the] ranch in 1951 [and milked] cows, working for \$300 a month until April 1953."

The Kreutzers were some of Curry County's leading dairy farmers in the 1940's. In 1944, young Ralph Cope bought a Jersey calf from the Kreutzers as a 4-H project, and she won four National Production Championships for him.

from Lloyd Kreutzer's life story, Curry Historical Society archives and *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder

JENSEN

John Jensen was from Kyobing, Denmark, choosing to settle in the Curry community of Denmark where several relatives were already located. One of John and Orlinnie's sons was Charlie, born in 1901. At the age of 13, he hauled cans of milk from neighboring dairies with his...

(Continued on page 13...)



Charlie poses on the McCormick-Dearing iron-wheeled tractor while clearing pastureland for the Jensen farm.

**from *The Story Behind the Treble
Clef* by Bonnie Jensen Cox**

BOOKS FOR SALE FROM THE MUSEUM BOOKSHELF

FRAGMENTS Bits and Pieces of the History of Curry County, Oregon

By *Mark Kramer* \$25.00

From the Introduction – “As a kid growing up near Gold Beach in the 1970s, I became very interested in the history of the area. . . At 13 years old I was fascinated by all the events that had occurred here. From the earliest sailing ships and explorers passing by, the Native Americans, the early settlers, the Indian Wars, hewing farms and homes out of the wilderness and finally building towns... Many days were spent searching out the old sites... I loved every minute of it!... It is my sincere hope that these writings may be of interest to others who enjoy learning about local history. There is much to explore and know.”

THE STORY BEHIND THE TREBLE CLEF Family Roots in Denmark, Oregon

By *Bonnie Jensen Cox* \$30.00

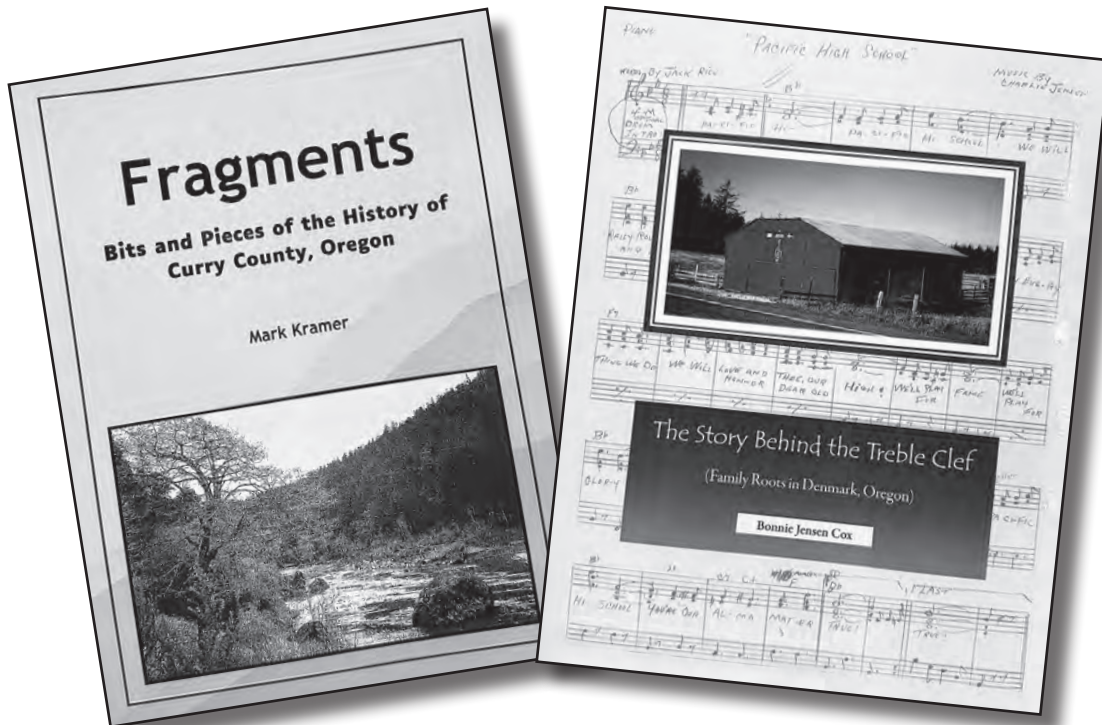
“Inside is the story of Denmark, Oregon’s origins and the biography of Charlie Ray Jensen. Included in the narrative are the circumstances that compelled Danish immigrant, Johan ‘John’ P.F Jensen, to homestead on Willow Creek in 1887, and the dual roles that music and agriculture played in the life of his son, Charlie.”

