

[Reproduced from [*The Siskiyou Pioneer in Folklore, Fact and Fiction, 1957, and Yearbook—1956, v. 2, no. 9*](#), p. 41–42]

Pioneers of Laird's Landing . . .

By Clyde and Ray Laird, Marguerite Laird Dayton,
and Laurence Laird



ELVA CATHERINE LAIRD

About 1896.

—courtesy Mrs. H. L. Dayton

Charles J. Laird, for whom Laird's Landing on the southern end of Lower Klamath Lake was named, was born in Fremont County, Iowa, January 16, 1858.

In the spring of 1862 his family consisting of his father, William T. Laird, mother Sarah, brother William H. age two years, and he, Charles, age four, along with other families started their long slow journey for California by wagon train. His father often mentioned that Charles rode most of the way bareback on a gentle mare and in one instance the Indians wanted to trade for him saying he would make a "good chief."

After six months of travel the family settled in Trinity County but only until the next spring when they moved on to Scott Valley in Siskiyou County. Staying there about a year they purchased a ranch on the Klamath River near Ager and Thrall. Here the family settled to make their home.

After finishing school Charles, better known by that time as Charlie, was interested in ranching and stock raising with his father. Always having a great liking and understanding of horses, he began driving stage in 1880, operating from Redding on the south to Ashland, Oregon on the north. The railroad from Redding north was under construction and as it progressed the stage distance was cut down. It was completed to Ashland in 1887 thus ending the staging days. A photograph taken in Yreka in 1884 of Charles along with six other drivers and the shotgun messenger, is now on file in the Wells Fargo Museum in San Francisco.

In 1884 another Iowa family, the Marion Casters, came to Oregon, later settling in the Bogus community where Charles J. Laird and Elva Catherine Caster became acquainted and were married in 1892.

Previous to the time they were married Charlie, still with the pioneer blood, had purchased a ranch from "Doc" Skeen on the Lower Klamath Lake and also acquired more acreage by his own homestead right. They moved there following their marriage to enter the livestock business and establish a "stopping place." The nearest neighbors at that time were a distance of five miles away.

Much freighting was done from Montague, via Ball Mountain, through Red Rock Valley and on around the east side of Lower Klamath Lake into southern Oregon. Large droves of cattle were taken over this route to Montague to be shipped to market, some as far away as Lake County, Oregon. This necessitated stopping places for the riders and hay for the stock.

During these years four children were born to this union, namely: Clyde, Ray, Marguerite and Laurence (Bud).

Shortly after the turn of the century transportation between the budding city of Klamath Falls, Oregon and the railroad, was needed. The idea was conceived to have steamboat service on Lower Klamath Lake and hence, staging to the railroad.

A canal was dredged by J. Frank Adams of Merrill, Oregon, from a main channel to a point near the Laird house; so Laird's Landing was founded in 1905. The "Klamath," an 80-foot propeller-driven steamboat owned and operated by the Klamath Lake Navigation Company, began operation.

In the meantime a road had been constructed south by way of Pumice Stone Mountain to Bartle, a point on the McCloud River Lumber Company Railroad. (To this day it is known as "Davis Road" in honor of William R. Davis, prominent rancher and stockman of the area.) Over this road a stage line was operated by William Davis and Charles Laird, transporting passengers to and from the steamboat to the railroad at Bartle.

By 1906, the Weed Lumber Company had completed a railroad as far north as Grass Lake, so the stage line was shifted to that point with a daily service each way. In addition to passengers, now the Klamath carried freight, largely cement, as it was about this time the Reclamation Service began construction in Klamath Falls. This was transported from Grass Lake to Laird's Landing mostly by six-mule jerk line teams owned by "Cap" McIntyre, taking four days to make the round trip.

Practically all of this freight personnel, the beef drivers and other daily travelers, had to be fed and bedded down at the Landing and hay provided for the stock. Conveniences were very limited those days so it was no small chore.

However, the staging, freighting and "boating" days were short-lived as the railroad was gradually built on into Klamath Falls. Some cattle continued to be driven over this route to Montague for a few years.



C. J. LAIRD

—courtesy Mrs. H. L. Dayton

Charlie Laird and his wife Kate continued on with their ranch, devoting more time to building up their herd of cattle.

He passed away at home in November, 1928 and Mrs. Laird continued with the operations until her death in August, 1933.

It can be truly said that these two never lacked from a plentiful supply of friends during their lifetimes—a fact attested to by the attendance at their funerals. Both are buried at Medford, Oregon.

The ranch is still owned by the son, Ray, and his wife, and the daughter, Marguerite Dayton, and her husband, all residing at Tulalake, California.

It might be mentioned that the CL cattle brand registered by Charles Laird many years ago, is still used by Ray in his operations.

The oldest son, Clyde, lives at Fall Creek where he is engaged in the livestock business, and the youngest of the family, Laurence (Bud), is captain of the Berkeley Police Department in Berkeley, California.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Dayton live on a ranch near Tulalake. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Laird also live on a ranch near Tulalake. They have two sons and three grandchildren.