

8/84

# THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

## Cover

The first announcement of a company of players appearing in Jacksonville is found in a February 1858 issue of the *Table Rock Sentinel*. The traveling troupe featured Lotta Crabtree in a variety show. In June of the same year a circus with a tight-rope walker and equestrian displays came to southern Oregon. That was scarcely six years after gold was discovered in the uninhabited wilderness of Rich Gulch.

Theater people have always been a strange breed and you have to admire the spirit of determination which urged these actor-people to venture so far from civilization and rattle around in the remote mountain camps. Of course it was better to appear before mountaineers and country bumpkins than it was to go hungry in San Francisco.

The cover girl is Miss Weatherby. On the back of the photograph is written "Actress," and that's all we know about her. She may have been a tragedienne or an equestrienne. Her costume would indicate she wasn't a headliner, but she must have been the favorite of the miners who hadn't seen a white gal in a year or two.

Miss Weatherby looks wistful and perhaps she is thinking that life is certainly no bed of begonias. In the heyday of her youth--some time ago--she appeared at the Palace, but now she's doing her turn before a bunch of rowdies.

As sole support of a dear old mother with a yen for gin, she has to plod on. What else can a poor girl do?

This issue of the newsletter is devoted to the schools in Medford, but Miss Weatherby contributed very little to the formal education of the youth in southern Oregon.

We're glad she posed for Peter Britt whose photograph of her in her fetching ensemble with braids wrapped around her pretty plump limbs, has made her sort of immortal.



### THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### Officers of the Board of Trustees

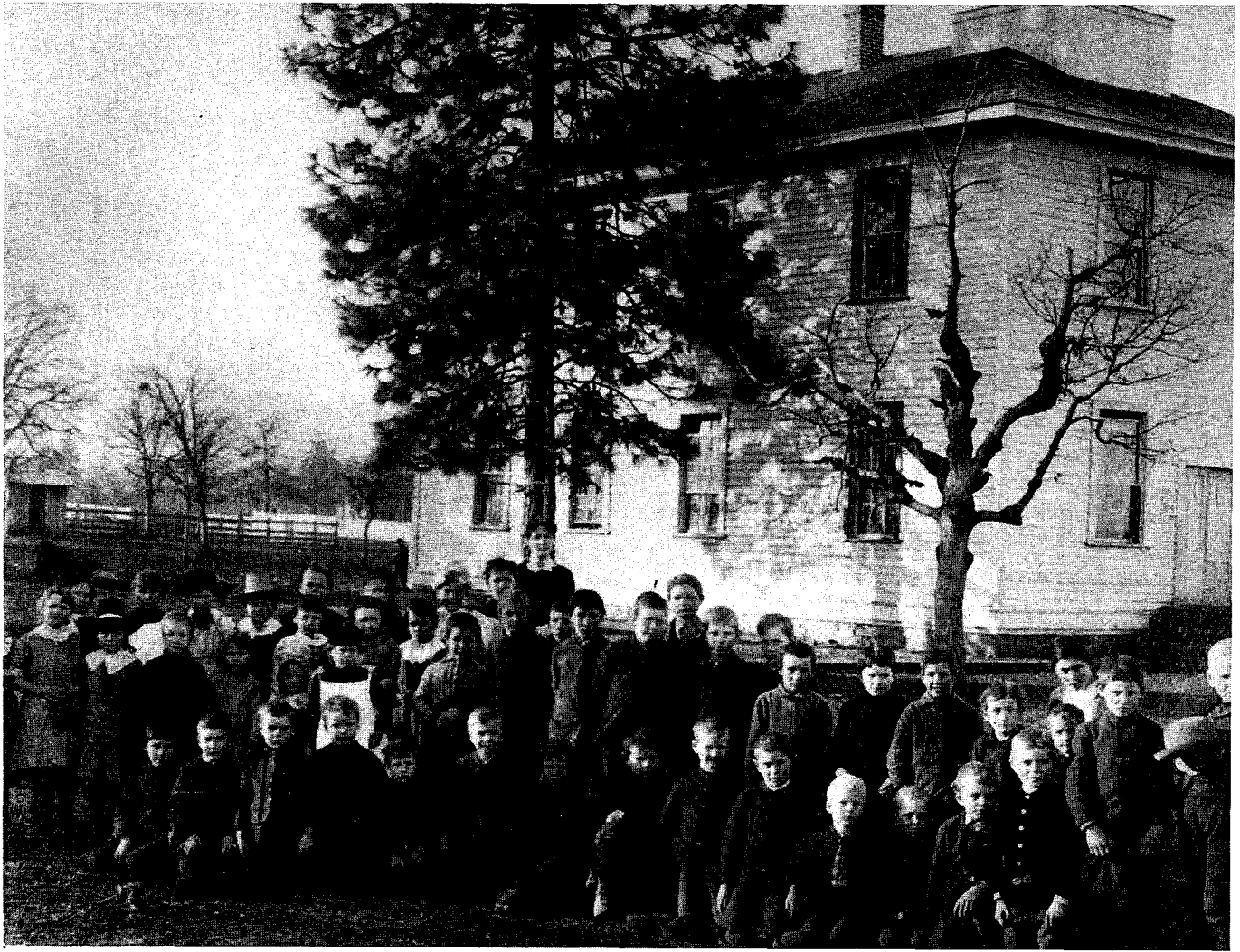
Richard Orr .....	President
Robert Butler .....	First Vice President
Vicki Bryden .....	Second Vice President
Laurel Prairie-Kuntz .....	Secretary
Mark Merriman .....	Treasurer

#### Staff

Executive Director .....	Nick Clark
Director of Operations/ Controller .....	Dottie Ellen Bailey
Curator of Interpretation .....	Dawna Curler

Telephone: 899-1847

Librarian .....	Laura O'Keefe
Oral Historian .....	Marjorie Edens
Newsletter Editor/Writer .....	Raymond Lewis
Curator of Collections .....	
Membership/Volunteer Curator .....	Maureen Smith
Curator of Exhibits .....	Jime Matoush
Curator of Photography .....	Doug Smith
Curator of Preservation and Maintenance .....	Byron Ferrell



Medford Public School, 1888. This was the second frame building constructed on the site of the Jackson County courthouse.

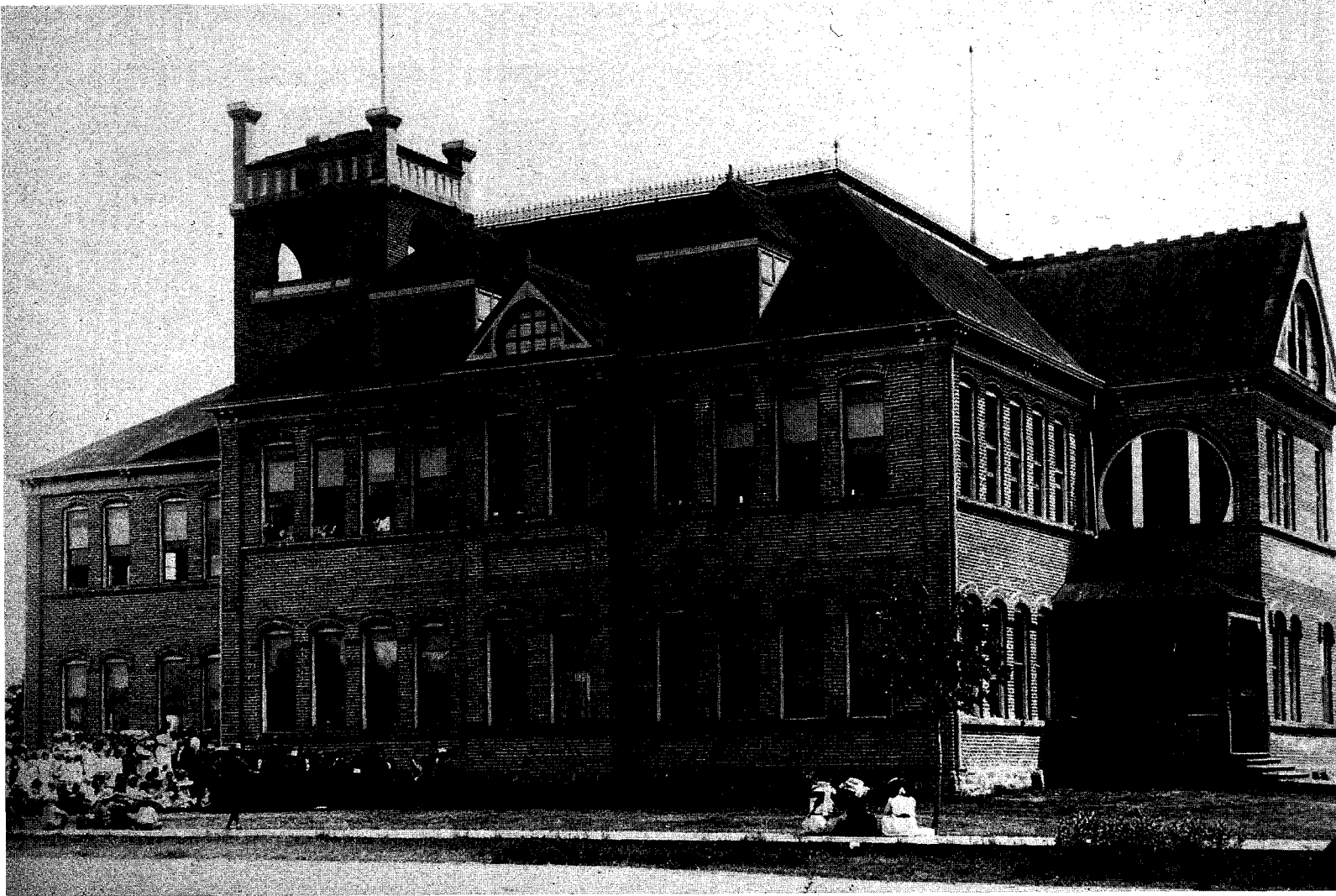
## THE SCHOOL BOARD vs THE CITIZENS 1925, 1926

*Disagreement is not new to the Medford School District. A battle in 1925 resulted in the superintendent's resignation, threats of a school board recall and a pitched battle by the citizens. It was a critical conflict but it was only a dress rehearsal for today's controversy.*

**W**hen Medford pipped from the shell and first tried out its wings, Jacksonville, Ashland, Phoenix and the other early southern Oregon settlements had long since disposed of the Indians and had settled down to become thriving communities. Businesses and schools were firmly established and flourishing and many of the city fathers had cosied into the rut of venerable old

age. Unlike its predecessors Medford didn't have to go through the steps of developing a school in experimental stages. The new town had no pioneer Mary Hoffman who was inspired to make a classroom in the wilderness and conduct lessons with a hodgepodge of textbooks and few supplies.

