

Carrol E. Brown's Hugo Memories: 1916 - 2000

by

Mike Walker, Secretary
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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1916 Carrol E. Brown was born January 7, 1916 in Montrose, Colorado to Lawrence E. and Ellen (Markley) Brown.

1922 In 1922 Carrol's mom, including her kids, LeNora, Edwin, and six-year old Carrol, traveled via train to Compton, California near Los Angeles where Carrol's dad was already working in the oil industry. The move was made because the Gunnison River near their home in Colorado had changed channels, taking a good portion of the land and getting dangerously close to the Brown home on the leased acreage his dad had been farming.

1925 The Brown family moved from Compton, California to Oakland, California in the fall of 1925 prior to its move to Hugo, Oregon. Mr. and Mrs. Brown had obtained an unreliable Cole-8. The car lost a front wheel out into a prune orchard just before the family reached Oakland. So - It was traded for a Model T Ford in which the Browns and their kids LeNora, Edwin, Maxine, and Carrol continued on to Hugo in May 1926.

The old U.S. 99 was constructed around 1922 - 1923 just before the Browns moved to Hugo. Elmer Ward used to tell stories

about building it with horses. Elmer used to carry water up there for the guys that were building the road.

1926 The Brown's land in Hugo, which was acquired in a trade for their home in Compton, California, was 20 acres in one piece and seven acres down the road (see Map One). About four acres were cleared and had a small peach orchard. The rest was in trees with a small creek, Bummer Creek, running through it. This creek was their water supply. Buckets were carried from it for all house hold needs and also to water the gardens. And they had a path into the woods where the "out-house" was set up.

The family set up a tent near the creek, planted a garden, brought chickens, and a pig and later a cow when a barn was built. First they had to cut enough logs, with a neighbor's help to build a house. From May to October enough logs were cut from their woods and gathered to build a 34' by 40' two-room, two-story log home. On October 1926 neighbors came from all around to the Brown's "House Raising." They got the Browns in and roofed before November.



The Brown's old log house had a lot of cedar in it. Wayne McKy's dad, Glenn McKy, used his Fordson tractor to pull the logs from down in the woods on the Brown's property. Cranking that old tractor to start its engine was terrible. Wayne McKy has that Fordson tractor sitting on his property today.

That was the Hugo they found in 1926 - great, helpful neighbors and a supportive community. It was a really great place to live and grow up.

The "town" had one general store, one church, a two-room elementary and high school, (grades 1 - 8 and 9 - 12), and an unused Grange Hall which was renovated into a community center. Here, once or twice a month, square dances, pot lucks, and parties were held.

1926 Carrol Brown started school in the 6th grade in 1926 about a month after the family arrived in Hugo (see Photo One). Mrs. Bernice Johns taught 1st - 8th grades; Mrs. James was the high school teacher.

At the school the students made a tennis and volley ball court. Their volley ball team played other small schools in the area. When the school's well went dry Carrol's dad bargained for a well drill and paid for it with hard wood cut from the trees on their land.

In 1927 - 1928 Carrol's father and his Uncle Ralph and other adults in the community made a deal with the power company to put in a line from above the Pirzer place (on old

stage road). The power pole were 15 - 20 feet high. Carrol still has the old spikes that they used to climb the poles with. His Uncle Ralph had been a lineman. They salvaged all the cross irons, copper wire, and other material from an old power line that went south from Grave Creek on the east side of Mt. Sexton to Grants Pass. The Placer Divide line that came down Jack Creek to Winona. They got it and moved by horse and wagon to the Hugo side and that was what they used to develop the new line.

1928 Andy and Maude Summers and their three children, Clarence, Gene, and June, lived in a house by the McKys (see Map One). They lived there from 1928/29 to 1935/36.



*Photo 1. Hugo School: 1926
Courtesy of Carrol Brown*

Clarence and Carrol became fast friends.

Gene Summers was known by some as one of the "Terrible 3s:" Gene Sommers, Gene Brown, and Gene Decker.

1929 Carrol graduated from the eight grade at Hugo Elementary School in 1929.

In 1929 -1930 more room was needed for the Hugo High School which was on the north side and the grade school which was in the old south section of the multi-purpose and one room school. The high school students moved down to the first school and old grange hall (now Hugo Ladies Club) while the high school was being renovated.

But, first 13-year old Carrol and a couple of other students helped by hauling lumber for the remodeling of the old grange hall. They cranked up one corner of the building that was down and put studding under it. Carrol worked on it all the time that year. Marshall Halstead was one of the adults helping with the wooden foundation. They did not know what concrete was in those days. However, a few old Hugo buildings had granite concrete.

