
THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Nunan Children
Ella, Josephine, Frances, Charles



WILLIAM G. T'VAULT The Opportunist PART 2

The story of WILLIAM G. T'VAULT began in the April issue of the "Table Rock Sentinel." Part one featured his crossing the plains, his torturous experiences on the Meek Cutoff and his activities in Oregon City as editor of the first newspaper in the West. At the conclusion of the first episode he had just left the Willamette valley to begin another phase of his life in southern Oregon.

By this time Indian tribes in the northwest, from Puget Sound to the Rogue River valley, including those in eastern Oregon and Washington, began to realize the seriousness of their predicament. Foreseeing that they must lose their lands unless they could expel the unwelcome settlers who were already there and prevent others from coming, they began a more or less concerted resistance and waged intermittent warfare. The Rogues had always been intollerant of intruders, and had earlier earned the reputation of being rascals, wily and cruel.

In fact friendly relations had existed only rarely between the Rogues and the earliest explorers who had made no demands on their hunting grounds. In 1850 a group of men who had set sail on the *Samuel Rogers* for the mouth of the Klamath River to investigate the possibility of establishing a port there, had missed the Klamath and accidentally sailed into the Rogue River many miles to the north. Five men, who were sent ashore to scout the area, overturned in the treacherous surf and two were drowned. The three who made their way to shore were met by waiting Rogues who quickly

stripped them of everything but their shirts. Although the Indians did no other harm to the men, those aboard the ship were determined to avenge their bare-bottomed shipmates, and they gallantly aimed the bow at the river's entrance and set full sail.

The little schooner skidded across the bar and before anchor could be dropped she ground to a halt on a sandbar. During the few days the *Samuel Roberts** was aground, the crew had to maintain an alert guard to keep the Indians from stealing the ship one piece at a time. Some of the more enterprising braves even tried to remove the ship's copper bottom sheathing with their teeth. They had made remarkable progress before the activity was discovered. One of the sailors later reported that the Rogue River In-

* A little later the *Samuel Roberts* sailed up the Umpqua to prove the river was navigable, but it ran aground just above Echo Island. The crewmen agreed that lightening the load was the only practical means of floating free from the sand bar and accordingly the total supply of liquor was passed out to the crew who in turn passed out from the effects of the generous allotment of grog. The schooner floated free with the rising tide, and the historic spot is still called Brandy Bar.

dians were certainly the equal of any professional pickpockets in the civilized world.

Although the loss of one's pants might be considered an occupational hazard of exploring Indian country, little was done to concilliate the natives and much was done to teach them their lessons.

With the discovery of gold and its accompanying influx of unwelcome visitors, isolated outrages moved into hard fighting, but in spite of the savagery and bloodshed, prospectors poured into southern Oregon and settlers took up land along the Rogue River and its branches. Groups of unarmed travelers with enviable property and livestock presented an irrisistible temptation to the Indians, but robbery provoked punishment and punishment provoked retaliation; the stealing continued because one was not guilty unless he was caught. Unfortunately in that case the blood that was shed was the seed of a fearful harvest.

Oregon had been organized into a territory since 1848 but in 1852 there was neither an Indian agent nor a military force in the Rogue River valley. Samuel Thurston had become the first Oregon Territorial delegate to the United States Congress and he had advised authorities in the capital that the Indians of Oregon were friendly and that troupes were unnecessary.* The nearest military forces were at Fort Orford and Fort Jones, and the soldiers were remote enough to present no threat to the menacing Rogues who continued to attack individuals and small groups, burned cabins, killed cattle and stole horses. The settlers and the miners banded together and rode forth for revenge, committing even worse crimes and a state of undeclared hostility existed in southern Oregon.

In 1850 a commission had been created to make treaties with the Indians by giving them presents and making some promises to pay for their lands. But the Rogues felt no moral obligation to keep faith and the white men, after the loss of friends and property, were not in-

* This circumstance undoubtedly prolonged the war and needlessly increased the hardships of the settlers. It was almost two years before Congress sent support to the Oregon volunteers. Samuel R. Thurston who was a powerful enemy to Dr. John McLoughlin was obviously not one of the most highly principled and deserving of Oregon's early politicians.

