

**Interview: Howard Banks
Crown Jewels of the Wire (CJOW)
Hugo, Oregon**



Mike Walker, Education Chair
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society
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Thursday, March 16, 2006

Interview Mike Walker, Education Chair of the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society, interviewed Howard Banks, Editor, CJOW, on Friday, February 24, 2006, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., at his home on Hugo Road about CJOW and its local applicability. Everyone felt it was great to be able to match a person's passion and their business.

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Howard provided an overview of early (pre-depression) era insulator lines in Josephine County.

- Crown Jewels Of The Wire
- Insulators in northern Josephine County
- Companies/Businesses Having Used/Using These Insulators in northern Josephine County

Norbert Tieman was at the interview and that day's field trip to Sexton Pass.

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The interview notes were reviewed and edited by Jacque Hardwick and Mike Walker.

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BANKS' KITCHEN TABLE (Link Photos 1)

Howard Banks stated that his family has lived in their old Hugo Road house since 1940. His grand-father, Thomas Morton Banks, and his second wife bought the Hugo land. At the time his folks were living in San Diego, California. About 1944 his dad and mom moved to Hugo and built a log cabin on an adjacent parcel, just north of the present house. This parcel was originally a 160-acre homestead. He thinks a fairly late one, perhaps the 1890s. He believes the original house was started in the 1890 and added on to by subsequent owners.

Thomas Banks lived here from 1940 until 1951 when he passed away, the same year Howard was born. His dad had moved to Murphy and he was working there in the late 1940s. In 1952 his dad had bought the Banks place from his step-mother. Howard was one-year old when they moved into the old house in 1952. His mother is 90-years old now and going strong. Howard was born here. The place has been in the family for 66 years.



Photo 1. Linda & Howard, Banks, & Norbert Tieman

His grandfather and his dad built the barn in 1947. They used pine logs they harvested on the property. It originally had a shake roof (now covered up by a tin roof). They bought the shakes from a guy that basically stole a tree off BLM land up Quartz Creek Road.

Not long ago, Howard, and his wife, Linda (Photo 1), sold their own property, next door to the south, because they intend to move to Joseph, Oregon, in a few years. They felt they captured the “hot” real estate market when they sold their home last year. They then moved back into the old family farm (Photo 2). They are now care-taking it until they move to Joseph.



Photo 2. Banks Home

Howard attended Merlin Elementary in the old brick building. He went through the 5th grade at Merlin until they opened a new school, Monument Junior High, where he started the 6th grade in 1962.

He gave Norbert and Mike each a copy of the April issue of *Crown Jewels of the Wire*.

He showed some of his insulators (Photo 3) and gave Mike a CD 126/O & C Railroad Brookfield *Blob Top* to add to the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society’s collection (The *Hugo Neighborhood* now has four insulators).

Howard then started referring to his excellent two-page hard copy summary of the “*Time Line of Telegraph History in Josephine County.*” The summary had the following outline.

- Collins Line: 1864
- Oregon & California Railroad
- Postal Telegraph Company
- AT&T Long Distance Telephone Lines
- Local Phone Service Lines
- Power Lines



Photo 3. Insulators on Banks Kitchen Table

The rest of the interview was centered around those six topics. The entire two-page summary is incorporated into the following interview summary as appropriate (i.e., italics, 10-point size, and indented).

COLLINS LINE/WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH LINE: 1864

1850s At one time there were dozens and dozens of local competing telegraph companies. These companies started consolidating as the lines were extended around the country. Bigger and bigger projects required more financing to build them and the companies started merging together. There was one company trying to connect Europe with America with the trans-Atlantic cable. If successful, it would be a huge financial benefit, but it was failing year after year. This effort had started in the late 1850s.

In the early 1860's, when efforts to lay a telegraph cable across the Atlantic Ocean were failing year after year, a competing company undertook an even more ambitious plan. Only three years after the transcontinental telegraph was completed, the Western Union Telegraph Company began building a trans-world telegraph line. In 1864, that dream worked its way north through Southern Oregon, one pole at a time.

1861 The transcontinental telegraph line across the United States was completed by the Western Union in 1861 putting the pony express out of business. It was such an immediate success that a second line was built a year later. This insulator, a U.S. Tel, was off that second line in the Sacramento area. The U.S. Tell company was one of those conglomerates that had formed during the consolidation period.

