

Applegater

Photo by Luke Ruediger • applegater.org

SPRING 2023
Volume 16, No. 1

Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
Serving Jackson and Josephine Counties — Circulation: 13,000

Celebrating
~29~
Years

Sentinels through the centuries: Ancient incense-cedars of the Applegate

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

Other than studying the ancient geology of the Applegate watershed, there's no better way to connect with the area's natural history in the here and now than getting to know the big old trees that have grown through the centuries. Many local old-growth trees have been alive in the Applegate watershed for hundreds of years and have witnessed lots of changes over that time.

The Applegate watershed is home to many stunning old trees, like the ancient sugar pines that grow in the Butte Fork canyon, dwarfing hikers along the Butte Fork Trail, and gigantic Douglas fir trees along the Middle Fork Trail that grow like a cathedral. The behemoth incense-cedar trees in the Applegate watershed that erupt from the earth with their ancient burls are some of the largest incense-cedar trees in the world.

Incense-cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) is not a true cedar, and that is why the common name is purposefully hyphenated. The hyphen is botanical



The Studhorse Tree is quite possibly the largest incense-cedar in the world, and it grows right here in the Applegate watershed. Photo: Suzie Savoie.

shorthand indicating that the common name is misleading. True cedars, in the See **INCENSE-CEDARS**, page 15.

Honoring the First Nations people of the Applegate Valley

BY EVELYN ROETHER

Southwest Oregon has been occupied by humans for at least 10,000 years. The original inhabitants of the Applegate River watershed were mostly the Da-ku-be-te-de people. They spoke Athapascan, as did the Galice Creek Taltushtunte, as do the Klamath River Hoopa and the coastal Tolowa people. Their neighbors, the Takelma, who lived more in the Illinois Valley, spoke a different language and referred to the Applegate River as "S'bink," meaning "Beaver Place."

Although there was some shared use of higher-elevation territory, each tribe had primary usage along certain rivers where they had camps, villages, and access to an abundance of salmon.

At the time of initial contact with white people, the Da-ku-be-te-de reportedly had three intensively occupied areas: near the confluence of the Applegate and Rogue rivers, near the mouth of the Little Applegate River, and upriver below where the Applegate Reservoir is today.

A little below the mouth of Applegate River, on the banks of the Rogue River,

was a Da-ku-be-te-de settlement referred to as Tadmelm. A village near the mouth of the Little Applegate was inhabited by a band of people, including Chief John, who was also known for his leadership of the Native people in the Rogue Indian Wars. Before the Applegate Reservoir was built, archeologists found several house pits near the dam site, indicating historical Native habitation there as well. The Da-ku-be-te-de also had seasonal villages around the Applegate Valley, one of which was in the vicinity of the original Williamsburg townsite off Williams Highway in present-day Williams.

The lives of the Native people drastically changed when the first Euro-American people came to the Applegate watershed looking for beaver. In 1827, Peter Skene Ogden and his crew were sent by the (British) Hudson Bay Company to fulfill the European demand for beaver hats and to also create a "fur desert," thereby gaining economic advantage before their

See **FIRST NATIONS**, page 2.

Applegate collection offers a glimpse into a time when you made social media posts on postcards

BY DIANA COOGLE

"Postcards were the social media of the day," says Mary Mikkelsen, a descendant of the Applegate's pioneering Buckley family and an avid collector of historic postcards. Her collection has "too many to count," she says. "They come from all over the world, including my dad's collection from when he was overseas for World War II and my great-aunt Kate's collection from when she was overseas in World War I as a nurse."

A good example of the use of this social medium is the exchange of postcards between Mary's great-uncle George Buckley and his best friend, Ed Kubli, who lived downriver from George, close to the Applegate Bridge store.

"Uncle George spent the winter above French Gulch, breaking and training horses," Mary says. "Ed would send him a postcard, and he would send a postcard

back. Some had pictures of interesting things—horses, or whatever. Sometimes Ed or George wouldn't say anything on a postcard. Sometimes they just numbered them. Ed would write 'Number 8' on his, and George would respond with 'Number 8.'"

These days we send emojis.

A whole series of these postcards between George and Ed was about Ed's missing horses. The postcards reveal that the horses went up Thompson Creek, then got over the divide to Elliot Creek. Finally, George sends a postcard to Ed saying, "Yay! I found your horses."

A popular practice was to send colorized photos, like the one of the Permanent Exhibit Building in Medford (maybe the old Medford train depot, where Porter's is now). Some, like the sailboat postcard, were made of leather and are especially



A postcard (above) from Mary Mikkelsen's collection shows the Beekman Bank, the oldest bank in Oregon. This postcard (at right) from Mary Mikkelsen's collection is made of leather.



beautiful. One of these was sent to Mary's great-aunt Rose from a friend in Alaska. It shows an owl on a branch with the words, "Get wise. Come to Nome, Alaska."

Another popular practice was to take photographs on family vacations and have them made into postcards. Some in Mary's collection picture a family at Oregon Caves or coming up the Smith River. She has lots of postcards from Crater Lake.

Among Mary's treasures is a postcard of the Beekman Bank, the oldest bank in Oregon. It was addressed to J. G. Crotchet in Weed, California, but never mailed.

One of her gems is a series of colorized, fold-out postcards, with 18 pictures on

each side, that have never been sent. "They are really beautiful," she says, mentioning especially one of Table Rock with a huge bull elk in front of it.

If you know how to interpret them, historic postcards can say a lot, such as the one of George and Ed in their twenties on horseback. "They've been breaking horses," Mary says. "They're dressed for it. That photo

See **POSTCARDS**, page 14.

Local Postal Customer

Nonprofit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit #125
Medford OR

ECRWSEDDM

HISTORY - HERITAGE