HORSE TALES FROM PISTOL RIVER

By *DeBorah Howard* \$8.00

CABIN FEVER Notes from a Parttime Pioneer

By *William L. Sullivan* \$19.00



... FROM THE MUSEUM NEWS DESK

By Mandy Keady

Roots

What connects and anchors a person to a particular place? Family? Familiarity? Discovery of a place that resonates with one's spirit? Whatever the case, roots become essential to a person's life. Knowing, and possibly loving, a place helps define who you are. Our younger years often focus on branching out our own, striving to grow and flourish. Yet, in time, we begin to recognize where the strength to continue flourishing frequently lies— in our roots, underlying all and passing along the life force. Roots can inspire us to excel and to honor those who have come before and to contribute to the longevity of our special place.

Having lived in this region of towering trees, powerful rivers, and rocky coasts for a few years now, I'm reflecting on roots from a different perspective. Roots can be far-reaching and extend into new ground, finding strength in familiar elements. Most of my roots are in the wheatfields and cattle farms of Oklahoma, in the satisfaction and pride of a long day's work accomplished – the winter's hay put up in the barn, the cattle and horses tended to and content, harvesting at times through the night to beat the crop-demolishing hailstorms. Here in southern coastal Oregon, I am discovering stories of the hard work and dedication of pioneers, fishermen, entrepreneurs, loggers—connections to satisfaction and pride in a job well done. Digging into Curry County's past seems an ideal way for a Midwest country girl to start putting down some roots in new but familiar ground.

It is my aim to share my "newcomer" discoveries of Curry County and invite others to add to those stories with their experiences and knowledge. I am excited to have been given this opportunity to compile *Curry Echoes*, and I very

much look forward to learning more about the roots of Curry County!

Work on the annex continues. The interior walls have been finished with burlap, giving the annex a rustic feel. Farm and ranch implements are being gathered as part of the exhibit honoring John Mather.

The Christmas bazaar was well attended, and the museum successfully raised funds.

A group of students from Riley Creek Elementary in Gold Beach visited the museum in March and enjoyed learning more about area history.



Scythe and hay rake that will be part of the John Mather exhibit

Courtesy of Mandy Keady



Oxen yoke, barbed wire, and gamble that will be part of the John Mather exhibit

Courtesy of Mandy Keady

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(Continued from page 9...) small pony cart to the Demark cheese factory and was paid 10 cents a day. About a year later, he was hired as a helper to the head cheesemaker and received \$15 per month. Charlie became proficient at making cheese and made Mell-West cheese at Denmark, Tillamook cheese at Sixes, and the famous Blue Vein cheese at Langlois. (The Blue Vein cheese filled a void from lack of French cheese imports during WWII. The Langlois cheese factory used rich, creamy milk from local Jersey cows; and the professor from Iowa State College and experienced Danish cheesemaker who taught the Langlois factory owner how to make blue cheese claimed it was "superior to any he'd ever known.")

In 1955, Charlie cleared three acres of the farm to cultivate blueberries for what was to become Jensen Blueberries. Charlie was also

known as Mr. Music, devoting much of his life to local and school bands. He spent most of his 103 years on the Jensen Farm.

from Curry Historical Society archives and *Curry County Agriculture: The People and the Land* by Walt Schroeder



Above is John and Linnie Jensen's newly finished homestead home on Willow Creek. Back row LR: Jack, Bessie, Linnie, John. Front row LR: Mabel, doll in carriage, and Nellie.

from The Story Behind the Treble Clef by Bonnie Jensen Cox

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Mark Kramer – copies of his book *Fragments*

The Curry Historical Society appreciates your generous donations.

Marian Davis, Accessions Director

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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.