The next year the old elementary school room became the high school and the expanded northern room became the high school.

The old original Hugo school well is next to the road on the old baseball diamond. It was a dug well. In 1929 - 1930 Carrol Brown's father drilled it deeper and put in a four inch casing. He ran into a stream of water at about 70 or 80 feet at which time it rose up to about 6 or 8 feet of the surface. The water had to be tested for public use and it was bad and they would not let them use it because of the farm bacteria that was in it - too many barnyards up the creek. They tried to pull the casing out, but never did except for about 25 feet at the top. This was another job that Carrol remembers well because he spent a lot of time there helping his father.

Carrol remembers that he was just learning to drive his family's model-T Ford down to home for lunch and back to the job.

His father was not paid anything for that well job. Carrol can not remember what well the school actually used, but Wayne McKy remembers that they used that well all the time while he was there from 1941 until he graduated from 8th grade in 1947. It also had a pipeline over to the old Ben Baker house. Carrol sorta remembers another well south of the gym in the creek area that they might have used.

The Hugo school had a drinking fountain in it in the old cloak room.

Another case drilled well was at the southwest corner of the gym. This is the well that is used today at the now private residence.

Ben Baker was a logger, miner, and Carrol Brown's scoutmaster. Carrol spent a lot of time placer mining with Baker during the 1929 - 1935 period. They used a sluice box/rocker box while gold mining on the Rogue River from Grants Pass to Grave Creek.

Sixteen or 17-year old Carrol summer logged with Ben Baker around Fort Klamath. He would do anything he was asked.

Community was very important in those days. The modern things we take for granted today were not part of the scene. Carrol and the rest of the kids learned how to work and farm. They learned how to earn enough to survive, especially during the Depression years of 1929 and on up. There would be hundreds of guys on the freight

trains that went by Hugo. They would come from Ohio and all over the United States just trying to find a place where they could make a living to support their families back home.

1930 The Brown kids, Carrol, Lenora, and Edwin minded their place; taking care of the garden, live stock and the smaller children (Gene and Bertha had been added to the family) while their mom and dad worked in the fruit (dad picking and mom packing cherries). His dad also worked away from home on the railroad and any other kind of job he could find. Carrol and his dad picked potatoes in the fall (i.e., September and October) near Klamath Falls in the little towns of Malin and Merrill. They would camp there with other men and their sons from Hugo in order to make the money to get through the winter.

The Brown and McKy families, and Hana Thomas used to go down to the Fred Robinson's and Stevenson's hop yards and pick hops during late fall. They sometimes would camp there during the picking season. The kids would make less than a dollar a day, perhaps a penny a pound. Some of the Robinson hops were those floppy hops that did not weigh much. The only way some people got away with it was to slip a few rocks into the sacks before they were weighed.

Carrol remembers that there was plenty of work and all the kids did their share, but there was time to play too. Carrol learned to drive the Model-T when he was 13-years old and he would take his mom shopping in Grants Pass. They played tennis and volleyball. He learned to play the clarinet, swim, hunt and fish. The kids also hiked around the valley and picked wild strawberries and blackcaps. Blackcaps were

wild black raspberries and they were up high - the higher the better on King Mountain

One time Carrol and some other kids were playing in Southern Pacific Railroad's Tunnel # 9 (see Map One) and the train started to come through. Anna Pirzer came running down the tracks away from the train. Carrol grabbed her and held her between the supports as the train traveled past them. That was enough for Anna. As far as Carrol knows she never played in the tunnel again. The rest of the kids continued to enjoy the fun - or challenge of meeting the train!

1931 The school had a piano and when there was a wintertime dance at the old grange hall they would put it into the wagon and take it down there. Fern and several others played the piano. They had an orchestra of sorts and Carrol played the clarinet (see Photo Two). These dances might be held once a month in the winter, but not in the summer. In the summertime all were working.

The Browns did not have a telephone. It cost a buck a month and they could not afford it. About a half-dozen families (e.g., Art Erickson, McKenzie, Pirzer, Peterson, Aheirn, etc.) had telephones, and most of those were just for local calls. You could make long distance call on Art Erickson's phone at his store on old U.S. 99 (at junction of what is now Hugo and Oxyoke roads).

1933 Carrol Brown was one of three students in the Hugo High School's senior graduating class of 1932 - 1933 (see Photo Two). The other two students were Anna Pirzer and Vivian Hutton. Rena Holdman was teacher and principal at that time and Carrol's father, L. E. Brown, was Chairman of the school board.

