



The Ridge Route Rambler

Published by the Ridge Route Communities Museum and Historical Society

Fall 2010/Winter 2011- Eloise Richer, Editor



DALE CHITWOOD

September 11, 1930 – February 16, 2011

Dale Chitwood, a pillar of the Ridge Route Communities Museum and Historical Society and the Condor Group chapter of the Sierra Club, as well as a tireless volunteer at the Wind Wolves Preserve and an inspiration to neighbors and friends, died suddenly on February 16.

Dale was born on September 11, 1930 in Phoenix, Arizona to parents William and Dorothy Chitwood. He passed away on February 16 due to a stroke after a brief hospital stay. After graduating from Azusa Pacific College and receiving his secondary teaching credential at Claremont Men's College, he married Alice Burnett and started teaching history at a local high school. In 1958 he bought a service station which he owned and operated until his retirement in 2000. Throughout his working years Dale served the communities wherever he lived and worked. He was deeply involved with the Junior Chamber of Commerce, served as president of the California Service Station Association throughout the 1980s. He also raised funds for local schools.

Dale and Alice retired to Pine Mountain in 2000. He kept active by volunteering at Wind Wolves Preserve, by being active in the Ridge Route Communities Museum and serving the past two years as president. He lead hikes with the Sierra Club and did woodworking and construction projects at home. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Alice; his three, sons, Doug, Dan and Derek; his daughter Dottie and his two stepchildren John and Chris Regan and grandchildren Toshio, Miyeko, Kiyoshi, Gaby, Kiera, Erin and Ian. A memorial service was held at Wind Wolves Preserve on February 26. He will be sorely missed by many people.

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MY EXPERIENCES AS A NEW DOCENT

by Chandra Sargent Mead

Being recently retired as an air traffic controller, I have a lot of time on my hands lately. I attended the Museum's picnic in July and was encouraged to volunteer as a docent. I began doing that once a week shortly after that.

Although the museum is small and hours limited, I've met some interesting visitors. One gentleman, after looking around, pointed to a panoramic picture on the wall with a couple hundred people in it from a General Petroleum picnic in the 40's and said "See the little boy in the striped shirt? That's me!" We've had a visitor here from London who thought that the museum was "quaint". We even had a couple of guys from Russia, who run a tour group down in Los Angeles.

The static and rotating exhibits, as well as the outdoor setups are interesting enough, but for me the really interesting "meat" of the museum is the history files. Every week I pick a file, and read through all the interesting letters, articles and interviews on that person or subject and look through all the pictures.

Some of these may have been donated by a local or their family; sometimes they're copies of copies. Some are clippings from old newspapers. And some are records of interviews with "old-timers" made by our historian. Often what's in one file will lead me to another file. And another.

One day, I was reading through the various Cuddy family files and came upon a plainly drawn family tree, from Eliza (Walla Walla daughter of the Nez Perce Chief Joseph) and her husband Joseph Gale, and their daughter Margaret who married John

Fletcher Cuddy and settled here in 1858, to the Cuddys, Darlings, Tubbs, Tiffts, Gormans and many more that live on the hill today. Being an amateur genealogist I set out to properly redraw their family tree. It became quickly obvious how overwhelming a task that would be, so I began entering the family data on an online genealogy site. And shortly thereafter, the museum got a copy of the newly minted book "Governor Joseph Gale and His Indian First Lady" by Lillian Cummings Densley & Aaron G. Densley. What a treasure trove on the Cuddy family! Pretty soon the tree had grown to over 200 people with lots of information on their lives.

From the book I learned that Joseph Gale was quite a character. In his 74 years, he was not only the First Governor of Oregon, he was an explorer, a fur trapper, builder and captain of the schooner "Star of Oregon". He was a gold miner (49er) and a scout-guide for the Union Army. Gale was a hay farmer (here in the Ft. Tejon area, which is how his daughter met John Cuddy). He was a ferryman on the Kern River. Formerly called Gordon's Ferry, the crossing came to be known as Gale's Ferry. In his 60's he finally settled down as a farmer in Eagle Valley, Oregon; growing vegetables and fruit. Gale became the first Postmaster of New Bridge, Oregon. He turned to politics and took on causes such as the eligibility of "half-breeds" to citizenship. Many of his descendants live in Oregon to this day.

