

12/84

# THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

## The Swedenburg Story

Without the Ginny Cotton files and the voluminous research by Mary Keating, who painstakingly searched through the *Ashland Daily Tidings* files page by page, seeking items about the Chappell and Swedenburg families, the story of the Swedenburg House could not have been written. The home was built almost eighty years ago, and during its existence the world changed around it. Eighty years have been condensed considerably; even so, the story is too long. But the more cuts, the less authenticity, and since we are pledged to historical reporting, we present the lengthy story and offer our regrets that many people and some events have been omitted.

To date there are three corrections to be made in Part I which appeared in our last issue. The date of the building of the Winburn suite on the back of the house is confusing and appears out of continuity. Of course Jesse Winburn built his "townhouse" *after* Dr. Swedenburg had bought the house, *not before*. A second error is the misspelling of the family name, Taverner. It was copied from *Tidings* files, and this misspelling frequently appeared in that paper. A third error, the college officials did not complete condemnation proceedings of the house. Thinking the college would make a house museum with antiques and art objects left in place, Mrs. Purdy willingly sold the property before attorneys for the college had begun the legal steps.

### In Memoriam

Seely Hall

1893-1984

### The Cover

The cover photograph was taken by anonymous, who no doubt made other enchanting landscapes but neglected to sign them, and thereby remains unhonored and unsung. Originally the picture was a horizontal shot, but the sides were cropped to make it fit the newsletter. Natalie Brown-Gieger developed the print, focusing the interest on the snow-covered stile and the roadway and made an opulent cover for our Christmas issue.

The photographer entitled the picture "Mt. Pitt."

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# SEASON'S GREETINGS

A few news stories selected from past Christmas issues of the *Mail Tribune*.

## CHICAGO POLICEMAN ARRESTS SANTA CLAUS

*Chicago, Illinois, Dec. 26, 1929*

James Buck, or Santa Claus as he chose to designate himself, was climbing through the window of a home on Hartray Avenue last night with a pack on his back. By some strange freak of fate a policeman observed him. He pulled Mr. Buck out of the window and asked what was the idea.

"I am Santa Claus," said the gentleman. "My friends who live here are away and I thought I would seize the opportunity to slip in the window and deposit gifts about the place."

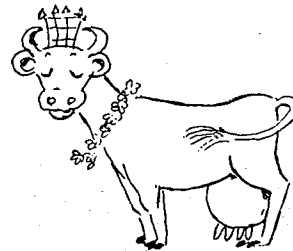
"You may be Santa Claus to others," said Officer Sachs, "but you're just a suspicious character to me."

There was no denying that Santa had some nice presents in his bag. It was not surprising for, as was later discovered, the presents had been collected from some of the best places on Hart-ray Avenue.

## HOLSTEIN COW BREAKS YEAR'S RECORD

*Omaha, Nebraska, Jan. 1, 1920*

"May Walker Ollie Homestead," a cow owned by the Minnesota Holstein Company has broken the world's record for a year's production of butter. Her figure for 365 days ending at midnight last night was 1217.27 pounds of butterfat, the equivalent of 1521.6 pounds of butter.



The former record of 1506.9 pounds of butter was held by "Dutchess Skylark Ormsby," a Holstein who died a few years earlier.

## TOGGERY BILL AND SON RISE IN HASTE

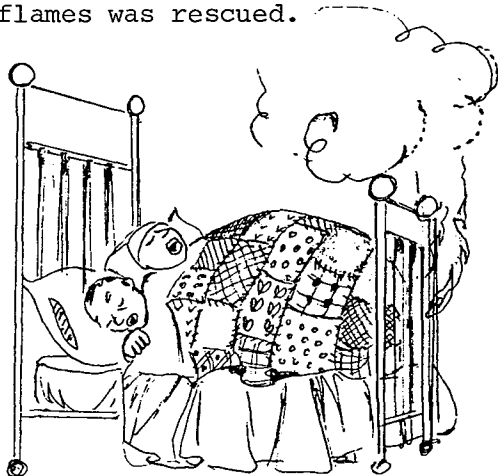
*Medford, December 23, 1930*

William Isaacs and his son Dick had a thrilling encounter with an electric bed warmer Monday morning between midnight and dawn which resulted in the loss of considerable sleep and a 50-pound mattress, which was completely destroyed by fire, water and rough handling on the lawn. Toggery Bill also had one leg toasted to an autumn brown.

Dad and lad repaired to the hay, per usual, Monday night, on the sleeping porch of their home at 115 North Oakdale. As the fog and frost rolled in unhindered upon them, the Isaacs thought they would reinforce several layers of Oregon City Woolen blankets, Pendleton Indian blankets, U.S. Army blankets and a couple pieces of canvas with an electric bed warmer. They installed the rig at the foot of the bed and relaxed for a good old-fashioned country sleep.

In about 20 minutes Richard, who is a University of Oregon law student, began to smell something and about 20 minutes later declared he had put his foot into fire. The father attributed the allegations to youthful imagination and told him to go to sleep as they both needed rest.

About three o'clock in the morning the father thought that he detected an unseemly odor, akin to a horse burning up, and thought his left shank was getting a trifle sultry, so he hopped out of bed to discover a young conflagration raging in his midst. The mattress and the blankets were smouldering in a business-like manner and there was a great hustling around after water. A valuable Turkish rug in the path of the threatening flames was rescued.



It was the original intention to subdue the blaze but finally the mattress was yanked out on the lawn where it had water squirted on it and fully demonstrated that nothing is so hard to extinguish as a mattress as it was still burning in a languid manner at three o'clock the following afternoon.

As near as can be figured out, the semi-disaster was due in the first place to the cord attached to the bed warmer burning off and in the second place to Toggery Bill turning the warmer into high, when he thought he was turning it off.

Both are none the worse for battling the smudge in their pajamas instead of their pants, which the weather most certainly warranted their wearing.

## WIFE BEATER GLADLY PAYS FOR PRIVILEGE

*Sacramento, California, Dec. 24, 1924*

Appearing before Judge Silas Orr in township court here Jack Radifer pleaded guilty to wife beating and was fined \$40. He insisted on paying an extra \$50.

"Here's \$10 more for charity, your honor," said Radifer. "It was certainly worth that much."

## TURKEY DINNER, CHRISTMAS, (1912) NASH GRILL.

All you can eat. 50¢

## XMAS EGGNOGS JUMP EGG PRICES



*San Francisco, Cal., December 24, 1912*

Christmas eggnogs have caused a jump of five cents a dozen in the price of fresh eggs. People want eggnogs for Christmas and the demand for eggs is enormous. As a result the price jumped.

Eggs last Friday were quoted at 27¢, but sold in the market at 40¢ and even 50¢ a dozen. Then the housewives league went to work and in a determined crusade hammered down the price to 35¢. But eggnogs and Christmas time were not reckoned with. All sorts of excuses are offered. The retailers blame the wholesalers and the public for extravagance and the hens for laziness.

*Now Don Lewis wants to  
tear down the Coloss-  
eum!*

*Call Ginny Cotton at  
CDLXXXII-MMDCXCL  
...and hurry!*



## *Saving the* **Chappell-Swedenburg** *house*

**T**he *Medford Mail Tribune*, on Sunday, July 24, 1966, dedicated a full page to the Swedenburg House. Captions under the attractive pictures announced that the "large, turn-of-the-century home...had been acquired by Southern Oregon College for use as a cultural center and a fine arts complex."

Photographs of the unusual stairwell and the furnishings, including a Turkish ceiling fixture, ornate needlepoint chairs and a handsome marble topped dresser, revealed the late Victorian flavor that had The picture above was brought up to date by John Snider and presented to Ginny Cotton in admiration of her persistence.

been returned to the rooms. The article declared: "Widespread community support must be forthcoming *if* the project is to be completed. The declaration had an ominous ring.

Mrs. Carolyn Ainsworth, who had recently seen a University of Oregon exhibit of fine art in a restored home near the U of O campus became impressed with the potential for just such a show at the Swedenburg House. She was appointed chairman of a committee whose purpose was to preserve the house which had become "an important Ashland monument." Her committee had made arrangements to borrow \$6,500 to purchase selected furnishings for the house, and the Southern Oregon College administration had endorsed the plan. After all, the purchases cost the Board of Higher Education nothing, Mrs. Ainsworth's committee would assume the responsibility of finding donors to pay off the loan and her group would also provide volunteers to act as guides. The college officials could well sit back with a benign attitude and a charitable smile.

President Elmo Stevenson became a member of the committee. He and Mrs. Stevenson purchased a bedroom set and a rug to help furnish one room. "We hope the house will become a period display center with some of the rooms fully furnished," he told reporters. "The house *will not be razed for future buildings*, but will be used by the college. Administration offices will be located on the second floor." This was the first of many public statements made by Dr. Stevenson that the house would be preserved.

Donald E. Lewis, Dean of Administration, agreeably became treasurer of the non-profit committee, now called the "Southern Oregon College Foundation," and accepted donations for the project. Student art work was exhibited in the spacious rooms and the house began a new phase as a museum.

Unfortunately only a limited amount of furniture was purchased because the donations failed to materialize. Those in favor of preservation appeared to feel that moral support was enough; others could supply the cold cash. Carolyn Ainsworth feared the committee would be forced to sell the furniture in order to pay off the loan, an exer-

cize in futility. Asked what would happen to the property if insufficient support was found to pay off the bankloan, Dr. Stevenson said, "Well, if the interest is not forthcoming, of course the college will have to develop other plans for the use of the property." The statement could mean just about anything.

One month later the *Ashland Daily Tidings* announced in an article written by Dr. Frank Haines which appeared in the issue of August 22, 1966, that the Swedenburg House, "Ashland's New Museum," was in trouble. "The September closing date of the summer exhibit season at the Swedenburg House," he wrote, "may be the final closing date."

**W**ith its auspicious beginning as a museum and an art center, those citizens who were enthusiastic about saving the house should have been able to relax, secure in the comforting thought that the house was off the endangered list. But in the second season limited use only was made of the building.

Student art remained on display in the downstairs rooms, but the building received little maintenance. A graduate student couple lived there as caretakers and from time to time efforts were made to suggest uses for the empty rooms: for example, the house, operated by faculty wives, could be used for wedding receptions and teas; if the faculty association would hire a cook and housekeeper, the home might be made into a delightful faculty club; it could serve as a handsome residence for the college president; the space might be used for seminar rooms and alumni offices; it could become an on-campus International House, etc., etc. None of the ideas seemed to take fire.

Another serious charge was made. Dr. Stevenson declared that the president's house on Avery Street, chosen for him by the administration, had considerable history and was a landmark, but unhappily historic homes were difficult to maintain, hard to furnish and expensive to heat, and the Swedenburg House required a great deal of preliminary work to make it even habitable. The house unfortunately couldn't renew itself; it needed a steady tenant or a practical function to exist and nothing had materialized. One would think that a college full of students and faculty could surely find a use for a spacious house that bore

a proud tradition of hospitality.

