

Blue Lake--A Pleasant Place to Live

Thriving City Has Beautiful Setting

By CHET SCHWARZKOPF
(Photos by Dick Ryan)

To the casual visitor, motoring along highway 299 as it winds up Mad river valley from the coast route, Blue Lake presents a picture quite out of the ordinary. For here you see a combination of the architecture of the 1880's and the new streamlined bungalows of the post-war era, all mixed together in an atmosphere of hustle and go-get. In the great wave of migration that has swept the west since Pearl Harbor, Blue Lake has collected its share—and expects more.

To the visitor who belongs in Humboldt, and who remembers those anxious days in the first 1930's, the change that has come over Blue Lake is all but miraculous. For the Blue Lake of fifteen years ago was almost a deserted village. Korbelt had shut down entirely, and the bottom had fallen out of the lumber market everywhere. And as Blue Lake's population depended almost entirely upon the lumber game, the little town was hard hit. And showed it.

But today! The once-rusty rails of the historic Arcata and Mad River railroad that runs from Arcata to Korbelt again gleam like silver and locomotive whistles blare the length of Mad river valley. Business is booming again—both in neighboring Korbelt and the big new Grizzly Park Lumber corporation mills right in town—and Blue Lake shows it.

TOWN IS NATURAL CENTER

Blue Lake is again the trading center of the valley it dominates. The once-quiet streets are a-bustle and it is developing a traffic merry-go-round. Railroad avenue is the town's main thoroughfare and the rebuilding and addition work now in progress on the Lindstrand store add a final touch to a busy scene. Right in the midst of things is the old Arcata and Mad River Railroad depot, abandoned when automobiles put passenger trains out of business. But the depot no longer stands stark. For now it is the headquarters office of the Grizzly Park Lumber corporation, and parking is at a premium in its vicinity.

Go a couple of blocks up the street from Lindstrand's and you come to the edge of the new residential district. Here, amid exotic surroundings, stands a group of modern homes. Some of them are completed, others are building, and more are being planned. As you look at the development that is taking place, you realize that Blue Lake indeed has come into its own—and this is only the start. Down the center of the town they are installing a new eight-inch water main to bring additional water from the big springs back in the timbered hills, where Blue Lake owns a perpetual water right.

Just off the town's center is the grammar school, a two-story structure once considered too large, but which now could do with more space to accommodate its 160 students that range from kindergarten to the eighth grade. Principal of Blue Lake's school is Clyde Patenaude, who is justly proud of the job he and his teachers are doing, and who also is building one of the dozen modern homes now under construction in Blue Lake.

BLUE LAKE'S BACKGROUND

Blue Lake is located in one of the most beautiful settings in all the Redwood Empire. Situated at the upper end of that valley where Mad river leaves the hills and dawdles on its last lap down to the sea, the town commands a view of timbered hills and winding river that must impress the most blasé of sightseers. And along the edge of town run both the Mad

river and its north fork—famed salmon and steelhead trout streams that furnish the fortunate Blue Lakers with fine sport and fine eating, as well as a community swimming pool during summer.

Highway 299—the road to Redding and Weaverville—passes through the middle of Blue Lake, and it is six miles to 101 highway and eight to Arcata—all easy valley running. Immediately in back of Blue Lake, however, 299 takes to the hills on its long climb over the hump of the Trinity and down into the Great valley. Thanks to its upper valley location, Blue Lake enjoys a salubrious climate, getting neither the fogs of the nearby coast nor the heat of the interior hinterlands. And yet it is only 20 minutes down to the ocean at Clam Beach and not over a half-hour to Eureka.

The town's present population is estimated at slightly over 1000 and, like most of Humboldt, it has its housing headache. But, given time, it expects to solve that—especially when the Grizzly Park Lumber corporation gets its housing project under way. For men now drive 10 to 20 miles to and fro to work, whereas, says Mayor Robert Yegge, they should have a chance to live in Blue Lake and enjoy their community.