CD 723 The CD 723 was an insulator that Western Union used on the transcontinental telegraph line. Threadless pins. Glass cylinder. You put a wooden cover on it and tie the wooden cover. This is the finest known example of this insulator - Not the glass part, the wooden cover part. This is because the wood is the hardest to come by as it is outdoors and deteriorates in 135 - 140 years. They started making this in the 1850s. They were still making and using this style until the late 1860s. The wood cover was also to protect the glass insulator from Indians shooting them - long before our later



CD 723

recreationists did it for fun. The Indians did it for survival. For example, in order for the Indians to be successful in an attack on the settlements they had to disable the telegraph. Howard had a wood insulator he found at a garage sale in Brookings, Oregon.

There were dozens of styles of threadless insulators and tens of thousands of miles of line in operation before threads for insulators were invented in 1865. It took about five or more years for threads to catch on. Once it caught on the threadless insulators were obsolete; there was no reason to salvage them, save them, or reuse them. That is one reason why threadless insulators are rare.

Virtually, no sooner than the transcontinental telegraph line has been built, the Western Union Company began thinking about the unsuccessful trans-Atlantic cable. It may never be successful. Western Union, therefore, decided to build an overland line to England by going west from the U.S. This line was eventually called the "Collins Line" (Collins Overland Line). Collins was a key figure in the company at the time. The purpose of the Collins Line was to connect the United States (Washington D.C. and London) by building a line that ran up the Pacific Coast through Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alaska, across the Bering Strait, south along the coast of Siberia, and west along the trans-Siberian Railroad which was in construction, to St. Petersburg. The rest of the telegraph system was complete to London. All they had to do to was build this 15,000 mile telegraphy line.

This line basically followed the stage line route from Sacramento, California to Portland, Oregon. The Western Union was in a hurry to build this line because if they got beat by a successful trans-Atlantic cable line, they would have to stop the project. They sent crews working from Eureka, California through southern Oregon and north. They sent separate crews to Washington, British Columbia, Alaska, and Siberia. The line was built in southern Oregon in 1864. The line from San Francisco to Portland was completed and making money. However, in 1866 the first trans-Atlantic cable was successfully completed, providing instantaneous communication between London and New York. All the crews for the geographic areas not completed beyond British Columbia ceased work. However, the crew in Siberia was never told and kept on working for two more years before they found out they were out of a job. The crews sold their equipment to the natives. They sold their threadless insulators as tea cups. Of the 50,000 insulators in Siberia, none have ever been found.

The primary insulator used when Western Union built the Collins Line through southern Oregon was the NY & E.R.R. (New York and Area Railroad). This is the threaded version. This was the style. There were various colors from green and puce (sp?) to aqua. The opening bid on that insulator was \$7,500.00 on an E-Bay auction just completed this week. Bottle collectors found three of them in the Gold Hill area in the early 1970s. Howard has walked miles and miles of line, and he is still hoping. There is an 1864 photograph of a line going down into Sunny Valley through the covered bridge area. The photograph shows the brand new line with the brand new poles with glass insulators (probably NY ERRs) on them. These insulators are rare. They would be the first insulators used in southern Oregon.

The Wade Insulator was used in southern Oregon. One was found in the Hugo area by a hunter.

Wood-Block Rams Horn Insulator They also used the Wood-Block Rams Horn Insulator. This is an insulator with a block of wood. A metal insulator is screwed up into this block of wood. The metal insulator had a hook on it which is why it is called a rams horn. In 1998, on President's Day, Howard took a bunch of kids insulator hunting. They took the kids up to Stage Coach Pass (Glendale). He and a friend took them there because it was a narrow pass which used to have several lines through it. They were in old growth timber when at one point they stopped, and Howard was telling the kids about the rams horn. He told them when in heavy timber you need to look up at the trees and look for insulators on wooden blocks. They were standing under a cedar tree and they all looked up at the same time and saw one. It was about 15 feet up the tree. The tree was overgrown with poison oak vines. His son Dave was able to climb up to it. Howard could see square nails sticking out of it. Howard wondered how Dave could even climb that high. How was he going to pull it out with those square nails in it? However, Dave just touched it and it flew off the tree. It had been held to the tree for 134 years on wooden pegs. The wooden block, the back block, was held to the tree with wooden pegs. The threadless insulator was nailed to this back block. When Dave touched the back block, those pegs gave way, and the insulator just flew off. They did not find the metal hook, it was in the ground some where. There are many examples where a tree had grown around the back block.

In summary, the three types of insulators that Banks knows were used on the Collins Line in southern Oregon were the following.