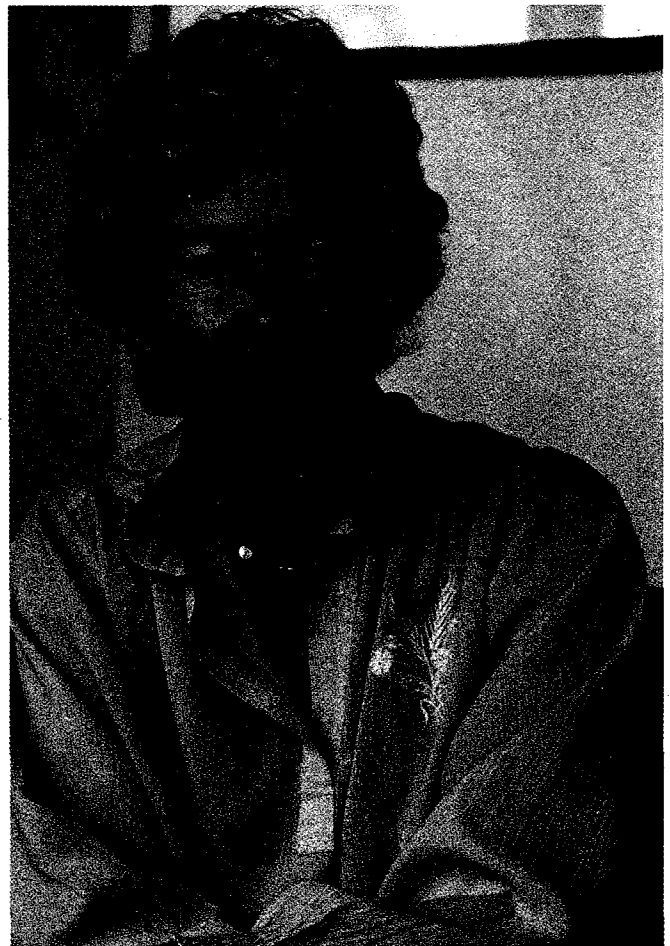
The Ways and Means Committee of the State Legislature--whose members are not duplicated on the Board of Higher Education--visited the premises and declared no more state funds would be spent on the building. That it had stood there in deteriorating splendor was a wonder. Less determined defenders would have waved a white flag at the end of the first year.

In the last part of 1968 ugly rumors began circulating that the house was slated for demolition, and by January, 1969, concerned citizens initiated a campaign for preservation of the house. A group of students joined together to protest the destruction and the Ashland Economic Development Commission decided a study of the situation was in order. They felt that if a great deal of public sentiment against demolition could be found, they could persuade the Board of Higher Education to postpone the razing of the house until a further study might be made. In this regard the Commission assigned Mrs. John Cotton, as an interested member, to make an effort to secure names of supporters of the preservation movement.

Mrs. Cotton--Ginny--worked on her task methodically. She went far beyond ordinary dedication in the matter and embraced the cause with enthusiasm and fervor. Her interest continued past the first steps and she became a sort of automatic chairperson devoting her time and energies to the project for years for it proved to be a matter that could not lend itself to an easy solution within any reasonable time. Additionally, she preserved every letter, every memorandum and every record of each step in the struggle to save the Swedenburg House and her bulging files and clipping collections are the basis of this story.

There were many southern Oregon people eager to give their support. They were told to express their thoughts on the matter to Mrs. Cotton, Mrs. Ainsworth or John Snider, a member of the Board of Higher Education, who lived in Medford, was accessible to everyone and was also sympathetic to the campaign.

By February, 1969, battle lines were drawn. Dr. Stevenson made a statement for the *Tidings* and, although he seems to have made a complete reversal



Mrs. John Cotton

in his thinking, he expressed his opinions with reasonable argument. He said, "Let's not fool ourselves. Look at the house impersonally and you will find it a hodgepodge of architecture. It is not old, only fifty years [sixty years would have been a more accurate figure]. It is not in use and not likely to be, but, even more important, *the building belongs to the college.*" He admitted the Swedenburgs were a well-known Ashland family but he was of the opinion they weren't so outstanding that they merited a memorial. The faculty for the art school had turned down the house as a permanent art building. They wanted new, modern, functional classrooms, and who could blame them? The Humanities Department had no enthusiasm for the House and rejected it as a Humanities Building. "The attendance at college and community functions held at the Swedenburg House has been poor," continued Stevenson. "On one occasion there were 253 invitations sent out to an open house and only three persons showed up. There has been more interest shown by Medford people than there has by Ashland people."





Dr. Elmo Stevenson

The time had come for the construction of the Education-Psychology building and the ideal space for it was on the Swedenburg place where a handsome new structure would be very impressive among the Swedenburg trees which could be saved. Although, as the Swedenburg Committee had continually maintained, the new building could be set back forty feet from the House--if the carriage house was raised--it was certain that the two types of architecture would clash jarringly. The house, standing on the front lawns before the new building, would be a distortion "therefore its removal was the only sensible step."

Of course the final decision rested with the Board of Higher Education. The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for March 10, in Newport, Oregon, and that was not far away. If enough support could be demonstrated perhaps the Board would be willing to hold back the wrecking ball until a full study could be made.

The *Siskiyou*, the college newspaper, began the drive. The Ashland Development

Commission, the *Ashland Daily Tidings*, the *Medford Mail Tribune*, and other persons and groups joined the action. In the first days of operation over 750 signatures were obtained, and a "rap-in" was held on the steps of the Britt Student Union. Vincent Price, the actor and critic, happened along and revealed he had visited the house and signed the petition. "I think it should be stripped inside to make those wonderful rooms upstairs into galleries and workshops and classrooms. It could be a very important center, and it's certainly beautiful," he said.

On March 1 the *Tidings* featured a full page of pictures of the house under the headline, "Doomed?" Ashland's Shakespearean Festival Association entered the debate. "There is considerable value to the Swedenburg home both to SOC and the city of Ashland," wrote William M. Patton, general manager, in a letter to John Snider. "Its gracious prominence on Siskiyou Boulevard as a welcome to the campus is perhaps the one comfortable initial impression to help soften what is otherwise an already irrevocable conflict of architectural styles.

But apparently oblivious to all the resistance, Don Lewis asked the city to close Palm Avenue and Wisconsin Street so building construction and landscaping could continue. He indicated the vacation of a portion of Mountain Avenue, bordering the Swedenburg property, would be requested next.

Fortified with student signatures\* and messages, Ginny Cotton wrote to the State Board asking for a delay in their decision. In her letter she emphasized the fact that

\*Before the end of the controversy there were stacks of lists and petitions and statements. But in Ginny Cotton's letter of March 5, 1969, only these names were included:

Mr. Ray Skibby, Mr. and Mrs. John Skibby, Mr. Terry Skibby, Mrs. Philip Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. John Briggs, Dr. and Mrs. Irving Lord, Mr. and Mrs. John Abernathy, Mrs. Rose Robinett, Mrs. Tom Delsman, Miss Victoria Taverner, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Davis, Mrs. Jim Busch, Mrs. Mildred R. Constable, Mr. and Mrs. Shelby Wilcox, Mr. and Mrs. Donal Rounds, Mr. Albert B. Schwab, Dr. and Mrs. B.A. Cope, Mrs. Donald Kitzman, Mr. Paul Covington, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lang, Mrs. Karl Peterson, Mr. Chester E. Corry, Mr. and Mrs. E. Hungerford, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Phelps, Mr. Peter Cotton, Mr. Dick Simonson, Mr. Joe Townley, Mr. Scott Rogers, Mr. Alex Millar, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Jones, Mrs. Una LaMarre, Mrs. Carol Wentela, Mrs. Kenneth Bartlett, Mrs. Harry Hawk, Mr. Edwin Mowat, Mrs. H.A. Thomas, Mrs. Yont, David G. Coppang.



it would be only fair to wait until Dr. J.K. Sours, the newly elected president, arrived. In her letter she also protested the closing of established streets, stating she feared that such changes would be detrimental to Ashland's traffic patterns. She closed her letter with a list of concerned people who wished to express a strong protest of the destruction planned by college officials. As a member of the Board, John Snider received a flood of protests\*\* from interested people and organizations.

In the agenda of the March 10 meeting of the Board of Higher Education, the question of the historical value of the Swedenburg property was presented. President Stevenson agreed that the house was an imposing one in a well-landscaped setting, but said that other houses in the community were older and represented a more distinct type and period of architecture. He indicated that the house had been preserved because some individuals were concerned that it remain, but it would probably be removed at a future time. He added that a group had been organ-

\*\* One of the letters came from Louise Perozzi, a representative of a historic Ashland family. It merits reproduction:

The Board of Regents  
Gentlemen:

We understand that the sentiment of private citizens in regard to the destruction of the Swedenburg home is desired. Our family came to live in Ashland in 1887. I graduated in the class of 1899 of the old Normal School. I have been interested in the school's problems and activities ever since...Old landmarks and traditions should have a place in our lives. [It is a tragic thing to destroy] an old landmark for a present small gain, and then years after, at a great expense of time and money, to try to restore something of value that should have been retained for posterity.

There are many residents living in our valley who remember their happy association with the [Chappell] family who lived in the beautifully furnished home with its spacious lawns, landscaped with lovely trees, flowers and shrubbery. Then there was the interesting Swedenburg family [made up of] Dr. F.G. Swedenburg, a prominent surgeon and physician, his civic minded wife...and their two daughters, Dr. Genevieve and Nurse Eleanor, now Mrs. Purdy.

Some zealous modern planners forget that a variety of interests and a combination of the old with the new is good and necessary and that [that combination] can best serve all the citizens.

Respectfully,  
Louise Perozzi



Don Lewis

ized to restore and preserve the house but had been unsuccessful in obtaining financial support or community response. Members of the board deliberated the problem.

On March 11 the *Ashland Daily Tidings* announced: "Old House To Be Preserved." A good loser, Dr. Stevenson declared, "As far as we can see the Swedenburg House will remain part of the campus. In order to get ahead with the education building project, we compromised."

The Board had approved the designs for a \$1,735,000 education-psychology building to be located about forty feet from the house. "It has been satisfactorily worked out," said Dr. Stevenson. "Landscaping will be used to prevent the different styles of the buildings from clashing."

This called for a general rejoicing. Ginny Cotton received a letter from John Snider:

Dear Mrs. Cotton:

Because of your efforts, the Swedenburg House will not be removed.

I have the feeling that had you been on the side of the Japanese, the United States wouldn't have won World War II.



Dr. James K. Sours

Thank you for all that you did for Southern Oregon College and for Ashland. It's nice being on your side.