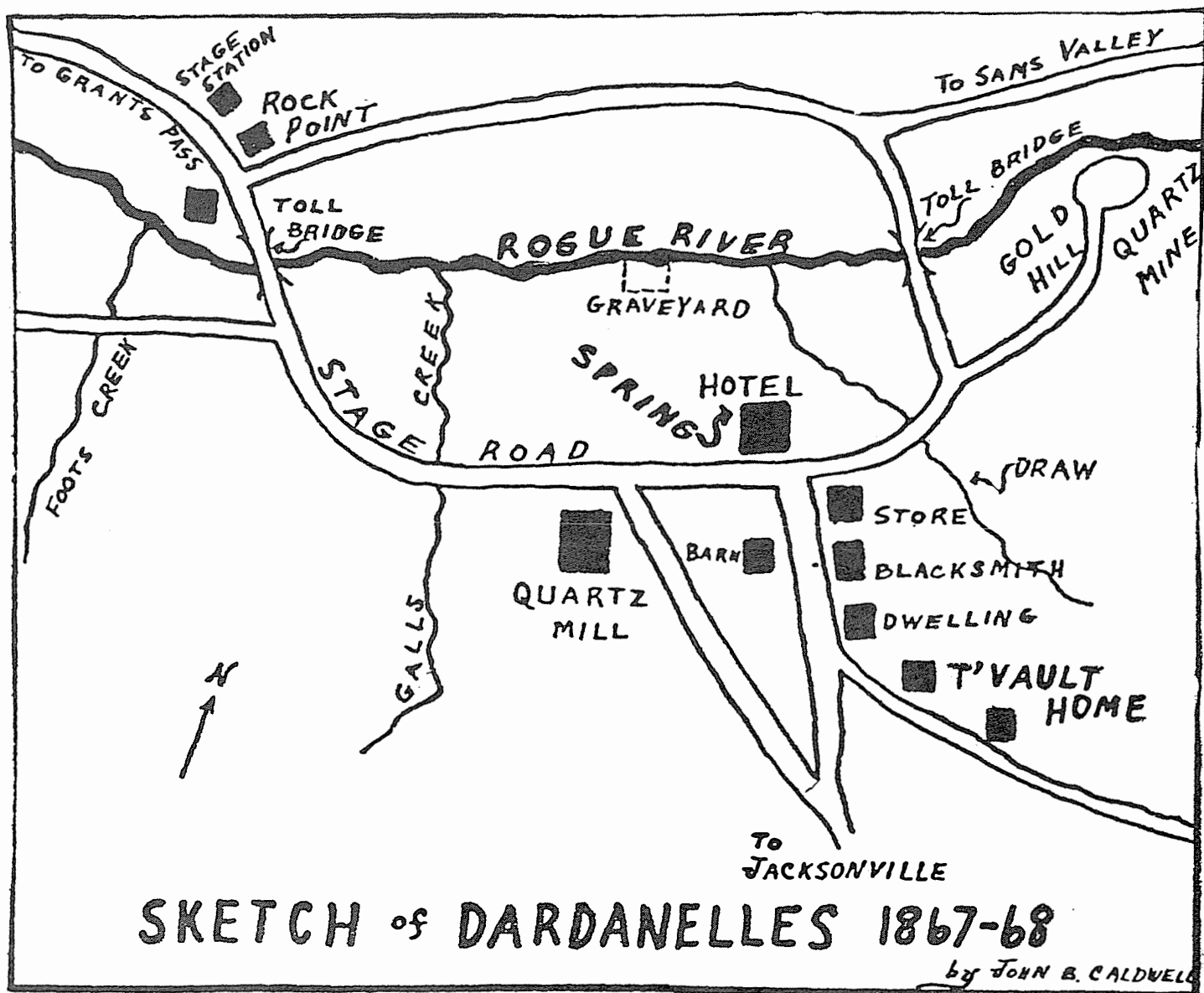


Samuel R. Thurston

clined to honor any treaty. But for a while in 1851 it appeared that relations had improved. A number of Indians -- Sam, Joe, Tipsee Tyee, Queen Mary and others -- became familiar figures in Jacksonville where they mingled with the settlers and were sometimes invited to dinner, and the pilfering and sniping lessened to an occasional incident. It was during this time that William Green T'Vault, his wife and three children arrived in southern Oregon.

His first intentions were to prospect for gold, and as he neared Jacksonville, he was given the news that nuggets had just been found in the area where Gold Hill was eventually established. He pulled up his oxen at a spot on the south bank of the Rogue River where a spring of cold, clear water bubbled from the earth and a narrow strip of green land was nestled against the hills. He crawled down from the wagon seat and announced to his family that they had reached their destination, the Dardanelles.

Some historians maintain he named the spot in memory of his mother who was born in Turkey; others claim he named it Dardanelles because it resembles that region, but there is no record that he had ever visited the Hellespont. Mr. Ruby Quackenbush, a member of a pioneer family, stated that the land was originally occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company and that Fort Dardanelles was named by French-Canadian trappers. There is a Dardanelle in Arkansas, and it is likely T'Vault named



Pictured is a reproduction of a sketch drawn by John B. Caldwell, Portland, in 1938, of the community of the Dardanelles as it existed in 1867 on the south bank of the Rogue river, across the river from the present city of Gold Hill. It was established on October 19, 1852.

it after that city. If any one knows whether it is Dardanelle or Dardanelles, or just why it was named that, let him come forward for his reward. W.G. T'Vault built his cabin there and made a Donation Land Claim on the 210.75 acres bordering Kane (originally T'Vault) creek.

If he had any success mining and struck the mother lode, the facts remain hidden. He appears to have spent little energy digging in the creeks or washing out pans of mud. Prospecting demands unlimited time and concentration, and patience was certainly not T'Vault's greatest virtue. Overnight two-hundred miners appeared at Big Bar (next to Gold Hill) and it was pretty obvious that gold was more easily

It was located near the spring shown in the drawing which is now in the right of way of Highway 99 across the river from Gold Hill. At the time of this drawing the post office was in Rock Point. It was later re-established in the Dardanelles, presumably in the hotel.

extracted from their pockets than from the creek beds. He could not have arrived in southern Oregon much before February and by March he had established T'Vault and Company's Oregon and Shasta Express and Postal Service, touching at Oregon City, Winchester, the Rogue River Indian Agency, Josephine Creek, Minersville, Humbug City and Shasta Butte City (now Yreka, California).

