

4/82

THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



GRAND OPENING, PAGE 11

Director's Corner

Museums are not what they used to be. I first worked at a museum in the winter of 1959-60. I can't remember if I started in December or January, but I do remember that the museum I was associated with was little more than a collection of cast off department store show cases, jam-packed with as many things as the cases could hold. Happily museums are becoming more sophisticated in their presentations as are the viewing tastes of the museum visitor.

Yet, I am surprised how far the SOHS has come in the past few years in its outreach programs. Three years ago we opened the children's museum wherein we have a theatre dedicated to a local boy who became a world famous clown. We even initiated our own in-house clown, "Pinto," who presents local history to children of all ages. Last year we built a puppet stage and produced seven puppet show scripts based on local history and Indian legends. The puppet stage is portable and will soon be available for use outside the children's museum.

In December 1980 still another outreach effort was started in the form of the Jacksonville Museum Performers. Directed by Elizabeth Vickerman, this theatre group has written several plays based on local history. Performing mainly at nursing homes and for senior citizen organizations, the Performers have been warmly received. So successful have been their initial efforts that travelling and production costs have become an almost curtailng obstacle. Like other SOHS volunteer groups, such as the Golddiggers Guild and the Jacksonville Museum Quilters, there is little or no money allocated from the general budget for the Performers. Since there are no admission charges, they had no recourse but to seek a grant from an outside agency. The Oregon Committee for the Humanities was approached to underwrite the cost of a production called "The Influence of Pioneer Women in Jackson County." The grant was awarded and for the first time the Jacksonville Museum Performers will have funds for costumes, props, and sets. The grant also provides for the services of Dr. Edwin R. Bingham, Professor of History at the University of Oregon. (See page 20 for more information.) Good luck to Elizabeth and her crew.

Yes, the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the Jacksonville Museum for that matter, have come a long way in breaking away from the notion that all a museum really needs to do is display as much as possible to satisfy its mandate to "collect, preserve, and interpret" history. The inference today is on meaningful interpretation. With exhibit space costing more and more to create and maintain, it is becoming absolutely necessary for the historical society to seek new ways to reach its public. Simply relying on "business as usual" will get us nothing except ultimately "no business." When the Performers offer their program in your area, please support them with your attendance.

Bill Burk



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The Wonderful World of Medical Gimmicks

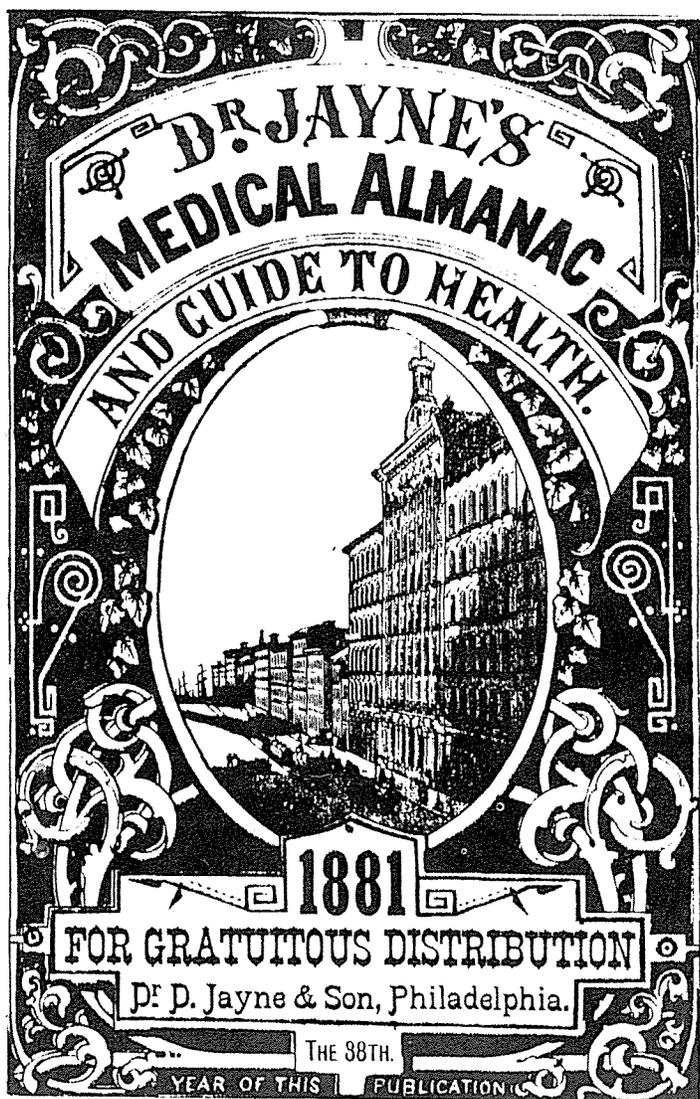
Dr. J. W. ROBINSON, a Jacksonville physician (*Table Rock Sentinel*, Vol.I-No.3) was photographed in his drug store which was located next to the Beekman Bank. To the citizen who knew only a practical, basic way of life with little comfort and few luxuries, the pharmacy was an elegant, slightly mysterious place. The combination of scented soaps (for the affluent few), antiseptic concoctions and sovereign remedies stirred up in basins in the back room, and the potpourri of sachets and cosmetics--*Djer Kiss*, *Trailing Arbutus* and Edna Wallace Hopper's Beauty Creams--produced the most enchanting smell in town. One day some enterprising young chemist will bottle that aroma, call it *Ecstasy Number Seven*, and make his first million.

Although Dr. Robinson's Drug Store displayed the sign: "We sell patent medicines, we do not recommend them," the

bottles in their colorful boxes were neatly lined up on the shelves behind the counter. Bitters, compounded from an infallible secret formula, displayed a rowful of seductive Indian maidens graciously offering their panaceas; a parade of dear, motherly Lydia E. Pinkhams, one after another, tendered instant relief to suffering womanhood; and a rack of Paine's Celery Compound, exhibiting a garden plot of refreshing crisp, green stalks, promised in each tablespoon (1) an exhilarating tonic, (2) a powerful restorative, and (3) a stiff belt of the sauce. Incidentally it's no wonder that Paine's Compound was such a constant success--there's something so *honest* about a bunch of celery.

In addition to the delight of just being in the drugstore, the patron frequently received gifts to be tucked away and cherished. The generous patent

medicine people offered, for free, trade cards printed in full and glorious color. One might receive a picture of dear little children feeding a cunning goat wearing a saddle. The tricky saddle is advertising Carter's Little Nerve Pills. Some lucky collectors acquired a charming photograph of Lydia E. Pinkham's two rosy cheeked, insipid granddaughters. Who wouldn't treasure that forever? And for those preferring action to treacle, there was an Indian brave fighting an angry bear that was charging around fiercely on top of a sign for Dr. Comstock's Dead Shot Worm Pills. There was of course no end of beautiful mamas soothing their beautiful babies with syrup, teething compounds, pain killers and gentle doses of opium.



Dr. Jayne's Almanac--only one of thousands produced for a grateful public.

At the new year you could get a free almanac, loaded with valuable information: recipes, weather forecasts, homely wisdom and bucolic jokes. It was also full of advertising praising the company's products. That little book could entertain and educate the family for a whole year.

There were occasionally tiny samples of valuable merchandise for the asking. The customer could have a test bottle of Emma T. Goldman's black hair dye, a try-out cake of ghastly white face powder or a dab of Eucalyptus salve for an overblown nose.

Today's drug stores still have it all--except the magic.

Although family remedies, concocted from secret formulas of herbs and chemicals, were around long before the three old chicks in *Macbeth* whipped up their cauldron of delicacies, patent medicines really reached the peak of production--and charlatanism--a few years after the turn of the century*. In 1900 there were oceans of elixirs and bitters, mountains of pills and trainloads of inventions, and most of them, as a result of the constant dinging of advertisements whose chief emphasis was centered on the morbid fear of illness and death, found their way into the cupboards of nearly every household in America. Yet when President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906, he brought about the end of this vast industry. A list of the fraudulent medical products which were on the market then and a catalog of the manufacturers' unscrupulous claims would occupy a five foot shelf.