1. CD 736
2. Wade CD 723 with Wooden Top
3. Wood-Block Rams Horn Insulator

Insulators used in Southern Oregon included:

- *CD 736 threadless glass insulator embossed: NY. & E.R.R. The embossing referred to the New York & Erie Rail Road. The railroad had nothing to do with the project; the insulators just happened to be used on the line.*
- *CD 723 "Wade". This threadless glass insulator had a wooden cover to protect the glass from attack. Yes, attack. In the Great Plains, Indians fired arrows and bullets at the insulators to disrupt telegraphic communications.*
- *Wood-Block Rams Horn Insulator. These were blocks of wood containing a metal hook. Inexpensive to make, their insulating value was questionable, particular in the rainy northwest.*

Western Union maintained the Collins Line, upgraded it, and kept it going through the 1870s. On some portions of the line Western Union started using an insulator from San Francisco from the ?? Construction Maintenance Company of San Francisco. This is where the line moved away from threadless insulators (when they upgraded).

SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD

The first O & C rail was completed to Roseburg from Portland in 1872. The first official train arrived in Grants Pass December 2, 1883, the same year the Grave Creek Tunnel, better known in later years as Tunnel No. 9, was completed July 4th. When the railroad was built in the county

the Western Union moved its wires to the railroad right of way and abandoned the lines through the mountains on the old stage routes.



Photo 4. Hugo's Signal Line: 1916

The original insulators from the railroad were CD 126 & CD 127 Brookfield "blob tops".

Western Union built a whole brand new line on the railroad right-of-way. They did go out into the woods and tried to salvage their materials on the old Collins Line and sell them to local communities.

When the O&C Railroad was built through Josephine County in 1883 - 1884, Western Union moved its wires to the railroad right of way and abandoned the lines through the mountains. Generally, the telegraph lines, poles, wire, etc was salvaged by WU. (The salvage efforts help account for the difficulty in finding original telegraph insulators from the Collins line.)

The line on the railroad right-of-way we see today was the signal line. It was probably built in the 1920s, perhaps earlier (Text Photo 4; Text Photo 5).

The line on the other side of the tracks was the communications line – telegraph line (later telegraph and telephone line). The Western Union telegraph line on the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way started out in 1883 using these CD 126 & CD 127 Brookfield "Blob Tops". Howard found a blob top at Tunnel No. 9. a couple years ago. They are Brookfield insulators with patent dates of 1865 and 1870. Most of these say WT (Western Union) Telegraph on them. Some are a little green; see the one on the end in the window. They are more desirable and more valuable. They come in colors that go from amber, purple (is extremely rare), and mustard.



Photo 5. Unused Hugo Signal Line: 2004



Photo 6. Southern Pacific Railroad's Communications Line

The square poles/redwood poles date from 1910 - 1912 when they were installed. If you go to Tunnel No. 9 and climb over the top of the mountain and stay on the west side, on the north slope, you will find the original poles on the ground in the brush.

When Howard Banks was a kid the east line along the railroad had 48 wires on it per pole (four cross arms with 12 pins each). Railroad pictures will show the line. As

they upgraded the line they used all kinds of stuff.

By the time Howard started collecting in the 1960s there were already people out who had walked the lines ahead of him. Insulator collecting as a hobby started in the 1940s. In the 1950s railroad linemen were participating. By the 1960s the public finally got enthusiastic about collecting.

After the Central Oregon & Pacific took over the line Howard had a friend that worked as a track inspector. He was also an insulator collector. He had the authority to close down the railroad because he was a track inspector. He would take them out insulator hunting with him.

Norbert used to work for the railroad and he saw a lot of beautiful country. For the telegraph line along the railroad tracks, he has seen galvanized wire, copper wire, and copper-clad iron wire. Norbert found insulators with stars on them. Howard stated that it is generally believed that insulators with stars were made for General Electric. They were widespread and used everywhere. If someone ordered insulators from a General Electric catalog they probably got insulators with stars on them.

The Southern Pacific Railroad bought insulators from the McLoughlin Company in San Diego (1920s - 1930s), Maydwell Company in southern California mostly - they bought out the McLoughlin Company (1930s - 1940s), Hemingray in Indiana (the whole period), Brookfield (1860s - 1920s), California (1912 - 1916). There were different companies during different periods that sold insulators. The railroad's upgrades or changes resulted in a large variety of insulators being used. Howard suspected that at some point the railroad ordered insulators from General Electric.

The CD 127 Blob Top was an early Brookfield insulator probably made in the mid-1880s and was one of the original insulators used along the railroad in southern Oregon. They are not particularly rare in the aqua color as they were made in the millions.

POSTAL TELEGRAPH COMPANY

US Tel competed with Western Union. It was eventually purchased by Western Union. It was the way you eliminated your competition.

By the 1880s Western Union was so powerful that they did not care about offering any kind of service other than what they had. In other words, you accepted the services provided, or you did not get that service.

