

Interview with Olive Hall, May 10, 2000

Interviewed by Leda Hunter

Olive Hall, age 77, lived in Bly since 1941

Went to work June 5, 1951, at Forest Service, Just three stone buildings at that time, Used to be the bunkhouse for the summer crew back in the corner. New office built in 1962 or 3, three permanent people at that time Bill Maxwell and Olive were temporary. Bill was a bachelor. He was off three month in the winter and would hunt porcupines and turn in noses for bounty paid by Klamath County. He would bring them to Olive packed in salt and Olive would have to count them. Olive wouldn't count them but would burn them because she knew Bills count was correct. The F.S. wasn't allowed to collect. Bill was so quite and reserved and if he found an arrowhead he would bring it to Olive. Wouldn't say anything just laid them on Olive's desk.

Made popcorn balls one year and took Hank around dressed as Santa.

Hank was Olive's husband, died August 6, 1966, in an auto accident. Hank was a rancher and ran the ranch after his folks were not able to. Herb Hadley worked at the F.S. long before Olive started. He retired from the F.S. and worked at the Mill.

The CCC built the rock buildings before Olive came to Bly. They also built the Sprague River Park. The CCC camp was already gone before she moved here. It was at the site of Gearhart School. The small F.S. office was built in 1936.

Olive had to take the weather three times per day, check all the scale books, Was the only gal working there, Sometimes she got extra help in the summer. Hired lookouts and Fire crews in the summer. Had a helicopter site. Would send people up on the Bly lookout during a fire bust. Had Spodue, Fishhole, Lookout rock and Horsefly. Sometime do Recon with an airplane now. Many of the previous summer crew was college students. Olive has a list of everyone that was hired during the early years.

District Rangers; Spike Armstrong was the ranger when I went to work there. Harold Powell was the timber assistant and Herb was the fire asst. Spike was there less than a year. Next came Ellis Gross. Worked until December 1982. Quite a party when she retired. Emil Johnson was the next Ranger, Phil Lee was next, then Bruce Egger before Phil Lee, then Jim Grace. Buck Woodward came next. Olive had 31 1/2 years in when she retired while Buck was Ranger.

Fire Control officers were Tony Percival who came after Herb retired and Dick Johnson came next.

Vesta Robbins sister, Margie Kibbert worked on Fishhole Lookout. She would stay at Olive's house and Margie would take care of the girls while Olive and Hank went to CA to sell Christmas trees.

What was the deal at the old bowling alley? Called the Club. Had two lanes. Used to go clubbing every Sat night. Use to go with Corky and Wayne Smith and Jim and Shirley McGilvery. Jim, Wayne, Hank ran together and it was a party every Saturday night. Would play cards at each other houses. Had to take your own bottle and they would put you name on it. All lined up behind the bar. There was another big club where the minister's house now sits. Can't remember the name. Was when first married. They would provide the mix. State law, wasn't dry county, was whole state. Don't remember when they changed like they are now.

Corky Smith and Tom Thumb (Neil Griffin) saw that old Titus kill a guy in front of the liquor store when they were little kids. In the 1940s, during the war Olive thinks.

Hank got drafted in the fall of 1942. I went home and lived with my folks in Paisley. Cooked on a ranch, had Frankie while living there. Went to see Hank in Mississippi and came home pregnant. Connie was 9 month old before Hank got to see her. Connie was born in March 1945. Got his discharge on Christmas

day. Got home Jan 1, 1946.

Olive first lived in a little three-room house by the water company. Little brown house later bought by Elmer Jacobs and burned down. Moved across the street from the F.S. in 1949. Moved this house in 1999 on Walker Street, Remodeled by daughter Connie and husband Paul Melsness after buying in 1967. June Cummings first lived there. Used to be very small. Paul did most of the work.

Leda remembers that Olive once told her that she had dressed up like a clown on Halloween. Pat, one of the lookouts, both dressed up and went trick or treating with their glasses. Went to Jim Grace's house first. Ethel and Olive went to the Sagebrush Inn one time. Curt Allen was a judge. Olive danced with Sammie Allen like she was a man. They could not figure out who it was. Olive won first place. Olive also did that at the Eagles one time. Most people don't dress up anymore.

Used to like parties when Olive was young. Late 50s. Would have pinochle parties. Melvin and Ilene Brooks, He was a teacher, Nisha and Herb Hadley, Jim and Shirley McGilvery, Max and Iva Cline, Corky and Wayne Smith. Jim and Frank Dunning were always with the crowd.

Remember Darlene Dillavou telling about one of the locals having an affair with the District Ranger's wife. Rex Dillavou drove up beside the car. Olive flashed a camera with no film.

One time the ranger left town. Saw one of the local ranchers go to the house. Hank, Jim and Herb blocked the car up and put a smoke bomb in the car. Then they went to Olive's house to wait for him to leave so they could hear. When the bomb went off it howled. That car hit the cattleguard and out of town it went. They laughed till the wee hours.

Olive ran the theater for years. Eat dinner and go to the theater. In the 50s. Wayne hunter talks bout Olive firing him when he was small. Benny Moore ran the projectors. The Moores lived in the house next to the CMA church. Benny went to high school here. They had a quartet and sounded good

What about the House brothers? They lived down by river close to the old Ivory Pine mill. There were 4 House Brothers that sang. They even went to Nashville one time.

They used to Square Dance. Herb Hadley was the caller so Nisha would dance with Bill Pohl.

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