The surviving bottles, tins and promotional publications have gone into collections of curios although only a small part of the once great landslide remains. It seems that when the disappointed buyer found that the sure cure wasn't really a sure cure after all, he gave it the old heave-ho. Why retain the evidence that

* A witty and informal history of the rise and fall of patent medicines has been presented by Oregon author, Stewart Holbrook, in his book, *The Golden Age of Quackery*.

he had been duped? But the advertisements with their glowing promises can still be found in yellowing newspapers and old magazines.

As space is limited, the *Table Rock Sentinel* is presenting in this issue only that part of the story which deals with metal belts and harnesses, medical and magic pads, and electric and magnetic gadgets--featuring a few of the avalanche of gimmicks which brought such hope and such disillusionment to the purchaser.

At first thought, the towering sales of these pseudo-scientific items boggle the mind, but when one is reminded of the recent copper bracelets, the plastic reducing belts and the cosmetic creams that "permeate the skin and feed the pores," the incredible demand for fakery isn't so astonishing after all.

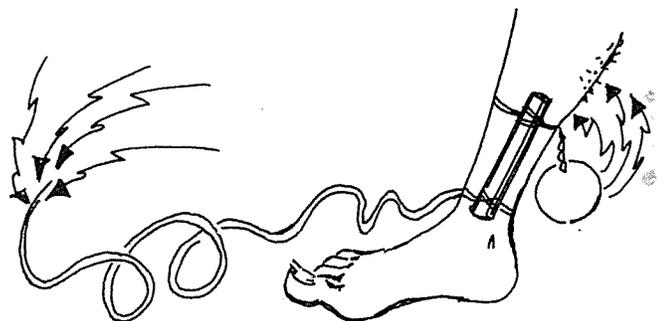
The first of these objects that came along was a pair of metal bars produced by Elisha Perkins. He called his invention tractors and in 1796 he received a patent for them--the first to be issued for a medical device in the United States. Perkins was a Connecticut doctor who had earned the respect of his colleagues and the adoration of his patients. He was one of the founders of the Connecticut Medical Society. As he went about his business of doctoring people and selling mules, he became convinced that metal possessed an influence on the body. When his scalpel touched a muscle, the muscle contracted; when a lancet touched the gum, the toothache stopped; when he passed an iron comb over a patient's head, the headache subsided. Perkins concluded that there was "a surcharge of electric fluid" in affected parts and that the metal drew off that fluid.

He was obviously sincere. Presenting his discovery at a state medical convention, he declared he would "cheerfully hazard his honor and reputation" on the fact that metal rods could rub away pain. The user must follow specific directions: the tips of the two three-inch rods--one iron, one brass--must be drawn, one after the other, across the affected spot, always away from the center of the trouble toward the feet, hands or head,

and the aches and pains would be magnetized away. At first the doctors were swayed by Perkins' earnest presentation, but by the following year they had decided the use of tractors was quackery and they ousted him from the society.

This didn't dampen Elisha Perkins' enthusiasm. He forged metal rods in his own furnace and sold them for \$25 a pair. The tractors were an immediate success. The good doctor published a series of pamphlets explaining how his discovery worked and went on the road to sell them. Why would his grateful patients doubt their effectiveness? Benjamin Franklin had easily brought electricity down from the sky, and now Perkins was simply directing it into the body to eliminate suffering.

In 1799 New York City was ravaged by yellow fever. Perkins armed with his tractors, started out, door to door, hoping to heal the sick, but within a few weeks he contracted the disease and died. Although his son Benjamin had a sudden but short-lived success pushing the metal bars in London, people ultimately decided they could get just about the same results with a couple of sticks or two nails. Sales of the remarkable invention came to an abrupt stop but hundreds of similar gimmicks followed: Magnetic Liquid, Electric Insoles, Electro-Magnetic Bracelets and Galvanic Belts, in addition to electrically charged pads, caps, combs and corsets.



One imitation which had an extremely wide sale was the Electro-poise, invented by Dr. Hercule Sanche. This amazing little wonder-worker was a hollow metal tube, about

four inches long, sealed on both ends to hold in the scientific good stuff. At one end was a flexible cord, at the other, a small metal disc which could be fastened to the ankle or wrist of the sufferer. The magnetism came into the cord, from where, don't ask--it just seeped in from the atmosphere then ran through the tube into the disc and on into the patient who didn't even feel the powerful healing rays enter his body. He could read the paper and take a little splash of bitters while the treatment went on. This never-fail device sold for \$10.

The name, Electropoise, was later changed to Oxydonor, and the claims were revised. Rather than electricity, the pipe now shot healing blasts of oxygen into the system. This seems to have been brought about by the addition of a little sand into the pipe. The user still felt no painful sensation. What a versatile creation. When it became fashionable to heal with radium, the name could be changed to Radiopoise and radium, rather than oxygen, could be sent into the sluggish system. Today we might have an Atomopoise and atomic energy would surge into the veins supercharging that old tired blood.

The enormous success of the Oxydonor insured instant competition; the Oxytonor, the Oxybon, the Oxypathor, etc., etc. Production of these pipe and wire wonders came to a halt after the inventor of the Oxypathor was hauled into court, found guilty of using the mails to defraud and given eighteen months vacation in the Federal pen. He had sold over 40,000 Oxypathors at \$35 each, and each one had cost him a little over a dollar. Maybe it was worth spending a year and a half in the hoosegow.

Deciding that disease is an electrical malfunction in the body, Dr. Albert Abrahms, in 1916, introduced two new instruments: an electronic gadget for diagnosis and an Oscilloclast which cured the disease the first machine had detected. A drop of the patient's blood--it could be on a piece of blotting paper--was put into the buzzing diagnostic machine which was wired to the forehead of a healthy person who stood facing

the west. Tapping on this individual's abdomen and torso, Dr. Abrams could detect "dull spots" where the patient's disease was centered and thereby treat it with his always effective Oscilloclast. By 1923 more than 3,500 of these machines were in operation.

The suspicious American Medical Association, ever sly and crafty, submitted some blood taken from farm animals for the test. The first sample revealed that the animal was suffering from cancer of the genito-urinary tract and a second, from a sheep, clearly showed the patient had hereditary syphillis. Dr. Abrams guaranteed a cure for \$250. How could an unsuspecting quack compete with dirty tricks like that? Leaving a fortune of at least two million dollars, he inconsiderately died, his plant ceased operations and that tricky old A.M.A. was foiled after all.

HOLMAN'S
Fever and Ague and Liver Pad

CURES WITHOUT MEDICINE, SIMPLY
BY ABSORPTION.

The Best Liver Regulator in the World.



TRADE MARK.

The only true cure for, and preventive of malaria, in all its forms:

Liver Complaint, Jaundice, Dyspepsia, Rheumatism, Yellow Fever, Sea-Sickness, Neuralgia, Bilious Disorders, &c., &c.

None genuine without the Trade-Mark and Signature of the Inventor on the wrapper.

Ask your druggist for it. For Certificates, read little blue book, *Enemy in the Air*.

