

*On Saturday, July 23, 2011 we will celebrate Lockwood, California
turning the ripe young age of 123 years old!*

*Lockwood was formerly known as Hungry Flats
and it was presumably named after
Belva Bennett Lockwood by Lair Patterson, Postmaster, 1888.*

This is the story of how Lockwood got its name...

Belva Bennett was born in 1830 and grew up in New York. She began teaching at only 14, in the same school she'd attended. At 18 she married Uriah McNall; he died four years later in a sawmill accident leaving her a young widow with a young daughter.

Belva persevered and graduated from Genesee School in 1857 she was hired at the Lockport Union School in New York. A few years later she left Lockport to buy a young ladies' seminary in Owega, New York which she ran as the Principal and School Director during the Civil War.

After the war she moved to Washington, D.C. and opened another school, one of that city's first private co-educational schools. In 1868 she married Dr. Ezekiel Lockwood, a dentist, chaplain, and claims officer. She decided to study law, and at 40 years old found a school that would accept her, National University Law School. She was refused a diploma because the male students objected and she spent the next few years trying to obtain it. In desperation she finally wrote a letter to the ex-officio president of the law school, President Ulysses S. Grant. She was granted her diploma and became an aspiring attorney in 1873.

Belva had many struggles and hurdles to overcome along her journey to find acceptance in a world that was not ready to recognize women as equal to men. She was determined to find this acceptance for women and from an early age advocated for women's rights, speaking at meetings with Susan B. Anthony on occasion. In 1884 she received a letter from The National Equal Rights Party of the Pacific Slope, San Francisco, California informing her that she had

been nominated by them as their Presidential Candidate. Marietta Stowe was their Vice-Presidential choice. She accepted their nomination and began her campaign, traveling and speaking on a wide variety of issues, including women's right to vote. She received over 4000 votes and made a lot of people stop and think about the rights they had, or did not have in this country.

She ran for President again in 1888. In July of that year the newly appointed postmaster, Lair Patterson, chose to name a community formerly known as Hungry Flats, Lockwood, California. Though no documentation exists, it has been assumed by local historians he did so to honor Belva Lockwood, who was very much in the public eye during those years.

Belva Lockwood lived another 29 years after her second bid for the Presidency. During these years she traveled throughout the world as US Representative to International Peace Conferences, speaking on disarmament and peaceful arbitration of international disputes. She was also a popular national speaker, earning many times what others were paid when she appeared.

At the age of 83 she welcomed members of what was to become the National Women's Rights Party to the capitol, and marched with them on behalf of women's right to vote. She died at the age of 86, in 1917, three years before passage of the 19th Amendment granting women that right. She left a legacy and example we reclaim and honor today, in Lockwood, California.

Abridged from:

***Belva Speaks:
The Story of Belva Bennett Lockwood
A Play
by Susan M. Raycraft
based on research by Julia Davis and Jill Norgren***

***Premiere Performance at
Centennial Celebration
July 23, 1988
Lockwood, California***