In addition to his express line he became the first postmaster in southern Oregon--and third in the entire state. One article refers to his daughter, Elizabeth, acting as postmistress so he must have given her a little allowance to share the chores. The postal duties

couldn't have been very burdensome; business transactions took place in two empty cigar boxes and the T'Vault kitchen was the post office so the overhead was no financial challenge.

The more intimate acquaintance between the whites and the red races in southern Oregon did not lead to a feeling of confidence. The circle of robbery--punishment--retaliation--punishment eventually led to frequent murders. Jacksonville was populated with riffraff from California; Vigilance Committees in San Francisco had banished their undesirables by sending them out of the state. Other California cities followed the practice with their law-breakers and these outcasts flocked to the nearest town in Oregon. John Wesley Hillman (discoverer of Crater Lake) tells in his journal that "Jacksonville had as temporary citizens some well-known gun fighters, quite a crew of gamblers, and other hoodlums." This element had short fuses and was even less likely to overlook the trespasses of the Rogues than the more sedate townspeople and soon open warfare broke out all over the Rogue River valley. The settlements were threatened and isolated homesteaders were in terror of the angry Indians. William T'Vault joined his neighbors in patrolling the immigrant road from Bear creek to what is now Grants Pass and warning the settlers and miners that war was unavoidable, and advising them to head for the forts.

There were no federal troupes on patrol duty and scattered bands of volunteers were unable to provide protection for cabins or remote claims. The pioneers took refuge in forts where there was some safety in numbers. T'Vault's home at the Dardanelles was quickly turned into a fortification and a stockade was erected around it. The walls were constructed by digging a trench four or five feet deep around the cabin and standing logs, twenty to thirty feet in length, on end to form a bullet proof wall. The dirt from the trench was replaced, tramped solid, and loopholes to fire at an attacking enemy were cut out at strategic positions. There was little space for cabins and none of the comforts of even the most primitive living. The occupants had to rough it, which they did for months at a time, having abandoned

their own property to the enemy who traveled around the countryside firing cabins and storage sheds for sport. On pages 12 and 13 is a detailed sketch of a fort built on the Gore Brothers' Donation Land Claim. It was drawn by one of the pioneers who lived there during the trying times of 1853-1856. Several of the inhabitants have been given short biographies in previous newsletters.

Detailed descriptions and campaign strategy of the Rogue River Indian wars have appeared in previous issues of the *Table Rock Sentinel*. There is no point in repeating them for the T'Vault story although he participated in the bloody battles which culminated in the peace treaties of 1853 and 1856. His earlier experiences with the Indians while crossing the plains and exploring the coastal wilderness did not make him sympathetic to the Indian cause.

He had formerly been associated with several of the commanders and leading military men and had received praise as a frontiersman from Phil Kearney and General Lane. Though he was among the first to volunteer for battle, he didn't win any medals for bravery. At the start of the hostilities he was sent on a patrol in the Willow Springs area with several settlers including David Birdseye and S.S. Wall. The group was attacked from ambush by Takelmas hiding in the forest and two of the patrol party -- Dr. William Rose and John R. Hardin -- were killed. Realizing he had been the target of Indians who were skilled riflemen dampened his enthusiasm for Indian fighting considerably. In his earlier skirmishes he had faced an enemy armed principally with bows and arrows and canoe paddles. These Indians had guns and ammunition and knew how to use them.

In the brief period of uneasy peace when the warriors lay low and the other Rogues had appeared docile and even friendly, the deceitful Indians had actually been acquiring guns and arming themselves. Their methods of accomplishing this was certainly considered unethical by the whites although it may have been regarded as the peak of virtue by the Indians. Many guns of course were stolen whenever the opportunity presented itself but many, many other firearms were traded by the miners and settlers for the

favours of the Indian women. Sometimes a squaw was repurchased several times by her new white master when she returned to her tribe while the miner was away working on his claim. Jack Sutton wrote in his brief biography of William T'Vault, "By this type of trade the Indian could sometimes rid himself of a troublesome wife or daughter for a good gun and felt himself well ahead in the bargain, with a fair chance for a second gun when returning the same merchandise."

Over two hundred volunteers were enrolled: 115 from the Rogue River valley and 80 from Yreka. Eventually federal troupes arrived from Fort Jones and Fort Orford, and groups of men from other areas joined in the fighting, but Indians were on the warpath all over the Territory and distant settlers had to stay home and tend to their own battles. The volunteers were on the defensive, received no pay and used their own rifles. At the beginning they were outnumbered by the enemy and had fewer guns, but they were fighting to protect their families and all they possessed and they needed no spirited urging or patriotic enducement. How the separate headquarters found money to feed and bed-down so many with so little help from the government is a question to be answered at another time.

Early in the conflict, General Lane was put in command of the troops and William T'Vault, as his friend, was appointed an aide. He was in charge of a division along with Colonel John Ross and other famous Indian fighters, and he led his men in some courageous fighting and did his share of the shooting or at least carried out the orders handed to him by his famous general. He no doubt charged around the front of the line shouting directions from time to time, for he was among the wounded and carried a lifelong reminder of his valor. A musket ball passed through his hand resulting in a permanent partial paralysis.