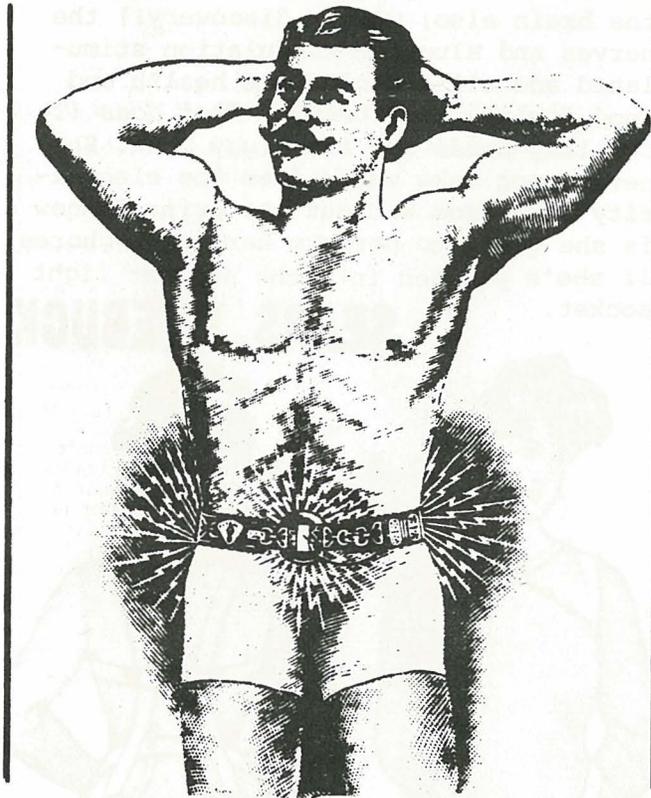
Sent by mail on receipt of \$2.

WM. F. KIDDER & CO., Sole Proprietors,
No. 83 John Street, N. Y.

Holman's Pad, sent by mail upon receipt of \$2 was the only true cure for malaria in the country. It was also the best little old Liver Regulator in the world. This inconspicuous pad, held in place by tapes, rested on the patient's sternum where its precious rays could be absorbed by the heart, the lungs and the lights and the liver. A wearer of Hol-

man's Fever and Ague and Liver Pad found that getting rid of jaundice, yellow fever, dyspepsia and rheumatism was a breeze. This was especially remarkable in view of the fact that it was filled with sawdust, generously laced with red pepper to produce that healing tingle and sprinkled with a nice drug store-ish smell. Naturally this magnetic pad was immediately followed by a multitude of imitations.

The dictionary defines *galvanism* as "current electricity, produced by chemical action ... In medicine, the application of the ordinary voltaic or battery current to the body for therapeutic purposes." That may not make much sense but it doesn't have to; it sounds scientific, beneficial and far out. The word, *galvanism*, combined with the other term, *voltaic*, could certainly give an enterprising inventor no end of ideas.

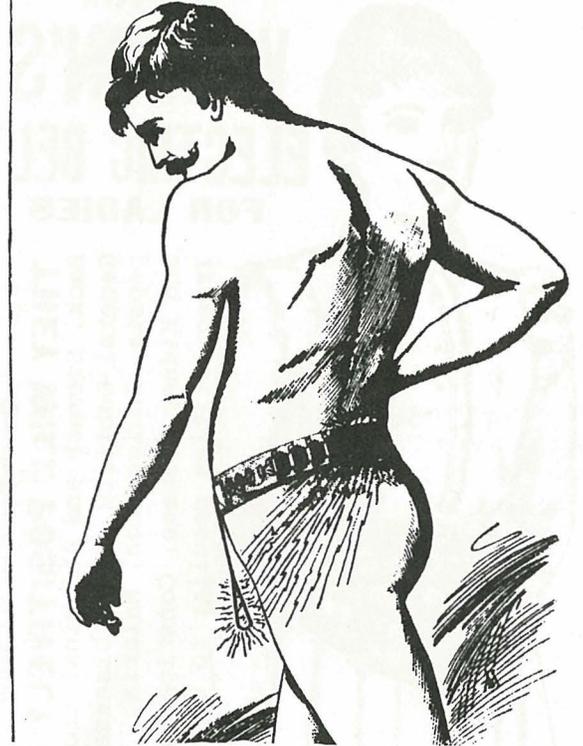


Sure enough, Dr. Dye's Voltaic Belt soon appeared, touted as the "grandest discovery of the Nineteenth Century." Kind and lovable old Doc Dye had produced a colorful contraption, "scientifically designed with copper and zinc plates" attached with important-looking little

wires to a bright cotton flannel strap. The electric current enveloped EVERY PART AFFECTED and passed through the liver, the kidneys and some other items. It thus brought immediate relief to any gent suffering with kidney, bladder, liver or stomach troubles. And in addition it PROMPTLY, RELIABLY and THOROUGHLY cured any private problems with those other items.

Advertising for at least one of the many imitations which soon flooded the market is a bit more graphic than that for the Voltaic Belt. Doc Dye may have been a crook, but he cheated the public with a tad more delicacy than the inventor of the Common Sense Belt for Weak Men. The artist has pictured the belt wrapped around a naked--gasp--gentleman who is in a terrible shape. A section of the insulation has been removed to reveal those dear little batteries shooting out their tiny but powerful beams of current. The

A Common-Sense Treatment for Weak Men



advertising copy warns: "If you suffer as above (The victim appears to be clutching his right kidney. No wonder. Those perverse rays are spilling out in the wrong direction) you are simply throwing health and happiness away if you do not avail yourself of the belt."

The Spiral Suspensory--that small electric jimbo working away like mad in the lower part of the picture on the preceding page--can be detached and then all the goody will go into the discs which are designed to work on the liver and the stomach. It's nice the nude gentleman has bought the belt because he'll regain the vitality of youth and the story will have a happy ending.

If the inventor limited the sale of his miraculous invention to men only he lost at least half of his potential market. Besides, the ladies surely had some picky little nagging problems like malaria fever or acute kidney failure, which would disappear almost instantly with a small but delightful charge of electricity. Doctor Wilson, sympathetic and obviously concerned by this unfair and chauvenistic indifference to the gentler sex, marketed his electric belt designed for ladies only.

DOCTOR
WILSON'S
ELECTRIC BELT
FOR LADIES



They Are Vastly Superior to so-called "Electric" Corsets, Quack Nerveums and Drings.

THEY WILL POSITIVELY CURE
Back, Stomach and Abdominal troubles,
General Debility, Heart Disease, Dys-
pepsia, Indigestion, Malaria, Liver
and Kidney Disease, Constipation and
Irregularities peculiar to Women.

This not unattractive garment was a certain cure for all back and abdominal troubles, weakness, heart disease, dys-

pepsia, constipation and a lot of other stuff including all those complaints peculiar to women. A victim of one--or all--of those ailments could get relief for only \$3. If she had really severe symptoms, she could get a double-power belt for a couple of dollars extra, and \$8 would purchase the deluxe belt *with an abdominal supporter attached*. The rig was costly, no kidding around, and the sufferer had to decide for herself if becoming a well woman again was worth the asking price. But, on the other hand, who could resist? The advertisement clearly stated--and if it's in print it has to be true--that the constant infusion of electric current aids, assists and exerts every part to a proper performance of its functions...There is no 'shock' felt but instead a pleasant, delightful, exhilarating effect, only too pleasant (what's with this *too* pleasant?) and agreeable. The mind will become active (ye gods, it's good for the brain also; *what* a discovery!) the nerves and sluggish circulation stimulated and all the old time health and good feeling come back." *That does it.* The lady heads for the piggy bank. She never once asks where does the electricity come from without batteries or how is she going to perform her daily chores if she's plugged into the nearest light socket.

SEARS, ROEBUCK

\$1.19



IMPROVED RATIONAL BODY BRACE

Of course there were many "inferior imitations" which the buyer was urged to avoid. Even those wonderful folk who brought us *LaDore's Bust Food*, Sears, Roebuck, offered a belt to brace up the female body and hold those organs in place so they wouldn't drift aimlessly around the system. Sears appears to have been a good deal more modest in claims for its accouterment; the thing didn't hold hidden electricity, wouldn't prevent heart attacks and it wasn't a cure for galloping consumption. It certainly wasn't beguiling enough to wear on the honeymoon, and it might have been less trouble to put up with a back ache than to get in and out of that harness.