In 1881 a new telegraph company was created to compete with Western Union. Lines were built through Josephine County around 1886 - 1887. The original insulators on the Postal system were CD 133 Brookfields. This telegraph system was expanded to six lines before it was abandoned to the elements in the middle 1940's. Most of the insulators found in the mountains are from the abandoned Postal system.

A wide variety of insulators were being used on the system when it was abandoned. Included were CD 145 Californias, CD 208 Californias, CD 210 Californias, CD 154 Maydwells, CD 154 Whitall Tatums, CD 153 48-40's (Gayners), and others.

In 1881 a new telegraph company, the Postal Telegraph Company, was created to compete with Western Union. Lines were built through Josephine County around 1886 - 1887. It was a smaller company that found a niche in the market. Its niche was taking care of the little guy. For example, Western Union might be the only telegraph line providing service to your area. If you lived in a town you can get telegraph service. If you lived in the country, forget Western Union telegraph. Therefore, the Postal Telegraph Company was set up to utilize both the telegraph and the post office. A telegraph might be sent from Iowa to Merlin, Oregon. At this point the telegraph would be mailed from Merlin to the family in Hugo. So now, all the little folks in the country can now get telegraphs, or send telegraphs by using the mail system. There were postal telegraph offices clear up to Prospect, Oregon. They covered a wide market. Later on Western Union also started providing this service.

The Postal Telegraph Company operated the line until it had six-pin cross arms. The neat thing about the postal line was in the middle of WWII they merged with Western Union and the lines were left standing. They discontinued using them and the lines were left in place and they disintegrated into the ground. You can still go up and find the poles.

In the 1960s the poles were still standing and still had insulators on them. I pulled this insulator off one of those poles. It is called a California hot cross bun. They are sold at \$350 today. Howard found three of them on one pole and three others on one pole on Canyon Mountain.

This insulator (CD 145 beehive) was found on Mt. Sexton. Howard and his dad were digging around the base of a postal telegraph pole on Mt. Sexton. They were taking turns digging. He would dig and find something and Howard would dig and find something. He would pull up an insulator and then Howard would pull out an insulator.

The California Company was only in business from 1912 to 1916. Finding insulators from this company meant a lot of the upgrades were during that time.

The Postal Telegraph Company had upgraded its lines in the 1930s, not long before it was abandoned.

AT&T LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE LINES

AT&T built long distance lines through Josephine County in the early 1920s. Service continued until the mid to late 1950s when the lines were replaced with buried cable.

AT&T built long distance lines through Josephine County in the 1920s. Service continued until the mid to late 1950's when the lines were replaced with buried cable. Insulators used were CD 152 Hemingrays, CD 154 Hemingrays & CD 208 Hemingrays. While the poles can still be found in the mountains, the insulators and hardware were removed by the company and taken to landfills. I remember seeing stacks of insulators at Dry Diggins, a landfill just east of Grants Pass that was closed with the construction of Interstate Five in the late 1950's.

Howard thought the line had 24 wires (24 insulators per pole). The insulators are pretty common. In fact they are the most common insulators that were ever made and they were used on that line

(i.e., CD 152 Hemingrays, CD 154 Hemingrays, and CD 208 Hemingrays). As a kid, Howard can remember going to the Grants Pass City dump (Dry Diggings where I-5 goes by east of town) and seeing piles of insulators and cross arms. He is sure they just got buried. They are under the freeway or not far off the freeway.

You can find the poles out in the woods today. They left the poles behind, but they hauled off the materials. An old Hemingray 40 or 42 probably came off that line.

The Postal Telegraph and AT&T long distance telephone lines were located on similar routes (perhaps 50 to 100 feet apart). They also both tended to be located in the mountains along the



Photo 7. Pacific Highway: 1910s

old stage routes (usually along side the roads). For example, the old Pacific Highway (today's Oxyoke Road) had two lines east of the road: 1. the poles with double cross arms was the long distance AT&T telephone line, and 2. the poles with a single cross arm was the Postal Telegraph line (Text Photo 7).

LOCAL PHONE SERVICE LINES

There was a value in selling telephone service to farmers. These kind of lines came and went. They did not stay. They was an old phone line that ran up today's Hugo Road by the Banks' home, but by the time his folks came to Hugo in the 1940s and 1950s there was no phone line there.

A variety of "local" phone lines were constructed in Josephine County to service farmers, mining communities, and forest service fire lookouts. These lines often ran tree to tree, and insulators can still be found in trees along the routes. An early line ran along Grave Creek to Sunny Valley through the mining tailings, apparently connecting Leland along the railroad to points upstream. Little is know about the line except pole remnants could still be seen 30 years ago. This is the line rumored to have used the few CD 123 EC&M's found in the Sunny Valley area in the 1950's & 1960's.