Founded about 1876 by Clement Chartin, who was attracted by the beautiful natural setting, the town was incorporated in 1912. Its earlier settlers were mostly French, many of whom were induced to come to Blue Lake by Chartin, who built the town's first hotel and was one of its strongest boosters. Nearby lumber mills at Gledale and Essex—and in later days Korbelt—as well as the Chandler, Henderson and Co. operation in Blue Lake itself, gave the town a steady payroll during its earlier heyday.

Blue Lake's newspaper, the Advocate, celebrated its 60th anniversary May 1, 1948. Owned and operated for many years by Gus Perigot and by his sister, Berthe Perigot, since 1929, the fast-growing weekly recently was purchased from Miss Perigot by Loren and N. S. "Bus" DeMotte, a well-known father and son newspaperman combination. While the elder DeMotte was operating the Blue Lake Advocate under Publisher Berthe Perigot, son "Bus" was getting his education and serving his roving journeyman's time with the Eureka and later the San Francisco bay cities papers. Together again now, and with their town growing and prospering as never before, the two DeMottes have big plans for their paper—while former Publisher - Owner Perigot lives nearby and gives advice and approval.

Blue Lake has a civic center of which it is proud and for which it has ambitious plans. Renovated in 1910 by the Ladies' Civic club and donated to the town by them, the center now houses the city administration, volunteer fire department, public library, Boy Scouts and various lesser activities. Majordomo of the center is Chief of Police Sam Jones, who, despite the town's rapid growth

BLUE LAKE ITEMS

BLUE LAKE—The Busy Bee Birthday club met Thursday afternoon with Mrs. Elmer Holsinger as hostess. Mrs. Myrtle Smith was the honoree, her birthday being celebrated at the occasion.

During the afternoon several songs were sung and readings given by Mrs. Holsinger, Mrs. Dora Williams and Mrs. Enos Barber. Two lovely birthday cakes and other refreshments were served at the close of the afternoon to Mrs. Cora Clifton, Mrs. Clifford Miller, Mrs. Emma Fleckinstien, Mrs. Ada Fearrien, Mrs. Vista Hagood, Mrs. Myrtle Smith, Mrs. Enos Barber, Mrs. Gooch, a visitor from Missouri, and Mrs. Holsinger.

HOME ECONOMICS CLUB

The Home Economics club of Mad River Grange met at the IOOF hall this week with Mrs. Mabel Scott, Mrs. Mary Kane and Mrs. Helen Scott as hostesses. Over 20 members and guests were present.

Following luncheon a business meeting was held with Mrs. Grace Ayer presiding. The club decided to postpone the card party slated for November, until January. At the close of the business session pal gifts were distributed.

WHA-NIKA CLUB MEETS

Mrs. Ira Acorn was hostess at a meeting of the Wha-Nika club at her home Thursday afternoon. Roll call was quotations from Evangeline which were enjoyed all the more because the reader, Mrs. Bertha Cox, had visited the home of Evangeline when she took a trip to Nova Scotia a few months ago. Refreshments were

served at the close of the afternoon to Mrs. Bessie Siggins, Mrs. Charles Brown, Mrs. Leonard Lindstrand, Mrs. Robert Acorn, Mrs. Willis Webb, Mrs. Bertha Cox, Mrs. Walter Jackson and the hostess, Mrs. Ira Acorn. The next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Shedrick Jackson of Blue Lake.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

The sixth birthday of Freddy Lee Nielsen was the occasion that brought some youngsters to the home of the boy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nielsen, Friday afternoon. The afternoon was spent playing merry games. Ardith Melvin won a prize for pinning the tail on the donkey. Outdoor games were played during the balance of the afternoon followed by refreshments and opening the gifts. Those enjoying the occasion were: Mary Lynn Mitchell, Ardith and John Melvin, Richard and Carol Ann Brown, Dickie Jackson, Buddy Webb, Otto and Arthur Peterson, Stephen and Robert Patenaude, Richard Landon, Sharon Lee Hinding, Tommy Landon, Sidney and Arlene Ayer, Jimmy Landon, Roger and Russell Rounds, Kay Nielsen, the honoree Freddy Nielsen and the following mothers: Mrs. Floyd Mitchell, Mrs. Francis Hinding, Mrs. Charles Melvin and the hostess, Mrs. Fred Nielsen.

and the influx of many boomers, has maintained law and order well.