Dr. W.G. Brownson's Electro-Chemical Ring, which was followed by a glut of similar marvels, was a piece of artistically designed jewelry and it sold for only \$2. It was made of iron, forged with secret powers, and was worn on the pinkie. The ring was guaranteed to cure twenty-one diseases among them Diabetes, Cancer, Psoriasis and Epilepsy. The inventor, who called himself a "Medical Electrician," periodically issued booklets filled with testimonials from grateful people--bank presidents, church elders, surgeons and ladies of society. In 1914 a fraud order from the Post Office denying Dr. Brownson the use of the mails forced the Medical Electrician out of business. You can't fight the government when it gets nosy, and the philanthropic Dr. Brownson threw in the towel.

Another piece of jewelry with curative powers was given a patent and put on the market in 1916. This was a metal necklace which nestled prettily upon the wearer's throat, emitted electric currents and relieved and prevented goiter.

A.M. Richardson's Wonderful Discovery cured everything but hangnails--and it would have made short work of those too, but the copy man forgot about the pesky things when he wrote the ad. This device made use of completely natural forces to do its thing. It was called--in scientific medical circles--the Richardson's Magneto-Galvanic

WONDERFUL DISCOVERY!

FOR MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD!

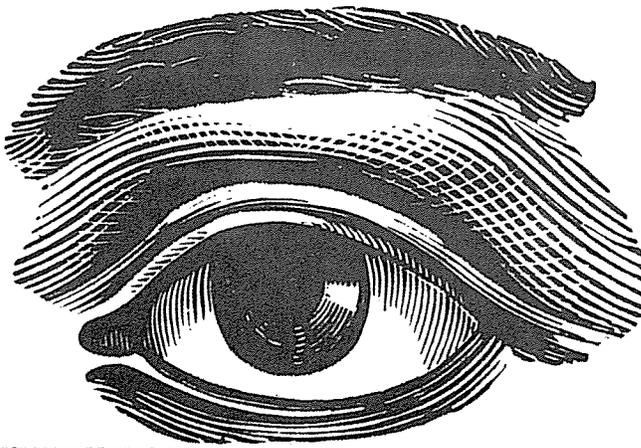


A. M. RICHARDSON & CO.
Sole Proprietors for the U. S.
104 West 49th Street, New York.

Battery, and it infused "Electricity" through the sluggish system, "invigorating, stimulating and putting new life into every nerve in the body." While it was doing the rejuvenation bit, it incidentally cured up those nagging symptoms of "rheumatism, colic, bilious affections" (that's some silly phrase--when you're bilious, affection is about the last thing on your mind) back ache, cold feet and the nervous willies. The patient was warned to beware of worthless imitations. The Genuine Richardson Battery would pick up a needle. Gosh. While you were taking the cure, you could pick out splinters.

The advertisement doesn't say but it looks as if the surplus Wonderful Discoveries could be sold to Ma Bell for use on dial phones which were going to be invented in the distant future.

The Ideal Sight Restorer was such an intricate medical phenomenon that a pamphlet was printed to explain its inner workings. There was no fifteen day trial period. That's no wonder; it wouldn't take many hours of staring into two empty pipes to discourage the



THE IDEAL SIGHT RESTORER

THE INESTIMABLE BLESSING OF SIGHT.

AVOID SPECTACLES & EYEGASSES. HEADACHE & SURGICAL OPERATION. ILLUSTRATED PAMPHLET ON THE EYE. MAILED FREE.

THE IDEAL COMPANY, 239 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

user. If he didn't have a headache to begin with, he surely would have a doozie by the end of the first day. The realization of the harm this thing might have caused is staggering. A person in need of involved, intricate eye surgery or a delicate lens adjustment could hardly do worse than attempt a cure with this absurd object.



Dr. Scott's Electric Tooth Brush came as a blessed relief to all those long suffering people who were bugged by falling bristles. The Pall Mall Electric Association of London made a smashing scientific breakthrough and produced a tooth brush designed so cleverly that not one bristle could escape. In addition to this the handle was permanently charged with electro-magnetic current which acted upon the teeth and gums and produced, in no time at all, pearly charmers and rosy gooms.

There were probably some disadvantages. Dr. Scott's potent gismo would surely

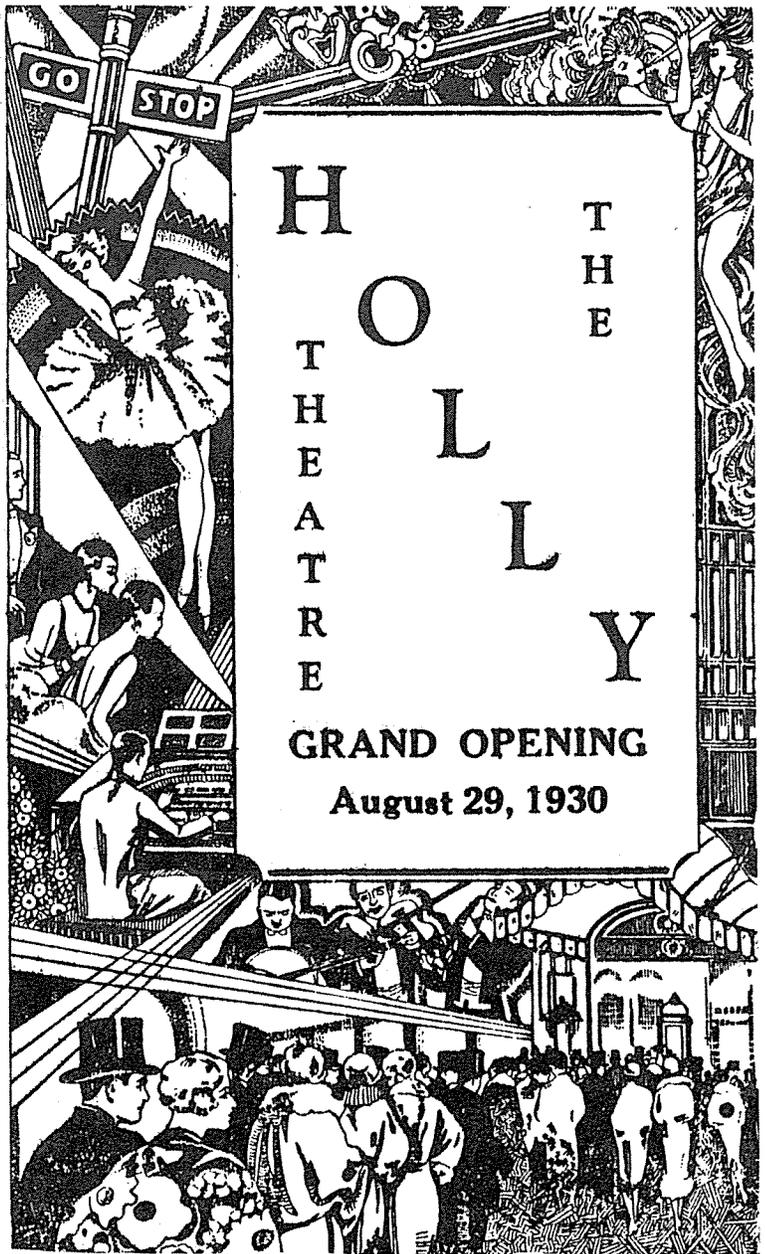
discourage romance. With his teeth freshly electrified, hubby would certainly curl wifie's toes if he got romantic and attempted to buss her. If she'd been messing around with the Electric Tooth Brush also, the two jolts of combined current would knock them right off the love seat. This is quibbling. That's a small price to pay for electric teeth.

During the years when tuberculosis was on the increase, when typhoid fever and yellow fever were raging and when an epidemic of cholera was lurking in the shadows, frightened people would naturally grasp at straws. But how could so many fall victim to cures such as Anti-Consumptive Cork Soles or Medicated Fur Chest Protector? (the last was apparently your ordinary Superman Chest Wig, liberally marinated in a menthol solution.)