As early as 1883 a one-room structure on South Central in the heart of the city,



*The Washington School on Oakdale. The upstairs was reserved for high school students.*

just south of the Montgomery Ward building, was used as a schoolroom and a Mr. Williamson was the teacher. Each pupil subscribed \$8 for his year's education. During the next summer, the first schoolhouse was constructed, a two story frame building located between Oakdale and Laurel, the present site of the county courthouse.

In 1891 the building proved to be too small and was replaced\* with a larger one, and provisions were made to include high school students. For many years -- about twenty -- no building was set aside and especially designated as a high school. There were no groups of parents arguing about the advantages of 6-3-3 vs 6-2-2-2. This was 1-12 and that was it, take it or leave it. For years most young men and women considered themselves educated aplenty, long before they reached the lofty

\* This structure was moved to West Tenth Street behind the Catholic Church. A veranda and handsome columns were added and it became a private residence. In 1976 it was fully redecorated as an elegant landmark.

heights of the junior or senior years and they left school to go to work. Too few advanced students attended to make a special building necessary although in 1893 there were thirteen seniors who graduated, a record held for several years.

During the school year of 1895 this larger building burned. The term was completed by the board's renting a couple of churches and a downtown hall and making makeshift classrooms. Two of these substitute schools also burned -- proof positive that a wooden schoolhouse was too alluring a target to the arsonist. In 1896 a handsome new brick school was completed on the Oakdale-Laurel Street lots and the second floor provided for a complete four years of high school. The town had grown rapidly, many more students were enrolled and by this time a lot of parents hoped their offsprings would get high school diplomas. By 1900 college seemed less remote and getting a university education was no longer a pipe-dream for the young man or young lady



of ordinary means.

In only a few years the spacious new building was overcrowded, and the Christian Church was again rented for extra space. In 1906 members of the school board and concerned citizens met for the purpose of finding ways and means to finance a new school house. Those in attendance voted unanimously for an eight room school on Bartlett Street. They specified a brick building that would cost no more than \$20,000, a munificent sum for the time and one which would not stretch their resources unduly. The building was called North School (now known as Lincoln). "In 1906 the school was in the very outskirts of the town, being located about two blocks north of Jackson Street on North Bartlett Street. The town later grew around the building.\*

The old building on Oakdale was remodeled and became Medford High School. New teachers were hired and additional classes were offered. With the constant increase in population students and teachers were barely settled into their new schedules when it became apparent that the high school building (the West school) should be altered to serve as another grade school and a new high school building should be constructed.

**A**gain the board and the citizens met. In the interim building costs seem to have doubled -- in addition folks were getting into the swing of construction and began demanding a few elegancies, like indoor plumbing and home economics and science laboratories. They decided they could manage \$35,000 for the building and \$5,000 for the site which raised the ante to \$40,000. That was exorbitant enough but at the same time the teachers were asking for salary raises.

As ever, talk of a boost in wages did not meet with immediate, unreserved approval. *Some of those teachers were just out to gouge the tax payer.* Why, salaries were up to \$65, almost \$10 more than was being paid in the rural districts, and Medford teachers could work in tidy, up-to-date classrooms. *You can't seem to do enough for some*

\*Robert Stedman: "A Short History of the Medford School System from 1883 Through 1925." This is a very scholarly, well-documented thesis for a master's degree. It is available at the public library.

*people.* It's curious how a dedicated, sacrificing and noble teacher who is paid \$25 a month becomes a greedy gold-bricker when she timidly asks for \$35.

The teachers were reelected at a monthly increase of \$5 and the building was started on Bartlett Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets in 1909. When it was completed it was far and above the West school in all respects, but concepts of education were changing and some departments were obsolete before the first class enrolled.

The gym classes had to meet at the Natatorium, just across the street from the back door, and basketball games were played there on a removable floor laid over the swimming pool. Rent for this service was \$25 a term. There were other educational innovations left out in the planning but the home economics department boasted a new and marvelous electric cooking stove along with the more practical coal and gas ranges, and the manual training department was an impressive model of a well equipped work room.

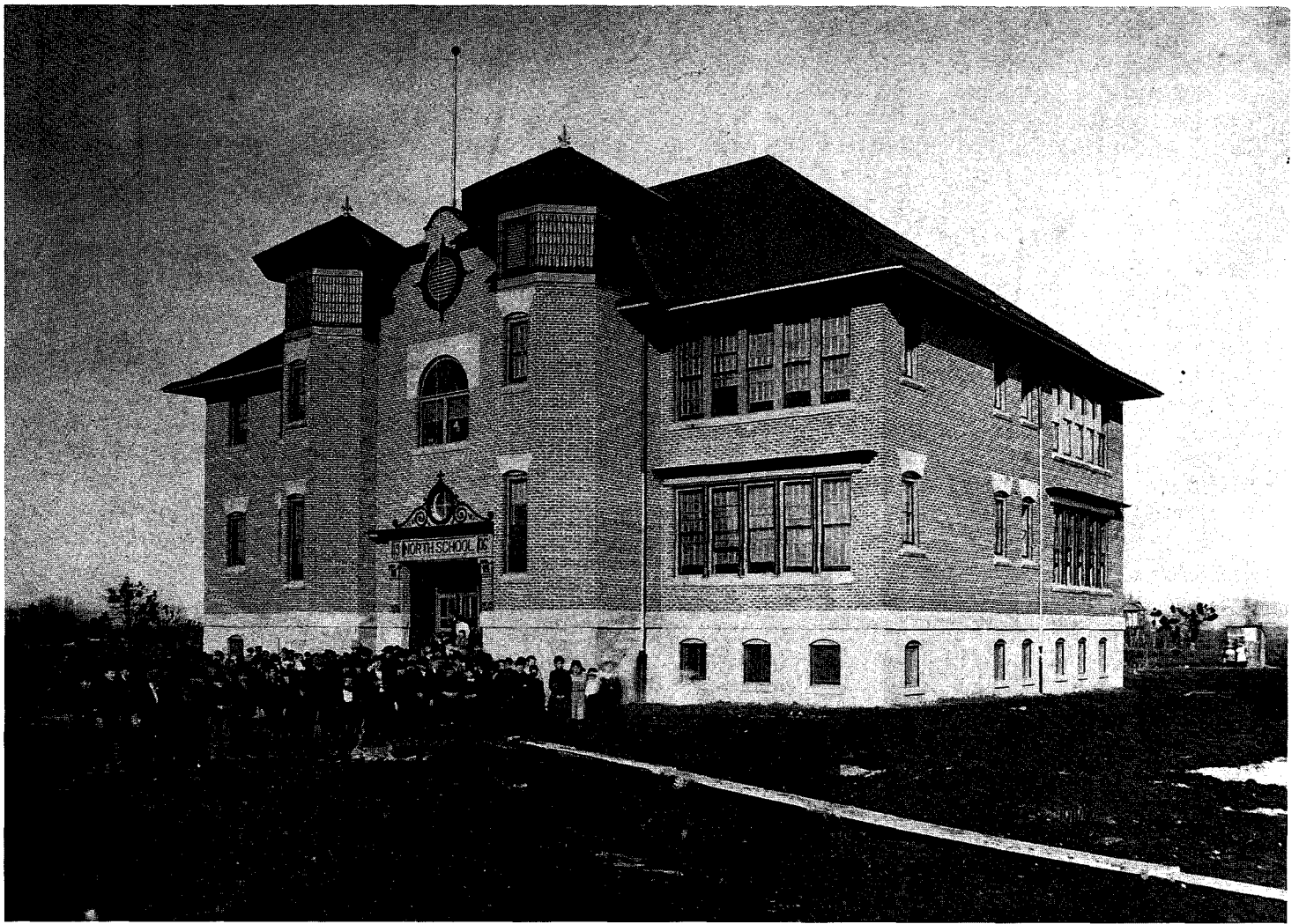
**D**uring the next ten years the Jackson and Roosevelt elementary schools were opened and the high school on Bartlett continued to serve. But by 1923 the large number of students had again created problems of over crowding. "Every conceivable method of providing added facilities from the available room was being tried and there was agitation for a building program."\*\*

On January 3, 1925, the action of the school board made headlines. The following communication appeared. (The text is cut.)

To the editor:

After a careful study of the school and financial situation ... covering the last six months, the undersigned members of the board of directors have decided upon the following plan to meet the necessities of the district, to-wit: First, to purchase the southwest corner of the block in which the present

\*Margaret Nesheim prepared a study on the "Effort for Public Education in Jackson County, Oregon, 1854-1976." It is a fully detailed work entitled "One Hundred Twenty-three Years' Search for Community," and presents the development of every school in Jackson County. The book is required reading for anyone interested in southern Oregon's history of the schools.



