



You Get What You Pay For...

with Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

Your Well Pump, Pressure Tank and Water Filtration Equipment is not something to cut corners on when it comes to cost. When purchasing your well equipment remember, *you get what you pay for!*

A department store can sell something to you for a lower cost, but it doesn't mean they know anything about it.

When purchasing equipment to provide water to your family make sure you are asking all of the right questions: What type of warranty does it have? What kind of maintenance will it need? Is it going to meet your specific needs?

If you are looking for a well pump, consider the depth of the well, GPM, elevation to the house & desired water pressure.

If you are looking for water treatment equipment, keep in mind the chemistry of your water. Has your water been tested by a professional that can help you determine what equipment is needed to condition your water? Your water chemistry may not be the same as your neighbors.

Don't assume you can just buy filtration equipment from a department store & that it will work for your specific needs.

Water is a geological cocktail, so DRINK MORE WATER!



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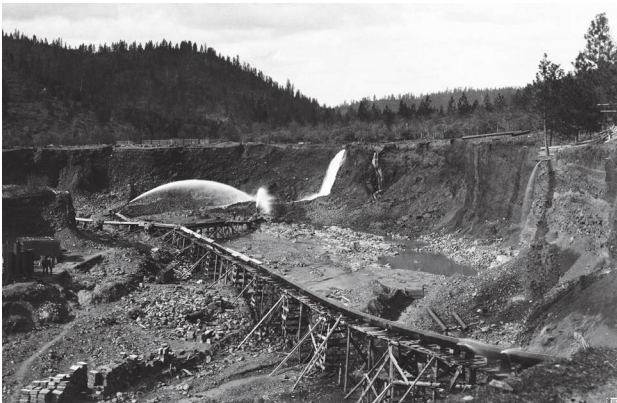
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Finding forgotten waters

BY LAURA B. AHEARN

On March 8, 2025, McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) launched a History Buffs Movie Series, open to the public free of charge. The first viewing was the 1914 film, *Grace's Visit to the Rogue River Valley*. This silent movie was made by wealthy orchardists on a hand-cranked 35mm Ernemann camera. The orchard boom had busted, and the film was shown at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in an effort to revitalize Medford and the surrounding area. Grace was Alice Grace Andrews, a true Broadway actress who had married bond broker and orchard owner Conro Fiero in 1910. She wasn't visiting; her home was Woodlawn, the Tudor-style mansion in Central Point, which later became the upscale Mon Desir restaurant.

What makes this movie so special for us in the Applegate? It shows the hydraulic "giants" at the Sterling Mine in action, with water blasting at maximum force in the spring! Like the Sturgis Mine on Forest Creek, the tumbling cliffs and raging sluices were tourist attractions from the



Sterling Mine (Southern Oregon Historical Society #5086).



Lowden Falls, northwest of today's Applegate Dam.

1880s through the 1920s, at least during spring melts when water was plentiful. This truly unique and powerful footage has never been properly identified or promoted as Sterling Creek. If you missed the March 8 viewing, you can watch an abbreviated clip in the Virtual Museum on the MBHS website at mckeebridge.org/virtual-history-museum (click Sterling Creek/Sterlingville).

The History Buffs Movie Series will "take a vacation" for the summer. We expect to resume the series in October on the second Saturday each month, 3-4:30 pm, at the Ruch Library.

Another intriguing and forgotten water feature was brought to our attention by Ben Truwe at the Southern Oregon Historical Society: a stereoscopic image of "Lowden Falls" at Watkins, i.e., today's Applegate Lake. Even old-timers don't recall these "falls." We believe these cascades were leaks from the Grand Applegate Ditch. According to the article "Oregon's Chinese Heritage: A Legacy of Places," "the six-mile-long, north-flowing Grand Applegate Ditch diverted water from Carberry Creek to the Grand Applegate hydraulic mine. Chinese laborers constructed the canal during the winter of 1878-1879. The claim itself was purchased by a Chinese mining company in 1886." Efforts started a few years ago to build a hiking trail along the remnants of this ditch, providing a scenic route from Applegate Lake to the Gin Lin National Recreation Trail.