In those grand old days, cherished now with such nostalgia, there were few doctors, many of them self-taught and some of them little more than Peruna drunks. Living conditions, under the starch and polish, were pretty primitive and people had only scanty knowledge of sanitation. In addition, unethical newspaper editors accepted advertising from ruthless charlatans and bombarded the public with false medical claims, forged testimonials and outright lies. The poor victim of a disease, thrown on his own, was besieged by persuasive reports of fabulous cures. He very often had only quackery to turn to and was at the mercy of skillful bunco men who got rich trading on peoples' misfortunes.

The first really telling blow against these ghouls was struck by Samuel Hopkins Adams who, in 1905, introduced a campaign in *Collier's* magazine which ended in the legislation now protecting us from such dishonesty. Unfortunately the controls didn't extend to the mechanical devices and they weren't brought under government authority until 1938.

But now, thanks to altruistic ordinances and regulations, we're safe from such deceit, aren't we?



The year, 1930, when the Holly Theater was built, was about the best time in the whole world to get into the motion picture business. Even though the year marked the end of silent pictures and the stock market crash had occurred only a year earlier, the studios had finally settled down and accepted the talkies and were producing a constant supply of noisy entertainment. Although the country was in the doldrums of the depression, almost everyone averaged a movie a week and the silver screen offered a break from the nagging worry of what're we gonna do if things keep getting worse. Moreover Clara Bow, Colleen Moore, Mary Pickford, Ramon Novarro and Tom Mix were cherished friends and it wouldn't do to miss their pictures. In addition they offered GLAMOR with capital letters in an otherwise pretty grim existence.

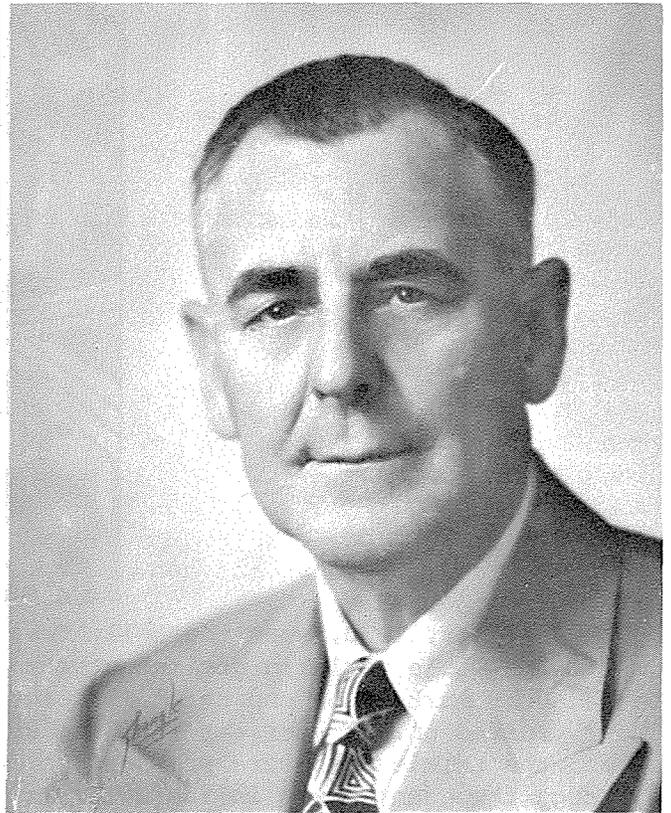
In those days folks dressed up--not down--for the movies. Daddy wore his suit and mamma wore her good coat and her felt hat with the narrow brim so the people sitting behind her could see the pictures. Even getting ready was a production: "If we're going to spend all that good money on you kids, you get in here and scrub your neck and ears and put on a clean shirt. And shine up those shoes. I'm not going to be ashamed of my own children." When you got to the show you shut up

and sat tall and proper. Nobody in patched jeans and an obscene tee-shirt sprawled out in the seat next to you and stuffed junk food into his mouth with the palm of his hand. There was no annoying announcement flashed on the bottom of the screen, just as the story reached its peak of suspense, that the snack bar would close in seven minutes. There wasn't any snack bar; you wouldn't expect to find candy and soda pop in church, would you? Maybe it was that buttered popcorn and all those chocolate bars that eventually brought Hollywood to its knees and wiped out the golden age.

After several delays in schedule the "uniquely distinctive and elaborately furnished" theater held its festive grand opening on August 29. The Holly Building was built by the Niedermeyer Corporation, headed by John Niedermeyer, and its construction was supervised by Earl H. Fehl who was slated to receive even more newspaper coverage at a little later date. Frank C. Clark was the architect. The sign on the exterior of the building at the corner of Sixth and Holly was the largest neon sign outside of Portland. Walter Leverette joined with Niedermeyer in a dual ownership of the theater complex and together they formed the Pacific States Theatres, Inc.



John Niedermeyer



Walter Leverette

The *Medford Mail Tribune* gave the story a banner headline and announced that "hundreds of Medfordites swarmed about the boxoffice early in the morning in a mad scramble to purchase tickets for the opening of the city's most gorgeous picture house." Manager Leverette reported that the entire auditorium "which could seat 1200 people" had been sold out long before noon. In order to accommodate all the disappointed people, who still clutched their silver dollars, the management ordained that a repeat midnight matinee of the entire extravaganza would be given after the first batch of folks got out. The editor of the *Tribune*, Robert W. Ruhl, figured this was a pretty significant step for the city of Medford

and put out an Extra to announce the second show. The edition also included the information that if the reader acted before September 1, 1930, he could take advantage of Bargain Days and get a full year's subscription to the paper for \$5.00.

When you finally got inside the temple, you knew it was worth waiting for. The carpets were bright and plushy, the seats were spaced just right so you didn't have to skew around and crane the neck to get the actors focused between the two big heads in front of you, and the curtain--*such* a curtain--was a silver splash across the proscenium arch. The designers had made one whole row of loge seats, set off from the *hoi polloi* with little maroon velvet draperies, and had reserved them for royalty. If all the Niedermeyers--and there were enough of them to fill the entire row--stayed home or if the Leverette kids weren't having a theater party, those elegant seats were empty, roped off with velvet cords. Later on--about three years--when you went to the Holly you half-way expected to see Eleanor Roosevelt sitting up there in the middle of those vacant seats, having made a little junket to the west coast just to see the Rogue River Valley and go to the movies--or, if not the first lady, at least Queen Marie of Rumania.

Anyway you were inside at last for the grand gala. At first, just before leaving home, there was a moment of suspense: "A dollar a seat for a child! Why, that's *outrageous!* I'd send those kids over to Nettie's if she weren't going to the show too." That was an age before baby sitting had become a wide-spread profession, and when the family went to a Greta Garbo picture, which showed a little hanky-panky that might give the young folks some funny ideas, the kids were sent over to Aunt Nettie's house until the show let out at nine o'clock.

Completely subdued by the splendor of the new furnishings and the presence of the elite--the city dignitaries and the favored few were already safely roped into the sacred row--you sat back just as the houselights dimmed, the audience gasped with anticipation, somebody plugged in the sound track and those silver curtains parted and swooped back as the screen lighted up with the eagerly awaited tidings that Warner Brothers were presenting Joe E. Brown in glorious technicolor in *Hold Everything!*, an all-talker featuring Winnie Lightner.

Winnie was the ever-popular and flippant brassy comedienne. She could carry a tune and tap dance adequately--nothing, mind you, like Eleanor Powell who came along later and danced the daylights out of stair steps, piano lids, drums, ladders to the poop deck and all the way across the Washington mall, with such a ratatat-tat you were left gasping. Winnie was the kind of tap dancer you watched with satisfaction. When she had her big finish, you thought, very nice; when that Eleanor stomped out her last beat, you just sat there exhausted, with hardly enough gumption left to shut your mouth--such a Terpsichore, you could hardly believe it. Joe E. Brown was a really comical actor. He had a mouth that was the biggest cavern this side of Yellowstone, and when he slowly opened it to its full splendor, it was always good for a big laugh. You could count on him to do this trick often enough to satisfy his fans--and maybe one or two times too many for those who didn't realize he was so funny. Winnie Lightner and Joe E. Brown set the pace for the second part and brightened up the whole audience for the big, big revue. At nine o'clock, after Winnie and Joe E. had their chaste kiss and final fadeout, the audience didn't have to file out and go home. The house lights came up and the lucky first-nighters, after glancing around to investigate their neighbors, settled into their seats with a great rattle of programs as those glamorous folk behind the big silver curtain made their get-ready shushes and re-checked their buttons for the last time.