*Lincoln (North) School. Could this have been the entire student body?*

high school building is located. Second, to build and completely equip on that lot the first building, containing twelve classrooms and a gym.

We have carefully canvassed the situation and find that it is necessary to have a bond issue of \$165,000, the bonds to be redeemable on or before 20 years; and it is the purpose of the board to ask the voters for their authorization.

It is quite generally agreed that there is a great need of better high school facilities and the members of the board wish that it were possible to build and equip a complete high school building, but the cost would be in excess of \$300,000; the assessed valuation of the district is only \$5,250,000 and under our laws the maximum indebtedness cannot exceed five per cent of its valuation and this would authorize us to issue bonds in the sum of \$261,000 only. By acquiring other property on the block and erecting the first unit of the building we can have adequate facilities and adequate rooms for laboratories for chemistry and physics

departments, for biology, for domestic science and arts and six other classrooms and a gymnasium.

The first unit of the new building together with the old building will take care of the necessities of the high school for some time and as soon as it is needed the second unit of the new building can be erected at the rear of the old building. The first and second units of the new building could then be used while the third and last unit is being built where the old building now stands.

The board have had plans prepared so that the tax payer can readily see what the new building, when completed, will look like and for the accommodation of the public we have placed a view of the new building in Crowson's window and the taxpayers and public are invited to examine it.

We have called a school election for the 21st day of January, and earnestly urge the cooperation of all persons interested in educational matters. Come out on election day and vote as

we wish to begin construction at the earliest possible date so that the unit can be completed for the opening of the 1925 school year.

Signed:

I.D. PHIPPS

A.H. MILLER

ELMER WILSON

HARRY MILLS

N.H. FRANKLIN

Board of Directors, School District 49.

Early on, Medford school boards had gained a reputation for being obstinent and inflexible. Bob Stedman wrote, "The squabbles and flareups that marked the period from 1910 to 1925 were due in large part to growing pains. The school board took all of the actual responsibility and the powers of administration into its own hands. Any complaint against the school, teachers or pupils was brought before the board, and few matters were settled before tempers had flared and the community had become divided over the issue. The superintendent received the censure of the community but he had no power with which to improve the situation." Relations between the citizens and the school board were always on the point of battle and few superintendents lasted more than three years. There were twelve superintendents in the first forty years. Members of the 1925 board of directors may have had the betterment of the education system at heart, but their reputations were already made for them. In view of past disagreements they were naive in their belief that the citizens would welcome their idea and rally 'round the cause. They overlooked human nature.

Some people are perverse and immediately take the opposite viewpoint just for the pleasure of the argument. Others oppose the suggestion because they feel sincerely another course is better. And there are always the malcontents who enter the fray so they can deflate those in authority; *some fellows get mighty uppity when they're handed a little responsibility.*

The board offered a plan which obviously had required a lot of deep consideration and debate. The members were protecting the taxpayer's pocket book as reasonably as they could and adhering to the state laws of finance. Their

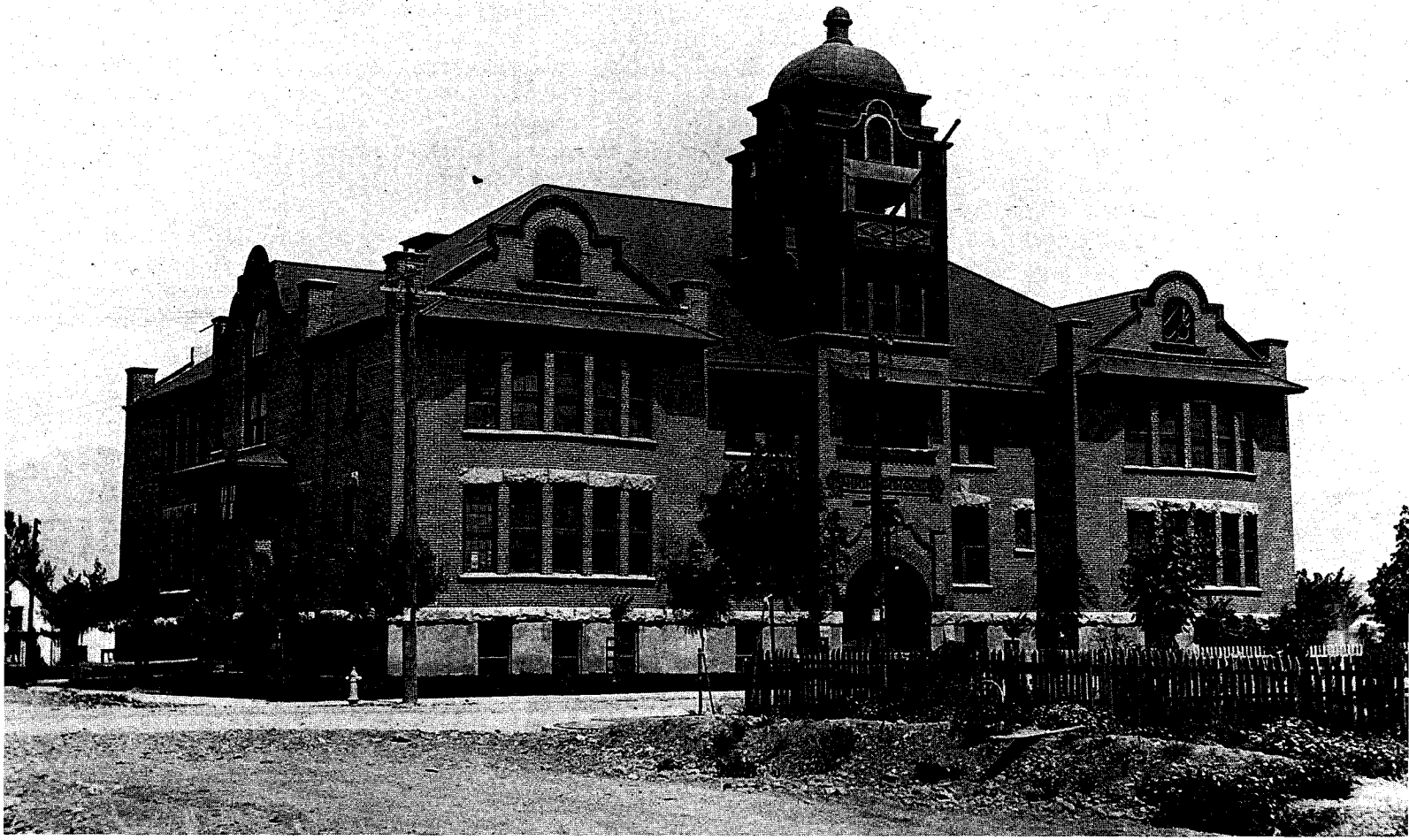
unit plan utilized the old building which, although out-moded, had considerable use still in it, the operation wouldn't require the citizens to pay for a new building lot, and the school would be ready for 1925 occupancy. Who could take exception to any part of that plan? The objections arose immediately.

**O**n the invitation of the Crater Club a group met with the school board in the public library to study the proposed project. There were representatives from the Kiwanis club, Rotary, Parent-Teachers Council, The Greater Medford Club and the City Planning Commission. Mr. Miller presented the study in detail. Following his explanation the ladies in the group dropped their bomb.

In the first place the present location of the high school was not proper and almost any site would be better. There simply shouldn't be a public school in the middle of the business district. And the board was proposing to spend practically all of Medford's bondable funds to purchase additional property and build on the same undesirable site, right next door to Merrick's unsightly auto cabins, smelly service stations and garages, and a disreputable public dance hall. It was obvious a new high school was desperately needed, but why did the election have to carry with it the determination of the site? Couldn't the vote be upon the bond issue alone, leaving the question of site and architecture for a later decision? Gus Newbury, attorney for the school board, declared it was too late to change the issue, and the ladies suggested that the entire election should be scratched and a new study made.

All efforts to compose the differences were unavailing and the board closed the meeting by demanding that the election go forward as planned. The ladies coolly thanked the board for its industry and zeal, and the meeting adjourned, with most of those in attendance determined to scuttle the project.

The *Tribune* editorialized that since it was too late to delay the vote, and since no one was thoroughly enchanted with the plan, folks should go to the polls and defeat the measure. A representative citizens' committee could then work with the board and come up with a



*The high school on Bartlett Street. It later became a junior high school briefly.*

super plan, acceptable and satisfactory to all.

The City Planning Commission, who was pledged to see to the future growth, development and beautification of downtown Medford, declared that the commission should have first approved and endorsed the plans before the vote was scheduled. A representative said Sixth Street would soon be teeming with businesses, it would become a thoroughfare from Main Street to the Pacific Highway and it would be a center of traffic congestion. There would be no ground available for an athletic field. The business district should be reserved for businesses. There were certainly *appropriate* sites for a new high school available elsewhere which could be obtained at reasonable prices. The commission would cooperate with the directors of the school board in selecting such a site.

In the meantime the members strongly recommended a NO vote.

#### CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

O.C. Boggs, Chairman	Rev. J.B. Coan
Emil Mohr	Mrs. Bert Anderson
O.O. Alenderfer	Mrs. A.J. Hanby
John H. Carkin	C.W. Davis

The board members stood pat. They hadn't arrived at all those decisions and devoted hours to making all those neat plans to see them go down the tube without at least a try. Many of the parents and teachers wanted to start 1925 with new rooms and up-to-date laboratories and they would certainly vote *yes*. People who were concerned with their kids getting an education in any environment would vote for it, and the citizens who could foresee the astronomical expense of a totally new school plant would favor it. *The issue might pass.*

On January 21 with fifty per cent of the registered voters exercising their franchise, the bond issue was defeated by 58 votes. The totals were 257 yes; 315 no. The board members were not completely surprised but they declared they



would not bring up another vote for bonds. "After five months of hard study, investigation and consideration of the much mooted problem from all angles," they were convinced "the best and only practical solution for the dilemma was the one which the voters rejected." They added that they had worked without prejudice, no unfriendliness whatever, and no motive except to reach the best solution, and they took their defeat good naturedly without any resentment. It was unfortunate that Medford might lose a number of the best high school teachers who no longer wanted to teach in the inadequate old structure, but that was the risk they had to take and the next move was up to the people.

