

# Bear Valley history comes alive



Photo by Judith Beaudet Reed

SENECA — Stormy skies cleared for kindergarten through fourth-grade students as they took a hayride into Bear Valley's past with wagonmaster Jack Southworth June 8.

Their first stop was the old cemetery where 17-year-old Nellie Keller was buried with her newborn baby so long ago. The students laid wildflowers on her gravesite while Jack told them her story.

The hay wagon stopped next at Blanton, the former stage stop and post office on the old stage road from Canyon City to Burns. Farther down the road, students explored the old Stratton homestead cabin, where they picked up treasures from the past, such as pottery bits, purple glass and a horseshoe.

Putting their finds into the remains of a bucket for safekeeping, they lunched around Teresa Southworth's warming campfire. After dessert of roasted marsh-

mallows and root beer floats, the students entertained themselves with campfire songs.

Then they all loaded up for the highly eventful return trip, during which Bad Brad and Con-niving Ken held up the wagon and stole the entire bucketful of treasures! Before they could steal any more, Sheriff Ed raced down the hill to the students' rescue. The sheriff galloped off in hot pursuit of the renegades.

The hay wagon followed, and the students were delighted to find Sheriff Ed holding the outlaws at gunpoint. The treasure bucket was returned, but alas, most of the treasures slipped through a hole in the bucket.

Despite cries of "hang 'em high," the students relented when the desperadoes repented of their dastardly deeds and let the kids pet their horses. Sheriff Ed kept the outlaws in his custody while the students returned safely to Seneca School.