"Governor Joseph Gale and His Indian First Lady" is available for purchase at the Ridge Route Communities Museum.

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MUSEUM NEWS

MONEY- The subject that is on all our minds this year for one reason or another. The Board is so thankful for all of you – our faithful members. Because of you we finished the year with money in the treasury and we had not raided the savings account once. Granted, the amount was only \$90.00, but it was positive. We thank all of you for paying your dues, sending extra as donation and supporting our fund raising efforts to keep the museum afloat. Please continue your efforts and we will continue to minimize expenditures and keep everything going on.

GOALS – Each year the Board sets goals for achievement during the year. In 2010 we experienced the best year of achievement in a long time. We revamped the inside of the museum and the displays, renewed the Native American parts, built interactive mining displays (for the child in all of us) and expanded programs for children. We also reworked and expanded the subject matter of our books for sale. Our biggest setback was with our goal to establish a native plant garden around the property. The plants just did not take. Do come in and see the changes.

Our 2011 goals include (1) to complete the picture boards that are part of the inside displays; These expand our ability to show off our wonderful collection of pictures of the Ridge Route communities; (2) to rework the outdoor Native American display and set up a realistic camp; (3) to build a shed outside to display the many small tools we have for ranching and mining especially; (4) to establish some more native plants on the property; (5) to conduct more programs, tours and fund raising events to keep the museum viable. If any of these ideas interest you, call the museum to be put in contact with the person in charge of that activity.

THINGS ARE CHANGING

NEWSLETTER – One of our most expensive activities is the publication and mailing of our newsletter. Throughout 2010 the Board kept looking at the way we do things to cut expenses and minimize our expenditures. We stopped having the *Ridge Route Rambler* printed by a commercial printer to cut expenses. The next change we have planned is to send the newsletter to those of you who have e-mail addresses.. Those of you who do not have this nice helper will still receive you newsletter by U.S. Mail as you always have. If you don not want to receive the newsletter via e-mail, or do not have a e-mail address, we will continue to send the newsletter by mail. With postal rates ready to increase again this year, we hope to save \$90 for each issue on postage. This also saves paper, ink and allows for more pictures in each issue. I hope you understand our predicament regarding funds. It is common right now for all nonprofit organizations in the current economy.

SPECIAL DISPLAYS - On the end of the Native American display section we constructed a set of shelves. We are starting to use these for the display of special collections. These collections are privately owned and are displayed for only a short time. We displayed Carl Marsee's pencil sharpener collection, Bonnie Kane's Halloween collection, Christmas toys from several of us, and now Donna Turner's oil lamp collection. These are on display for two months at a time. Do plan to come in and look at the special collection. These are very interesting. If you have a special collection that you would allow us to display, call the museum and you will be put into contact with someone to take the information and schedule your time. The abundant variety in collections is fascinating.

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15 YEARS! – Who would have thought it! It has been 15 years since the Ridge Route Communities Museum and Historical Society was established in May of 1997. In those 15 years, we established the society, set up the first museum in Lake of the Woods, purchased our current site and developed it into an excellent example of a small museum that presents the broad scope of the history in the Ridge Route Communities. The Community Picnic scheduled for July 16 will celebrate this achievement. Many people have worked hard to get to this point.

CRAFT FAIR – At this year’s Craft Fair in November, we want to have a table of donated craft and sewing items that will be sold to benefit the museum. Simple household items like aprons, potholders, embroidered towels, etc. are what we thought would sell to benefit the museum. If you would like to participate in this effort (please!), call Eloise Richer at 245-1789. This table will supplement the “Bits and Pieces” table that we have had for the last two years.



Open meetings – Under our constitution, all Board of Director’s meetings are open to Society members to attend if they wish. Do you have gripes or suggestions you want the board to hear? Come to the monthly board meeting. If you are curious to hear plans and ideas, come to the monthly board meeting. We meet at 6:00 P.M. the second Thursday of each month at the museum. Meetings usually dismiss by 7:30 at the latest.

