

June 1-2, 2007 Pioneer Queen and Grand Marshal



Queen Jane Ferguson

The queen's story in Umatilla County began in 1832 when her maternal great-grandmother, Naomi Banks, age one, traversed the Oregon Trail with her family by ox team from Arkansas. The Banks family first settled in the Roseburg area and later relocated in Umatilla County. Her maternal great-grandfather, John Dickenson, emigrated from Missouri when he was 15 years of age. The couple was married in Roseburg in 1871, and they later moved to Centerville and homesteaded on Gerking Flats where they farmed. They are registered as attendees of the 1899 Pioneer Picnic in Weston. Her grandfather, Roscoe Dickenson was born on the homestead in 1878 and was 6 weeks old when the last Indian uprising in the Walla Walla area occurred.

Her other maternal great-grandparents, Tom and Rebecca Ledgerwood, traveled by covered wagon from Booneville, Missouri in 1880, and her grandmother, Emma, a twin, was born the following year at Ridge, Oregon, near Ukiah. Her twin sister died at birth, but her grandmother

was swaddled and placed in a small box that was kept warm in the warming oven of an old wood-burning stove. She was first weight at 6 weeks of age, and her weight at that time, fully dressed in a gown that reached the floor when held in her mother's arms, was a whopping 2-1/2 pounds. Roscoe Dickenson and Emma Ledgerwood were married in 1899, and homesteaded in the Ukiah area. Queen Jane's mother, Kate, also a twin, the 6th of 7 children, was born in Ukiah in 1915. The family moved to Weston in 1920.

Her paternal grandparents traveled to Oregon by train from North Carolina in 1910, when her father was 5 years old. They homesteaded on Little Buttercreek in Morrow County, but their homestead land turned out to be far too rocky to farm, so the family moved near Hermiston where their boys attended school. Queen Jane's father, Fred Gordon, was the 3rd of a family of four boys. Her paternal grandmother died in 1931 and is buried in the Weston IOOF Cemetery. Her grandfather then returned to North Carolina where he spent his remaining days.

A mutual friend introduced the queen's parents in Weston in 1932, and they married in Walla Walla, Washington on June 30, 1933. Queen Barbara Jane Gordon Ferguson was born in Weston in 1934 to this union. When she was a first grader, there was another Barbara in her class, so the teacher had her go by Barbara Jane. In the second grade, the teacher's son, Paul Orwick, dared her to sign her spelling paper, "Jane," the name she has used since then. It was also this year her classmates changed the wording of Little Liza Jane to Little Barbara Jane during music class. She attended 12 years of school in Weston, graduating in 1952 as class Valedictorian.

Her mother was Queen of the Pioneer Days 25 years ago and her father was Grand Marshal of the Pioneer Days Parade 10 years ago. Her parents were married just 11 days shy of 69 years and lived in Weston for 68 of those years.

Shortly after graduating from high school, Queen Jane married her high school sweetheart, Earl Ferguson, and they have two children, Becky and Melvin. During their married life, they have lived in Texas, Arizona, Illinois, the Philippine Islands, and many places in Oregon. After her children started school, Jane attended and graduated from Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Education degree in 1966. She then taught elementary school both as a classroom teacher and library media specialist, in Klamath Falls for 19 years.

Daughters Becky lives in Eugene with her husband, Greg Morgan. They have 6 children, Captain McKay Morgan – Okinawa, Japan, Katie Duhle – Virginia, Lane Morgan – Cambridge, Massachusetts, Lt. Kyle Morgan – Eugene, Oregon, Clark Morgan – Provo, Utah, Airman Jeffrey Morgan – Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany; and 7 grandchildren. Son Mel lives in Klamath Falls with his wife Reneé and their other two children, Jillian and Robert.

Since retirement, Jane and Earl now live in Arizona, but Weston has always been home to them. Even though her parents, Kate and Fred Gordon have passed on, she and Earl still return to Weston yearly and are involved with the underprivileged of the area.

Grand Marshal Earl Ferguson

Earl Eugene Ferguson was born in the state of Oklahoma in 1932 to parent Beulah and Clarence Ferguson. They were share croppers in peanuts and cotton. He was the middle son of seven Ferguson boys.

Earl attended the first four grades in a one-room rural school in Oklahoma before his parents moved the family to Richmond, California where both his father and mother were employed in the Keiser Shipyards.

While attending half-day school in Richmond, he spent his afternoons and early evenings selling newspapers and shining shoes on the streets downtown.

In 1944, the family departed California for Oklahoma via Eston, Oregon to visit relatives. Within two weeks his parents had purchased 90 acres on Weston Mountain (Basket Mountain Road) where they lived for a year before moving to town.

While attending school in Weston from grades 8-12, Earl worked after school, weekends and summers for Charlie Elliott's grocery, dry goods, and hardware store which is now the Long Branch Café and Saloon.

He was very active in high school athletics earning 4 varsity letters each in football, basketball, baseball and one varsity letter in boxing; winning his weight classification championship in Umatilla County "B" Schools. His 1949 six-man football team not only won their Umatilla-Morrow County Championship, they placed third in the state playoffs losing to Talent High School near Medford.

Earl graduated from Weston High School in 1950 as Co-Valedictorian of his class and enrolled at the University of Oregon that fall. In 1952, he married his high school sweetheart, Barbara

Jane Gordon. He graduated in 1954 with a teaching degree and taught and coached one year at Colton, Oregon before entering the U.S. Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. Active duty with the Air Force took him to Texas, Arizona, Illinois and the Philippine Islands.

Following his discharge from the Air Force, he returned to teaching and coaching, including one year as a high school principal at Colton, Oregon. In July 1959 he returned to Weston as the Weston School Superintendent-Principal where he remained four years. He followed his stint at Weston by earning a Doctorate in School Administration at Oregon State University followed by a year on the Oregon State staff.

In 1965 he became Assistant Superintendent in the Albany Schools and then to Klamath Falls, Oregon as Superintendent of Schools for a period of 24 years. Many humorous incidents occurred in the 24 years in Klamath Falls, but one stands out in particular. Earl and Jane's granddaughter, Katie Morgan, was living with them in order to enter kindergarten at her October birthday age. At a class session of standing and telling what occupation their parents did. Katie stood and with full confidence told the class "my Grandpa is the stupidtendent." Word of that statement traveled around the school district pretty fast.

During his 24 years as superintendent of schools in Klamath Falls, he was elected president of most state administrative organizations including Oregon State School Superintendents, Oregon School Activities Association, and in 1980 to the American Association of School Administrative Executive Committee. In 1985-86 he served as president of that national organization which gave him and Jane the opportunity to spend a year traveling to schools throughout the USA and to numerous other countries with USA educational connections. Both Earl and Jane retired from the Klamath Falls Schools in 1980. They have spent the last 17 years between Klamath Falls, Weston, and Chandler, Arizona. Golfing takes up a good share of their time with an occasional cruise vacation.

Earl and Jane have two children, Becky Morgan, a former teacher lives in Eugene, and Melvin, an attorney in Klamath Falls. From these two children, they have eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren with whom they spend as much time as possible.

Earl and Jane return to Weston and Klamath Falls yearly where they are involved with college scholarships for high school seniors and with the underprivileged in the area.

Thank you to Melanie Hall and Valley Herald Newspaper for the photo and biographies!