

7/23

# THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OCEANIC SOCIETY



Britt portrait of unidentified man  
with symbols of Chinese New Year

# Director's Corner

A long-range planning session, held by the SOHS trustees and the Society's department heads, met for two days during the last weekend in March. With the help of a professional management consultant, some future goals and strategies to assist in accomplishing those goals were developed. These goals, when reached, will bring major changes in the SOHS image, policies, operations, and programs.

The first important result of the session was the development of closer working relations between the trustees and the staff. Listed below are the six goals which were deemed the most important of all those considered:

(1) Establish alternate sources of funding. It was unanimously agreed that the Society has too long relied on its local tax levy for nearly all of its operational support. It was agreed that the Society should reduce its dependence on the levy by a minimum of fifty percent, with the idea that a one-hundred percent reduction, if at all possible, would be a wise goal.

(2) Acquire or construct a building to house adequately our research library, the staff and the corporate offices. A large meeting and exhibit room was thought to be a major and immediate goal. This plan was first established as long ago as 1970. The need has increased considerably over the years.

(3) Design a manual which will include handbooks for both employees and trustees with job descriptions for each. It would state the trustee/employee relationship, a trustee profile, rules, regulations and laws governing our organization. Work toward this goal is currently under way.

(4) Develop a coordinated interpretive plan for the use of all SOHS properties and exhibits. This was considered essential. Some of the properties should be sold while the use of those retained should be re-evaluated and placed in some context reflecting the Society's stated purpose.

(5) Strive to spread the influence of SOHS throughout the whole county. Even after 37 years of existence, the Society is still regarded by many as merely the Jacksonville Museum. Some think we are an arm of the City of Jacksonville. Changing this image has already started with our decision to operate a small museum in the Swedenberg House in Ashland. We all realize that having Society-managed museums in every community is not practical; however, there are ways to serve those communities directly: we can be advocates for historic preservation, publish histories of local areas, cooperate with existing historical and cultural organizations, and present our programs in communities other than Jacksonville.

(6) Increase the size of our membership. We currently have approximately 1600 members. This is not half enough. The larger our membership, the easier it will be to accomplish goal #5. We need more grassroots support for our purposes. A large and satisfied membership can produce the advocates for our purpose and help change our image.

Those are the six major goals. To achieve them the trustees and the staff pledged themselves to work actively on the committees that were formed to accomplish the projects. All the committees have completion dates on their work. There will be some new staff positions created, and the current staff will undergo some revision with duties being reassigned. While we experience the problems created by change, we ask the members and the general public to be patient with the inconveniences that will no doubt develop. We think the effort will result in an improved historical society better able to face the future.

Bill Burk

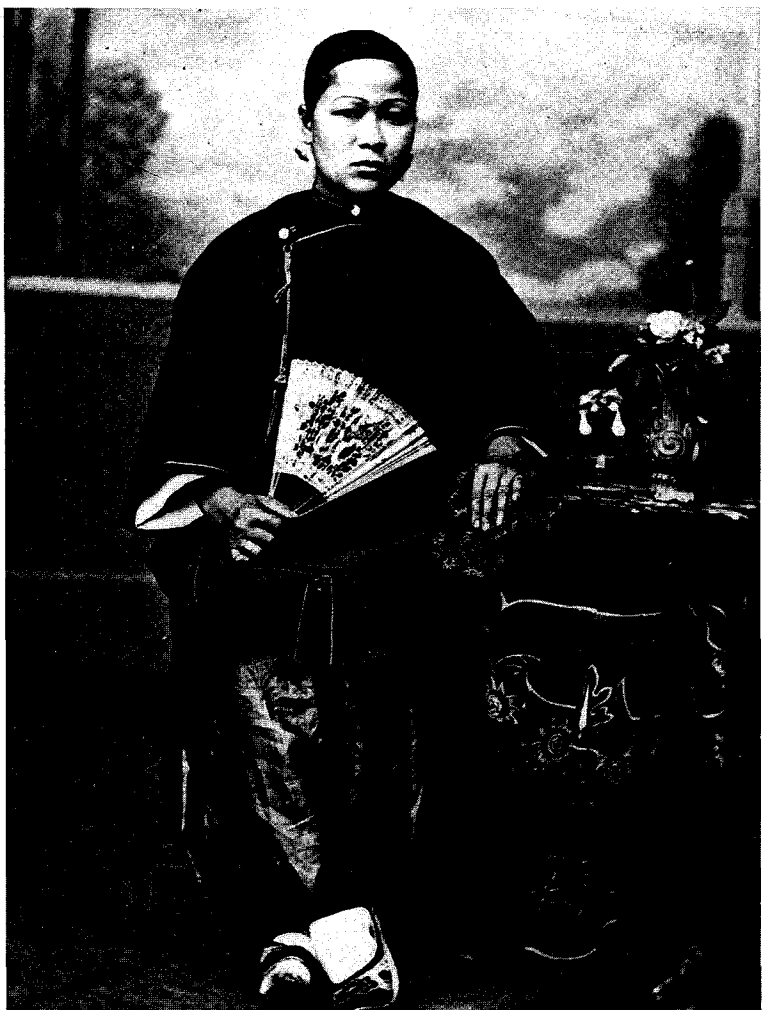
## THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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An unidentified lady  
Photographed by Peter Britt

ISSUES OF EARLY SOUTHERN OREGON NEWSPAPERS CONTAIN MANY ITEMS ABOUT THE CHINESE SOJOURNERS, BUT IN THE STORIES THE CHINESE PEOPLE ARE SELDOM GIVEN THE DIGNITY OF A NAME. THE WAGGISH EDITORS PREFERRED TO IDENTIFY THEM ALL AS 'CELESTIALS.' THERE IS NO COMPLETE RECORD OF ANY CHINESE MINER WHO APPEARED IN THE ROGUE RIVER VALLEY AT THAT TIME, AND AN AUTHENTIC BIOGRAPHY CANNOT BE WRITTEN. A REASONABLE FACSIMILE, THEREFORE, REQUIRES IMAGINATION. ALTHOUGH THE TALE HERE IS FICTION, THE EVENTS ACTUALLY HAPPENED AND WERE REPORTED IN THE PAPERS. THE NAMES OF THE CHINESE CHARACTERS ARE TAKEN FROM AN EARLY CENSUS LIST, BUT THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THEY WERE INVOLVED IN THESE EPISODES IS MIGHTY SLIM.

## THE CHINESE IN SOUTHERN OREGON

Lan Kee was one of eighty Chinese who were listed in an early census of Jackson County, and he and the other seventy-nine had come to Oregon to seek their fortunes. They cannot be called immigrants because they did not intend to make America their permanent home; after they had found their treasure, they would return to China. They were sojourners only. Lan Kee's ambitions, however, were not very different from those of other newcomers who arrived at the same time, but his reception was far less cordial. The hostility of the Indians was not more threatening than the bitter antagonism of the pioneers. We can admire, even

love, the settlers for their courage and valor and their loyalty to their friends, but we cannot fail to be disillusioned by their cruelty and inhumanity towards the Chinese. Like their contempt for the Indians, their treatment of the Chinese will forever be a black mark on our history.

The unidentified man in the picture could have been Lan Kee. The orientals who came to southern Oregon had remarkably similar backgrounds and they appear to have lived almost identical lives. We will assume that Lan Kee also fits into this pattern, and we will make him our model. Let us just say . . . . .

# LAN KEE FINDS HIS TREASURE

**L**AN KEE was born in the province of Canton, or Kwangtung, the fifth son of a growing peasant family. They lived on a small plot of ground which barely supported them even though the sons and daughters toiled diligently in the fields to produce the scanty crops. The children had no opportunity for an education or any way to improve their living conditions. But most



of the Cantonese knew no other way of life and they conformed to this existence without trying to change it.

When Lan Kee was about twenty, he industriously acquired his own plot of ground, married a Cantonese girl, and, like his father before him, began a family of his own. After his parents became aged and were unable to maintain their own land, they moved in with Lan Kee and his young wife who respectfully looked after them.

Unfortunately, in 1850, the Kwangtung province was the center of political turmoil which led to bloody battles and civil war. Lan Kee found it increasingly difficult to keep his family together, and he could no longer sustain his wife, his children and his dependent parents on his small plot. When foreign traders brought news of the fabulous gold discoveries in California, Lan Kee and his friends were fascinated by the fantasies of getting some of that treasure, but the Land of the Golden Hills was too remote. Who could hope to travel that far away?

But suddenly an opportunity was miraculously provided. A *Boss* appeared in the province and he would supply the passages and pay the travelers' expenses. Lan Kee would be his worker but would be obligated to him only until he had earned enough to pay off his debt. After that he would be free to search for the treasure in the Golden Hills himself. When he had acquired a little wealth, he would return to Kwangtung, a man of means and prestige, and resume his place as head of the family.

Lan Kee eagerly joined the company, assumed his debt of fifty dollars, and, assuring his weeping family that he would soon return, left on the big ship with hundreds of other Cantonese for the land of the hidden gold. On the voyage many of his fellow travelers gambled and lost money which greatly increased their indebtedness to the Boss. Lan Kee was not so foolish, but he was charged extra for his bunk

which had to be squeezed into a crowded cabin, and he had to buy water from the big storage tank in steerage. He was careful and frugal on the long tiresome journey, but, even so, by the time he reached San Francisco his debt had doubled.

**A**t the dock the men were herded together into groups and additional bosses appeared, each taking charge of a company. Lan Kee and about twenty companions were taken to a room in a shabby section of Chinatown, where they were fed and given a pad on the floor. All of them eagerly looked forward to the next morning when they could energetically start earning the cost of their passage and take the first step toward getting clear of their ever-growing obligation.