Blue Lake's city park is on land donated by Chartin and heirs in 1915. It was improved in 1923 by Berthe Perigot and now contains a baseball diamond. Early in the present year, the town council voted funds to turn the property into a recreational project and work is expected to get under way in 1949.

TOWN HAS A PAYROLL

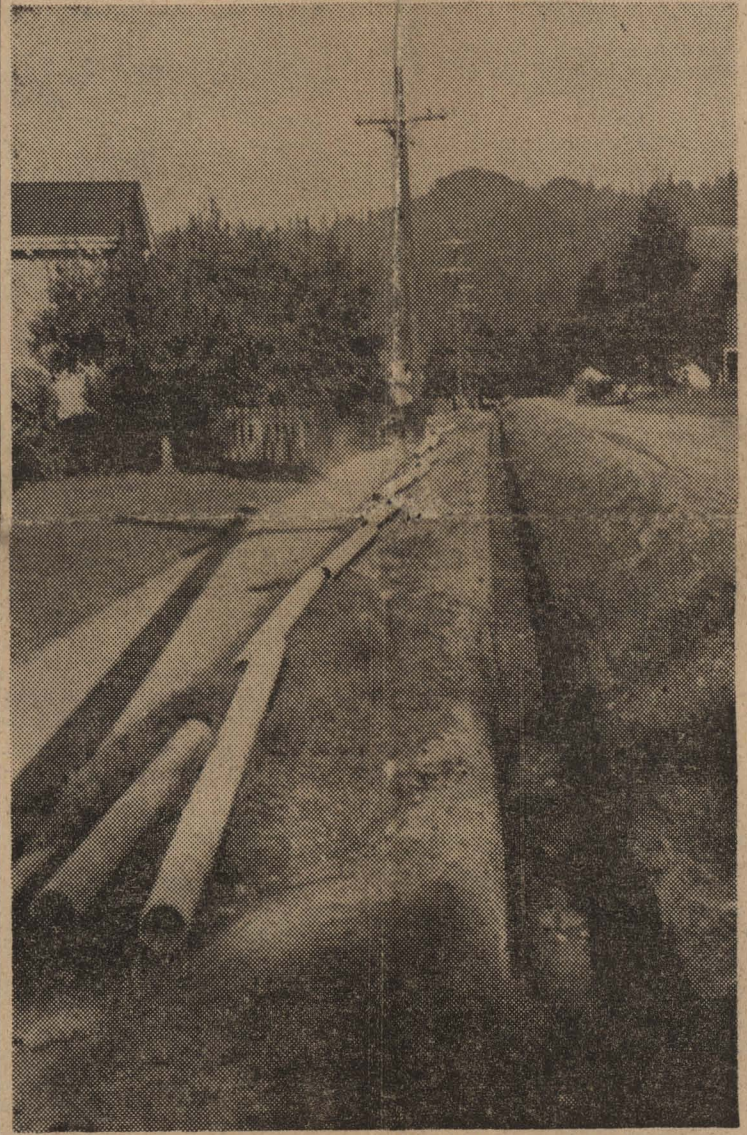
Biggest business and biggest employer in Blue Lake is the Grizzly Park Lumber corporation, whose large new mill and auxiliaries are nearing completion after 18 months' combined operation and building. Here is a mill to stir the imagination of the most mill-wise. No one-cut stand this—it is built literally from the ground up, with a long-range view as to payoff. "We're not thinking in terms of today's expenditure," says "Bernie" Kirsch, president of the corporation, who is justly proud. "We're building the best and most efficient plant engineering ingenuity can lay out. And, come good times or bad, we will be able to cut up 100,000 feet per day on a low over-all cost."