The house lights dimmed, the foot lights brightened and out from under the stage came Wilson Wait with his little stick tucked under his arm pit. As the audience clapped appreciatively and a few of the rowdies whistled,

he tapped his music stand authoritatively, the violins came smartly up to the chins, the brass players checked their spit valves, the clarinetists lifted their mouthpieces to their pursed lips and the drummer snapped to attention. Everybody looked sharp, all eyes on the director, as Wilson Wait made with the upswamp and the downbeat--kapow--right into the overture. That orchestra really had pizzazz, and, just think, the players all came from right here in the valley. Believe me, Medford, Oregon, didn't have to take any backseat when it came to putting on a snappy musical show. You could see Dorothy Gore, bowing like fury in the first violin chair, Albert Gaddis really concentrating on that clarinet and Avaroi Bianchi smartly banging away on the drums.

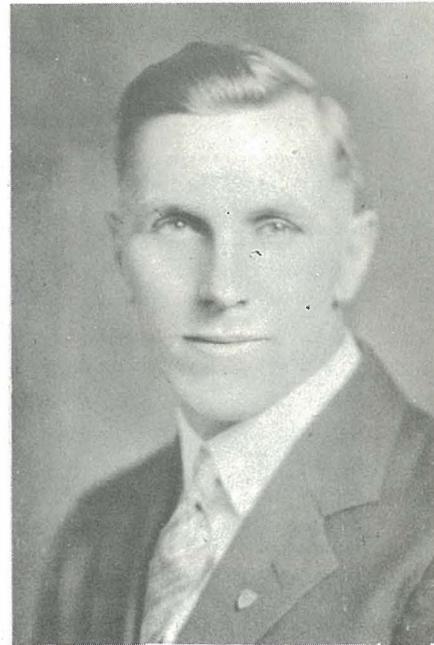
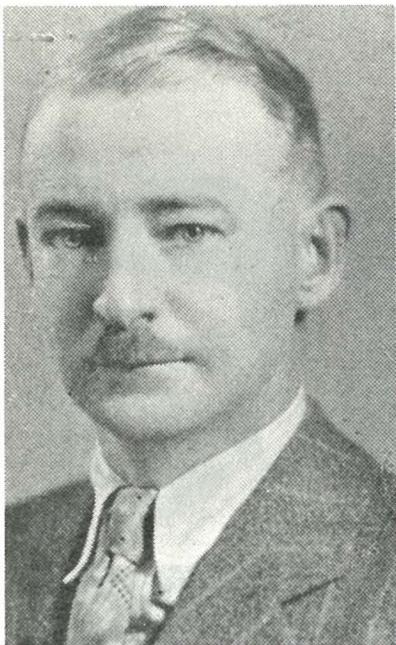
At the end of the overture, the silver curtains, after a nervous twitch or two, suddenly swept open and there on the stage stood the entire glittering cast, smiling broadly at the audience. That was a sight. Tom Swem had decorated the set with some white lattice and a lot of pink crepe paper roses, and the bright lights made it all look extravagant and professional.

The orchestra gave an intro into the national anthem and, after a second's hesitation--gee, which one *do* you get up for: My-Country-'Tis-of-Thee or Oh,-Say Can-You-See?--the audience stood and everybody plowed into *The Star Spangled Banner*. It was such a grand occasion the singers even belted out "the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air," where people usually give up.

After the last full, rounded, Rogue Valley pear shaped tones had floated to the ceiling, the audience again settled back into their seats and George P. Olson, director and M.C., stepped to the apron of the stage, calling for Walter Leverette and John Niedermeyer to join him. They were both happy to oblige and there was a lot of handshaking accompanied with some tomfoolery and compliments. George Olson then announced Mayor Pipes who came from the wings to the center stage to welcome everybody to Medford's lavish new theater and to thank John Niedermeyer and Walter Leverette for their contribution to the city. Some more handshaking went on and, as the mayor stepped back, George Olson called on Fire Chief Roy Elliott who came forth as a representative of the civil service and added his compliments and handshakes to the two civic-minded citizens. The public-spirited gentlemen on the stage were then joined by a representative of the Rotary Club who, on behalf of the other members, all in attendance in a bloc, presented Walter Leverette, as a charter member and president of the club, with a pillow "of the beautiful Rotary emblem formed of flowers." At the conclusion of the honorary presentations, the "Holly's Follies" sailed into action.

As the dignitaries left the stage, the full company joined in the opening chorus which developed into a production number as George Olson and the Dixie Harvey girls took the spotlight, spinning into a speedy tap dance routine. Two Ruth Luy dancers, Zoe Dell Lantis who later became the *prima danseuse* or the theme girl or, anyway, something super important, at the San Francisco World's Fair, and her dancing partner, Jane Antle, each had a solo spot. At the big finish the company tramped off-stage and George Olson breathlessly announced the appearance of one of the stars of the evening--Jack McDaniels, the Grants Pass tenor, singing *Vesti la giubba*. According to a follow-up story in the *Tribune*, the aria was a huge success. The audience may not have known much about *Pagliacci* but that song certainly wasn't in English, it had a lot of high notes in it and Enrico Caruso had fancied it, so it had to be pretty good.

Jack McDaniels was followed by another singing star, Elbow Mae Wilson, who joined George Olson and the Dixie Harvey girls in a production number entitled Theme Song. Neither the printed program nor the *Tribune* tells what the Theme Song was. Some of the big numbers that year were *Tip-Toe Thru' the Tulips*, *Painting the Clouds with Sunshine*, *I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover*, and *You Do Something to Me*. Take your pick. Elbow Mae Wilson, who had just won first place in the annual Atwater Kent Auditions and who was billed as Medford's prize-



