

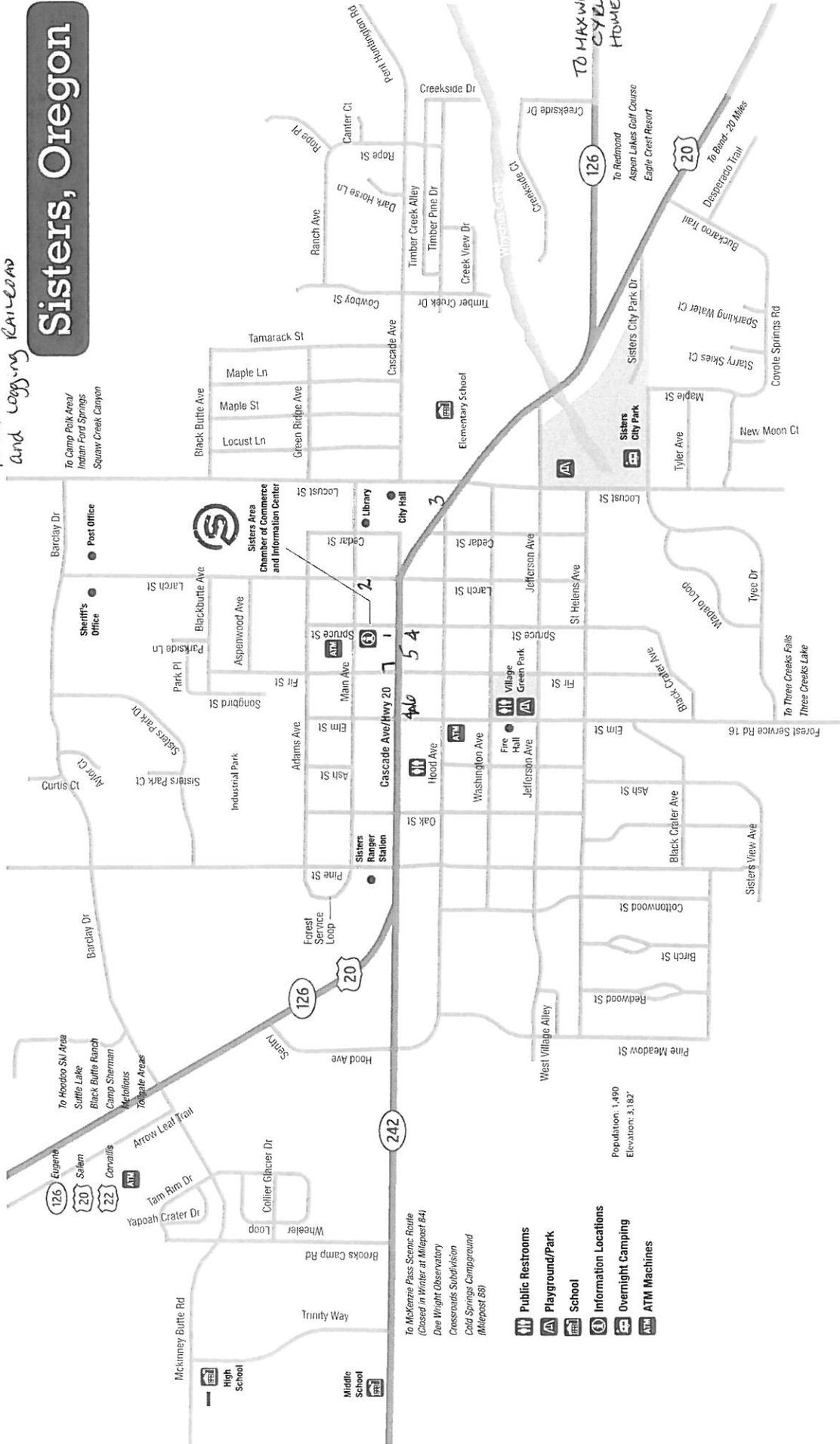


The
SISTERS
Country

Historical Information and Tour

To CAMP ROCK CEMETARY
and LOGGING RAILROAD

Sisters, Oregon



To Camp Rock Area/
Indian Ford Springs
Squaw Creek Canyon

To MAXWELL-
CYDE'S
HOMESTEAD

Population: 1,490
Elevation: 3,182'

To McKenzie Pass Scenic Route
(Closed in Winter at Milepost 84)
Doe Wright Observatory
Crowsrocks Subdivision
Cold Springs Campground
(Milepost 88)

- Public Restrooms
- Playground/Park
- School
- Information Locations
- Overnight Camping
- ATM Machines

#1

THE SISTERS LIBRARY

The Maida Bailey Old Library Building-151 Spruce St.