First hand accounts of the battles fail to name him. He left no spectacular record as an expert on battle tactics or as a sly plotter to out-manuever and out-wit the Rogues. William Tichenor, in his *Reminiscences*, states: "T'Vault's reputation as an Indian fighter is both good and bad. In some cases he conducted

himself with skill and courage. It is reported in others he was cowardly and stupid." In truth there is no necessity to excel in everything to be a winner. He was an adroit lawyer, a cunning politician and a smart editor but when he assumed the role of an experienced explorer and a master soldier, he was far out of his depth, and has to take his lumps.

His daughter, Elizabeth, a proficient student in Indian languages, did distinguish herself at the first unsuccessful peace treaty at Battle Mountain in 1853 by acting as interpreter when the generals and chiefs met for parley.* William T'Vault was unable to be present at this dramatic moment as he had been felled by a severe fever. He later reported that at the command of his doctor, his entire family kept him unwillingly confined to his bed. One sees him with his fevered eyes flashing in defiance, his weakened legs and arms flailing in air as his stern physician orders his faithful wife and his three dutiful children to sit on him to keep him from staggering up the hills of Table Rock. As soon as he had regained sufficient strength to stand, however, he joined General Lane and some other commanders in a visit to the Klamath river camp of Chief Tipsee Tyee to make a separate treaty with the Shasta tribes.

When the Battle Mountain treaty had been agreed upon the Indians seemed willing to live in peace although some of them occasionally roamed away from the reservation. The treaty was broken by the settlers and the miners who had developed such hatred for the Rogues they continued to murder them. Women and children were frequent victims of savage attacks and there was no relin-

* In the SOHS archives is a copy of a letter written to Elizabeth T'Vault from the secretary of the Oregon Pioneers' Association written in Chinook language (1906).

My dear Mrs. Kenney,
Mica tickey chahco copah piah, chick-chick
copah Poteland? Mica nanich tenass papeh,
yass klosa wawa.
Hyu abncutty Boston tillicums, hyu muckamuck,
hyu he-he! Mica cumtux. Klahowyan Six.

George H. Himes

The donor wrote:

"Those who haven't the time to translate the letter must be content with the information that it is an invitation to a meeting at Portland where there will be much of interest and much laughter, and one which will be attended by many people."

quishing the policy of *Extermination!* After a brief respite the war began again.

Sometime before the conclusion of the war T'Vault moved his family to Jacksonville. His home at the Dardanelles remained a functioning fort with volunteers and soldiers stationed there, but he seems to have dropped out of the actual fighting. He was at least 45 years old and a little long in the tooth for soldiering. When rebelling Indians in other parts of the Territory were defeated, the soldier fighting them were transferred to the Rogue River valley to continue the war there, and the need for volunteers lightened considerably.

During the early days of Jacksonville's growth, T'Vault resumed his practice of law, and in 1854, when Jackson County was included as an Oregon judicial district, he was elected as the first prosecuting attorney. It would seem southern Oregon should have been so occupied at this time defending itself from the Rogues, there would have been little time for other business, but there is a record of February, 1854, that T'Vault successfully defended Fanny Tyron, alias Fanny White, against a charge of adultery. His other activities are a little obscure but he did receive the handsome figure of \$300 a year for the performance of his duties as prosecutor.

In 1855 William T'Vault, Alex Blakeley and Sylvester Taylor bought the plant and equipment of the *Umpqua Gazette*, a defunct paper that had been published in Scottsburg. Interested in establishing a newspaper in southern Oregon, they joined forces and put up the necessary cash. The tools, the printing press and the other gear were moved by ship to Crescent City and freighted into Jacksonville by pack mules. There it was set up and T'Vault with his previous experience as editor of the *Oregon Spectator* plus a stint as assistant editor of the *Oregon Statesman** at Salem, was

* The *Statesman*, edited by Asahel Bush, was the democratic standard bearer in Oregon. T'Vault, a staunch democrat, was natural choice for assistant editor. Ten years later, however, the two men became enemies. Bush, anti-Lane, supported Stephen Douglas and the Union party, and T'Vault backed the Southern Democrats, with candidates Breckenridge and Lane.

the natural choice for Editor in Chief. Taylor, who also had had years of experience in journalism, apparently deferred to T'Vault as the oldest and the most vocal. Vol. I No. 1 of the *Table Rock Sentinel*, the first newspaper south of the Calapooia Mountains, appeared on November 24, 1855. (Jacksonville had briefly been called Table Rock City.)

In a short time T'Vault bought Taylor's and Blakeley's shares and became sole owner. Why they agreed to sell their shares of the investment has not been disclosed, but T'Vault could hardly have been a continual joy to work with.

Colonel T'Vault is known as the *first* editor in Oregon; he is not known as the *best*. His papers, however, closely resembled other early-day newspapers. In those days editors weren't concerned with tact and objectivity. Rival editors came in for their share of vituperation, and they naturally made their responses to the attacks in the same caustic manner. (Perhaps T'Vault's editorials were a tad more salacious than others.) Political contests were open season and no holds were barred, but most of the name calling was directed at local politicians and local issues. National news was lifted word-for-word from eastern papers, and was pretty circumspect; it was for the local coverage that the editors complacently shoveled out the libel.