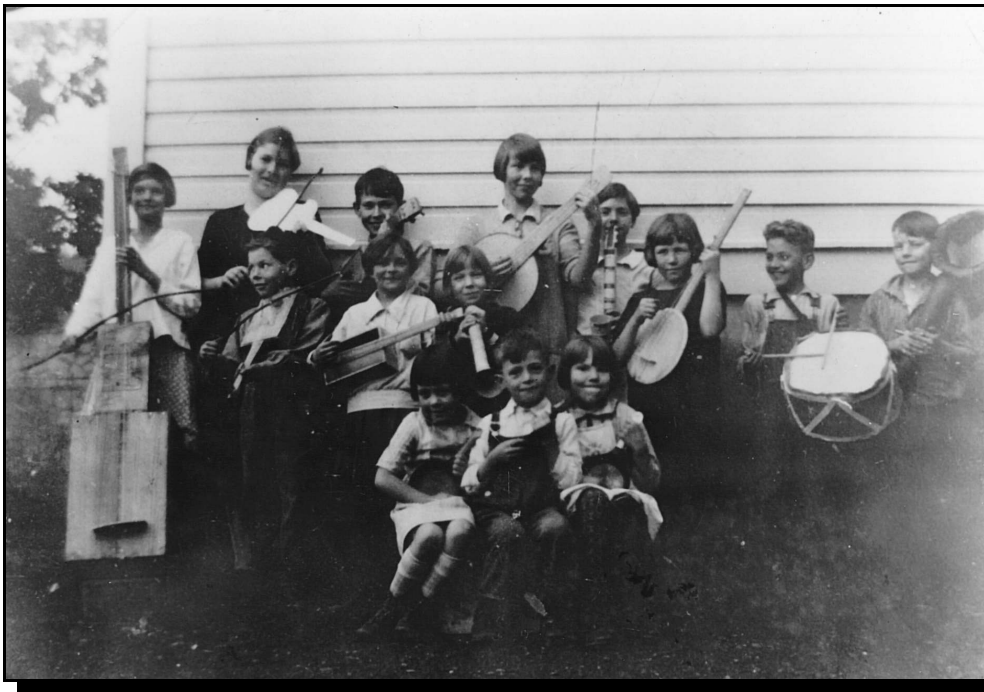


Photo Two. Hugo School Band: 1929
Courtesy of Carrol Brown

Back row, left to right: Margaret Brown, Edith Bagley, ?, Willamal Metsuel sp.?, Metzler, Olson?, Max Buffington and Edwin Brown

Middle row: Courtney Metzler, Barbara Brown, and ?

Front row: Maxine Brown, Stanley and Ariel Metzler

1934 Carrol's good friend, Clarence Sommers, graduated from Hugo High School in 1934.

1935 Carrol enlisted in the Navy in 1935. His pay at the time was \$18 a month for the first three months after which it was raised to \$30 a month.

1935 - 1936 Just after Carrol left for the Navy they developed Halleys sawmill in Hugo. It had a big 24 inch one-cylinder engine - the biggest cotton picking gas engine that most folks had ever seen. It was water cooled and a one-lunger and a chunk, chunk, chunk. It would actually shake the ground. They would have the most difficult

time getting it started. It had a pressure release. Sometimes the only way to start it was with McKy's Fordson tractor which they would put a belt on run it to the big engine. The mill had a couple of big horses which moved the logs around at the mill. The mill was there until the 1940s.

1936 After Carrol had completed five month's training in the Machinist School at Norfolk, Virginia, he was sent to Pearl Harbor. His first duty station was on board the U.S.S.

Swan. It was a WWI sea-going tug, 62 feet long and 32 feet wide. It had been converted into a seaplane tender by replacing the towing gear with an 11,000 gallon fuel tank for aviation gas. The Swan was one of three seaplane tenders based at the Naval Air Station at Pearl Harbor. The Swan was sent out about half way to San Francisco, with the other two, the Avocet and the Pelican spaced apart closer to Pearl Harbor. The tenders were a safety precaution for the first squadron of PBYs to fly this route from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor, a distance of about 2,400 miles. The PBYs arrived safely with no problems encountered.

However, the Swan was on this station about six days, and since the Swan was stationed

and not moving, and the weather was extremely rough, it was bouncing around like a cork. Carrol was on mess duty. He and all the men, including the Captain, were sea sick. Yet all the duty stations had to be manned. This was the first time Carrol had been on a small ship and the last time he was ever sea sick.