The *Tribune* editor wrote, "The deck is cleared for action and no time should be lost in the appointment of a citizens committee to investigate the entire high school proposition and determine upon a solution best calculated to serve the public interest."

By February a study group had been formed and Miss Fay Woolsey, the librarian of the public library, presented a report of the latest needs of a modern high school. She had done extensive research at the behest of the commission and her findings were designed to educate the general Medford public to these needs so that when the matter again came up for election the people could vote intelligently. This is a subtle way of saying, "All you misguided folk who voted for the measure voted unintelligently."

**M**embers of the school board, to show they had other fish to fry, announced they had hired a new superintendent for the Medford public schools -- Mr. E. H. Hedrick, former principal of Central Point and Monmouth, and for several years the superintendent of the Heppner, Oregon, schools. He was 36, with a nice little wife and baby daughter, and would assume office in September, succeeding Aubrey G. Smith whose term would expire in June. Mr. Hedrick was offered a salary of \$3,000 with the understanding that if he made good during the first year he would thereafter receive a substantial increase in salary. Board

President Phipps announced that the new superintendent came very highly recommended and the board had no doubt that he could ably handle the Medford schools. He was to have full charge of the system and a free hand in the administration of school affairs and teacher concerns and he was to have the hearty backing of the school board. Superintendent Aubrey Smith who was barely on speaking terms with the directors had not been a candidate for the job, and he no doubt had reservations about all this liberality. E.H. Hedrick, called on the long distance phone and offered the position, had accepted. He would move to Medford after he had completed some summer work at the University of Oregon.

Representatives of the four local banks and the school board met to confer on the financial situation and acknowledged that the problem was a serious one. The enrollment in the high school was over 500. About 70 would graduate, but 120 would enter from the eighth grade and 110 would be promoted at mid term. The total enrollment then would be 700. A modern building to care for Medford's needs would cost at least \$350,000 but the district could be bonded for \$205,000 at the maximum. Therefore it was impossible to build a complete high school building at that time. If a new unit was erected it had to be near enough to the old building so that the two might be used by the same classes and teachers. The school board was smugly pleased by the findings of the meeting but apparently resisted gloating over the revelation of their wisdom or crowing, "We tried to tell ya!"

**I**n April a committee of two unprejudiced experts from the University of Oregon, appointed by O.C. Boggs, president of the City Planning Commission, were hired to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the six or seven suggested sites. The election to vote bonds for the first unit was deferred until the survey was complete. Editor Robert Ruhl asserted that the move was certainly a step in the right direction because Medford was full of self-proclaimed experts. "Those who have studied the problem least have the most positive opinions," he wrote. The men from Eugene would view the situation in the clear light of common sense, without preconceived notions and without local prejudices. He added,

"It would be too much to expect the expert decision will settle all strife and confusion. But it should clear the atmosphere and give the fair-minded majority some solid ground upon which to reach a definite and desirable conclusion."

The experts arrived, spent a couple of days investigating sites, and before their departure met with the commission at a dinner meeting at the Medford Hotel and a discussion followed until time for their departure on the train. They had agreed to send their conclusions to the commission in a written report, but they did reveal they had eliminated all proposed sites except two: the baseball ground track in the Holly-Second streets locality, which had been purchased years before by an earlier school board as a possible new high school site, and the "P & E" site at Hawthorne park, the previous location of the Pacific and Eastern Railway depot. (The train had made a daily round trip run to Butte Falls, but the route had been abandoned.) The possibility of selling this large lot was welcome news to Chairman Phipps who owned it and had built a lot of auto cabins near beautiful Bear Creek. Unfortunately the rentals were seasonal and the possibility of winter flooding was a constant fear and he would be far from sorry to unload the property on the first pigeon who came along. The committee from Eugene made no choice between these two lots, finding almost equal advantages and disadvantages.

The amount of money paid to the two experts is not recorded, but whatever it was the report was worth it. In small print the study filled almost a full page in the *Tribune*, and it was somewhat of a shocker. Medford needed not only a new high school but a couple of grade schools and a junior high as well. Population was increasing at the rate of 800 a year, which annually threw at least 200 children into the public schools. This situation would continue. "We wish to urge upon the people of Medford," stated the report, "the importance and need for housing your schools...We do not know of a community in Oregon where a high school is so poorly housed. The situation in the elementary schools will be no bet-

ter in two or three years." The study continues, "Your problem is not to beautify Medford as much as to provide a place adequate for a high grade of teaching. Based on our conservative estimate of future growth, you will have to provide school housing at the rate of a building like the Roosevelt School every two years to house the new pupils alone."

The experts recommended a building program and gave future dates for the construction of new fire-proof, well ventilated schools and strongly urged acceptance of the 6-3-3 plan [six years of elementary, three years of junior high and three years of senior] over the 8-4 plan. The gentlemen made suggestions for financing this massive building program and even went so far as to suggest linoleum for the floors and planting for the landscaping.

The board issued a call for a special election to be held May 5 for the purpose of voting \$185,000 in bonds for the purchase of a site and for building the first unit of a \$300,000 building. A second election would be held ten days later to determine which of the two approved sites would be the peoples' choice.

The *Tribune* again came forth with an editorial. Mr. Ruhl wrote, "Only an incorrigible optimist will expect the survey to settle the controversy. No matter how expert the specialists may be, or how wise their decisions there will be scores of citizens who will consider themselves more expert and far wiser and who will have some alternative plan far better than the plans suggested. With human nature what it is there is no chance of unanimity of opinion. But as far as a majority is concerned:

First, Medford must have a new high school at once;  
Second, the decision of the site should be left to a vote of the people.

The idea that Medford can worry along somehow without a new school is given a final death blow by this report. A new high school is imperative. The sooner the matter is settled and removed from controversy the better for all concerned."

**I**n spite of almost city wide support for the issue there were those against it. The school board members of course were made the heavies because they wanted to raise everybody's taxes,

and how did one know those fellows could be trusted? Rumors hinted that as soon as the bonds were authorized by the people the board would withdraw the site selection. *A No vote would be a lesson and show them they hadn't hood-winked everybody.*

But the final vote revealed strong support for the new building. By a four to one -- 675 for the bonds to only 158 against -- they voted for immediate construction, but the question of *where* remained unanswered. The vote on May 15 would determine that. In a spirit of premature delight over the outcome of the election, the high school students presented a gala entertainment which included skits by the Dramatic club, concert numbers by the band and some ad lib appearances by the citizens. The parents, school board and townspeople were invited to join the celebration. There was a 10¢ charge for adults; 5¢, for children.

**T**he next day the verbal battle began. Fortunately there were only nine days to argue; in two weeks there would have been violence. Letters to the Editor endorsed each side. Some of them made sense, some made none, and some were outrageous. A sampling:

Last winter we saw pretty little Bear Creek transformed into an ugly stream and if Emigrant dam had not held, a wall of water many feet high would have roared over the P & E site. Surely all voting mothers will protest against housing their children in the path of possible disaster. They would rather be safe than sorry, even though both regrets and flowers be available.

Mrs. Edga Rollen Moore

Medford doesn't want a manufacturing site surrounded by woodyards and smoke stacks where you have to blast holes to plant trees. Our public buildings should be where they can be seen from the Pacific and Crater Lake highways so that tourists can see we have nice buildings in Medford. Vote for P & E and eliminate danger of children drowning in Holly Hi basement.

Mrs. Wm. Miller

Mrs. Miller handles the truth carelessly. Last winter the water on Holly Street was not high enough to wash eleven camp houses a quarter of a mile down stream.

[a crack at the P & E site.] On Holly Street you do not have to blast holes to plant trees.

Me and my four children for the North Holly Street site.

Mrs. William Hooker

In the worst flood in the history of the region the P & E site stood high and dry while the Holly Street site was an excellent hunting ground for ducks. This elevation was not shown by Superintendent Aubrey Smith in his map and it is no wonder that he is now looking for a job in some unsuspecting and peaceful town far from here.

W. Bernard Roberts

A vote for the Holly Street site will delay the new high school for at least one year. Condemnation proceedings are necessary.

Gus Newbury, Better Site Committee

There will be no delay if the Holly Street site is selected. Mr. Newbury, how much is our neutral (?) school board going to pay you for boosting the P & E site? The Medford School disbursement record included this item: Gus Newbury (injuncton case).....\$200.00

Executive Committee

Bert Lowry, Chairman	Emil Mohr
Vern Marshall	Mrs. Olen Arnsperger
Ralph Cowgill	Mrs. L.G. Lyman

I protest the unfairness in the letter published yesterday from the Executive Committee containing the innuendo that the \$200 paid Mr. Newbury was an exorbitant fee. His charge was very reasonable.

E.E. Kelly

Holly Street school means "Safety first."

Bert B. Lowry

Propaganda is being distributed wholesale that I have refused to sell block 62 for a reasonable figure and am trying to hold up the school district. If the parties who are spreading that stuff would investigate for themselves they could easily see that I have made a proposition which is above reproach; also if the high school teacher who spent all day Thursday framing up the half page ad in the papers had been attending to his duties as a teacher, he probably would have earned the salary which the taxpayers are paying him.