Sincerely,  
John Snider

The crowing was premature. Before a month had passed the Ways and Means Committee of the Oregon Legislature appeared on the Ashland scene for study of the property. This committee was given little publicity and appeared to desire none, but distressing rumors arose. A little sleuthing by Ginny Cotton revealed the names of the members of the group and that Lyndell Newbry was acting as chairman. Rep. Stafford Hensell, from Hermiston, was most outspoken about the economic absurdity of maintaining the Swedenburg House, and if one could believe the report, other members of the committee felt the same. The committee made no announcement to the press and departed without revealing the results of their meeting. But the defenders again warily put up their guard.

In the midst of the indecision and concern which lingered, Dr. and Mrs. James K. Sours arrived in Ashland.

Dr. Sours, as the new president of the college, took the place of Dr. Stevenson who had retired. A pleasant and graceful reception to welcome the newcomers was held on the grounds of the Swedenburg House. Eric Allen, in the *Tribune*, took advantage of the social gathering to editorialize:

It was an extremely pleasant affair, the kind that belongs in such surroundings. But it was troubled by an ugly rumor making the rounds that the Swedenburg House...may actually be threatened.

The Ways and Means Committee of the 1969 Legislature, acting without full information, gave some indication that the charming old house should be sacrificed to new buildings on the campus.

...We presume that those who want the house and its surroundings to be desecrated feel that way because they are in favor of "progress."

We prefer to call it by its right name -- official vandalism.

EA

Sending a copy of the editorial to R.E. Lieuellen, Chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education, Mr. Allen again expressed his concern:

Dear Lew:

Here is a brief comment on a matter about which I feel strongly.

How can the board possibly justify hiring architects and spending considerable sums to insure some beauty in new buildings and then, at the same time, acquiesce in the destruction of something that has both historic and aesthetic value and that cannot be replaced.

If I understand correctly, a committee is at work assessing some of the board's properties in this light. I hope it can be encouraged to identify some of them, and that a report can be brought to the attention of the board and action taken before the System is made to look stupid by the destruction of something good simply through inadvertence.

Cordially,  
EA

Dr. Sours sent a courteous note to Ginny Cotton, thanking her for the reception. In his letter he wrote: "Swedenburg House is, indeed, an impressive landmark, and I can understand how people could develop an emotional attachment to it. I shall be happy to receive you and any others you care to bring with you, to discuss the matter of its preservation insofar as I may be able to do so.

Cordially,  
Jim Sours

Ginny Cotton, sensing a sympathetic ear, replied. She, Mrs. Ainsworth, Donal Rounds (the Ashland architect) and Mrs. Jane Buffington met with Dr. Sours.

On September 12, 1969, Eric Allen received a letter from Chancellor Lieuellen

in which the senator revealed that the state budget report included an admonition *not to include the Swedenburg House...in the development of the SOC campus master plan.*

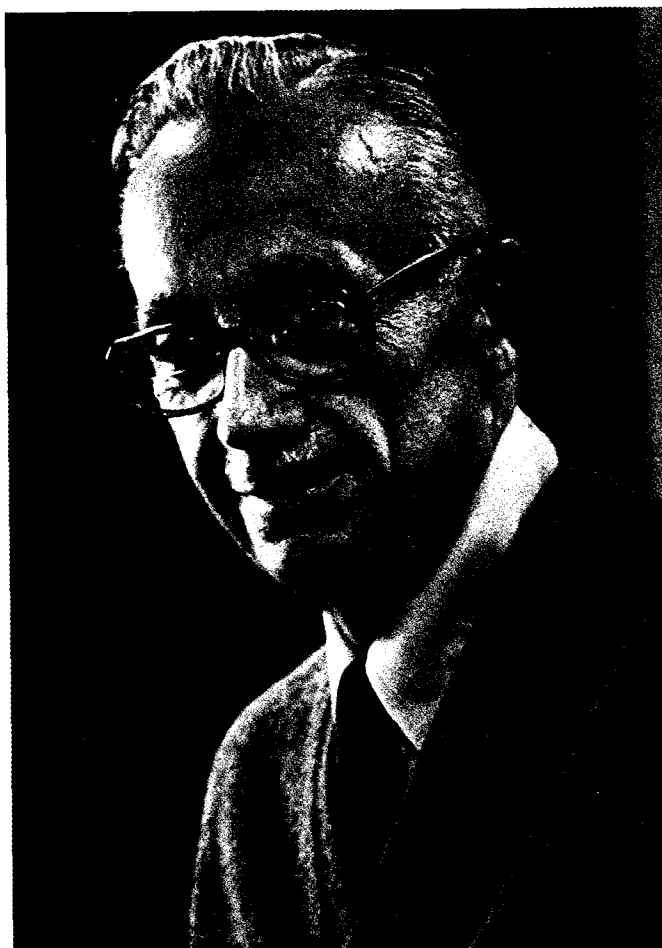
Mr. Allen immediately sent a copy of the letter to Senator Lyn Newbry. He asked the senator what could be done to stall off any "official vandalism," and begged him to see what he could do to prevent irreparable action until (1) the Board had completed its evaluation and (2) the Ways and Means Committee had reviewed its actions.

But the *Ashland Daily Tidings* announced: "Swedenburg House Doomed." The article contained the information that the order was a result of the action taken by the Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Hansell had so moved, and the only one to oppose him was Senator Newbry. "Over a period of years, [keeping the house] would cost the state a considerable sum of money," Hansell said. He pointed out the house had "no basic historic value and that it would be to the advantage of the state in the long run to tear it down." On his tour of the site, he said, "I looked underneath it and all through it. It doesn't lend itself to anything academically and the maintenance and heating costs would be terrific."

Senator Newbry warned that although a decision of the Ways and Means Committee is not a law, "it is nearly as binding...It has been incorporated in the state budget report." The only hope came from the statement: "Since funds for the education building this biennium were not approved, time was on the side of those who wish to keep the house standing." (The Legislature would not reconvene until 1971.)

Senator Newbry discussed the problem with the Chancellor and suggested to him that the Board should postpone disposition of the house until the Society of Architectural Historians had time to evaluate the property. In letters to Eric Allen and Ginny Cotton he wrote that the answer, as he saw it, was to convince the next Legislature of the value of the house. With determination--about all that was left on her side--Ginny Cotton went back to square one.

The Architectural Society met in Jacksonville in October, holding several

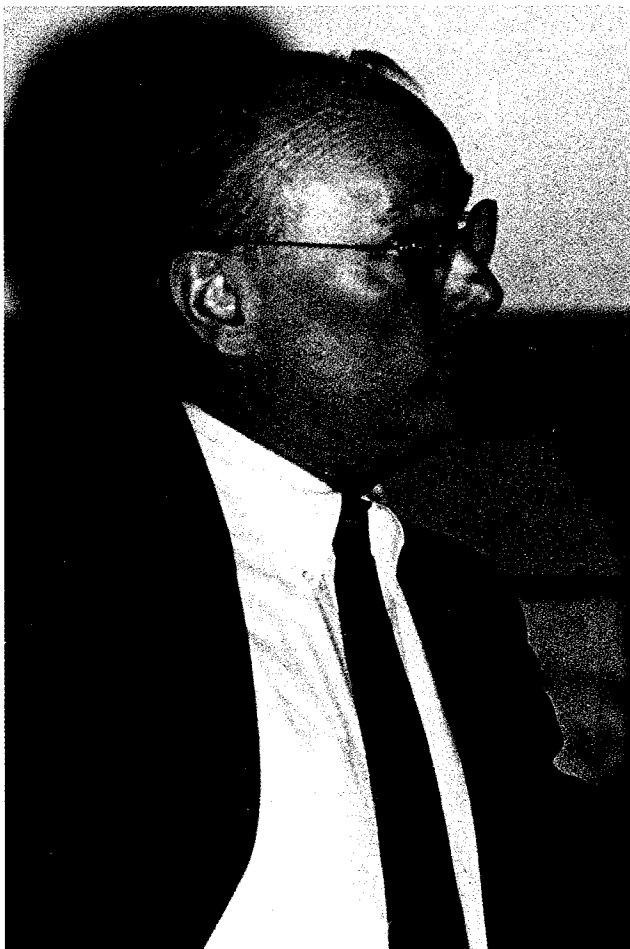


Eric Allen

of their sessions at the U.S. Hotel and visiting the museum. To show that southern Oregon hospitality was alive and well, Robertson Collins--who was first to see the historic value in Jacksonville--invited them to a buffet supper at his home and screened for them the early film, *Grace's Visit to the Rogue Valley*. On Saturday at the end of the meeting, Ginny Cotton gave them a comfortable social evening at her home. A little conviviality and festivity didn't hurt the cause. A story, appearing on the front page of the *Siskiyou*, declared: "Architects Call the Home a SOC Campus Asset." The Swedenburg House is worth preserving was the opinion given on Sunday by the society. Several of the members gave written statements in their praise of the house. For example:

It is important to realize that the columns, the porch, the green lawns and the stately trees belong to Ashland and not just to the house; and

New buildings could easily be designed to compliment the old house; and



Robertson Collins

The house cannot be isolated from its setting."

At the same time the architects were rhapsodizing about the beauty of the house and grounds, Don Lewis commissioned a little study of the cost of converting the house to office use. Additions, re-wiring, refinishing, reflooring, insulation, a new furnace and a new roof came to \$30,000. Dr. Sours, who was still in the process of making his own decision on the old house, wrote a letter to Ginny Cotton. In it he said:

I am enclosing some information about the cost of bringing the house up to a state of repair satisfactory to the city and state officials (fire marshall) so that we might use the upstairs rooms at least for seminars and faculty office space -- especially for our honors program. This is minimal but even so the price tag is prohibitive for the value returned. Also, I discovered that those rooms are filled with assorted antiques of which some disposition would have to be made under difficult circumstances. Difficult because we have no storage space, and, if we were to sell them, the state's red tape would involve more time than we care to allocate.

I'm telling you this just to bring you up to date.

J.K. Sours

At the end of October the Campus Development Committee reaffirmed its four year stand that the house should go. Scott Taylor, the student representative, said, "The Committee feels that the people who are agitating in favor of keeping the house are mainly attracted to the setting, and if the house was removed, the setting would remain." He added, "The house will be removed when needed, and that will be when the education building goes in."

**R**obertson Collins accepted appointment on a citizens' committee of the Oregon State System of Higher Education in December. The purpose of the committee was to evaluate historic properties on Oregon campuses and to submit recommendations on the question: "Should they be preserved?" It was gratifying to have an ally on this important committee, and its members would surely find the Swedenburg House worthy of preservation. But a review of the conflict shows that although there were many people in the state opposed to demolition of the house, those who advocated its destruction simply closed their ears to the opposition. The sentiments of the committee sometimes met with frustrating indifference. Yet Mr. Collins has emphasized that in all fairness, one must realize that this controversy began before 1970, a time when efforts at preserving the old and the beautiful were just beginning to be heard on a nation-wide scale. Today when restoration and conservation are commonplace and when there are hundreds of little ladies willing and eager to hurl themselves in front of a bulldozer just to save a tree, the movement would have had more weight.