The Sisters Library was built in 1939 with money from area residents and businesses. Lumber was donated by local lumber mills. Members of the Sisters Civic Club volunteered as librarians to keep the doors open for three days and evenings per week. In 1949 an existing office from a local mill was attached to the library to provide additional shelf space. The structure was retired as a library in 1990. The library was dedicated to longtime Sisters area resident and community activist Maida Bailey in 2006.



#2

THE HARDY ALLEN HOUSE

Three Sisters Floral - 401 E. Main Ave.

Hardy Allen was born in Crook County in 1874. He moved to Central Oregon in 1897 at the age of 23 and homesteaded property in the Metolius country. He and his wife Daisy moved to Sisters in 1905 and soon thereafter opened a blacksmith shop. The house was built in 1908 and was considered one of the finest in the Sisters Country.

With decreased demand for blacksmiths and the growing popularity of the automobile, Mr. Allen transformed his shop into a garage in 1920. He continued, however, to accommodate his longtime customers who were in need of blacksmithing services. One of his more unusual jobs was construction of the door of the town jail. The bars were made from spokes of old iron buggy wheels.

The Allens continued to prosper and remained sturdy threads in the fabric of the community.

Hardy Allen died in November of 1954 at the age of 80.

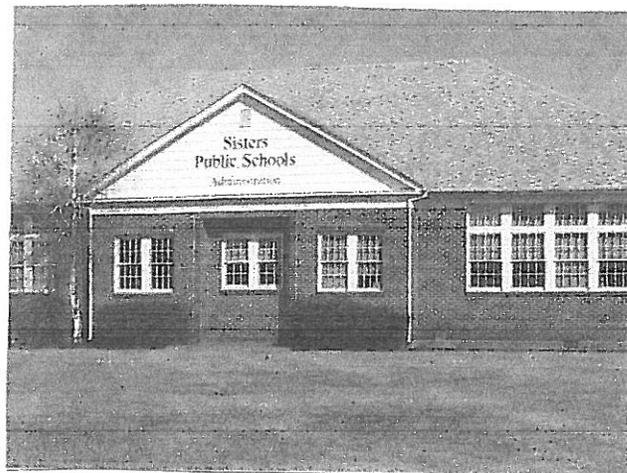


#3

OLD SISTERS HIGH SCHOOL

Sisters School District Office-525 E. Cascade Ave.

The Old Sisters High School was built by the Public Works Administration (PWA), one of many New Deal programs designed to revive the economy during the Great Depression. This handsome structure is a fine example of the traditional Colonial Revival style of architecture. Harold Y. Smith was the principal when the high school opened in 1939 with twenty students. The building served as the high school until 1967. It became the Sisters School District office in 2005 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The current main entrance was built during the restoration process.



#4, 4a

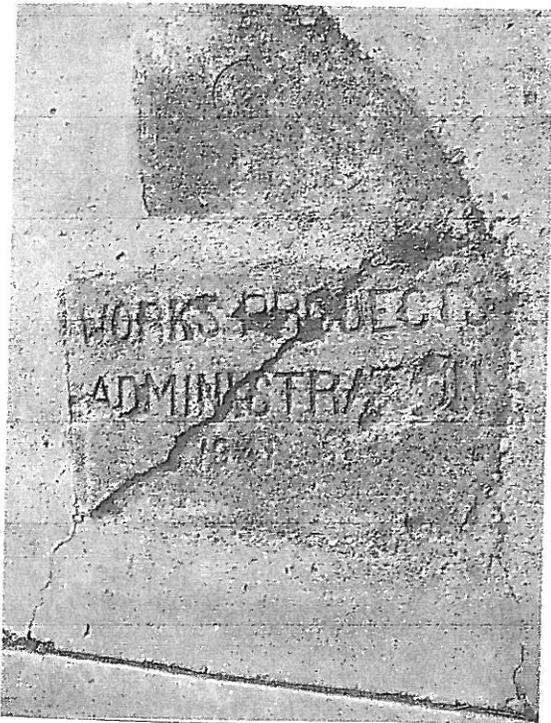
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

South West Corner of Spruce and Cascade and South East Corner of Elm and Cascade

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in 1935 to stimulate the economy and preserve the skills and self-respect of unemployed persons by providing them useful work. A

WPA crew came to Sisters in 1941 and built sidewalks. The City of Sisters Public Works

Department has preserved these engravings in memory of this proud organization.