As a speaker for loyal democrats, T'Vault expressed his feelings often and eloquently. Rev. George Gary said, (*Oregon Historical Quarterly* XXIV) "T'Vault had a violent, consuming temper over which he had little control and once he became angry about something chances are he remained that way for life." The *Table Rock Sentinel* was an excellent outlet for his explosive irascibility. The anti-abolitionists rallied around the banner and saw him as a fearless spokesman for the southern cause; the unionists regarded him as an unrestrained rabble-rouser. He stuck doggedly to his beliefs but he had spent his boyhood in Tennessee and had been thoroughly indoctrinated with southern democrat philosophy. "If I had one drop of abolitionist blood in my veins," he wrote, "I would cut it out." He also offered to meet his opposition on the field of honor, but he had a reputation as a crack shot and had no takers to his challenge.

George, William T'Vault's only son, a youth of seventeen, died in 1857. Young as he was, he had gone into partnership with his father in the publication of the *Sentinel*, and his death was a bitter blow to T'Vault. It meant the end of his branch of the T'Vault name.

In 1858 Colonel T'Vault was elected to the legislature from Jackson County and was named speaker of the house on the first ballot. He conducted the affairs of the legislature in a capable manner and appears to have lashed down his temper and kept his mouth shut. In his first year he introduced a resolution requesting the Oregon delegation in the capital to use their influence for the establishment of a military post at Klamath Lake with an agent in residence to serve the Klamath Indians. He also introduced a memorial to Congress asking that a mail-route be adopted that would afford tri-weekly mail service between Portland and Yreka. Ever eager to direct any floating dollars into his own pocket, he probably had in mind a revival of his stage line if he could secure a lucrative contract. The measure attracted little support.

His greatest concern at this time was advancing the democratic party and persuading people in the Oregon Territory to support its platform. He nagged the legislature continually to pass a law that would permit slave owners to bring their slaves into the Territory. "Any citizen of a slave holding state," he declared, "must be allowed to convey his chattel property to the Oregon Territory and be protected in his rights to hold his property. The Constitution authorizes the holding of slaves in all Territories and the legislature cannot prohibit slavery." Southern Oregon was a hot bed of democrats and Jacksonville was full of copperheads. An effort was made--in spite of William T'Vault--to support the Union Party but most of the citizens remained true to Jefferson Davis; Colonel T'Vault let his pro-Southern feelings overcome his normal American patriotism.

In 1858 he took W.G. Robinson as a partner and the name of the paper changed to *Oregon Sentinel*, but in the fall of 1859 it was sold to James O'Meara, who continued the pro-southern

policy with a vengeance. A complete change came in 1861 when the *Sentinel* presses were sold to Henry Denlinger and W.M. Hand who were strongly Republican. The Colonel returned to his law practice.

As the Civil War neared, William T'Vault became active in the movement to establish the Pacific Republic. This plan, which for some years was supported by a small group of malcontents in Oregon and California, was designed to divide the United States into three separate republics. The third republic, made up of the western coastal areas and some inland states, would be a sort of Utopia. The citizens would live like southern gentlemen, and all labor would be performed by workers from China, Africa, the South Seas and the Hawaiian Island. This labor force would be invited to come to the west where they would work as servants without the benefit of citizenship.

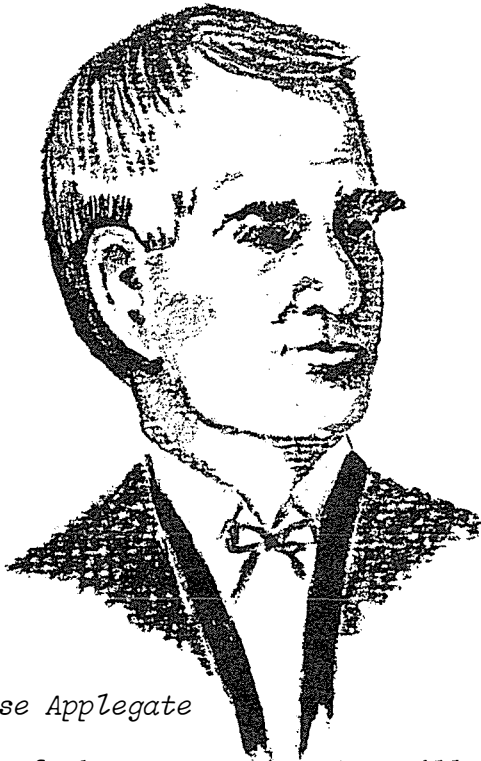
Advocates of the plan must have assumed that life in this Pacific Eden would be such a privilege, people would jump at the irresistible opportunity to become slaves.* T'Vault campaigned for the idea but received little encouragement. By 1862 most of the people in Jacksonville regarded the Pacific Republic as a joke.

But General Joseph Lane took it seriously enough. Defeated in his bid for Vice President of the United States on the Breckenridge ticket, he arrived back in Oregon on the same boat which brought news of the attack and surrender at Fort Sumpter.

Included with General Lane's baggage were "stout boxes" filled with rifles. His plan was to deliver them to Jacksonville where, with T'Vault's help, he would arm those southern Oregonians who were sympathetic to the confederate cause though putting rifles in the hands of paranoiac, secessionist-minded citizens was a treasonable plan.