But at break of day they were given most distressing tidings. The golden hills of California were mined-out; there was no treasure left in them. The men would have to make a long journey, far away to the north, to another land, the Oregon Territory. There was nothing Lan Kee and his friends could do but obey orders. They were taken back to the dock, pushed onto another boat and were soon on their way up the Pacific coast to Crescent City.

Upon their arrival at that bustling little frontier seaport, they were given new work clothes. Lan Kee's long blue coat, thin trousers, white stockings and cloth shoes were unsuitable for tramping around mountains.

His new heavy boots would require some getting used to, but dressed in these clothes, he would certainly look like an Amellican. Each man was also given a bed roll--a couple of thin blankets --because from then on he would frequently have to sleep in the open.

These new possessions cost many dollars which were added to the debt. Dollars were like dragons. You didn't see them, you hadn't held one in your hand, yet they kept on growing and menacing. Perhaps when you had a dollar in your pocket, it would no longer be so threatening.

The men and the Boss formed a train made up of several supply wagons and a few primitive carts and, with most of them walking over the rough trails, they headed for the mountain passes leading to the Rogue River Valley.

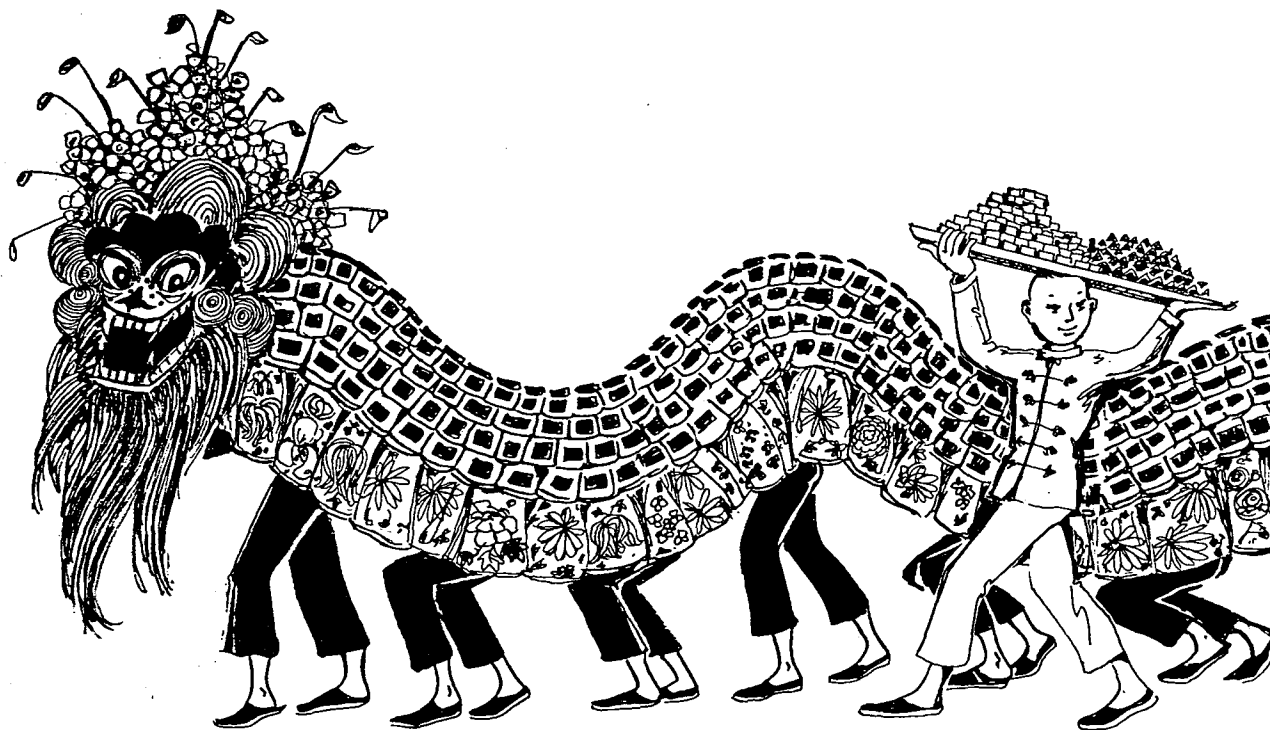
After a week or so of relentless travel, they arrived, dusty and tired, at Jacksonville. It was a strange little city. There were several of those funny square brick buildings the Americans make, and although the streets were dusty, they were filled with busy, happy people. Here the men could rest and get more substantial food, and maybe even receive a word of welcome in this alien land. Suddenly a group of noisy, yelling boys raced toward them and began throwing rocks at the men in the train. A stone struck Lan Kee in the temple and a sudden spurt of blood ran down his cheek. The Boss shook his fist at the boys, and angrily yelled at them, and they ran away, but one could see they weren't really afraid of the Boss. Lan Kee realized that these people hated him. Why? What had he done? As he stood there with his angry wound throbbing, he realized his first valuable lesson in this strange world. The Americans didn't want him to be there; they were his enemy.

Jacksonville's Chinatown faced Main Street and tumbled over itself in back of the lots. The buildings were ramshackle, poorly constructed shacks but they housed a greater population than was apparent on the surface. Many Chinese lived in tiny, cramped areas, but that was



Unidentified portrait by Peter Britt

no great change from the way they lived in China, and they accepted the crowding without question. The newcomers gave them a thorough but disheartening indoctrination: most Americans were treacherous and ill-intentioned; it was best to avoid them; when you went among them, you must be as invisible as possible; stay with your group for protection because accidents could happen when one went about alone. There were two stores in Chinatown where you could buy rice, tea, oil, rice wine, dried oysters, pickled cabbage and salted fish. If you were sent to work in the Applegate valley where there were many mines, you could buy food at the big store run by Kubli, who had a stock of many Chinese items packed in from San Francisco. It wasn't necessary to mix with the Americans. But even though Chinatown offered shelter and some safety, it wasn't entirely free from danger. Undisciplined youths and vengeful miners were known to bring their violence even into Chinatown.



Lim Chow had been found dead in his bed, shot by an unknown drunken rowdy who had unaccountedly fired his rifle into the cabin as he galloped by on his horse.

Lan Kee and the men who had come with him stayed together as a labor force. In Jacksonville they were assigned to a new Boss, Gin Lin, who was a prominent member of the community. He was responsible for finding work for them, and the mine owners sent for him when they needed someone to do the arduous "Coolie" labor that Americans wouldn't do. There seemed to be no end to this kind of work. One tedious, burdensome task was immediately followed by another, and the crew worked long, unrelieved hours. The miners paid the Boss, and he in turn credited each man in his group with the money allotted him. Lan Kee asked for only a pittance to buy his food, so that the rest could be applied on the debt which had grown at least four times its original figure.

The work gang's first undertaking was to dig a ditch to bring water from a distant river to the mines. Many months passed before it was finished and constant attention was required to keep it in operation.

After the completion of the ditch,

the Boss put the men to work at a mining claim which he had bought for himself. The first owner had taken out all the gold he could find, considered the spot exhausted, and was eager to move on to another untried gulch. He offered his leavings to the Boss for a small sum. Some days Lan Kee and his group dug with picks and shovels and moved huge boulders, unearthing the bedrock. On other days they worked painstakingly with table spoons and small camel hair brushes to sift through the dirt for the tiny nuggets and colors. In this manner the workers were sometimes able to glean considerable treasure out of an abandoned mine.

At another time, the men cleared a field, digging out stones and stumps to prepare the soil for planting, and during the winter months they tunneled their way through a mountain. They seldom knew what their next task would be, but they could be certain it would require herculean effort.

Occasionally, between duties, they returned to Chinatown. It was pleasant to be there with congenial friends, and idle time passed quickly. Many of the men smoked opium which the Americans considered a crime, but if one had spent day



after day after day at hard labor until his back almost gave way and every muscle ached, and had whittled only a few dollars from his debt, he might feel entitled to seek a short respite of opium-induced euphoria. Lan Kee, of course, because he is the model, avoided the drug dens and applied what he might have spent on the poppy to his account.

Chinese New Year was the only day the Chinese people became part of the outside community. They prepared a traditional parade with a paper dragon at the head and a replica of the Kitchen God who was thought to return to Heaven and report on the family's behavior. Everywhere there was a profusion of white flowers, always a part of the holiday festival. The parade made a serpentine through town and some of the paraders tossed out red slips of paper printed with gold good luck symbols. Some of the men carried baskets of Chinese sweets and gave candies to the citizens. The Jacksonville children eagerly joined the parade and marched jubilantly along at the end. After the day's celebration and good fellowship, conditions returned to normal. The feelings of resentment surged back, and the Chinese again crept into hiding in Chinatown.

Finally, at the end of a year, Lan Kee made his last payment to the Boss. At the same time two other young men from Kwangtung province—Ah Che and Wing—were also able to free themselves from their bondage. The three continued working for the Boss because they had no capital and were afraid to venture out on their own, but they were given all of their small salaries which seemed like a fortune to them. They spent hours discussing how they might acquire their wealth. It was to be found here in America if one could only discover the spot. They might one day pool their combined savings and have enough to buy an abandoned claim of their own.

In a few months just such an opportunity arose. The Boss, acting as an agent for the three of them, made a deal with two brothers who had exhausted their claim on Jackass Creek, and wanted to move on to a more profitable place.

Gin Lin, the Boss, was not a fool when it came to making deals with the white men. He insisted that the men give Lan Kee, Ah Che and Wing a Bill of Sale which he asked a real American lawyer to prepare. It was written in the unfathomable American writing, but it testified the sale was legal. Lan Kee hid it away

carefully.

One day, with their own picks and shovels and a new rocker, the three of them proudly began digging their claim. The white men in authority had demanded four dollars from each of them, the required monthly fee because they were Chinese, and the sheriff had charged them fifty dollars for a license. They paid these duties promptly because Lim Wang, a laundryman, was thrown into jail when he refused to buy his five dollar license. They could soon get the money back if they winnowed the dirt with great care and patience. The wearisome work was lighter when one did it for himself instead of for the demanding American bosses.