Wilson Wait

Ellow Mae Wilson

George Peckham

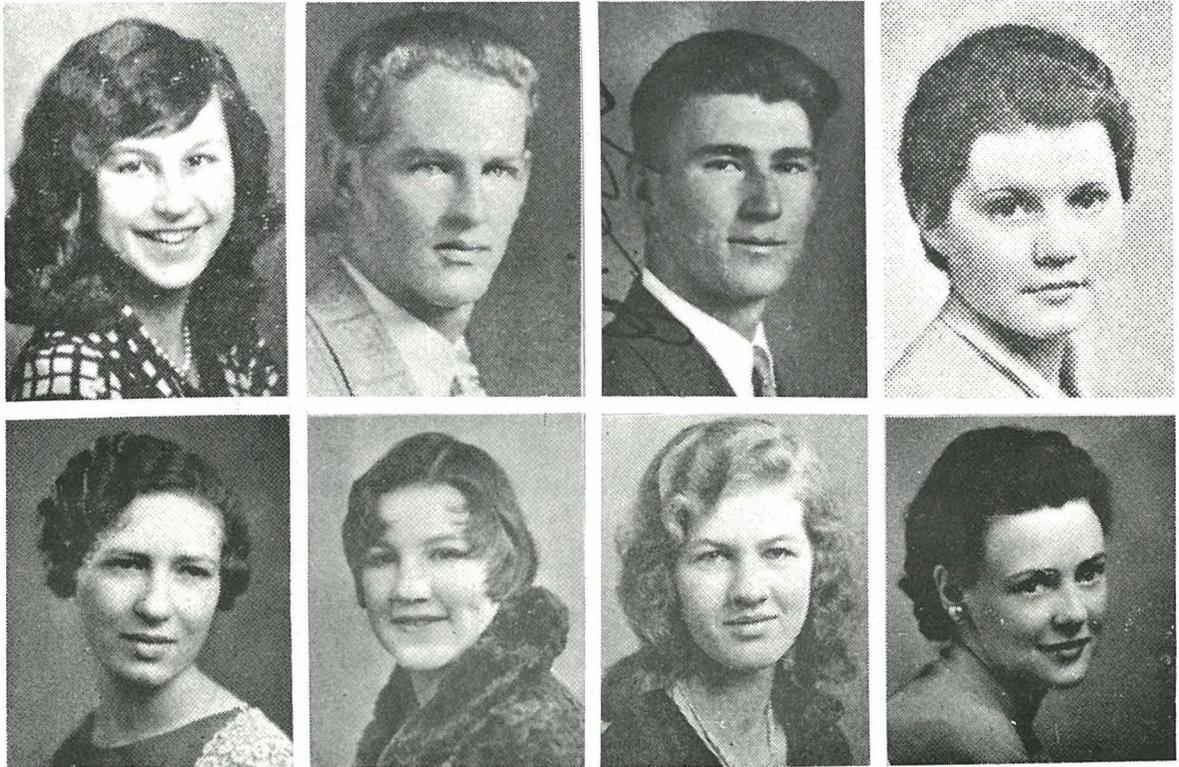
winning radio vocalist, could also whistle like a pedigreed canary. The program, however, doesn't say she whistled for this occasion. The whistle is an intimate little concert thing, more suitable to the parlor than to the large auditorium, so chances are she eschewed the whistle on this evening. She had--surely still has--a delightfully well-trained soprano, most peasing to the ear. She would have contributed a good deal of beauty and polish to the affair.

After the Theme Song the program lists a dance specialty by Douglas Fox. This number was probably a tap routine because tap dancing was the big thing, but one cannot be certain. The dance is not described in the program or in the *Tribune* story. As for the performers who are available for questioning, they get a higher grade for dancing than they do for recording history.

Maxine Vaughn Bigalow reports that on the celebrated night she came down with scarlet fever and, being in a semi-coma, she doesn't remember the details. In true theatrical tradition, of course, even though the rampant germs frolicked with absolute abandon, she doggedly danced on and on through two performances. Laura Drury Porter draws a complete blank for the evening, but she had just graduated from high school, was dating, and probably had other things on her mind. Doreen Leverette Vaughan remembers the thrill of being in the program but she's forgotten who did exactly what and why and when. Golda and Deah Higdon, who later joined Barnum and Bailey's Circus, and, with a bunch of other small town chorines billed as Broadway Stars, appeared in nearly every town in the country, couldn't be expected to remember a debut in little old Medford, Oregon. Lois Hill Reinking supplied the most accurate information, but she wasn't in the show. She vaguely remembers that August, 1930, was a low time for the family budget and that she couldn't afford the costumes and, being unwilling to appear in her old orange organdy formal, she remained an observer and missed her golden opportunity to be discovered by Hollywood talent scouts. If anyone wishes to make corrections for the sake of historical accuracy, his comments will be welcome.

In any event Douglas Fox was followed by the Eve Benson Dancers in a big number entitled the Three Legged Chorus. No doubt each pair of dancers had two legs tied together with a colorful ribbon and a big bow which would tend to produce a little novelty number, more hysterical than graceful. Helen McAllister and Noel Benson, using four legs, were featured in a solo duet.

LaMurle Beck and Gordon Turner, who had previously received acclaim for their adagio dance, presented a new version, The Fisherman and the Mermaid. Gordon Turner was an outstanding athlete, swimmer and dancer and he was able to toss



EVE BENSON DANCING ACADEMY, DIXIE HARVEY GIRLS AND THE RUTH LUY DANCERS:
Doreen Leverette Gordon Turner Jewel Waddell Zoe Dell Lantis
LaMurle Beck Goldie Higdon Verna Forncrook Helen McAllister

LaMurle Beck around with great style. The mermaid bit is a little confusing. If she were pitched around the stage with her bottom extremities swathed in a fish tail, it must have been a pretty exacting dance. The *Tribune* reporter stated that it was extremely well received. The audience was probably relieved that the mermaid didn't end up flipping and floundering about in the orchestra pit.

The *adagio* was followed by the dancing spectacular of the evening, an Argentine tango by Ethel Chord and Noel Benson. Noel was a polished dancer, even as a youth, and Ethel was extraordinarily beautiful and graceful. Before time turned it into a travesty of itself, the tango, as performed by Rudolph Valentino and other Latin dancers, was a smooth, rhythmic pattern of steps performed with suppressed emotion. At this performance it stopped the show.

It took a real professional to follow the tango, and Ed Andrews was that all right. A veteran actor and comic opera star with the famous Andrews brothers, he had received plaudits especially for his *KoKo* in the *Mikado*. Accompanied by Mrs. George Andrews at the piano, he sang a comedy song which received a genuine



Alene Ray Noel Benson Louise Elrod Robert Elson Adra Edwards



Laura Drury Maxine Bohnert Helen Wood Ethel Chord
Jane Antle Lucille Lowry Ruby Stone Anna May Fuson
(Dancing girls not pictured: Evelyn Randall, Lucille Simmons, Rae Simmons, Louise Elrod, Deah Higdon. Pages, Dorothy Burgess and Madelyn Schade)

ovation. Elrow Mae Wilson and George Olson's second production number ended the first half of the show.

After all the color, the dancing and the singing, the second part opened with a complete change of pace. That George Olson was no slouch as a program director. Dressed in immaculate white trousers and shirts, Gordon Turner, Jewel Waddell and Robert Elson, members of Eve Benson's group, presented a program of acrobatic feats with a musical background. It may have been of Olympic quality, but that wouldn't have signified much then. In those days one was uncertain he could afford to go to Central Point and back, much less book a round trip passage to the Berlin Olympics. Turner, Waddell and Elson were born to blush unseen except by Medford audiences, who were as appreciative as they could be but had no gold, silver and bronze medals to toss around.

After a final series of spectacular stunts amid enthusiastic applause, the acrobats bounded off the stage, and George Peckham, Medford's basso was introduced.



Jean Chamberlain

Maxine Vaughn

Barbara Drury

Dortha Meyer

He was a prize winner as well, having also won a first at the Atwater Kent contest. He sang "Asleep in the Deep," and turned on plenty of resonance in the final "beware." The crowd, delighted, demanded more and he favored them with another showy song for *basso profundo*, "The Big Bass Viol."

As he left the stage the men in the Drum Corps of the American Legion Post Number 12 smartly marched in from the wings, took formation and gave a noisy and spirited demonstration of their skill. At the conclusion of the number, as the drumming became more and more intense, some of the men did their muzzles-butts-butts-muzzles drill and slapped their rifles around to the rhythm of the drums and the constant din of clapping. A big, big deal indeed.

After all that racket it would have been hard to settle down, but the next number was a guitar specialty performed by Frankie and Al of the local radio station. KMED was the voice of the Rogue River Valley and Frankie and Al were special pets of the listeners. It was a great charge for listeners who knew only their voices to see the two of them *in person*. They were very jolly as well as musical, and they made everybody feel happy and upbeat and with-it.

The two guitarists led into the last musical number as the orchestra picked up the melody and the entire company pranced onto the stage. The dancing girls had made a costume change and they wore a lot of black oilcloth which flashed and gleamed as they cavorted around in their best grand finale style. The stars, one by one, walking in rhythm with the music, took their turns for a moment in the spotlight, center stage, as the applause grew louder and more responsive. When that silver curtain swished back across the stage for the last time, everyone was in a glow from clapping so hard and being so enthusiastic.

But the party was over. It was time to call it a day. The people slowly filed out of the brand new theater a little wistfully because, even though one might pretend that dancing and singing and joking were forever, tomorrow was still on its way. There'd been a little while, though, when scarcely anyone thought of the depression, and everybody had shared something spontaneous and fine and special.