At the end of 1969 Philip A. Joss, a member of the Board of Higher Education, had been won over, possibly through the persuasion of fellow member John Snider. He was of the opinion that the demolition "of the Ashland landmark would be a tragic mistake," and felt "Mrs. Cotton and her committee [were] to be complimented on their fine efforts." In addition in November Dr. James Sours nominated the house to the Citizens' Committee for consideration as a campus property worth saving.

In March, 1970, Richard Simonson, vice president of the alumni associa-

tion, gave the assurance that his organization strongly favored keeping the property, and the State Board was still in favor of preservation. Don Lewis, however, announced, "Unless we get more budget money, the costs make the house unusable." The question of money generally startles the tax payer but, all-in-all, the situation looked hopeful and none too urgent.

But on February 15, 1971, headlines in the *Ashland Daily Tidings* knocked the complacency out from under the supporters. "Old House Said To Be White Elephant," declared the newspaper. President Sours who had accompanied the Ways and Means Committee on a second tour of the campus, said, "The Committee issued a directive that the house was not to be maintained. Rep. Hansell (of Hermiston) who had from the first been opposed to keeping the house standing, was shocked to discover it still there. "Why hasn't that building been torn down yet?" he asked.

In view of the need for classrooms, several committee members could see no wisdom in spending money to fix up an old house. Asked about his views, Senator Newbry said, "I am sympathetic to Ashland's interests, but whether or not the house should be maintained by the State Board is a question in my mind. Perhaps some other group--the Southern Oregon College Foundation or the Jackson County Historical Society--should take over the responsibility."

The conclusion was reached, *for a third time*, by the Ways and Means Committee that the house should be razed or removed unless arrangements could be made for its perpetual upkeep from other than state funds. This decision was put into a declaration and June 1, 1972, was set for the deadline date. This meant simply that either the Swedenburg House would be privately funded by that time or it would have to face the demolition squad.

Eric Allen wrote a pertinent editorial in which he again presented valid reasons for keeping the house and added that the planned destruction was the work of the Ways and Means Committee, and more specifically by one member. "We believe," he continued, "that such pressures should be resisted, not only by local citizens who have an appreciation of the Swedenburg House, but also



John Snider

by the administration of the college and by the Board itself..[Even if the efforts put forth by the Rogue Valley people fail], for the Board seriously to contemplate razing the house would be a breach of its responsibility to the people of the state, to the principles of historic preservation, and to the needs of visual and architectural beauty."

In a subsequent editorial published a few days later, Mr. Allen was even more direct: "[The] pressure to raze or move the Swedenburg House...is almost wholly the work of one member of the Joint Ways and Means Committee...Rep. Stafford Hansell, R-Hermiston. He is a powerful and highly respected man, although we sometimes wonder whether his background as an eastern Oregon farmer really qualified him to judge the intangible values of the Swedenburg House.

These editorials provoked a response from Mr. Hansell who wrote directly to Eric Allen:

The State Board of Higher Education has the final say but, to me, its role is to provide education and scarcely seems broad enough to include restoration and maintenance of old buildings. In this in-

stance, buildings with greater historical significance have been razed in other towns to make way for college campus growth...At a time when we are fighting for the very existence of higher education, when we are required to raise tuition, when we ask the Division of Continuing Education to be self-supporting, when we can afford only minimal salary increases and suffer smaller graduate programs, I claim it is improper to spend General Fund dollars for Swedenburg House.

Bud Forrester of *The East Oregonian* in response to a request from Eric Allen talked with Mr. Hansell and attempted to persuade him to soften his attitude. But Hansell said that "in view of the very pressing demands for the essentials of the state system of higher education," he could not justify allocating funds for operation of the house. He was, however, "willing to give the Board more time to develop a financial program that would continue operation of the house."

Ginny Cotton went to the typewriter and fired off letters to sympathetic members of the Board and the Ways and Means Committee, seeking help and advice. In a letter to Philip Joss, Chairman of the Committee on Buildings, she asked for an extension on the deadline date. In a letter to Senator Newbry she asked, "Can you help us with Mr. Hansell and his henchmen? Can you advise us as to what we now must do?" She wrote to George H. Layman, President of the Board, requesting that the Board defer action until July 26, 1971, to give her committee time to prepare a better documented case.

By June, several members of the Board had expressed their concern for the house and had joined the group favoring preservation. John Snider of Medford had been with the movement from the first, Philip Joss of Portland and George Layman of Newberg each declared they shared the views of the majority and Elizabeth H. Johnson of Redmond was an ally. In September Edward G. Westerdahl II of Portland pledged his support.

Another significant group, Governor Tom McCall's State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, made up of professional historians and architects, expressed their concern over the possible loss of the house. Although they felt they could not nominate the house for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Buildings, the committee concluded that the house and grounds should be preserved. In answer to President

Sours' request for federal funds, members of the committee, however, declared the house did not meet the criteria of a federal aid program to protect historical buildings.

The student newspaper, *The Siskiyou*, editorialized:

Possibilities for utilizing the Swedenburg Home for student-sponsored events are unlimited. We can and must save this bit of the past as our last refuge from the blitz of concrete and bulldozer now sweeping the campus. Won't you help save the Swedenburg Home? Support all efforts to do so, both now and in the coming months ahead...SOC students will not allow the granite forces to continue to destroy the little beauty that remains on this campus.

Eric Allen wrote directly to Stafford Hansell in Hermiston. In his communication he asked Hansell to indicate to the Board that "the pressure is off" so committees could work out ways to make use of the house. He said, "You may well ask why we ...have not been busy over the past couple of years looking for uses for the house. Perhaps we should have been, but we were under the impression...that the house was in no danger, and that a use for it was going to be found."

At the June meeting in LaGrande Ginny Cotton asked the members to postpone any action on the house until their July meeting in Ashland. She also asked that the Board grant her permission to present an advocate who would speak at the July meeting. Eric Allen was designated as spokesman and a select few were called upon to answer questions. She assured the chancellor her group would take no more than fifteen minutes and that their presentation would contain only seven points.

1. When the Swedenburg House was first acquired, it was represented to the public as a permanent and valuable addition to the Southern Oregon College campus.

2. The Swedenburg House should not be razed or otherwise disposed of because it has an intrinsic value, arising from its history and aesthetic qualities that place it in a special category deserving special consideration.

3. The semantic confusion surrounding the words "preservation" and "restoration" need to be cleared up. (Preservation, in this case, applies to only the exterior of the house and grounds.)

4. The Swedenburg House should be used by the college. (That the college officials find a use for the house as part of the campus was a point constantly emphasized by the Committee.)

5. The urgent need for usable space on campus, if no other reason, makes the deliberate razing, or otherwise disposing of, the usable space represented by the Swedenburg House unwise.

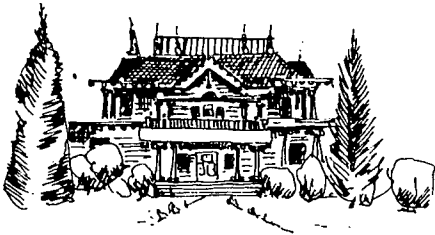
6. The State System of Higher Education, including the Board and the Chancellor, is in an uncomfortable position vis-a-vis certain members of the Legislature who have given their opinion the house should be disposed of and that no tax funds should be spent upon it.

7. An intensive effort should be made by the college in cooperation with the Ashland community to find a use for the house, and the deadline of June 1, 1972, should be lifted.

**I**n July 26 members of the State Board gathered in Ashland for the annual July meeting. The Save the Swedenburg Committee was given its allotted time. Eric Allen, as advocate, spoke, and a discussion followed. Other pressing business had to be considered and, at Philip Joss' request, a tour was made of the Swedenburg house. As time was exhausted, decision on the house was postponed until the next meeting. This gave the Save the Swedenburg group time to continue their home work.

The preservation effort had continued for three years and had gathered an impressive list of members. Kay Atwood decided they were so well established they should have an official title and a logo. She designed a letter head for the stationery which had been donated by an enthusiastic member.

#### SWEDENBURG HOUSE COMMITTEE



Mrs. Carolyn Ainsworth  
Eric W. Allen, Jr.  
Linda Anania  
Kay Atwood  
Carol Bell  
Mrs. Collier Buffington  
A. S. V. Carpenter  
Robertson E. Collins  
Mrs. John C. Cotton  
Mrs. Jack Day  
Hasso Hering  
Dr. E. A. Hungerford  
Paul Jenny

Dr. Irving Lord  
Mrs. Frank MacGraw  
Governor Tom McCall  
Mrs. Horace Myers  
Dean L. Phelps  
Dr. Glenn Revel  
James A. Ruoff  
Dr. W. H. Sammons  
Mrs. Philip Selby  
Richard Symonson  
Representative Don Stathos  
Grace Tapp

**I**n the meantime the Swedenburg House began to need a little attention. Paint peeled, the roof leaked, and in winter the basement flooded. Estimates for restoration now ran from from \$35,000 to \$50,000. The figures varied depending on who was citing it. Those who wanted to keep the building, emphasized the fact that repair was far less



Kay Atwood

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

costly per square foot than new construction. Those who championed elimination felt that any money spent on the house was being poured down the proverbial rat hole.

During this debate the Preservation Committee continued to seek new members, new ideas and suggested uses for the structure. In spite of the decision made by the Board of Higher Education that the Swedenburg property be given top priority for preservation--a statement which gave a false sense of security to those who would save the house--the architects who designed the Educational-Psychology building declared the house was of no importance. The Board of Higher Education, however, insisted on the order to construct the new building farther back to accommodate the Swedenburg House.

The plans for the new Educational-Psychology building were approved in February, 1972. Rep. Stafford Hansell headed the committee, and the Board formally released \$2.26 million--a formidable figure which fell short of the eventual expenditure. College officials gave their approval for tearing down the



Swedenburg carriage house and garage. As costs were always rising and estimates were soon outdated, the college commissioned a firm of architects, Hyatt and Rounds, to make a new study and give the latest figures for rehabilitation of the house. These architects predicted the house would have a long life, but decided they could give cost estimates *after* the college had approved their designs. Expenses would certainly run between \$150,000 and \$200,000. When Dr. Sours set out to get a fraction of this money for simple repairs, the officials of the State System of Higher Education again made their position clear: they had ordained that the house could remain standing but they would give no state money for maintaining it.

In September, however, the Chancellor allocated \$19,000 for minor renovation, painting, roof and foundation repair and some work on the heating system. Complete rejuvenation, according to Don Lewis, was on the 1975 biennium priority list. The \$19,000 would shore it up in the meantime.