Day after day they dug out the dirt, and, using spoons and brushes, fastidiously examined it. Frequently they found colors and once in awhile, using the rocker, they washed out a small nugget which had been overlooked by the first impatient owners of the claim. At the end of a week they took a glass jar of gold dust to the bank in Jacksonville and turned it into dollars. There weren't many, but those dollars were the first, and the occasion called for a celebration. Lan Kee, Ah Che and Wang went to Chinatown, bought glasses of rice wine, and proudly drank a toast to their success.

At the end of the following week, and the next and the next, they changed their gold into dollars and eventually had a nice little start on the treasure. Their continuing trips to the bank were observed by miners at Jacksonville and someone soon circulated the rumor that "those three Chinamen on Jackass Creek" had made a strike. Miners were a gossip lot; speculation and tall tales were their chief interest. Greedily envious of another's success and always afraid that some other prospector might strike it rich, they invented exaggerated stories of fabulous finds. Fiction had it that Lan Kee, Ah Che and Wing had already hidden away a treasure house of huge nuggets.

When the account was heard by the original owners of the claim, they became bellicose and resentful.

"Those Chinks have jumped our claim," one of them said. They asserted that the land still belonged to them, they'd get it back and maybe give those Chink claim-jumpers a lesson to boot. Fortified with liquor and rifles the two made tracks for Jackass Creek to reclaim their just deserts from those thieving foreigners.

At the mine, Lan Kee, Ah Che and Wing, intent on washing out paydirt, were crouched over the rocker in deep concentration, when, without warning, the two swaggering miners appeared at the edge of the creek. Yelling and waving their guns, they dismounted and stormed up to the three men who were bewildered by the sudden racket and the frightening exhibition of rage. Roughly pushing Wing and Ah Che aside, one of the men stood possessively over the sluice box, and, still shouting the strange and threatening American words, pointed his gun directly at Lan Kee, who backed away as Wing and Ah Che scrambled to their feet. The loud shouting made no sense at all, but when the other intruder shoved his gun into Lan Kee's belly, making him tumble backward into the creek, it was obvious that a quick retreat was the only sensible move. In fear for their lives, the three of them headed for Jacksonville and the safety of the China houses.

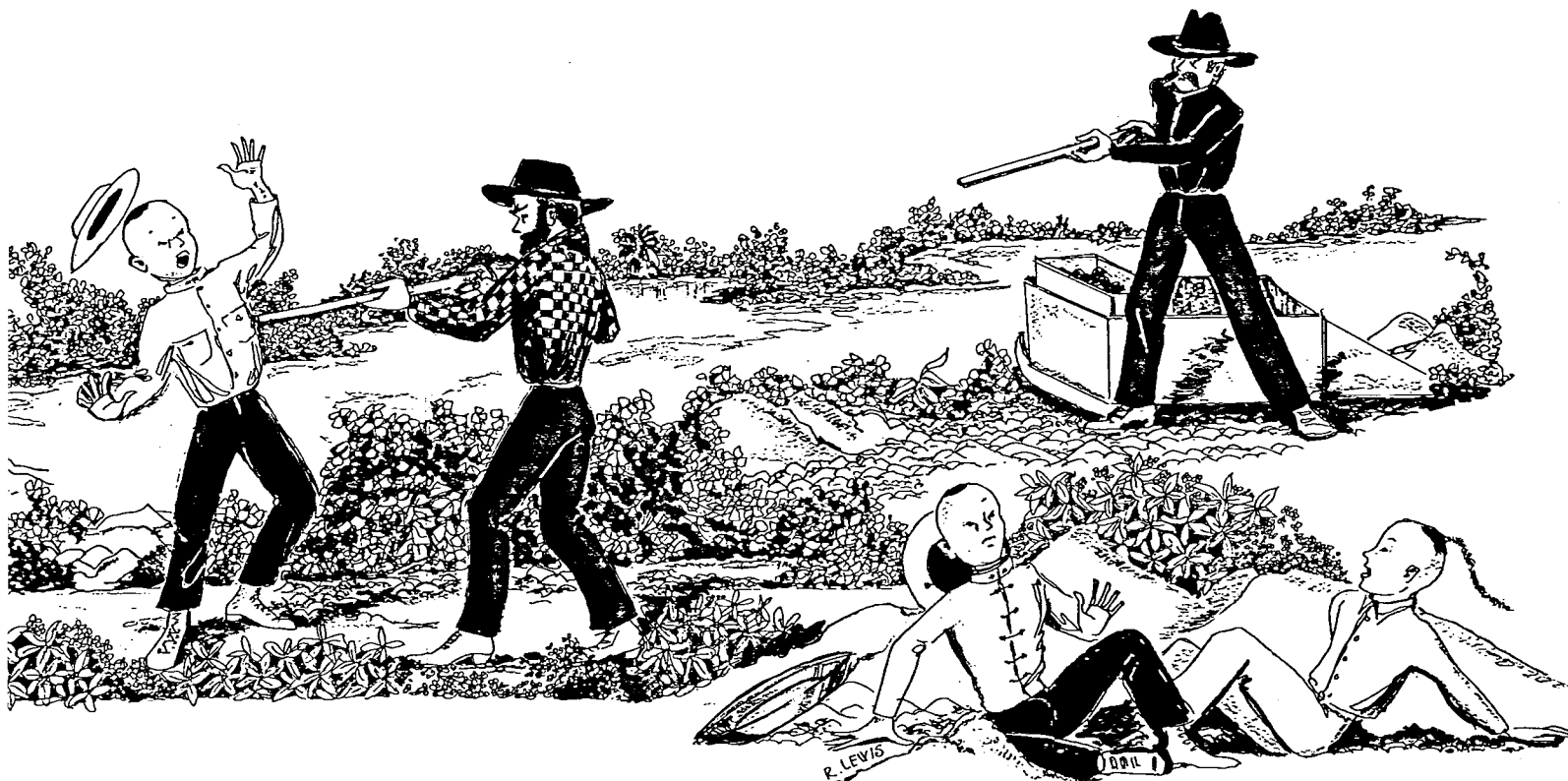
The people in Chinatown were pessimistic. In a match with the Americans, you can't win. The fortune sticks are already crossed against you. Don't be foolish geese; give up the claim and forget it. But Gin Lin, the Boss, said, "Get the paper signed by the Americans. We'll go to the lawyer."

After listening to the Boss the lawyer said, "With the Bill of Sale we might win. We'll go to the magistrate."

"See," said the Boss. "You might win," but he wasn't very convincing.

The magistrate was an old man called J. H. Stimson, and he looked gentle and honorable, but he thought for awhile and then said, "No Chinaman can be a citizen. Unless he is a white person he can't own property." And he ruled in favor of the white miners.

"See?" said their friends. "We



told you. You give the American lawyer dollars for nothing."

But the lawyer said, "If we say you do not want to keep the land, you are only leasing it, we may get it back. We will wait and go to the district court."

In about a week the District Court Judge Matthew Deady arrived in town. When the lawyer, the Boss, Lan Kee, Wing and Ah Che went to the court room, there was a crowd of unfriendly people already there. The two men who had stolen the claim stood in the back of the room, sullen and dangerous, like evil warriors. Lan Kee thought, "We should have listened to our friends. We can never win in this hostile place."

The American Judge Matthew Deady examined the Bill of Sale paper and listened thoughtfully to the American lawyer. After scratching his head a little and thinking hard, he said, "I can see no intent to defraud and no case for a claim-jumping charge. These two men (pointing to the warriors) were paid the price they asked and have no title to the land. The Chinese men have a right to lease land for a term of three years, and I find in their favor." He rapped with his little wooden hammer and it was all over.

There was a surprised and resent-

ful murmur in the courtroom, and the two angry men looked even angrier, but one of them said, "There's no gold left in that claim anyway. Whoever said those Chinks made a big strike lied in his teeth!"

The happy American lawyer shook hands with the Boss and the three bewildered winners, who could hardly believe their unexpected good fortune. In Chinatown the people all drank a glass of rice wine and some of them exploded firecrackers. Lan Kee, Wing and Ah Che were heroes who had won in a contest with the Americans, and that didn't ever happen. Chinese don't win in America.

The next day they went gratefully back to the claim. The trouble had lasted several days and had cost them many dollars, but they were working together again, and one day they'd have the treasure. Happily they scooped up dirt and began the slow, deliberate search for colors.

Towards evening as they were putting away their tools, they heard the clatter of horses and a great shouting. Suddenly the two evil warriors appeared, again waving their guns and drunkenly calling out threats. Incredibly one lifted his gun and fired at the men. Without a cry Ah Che fell to the ground. The brothers, sobered by the realization they had shot an

unarmed man, at once turned their horses and rapidly rode away as fast as they had come. Wing and Lan Kee ran to the fallen Ah Che. He was dead; the bullet had entered his heart.

As they bent over his body they realized that they had lost after all. Chinese don't win in America.

**T**hey buried Ah Che on the slope of the hill at the town cemetery. It was a grand funeral, starting with a ceremonial fire in Chinatown where gifts to the dead were burned and a priest offered prayers. The people, dressed in white mourning, slowly followed the funeral cart up the cemetery road. A wooden slab was marked with the characters which identified the grave as Ah Che's temporary resting place. The mourners had brought food and joss sticks for Ah Che's journey and they carefully arranged their offerings on the grave. After they had kowtowed with their foreheads to the earth, they left Ah Che and went back to their homes. The sexton in the cemetery put a mark on the chart reserved for registering Chinese burials. A mark was enough; they didn't need names. The Chinese were all alike anyway.