Yearly Theme and Celebration – Each year we set a theme that celebrates an activity in our area. Last year (2010) it was gold mining as well as the coming of the telegraph to the area. In 2011 we will celebrate the Cristo umbrellas that displayed so beautifully on our hills and mountains. We all have some personal memories of this event. Come to see the display that Bonnie Kane has set up in the museum. She has displayed pictures and artifacts of many types including samples of the fabric used in the umbrellas.

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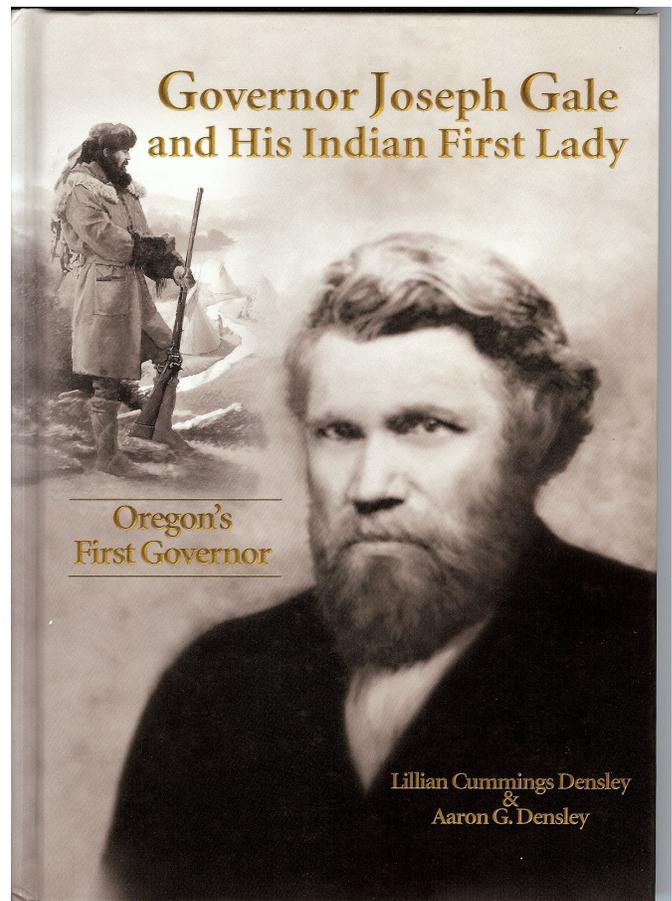
UNNAMED CANYON - In our last issue we invited all of you to suggest names for an unnamed canyon that Lockwood Valley Road goes through. No suggestions were submitted, so it will remain unnamed.

HELP AROUND THE PROPERTY – The Board has thought about all of the things and tasks that must be done around the museum property and have come up with a list. These vary from housekeeping, outside and inside maintenance, simple garden tending, and building outside display structures (see above). We are looking for people to fill these volunteer positions. Please, if you can help out, call the museum at 661-245-7747, preferably on weekends when someone will be present to answer your call.

Basket weaving Class – This year Bonnie Kane will be holding her popular basket-weaving class on Saturday, March 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is a Saturday. Because space in the museum is limited, we must limit the attendees. So call in your reservation as soon as possible. Also, if you find you cannot keep your reserved spot, please cancel so that someone on the inevitable waiting list can come.

Popular Selling Items – Susan Amon, our Gift Shop manager has compiled a list of the 10 most popular selling items in our Gift Shop. The top selling item is Creepy Crawlers, a soft molded presentation of snakes, spiders, alligators and all other similar creatures. These are popular with the under 10 years age group.

NEW BOOK AVAILABLE – A new book is now available in our bookstore entitled *Governor Joseph Gale and His Indian First Lady* by Lillian Cummings Densley & Aaron G. Densley. The Gales settled in this mountain area and were part of the very early pioneers. The cost is \$38.00 prepaid. If you wish to order the book, send the money to the museum and we will send you a copy.