An editorial in the *Siskiyou* protested the move:

Almost \$19,000 will be spent on a building that will be boarded up, abandoned, and left to the elements. The rathole that will have this money pounded down its throat...is the Swedenburg House. ...It was beautiful in its day, and still is, for that matter, but maintenance on it is a continual nightmare. Now the college...is being forced to throw away its money because of pressure from members of historical groups, chambers of commerce, as well as some of this school's biggest financial backers. Every time someone tries to let the house die a natural death, these "Nostalgia at Any Cost" buffs rise to the occasion.

...If you think the college should use Swedenburg for an art gallery or student lounge, the answer is "no." The second floor is not even habitable because of the lack of fire exits. In fact the first floor is being used only through the fire marshall's special permission. The wiring needs replacing.

...We would welcome any commitment from those who say they want to see the house saved. Come and get it. Refurbish away.

P.S. Bring your checkbook.

The tone and sentiments of this student editorial are far different from those appearing earlier.

**S**ometime in 1973 Dr. Sours gave serious thought to converting the house into the President's home. His Elkader Street property was on a hill, had limited parking and

presented other drawbacks. He suggested selling the Elkader Street house and using the money to restore the Swedenburg estate. Although several prominent people, including members of the Board, expressed their approval, the Chancellor vetoed the suggestion.

The art gallery was removed early in the year and the College Relations Office, the Alumni Office, the SOC News Service and the Office of the Executive Assistant to the College President were moved in. According to Don Lewis, these offices were located there only temporarily and would be moved as soon as alternate space could be found on the campus. "The house is in a state of limbo," he said, "and no repair work will be done until the project is reviewed by the 1975 session of the Legislature." The antique furniture would probably be sold. The *Tidings* featured a full page emphasizing the deterioration of the house. Lewis had directed the photographer to photograph places where evidence of neglect was the worst. The story was a shocker and the house, in the pictures, looked neglected and tacky.

Eric Allen wrote to Dr. Sours:

I was shocked and dismayed to see the *Tidings* and the sad pictures and the sadder story about the building and the neglect and insults it has received.

I was offended at the simple lack of elementary maintenance...and outraged at what looks like...an attempt to simply let neglect and the passage of time provide the "ultimate solution."

...With grant and restoration money doubtlessly available if it were sought out, I find it difficult to understand why something is not being done--unless (I confess to the unworthy suspicion) it is deliberate.

If the house has to go, let it go quickly; don't let it crumble away through desuetude. For my part, I think either course would be unworthy of the institution you head.

Sincerely,  
EA

The idea that the house, tenantless and neglected, would eventually molder away and cease to be a problem, was not unique. Jack Hunderup, Vice Chancellor, indicated that a long-term policy of the state was to let public support for a house erode and then raze it. Just such a policy had been practiced by the college on disposing of the residences and other buildings absorbed by the college in its expansion program. Until a house fell into complete decay, it could be

rented by students and ease the housing crush.

In May the Building Committee of the Board gave the house special status in view of its historical and architectural importance. Under their recommendation it would be designated as of "prime significance" and given "top priority" for preservation, and it "could not be razed, relocated or modified substantially without prior concurrence of the Board." The Committee, appointed by the State Chancellor was headed by Thomas Vaughan, Director of the Oregon Historical Society.

**T**he house seemed to have no trouble attracting friends. Its difficulty lay in its inability to gain supporters. It was an aristocrat in a valley of commoners, and it wanted an owner who had an unlimited purse. Until one came along, it nestled there, aloof in its grove of evergreens and grew more and more shabby.

Some people tried. A successful quilt show was exhibited in the house in July, 1974. It made enough money to pay a little rent and raise some cash and lifted the spirits of the Committee who thought that perhaps other houseware exhibits could be booked there. In June the Shakespearean Festival Association created a museum on the first floor. Conceived by Kay Atwood and a corps of assistants, the show gave the history of the festival and told much about people who contributed to its success; it displayed properties and artifacts and pictured backstage activities. A Festival Museum would seem to be an ideal use for the first floor, but at the end of the season the Festival Board moved the show downtown, closer to the theater-center, where it would get walk-in traffic. These successes were temporary, helped build hopes and then petered out.

During 1974 Don Lewis sold the antique furniture at a public sale. The transaction was not announced to the Swedenburg Committee.

Eventually the fire marshall discovered the long overdue restoration would require structural changes that would all but destroy the building's elegant appearance. Requirements included a prohibitively expensive sprinkler system, outside fire escapes, and a wide interior hallway with one hour fire doors

at the top and bottom of the stairs. The supporting posts in the basement had deteriorated and there was danger that the second floor might cave in; the first floor was no longer safe for heavy files and office equipment.

**I**n 1979 the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the Ashland Heritage Committee presented a plaque to the Natale Sicuro, the new SOSOC President. The award again honored the house as a site of historical significance. President Sicuro accepted graciously, but said, "We cannot think positively about rebuilding it unless it can become a multi-purpose building."

Kay Atwood, hoping to gain additional assurance that the house would remain, wrote Don Lewis in May that she was interested in making application to get the house placed on the National Register of Historic Places. He replied that he saw little or no value of being on the register and, unless there was a compelling reason to do so, he would take no action.

**B**y 1980 the house stood empty and unused. There were no plans for its future. A reporter in the *Siskiyou* wrote: "It may be a waste of valuable space, but when one looks at the alternatives for the turn-of-the-century mansion, it looks good just standing there." It was not the most shining hour for the Swedenburg House.

**B**ut in January, 1981, the future of the house which had stood idle for more than a decade, began to take on a brighter aspect. A college organization, the Southern Oregon College Foundation, launched a drive to collect \$3 million for campus use. The money would provide a stadium, scholarships, an art gallery, a museum, and several other projects *including renovation of the Swedenburg House*. \$250,000 would be earmarked for the house. The Alumni Association held a wine and cheese tasting party on the lawns for Homecoming '81, and pledged their support. Early in 1982 the *Tidings* reported the Association had already raised \$3,598.

That figure could almost be called loose change, although it was a start. A collection of like-size every year would require a hundred years and the goal would

be realized. Unfortunately it was unlikely the house could hold out for another decade, much less a hundred years.

Members of the Oregon Senate debated the problem and in 1983 they came up with a proposed project to allocate \$340,000 for Swedenburg restoration. Donal Rounds was appointed architect for the rebuilding. This project was later tabled. In the meantime the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation unanimously approved the Chappell-Swedenburg House for Nomination to the National Register of Historic places. Over the years it had gone into a decline, but at the same time its historic value had increased, and Chappell and Swedenburg had grown in historical stature. On this occasion the house was found to meet the criteria of the National Register as (1) an example of Colonial Revival architecture, (2) exceptional landscaping and (3) a property associated with Charles Chappell and Dr. Francis G. Swedenburg, two noteworthy figures in Ashland history. Kay Atwood made the application; the house was included in the register later that year.

The Alumni campaign received new impetus and a shot in the arm when their 1983 drive kicked off with a champagne reception. Co-chairing the renewed drive were Bert and Kathryn Stancliffe, Honorary Chairman was Con Sellers, and Shirley Oas served as mistress of ceremonies. Frank Koch, president, welcomed the old grads and informed them the purse for the campaign had fattened considerably.

The Carpenter Foundation had supplied a \$10,085 grant which the association had matched, Mr. and Mrs. Koch had donated \$5,000 and the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Office, a federal agency, had given a gift of \$40,000, and the trustees of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, under the directorship of Bill Burk, had pledged \$100,000 for a 25 year lease on the first floor which, under society management, would become a museum and research center for Ashland. The goal had passed the half-way point, but that was only half of the announcement.

Headlines in the *Daily Tidings* of June 26, 1983, proclaimed: "Donation

Gives SOSOC Quick Win," and the lead paragraph ran:

It's rare when a kickoff results in a touchdown, but that's what happened Wednesday night when officials for the fundraising campaign to restore the Swedenburg House announced a \$150,000 bequest at their kickoff reception. The generous donation from local resident, Gil Plunkett,\* brings the campaign total to \$290,000 --enough to restore the 79 year old grand but dilapidated home.

Triumph, at last.

**T**he renovation began in January, 1984, and took almost a year to complete. It was not an overnight task. Workers stripped paint, replaced floors and ceilings, and reinforced the entire structure. The interior walls were repaired or replastered; many layers of wallpaper were removed from each room. New heating and cooling plants, and all-new ventilating, plumbing and electrical systems were installed. The second floor bedrooms were converted to offices but the first floor retains much of its original floor plan. Donal Rounds was architect.

"You can almost see the shadows of long-vanished dancers gliding across the newly-polished floors, while echoes of distant laughter and conversations seem to linger in the parlor," romanticized Jonel Aleccia in the *Tribune*. On October 27, 1984, the house was dedicated and Christening ceremonies were held for "Plunkett Center." The house had become the new home of the Southern Oregon State College Alumni and Development Staff, the Southern Oregon Foundation and the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Ashland Branch.

Once more in immaculate white, it stands in splendor facing the Boulevard. The floors shine, the paint sparkles and the rooms are tastefully decorated in unobtrusive colors. In the midst of opulence --or near ruin--the Swedenburg House was never less than true gentry. Today it has come again into its own.

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\*Gilman Plunkett, a retired inventor and engineer (designed a forerunner of the electronic calculator) and his wife Blanch were supporters of the college. Before her death in 1983 they made several gifts, including a Yamaha grand piano. Mr. Plunkett gave \$10,000 for scholarships and a Steinway grand in addition to his gift of \$150,000




Victorine A. Lee

*In the first part of an essay written by Mrs. Lee, she described the wild flowers which bloomed on her property and told of her acquaintance with the deer that inhabited her garden on Fish Hatchery Road. In this part of the story she concludes the memories of her pleasant sojourn in southern Oregon.*

# My Love Affair with Nature

## THE PET FROG

 One of my first pets was a very large shiny green Frog. I came upon her sitting on the edge of one of our deep pools. Upon seeing me, she immediately hopped into the water. So, each time I approached her, she leaped into the pool and swam down to the bottom, waiting for me to leave. I started talking to her very softly, and sat down beside the pool to await her emergence, then talked to her again, not moving at all. One day she did not hop back into the water, but sat quietly on the rock at the edge while I spoke to her. I had a long piece of reed grass in my hand, and approaching slowly, started to stroke her head with the grass. She just sat there and let me pet her, closing her eyes from time to time. So after that I would always take a piece of reed grass with me, approach very quietly, sit down and pet her. One time I tried stroking her head with my finger and she seemed to enjoy it, closing her eyes and sitting on the rock. This was such a thrill to me. Sometimes I

could even gently rub her white throat and back. But she would never take a bug or a dragonfly from me. Maybe she was not hungry, as there were always bugs, moths or butterflies around the pool. However, waterspiders, or "skaters" as we called them, were not to her liking. So my frog became a pet.