These lines were usually on porcelain insulators called donuts. You can still find them on trees along Hugo Road. There is one near the Falcon Crest Subdivision on Hugo Road. The U. S. Forest Service and the mines used donut insulators.

There was one telephone line between Leland and Sunny Valley. When Howard was a kid you could find the telephone poles in the mining tailings in Grave Creek.

Howard and friends were tracking it down because some of the old timers in Sunny Valley found these some EC & Ms? They have always been desirable insulators. He suspected that there were

viable businesses in the main part of Sunny Valley, but the Southern Pacific Railroad was located in Leland. Some little telegraph or telephone line connected these two communities. One wire per pole would work as they used the earth as the ground.

For many telegraph lines the ground was the “earth”.

POWER LINES

The Rogue River Electric Company extended power to the Granite Hill Mine and the Greenback Mine in 1904. The line ran from Gold Ray Dam to Grants Pass, up Granite Hill Road, Winona Road, and over Jack Creek pass to Grave Creek and the Greenback.

The Rogue River Electric Company extended power to the Granite Hill Mine and the Greenback Mine in 1904. The line ran from Gold Ray Dam to Grants Pass, up Granite Hill Road, Winona Road, and over the pass to Grave Creek and the Greenback. Insulators used were various experimental power insulators produced by the Fred M Locke company of New York. Some of these insulators are worth in excess of \$1,000 each today.

The power plant in the dam ran until the 1970s. The turbines were rope driven. If you worked in that power plant you had to know how to splice rope to work there. They never updated the generator from 1904 to the 1970s. Copper was so expensive it normally was only used for power lines.

The insulators for that line were made by the Fred and Watt Company. There are some old poles in Sunny Valley on a fill slope Howard had seen back in the 1960s. They are ancient looking things on short 13-foot tall skinny poles. Howard thought the poles might have had EC & Ms on them. He has hunted that since the 1960s. There are just three poles left straight down this hill.

When he started collecting insulators again in 1998 he found a piece of a power insulator at the base of a pole about four inches down in the earth. He got his daughter up there with his dad’s metal detector and ping, ping. They found copper wire. That was power stuff and Howard was really puzzled. The pole was in his way so he moved the pole and his daughter saw some glass. It turned out to be the power insulator Howard had on the kitchen table.

The glass base insulator had originally had a porcelain top called a gutter top. A gutter top was being bid on E-bay. The last time Howard checked it was \$1,200. The pole did not have pins or anything. They just stuck the pole in the ground and stuck the threadless insulator base on the top of the pole. It was a single phase service to little mines.

Some brothers out of New York were visiting Josephine County. There were business men. One was a doctor and one was an entrepreneur. During the Alaska gold rush one brother financed the other brother to go to Alaska to look for mining property. He got up there too late and came back to the West Coast all disillusioned. He telegraphed his brother and his brother told him he had heard of the property in southern Oregon. Go down there and take a look. He found a property out of Gold Hill that he liked and they bought it, but they needed power to run the mining equipment so they got permission to build a dam on the Rogue River.

They built Gold Ray Dam. Building a dam then was no more popular then it is now. Somebody tried to dynamite the dam while it was under construction. They built the dam, but by the time they finished the dam it became the Rogue River Electric Company. They provided telephone, telegraph, and power to the various mines.

One of the main lines was built from Gold Ray Dam to Grant Pass and up Granite Hill Road and Winona Road and over the pass east of Mt. Sexton and down to the Greenback Mine (a branch line went to the Granite Hill Mine). The line was only used three or four years before the mines gave out. But, the lines were left there.

The power company eventually acquired the right-of-way. They used the same right-of-way which was a disaster for saving insulators because that line is high-tension power and it has all been bulldozed underneath the line. The only place you would find insulators is where the line happened be different from the present right-of-way. The high-tension line was originally placed in the 1940s/1950s and it has been upgraded several times.

This insulator was not original to southern Oregon. It was originally used on a line that came out of the Sierra-Nevadas about 1903 or 1904. The line was financed by a Bavarian prince who saw a chance to make money selling electricity to San Francisco. He built the dams and built the lines. Those insulators back in the early 1900s cost a \$1.75 a piece - a lot of money. Hundreds of thousands of them were used. But, the porcelain top was held on to the top with sulfur cement and sulphur has a low melting point.

