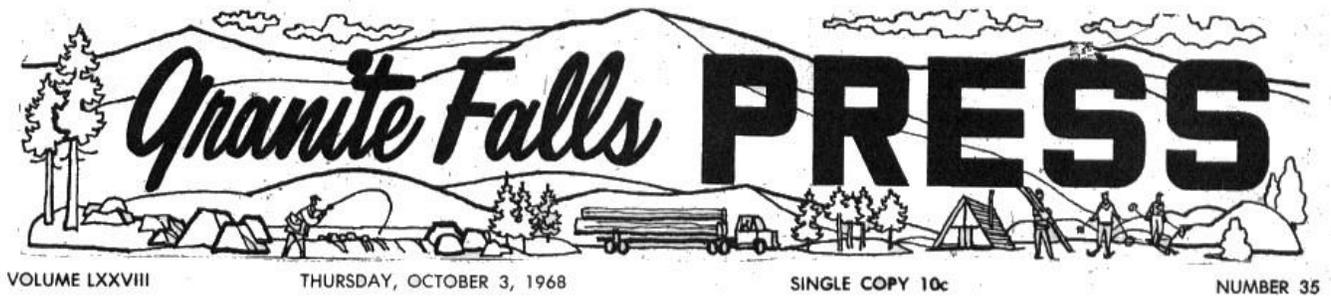


RAILROAD DAYS!

It's October, and that means Railroad Days in Granite Falls. Many have heard how the celebration started, but it's always worth one more telling of the story. Let's go back to the Oct 3, 1968 issue of the Granite Falls Press, and extract the details of how it started (almost by itself) in 1966, how it quickly expanded in 1967, and how in 1968 (the date of the article) it had gained full traction as "Railroad Reunion Days". What follows is taken directly from the newspaper in 1968:



Railroad Days Here Again!

"In 1966, a high school class was studying the history of Granite Falls. During the same year, the old brick schoolhouse, long out of use, was being torn down to make way for the new medical clinic. A tin box was discovered in the cornerstone of the old school building and this, possibly containing messages from the past, became an object of intense interest to the present-day students who were looking into their community's history.



The brick school stood from 1910 to 1966, razed to make way for medical clinic



The box was of interest to many other persons as well, so the class agreed to stage some kind of special event for the ceremonial opening of the box.

October 16 was selected as a significant date, that being the anniversary of the date that the train first came into Granite Falls back in 1892. The train had created a spirited era in the old town, carrying it far on its way toward being a special place, and it was evident that the building of the new clinic marked the beginnings of a new era of community development.

“Railroad Day” was declared to celebrate this spirit of the community. A parade through town was scheduled, special events were staged, and a public meeting was called for the box opening ceremonies.

It was a somewhat spontaneous affair in which both old- and young-timers participated, and everyone who was there had a marvelous time. The box contained some items of interest, particularly the signatures and some notes from students who were at the school in 1910 when the cornerstone was sealed.

The only adverse criticism was that more people, particularly out-of-towners, had not been contacted to take part. The sponsoring high school class then took on the project of compiling a list of all former graduates of the Granite Falls Schools, with an attempt to get current addresses, so that contact might be made for any future events.

A second “Railroad Day” was staged in 1967, with a much larger parade and with many more community groups and individuals participating. A meeting was held at the high school, and on the basis of the lists compiled, the formation of an Alumni Association was proposed, accepted, and a list of officers elected. The Alumni Association is now operating on an impressive scale, and will hold its meeting in conjunction with the third annual “Railroad and Reunion Day” this coming Saturday, October 5, at the high school auditorium.

The day is now established as a time when the town can celebrate and take pride in the unique spirit that has existed in the community since the days when the trains used to come through here, stirring the town in its activities. The train no longer runs to Granite Falls, it is true, but with our awareness of the past and our concern for the future, the spirit and pride of community still runs strong.”



Back in 1966-67, Richard Fallis taught the new course/workshop in “History of Granite Falls”. He was also named “Teacher of the Year” and commented in a newspaper article that, “One more item that will have to have community help to succeed is the need for a historical museum for Granite Falls. A great many things have already been lost or thrown away because there was no place to put them and no one to recognize their value. As the old timers pass an and the memory fades, 'these items from the past become ever more valuable.” He is shown in the picture above

holding “the box”, with students holding other local artifacts. John Petty (great grandson of Granite Falls’ first doctor, Dr. Chappell) is shown holding some surgical instruments, while the two girls are holding a basket woven by the well-known Pilchuck Julia and an early Granite Falls Post (the original town newspaper). He’d be particularly proud of the award-winning museum Granite Falls has today!

By 1968, the event had grown to include the Grand Parade, Alumni Meeting, Community Potluck Dinner, Community Dance at Legion Hall, and a Sunday open house at the Grange. In 2015, we are proud to hold the **50th Railroad Reunion Days** celebration, and proud of the community in which we live!