E.C. Silliman



*Medford High, 1908. Note the spacious library, the peeling paint and the light fixture.*

Call at the P & E headquarters and pick up your campaign button - "THE P & E for me!"

Hurry and get your campaign button - "THE HOLLY SITE IS RIGHT!"

Don't foist on to us for a high school site the gravel bars, pussy willow thickets, railroad embankments, old creek channels and bayous of the P & E terminal.

Better Site Committee

Come out of hiding, Better Site Committee. We know who you are but a lot of people do not. Let the voters have a chance to look you over and size you up.

Executive Committee

So much has been said regarding the school site, also muckraking, about unmasking and bringing from under cover the Better Site Committee. Everybody has a right to work for their favored site, without being called grafters, pig heads, etc. Let me appeal to your pride in Med-

ford to refrain from statements damaging our fair city, also the abuse of its citizens, so when this site is decided, we can all settle down to normal without any ill feeling and without having the community torn asunder.

G.E. Gates

The question of floods, paving, scenic beauty and costs have been discussed but never a word in regard to juvenile protection.

The P & E site affords numerous places of rendezvous which fact we mothers must not overlook. Many parents, imitating the ostrich, say, "Such things can't be." But the wise parent opens his eyes, ears and minds to the truth. How can the P & E site be properly supervised with dozens of camp cottages, bridges, willow thickets and warehouses in its immediate vicinity?

It may not always be possible for mothers to accompany their daughters to all school activities, therefore, let us



not subject them to more than the minimum hazards which would exist in a residential district.

Emma B. Robinson

The letter that aroused our indignation most was where the morality of our young people were attacked. One site is no better than the other when it comes to rendezvous for immoral purposes. Shame on anyone suggesting any argument of that nature.

Why lay immoral purposes at the door of our schools? Go search, you may find them in your own dooryard, dear mother. If a child falls by the wayside how easy it is to blame the school. They may be of high school age but the high school is not to blame for the downfall of your child.

Mothers tipping the glass, smoking cigarettes, keeping late hours, coming home in a condition not fit for her child to see, breaking the laws of our land as if they meant nothing; is it any wonder children go astray? Let us work to give our young people clean, pure thoughts and ideals and examples. Then you need not worry about the location of your school.

Edith Miller

It is very sad about the whistling trains disturbing the students as they study in their Holly Street building. It is likewise lamentable about the automobiles tooting over Bear Creek bridge. There is only one thing wrong with both of these arguments. It is that if high school students are like they were in my day, they don't do any studying anyway.

My final word is to urge people to vote for their side of the creek. The greater proportion of the people live on my side and if they stay in line, and vote with ordinary horse sense, my side will win.

Holly Street for ever!

Edison Marshall

I have heard a slogan originated by the merchants to this effect: with Medford Trade is Medford Made." Sounds nice.

If Medford did not have citizens capable of doing this class of work it would be different, but this is certainly not the case.

Now comes the new High School, about \$185,000 of Medford money to be spent.

The plans? Oh, yes, from Portland. There goes \$10,000 of Medford money to a firm that has not spent one cent with the merchants of this town nor pays a penny taxes.

Personally, I regret the choice made by the board. I feel as though I was fully competent to handle the work, and not only that but in a position to give the tax payer of this city a better building built by other taxpayers of the city, and by having the interests of the city at heart.

It is such work as the high school that brings a profit to architects. We struggle for an existence on small work.

Frank C. Clark

In the middle of the brouhaha generated by the question of the location of the school, one well known citizen, Bert Anderson, decided there was evidence of dirty work at the crossroads. In a paid advertisement entitled "A Public Office Is a Public Trust," he accused A.H. Miller and Elmer Wilson, members of the board, of collusion. He wrote, "Mr. Miller owns the Medford Book Store and Mr. Wilson is a member of the Medford Furniture and Hardware Company. Since 1923 the Medford School board has bought of the Medford Book Store, school supplies in the amount of \$899.04. From 1923 the board has bought school supplies and material from the M.F. & H. Company in the total sum of \$1309.31. And in that time a very small amount has been spent with any of the other furniture and hardware dealers in town."

Mr. Anderson ferreted around and found a copy of the Oregon school laws and gleefully quoted: "It shall be illegal for any director to demand or receive any compensation for the purchase of any supplies for public schoolhouses."

He then asked the citizens what they were going to do about this overt breaking of school laws. *Are you going to establish firmly the principle that a public office is a public trust, and not a private snap?*

As a taxpayer who had lived in Medford for seventeen years, and as a patron of the schools, he expressed his "profound conviction that the usefulness of these two directors, if they were ever useful, has ceased." He was of the opinion that the people certainly wouldn't want Mr. Miller and Mr. Wilson to have any-

thing to do with the \$185,000 to be spent on the new school

The time was far too short for recall action, but it was not too late for Mr. Miller and Mr. Wilson to resign and make way for the immediate appointment of two able and trustworthy men or women "in whom we can have full confidence."

In the next issue of the paper, J.D. Phipps, Chairman, concerned over Anderson's attack on Miller and Wilson, and aware that there but for the Grace of God went he, wrote a letter in their defense.

To the Editor:

I think Bert Anderson is getting a little over-enthusiastic about the Holly Street site, but we all know Bert, yet I do not think it is fair for him to try to smear Miller's and Wilson's reputations, since it has been the custom to apportion the buying of merchandise to the various merchants of the town.

The superintendent was buying the greater part of the school supplies out of town, until Miller showed him he could furnish them for less.

As for Wilson (a clerk) his financial interest in that concern is so small that it figures little for him when we give the M.F. & H. Co. their share of the patronage of the school district.

These men have given a great deal of their time to the schools and I don't believe they have taken one cent unjustly. Any bills have been carefully checked by the clerk, superintendent and full board and there is absolutely no chance for robbery.

Let's play fair.

J.D. Phipps

Rumors were widely circulated, however, that the recall was underway and that petitions were appearing in all sections of the city. It was talk on the street that more than 400 names had been secured and that the headquarters were already established in the Liberty building.

The complaint seemed to be that the men had sold supplies to the school district and were strongly opposed to the Holly Street property as site for the new high school. Friends and supporters of Mr. Miller and Mr. Wilson

branded the attempt as deplorable and declared if it came to pass, Medford and the school district would suffer a loss from which it would never recover.

As a climax to the controversy Emil Mohr submitted a paid advertisement in the May 14 *Tribune*, which appeared the evening before the election. It was a full page of denunciation, condemning the P&E site with wild and absurd statements. Much of it has been cut but the salient points are here:

The Better Sites Commission say that the P&E ground is so far ahead of the North Holly Street site that it would be practically useless for us poor devils to waste our votes.

The P&E site is immensely ahead of the Holly Street ground in the way of creating sickness and possibly we may have to build another hospital to take care of the different diseases it will bring forth.

The prevailing winds in Medford are from the northwest. This would then carry the germs of typhoid fever, malarial fever, scarlet fever, possibly hay fever and every other kind of disease germs which are in the stagnant pot holes in Bear Creek.

The Commission says Bear Creek is always running. In a pig's wrist it is. [In the late summer] there is nothing but seepage from one stench pothole to another further down. And the Better Sites say it is always running. Ha! Ha!

They say also that the Holly Street ground is not conducive to health -- one doctor's statement -- the poor fish. I have interviewed ten or eleven doctors and everyone says that's a ridiculous statement so I think that one doctor must have been a quack.

In addition to the terrible danger breeding germs on Bear Creek, sevenths of our children are asked to cross Riverside and the Bear Creek bridge with all kinds of traffic to contend with. Is it human? A few years ago a man was run over in front of the Washington School, also one of the students of the school. Let us pray to God to save us from further disaster.

It almost looks as though we are asked to create a reptile which will thrust its deadly fangs into the flesh and blood of our boys and girls we are trying to bring up to be good and healthy men and



*E.H. Hedrick, Superintendent*



*B.H. Conkle, Principal*

women. That can never be done by sending them into that slimy stench hole of Bear Creek. Where are the septic tanks of Ashland, Talent and Phoenix? Where are the slaughter houses? Go and see for yourself. Would any of the school board or members of the Better Sites Committee (B.S.C.) build himself a home on the P&E site. Oh, no! But yet they ask to send our children into that cesspool -- a fine bunch of people.

Mothers of Medford, I personally appeal to you. Exercise your franchise and kill this reptile with which we are confronted. Remember the brunt of caring for your sick child has to be borne by you. You take care of the boy from his cradle to his manhood, you who pray for your boy, give all your love for him and to him, do not allow this disastrous affair to come to existence, and save our city from this blemish.

We do not want the P & E

It is not fit for you and me

Not even for the B.S.C.

Emil Mohr

In the same paper the school board made a final plug for their choice -- the P&E site. They had refrained from expressing their opinion, waiting "for the mis-statements, mudslinging and innuendos to cease." Now it was time to face the matter calmly and consider all aspects of what a school should be. Out of six sites considered, the P&E was clearly the best. There had been unreasonable talk about flooding but three members of the board had children who would attend high school in several years and they did not fear that their children would be swept away in a flood. Information has shown that there has never been and will never be flooding on the P&E lands.