When they start extending power lines they had no clue what they were doing for insulation. They did not know how to insulate electrical power over long distances. So, all the early power insulators were all experimental. And, this particular insulator was self-destructing. It had a gutter top to drain the rain off, but it was suspect to electrical leakage. In the first year it was a disaster. In the hot dry summer days of California in the Sierra-Nevada foothills caused the design of the insulator to heat up the sulfur cement and it would catch on fire. The sulfur cement would drop down to the grass on the ground and start it on fire. The grass set the brush on fire and the brush set the poles on fire, and the insulator self-destructs.

They immediately removed the \$1.75 insulators and replaced them. But, they cost a lot of money and they sold what they had left to companies operating in cooler climates. Most of those insulators went to Hawaii or southern Oregon where it was a damper climate and the company got some of their money back. This insulator that was used in Sunny Valley had been used a year or two before in the Sierra-Nevadas.

The Fred and Watt Company used a variety of porcelain insulators on that line. Some are extremely rare. Howard has found some where there are only two examples known. Even though the example he found was damaged, he sold it on E-bay for \$888.00. Howard likes glass, not porcelain. It was easier to find porcelain because it is still out in the woods.

APPLEGATE TRAIL ON NORTH SIDE OF MT. SEXTON PASS

Howard Banks had been talking to Norbert Tieman for years about the Applegate Trail on the north side of Mt. Sexton Pass. He wanted to take both Norbert and Mike Walker to the site and they both jumped at the chance. He thought this trail was in a location unknown to the thinking of most people.

There is an old stage station site up there. There is also an old buggy at the station site which he believed crashed in a gully. Someone had probably ran off the road and it was left there because it was so badly damaged. The metal pieces are still there.



Photo 8. Telegraph Wire At Mt. Sexton

He found telegraph wire at the station site that he suspects had threadless insulators (Text Photo 8). Therefore, the line probably ran along the Applegate Trail there. The wire is plain old steel wire. It was not necessarily galvanized. Sometimes the wire was galvanized, sometime it was not.

Howard, Norbert, and Mike walked up the present buried cable right-of-way on the north side of Grave Creek Hills to near the top until they encountered an old roadbed which Howard suspected was the Applegate Trail. It was orientated roughly 90 degrees to the cable line's

right-of-way. The eastern route was orientated toward Sexton Pass. The group did not walk that portion of the route. They turned to the west where Howard knew the old station site existed (Link Interview Photos 2). Immediately below the roadbed was another developed trail (horse trail?).

The history of Howard's discovery goes back to 1964 (Link Interview Photos 4; Link Interview Photos 5). He had found an old whisky flask down near I-5. It had floated down there during a heavy rain. He walked up the drainage and found various pieces of old tin cans, etc. He kept going and found the old stage station site. He found pieces of old medicine bottles, usually with broken necks, and one that was almost whole. It had the name "Hammins (sp) Wizards Oil" on it. He thinks the bottle goes back to the 1870s. He found old whisky bottles that dated to the 1880s and 1890s, including a copper flask. Howard found some telegraph wire sticking out of a tree that looked like it had been wrapped around a post or pole. It lead Howard to believe it might have been the route of the earliest line (Collins Line that was put up in 1864).

It was obvious from the modified terrain that there originally had been some buildings in this location. A shallow gully went east and west right through the site. It was running water February 24, 2006. There was an old rotted wood pile on the west side of the site. Some stovepipe could be seen the day of the field trip (Friday, February 24, 2006). There were good physical indications that the outhouse was close and to the north of the main site. Howard had never dug into the outhouse location. The roadbed continued to the North-north west steeply up the mountain. Very close further north were the buggy remains - the wheels were narrow iron

rims iron wheels (Link Interview Photos 3). The axles and bed frame were there. In Howard's imagination he pictures a driver losing control of the buggy coming down the steep hill and crashing. It was such a mess after the accident that the remains were left.

Howard speculates that the old Applegate Trail was re-routed in the late 1800s high to the west out of Rat Creek to avoid the swamp in it. This site might have been a resting place or a place to change horses.

310 FOOT ROADBED, SOUTH SIDE OF SEXTON PASS

After they left the old stage station site north of Mt. Sexton Pass, Norbert and Mike took Howard to the 310' roadbed site (Link Interview Photos 6).



Photo 9. Banks At Mt. Sexton Telegraph Wire

Collins Line Howard found, at a location north of the Big Tree and south of the down fir tree at the northern end of the roadbed, some galvanized steel telegraph wire on a dying oak tree (Text Photo 9). The oak was leaning at a good angle toward the roadbed and all members of the group could touch the wire from the edge of the roadbed.