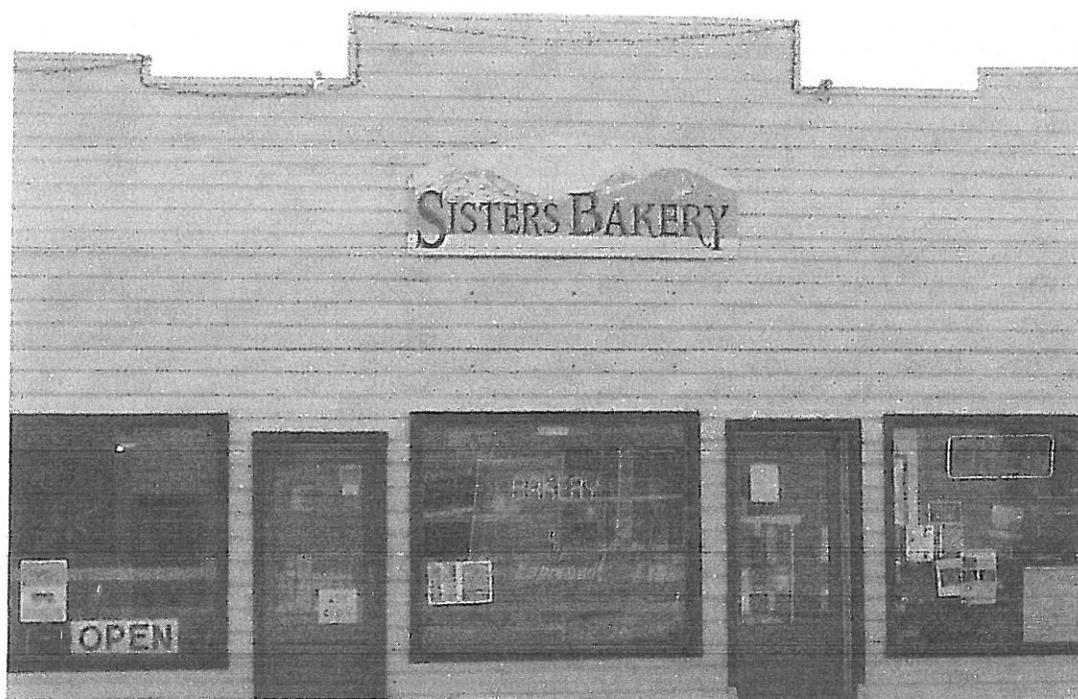


#5

THE LEITHAUSER GENERAL STORE

Sisters Bakery-251 E. Cascade Ave

The Leithauser General Store was built in the mid 1920s by the Leithauser family. The structure served as a general store until 1950, when a new store was built two lots to the west. Since then, the building has been used as a barber shop, variety store, yarn mill and bakery.



#6

THE SISTERS DRUG STORE

The Grand Palace Hotel-121 E. Cascade Ave.

The original structure on this site was destroyed in the fire of 1923. An existing one story building, owned by Grace Cyrus Aitken, was moved to this location. A second floor was eventually added. This building served as the Aitken residence and the family drug store, which also included a soda fountain, the post office and small library. For a time some of the upstairs rooms were rented.



#7

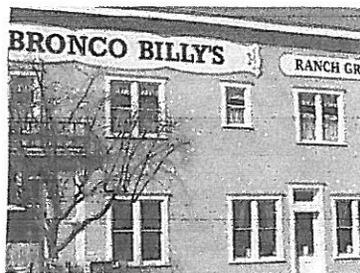
THE HOTEL SISTERS

Bronco Billy's Ranch Grill and Saloon- 190 E. Cascade Ave.

John Dennis was a veteran of the Spanish American War. In April of 1912 he announced his intention to build a hotel near the center of town. It was to be a 64' by 38' two story structure with a large basement. Hot and cold water would be available to each of the 19 guest rooms. The plans called for extensive finish work, which was more common in hotels in larger cities. The contractor for the project was John Cunningham of Bend.