We decided she might be lonesome so we began hunting for another frog down by the river. We finally found a large handsome bullfrog, and brought him up to our pet's home, which we had now named "The Pool of the Pet Frog." They seemed very compatible, and I am sure that they had a lot to say to each other when no one was around. During the winter, they disappeared, and I do not know to this day where they went.

## THE TALE OF THE LITTLE SHREW

One day as I was sitting on a tree stump in the woods, I heard something wiggling in the leaves on the ground. Then I could see the movement under them and pretty soon a tiny animal, like a mouse, appeared. It climbed up the protruding root of a laurel tree and



### *Frog Pool and Waterfall*

started nibbling on the moss growing there. I dared not move, but as it came closer, I saw it was a tiny shrew. These little animals are of the family *Insectivores* and the smallest of all mammals. They do not confine themselves to insects alone, but devour worms, small birds or any scraps of meat they may find. The shrew is some two to three inches long, with a mouse-like form and long, slender snout. It is soft-furred, with a well-developed tail. Eyes and ears are tiny, and its feet are very slender. Most shrews are land lovers but a few are aquatic. Many are mistaken for moles which are much larger.

The shrew makes its home in the hollow parts of trees, under wood piles or logs or in any sheltered place where it will not be disturbed. It does not burrow and prefers to dwell near some brook that will not dry up in the summer or freeze in the winter.

Many a time in the fall of the year I could see dozens of movements under the fallen leaves, and hear the crackling sound, as they were poking their little snouts into the small openings in the bark on the lower parts of the tree trunks, or ferreting about in the leaf mold or pieces of decayed wood for their daily bread. Many of the species have glands on the side of their body, which emit a noxious odor

when the animal is frightened or enraged, serving to protect it from many of its forest enemies. Weasels, owls and some hawks kill and eat shrews, but the mink, fox, most of the hawks and domestic cats, though they still kill them, will not eat them because of this noxious odor. The shrew's summer coat of soft fur is usually sepia brown or chestnut, and the winter one, dusky ash gray or lead colored.

Considering the size, the little shrew is one of the most pugnacious of all mammals. It takes a stance with its mouth wide open and its snout and lips drawn back so as to expose its sharp teeth, and throws its head rapidly from side to side and gives forth a peculiar song like a chatter of repeatedly rapid chirps, pitched on a high key and varied every second with a long drawn rasping note on a lower key. This really gives it a fiendish look. Mice and moles hate and fear the little shrew. I can testify to this. While reading by the Pool of the Wood Nymphs one day, I heard a scampering and squeaking so I quickly looked to see what the excitement was. Then I saw a rather fat field-mouse running along the path with a tiny shrew after it. The mouse had a home near the pool, as I had seen the family come out one day in search of food. They both disappeared into the thicket, but it really tickled me to see this impish little creature with so much fortitude.

### THE SPOTTED SKUNK FAMILY



Attached to our log house was a large garage and workshop. One day when I entered the garage, I heard a quick scampering noise, and something dashed under the workbench. For some time we had noticed that any food that was left in our cats' dishes was completely cleaned out so we suspected that some animal was helping itself. I thought it would be a good idea to remain in the garage after hearing all the scampering, and find out who the culprit was. I stayed in the background very quietly and waited. Pretty soon a little white animal crept out from under the workbench. It was small and had a bushy white tail and black spots. I knew it was a very young spotted skunk, and they are prettier than the black skunks with the white





*Spotted skunk*

stripes. The little creature came out slowly, then another little one joined this one. After a bit, Mama Skunk emerged, and she had a large fluffy white tail, and they all proceeded to a hole under the floor of the workbench and disappeared. So, they lived in there, and it was a nice cosy and warm place. I decided to get some of the cat food that they evidently liked, and held it at the hole. It was not long before a little nose appeared and the food was devoured. I kept this up for quite a while, then three noses appeared and the food was gone. They wanted it so badly that it overcame any fear. They were very polite and took the food so gently. This went on for several weeks, and then the little family moved out as the weather had become warmer, and hunting would be better. The only time there was any perfume was when Papa came around to visit.

Skunks are meat eaters, and chicken is about its favorite dish. Skunks, however, render a valuable service by destroying immense numbers of mice, white grubs, grasshoppers, crickets and hornets. At times they will eat fruits and berries and are fond of eggs. The skunk hibernates most of the winter, but comes out from time to time when the weather is mild. It is a night wanderer mostly, and is fearless of man and other animals, and if allowed to go its way, will pass close to you with a genteel and dignified indifference, but if interfered with or cornered, it will prepare for self-protection with a musky secretion located in two glands under the tail.

The home of the Skunk is usually in a burrow in the forest, a hollow log or a cave. The den contains a large bed of grass and leaves, and here the young are born in the spring. When the young are about a quarter grown, they follow the Mother on night excursions in search of food, and generally go in single file, forming a line from fifteen to twenty feet long. When de-scented they make an affectionate and interesting pet. They are quite independent

and saucy, and love to stamp their little feet when they are displeased.

## BIRDS IN THE PARK



here are many varieties of birds in our Park, varying with the seasons. In the spring, flocks of different kinds would stop for a day or so to feed and rest on their way to other places. Not being an authority on birds, I could not name many of them. The robins were among the first, and many remained on our place to build nests and start a family. They were real pests when our cherry trees ripened, and we had a constant struggle to retain cherries for ourselves. Their favorite diet is an earthworm. They seem to listen for the movement of the little creature in the lawn or ground. Their heads are cocked on one side close to the earth, and they appear both to look and listen, and then suddenly grab a worm in their beak.

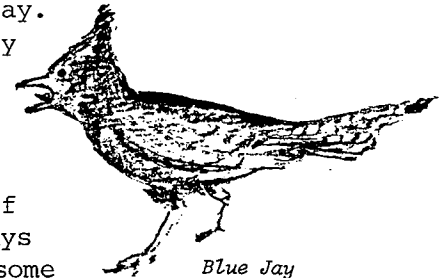
The blackbird flew in next, in swarms, and the lawn and fields were black with them. Several built nests in our honeysuckle vine.

The mountain blue birds are especially fond of Oregon. They are smaller than the robins or blackbirds, and are a beautiful deep blue color, but not as dark as the bluejay.

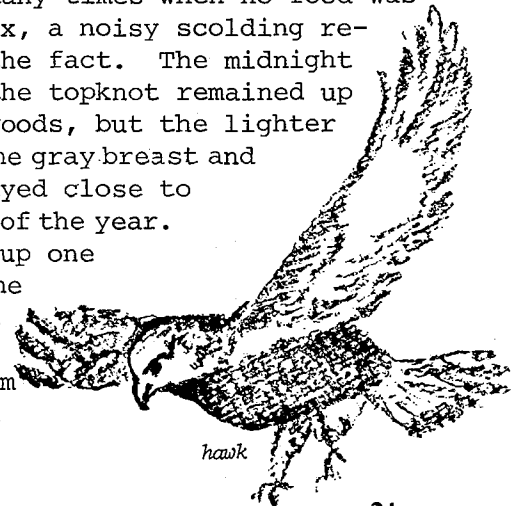
Their song is very sweet, and people build little bird houses to entice them to stay on their property. Of course the bluejays are plentiful and some

stay during the winter months. We put out tallow and bacon grease, as well as crumbled pieces of bread in our bird feeding box all winter long for extra sustenance. Many times when no food was in the bird box, a noisy scolding reminded us of the fact. The midnight bluejay with the topknot remained up above in our woods, but the lighter bluejay with the gray breast and no topknot stayed close to our house most of the year.

As I walked up one of our trails one day, I heard loud scoldings and squawks from one of the high

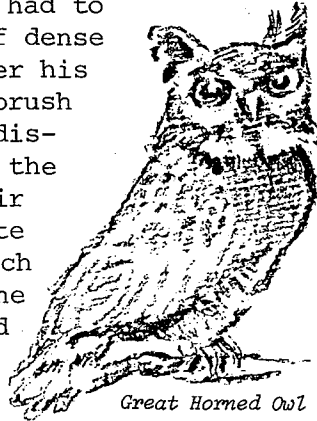


*Blue Jay*



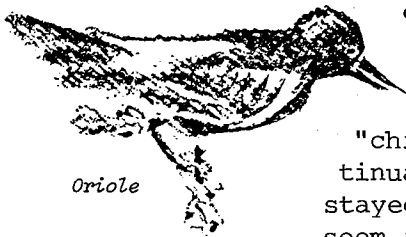
*hawk*

Ponderosas. It grew nearer and more raucus. Then I saw about eight bluejays with topknots, bearing down on a large brown bird, which I recognized as a hawk. He was trying his best to evade the onslaught, and finally had to dart down in a clump of dense thicket for cover. After his disappearance in the brush there were a few more disgruntled squawks, and the group flew back to their homes. So many birds hate the owl and the hawk which are nest robbers, and the smaller birds will band together and really attack with great vigor.



Great Horned Owl

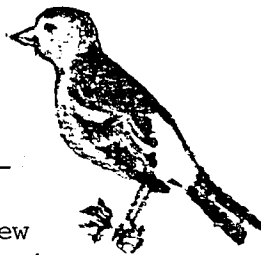
Orioles and scarlet tanagers, both spectacularly beautiful, would only stay a day or so and go elsewhere. We always hoped they would stay with us.



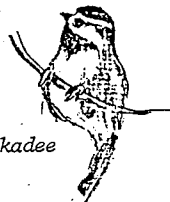
Oriole

The tiny bulltits, "chickadees," were a continual delight to us and stayed all winter as they seem indifferent to the

cold. They are very cute little brownish birds, usually in flocks, and they cheep and twitter most of the time. They are very tame and I have seen as many as twenty-five perched on a limb as I passed by, and not one flew away but just kept on twittering. I could have reached out and picked one up. Their nest is pearshaped, about ten inches long, and hangs from a branch like a stocking. It is made of moss and vegetable fiber. The entrance is so small that a bird has to wriggle in and out.



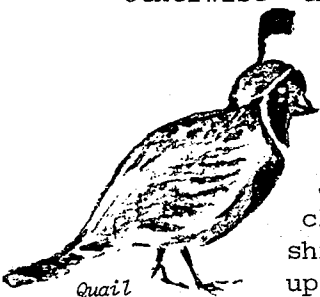
Western Tanager



Chickadee

The mountain quail were one of the favorite inhabitants of our Woods. They are larger than the regular quail, otherwise they have similar markings.