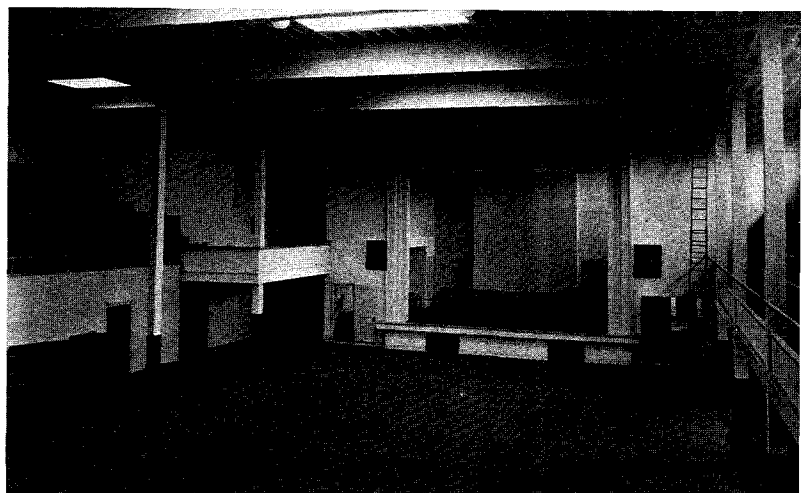
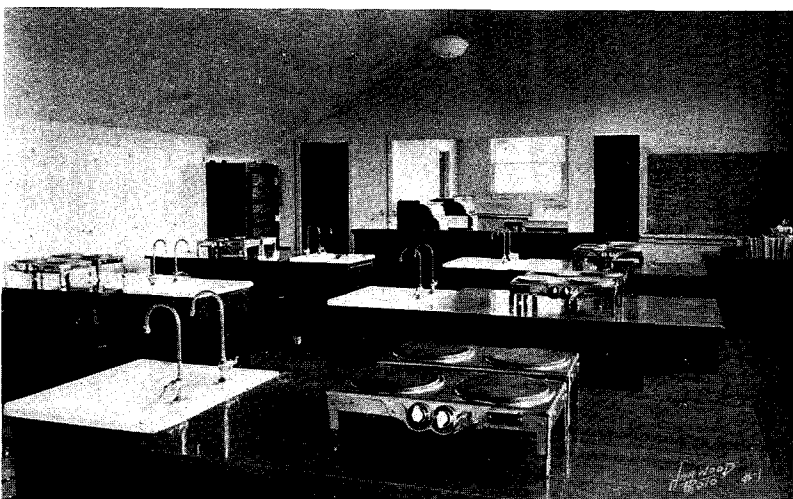
The site could be a beautiful show place and would cost a great deal less than the Holly Street construction. The members were unanimous in their decision but would cheerfully abide by the decision of the majority and make the best of what seemed to them almost a hopeless situation if the North Holly Street site were chosen.

In a last ditch stand the Executive Committee placed its advertisement on the same page of the paper. It included a shocking picture taken during the flood of 1890. It is a rather primitive photograph but shows the citizens under umbrellas scurrying for the safety of high ground as the footbridge teeters before it collapses. The bridge for wagon and buggy traffic is in the process of falling into Bear Creek; half of it

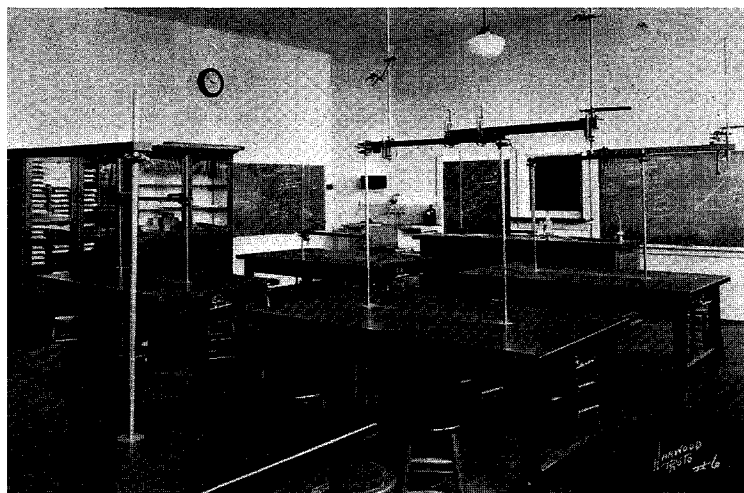
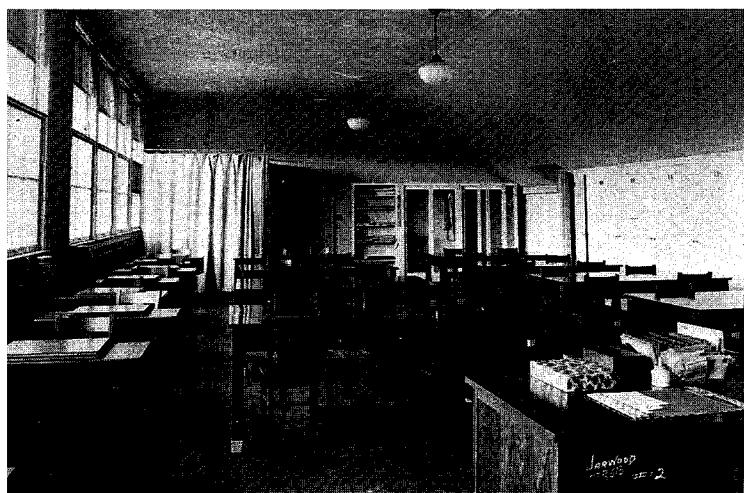
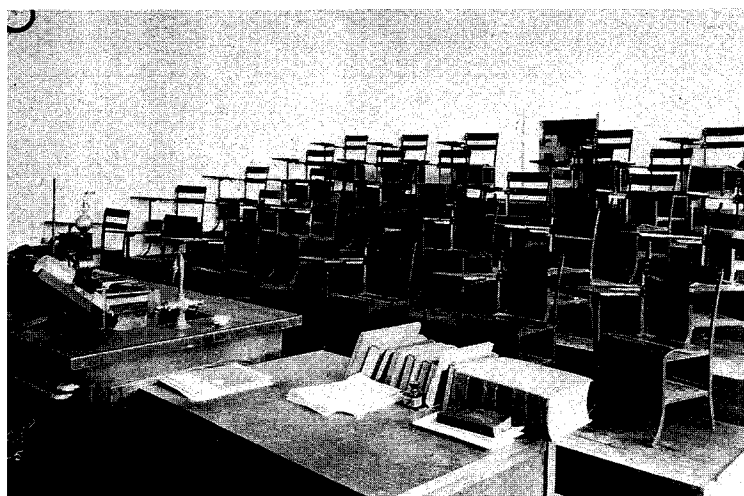
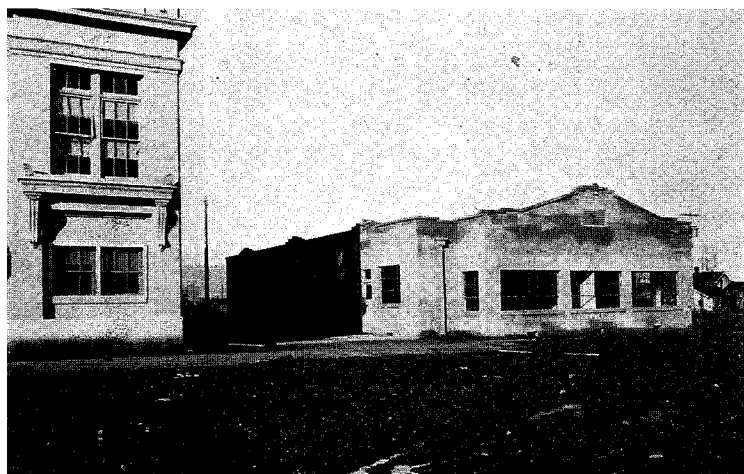
has already been swept away. The committee's advertisement includes statements about disastrous flooding in the past. S.P. Barneburg remembered a down-pour in 1854 when the water extended from the banks of Bear Creek to the foot of the hospital hill. The land where the new school was to be situated was eight feet under water and hundreds of cattle were swept down the river and drowned. W.M. Davis remembered a flood when Ed Wilkinson went down with the bridge and lost his umbrella, and several houses and a barn were demolished. T.E. Pottenger recalled a time when bulkheads had to be put up on East Main and H.T. Nicholson, Charles Strang the Hubbard brothers, the Lawtons and Dr. Pickel could also remember the occasion. Dr. Pickel, who was reported to have said that tourists on the Pacific highway would be able to see the school if it were on the P & E site, added, "Yes, and when they see it, they will say, 'What a hell of a place to build a school.'"

**O**n election day, May 16, the Holly Street site won 1603 to 1172. Everybody seems to have accepted the decision with little show of emotion. In the days before the vote, tempers had grown increasingly short and the insults had become more barbed. The people on each side had been convinced they were right and had even come to believe their own propaganda. A few years earlier the winning side would have boisterously taken over the saloon and the losers would have shot up the town. But not in the inhibited twenties. Perhaps those who were for the P & E site had spent their energy in the battle and had no strength left to grouse about the results. A defeat by 431 votes was clearly a majority and the losers were badly outnumbered. In that situation, it's best to take defeat gracefully. Tempers cooled and the voters said they were glad it was over and many of them admitted they weren't actually in love with either site. The board issued a statement that they were delighted -- fingers