These waters were called "Lowden Falls" because John Lowden's ranch was situated where the French Gulch flowed into Big Applegate. He sold the property to Patrick Swayne in 1910, for whom "Swayne Lookout," immediately south of the dam, is named.

Want to learn more? Visit our Virtual Museum at mckeebridge.org. Donations to support our work to collect and preserve our Applegate heritage are much appreciated!

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Applegate Museum: A walk through time

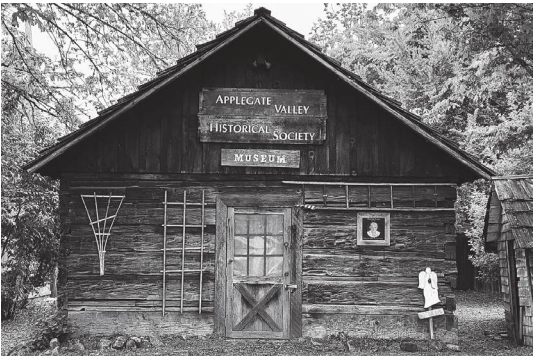
BY JAMES "BUCK" REINDERS

There is an exceptionally old building in the Applegate that has remained hidden behind fencing and brambles for many years, but now, a series of renovations has brought change right to its doorstep. A little front yard has been cleared, pulling back the green shadows and bringing a piece of local history back into the daylight, into view of the public eye. The Applegate Museum once again fronts Highway 238 and quietly testifies that some things don't change. Even as the traffic whizzes past, fences come and go, and the river flows, this old building remains. It's a sanctuary in the middle of town; a place where time slows down enough for us to connect with history and those who have lived through it.

The members of the Applegate Valley Historical Society (AVHS) are the stewards of the museum. Each member has lived in the valley long enough to know our local history firsthand. Some, like Steve Decker and Barbara Niedermeyer, have lived here their whole lives. Others, such as AVHS President Janis Tipton, moved here as a young adult, but even that was a lifetime ago. Despite being decades into retirement age, Janis and her fellow board members are not your average batch of retirees. It's true that their latest meeting, at the

Applegate Branch library, started a tad late because of a self-professed "senior moment" (someone couldn't find their keys), and yes, there were home-baked cookies to hand around, but there was also an intensity circling about the table as they discussed their major concern: the lawsuit that threatens to revoke the Society's ownership of the small plot of land the museum sits upon. This ownership was granted to them back in the early 90s on the condition that the land be used as a site for the historic building.

After the board meeting brief, one of the members, Maryanna, offered to give visitors a tour of the museum. She arrived at the small building first and sat inside, waiting to begin. Her clothing was playfully patterned in a full range of colors. Behind her hung a giant black-and-white photo album on the aged-gray cabin wall. She was familiar with the not-so-temporary exhibit and stayed in her seat while telling stories about the artifacts around her, adding to the cozy feeling inside the museum. Some of the exhibit is dedicated to the building itself. There is literature documenting its original use as



a farm store serving the Applegate way back in the 1860s, and its subsequent adventures since then. The hand-hewn logs that form its walls display their own record, nicked across the lines of their time-hardened grain.

Maryanna answered some questions about herself too. Turns out, for decades she owned and managed the Applegate Store, the current one, right across the street. So she was sitting inside the predecessor of the store that was once hers, yet this building was retired long before she ever set up shop. It appeared that layers of history develop one upon the other. Timber-framed by the doorway and backed in black-and-white (the walls, the cast iron stove, the photographs—all shades of gray), Maryanna became the colorful focal point in a portrait of living history.

Perhaps you will feel inspired, in your own way, when you visit the museum. Its door will be open during each Applegate Evening Market, and a member of the AVHS will be there to welcome you. This historical space could host a variety of events and exhibits organized by the community. It's a critically important time to support the Society as it continues its efforts to preserve this building as a resource for the neighborhood.

James "Buck" Reinders
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