The new mill is completely protected by automatic sprinklers—a "must," according to Kirsch—that make fire hazard non-existent. Three new kilns of 100,000 capacity apiece are building and a fourth is completed now. The plant has its own complete machine shop and a twin-series log ponds are being finished with separating locks and each its own deep water well. Unique among installations at the Grizzly corporation ponds is an outside band saw rig that will split logs into quarters before they enter the mill.

"It's hard to believe," says "Bus" DeMotte, looking at the many acres of filled land that comprise the mill grounds. "We used to play baseball here—and not so long ago, either. And remember when we used to cut across the lower end of the property to go fishing?"



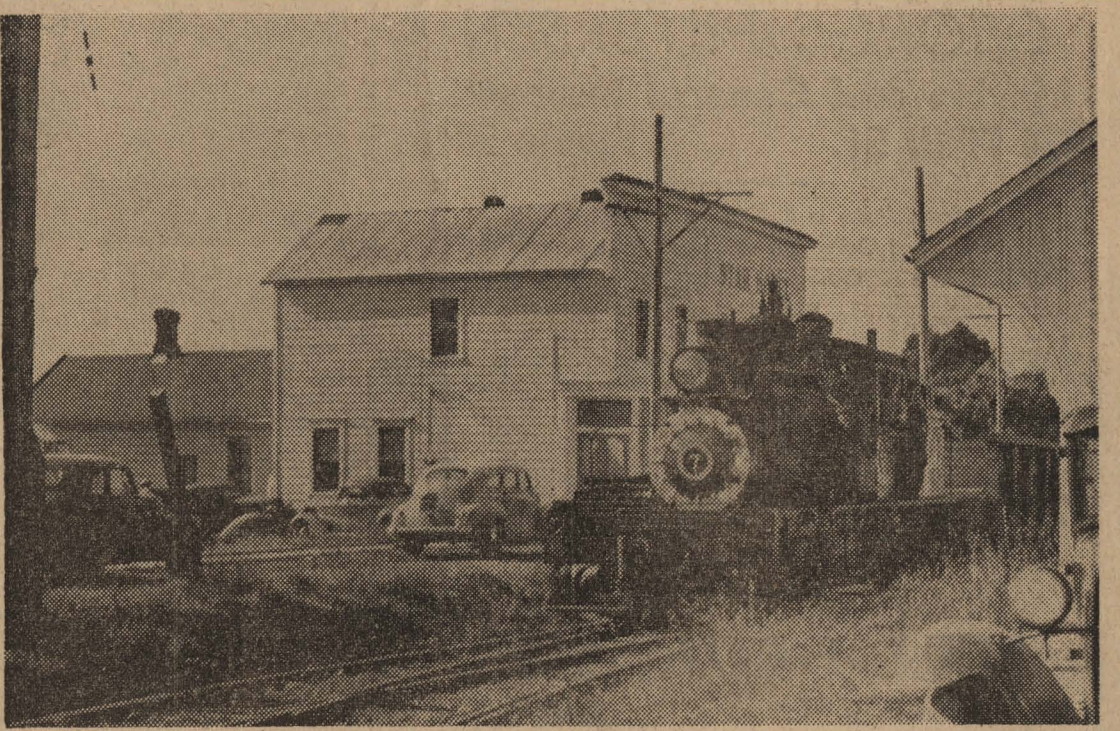
This aerial view of Blue Lake shows the wide streets and spacious houses of the town set in the pleasant countryside of the Mad River valley.