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THE FRAZIER MINE

by Bonnie Kane

In 1870 a very significant discovery was made in our mountains. Here is the story ---

Warren, William and Edgar Frazier had come to California while working with the crews that brought the railroad across the country. They settled in Bakersfield and from there would come up into the mountains as “market hunters” – providing meat to a local meat market. When tracking down a deer they had shot, they happened upon some gold nuggets. They returned to town (Bakersfield), put together supplies for an extended campout and returned to stake a claim to the area where they had seen the gold.

Warren was the one who spent the most time developing the mine and continued to cover expenses by hunting. One of his first partners, Bob Maddox, wrote of Warren Frazier:

“He took me not far from his camp to the croppings of a quartz vein and I broke some off and could see gold in it. He asked if I had experience in mining and if I had this, what would I do. I suggested he build an arrasta, which he knew nothing about, so I helped him guild it. We could, with the help of one of the mules, grind about three hundred pounds of rock a day, which ran about a \$100 a ton.”

Mr. Maddox also recorded that Mr. Frazier had the bad habit of spending the gold on booze and once, while on a binge, he was approached by some investors from San Francisco and lost the mine.

This was just the first time the mine changed ownership. Each owner took out gold. The last time the mine was worked was in 1988. After that the mine was permanently closed. No one knows exactly how much gold was taken from this site, but it was a lot and it was profitable.

The range of mountains where the Frazier Mine is found has been the site of many gold strikes. None of these were as large as that of the Frazier brothers, but most were profitable to their owners.

FRAZIER MINE 1995



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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to: Ridge Route Communities Museum, P.O, Box 684, Frazier Park, Ca. 93225

Names(s) _____

Mailing address _____

Phone _____ *E-Mail _____

Please Indicate:

Annual Membership _____ New _____ Renewal

_____ \$15.00 Individual

_____ \$20.00 Couple

_____ \$250.00 Lifetime Membership

_____ Gift Membership given to: _____

_____ Memorial Gift in the name of _____

(Please give us the name and address of the family so an acknowledgment may be sent)

DONATIONS:

_____ Building Fund

_____ Publication Fund

_____ General Fund

VISIT US ON THE WEB RRCHS.ORG

Email rrchs@frazmtn.com

For information after hours call:

Daisy Cuddy 661-245-2339

Eloise Richer 661-245-1789

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Membership.....Jessie Jamar

Contact RRCMHS:

Phone 661-245-7747

Email rrchs@frazmtn.com

Mail PO Box 684

Frazier Park, Ca. 93225

Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday
12 noon to 4:00 p. m.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR FOR 2011

The list of museum activities for 2011:

March 26 – Basket- weaving class

April 16 – Yard cleanup

May 21 – Annual car show, in town

June 4 & 5 – Annual Barn Sale

July 16 – Community picnic and anniversary
celebration

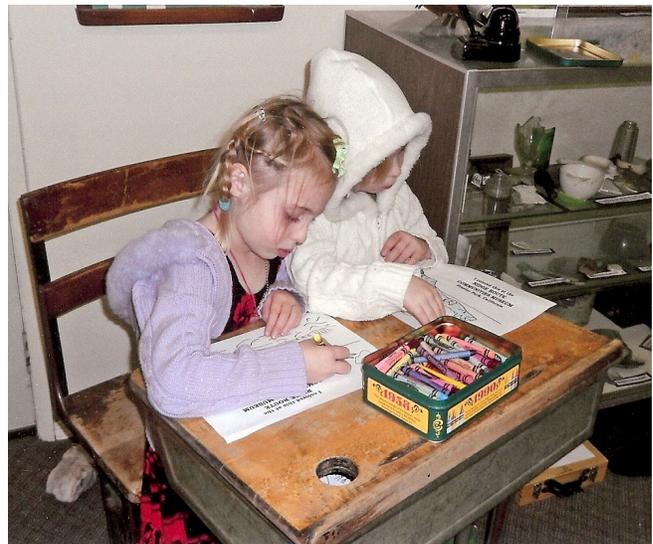
August 6 & 7 – Fiesta Days

September 17 – San Andreas Fault Tour

October 29 – Halloween Ghost Stories

November 4 & 5 – Holiday Craft Fair

Other dates will be announced as plans can
be finalized.



Museum neighbors Katelyn and Hannah
Bernards coloring pictures while sitting in
the old school desk.