- Top: The new school
- 2. The Library
- 3. Cooking room
- 4. Auditorium and gym







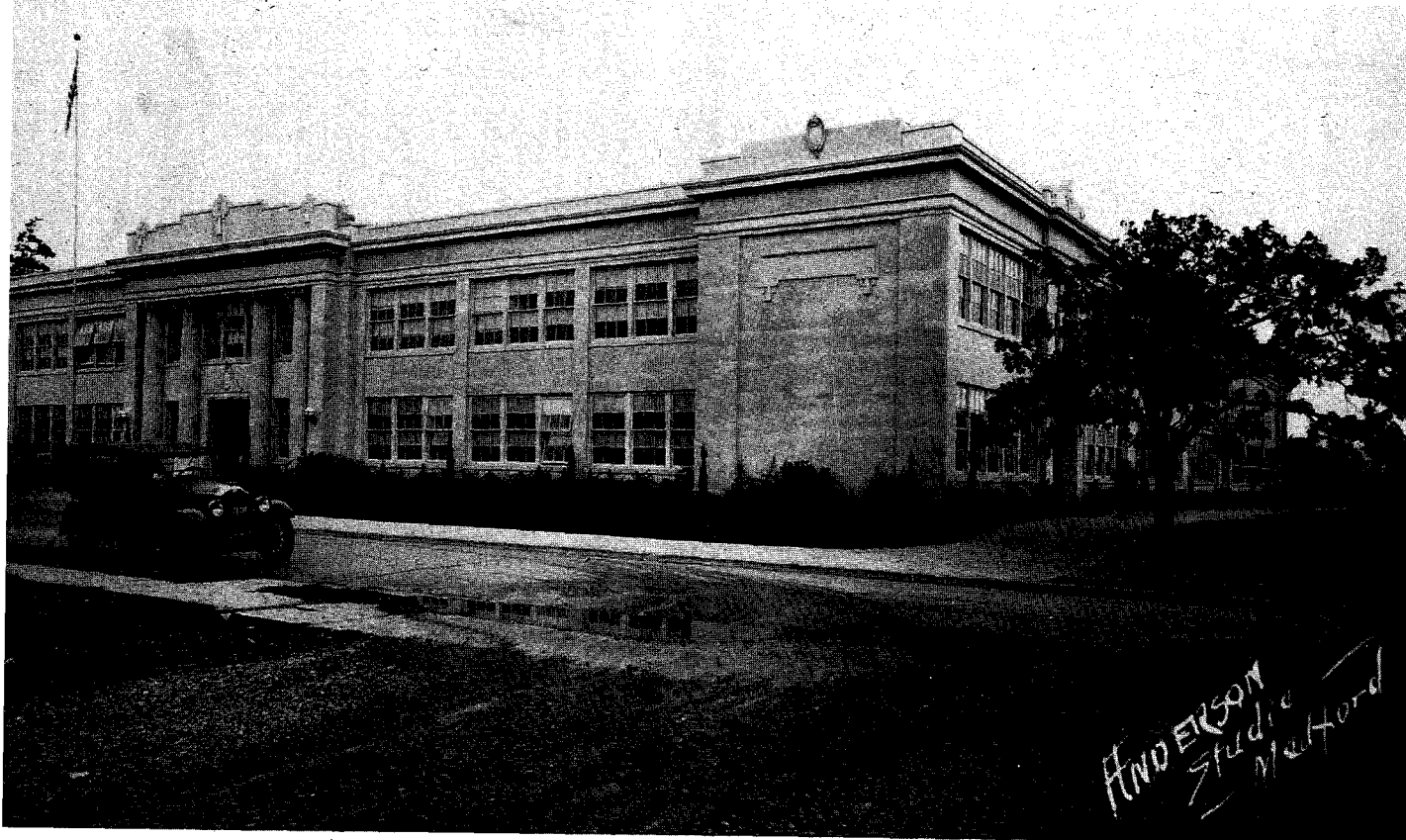
crossed behind their backs -- with the results and could now get busy on completing details and rushing the work as fast as circumstances would permit.

Upon his acceptance of the position as school superintendent in February, 1925, E.H. Hedrick had subscribed to the *Mail Tribune* and the daily paper was sent to him in Heppner. As he read of the day to day battle over building the new schoolhouse he became more and more certain than Medford offered a migraine headache along with the superintendency. The bickering, the contradictions and the extravagant claims made by the voting public were all too evident, and right in the center of the distasteful debate sat the seemingly complacent school board. Perhaps he had let himself in for more disharmony than appeared at first. Yet his teacher instinct urged him to grab a toe hold on those undisciplined citizens and straighten out the unproductive mess. At about the same time he was given the position in Medford, he was offered a contract in Ypsilanti (Michigan) Teachers Training School, and he found himself tempted to forego the dubious delights which awaited him in Medford. But when he first met with the board the members expressed a willingness to let him assume more responsibility than any other superintendent had been given. He stated that he would give his best possible service but in order to do this he demanded a free hand in matters pertaining to school administration and supervision.

Pleased to get out from under the responsibility of making decisions and the censure of the opposition, the directors heartily concurred. Thinking that he and the board had come to a complete understanding, he returned to Eugene to finish his summers school work.

When he arrived back in Medford for a second meeting that summer, Mr. N.H. Franklin, Chairman of Teachers' Procurement, handed him an application from a teacher in Central Point and told him to consider it. Mr. Hedrick said, "The teachers are all hired unless something unforeseen occurs."

- Top: The new shop building  
 2. Science classroom  
 3. Sewing room  
 4. Science laboratory



*The new Medford High School completed in September of 1925*

As the meeting was being adjourned, Mr. Franklin again brought up the application. Again Mr. Hedrick said, "The teachers are all hired."

Mr. Franklin, his nose immediately out of joint, considered the statement a rebuff, and said, "Well, if my suggestions are not going to be carried out, I'll resign as head of the committee."

"No," said Mr. Hedrick, "don't do that. You stay put. I'll resign instead." With that he left the meeting and returned to the hotel where he told Mrs. Hedrick that he had bollixed the job and she might as well start to pack up for Ypsilanti.

Shortly afterwards there was a knock at the door and when Mr. Hedrick opened it, he faced the five members of the board who began pleading with him to reconsider. They knew that if he resigned, the community would commence its attacks again and they had taken about all the disparagement they could take. Mr. Hedrick consented to stay one trial year. He said again that he believed a superintendent should run the schools, subject to the approval of the board, and if the board became dissatisfied they should fire him. He thought he could whip the system into shape in a year's time for the next superintendent. The board departed, content that they were off the

hook for one year at least.

**C**ontroversy continued but the new superintendent handled each problem with skill and diplomacy. Residents in the Holly Street area strongly opposed the erection of an eight foot fence around the athletic field. They signed a petition for the district to find another field outside the city limits and the board tried to appease them by announcing the fence would be painted green. The neighbors would have none of it; they launched the "Green Fence War." Mr. Hedrick ordered a double joint, combination fence with hinged extensions so that during games it could be seven feet high but at all other times it was only four feet. The city council decided to reactivate an alley that crossed the property only four feet from the building. Hedrick was able to talk persuasively with the council and get the movement stopped. People, burning with resentment against some member of the board, were referred to the superintendent who talked to them calmly, soothed their ruffled feathers and sent them away happy.

**M**eanwhile construction started. J.E. Tourtellotte of Portland, who had designed the newly opened Lithia Hotel, was hired as architect. He

worked with the assistance of Frank C. Clark as local representative. A Portland firm, Hedges and Hull, were the lowest bidders, and they hired local workers and used local material whenever possible. The school was ready for use by September 13, 1925, one week late. Although the landscaping was still to be started, there stood the building in 1925 magnificence, with its doors open, and in surged over 500 delighted students, a record breaking class of freshmen and an impressive bunch of 83 seniors. A brand new principal, B.H. Conkle, was on duty in his brand new office. The *Tribune* reporter overheard one freshman boy, overawed by the new structure, say, "It's a swell layout -- I should say its excruciatingly scrumptious."

No formal ceremony marked the grand opening but at the first assembly in the auditorium all 504 seats were filled. Mr. Hedrick, by way of introduction, gave a short address, B.H. Conkle introduced himself, Prink Callison declared the prospects for athletics as most exciting and Archie Laing, student body president, welcomed his fellow students. The entire faculty, in new first-day-of-school outfits, was on hand to look over the raw material. Incidentally the building was filled almost to capacity and plans were underway for a new and larger high school which would be built on Oakdale in six years and, under Mr. Hedrick's supervision, would not turn the city into a battlefield.

**M**r. Hedrick's one year became thirty. Bob Stedman said that under his jurisdiction the Medford schools came of age. In truth he ushered in the golden age. The healing of the rifts between the citizens and the school administration did not come over night. "It was several years," wrote Stedman, "before the absence of controversy and strife soothed the feelings of the district until the citizens finally lowered their militant guard and allowed the administration of the system to run the schools without resentful supervision."

The teachers were challenged to raise the level of instruction. Courses of study were prepared, the students were placed in ability grouping, and the

standards of achievement were raised. At the same time people slowly became aware that the schools were being run by a man who was trying to bring the best education he could to the youth of the district. He was admired and respected by the business men and most of his faculty adored him.

Of course he had his detractors. There were those who felt a student should travel at his own speed because constant prodding would squelch his creativity, but in Mr. Hedrick's administration achievement scores soared. When the National Education Association announced that Oregon had the most productive schools in the United States, and other Oregon cities acknowledged that Medford had the best schools in Oregon, headlines were pretty gratifying. Columbia University rated the high school English course of study as one of the first ten in the nation. Hundreds of copies were sold and it was adopted as far away as the Philippine Islands. His administration was marked by continual expansion yet he always protected the tax payers as much as he could and presented his requests for money honestly with no dissimulation.

Perhaps his success was possible because Medford was smaller and he didn't have to delegate responsibility and share his authority with others. His office was not cluttered with assistants to the assistant and he was aware of what went on in every department -- and closet. Unlike more recent superintendents, he didn't have to devote eleven months to producing a budget, watching it fail, and cutting it to the bone for another go at it. He and his able assistant and devoted friend, Rebecca Jensen, who became clerk of the board in 1927, were an unbeatable team. Bob Stedman wrote, "The one woman clerk-bookkeeper has grown into a business office with a manager and a staff using cold impersonal IBM machines." Of Hedrick and Jensen, he said, "We will probably not see their like again."

But it could happen. They didn't do it with mirrors.





