

Hugo's 80-Year Old Bell Crossing

Stop, Look, and Listen Soon after the advent of the automobile, speeds were increasing and the popularity of closed cars made the concept of "stop, look, and listen" at railroad crossings a difficult one. Fatalities at crossings were increasing. No one had invented an automatic fail-safe, universally-recognized grade crossing. In those days, many crossings were protected by a watchman who warned of an oncoming train by swinging a red lantern in a side-to-side arc, used universally in the U.S. to signify "stop". It was presumed that a mechanical device that mimicked that movement would catch the eyes of approaching motorists and give an unmistakable warning.

Belle-Oudry Family To Hugo: 1948 Eight and one-half year old Jacque Belle-Oudry along with her family moved to Hugo, Oregon in 1948. The family's moving van was her dad's old Army truck.¹ They found two railroad crossings. The railroad crossing between the two stores was always called the "Hugo Crossing." There was even a Hugo sign by the tracks near the depot. The Belle-Oudry kids loved the old steam trains. They would hear a train coming and make a bee-line for the depot. When they arrived they would sit on the loading dock and count the hobos and number of train cars. They always thought it was funny when they could never agree on the total number of hobos and cars.¹

Hugo's Bell Crossing The other railroad crossing on Three Pines Road was known to the Belle-Oudrys as the "Bell Crossing." This was because the crossing had a large silver painted box with a swinging red light on top which would lite up and swing when a train was near.¹

Southern Pacific Railroad



Belle-Oudry Family in Merlin, Oregon: October 1948
Courtesy of Jacque Hardwick

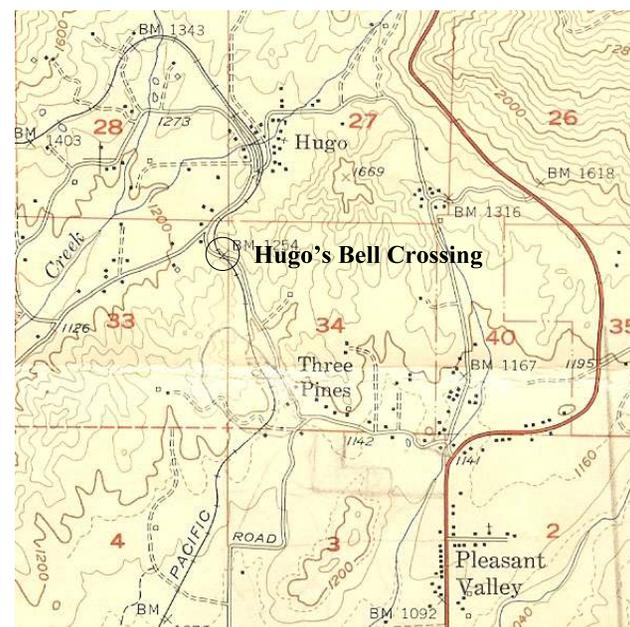


Hugo's Wigwag: 2000

Wig-Wag is the nickname given to a type of railroad grade crossing signal named for the pendulum-like motion it used to signal the approach of a train. It is generally credited to Albert Hunt, a mechanical engineer at Southern California's Pacific Electric inter-urban streetcar railroad, who invented it in 1909 out of the necessity for a safer railroad grade crossing.

Wig-Wag

In 2000 - 2001 as a part of their ongoing signal system upgrade program, the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad (CORP) replaced the last seven remaining Wig-Wag signals on the railroad. Wig-Wags such as Hugo's Bell Crossing were once prolific on the



Hugo's Bell Crossing: 1954

Southern Pacific guarding grade crossings throughout the West. Hugo's Bell Crossing was replaced in 2001 as part of CORP's Electrocode installation between Hugo and Grants Pass, Oregon.

More Information Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood*.

1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. November 8, 2000. *Family History: Jacque (Belle-Oudry) Hardwick*. Hugo, OR.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the *Hugo Neighborhood*. We are a nonprofit charitable and educational association composed of a voluntary group of citizens interested in both the land use and history of the Hugo area, which is located in Josephine County, Oregon.

Land Use & History

Its land use mission is to promote the social welfare of the citizens of the area by working to educate, preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Send us your email address if you want to know what we are doing; email does not cost us money, just time and effort.

Hugo Neighborhood

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Hugo's Wig-Wag

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Hugo's Wigwag From Three Pines Road

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Hugo's Bell Crossing



Hugo's Bell Crossing At Three Pines Road: 2000

June 1, 2011

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &
Historical Society**