Lane hired an Irish teamster to carry

*There were four distinct periods in this movement. First the pre-conquest period, 1843-1846, when American settlers planned to establish another Lone Star State in California; second, the period from 1846-1850, when Congress neglected to admit California into the union; third, the decade from 1850-1860, when the federal government failed to grant all of California's demands; and fourth, the period before the Civil War when the people in the west had no desire to participate in the conflict.



Jesse Applegate

some of the crates to Jacksonville and took his place beside him on the wagon seat. Unfortunately for General Lane, but fortunately for the Union cause, the driver's pistol accidentally discharged and the bullet struck the general, wounding him painfully but not mortally. The accident occurred when the general with his freight had just reached the home of Jesse Applegate in Yoncalla.

Applegate had never been an avid supporter of Colonel T'Vault, and had, in fact, opposed him in many military and political schemes. T'Vault had frequently attacked him in the *Sentinel* and Jesse Applegate thought the Colonel was unreliable, if not unbalanced.* While a doctor removed the bullet and during the general's few days of convalescence, Applegate talked him out of continuing on to Jacksonville and persuaded him to give up the rash plan.

The attempt did not miss the attention of the federal authorities. To prevent further action by those southern Oregonians favoring the Confederate cause, Captain J.M. Keeler was sent to Oregon with a corps of detectives to keep an eye on the movements of men be-

* Jesse Applegate had earlier said, "In the late 40s T'Vault was the most powerful politician in the Oregon Territory, but his enemies outnumbered his friends because he had a difficult time restraining his avarice. Friendship was not important when the Colonel saw a chance to turn a quick dollar."

lieved to have arms and ammunition hidden in their barns, and Fort Baker was established near Phoenix in Jackson County to house a troupe of officers and men sent to prevent any undercover opposition to the Union cause. These events occurred at a time T'Vault was not connected with a paper and he was unable to present his views in print. The presence of government men sent to keep him under surveillance certainly indicates he was more than just a minor rebel.

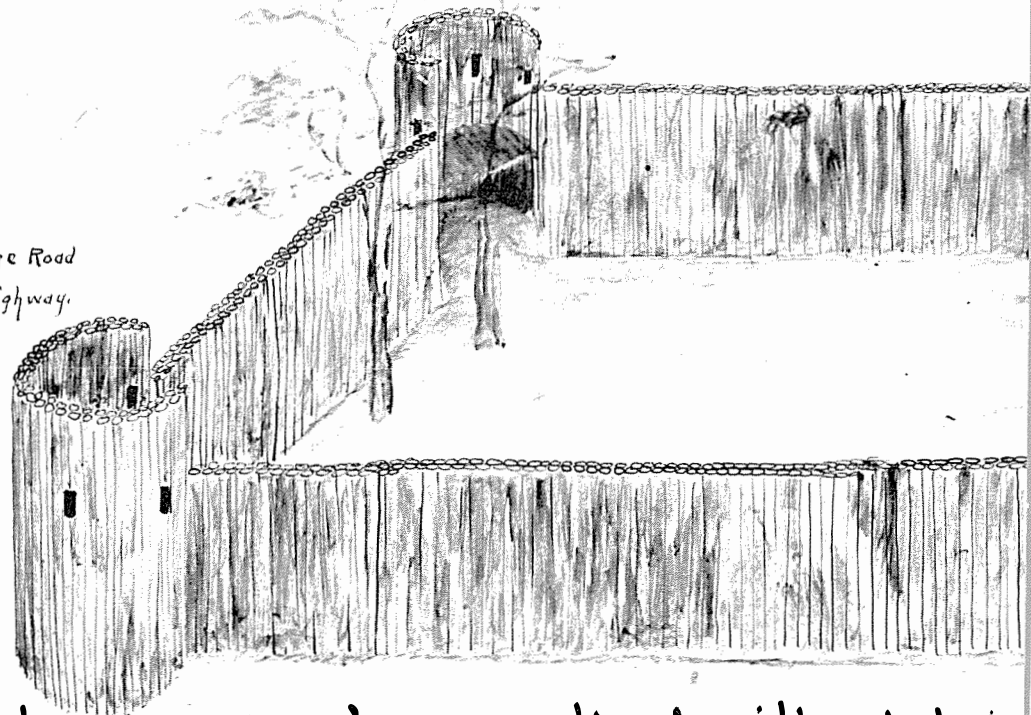
Robert Treat Platt, in an article appearing in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, reveals that much earlier, shortly after Lincoln's election in 1860, Senator Gwin of California with the cooperation of General Lane had formulated this plan for a slave-holding republic on the Pacific coast. If the southern states succeeded in withdrawing from the Union, then a continuous line of slave territory would stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But if there was a war between the North and South, then the Pacific coast should be captured and the Pacific Republic established separately.

The historian, Bancroft, wrote that but for the strong restraining advice of Jesse Applegate and the sentiment against him on his return, there is no doubt that General Lane would have embarked on the plan and that the boxes of arms and ammunition were intended for that purpose. It was a well-known fact in 1862 that an oath-bound secret organization was holding nightly meetings in many places. Gwin, Lane and a man named Tilden were the advisers of this movement to steal the Pacific coast from the federal union. They called themselves "The Knights of the Golden Circle."