**T**he work at the claim was slower now, and Lan Kee and Wing lost some of their enthusiasm. But you don't mourn forever when you have been taught that death is an unbroken continuation of living and you knew that Ah Che was happily with his ancestors. It was sad that his family would be without his company, but they would receive his bones to place respectfully in an urn of honor. Lan Kee would see to that before he left America.

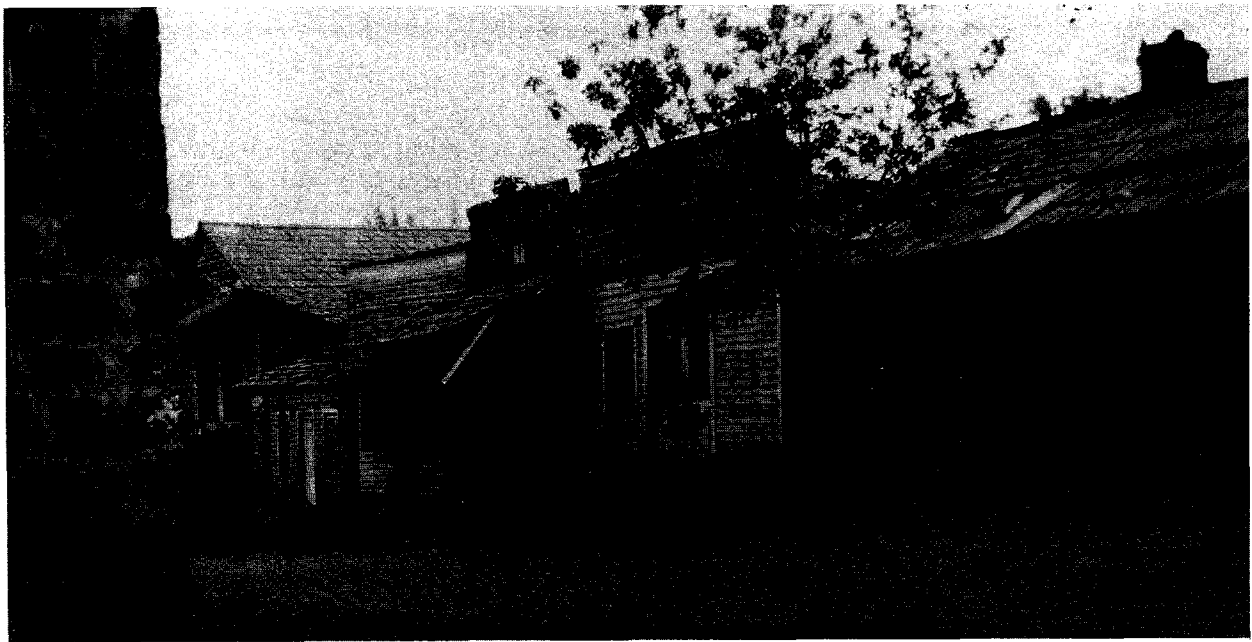
**A**s the days went on Lan Kee and Wing dug gradually deeper into the rocky hillside toward a fissure which extended from the bedrock to a sharp peak above their heads. Strangely as they came closer and closer to the rift in the rocks, the flecks of gold dust and the colors increased and they began working in a state of growing excitement. Each

day the take was a little richer and the nuggets a little larger. Hardly daring to hope for a miracle lest the hoping would bring bad luck, and not wishing to tempt providence by plunging recklessly into the cleft of the rock only to find nothing there, they continued each day with the same tedious methods. But every day they added more and more to the glass jar and occasionally they could see bright nuggets in a shovelful of dirt even before it was carefully brushed clean. At last Lan Kee's pick broke through the soil into a glittering vein of gold. There was no need to suppress their excitement any more. The god had favored them and had let them reach the mother lode. They howled and danced in a circle until they fell upon the trail of gold, rubbing their cheeks in it and laughing uncontrollably.

**O**ne day they returned in triumph to Chinatown where everyone rejoiced at their good fortune and Wing and Lan Kee treated all the people in the China Houses to rice wine and a grand feast of roast port with many exotic delicacies from the Chinese store. The party continued all night, with unending toasts to the two rich gentlemen of such profound nobility.

**L**an Kee and Wing had so much treasure that when they reached home they could build many rooms onto their houses as the Americans did, and buy new plots of rich land. They could give money to their honored parents, a third to Ah Che's family, and have enough left to live in peace and plenty for the rest of their lives.

With so many dollars they were entitled to spend a little on themselves, and, at long last, when they finally returned to their enraptured families in the Quangtung province, each of them proudly displayed across his chest an opulent, heavy gold chain which held, at one end, a beautiful gold watch that kept the minutes exactly, and proudly proclaimed to all the world that its owner was of unparalleled importance and sublime status.



Jacksonville's Chinatown

## FEW CHINESE PEOPLE BECAME PART OF THE COMMUNITY

The hundreds of Chinese workers who came to southern Oregon left only a scanty record of their stay. Even their dead who were buried in the cemeteries here have long since been exhumed and the remains have been sent to China. Local Chinatowns have fallen to ruin or have burned many years ago, some of them put to the torch by deliberate intent. A meager handful of artifacts and a collection of Peter Britt photographs are sad remnants of the rich heritage they might have left with us. Their failure to do so, of course, is the fault of the early settlers who deeply resented their presence and simply chose to ignore them. Southern Oregon boasted a full complement of prominent bigots such as Paine Page Prim, William M. Turner and Chas. Nickell, and there were far more who championed the cause of the Indians than ever defended the Chinese. The fact that they prevailed in spite of the legislation against them and the sharp cruelty which they constantly faced is testimony of their endurance, fortitude and patience.

A few of them can be identified as part of the community. We know of Julia Beekman's cook, Han, and his widely-circulated recipe for corn bread, we have a photograph of Lim Wang who ran a laundry on California Street in Jacksonville, and we know the names of some of those who broke the laws and were mentioned in the local papers.

The most prominent Chinese sojourner in southern Oregon was Gin Lin, a boss, who lived in the Jacksonville and Applegate areas. He became successful enough to buy and operate his own hydraulic mining operation in the region around Palmer Creek. Today the



Gin Lin



The Wah Chung Family

Gin Lin Trail which winds through his mine makes an interesting excursion for the traveler. He deposited at least two million dollars in the banks, a most remarkable achievement for a Chinese miner. He had his own carriage and was often seen driving through town in style. Having such great wealth, he was treated with respect and many of the citizens regarded him as a friend. He eventually returned to China. One report is that as he got off the ship, he was set upon by robbers and murdered. It is unlikely that we will ever learn what happened to him.

**W**ah Chung, who lived in Ashland for many years, was a boss on the Southern Pacific Railroad. He had a wife and two children whom he brought to southern Oregon with him. Mr. Henry Enders, a SOHS member who knew Wah Chung well, recalls:

[Wah Chung] had a big place down

where the Freight Depot used to be. ...There were Wah Chung, his wife, and twenty or thirty Chinese. They slept twelve in a room on the floor. Wah Chung hired and did all the contract work for the Southern Pacific. ..and Mrs. Wah Chung, (he brought her over from China) her feet were bound. The whole foot was tiny, but the toes were straight. [It] just stunts the growth of the foot so there is no blood circulation. I had a [store with a] very fine shoe man and he measured her up and sent to the factory for her shoes for maybe ten years.

Everybody seemed to treat them well. Wah Chung was a perfect gentleman. His credit was good and everybody trusted him.

Although most of the Chinese left the area after the railroad was completed, Wah Chung stayed on until his death sometime around 1915. His body was shipped back to China, and his family moved away from southern Oregon.

**T**he knowledge that a few of the Chinese sojourners had pleasant experiences in southern Oregon takes some of the sting from our regret that the others were so badly treated. The widespread abuse has inspired the happy ending in the Lan Kee story; at least one of them may have found his treasure, and, like Lan Keen, could have returned to China, a wealthy man. A far greater number met violent and tragic deaths in a most unfriendly country, America. Perhaps, though, if we were given an opportunity to make amends, we'd do the same thing again. Human nature didn't reform with the departure of the "celestials."

Much of the material in the story was taken from two publications: Ms Kay Atwood's "Minorities of Early Jackson County, Oregon" (1976) and Mr. Jeffrey M. LaLande's "Sojourners in the Oregon Siskiyou," (1981). One wishing to learn more about the Chinese in southern Oregon will find a great deal of information in these thoroughly documented, scholarly studies.

## NEWSPAPER ITEMS PICKED AT RANDOM REVEAL BIGOTRY

### MARCH 1872 - WAR IN CHINA

Last Saturday night the attention of a number of persons was attracted to an uproar proceeding from a Chinese gambling house, as if a fierce struggle was going on. On approaching the place, the war was suddenly stopped, the light extinguished and everything was serene. On inquiring of a Heathen Chinese if a fight was going on, he answered with a smile that was childlike and bland, "No fightee at all, only one row." No further inquiry was made.

### NOVEMBER 1878 - CHINESE ROOKERY

Jacksonville has its China row, and it possesses all the disgusting features of the Mongolian quarters in Portland and San Francisco, save the mission schools, where good white people strive to instruct the Joss worshippers in the principles of Christianity. During all hours of the night the Chinese of this place hold their orgies, drinking villainous red brandy, gambling and indulging in all manner of vice peculiar to their race. A fine field for a superannuated missionary of moderate ability is offered here.

### AUGUST 1878 - INCENDIARIES

On Tuesday night of last week two attempts were made to burn Chinatown, which, luckily proved unsuccessful. Shavings had been carried to the roof of the building opposite the residence of A. Fisher which were set on fire about two o'clock in the morning, but Mrs. Houck, the owner of the premises, was awakened by the noise and she discovered the blaze in time to prevent a serious conflagration. If it had not been discovered just at that time, probably our town today would have been in ashes.