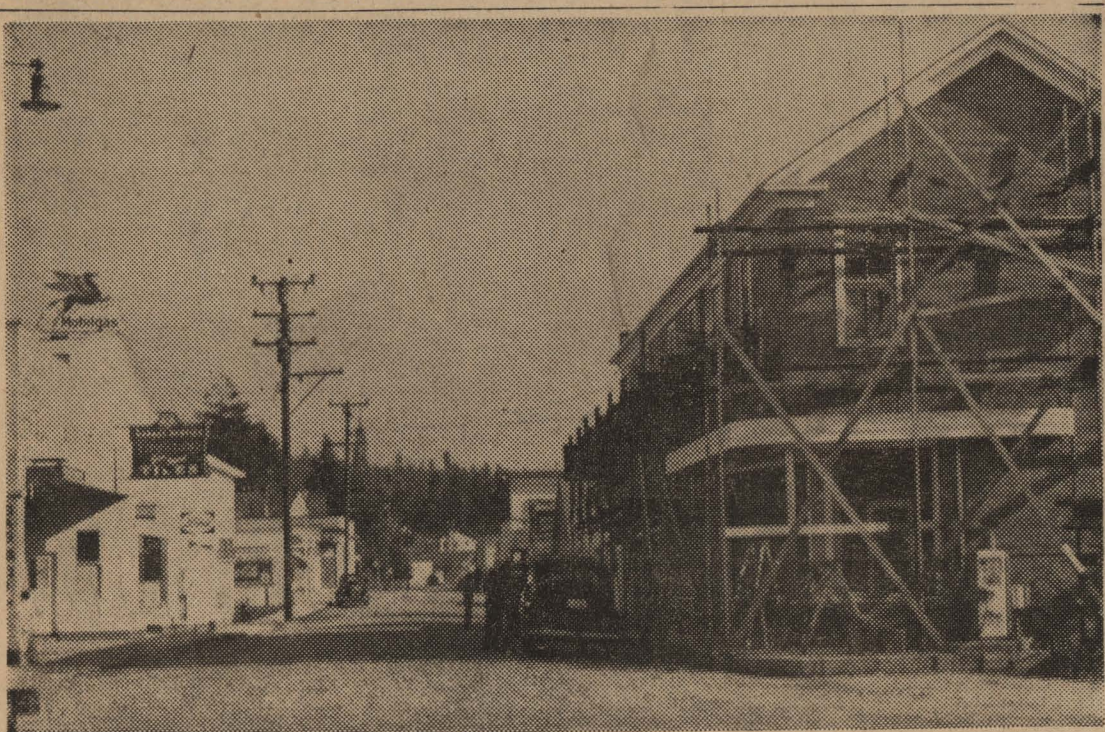
Blue Lake is installing a new eight-inch water main to carry water from the perpetual springs in the hills.



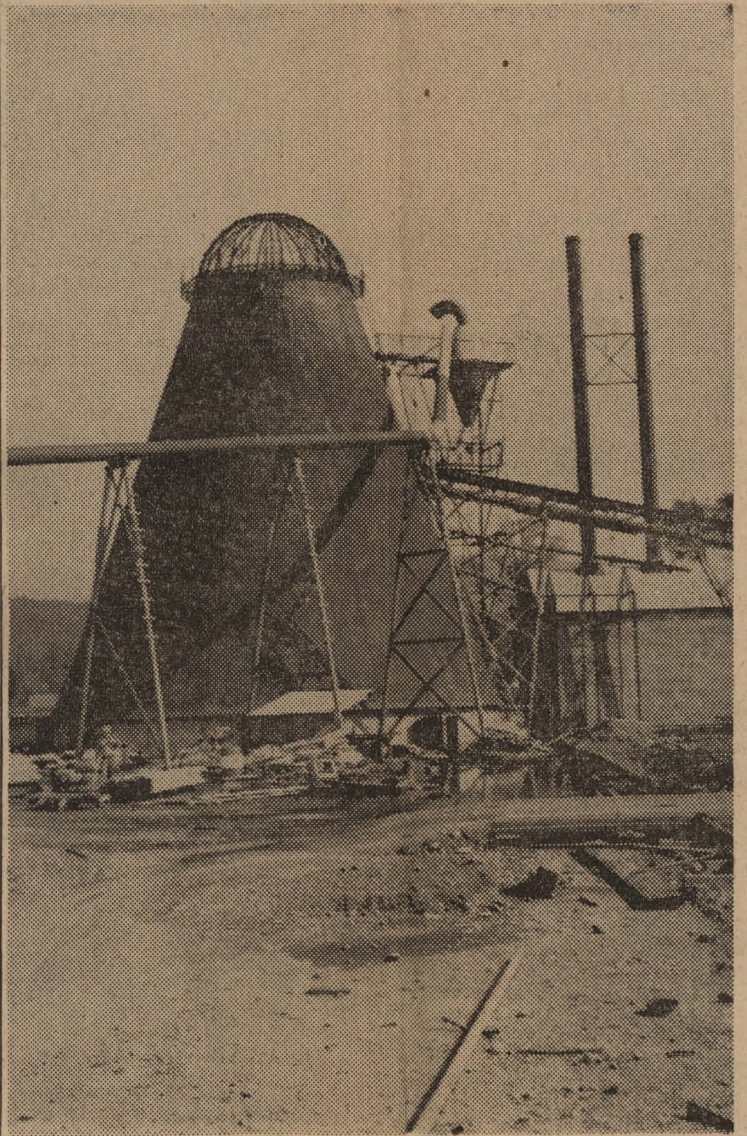
The Blue Lake Elementary school is surrounded by large, shady trees, and has large playgrounds for its pupils.