The telegraph wire was growing out of an old oak tree. The tree was rotted and deteriorated, but still alive. The telegraph wire was very old. By the time that the Postal Telegraph Line was

built through here in the 1870s- 1880s, everything was pole to pole. In Howard's opinion this telegraph wire predates the Postal Telegraph Line. It could represent a time when there was one line through Mt. Sexton Pass. This could go back to the Collins Line in the 1860s when the line construction, in some places, did go tree to tree. Telegraph companies used galvanized steel a lot in the 1870s for the telegraph wire.

Postal Telegraph Pole Howard identified a down pole as a Postal Telegraph pole downhill from the southern end of the 310' roadbed that he felt was built in the late 1880s (Text Photo 10). The Postal Telegraph Line was upgraded over the years. At the end of its operational life it had poles with six-pin cross arms on them. So there would have been six insulators that went with this pole. Insulator hunters have probably been here before, but you might be able to find tie wire in the ground directly below the base of the pole. You might find a bracket for a cross arm. The pins were generally wooden pins. Sometimes you found metal pins or some combination.



Photo 10. Banks & Tieman At Postal Telegraph Pole

This pole is not at all related to the wire in the old oak tree up the roadbed.

Pole Stump This particular pole stump (cut off by chain saw) is creosoted. It is Howard's experience that the creosoted poles were from the long-distance telephone line. It was constructed in the late 1910s or early 1920s (based on the age of insulates that Howard found on those type of poles). Some of the long distance poles in the mountain passes are still there on the ground (like the other side of Sunny Valley, Canyon Mountain, and Stage Coach to Glendale). If you find the whole pole you might find a date on it as each pole was identified by a number.

The earlier Postal Telegraph poles, which are 20 - 30 years older are not creosoted at all. They are usually cedar poles.

POSTAL TELEGRAPH LINE NEAR GARBERS PASS

Howard and his buddy were insulator collecting ca., 1966 - 1967 when they walked the Postal Telegraph Line in Hugo. The poles were still standing along Oxyoke Road. By the time you traveled north to where the canyon narrowed the poles were down (the farmers had used them). North of Garbers Pass they found poles on the ground with insulators on them. They came to a pole on the upper side of a road (in 2006 a 100' from the green gate on Hugo Road - Link Interview Photos 7) that was still standing with six insulators on it (a couple purple and a couple aqua). It was an old pole and they thought they might push it over. While rocking the pole all the insulators came loose from the rotten cross member. Boom, boom, boom, all around them came the insulators to the earth. When they picked them up they could only find five insulators. One was missing. They looked and looked for the sixth insulator they had just knocked off, but could not find it. In a follow-up trip with his kids in 1998 his son found that insulator.

BANKS' HOME (Link Interview Photos 8)

Tie Wire Howard hunted the Collins Line in Sunny Valley. He found a couple pole settings. With a metal detector he found this particular piece of tie wire that was never used. Someone dropped it when they were building the line.

Pin Howard showed a wooden pin (probably oak). It was a smaller size than normal. The western insulators had their own size. They were proud of their products and they wanted them to last so they painted them. You can find pins with red paint on it.

Wood-Block Rams Horn Insulator Howard showed a wood-block rams horn insulator. This insulator was not very effective.

Howard showed what his son, David, had removed from the tree. The wooden block, the back block, was held to the tree with wooden pegs. The threadless insulator was nailed to this back block.

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS

1. Mike Walker would love it if on another field trip Howard could show them the Postal Telegraph Company poles he had found in the past between Louse Creek and Grave Creek. Mike would like to take pictures of the site and map the pole location for the purpose of identifying the evolution of the Applegate Trail.
2. Howard had offered to take them to road and pole sites in the Grave Creek watershed north of Sunny Valley. Both Norbert and Mike would love to go at Howard's convenience.
3. Mike will be formally contacting the Oregon Department of Transportation to get permission for the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society to dig in the I-5 right-of-way in the location of the 310' roadbed. If we get permission Howard expressed an interest in being part of the dig.

Appendix A - Oregon's Governments

Oregon's Provisional Government Americans continued to move into the Willamette Valley. Together with French-Canadians who had been employed by the Company, there were some 500 whites in the area by 1842. American settlers began to think about establishing a government. An initial attempt, caused by the need to probate Ewing Young's huge estate, failed in 1841. A second attempt to form a government succeeded in 1843. Oregonians voted in an open air meeting at Champoeg on July 5 to establish Oregon's provisional government. This government was supposed to function until the United States extended its jurisdiction over Oregon. At this time, slavery was prohibited.