### JANUARY 1879 - CHINESE NEW YEAR

Our pagan neighbors ushered in their "New Year" on Monday evening with the usual barbaric ceremonies. A free lunch of "loast" pork with "blandy sauce" was spread and "John" jabbered and chattered and screamed with delight as the night wore on and the sauce had its due effect. The fearful music and the beating of gongs was committed this year probably in deference to feelings of the American community. The Chinese say they are poor this year, but they can always find means for a new year's spree.

### FEBRUARY 1881 - CHINAMAN JAILED

One of our Chinese laundrymen refused to pay the \$5 license required by the new law last Tuesday, but Marshal Crosby brought him to terms after a short stay in the new calaboose.

### JULY 1881 - CHINESE AT CEMETERY

For the past week or ten days a number of Chinamen have been engaged at the Jacksonville cemetery exhuming the bones of dead Chinamen, preparatory to shipping them to the Celestial empire. About 50 dead, who have been dead five or six years, are being taken up and the bones of each placed in boxes--so many sacks to each box--and then they are ready to be shipped to China. It is a ghastly process. We would much rather see live Chinamen shipped to China than dead ones.

### AUGUST 1882 - EDITORIAL

The Chinese restriction bill has been in force for several days. For the next 10 years no more Coolies can come to America. Of course those already here will continue to oppress us for sometime yet, but gradually they will be distributed over the country, so that within a few years, American laborers will no longer be reduced to the level of a hand-to-hand competition with a horde of heathen slaves.

### MAY 1883 - NEW YORKERS CHARGE CELESTIALS

The New York people who reside near the Chinese quarters are loudly complaining of the immoral conduct of their celestial fellow-citizens. This is as it should be. The people of this coast have labored long and faithfully to instruct these sentimentalists of the East in the ways of these wicked heathens, but all to no purpose. We hope experience will teach them a lesson.

### JANUARY 1885 - FUNERAL FOR CELESTIAL

A high toned Chinese funeral, with Gin Lin's partner acting as corpse, passed through town this week. The Chinaman was killed in the mine by a bank caving in on him while at work on Sterling Creek.

### JANUARY 1886 - MEDFORD CHINAMAN JAILED

Medford has only one Chinaman within her corporate limits and this week Constable Birdseye went down there and arrested him on a charge of assault with intent to kill. The Chinaman has since been bound over and is now in jail, and the citizens of that place are getting up a fund to buy a medal for Birdseye for ridding the town of Chinese.

### JULY 1880 - UNPLEASANT TRIP

Last week a Chinese employee of the Sterling Mining Company accidentally fell into the flume through which a heavy head of water was rushing, and before he could recover himself he was swept out on the dump a half a mile distant. A white miner ran down to assist him but arrived in time to see him shot out of the flume all of twenty feet. "John" was out of breath but managed to gasp, "Chinaman him go too fast, Muckahoy--no likee too muchee wet."

### FEBRUARY 1881 - CHINESE DISTURBANCE

During a quarrel over the sum of 15 cents two Chinamen became engaged in a fight at Cow Creek last month, which did not terminate until one of the celestials had gone to Joss land. The murderer made good his escape and eluded his pursuers until a day or two ago, when he was obliged to apply for food at one of the camps along the creek. He was recognized as the assassin. Before he could be turned over to the authorities, the miserable wretch died of starvation.

### MAY 1877 - CHINAWOMAN STONED

Some boys threw a rock at a Chinawoman last Sunday and struck her in the face, cutting a fearful gap over her eye. A stop should be put to this kind of amusement



The Edgar F. Hafer House-Perl Funeral Home was built around 1906. In 1921 Frank C. Clark executed architectural plans for substantial additions and alterations while making every effort to make the new design consistent with the first structure. Many of the original features and details are unchanged, and today the house is a charming example of a gracious home of the early 1920s.

The Perl Funeral Home, which has been serving the Rogue Valley for 75 years, has been located at the corner of Sixth and Oakdale for 70 years.

The advertising cut used here was first introduced in the twenties. The telephone number is 779-3677.

## ***The* PERL FUNERAL HOME**

**"Courteous, Conscientious Service"**

**SIXTH AT OAKDALE  
PHONE 47**



### **A Significant Communication From a SOHS Member**

To the Editor:

First, let me tell you how much I enjoy each issue of the Table Rock Sentinel--it's absolutely the best historical society newsletter that I have ever seen!

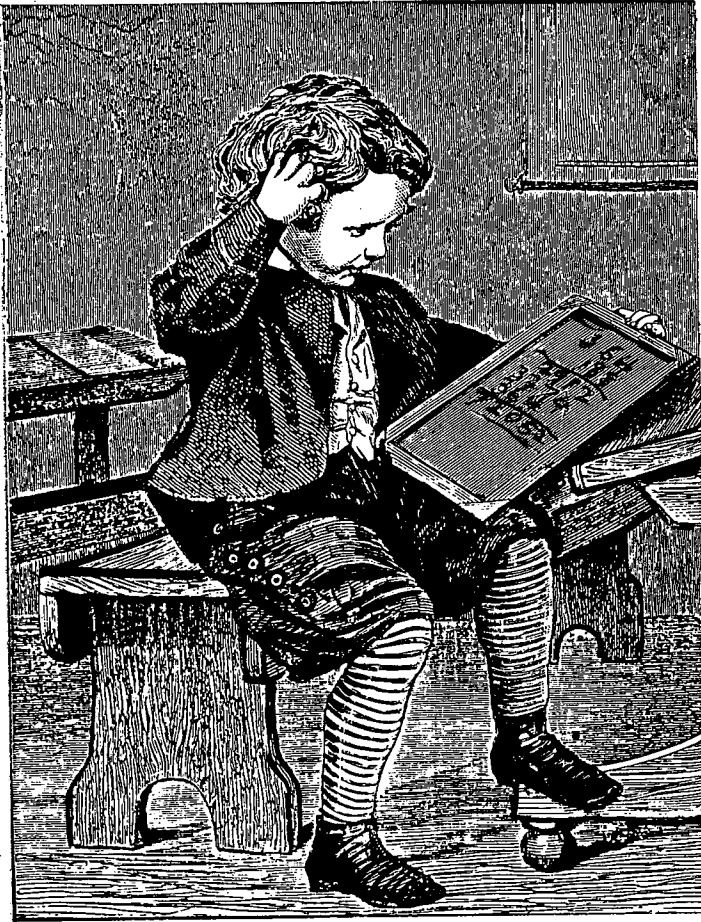
The last issue (Mar. 1983) was particularly interesting because of a reprint from the Democratic Times which told about the death of George Ross. But as a student of Rogue River history I spotted a few errors in the 1902 story. True on Oct. 9, 1855, Indians killed at least 20 people but between Evans Creek and Grave Creek, not Louse Creek and Grave Creek as the story said.

George Ross may have been with a rescue party but it was for Mary Harris and her daughter Sophie not for "Mrs. Wagner (sic) and her daughter." Actually, Indians had already killed Roana Wagoner and her little girl Mary. Their bones were found among the ashes of the house by soldiers from Fort Lane.

Then John W. Hillman is usually credited with the discovery of Crater Lake. The story said George Ross, who was a member of the party, was the first to "look upon the placid waters of this fairy lake." You might check this out: Hillman had that honor.

FRANK WALSH, Te-Cum-Tom Enterprises  
Coos Bay

(Our thanks for your kind words. Charles Nickell, editor of the Democratic Times, was never in danger of being awarded an international prize for his accuracy. Our intention was to present the story as an example of a movie scenario rather than authentic history. Our lead surely failed to show this intention. Sorry. We're grateful for your interest.)



# JOHN W. MERRITT MASTER TEACHER

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIRST SCHOOLS IN JACKSONVILLE

**R**eading, writing and arithmetic are just about the last things to come to mind when a man is scrabbling around in the forest primeval, trying to clear a little tract of land, build a cabin for his family and avoid a shoot-out with the natives. In fact everything has to be pretty shipshape before the need to educate his youngones occurs to him. And even then he may decide that since school didn't do anything earth shaking for him, his own kids might better get on with the work in the field or in the kitchen where they don't need to talk Latin or spell high-falutin' words. Life in the settlements isn't going to be much easier than life in the wilderness, and when the livery stable is short handed, little Oscar can help

daddy out a lot more by crawling up to the hay mow and pitching feed down to the livestock than he can by sitting behind a school desk in the third grade. The anti-education faction will object less to the taxes than to the unproductive waste of time required for book learning.

But, round up any random bunch of people, send them into the back country to chop out a new way of life for themselves, and in no time at all one of them will develop an urge to be a teacher. Along about the same time some of the folk with offsprings will decide they want their progeny to have the opportunity to acquire some elegancies that they haven't had, and, given an aspiring pedagogue and a collection of untouched raw material, the start-the-school move-

ment is off and running. And this is certainly the way it came about in southern Oregon.

The opposition couldn't have come on very strong--its anti-American to be against education--but the pro-school advocates, who were in the actual minority, had to be strong-minded and vocal to make any progress at all. With some eloquent fire-brands leading the campaign in the Rogue River Valley, they saw to it, as early as 1854, that school districts were formed and numbered and that county school superintendents were supplied. Many leading citizens of the valley stepped forward, eager to serve in this estimable office: H.B. Shipley, T.F. Royal, William M. Colvig, L.B. Brennen, William M. Turner, Moses A. Williams and others. With the initial groundwork promptly taken care of, the town trustees proceeded to table the matter and return to the business of running their respective towns. Some of them debated for years before they came up with belated resolutions to build schools and provide adequate tax money for teachers' salaries. In the meantime the parents with aspirations for their children to become the successful leaders of tomorrow had to send them to private schools and pay the tuition out of their own pocket-books.