Eight hundred of the knights, armed to the teeth, planned to make the initial outbreak and capture the arsenal at Fort Benicia. Fortunately their plan was exposed at the last minute and loyalists, armed and ready, joined together and defeated the movement. Like the K.K.K., the Knights of the Golden Circle were a long time dying.

In 1861 the Washington Territory legislature repudiated the Pacific Republic, and in 1862 the Oregon legis-

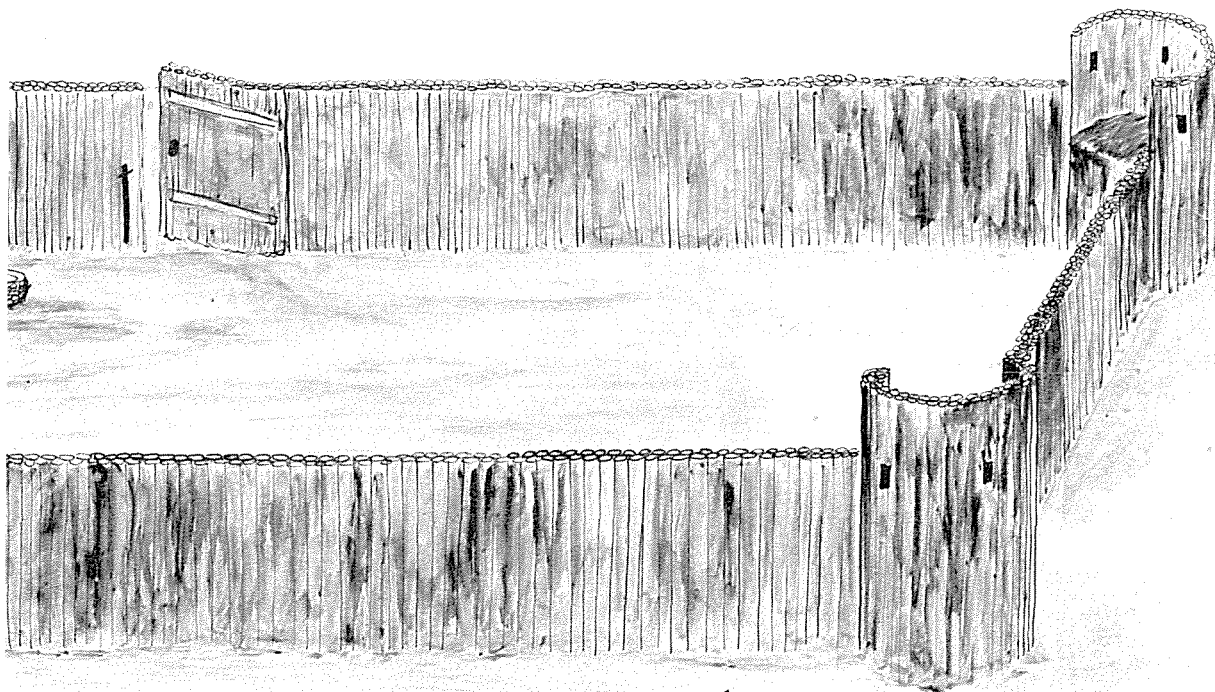
The old Stage Road
now The Pacific Highway.



Stockade 160 by 80 ft. built of logs
the ground. Built in 1853 on the C

List of Pioneers wh

Emerson E. Gore, wife and 3 children - L. A. Rose,
Annetta J. Gore, Walter S. Gore 3
Emory E. Gore - bachelor 185
S. D. Van Dyke, wife and son John G. 185
Dr. Mc Kinnell and wife. 185
George and wife. (just married.) 185
W^m Hoffman, wife and 6 daughters - Mary (Mr.
Geo. Vining) Julia (Mrs. C. C. Beekman) Anna (Mrs.
David Linn) Emma (Mrs. Geo. Dorris) Florence
(Mrs. Shipley) Kate (Mrs. Hal Hoffman) all of 185.
Aunt Betsy Hoffman. 185.



20 and 26 ft. long, buried 4 ft. deep in
re Donation Claim 2½ mi. S. of Medford.

lived here in 1853-4-6.

Mr. Arrudale, wife and daughters - Mary Jane,
Sarah Jane and son W^m. Henry 1852.

The 2 Gigar Brothers 1853.

Mr. Frick, wife and baby (buried within stockade) '53.

Chas. Jones and Louis Calhoun - bachelors - '52.

John and M. H. Coleman - brothers 1853.

Louis Sisley - bachelors 1853.

Ab Giddings and Wallace Bishop - bachelors '53.

Joe Pinkham - bachelor 1852

John S. Herrin and wife.

Mr. Wright, wife and family.

lature denounced the idea.

General Lane fell from adulation and fame to oblivion with the lost cause of southern secession and the failure of the Knights. He retired to his farm near Roseburg in Douglas county where he mouldered away for the last twenty years of his life.