The hotel came dangerously close to destruction in 1923 when fire broke out in a maintenance shop across the street. There was only a handful of people in town because most of the residents were attending a track meet in Redmond. The hotel survived, although many buildings in town were destroyed or seriously damaged. Fire again ravaged Sisters in 1924 when a fire started in the kitchen of the Gist Hotel, just east of the Hotel Sisters. The townspeople soaked blankets, mattresses and sheets and draped them over the threatened building. Firefighters from Bend, Redmond and the Forest Service responded, with veteran Ranger Perry South directing the fire fighting efforts.

During its history, the Hotel Sisters has functioned as a place of lodging, a drug store, antique shop, meeting center and restaurant. It remains one of the most photographed buildings in Central Oregon.



Sisters Area History

****NOTE:** Sisters Area History was contributed by Raymond R. Hatton, Author of *Oregon's Sisters Country – A Portrait of its Lands, Water, People* (1996) and *Sisters Country Weather and Climate* (1994).

Long before the Sisters Country was settled, Indians trekked through the region. Old survey maps showed Indian trails, some leading towards Warm Springs, some crossing the Cascade passes of McKenzie and Santiam. In time, some of these Indian trails became the routes of wagon roads. Nineteenth century fur trappers and explorers also traveled through the Sisters Country.

The forerunner of Sisters was Camp Polk, a short-lived military camp (from September 1865-May 1866) that had been established along Whychus Creek (formerly Squaw Creek), about three miles northeast of Sisters. Forth volunteers from Polk County, in western Oregon, camp on a mission to protect miners and settlers in the region, but were never engaged in battle. Following abandonment of the camp, the site was homesteaded in 1870 by Samuel M. Hindman who subsequently operated a store and post office. Camp Polk was located adjacent to a wagon road which linked the Willamette Valley and Prineville.

In 1888 the post office was relocated to the John J. Smith Store, about three miles south of Camp Polk. It was proposed the post office be named "Three Sisters." Postal authorities shortened the name to "Sisters." Taking advantage of its location at the intersection of the McKenzie and Santiam roads, Sisters soon grew to become a bustling little town. For years, Sisters was as supply station for sheepmen who passed through town on their way to grazing pastures in the Cascades. Finally, in 1901, Sisters was formally established.

Contributing further to growth of Sisters was the lumber industry. Extensive tracks of pine forest prompted the siting of several sawmills in or near town. By 1930, Sisters was primarily known as a lumber-producing town and was incorporated in 1946. The population grew from less than 200 to nearly 500. Gradually, however, lumber production fell off and in 1963 the last mill in Sisters was closed and the plant subsequently dismantled. Soon thereafter the population began to decline.

Fortunately, as highways in Central Oregon were improved, tourist-related travel increased. Sisters became known as the Gateway to the Cascades – a title befitting the city today. The population stabilized as Sisters capitalized on the beauty of the area's natural environment and the early development of Black Butte Ranch. By adopting a theme for the commercial sector and with financial support of Brooks Resources, the Sisters City Council made the 1880's style store front a part of its zoning ordinance in the early 1970's. The Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1974.

Over several years the landscape of the retail area was transformed and today Sisters has become recognized as a unique place to shop with its many specialty stores and galleries. Less obvious are other changes. The old mill site north of town has become an industrial park with a number of commercial establishments and light industries. Many people, seeking elbow room and mountain vistas have chosen the Sisters Country as a place to live and play.