In 1844, representatives of this new contingent came to power and began to form a new government modeled on the ones they had left in the Midwest. The following year, John McLoughlin, as representative of the Hudson's Bay Company, recognized the provisional government. Successive waves of immigrants arriving into the 1850s shared the same values and gave early Oregon a remarkably homogenous and cohesive population.

An estimated 53,000 settlers came to Oregon between 1840 and 1860. Most of them made the journey over the 2,000 mile Oregon Trail, which stretched from Independence, Missouri to western Oregon. By 1846, the United States and Great Britain agreed to divide the Pacific Northwest at the 49th parallel- the present border with Canada. Hudson's Bay Company headquarters had already been moved to Fort Victoria, on Vancouver Island. John McLoughlin resigned his position with the Company and settled in Oregon City. Americans in the Willamette Valley wanted territorial status immediately, yet the debate over slavery in Congress delayed this step.

1848 Oregon Territory In 1847, Cayuse Indians attacked the Whitman mission at Waiilatpu and killed fourteen people. The immediate cause of the attack was an epidemic of measles, brought by immigrants, which had devastated the local Indians. They believed that Marcus Whitman had introduced the disease to get Indian lands and horses. More fundamentally, however, the conflict between the two cultures caused great tensions between Indians and whites. To make matters worse, as whites came into Oregon, their demands for land increased. The Whitman Massacre and settlers' demands for protection finally caused Congress to move on this issue of territorial status, and Oregon became a United States territory on August 13, 1848.

1850 Donation Land Act In 1850, Congress passed the Donation Land Act, which recognized most of the land claims filed under the provisional government. Single white males over the age of twenty-one could claim 320 acres. If they were married, they could claim an additional 320 acres for their wife. Widows could hold title to land, but single women could not.

Territorial officials began their terms on March 3, 1849, in Oregon City, when Oregon was still predominantly wilderness. Homesteads usually consisted of one room log houses with vegetable gardens and a few acres planted in wheat. With little hard currency available, wheat was the primary medium of exchange. Few roads existed, so water was the quickest way to move crops and supplies. Some settlers laid out town sites from their claims. John McLoughlin was the first to do this when he platted Oregon City in 1842.

Despite the steady flow of immigrants to Oregon, many settlers were genuinely isolated. Only five newspapers were published in 1849. Post offices did not appear in most towns until the 1850s, and stage coaches and express companies were just beginning to operate. When gold was discovered in Southern Oregon during the 1850s, the government opened more roads.

1859 Oregon State During its brief existence, the territorial government was deluged with petitions from citizens who asked for laws in all areas of everyday life. They wanted divorces, schools, and pensions; prohibition of liquor; care for the insane; college charters and release from militia duty. On February 14, 1859, as the national debate over slavery was drawing to a close, Oregon was admitted to the union as the thirty-third state

Text Photographs

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Text Photo 1. | Linda & Howard, Banks, & Norbert Tieman |
| Text Photo 2. | Banks Home |
| Text Photo 3. | Insulators on Banks Kitchen Table |
| Text Photo 4. | Hugo's Signal Line: 1916 |
| Text Photo 5. | Unused Hugo Signal Line: 2004 |
| Text Photo 6. | Southern Pacific Railroad's Communications Line: 1916 |
| Text Photo 7: | Pacific Highway: 1910s. Today's Oxyoke Road had two lines east of the road: 1. the poles with double cross arms was the long distance AT&T telephone line, and 2. the poles with a single cross arm was the Postal Telegraph line. |
| Text Photo 8. | Telegraph Wire At Mt. Sexton |
| Text Photo 9. | Banks At Mt. Sexton Telegraph Wire |
| Text Photo 10. | Banks & Tieman At Postal Telegraph Pole |

Photographs

- Link Photos 1: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - Local Josephine County Insulator Types,
Banks's Home
- Link Photos 2: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - North Mt. Sexton Extension of Emigrant
Road? & Developed Site
- Link Photos 3: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - North Mt. Sexton Buggy
- Link Photos 4: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - North Mt. Sexton: Telegraph Wire Site
- Link Photos 5: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - North Mt. Sexton: Power Line & Logging
Road, Old Developed Site, & Dump Site
- Link Photos 6: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - 310' Sexton Mt. Site & Telegraph Wire, Tree
Anchor, & Postal Telegraph Pole
- Link Photos 7: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - Telegraph Poles & Cut Off
- Link Photos 8: Howard Banks, Crown Jewels of the Wire Hugo, Oregon:
Friday, February 24, 2006 - Banks' Home

During May 2010 these interview notes were reviewed and edited by Jacque Hardwick and Mike Walker.

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