They make their nests on the ground in a cluster of wild blackberry bushes with their thorny briars which offer fine protection against predators, or in a clump of willows or laurel shrubs. Many a time as I walked up our Woods, I would hear a

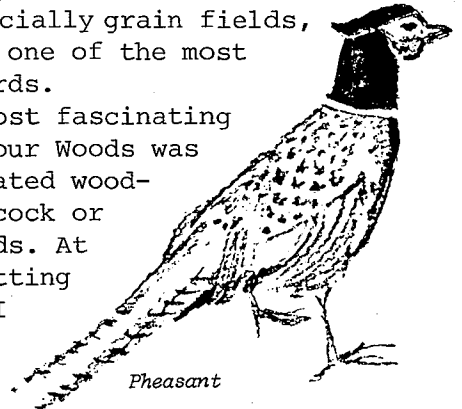


Quail

clucking sound in the late spring and see a little hen quail marching along with her babies following behind in a single file. While the quails are feeding, there are usually one or two lookouts to give a warning sound of any danger approaching.

Pheasant are profuse in the meadow and fields, especially grain fields, and the male is one of the most beautiful of birds.

I think the most fascinating bird I saw in our Woods was the large Pileated woodpecker, or log cock or cock of the woods. At first, while sitting in the woods I would hear this loud chopping sound as if a



Pheasant

logger were working on a tree. I soon discovered this large bird, hanging on the side of one of the pines, pecking away at a great rate. They hammer on the trees like a sledgehammer as they dig into the rotten wood for grubs. This was a large woodpecker, one of the largest I had ever seen, as its wing spread was over two feet. It had a flaming red crest on its head and black and white plumage. Because of its handsome appearance and size the pileated woodpecker has become one of the rarer species as collectors, would-be scientists and hunters have shot it to such an extent that it has become wary of settled areas. So, to have a family in our woods was a real treat. The female is a brownish color and quite drab, and pretty soon she appeared, and they all flew together. We could hear their loud "cuk, cuk, cuk" ring through the woods as they flew back and forth. The nest is dug out of living trees well up from the ground and about fifteen inches deep. Its powerful blows cut out huge chunks of wood, easily heard in the quiet of the woods. This bird stores acorns in the bark of the trees, and the acorns are so tightly wedged into the trees, it is difficult to extricate them, according to loggers who find these hiding places when a tree is felled.



Pileated Woodpecker

## MR. KEET

Mr. Keet is the joy of our life! He came to us from the woods. As we were





sitting up in our loafing grounds, just in back of our home, we spied large green eyes peering at us from under the bushes on one side of our irrigation canal. Then a sleek black form emerged; it was a large and muscular tom cat resembling a small black panther. He ran as I approached, but ever so often we would see him again, as he loitered around our place, no doubt in search of food. So I started putting out fish and scraps and when we were not too near, he would gobble it up with great gusto.

Gradually he became tamer and would not run when we approached. In all, it took two months to make his acquaintance and finally to pet him. He was so wild he would butt your hand when you stroked his head. At last he became our pet. We had to teach him gentleness, as he was so eager for love he would grab hold and bite to show his affection. This handsome cat was so smart that my husband was able to teach him to roll over and shake hands. He was more like a dog than a cat as he sounded an alarm when strangers approached, and licked and washed our hands and kissed us gently on the wrist. We had never known a cat like this one. During my husband's last illness, Mr. Keet was either on his lap or on the bed beside him.

Our old "Tabitha," a Maltese, twenty years of age disliked him intensely, but he was very disdainful of her growls and paid no attention. When she became too cross, he just raised his paw and swatted her gently, switching his tail back and forth, with an utterly disgusted look on his face.

His past remains a mystery, but because of his cautiousness and wariness, we felt that he must have supported him-

self for several years in the wilds.

## THE RIVER

What charm the River had for us! It gave us so many joys, not only the changing beauty of it, but the pleasure of fishing, swimming and sitting on its banks to observe the wild life, the trees, the wild-flowers and the multi-colored rocks and riffles.

We spent hours visiting our River, only one hundred yards from our log home. During the summer months we fished for trout for our table and for suckers for our cat's table.

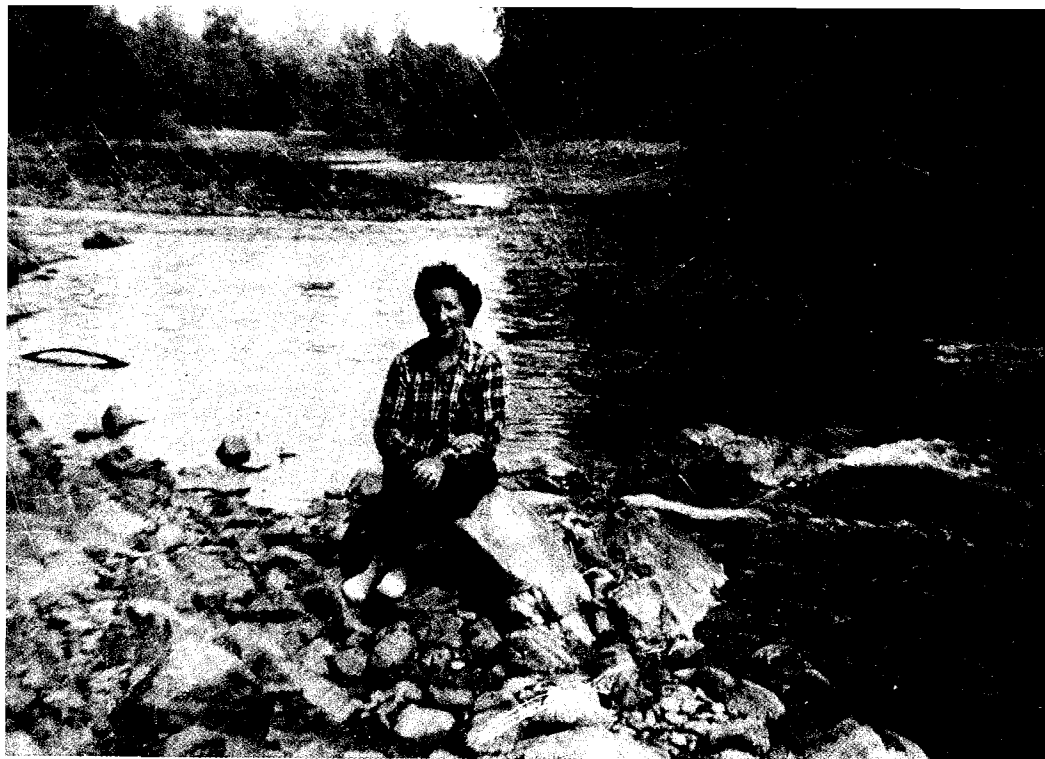
In the fall and winter the large and beautiful steelhead were the thrill of a lifetime to get on the hook.

At certain times the majestic salmon wended their weary way up our River to spawn. During the salmon migration we would always go down to the River to watch the show. These huge fish, all battle-scarred from their long fight upstream over rocks, waterfalls and white water, were a fascination to us. The female, when ready to lay her eggs, searches for a sunny place in the stream to make her bed. She slides her underside back and forth over the bottom to make a nest. Meanwhile, one or two males are right beside her awaiting the egg laying event. They thrash around a good deal at this point so we have been doused with the icy waters when standing too near.

As this is the time we fish for steelhead which follow the salmon upstream from the ocean, we have almost been knocked down by the large flashing tails of the spawning salmon. Sometimes when there is a large migration, the River is alive with activity.

After the eggs are laid and fertilized the male and female both die. It is not an immediate event but not too long after their mission is accomplished. It is a sad sight to watch as they are no longer the glistening and beautiful fish that left the ocean to swim upstream, but so scarred with sores on their sides and completely fatigued. Whenever I saw them wearily turn over on their sides, and gasp their last breath, it almost brought tears to my eyes.

As the salmon are uneatable after a long migration, we angled for the



*Victorine Lee*

sporty steelhead which follow the salmon upstream to feed on their eggs. They are a beautiful and large species of trout, sometimes thirty or more inches long, with a red stripe running along the side. They are so game and fight to the finish to throw the hook. They leap high out of the water, always heading downstream to the fast water, or quickly dart under a large rock or log in the River, sullenly and doggedly refusing to budge. Woe to the fisherman who tries to force them in! They have to be played, sometimes for a half-hour with patience and care, as they can snap a hook or break a line with the greatest of ease. Exhaustion finally makes them submit.

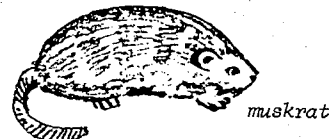
The sucker is a scavenger with large thick lips, if you can call them that. It vacuums up the river bottom and sucks the moss growing on the rock. Some are eighteen to twenty inches in length, and the flesh is pure white. It is a bony fish, but after cooking makes a substantial meal for pets. When the River was low during the summer months, we could see twenty or thirty of them, all in rows, just below a riffle, with mouths wide open, waiting for any tidbit to flow down the River.

In the spring we would go down to our River to visit the family of Wild Ducks that nested there. We could hardly wait for the young ones



to hatch and then watch the proud mother take them out for a swim.

A gray crane also homed there, but he was always alone, and would fly low over the water, giving out a mournful cry. We always hoped he would find a mate.



One day as I sat on a rock dangling my feet in the cool stream, a little muskrat swam up. Seeing me, he quickly turned downstream to land at a safer distance. Often as we fished, we would see a beaver family carrying twigs in their mouths to

complete a dam upstream a bit. If we disturbed them, a big tail slapping occurred, no doubt asking us to move on.

There were many small water snakes in the River, and they became entirely too friendly at times. They loved fish, and would slither around to partake of any trout which we had not put in our creel. Sometimes as I rested on the bank or on a rock, I would put my fish on a willow twig or place them in the water to freshen. But I soon learned that would never do as one time my trout were completely devoured by these little snakes.

I had a pet rock on which I loved to sit and fish, as it was near a good riffle. But I soon found that was not my favorite rock alone. A little water snake was fond of it too. He would sun himself there, and many a time I had to chase him away so that I could sit down. But not for long. Pretty soon he would sneak back, his little tongue wagging at me, and try to find a place on the rock also. This happened so often that we actually became acquainted, and I would talk to him and tell him to move over. He made no effort to leave his rock, so I started to give him a small trout now and then. He would always

take it and swim to the bank and enjoy his meal. It was fascinating to watch how that tiny mouth could eventually swallow the trout.