Sisters Country History in a Nutshell

*Sheep * Cattle * Logging * Tourism*

- 1825 Early trappers and US Army representatives begin exploring east side of the Cascade Mountains
- 1843 John Fremont with Kit Carson and Billy Chinook pass through present town site of Sisters while developing map of Oregon.
- 1865 Camp Polk briefly established
- 1870 Samuel Hindman establishes first homestead near site of Camp Polk
- 1871 First water rights filed
- 1880 Tourism based economy gets its start as merchants supply sheepman passing through each summer on their way to pastures in the high Cascades
- 1890 First sawmill is built on Whychus Creek, it is water powered
- 1895 Squaw Creek Irrigation Company formed with 1892 water rights
- 1900 Cattle become important part of economy centering on the vast holdings of Black Butte Land and Livestock Company
- 1901 Brothers Alex and Robert Smith plat the town of Sisters
- 1923 Fire destroys town buildings between Elm & Fir, south of Cascade, Hotel Sisters is scorched, but saved.
- 1924 Fire destroys town buildings on both sides of Cascade from Fir to Spruce. Hotel Sisters is scorched, but saved again.
- 1930's First electricity available.
- 1937 Timber economy booms, census shows town triples in size from 1935 (to 441)
- 1946 Town is incorporated (vote 115 for, 61 against)
- 1953 Timber economy busts, Dant and Russell sawmill closes, \$300,000 in payroll lost
- 1963 Round Butte Ram completed on Deschutes, steelhead can't return to the sea
- 1965 Last sawmill closes
- 1967 Last steelhead is seen in Whychus Creek
- 1970 Black Butte Ranch homesites go on the market
- 1975 First Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show
- 1983 Village Green City Park is constructed
- 1998 Pine Meadow Ranch development starts construction
- 1998 Vote for a City Sewer passes
- 2002 City Sewer system is in place



Sisters Area History

Auto/Bike Tour

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The Maxwell-Cyrus Homestead

The main house was built circa 1890 by Oscar Maxwell. In 1901 Enoch Cyrus purchased the property and built outbuildings. A structure originally on the other side of the road was purchased from Otis Cobb and moved onto the Cyrus property. A way station was opened, where travelers could get a hot meal, buy grocery items and secure the services of a blacksmith. The station closed in 1915.

DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of Highways 20 and 125, travel east on 126 for 3.4 miles to Cloverdale Road and turn right. Continue for 1.5 miles. Site is on left. *This is private property – please do not enter.*

Camp Polk Cemetery

Due to a steady increase in their numbers, the early settlers established a cemetery adjacent to the Hindman homestead. The first person to be buried here was Thomas Summers in 1880. When visiting, please be mindful that this cemetery is still in use.

DIRECTIONS: From Sisters, travel north on Locust Street (Camp Polk Road) for 3.1 miles. Turn right onto Camp Polk Road continuation. Go 0.4 Miles to Cemetery Road and turn left. Watch for restoration activity on the Hindman barn near the cemetery.

Logging Railroad

In 1939 a line was chosen to connect the Brooks Scanlon mill in Bend to the company's timber holdings in western Deschutes County. The column of raised dirt that is visible from the road is rail bed. The railroad was in operation until 1956. The rails were removed and sold to the government of India.

DIRECTIONS: From Sisters, travel north on Locust Street (Camp Polk Road) for 2.8 miles. Turn left on Indian Ford Road. Continue 3.6 miles to the site. *This is private property – please do not enter.*



Important Characters in Sisters History

Aitkens, Grace Cyrus – Postmaster – Born in 1886, just northwest of Prineville, Oregon, Grace was invited by her brother to move to Sisters and attend the new high school. In 1907, Grace began assisting the Sisters postmaster, becoming postmaster herself in 1912 and serving in that position until 1937. In 1915 she married George Aitkens and they had two sons. The couple ran a post office and drug store that was best known for its extraordinary ice cream. The family would cut ice in the winter, storing it until summer to make the sought after ice cream. George also started the first newspaper in Sisters, *the Herald*. In 1947, after George died, Grace became the Sisters librarian and served in that position for 16 years.

Allen, Hardy – Auto Garage - Allen was a stockman, blacksmith and businessman born in Prineville in 1874. He was one of the first white children born in Central Oregon. His parents had been part of the ill-fated Meek party, the family claiming they were deserted by Meek around what is now Lake County. Hardy's grandfather took charge of the party and successfully led the group to the Willamette Valley. Hardy's father soon joined Polk County's Company A, who established Camp Polk near Sisters in 1865 and leaving in 1866. The Allen family returned to Central Oregon, settling for a time in Prineville. In 1897, Hardy Allen established a homestead on the Metolius River, raising cattle. Later he moved to Sisters, first buying a hotel and then opening a blacksmith shop that became an auto garage and popular gathering place for locals to meet and talk about politics and events of the day.

Bailey, Maida Rossiter – Library – Maida Rossiter was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1881. Always eager to learn, Maida received a BA from Cornell University. While pursuing a graduate degree at Berkeley, she worked at the Stanford University Library from 1905 to 1912. Next, Maida organized and worked as the first librarian of Reed College in Portland, where she met and married Meredith Bailey, originally of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The couple moved to Sisters in 1918 so that Meredith could fulfill his dream of being a sheep rancher. They lived on a large parcel just west of Sisters. Maida became a major organizer of the first Sisters Library. The Maida Bailey Old Library Building on Spruce Street carries her name to honor her many contributions to Sisters.