In Jacksonville Mary E. Royal took the first Jackson County teachers' examinations in 1855, satisfactorily passed them and opened a class room. The first term was one month. After her initial success, the city fathers authorized a tax levy to provide \$550 to repair the cabin used as school-house, buy some supplies and textbooks, and pay the dedicated Miss Royal a handsome salary. This was Jacksonville's first school. Unfortunately during the last confrontation with the Indians, education suffered a severe setback. Scholars who are threatened with imminent attack by a vengeful enemy who isn't just fooling around, may find it difficult to concentrate on learning to recite the multiplication tables in five minutes. The schoolroom was abandoned. After the final battles with the

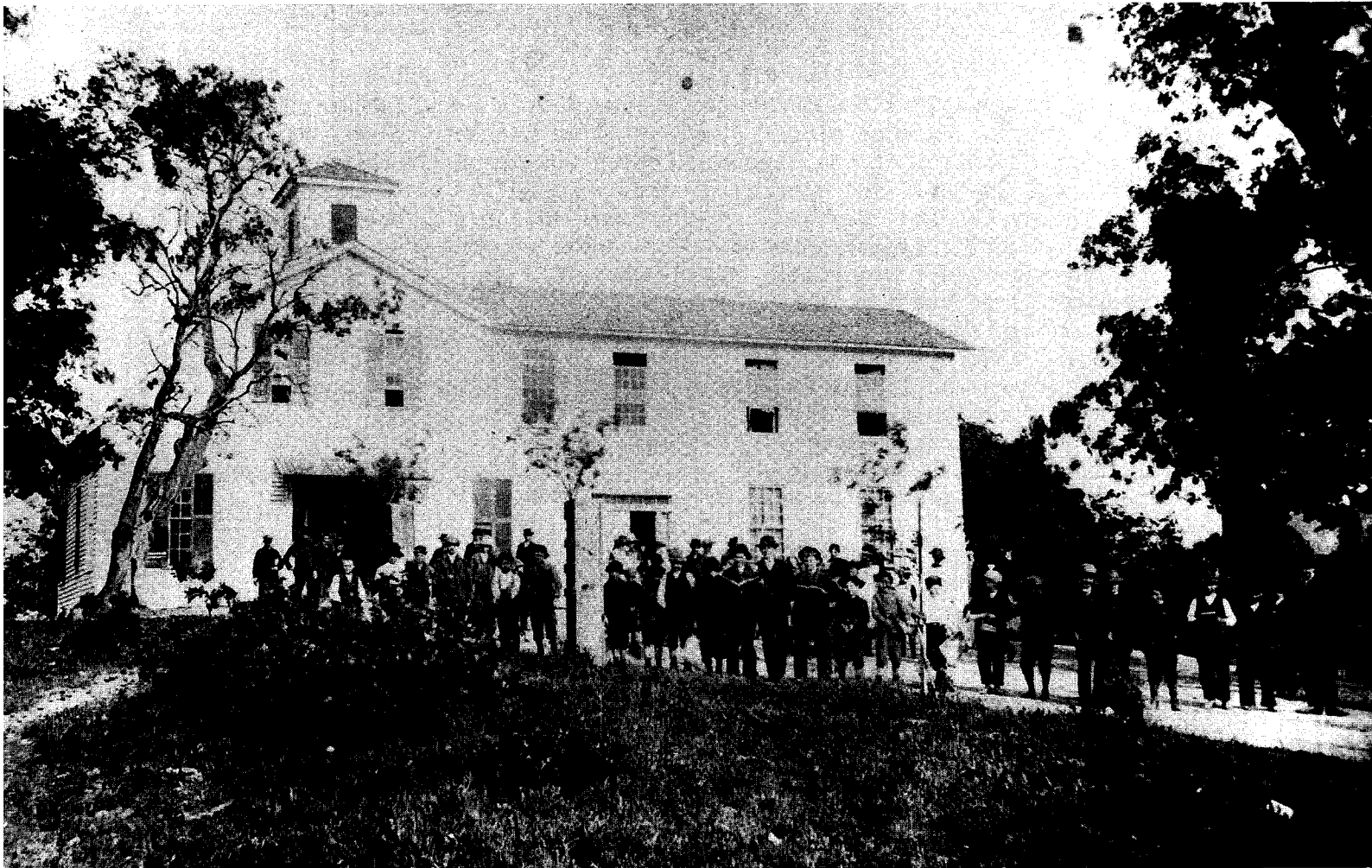
Indians, Miss Royal reopened the School house and expectantly rang the bell, but, to her great disappointment, only a few pupils appeared. The scant attendance may have been for the best because the amount of money brought in by taxes was far too small to provide for much of an operation. By 1861 the Jacksonville school had once again closed its doors and the students either entered the private school conducted by Mrs. Jane McCully or stayed home, giving up their hopes for an education.

In 1865 Father Francis X. Blanchet of St. Joseph's parish announced the opening of an "Academy for Young Ladies," and from the first it was well attended because it supplied an education for those who had been denied schooling.

The trustees, in 1867, encouraged by the success of St. Mary's, resolved to build a new school. They set aside \$1600 to be paid to David Linn, the builder, who industriously had at it, and by 1868, only fourteen years after the initial steps were taken, Jacksonville had its own brand new public school building.

There were seventy-nine males and forty-six females enrolled, and two teachers were hired to take care of these 125 aspiring young citizens. The two lucky instructors were paid, between then, \$1050 for the year, but the records don't indicate how the generous sum was divided. Going fifty-fifty, each teacher had sixty-three pupils and received \$525 for his efforts for the term.

For the next decade the school satisfactorily served the citizens. If there were any revolutionary teaching techniques introduced or any especially creative teachers on the staff during that time, the editors of the newspapers failed to notice them. This is not to say, of course, that there was none. Without an ingenious publicity agent, virtue goes unrewarded. The fame of a successful educator is an ephemeral glory. It will flicker for a time but go out abruptly when his last pupil has gone to glory. The notoriety of a tyrant has more longevity. The duration of his influence hinges upon the fre-



Jacksonville's second schoolhouse. It stood on the hill where the present recently closed schoolhouse stands. Professor J.W. Merritt was principal-teacher here for nine years.

quency with which he uses his whip. To paraphrase you-know-who, one may say the evil the schoolmaster does lives after him, the good is oft interred with his bones. One has to be a very good educator indeed to be remembered by more than one generation.

In 1875 the members of the Jacksonville school board made a brilliant move. They hired an exemplary one-in-a-thousand teacher to serve as principal, and he put District Number One right up there on top of the list of superior public schools in Oregon. Since school boards aren't especially noted for brilliant decisions, it will behoove us to present the story of Professor John W. Merritt.

**T**he Merritt progenitors settled in New York state not long after the Revolution, and a Merritt or two may have stepped off the *Mayflower* onto Plymouth Rock. John Merritt the Older, "of sterling farming ancestry," who lived near the Hudson River, begat Ebenezer, who begat John W. Merritt,

the subject of this short biography. Ebenezer and his wife Eliza begat nine children, three of whom were sons. John W., born in 1846, was the third child.

The Merritt farm near Syracuse yielded a comfortable living, but supporting a family of nine healthy children doesn't leave much of a surplus for the luxury of college educations for all. As a teen-ager John W. was familiar with the hardships of farm life, having done man's work in the fields from his early youth. Eager for an education, however, he sought his father's permission to attend public school. Ebenezer did not discourage him, but insisted that he continue to do his share by performing his farm chores before and after school. In spite of his arduous tasks at home he advanced rapidly in school. He read avidly, everything he could get his hands on, and in truth educated himself in a few short years, going far beyond the scholastic abilities of his teacher.

Before he had completed the Syracuse secondary schools, he made plans to continue his education at the Oswego (N.Y.) Normal School. In spite of his superior grades and advanced standing, no outside financial help was offered him. In those times scholarships were rare and John W. wasted no energy seeking assistance from others. In order to acquire money for tuition and living expenses he continued working in the fields and he refused no job, however menial, if it meant he could add a little cash to his reserve stash-away fund.

Working one's way through college is most commendable. It requires application, a strong back and dedication of purpose. Unfortunately, it also requires a lot of extra time. John W. Merritt was almost thirty years old when he graduated from normal school in 1875. His diploma gave him a lifetime certificate to teach in the schools of New York state.

If he accepted a teaching contract in an eastern school, however, he could expect to start at the lowest salary as a virtual apprentice, and he would have to spend several years gaining experience before he could hope to apply for a position as an administrator. He well knew he had the background, the skills and the temperament to serve as a principal, and at twenty-nine he was certainly no naive youth to be intimidated by his students, no matter how undisciplined and perverse they might be, or by his staff, regardless of their years of experience and impressive list of credits.

Several classmates, who graduated at the same time, sought positions in the far west. The salaries offered were only a little below those of the east, and the openings presented far greater opportunities for rapid advancement. When the placement officer showed John Merritt a letter from the school board at Jacksonville, Oregon, seeking applicants for the position as principal of that school, he was decidedly interested. The position would be a challenge in a different world, an adventure and an

opportunity to start at the top. He applied without delay. His application was accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the administrative head of the Oswego State Normal School, who declared in his own penmanship:



STATE  
Normal and Training School,

Oswego, N.Y. June 21, 1875-

Dear Sir:

It gives me pleasure to recommend to you Mr. John W. Merritt as a young man of more than ordinary qualifications as a teacher.

He is a graduate from the Classical Department of our school. By his good scholarship, his gentlemanly manner, and high moral worth, he has won the esteem of all his teachers and associates.

Before graduation each pupil is required to teach five months under criticism, in our School of Practice. In this department he showed himself master of the situation. I do not hesitate in recommending him to you as a man eminently qualified for the position you desire to fill.