1937 On board the U.S.S Swan in 1937, Carrol participated in the month long search for the lost aviator, Amelia Earhart. He thought it was quite an experience. His Navy group contacted many of the natives of the Phoenix and Gilbert Islands. The natives were cooperative (except for one French island), but knew nothing of the plane. They almost ran out of food - down to one small meal a day and about out of fuel before they were ordered to return to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii with a very hungry and ill crew of 38 officers and men.

In spite of the frustrations, inconveniences, and disappointments, it was the most beautiful cruise Carrol was ever on. The weather was perfect, the sea was calm, and the tuna were jumping day and night as far as the eye could see - usually a couple of miles from the ship.

1939 After completing his four-year tour in the Navy in 1939, Carrol worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company and Boeing.

1942 Carrol reenlisted in the Navy in 1942 as a 2nd Class Aircraft Metalsmith. These service years were spent at the Sandpoint Naval Air Station in Seattle, Washington and at the Naval Air Station at Barbers Point, Oahu Island, Hawaii.

1943 In Seattle in 1943 Carrol married Martha Lee.

1944 At the end of the war Carrol shipped out from Hawaii and returned to Oakland on the aircraft carrier U. S. S. Hornet. He had obtained the rank of Chief Petty Officer as an Aviation Metalsmith. He returned to Seattle and for a while he worked as a civilian at the Sand Point Naval Air Station while it was being decommissioned.

1948 In 1948 Carrol and Martha Lee Brown moved to Cave Junction, Oregon where Carrol worked as a feller and buckler.

1955 In 1955 the Browns moved to Medford, Oregon where Carrol was employed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in blister rust control and then in the genetic program for control of the blister rust disease in 5-needle pines and in tree improvement in other species (see Photos Three and Four). He helped set up the Charles A. Sprague tree seed orchard near Merlin, Oregon. Starting pay with the BLM was \$1.48 an hour as a GS-4. Carrol retired after 19 years as a GS-11 with several merit awards to his credit.

1960 In 1960 Martha Brown obtained her teaching degree from Southern Oregon College, now Southern Oregon University in



*Photo Three. Carrol Brown Working At BLM: 1959
Courtesy of Carrol Brown*

Ashland, Oregon. She taught third grade at the Phoenix, Oregon Elementary School for 16 years.

1976 Both Carrol and Martha Brown retired the summer of 1976.

1976 - 2000 Since then they have traveled by car and motor home to most of the National parks in the West and spent some time in Mexico and Canada. They especially enjoyed the Mexican trip down the Baja.

One summer they spent a week on a house boat on Lake Powell with family members. One year they rode the mule train to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, stayed over night at the Phantom Ranch, and rode the mules out the

next morning - with aching muscles, theirs and the mules.

Two memorable tours were New Zealand and Australia. Their Australia tour was a month long camping trip on a bus “coach” to the Ausies. They started at Melbourne, went up the Stuart Highway over to Cairns and down the east coast to Brisbane. They set up a tent each night, some times dry camping. They saw lots of Australian wildlife which was the purpose of the tour.

Several outstanding points of interest were Ayers Rock which Carrol climbed (Martha didn't); Coober Pedy where they dug for opals, and the Alice Springs old telegraph station. They have also traveled to Hawaii.

Their latest tour was a cruise to Alaska with 16 friends and family members, all of them celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries.



*Photo Four. Carrol Brown
Climbing Sugar Pine: 1959
Courtesy of Brown*

As hobbies Carrol enjoys the silver smith craft, hunting, fishing, and reading. He is a member of NARFE, the Roxy Ann Gem and Mineral Society. He attends the First Presbyterian Church in Medford, Oregon.

1999 Carrol and Martha Brown have three sons. Howard lives in Las Vegas. David in Coeur d' Alene and Larry in Boise. Their sons have given them eight grand children and five great-grand children.

Last July 1999 was a happy time for the Browns when they were visited by their granddaughter, Allison, and their great-grandson, Elliot (see Photo Five).

Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society

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Wayne McKy, Chair
6497 Hugo Road
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
541-476-4006

Mike Walker, Secretary
681 Jess Way (street)
3388B Merlin Rd #195
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
541-471-8271

2000 Homes The old Brown place is still being lived in and The old Halley house is still there. The old Ahern house may be the oldest house in Hugo that is left standing. The Peterson house is long gone, but there is the Beveridge place (Mike Batnatch's place) is still there, but might be torn down very soon.



*Photo Five. Carrol and Martha Brown with their Granddaughter, Allison, and Great Grandson, Elliot: July 1999
Courtesy of Carrol and Martha Brown*