Cobb, Alfred – Personal Notes – Cobb homesteaded in Sisters in around 1885 settling about 1.5 miles south of town. Mrs. Cobb operated a way station for early travelers and Mr. Cobb ran a blacksmith shop, offering wagon repair and horseshoeing to travelers. Warm and generous people, the Cobb's always went out of their way to help others. An example of their spirit is this story from Cobb's memoirs: *Early one evening a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Willit, rode up on their horses with their 12 year old girl. Asking, could they leave Cora with them that night while they went to a dance several miles distant. She was made welcome. When morning came, no one returned. Days went by and still no one came to claim little Cora Willit. Investigation proved fruitless. Her parents were never heard from again. Cora stayed with the Cobb family many years. Cobb's ranch later became known as the Lazy Z Ranch.*

Dennis, John W. – Sisters Hotel - Originally from Kennewick, Washington, John and his wife, Myrtle, were early investors in Sisters real estate. They bought and operated the "old Sisters Hotel" in 1910. In 1912, they built the new Sisters Hotel which still stands on the northwest corner of Cascade and Fir Streets. This hotel was very modern and upscale when it was built, rivaling fine hotels in much larger towns. The modern amenities included hot and cold water available in each of the original 19 rooms and central heating available to each room from a furnace in the basement. Dennis also owned a blacksmith shop and a livery barn in town. The Dennis' were active promoters of the progress in Sisters, including promoting the building of a new school in 1913 for the growing community. That school building lasted over 40 years.

Edgington, Ellis Hartley – Rodeo - Born in Yankeetown, Indiana in 1884, Ellis came with his family to Wasco, Oregon in 1888. He attended Oregon State College and was on the football teams of 1903 and 1904. In 1905, he filed for a homestead in the Plainview area. In 1912, he traded his Plainview homestead for a 1,200 acre ranch three miles south of Sisters. Ellis married Martha Ellen Crawford, a local school teacher, in 1914 and built a log home on his ranch in 1915. The family raised cattle on their land and Ellis and Mel Harrington had a partnership as road contractors using horse-drawn equipment to clear and grade roads. Ellis was one of the original organizers of the Sisters Rodeo.

Leithauser, Peter J. and Frank – Grocery Store – In 1911, Peter and his wife and daughter moved to Sisters from Hosmer, British Columbia. He built a two-story building, opening a barber shop with a pool table on the ground floor and living up above. Soon Peter's son, Frank, and his wife moved to Sisters. In 1918, Frank bought the Camp Sherman store and was appointed postmaster. Frank hauled mail and supplies to Camp Sherman. Soon groceries were added to the barber shop in Sisters and Frank helped his dad run that store, too. In 1924, the Sisters store was burned to the ground in the second Sisters' fire. The family immediately rebuilt it. In 1941, Frank sold the Sisters store to his son, Pete. The Leithauser store was a major part of Sisters until 1977.

Shaw, Frank L. – Sisters Fair – A native of Simcoe, Ontario, Frank and his wife, Ella, came to Sisters Country in 1912 looking for land investment opportunities. They bought city property in Bend and farm land in Sisters. At this time, Sisters was still part of Crook County, Deschutes County not having been created yet. Shaw became a promoter of the Sisters Fair Association with the fairgrounds located on one corner of his farm land. Shares were sold in the Association and an old school house was moved to the grounds to house exhibits. The first fair was held in 1914 and ran for three days. Participants came from all over the county. The program included everything from a foot race and baby judging to an "Indian woman ½ mile race" and sheep judging.

Wilson, Tillie Davidson – Teacher/Historian – A native Oregonian, Tillie Davidson was born in Dufer, Oregon in 1893. After graduating from high school with a teaching credential, Tillie moved to Sisters in 1914 to teach. Tillie married George Wilson in 1917 and had two children, leaving teaching while they were young. She returned to teaching in 1923 and continued with the Sisters School District until retiring in 1961. Tillie was actively involved with the growth and "civilizing" of this rough logging/farming community. She secured her name in history by teaming with her friend, Alice Scott, to write a history of the area called, *That Was Yesterday*, first published in 1974.