Yours truly,  
E.S. SHELDON  
Prin. Oswego State  
N. and Tr. School

With his application J.W. included his photograph. The Jacksonville school board, which included such worthy citizens as Judge J.R. Neil and the banker, Thomas G. Reames, could see at a glance that John W. Merritt was a handsome fellow, who looked into the camera with straightforward candor. His letter was written in the most beautiful penmanship you could ever hope to see, and his teachers couldn't seem to praise him enough. True, he had no experience, but that meant he might accept a little less salary than the board had set aside for the position. But an applicant with such great qualifications would soon be snapped up by some other school board, so it might not pay to delay and dicker. Throwing caution out the window, the board sent him a contract for three years, offering him the munificent sum of one thousand dollars for each year. John W. didn't hesitate. He signed the contract, returned it to the board and began taking steps to enter another phase in his career.

**I**n the late summer of 1875 he arrived in Jacksonville. The first sight of his future home may have been traumatic, but, on the other

hand, he might have been charmed by the primitive streets, the wooden buildings and the colorful natives. But he surely found the school building less than he had expected. It had been built only seven years before, but it had cost almost two-thousand dollars, and the directors were reluctant to ask the tax payers to divvy up a greater amount for necessary improvements. In fact some of the citizens had failed to pay their assessments and the *Sentinel* carried the announcement that Clerk Huffer of School District Number One would turn delinquent accounts over to the sheriff if they weren't settled within sixty days. The school could operate on little, but it could hardly function on nothing. Of course then, as now, an inspired teacher could make do with very few props if he had to. The rooms were equipped with blackboards, an adequate stock of chalk, some maps and globes, and the students would pay for their own text books and supplies.

Clerk Huffer presented a breakdown of the cost of the barest essentials required for a year's maintenance, and the total was pretty shocking:

Janitor's fees . . . . .	\$63.00
Wood, hauling and sawing . . . . .	205.50
S.J. Day, sundries . . . . . [frills?]	5.00
G. Karewski, brooms . . . . .	1.00
Insurance, 3 years . . . . .	68.50
Equipment, drinking cups, towels, soap & t.	34.85
D. Linn, labor and material for repairs	19.10
Mrs. Bilger, new stoves . . . . .	32.00
H. Judge, blackboard erasers . . . . .	4.50
Chas. Nickell, printing . . . . .	8.50
E.C. Brooks, chalk . . . . .	2.50
Henry Klippel, transcript [?]. . . . .	1.25
J.H. Huffer, Clerk . . . . .	185.04
SALARIES	
J.W. MERRITT [principal & teacher] . . .	1000.00
H.C. FLEMING [High school teacher] . . .	466.64
CHARLES PRIM [5th to 8th grade teacher]	540.00
MISS BELL CARR [1st to 4th grade] . . .	375.00

Fortunately after the payment of these accounts, there would be a surplus of \$549.37. The school was certainly solvent and ready for almost any emergency.

The *Democratic Times* published a letter to the editor, entitled *A Model Teacher* and signed "An Old Teacher," and the author, who had visited the classrooms, describes the splendid opportunity to be found

in the Jacksonville school under the able principalship of Prof. John W. Merritt:

[In the high school we find a] pleasing study of "Young America." We see fifty young ladies and gentlemen delving after knowledge, their faces glowing with pleasure as one obstacle after another is encountered and overcome. All is quietness, order and precision. The professor speaks to his pupils in a low tone of voice and is immediately answered upon all subjects in the same manner. The walls are adorned with a few appropriate mottoes [a decoration costing the taxpayer nothing]. Opposite the rostrum stands a large organ, which we are sorry to learn, is not used at present...The voice is the most beautiful of all instruments and at the same time the most delicate. The cultivation of the vocal organs is the same as the cultivation of the muscles of the brain. Daily practice is necessary.

As we entered [the professor] was conducting an exercise in grammar. The sentences were diagrammed with perfect accuracy and placed on the blackboard with consummate skill...In point of proficiency in reading, it is perhaps safe to say this school is without a rival on the Pacific coast. An accomplished elocutionist himself, the professor has given his pupils a thorough training in that most important branch of study.

We found excellent order in all of the rooms. [...We were especially pleased] in the primary department. Here we found 60 pairs of brown, blue and black eyes, all bright and glowing, indicating at a glance that the most cordial good feeling existed between teacher and pupil. [The teacher was using flash cards and the pupils were calling out the words written thereon. This is truly the proper method for the beginners in reading...I am pleased to say that the public school of Jacksonville is second to none. The citizens may justly feel proud.

The citizens should also have been proud that out of an enrollment of 200 kids, there were no non-conformists: every member of the class was at the same level of accomplishment, everyone learned at the same rate, and each one was inspired by the same motivation. If Professor Merritt could have created such a classroom through his own efforts, he was indeed one of the great ones and well deserved his pedestal.

One must, however, pity the poor primary teacher. She was paid the smallest salary and given the greatest number of students. Who would want to spend day after day shut up in a room with sixty little squirmers, at a time when a bathroom was a rarity, and have to teach them their basics as well as air them out from time to time?

By the end of John Merritt's third year at Jacksonville the excellent scholarship of his graduates was widely known, and it was generally accepted by the universities that the

school at Jacksonville, Oregon, was tops on the Pacific coast in educating the young.

Shortly after John W.'s arrival in southern Oregon, he met Miss Mary Belle 'Molly' McCully. A native of Jacksonville, she had graduated from Willamette University, and was in charge of the private school established by her mother, Jane Mason McCully, who by that time had begun investing in real estate and had turned the school over to Molly.

Molly was daintily pretty, an excellent musician and a clever conversationalist. She too had received accolades as a superior teacher, and, with so many shared interests, they were instantly attracted to each other. John Merritt began his courtship in earnest, and after two years of keeping company, they were married in 1877. Molly was beloved by all of Jacksonville, and John Merritt had also acquired many admirers. The young couple was held in high regard by many former students,

and the wedding was an important social event. They moved into a small home at the foot of the school house hill, and at the close of the term, Molly gave up her school to be Mrs. John W. Merritt full time. Jacksonville could well be proud of such a handsome and charming pair.

At the close of his third year as principal, James W. was again offered a contract at the same salary. His status had changed: he was a married man with additional responsibilities and he had purchased a home. He felt he was worthy of a raise. In addition to his need for more money, it would be a testimonial to his satisfactory service. He asked for \$1200 a year. The board was reluctant to go so far beyond their budget. They had acquired the services of Miss

Hattie Newbury whose reputation for excellence was also widespread, and she had agreed to teach the primary grades for \$350. When they compared that amount with the salary which Professor Merritt was seeking, his request did seem out of line. But when the townspeople discovered the directors were dilly-dallying around in meeting his terms, they protested loudly. It seemed none of them would object to adding a mill to the school tax if it would insure that Professor John W. Merritt, who had put District Number One on the map, would continue to teach their children. The board happily capitulated and signed James W. for another three year term, this time at a splendid raise of \$200 a year.



Mollie McCully Merritt

Professor Merritt had excelled in elocution at the Oswego Normal. He possessed an expressive resonant voice, and was an expert speaker. His ability to write his own inspirational material was also a decided asset. Although he probably began giving lectures soon after his arrival at Jacksonville, the first news item of his outstanding oratory was published in 1879 when he appeared before the Temperance Society in Ashland. That engagement surely gave him the opportunity to be his most eloquent and to wring tears from the sensitive audience of dry ladies and gentlemen as he emotionally described the sad lot of the drunkard's weeping wife and child. The engagement was so successful it led to many requests for lectures from then on. He presented a Fourth of July address each year to celebrants in Jacksonville, Ashland or Phoenix, and at each gathering of the annual teachers' institute, he was the featured speaker, going as far as Roseburg to appear on the program. After he gave up teaching, he frequently spoke for organizations and his fame as an orator continued to grow. In 1886 he presented two lectures in Eugene,

one for the University Literary Society and one for the laying of a cornerstone at the college. His distinguished eulogy at the memorial service for President Garfield is legendary. In several publications in Oregon he was declared to be the most effective elocutionist in the state.

Only a few copies of his speeches are preserved. He was extremely modest, and refused nearly all requests to have them published. An interesting letter in a private collection of Merritt papers\* includes just such a request, dated July 8, 1884:

Prof. J.W. Merritt, Sir:

We the undersigned would most respectfully request that your oration delivered in Jacksonville on the 4th be published. Hoping that you may favorably consider our request, we are

Most Respectfully

C.C. Beekman	
Will Jackson	Henry Klippel
J.A. Cardwell	P.P. Prim
D.R. Webster	C.W. Kahler
Max Muller	H. Kelly
J. Nunan	David Linn

Here we have the signatures of the most august personages of the city. Apparently their prominence failed to impress John Merritt. The oration was not printed for distribution.

**L**ate in the fourth year of the marriage, Molly gave birth to a little boy. He was named James Mason and was a bright sturdy baby, but when he was almost a year old, he suddenly became ill and died on the same day. The doctor diagnosed the cause of death as Cholera Infantum. It was a great shock to Molly, who was expecting another baby, and John Merritt, who had made great plans for his firstborn, was grief stricken.

A few months later a second son, George Henry, was born. Molly did not seem to recover from his birth and for some time she was an invalid, but everyone had hopes for her recovery. In January, 1884, she died from a congestive chill. She was twenty-six.

\*We are grateful to Jack Sanderson of Medford, a grandson of J.W. Merritt, who generously lent us his collection of Merritt memorabilia



Prof. John W. Merritt

Here was real tragedy. A beautiful young mother at the crest of her beauty and beloved by everyone was dead, only a few months after the death of her infant son. The disaster offered the editors a chance to wax emotionally eloquent and they didn't resist the urge. Herewith is a sample of the lush prose, designed to give solace to the mourner. It would seem the more tears it wrenched from the reader, the more comforting it was:

How early in the morning of life is its "Golden Bowl" broken. In the death of Mrs. Merritt a sweet, pure and beautiful life went out. Her remains were borne to the city of the dead, on the sunlit side of the beautiful hills and there buried, beside the sweet babe she buried only some four short months ago, there to sleep the quiet and peaceful sleep of death. She is now happy and blessed, and has clasped to her bosom her angel babe, that met her at the golden gate, with his little tiny hands and out-stretched arms.