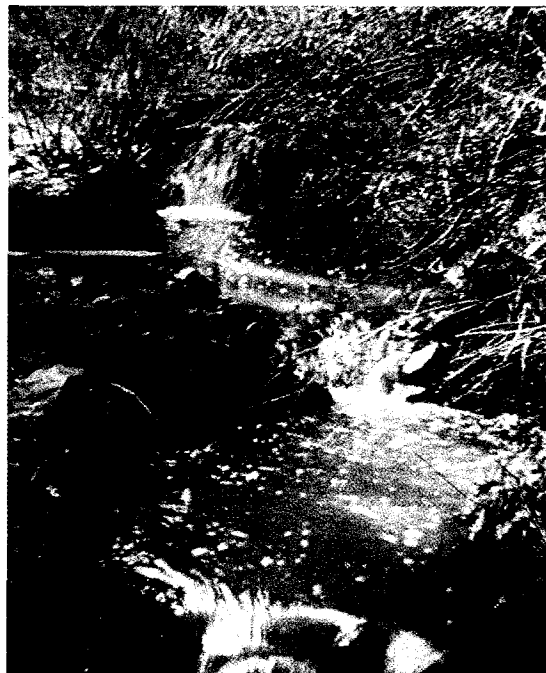
The procedure took quite a while sometimes, but he never gave up until the fish was completely down.

After the winter rains, the River would be a wild roaring torrent, often overflowing its banks and inundating fields and homes. At these times we would watch from our home and see trees, fences, and even houses swirling down the muddy waters. Sometimes a hen coop with a poor chicken atop would sail by.

After the waters subsided, the whole River bed had changed. New channels were formed and old ones obliterated. Then we would have to find new fishing and seimming holes.

While fishing or swimming in the summer, we would see deer slaking their thirst or swimming downstream. We watched them from a safe distance as they cavorted in the water.

In the summer I often wore a bathing suit while fishing so I could take a refreshing swim in a deep pool. My husband generally progressed downstream when he fished, wading a good part of the time. It was a wonderful way of life!



*The Brook*

### CONCLUSION

The memories of these happy times which my husband and I experienced will be forever in my heart. To us there was no greater happiness than this closeness to God and Nature. It was our glorious and bright spot in a world of turmoil and trouble. It was our Garden of Eden.



### MASONIC LODGE SEEKS PHOTOGRAPHS OF PAST MASTERS

Mr. Henry Halvorsen, historian of the Jacksonville Masons, Warren Lodge No. 10, has been making a collection of photographs of Past Masters of that lodge. He now has pictures of all but eight of those who served in the 130 years of the lodge's existence. The names of those who are missing are: Sewel Truax..Master, 1857; Alex Martin..1863; William M. Holmes..1893; Robert E. Golden..1913; Thurston T. Shaw..1915; Carl D. Stout..1916; Wm. H. Johnson..1917; and Jack Sharp..1924.

Mr. Halverson hopes that readers of the newlsetter may have photographs or information about the daily lives of these men and that those readers would be willing to permit the lodge to copy them. Arrangements can be made for those, who would like to tour the lodge hall and observe the pictures and lodge paraphernalia, by calling Mr. Halvorsen, 772-2312, or by writing him at 745 Marshall Avenue, Medford - 97530.

### CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE REAMES STORY

The cover of the September issue pictures two Reames children. The little boy was incorrectly identified as Charles. His name is Clarence. On page 17 Lucinda Reames Anderson's age at the time of her death was given as 95; she was 85. Dr. Thomas Anderson is her grandson and lives in Medford.

Mrs. Stanley R. Kelley, who was misnamed Dorothy Sanford in the story, wrote: "Florence did not die in childbirth. She married a mining engineer and spent most of her life in Weaverville. She taught school there and had a son who was killed in a motorcycle accident. She died in a convalescent home on Delta Waters Road. ...Zela White, my mother was a very accomplished violinist and played with the San Francisco Symphony. She died of TB at the age of 23 and my sister [Margery Murray] and I were raised by our grandparents."

This will help straighten out the record.

# Society News



Director's Report . . . . . Nick Clark

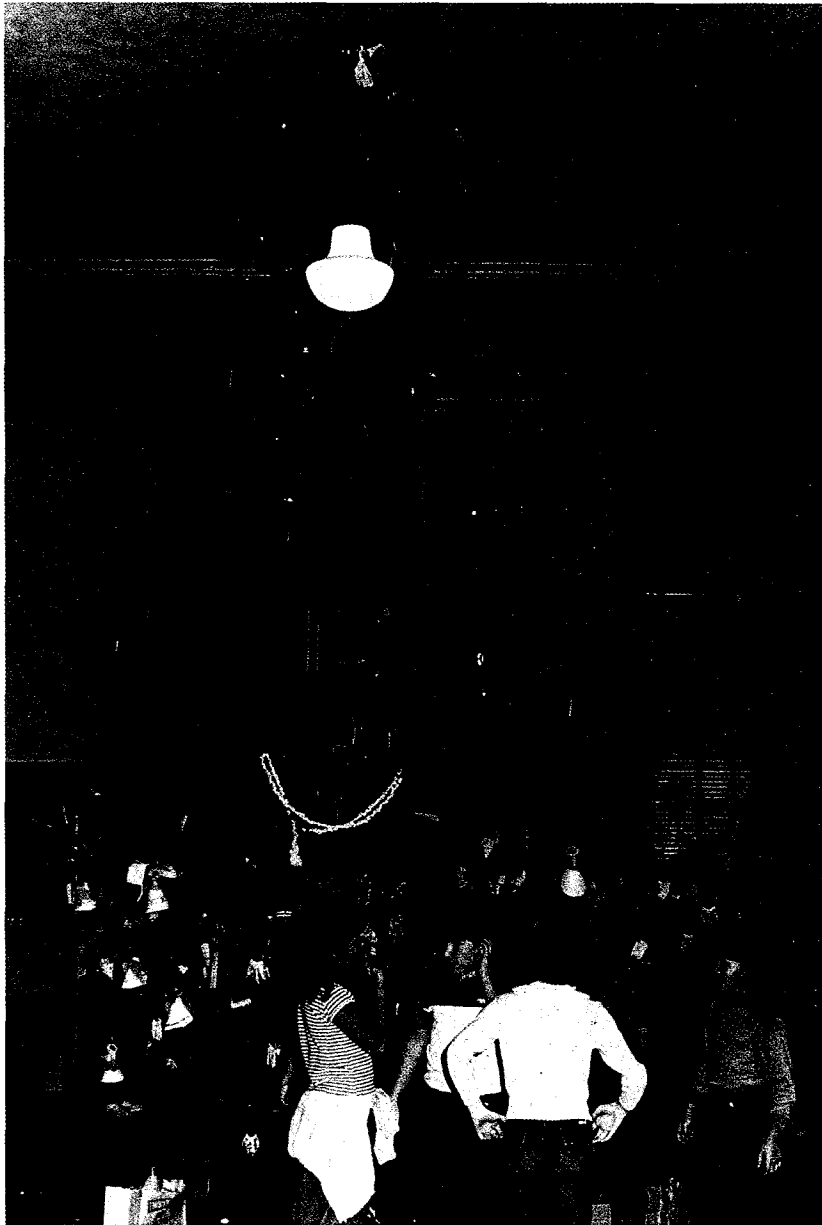
There are so many exciting activities and plans for the society's future that we hardly know where to begin in telling them. However, we want to pause and take this opportunity to thank you, our members, for all of the wonderful support you have given us during 1984. We are very grateful and we look forward to working with you in 1985. From all of the Board and Trustees, the staff and myself, we wish you a wonderful Holiday Season and prosperous and healthful 1985!

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- November 23 to January 11, 1985 - Special Christmas Exhibits in the Jacksonville Museum and the Children's Museum. See the 20' Christmas Tree, the antique children's toys, and the historic Peter Britt Parlor.
- January 19, 1985 - The Southern Oregon Historical Society and the Southern Oregon Folklore Society will jointly sponsor a traditional country dance featuring circle, square, and contre dancing to live music. Admission will be \$2.50 for adults, \$2.00 for children and \$2.00 for SOHS and SOFS members. The dance will begin at 8:00PM in the U. S. Hotel, Jacksonville.
- January 27, 1985 - SUNDAY AFTERNOON SOCIAL You won't want to miss this special showing of two films about southern Oregon. The first is Southern Oregon Historical Highlights which includes outtakes from "Grace's Visit To the Rogue Valley" a 1915 film made to promote settlement in the Rogue Valley, an also outtakes from film taken by the COPCO electric company recording events of the Rogue Valley during the 1920's and 30's.
- The second film will be Applegate Odyssey, a color documentary made in 1976 when George McUne organized the Applegate Trail commemorative wagon train expedition. This group wore costumes and retraced a portion of the old Applegate Trail in authentic wagons. The film also gives much information about original Applegate crossings. The event will begin at 2:00PM in the U. S. Hotel, Jacksonville.

DON'T FORGET THESE IMPORTANT DATES!

# Christmas Fest A Big Success



"What a great way to begin the holidays" was the most often heard comment as the "Spirit of Christmas Past" opened on November 23. More than 1500 persons toured the Jacksonville Museum and Children's Museum during the three day weekend and more than 1000 persons toured the historic homes and church on exhibit.

The festival was sponsored by the Southern Oregon Historical Society but was produced with the cooperation of several organizations: The Jacksonville Garden Club, The Medford Garden Club, The Applegate Valley Garden Club and the First Presbyterian Church.

In the photograph at the left, children of Jacksonville Elementary School decorate the 20-foot tree in the Jacksonville Museum with authentic decorations. Exhibits in both museums will continue until after New Year.

Because of the unique festival, Sunset Magazine will feature Jacksonville's Christmas Festival in its November 1985 issue. Plans are already in the works for our 1985 event!



Members of the Jacksonville Garden Club arrange decorations in the Peter Britt Room. The large rocking horse was donated by the Native Daughters of Jacksonville in 1950 when the museum was established and is an old Jacksonville artifact.



# Give A Membership For Christmas !

The Southern Oregon Historical Society is now 2,000 members strong and growing---but we'd love to have 5,000 members. A membership in the society has many benefits:

1. Receipt of the monthly newsletter, "The Table Rock Sentinel," packed full of southern Oregon History and society news
2. An opportunity to become an active society volunteer
3. Free participation in special events and the the opportunity for historical travel.

Your society has many exciting plans for the future and we think that you are going to want to let your friends in on the action by giving them a membership at Christmas. What a great gift for family and friends. You'll help us preserve our heritage while your family and friends will be able to become a part of our exciting work.

Please clip the form at the bottom of the page and send it to our membership secretary. If received in time, we will send a letter notifying the recipient of your gift, along with a packet of information and the society's new Swedenburg Calendar. Do it today! If received after December 20, we'll send the material just as soon as possible but it will not arrive in time for Christmas.

We'll appreciate your support!!

## GIFT MEMBERSHIP

I would like to purchase a membership in the Southern Oregon Historical Society for:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phn: \_\_\_\_\_

Junior Historian (18 & under)	\$ 6.00
Seniors (65 and over)	\$ 10.00
Individual	\$ 12.00
Family	\$ 15.00

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Maureen Smith  
S.O.H.S.  
P.O. Box 480  
Jacksonville, OR 97530

THANK YOU!!!

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

206 N. Fifth St., P.O. Box 480  
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530 (503) 899-1847

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