ROSEMARY BEVEL, ASSISTANT TO THE REGISTRAR

Although Rosemary Knott Bevel's grandparents came to Oregon in 1907 from Kansas, Rosemary, having been born in Ashland, is a native Oregonian. A depression baby, she is one of four children; she has two sisters, Roberta and June, and a brother, David Knott.

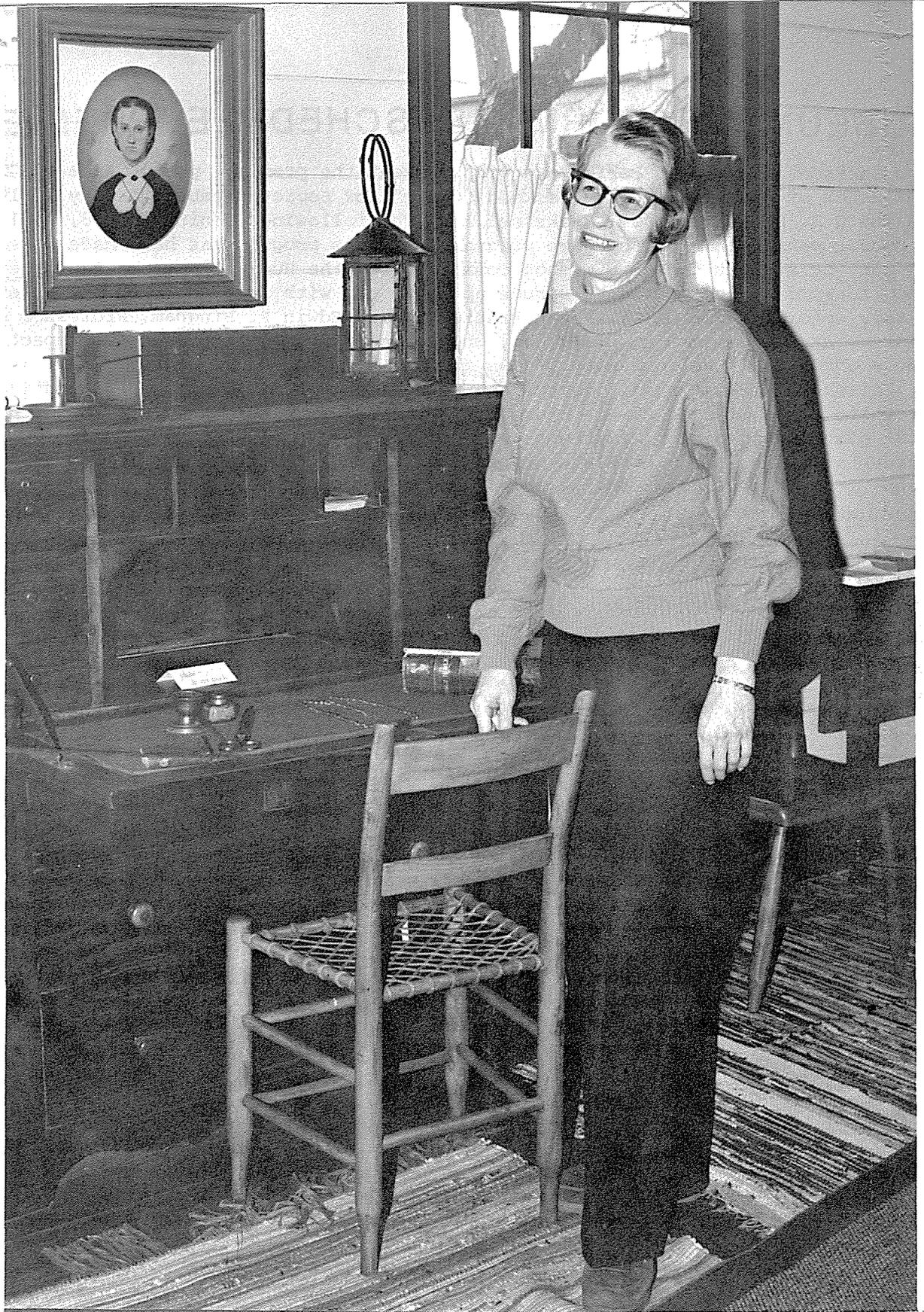
In 1949 she graduated from Ashland High School where she specialized in English, speech, journalism and anything else that had to do with words. Having been editor of the school paper she quite naturally became Star Girl Reporter for the *Ashland Daily Tidings*.

When she was well along the road to success as a journalist--she had been asked to become City Editor--she tossed it aside for a change of scene. Becoming Mrs. Doran Bevel, she pulled up her roots. In her autobiography she asserts that her marriage was less a romance than it was an opportunity to join the general exodus out of the Rogue River Valley. Mister Doran Bevel, who eventually became a sales executive, was at first a traveling salesman, and her exile in such cities as Portland, Pendleton, Sacramento and Caldwell lasted for twenty years.

Eventually, in 1970, the ties to southern Oregon started chafing and she chucked everything, including her husband Doran, and with her son Woran, then eighteen, she returned to home plate in Ashland. She was content to be home again, having found that living away from the valley surprisingly provided no special thrills.

In 1978, as a Ceta worker, she joined the museum staff as an aide. She was given the title Transcriber Clerk, but, although she was busybusybusy, she transcribed nothing. Today she is officially The Assistant to the Registrar. She is shown on the facing page at the restored Catholic Rectory where she is presently

a Doug Smith photograph



checking inventories of furnishings. Her *grande passion* is gardening and puttering around in the dirt, although, being an overly fastidious Gemini, she spends most of her time cleaning stuff and putting drawers in order. She even does windows. She'd make a great Mrs. Clean if ever Mr. Clean could relax enough to go shopping.

MUSEUM PERFORMERS SCHEDULE PREMIERE

The Jacksonville Museum Performers will present the premiere performance of "The Influence of Pioneer Women in Jackson County" for Society members on May 7, 1982, in the U.S. Hotel Ballroom, Jacksonville. The following evening, May 8, will be a public performance of the same program. As this program has been made possible in part by a grant from the Oregon Committee for the Humanities, the Performers look forward to being able to spruce up their act with real costumes and a set. A very special addition will be narration by Dr. Edwin R. Bingham, Professor of History at the University of Oregon, whose comments will interpret the impact of these women upon the community. (See poster insert in this issue.)

Elizabeth Vickerman will direct the production which will include dramatizations from the lives of four famous crusaders. Included will be Lotta Crabtree, child star of the gold-mining camps who, when performing in Jacksonville, had objects thrown at her by the miners who opposed her Union sympathies. Following will be a scene from "The Black Crook," a melodrama/burlesque play in which Lotta starred. (continued below)

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM ■ CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ■ BEEKMAN HOUSE ■ BEEKMAN BANK
ARMSTRONG HOUSE ■ CATHOLIC RECTORY ■ ROGUE RIVER VALLEY RAILWAY STATION
U.S. HOTEL ■ RESEARCH LIBRARY ■ MUSEUM SHOP

In a separate setting, The Table Rock Billiard Saloon, Abigail Scott Duniway and Ann Hazeltine Hill Russell will converse in a meeting-of-the-minds discussion in which they air their diverse views. In Mrs. Duniway's Jacksonville lecture, at which time she pled for the right of women to vote, she stated that State Supreme Court Justice Prim banished his wife and children. Because of the ruthless attack on a favored citizen, the men burned Mrs. Duniway in effigy. Mrs. Russell, the first WCTU president of Ashland, with a group of church ladies, closed down and bought the Granite Street Saloon for \$300, and Grace Wick-Merritt, wearing a barrel on which were plastered her slogans, campaigned for a myriad of rights, even those of the "old folks" who were headed over the hill for the poor house. Prominent characters of the 1800s will drop in and chat with the ladies, either agreeably or argumentatively.