My heart and sad feelings rush back in thought to her long lost home and I see her husband and beautiful babe, and my mind asks, what will become of them. Oh! how sad is home without the loved wife,

who was the choice of his youth, the very pulse of his heart.

If there are any thornless roses beyond the threshold of the "Unknown" that she has just crossed may they be woven for her into an eternal crown; for none ever left a world of joy and sorrow who deserved it more.

The tributes go on and on and on, column after column. No doubt the words were read aloud in many homes and they surely accomplished their purpose: weeping and more weeping, a few uncontrolled wails and occasional swooning. It *was* a sad, sad thing and neither yesterday's opulence of expression nor today's simplicity can make it any less pathetic. But in those years, the death of a dear one was a familiar event in every household. One gained comfort by going into mourning and by selecting an ornate memorial stone to mark the grave, and after that was taken care of, the bereaved went on about the business of living.

*End of part one.*

*The John W. Merritt story will be concluded in the next issue.*

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## GRISELDA THE TRANSCRIBER

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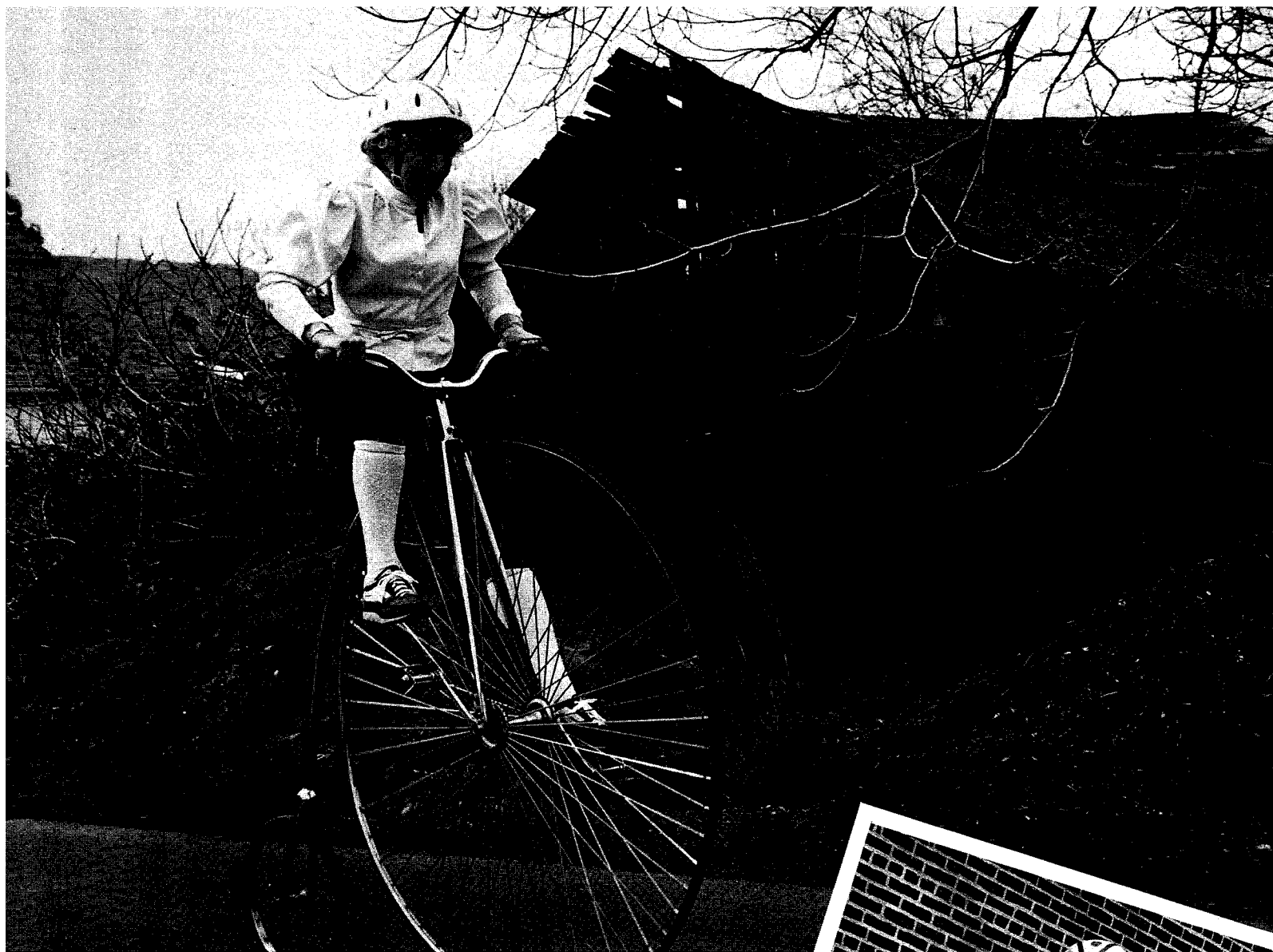
glance at these dandy pictures, taken by SOHS photographer, JANE CORY-VAN DYKE, clearly shows that Betty Grizzell is a decided asset to the historical society. She so enhances the artifacts that the trustees may decided to put her on display as a demonstrator of early modes of transportation. After the spring rains, you may see her, astride this vehicle, circling the museum block, pedaling at breakneck speed. Don't be alarmed. It will only be part of the new program of your enterprising historical society to bring history into the street.

Griselda is almost over-qualified for such a tour of duty; she's into athletic stuff. She belongs to (1) The Siskiyou Wheelmen, whose members bicycle around like mad, (2) The Sierra Club, which sponsors ski trips and pushes back packing, (3) The Desert Trails Society, which encourages its members to hike around in the boonies, (4) the Y.M.C.A., where she swims around the tank like a dolphin and, after she dries off, jumps into aerobics, (5) Southern Oregon Singles, a bunch of bouncy square dancers, and (6) Weight Watchers, an outfit which gave her a lifetime membership when she dropped thirty unnecessary pounds.

Born on a homestead in Chautauqua, Kansas, she crossed the plains in a Model-T when she was two years old. Her daddy was an oil rigger, and when the crew went to California, he naturally uprooted the family and followed after. They settled in Long Beach where Griselda eventually attended Enterprise High, the Compton Junior College and the Long Beach Business College. In 1941, after three months as a secretary, she quit her job and got married. She has three children and six grandchildren.

She came to SOHS in 1979 as an employee of Green Thumb, a program funded by the government as a supplement to Social Security. She transcribes oral history interviews, making copies of taped conversations. She enjoys her 20 hours per week at the typewriter, but prefers time off when she can stretch tendons, develop muscle tone and keep in shape.

Well, if that's her cup of tea.



Photographs by Jane Cory-Van Dyke

## A Few Belated Corrections for Past Mistakes

Several inadvertant errors appeared in issues of the *Table Rock Sentinel* during 1982. No corrections were made because of limited space and because, frankly, who wants to confess his gross blunders? But conscience demands an apology, so, *mea culpa* in the max. (Typographical clinkers are ignored.)

Vol. II, No. 1 (Abigail Clark Taylor story) The caption of the picture on page 5 should read Mary Ann Prescott *Taylor*.

Vol. II, No. 9, (Jacksonville Cemetery story) The caption of the sketch on page 7 states that J.W. Merritt was buried in the McCully plot. This is wrong. His grave is in the Merritt plot. He was buried beside his second wife.

Vol. II, No. 10 (Paine Page Prim story) On page 11 is the statement that Ella Prim and Charles Nickell were married for a little over a year. They were actually married several years and had three children.

Vol. II, No. 11 (1930 The Age of Innocence story) On page 18 a news item states that Mrs. Alfred S.V. Carpenter, aboard the *Leviathan*, telephoned her sister, Mrs. H. Chandler Egan. It should have been Mrs. *Leonard* Carpenter who called Mrs. Egan. (This correction is courtesy of Mrs. Olive Starcher.)

Vol. II, No. 12 (Charles Nickell and the *Democratic Times*) On page 14 the picture identified as Chas. Nickell is really Roscoe Cantrall. Several of Mr. Cantrall's family line are still in the area. No doubt they thought, "Why, Chas. Nickell looked just like great Uncle Roscoe." Unforgivable error.

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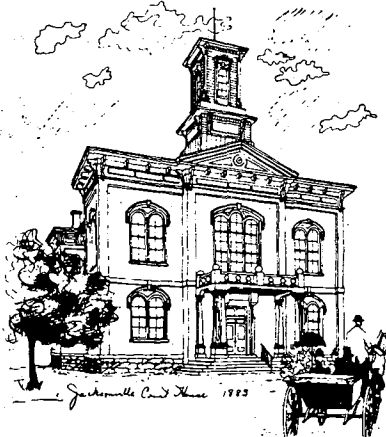
### THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS** The Publications Committee of SOHS is seeking volunteers to work on that committee. Its purpose is to promote the publication of articles, brochures, etc. of general interest to SOHS. LAUREL PRAIRIE-KUNTZ is the Committee Chairman.

The SOHS annual dinner has been scheduled for May 6, 1983, at the Rogue Valley Country Club. You will be receiving an invitation with further details soon. Speaker for the evening will be Mr. George McMath, a member of the Portland architecture firm of Allen-McMath-Hawkins. He is a specialist in preservation architecture and has consulted with the Society on the Beekman House, worked on the Pioneer Courthouse project, Portland, and is a member of the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation. He will review the nomination to the National Register for the Hanley Farm. Mark May 6 on your calendar now.