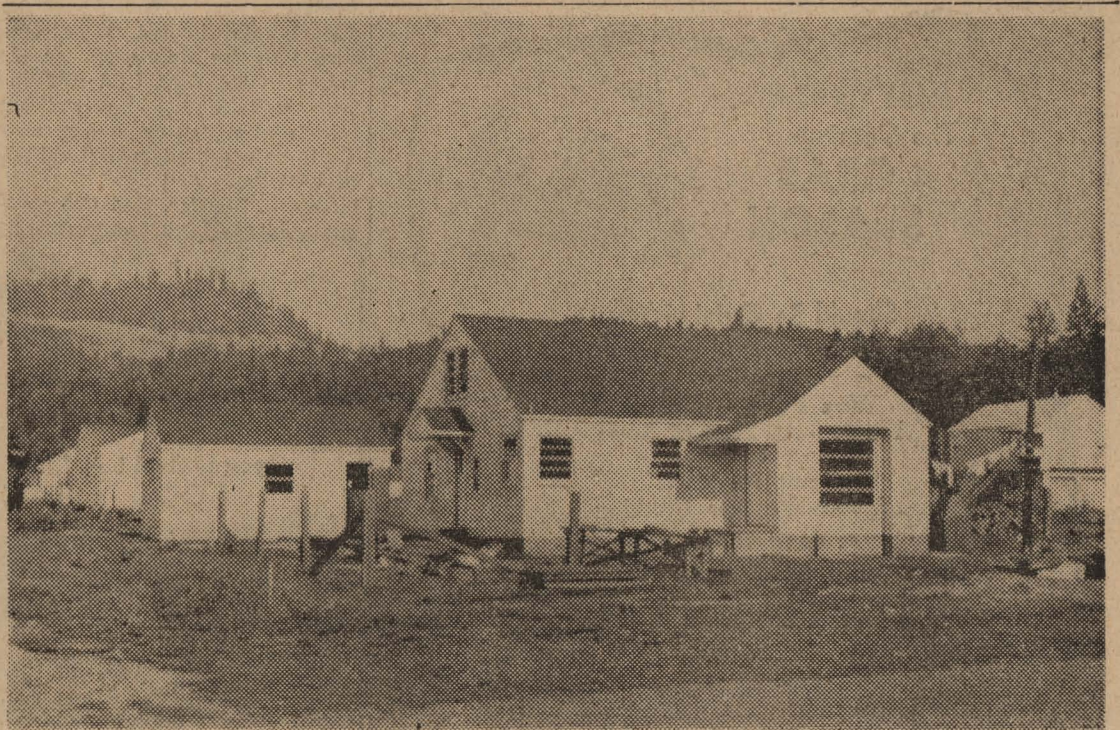
The historic Arcata and Mad River Railroad is busy again, chugging through town with its quaint locomotives.



Remodelling operations on Lindstrand's store catch the eye on Blue Lake's main street.



The expanding Grizzly Park Lumber company provides the major payroll for the town of Blue Lake.



Typical of the new housing being constructed in Blue Lake is the home of Clyde Patenaude, principal of the Blue Lake Elementary School.