Myrna Barrett	R.M. Burnham	Maurine Carroll	Gertrude Butler	Prink Callison	Elizabeth Jerome
Mary Gilbert	E.M. Husson	H.F. Cope	Elsie Butler	Zoe Hubbs	Leland Knox
Victor Sether	Ruth Sether	Mrs. Glenn Smith	Marguerite Scott	Leland Mentzer	Virginia Smith
Bea Schuerman	Glenn Smith	C.D. Thompson	F. Wilson Wait	Horace Terrell	C.T. Steward
Frances Theis	Josephine Wortman	Ruth Ann Wilson	Maude Barrigar	Esther Church	Ruth Ella Dickerson

## THE MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY



# Society News

What's New . . . . . Nick Clark



BE SURE AND KEEP AUGUST 25 and 26, ON YOUR CALENDAR!!!

The Southern Oregon Historical Society will be sponsoring two very special events on the weekend of August 25 and 26. The first will be a living history exhibit of Mountain Men and the second will be a "Pioneer Picnic."

The Mountain Man Day will be held from 10AM until 5PM on the grounds of the old Jacksonville Grade School. There are now quite a group of men whose hobby is collecting and exhibiting the life of the Mountain Man. These men dress in buckskins, are weekend teepee dwellers and shoot black powder rifles. Of course, this is quite an important portion of our heritage and we hope you'll be on hand to look over the exhibits. They'll have artifacts and paraphernalia on display and will be giving black powder rifle demonstrations throughout the day. Don't miss Mountain Man Day at the old Jacksonville Grade School Grounds on August 25.

Photograph by Doug Smith.

+++++

The Southern Oregon Historical Society will hold a "Pioneer Picnic" on Sunday, August 26, 1984 from 12:00PM until 4:00PM at TouVelle State Park on the Rogue River just off Table Rock Road. We'll plan to eat at 1:00PM in the shelterhouse near the entrance of the park. Members and their guests are welcome.

Everyone should bring their own table service and enough food for yourself, your family and guests, and then we'll pool all of the goodies. Just to make the picnic more interesting, we encourage you to bring one dish made from your favorite pioneer recipe and tell us about it. We know that your ancestors were good cooks, now let's prove it! The society will furnish iced tea.

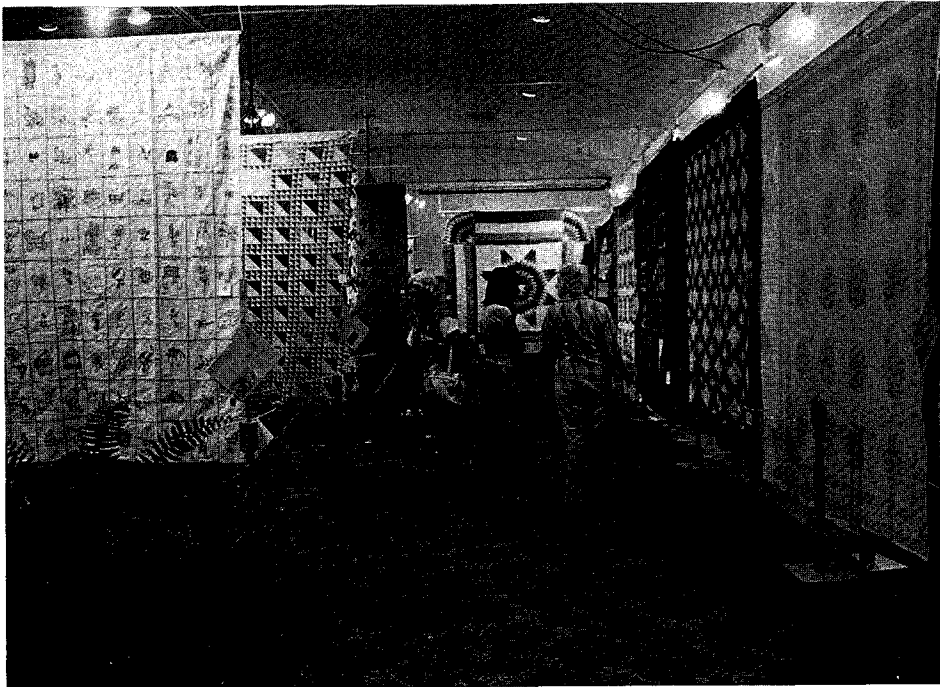
After lunch, we will be entertained by the Pear Blossom Chapter of Sweet Adelines. They will sing all of our favorites. In addition, there'll be games and a very special surprise for the children. We hope that you'll plan to be with us. Reservations are not necessary. See you at the picnic, Sunday, August 26.

+++++

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR

- Aug. 25 - Mountain Man Living History Exhibit on old Jacksonville Grade School Grounds. 10AM to 5PM No admission.
- Aug. 26 - "Pioneer Picnic" All society members and guests welcome. Touvelle State Park off Table Rock Road. 12PM to 4PM
- Aug. 28 - Native American Storytelling by Tom Doty. U. S. Hotel in Jacksonville - 7:30PM
- Aug. 29 - Bus Tour of Siskiyou County. Call Marjorie Edens for details at 899-1847
- Sept. 8 - Midwest Outdoor Museums Tour departs for a 9 day excursion to visit museums in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. For more information call Nick Clark or Marian Lehr at 899-1847.
- Sept. 22 - Annual Outhouse **Race** in Jacksonville
- Sept. 23 - "Sunday Afternoon Social" an afternoon of music on the "Peloubet" Reed Pipe Organ in the Jacksonville Museum, second floor, Jacksonville. Local organists will provide fine classical listening.
- Oct. 12-13 Jacksonville Home Tour, Jacksonville, Oregon.

+++++



Dora Scheidecker and her quilters can be very proud of this year's quilt show which more than 2,500 persons attended. Over 40 new and antique quilts were displayed in addition to more than 100 quilt blocks. The society is indebted to the Jacksonville Museum Quilters for their work. This year they have produced three quilts for our collections.

S.O.H.S. Photo By  
Natalie Brown-Geiger

# Tea Party At "The Willows"



The Gold Diggers Guild held a garden tea party at "The Willows" home of Miss Mary Hanley on Monday afternoon, July 23. About 75 ladies attended the function which was planned by a committee chaired by Ms. Gertrude Drew. Alma Van Vocter of Medford furnished tea music at the Baldwin.

*Photo by Nick Clark*



Ms. Pat Heffernan chats with Miss Mary Hanley during the tea party which was a fundraising function for restoration of the greenhouse, a Gold Digger project.



*Photo By Natalie Brown-Geiger*

Ms. Janet Granger, president of the Gold Diggers, a Southern Oregon Historical Society support group, pours tea for members and guests.



*S.O.H.S. Photo By Natalie Brown-Geiger*



## SOCIETY HAS FAIR BOOTH

Staff members and volunteers of the Southern Oregon Historical Society sponsored a booth at the recent Jackson County Fair. Shown is Maureen Smith, who answered questions about the society and its activities.

We'd love to have more volunteers who are interested in assisting us with community outreach projects. If you have time, give Maureen a call at 899-1847. It's a very rewarding experience to hear folks say good things about our society and that was surely our experience while attending the fair booth.

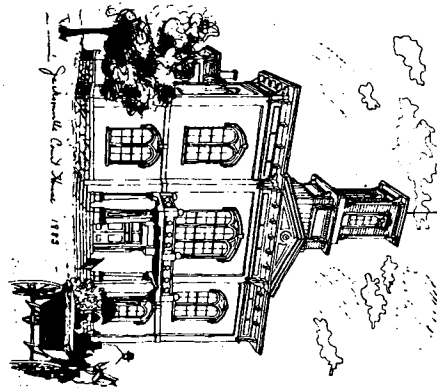
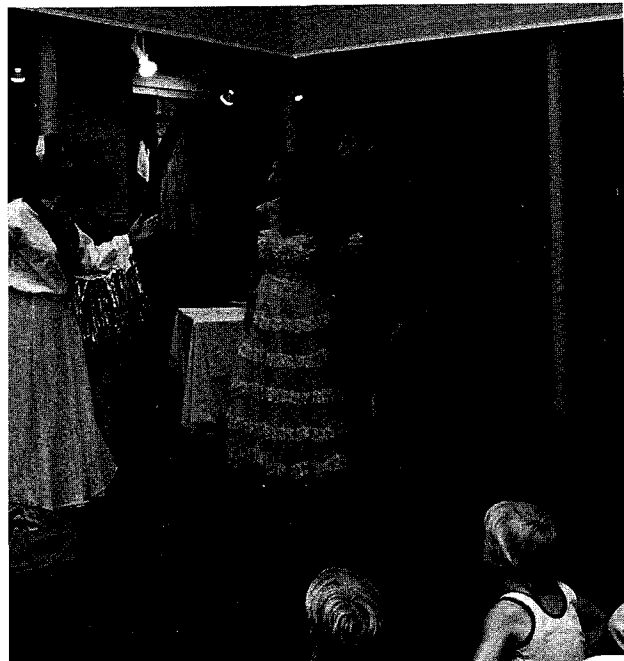
Photo by Nick Clark

## PLAYS AT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

During July and August, a group called "Happily Ever After Theatre Troupe" will be performing at the Society's Children's Museum in Jacksonville. The group is composed of several high school school students and young adults who were looking for something constructive to do with their summer while gaining theatrical experience. They have been a "roaring" success and have presented the play, "Cinderella" several times. We thank them for their volunteer service to the society.

You may find out more information by calling Stacy Williams at 899-1847.

Photograph by Doug Smith



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

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
206 N. Fifth St., P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530, (503) 899-1847  
Volume 4, No. 1, January 1984  
ISSN: 0732-0523 *aug.*

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 13  
Jacksonville,  
Oregon 97530