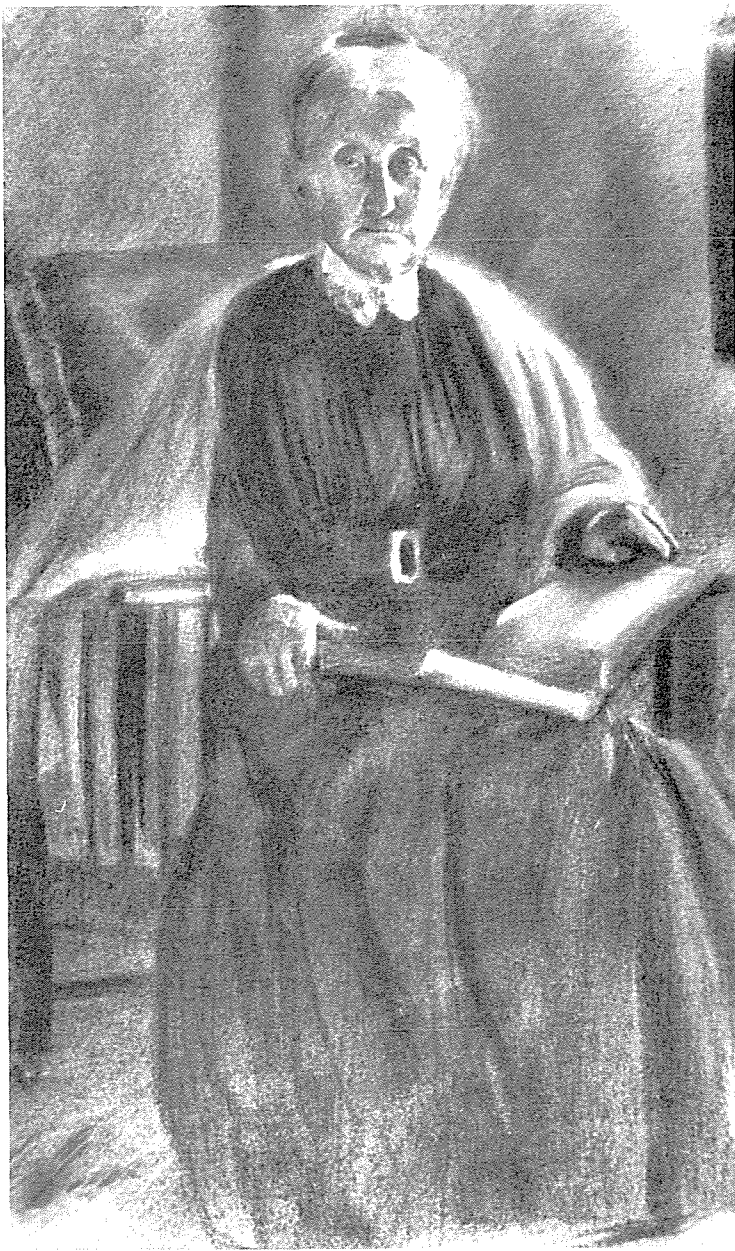
An issue of the *Sentinel* suggested that an oath of loyalty should be given to political candidates and that they should be required to sign the following pledge:

I sincerely promise and solemnly swear ...I do not desire, like T'Vault did in 1862, and still desires, to hold a high position in a Pacific Republic, that I will not publish a newspaper to encourage sedition, treason, or to assist in building up a Pacific Republic like T'Vault did.

When asked to present his stand on this seditious issue, he of course proclaimed his innocence. The *Sentinel*, published weekly, has omitted part of the story or else research has failed to disclose it. It would seem a jury was empanelled to determine if Colonel T'Vault was guilty of perjury and, after consideration, they acquitted him. Could a jury made up of local men clear a man of a federal charge? The document was signed by twelve honorable citizens:

Thomas Hopwood	Eli K. Anderson
Levi Pinkham	James Dawson
Peter E. Miller	William Bybee
Aaron Chambers	Miles F. Alcore
Hugh F. Barron	James Kilgore
Burrell B. Griffin	Thomas X. Clark

Late in 1862 Colonel T'Vault purchased the printing plant of the unsuccessful Jacksonville newspaper, *The Herald*, and early in 1863 began publishing a new democratic sheet, the *Oregon Intelligencer*. A perfunctory glance through its pages reveals much of the same type of journalism that is found in the *Sentinel*: editorials pushing the confederate cause, accusations and slander against his rivals, name calling (the *Sentinel*, now a Republican rag, became *Scent-in-Hell* and the editor became "Long Ugly") and a viciously biased view of political candidates, Indians and Chinese. Of course his attacks gave rival editors plenty of opportunity to reply in kind. For example, the editor



This charcoal sketch is a portrait of Elizabeth T'Vault Kenney, oldest daughter of William G. T'Vault. It is from the SOHS collection of works by Regina Dorland Robinson.

of the *Statesman*, upon hearing a report of T'Vault's drowning, wrote that of course the story wasn't true. "A man born to be hung certainly can't be drowned," he wrote. The *Intelligencer* lasted only a year and folded in 1864. Not surprisingly, the complete collection of papers in the SOHS archives contains considerable news and stirs a good deal of historical interest.

Once again T'Vault returned to law but as usual his attention span was short. In 1866 when he should have been considering retirement to the quiet life, he was struck with "Idaho

fever," as were many others from southern Oregon, and pulled out for Silver City, Idaho. He had no intention of prospecting but he wanted to be where the action was. He published the *Idaho Index* for a year before returning to his family.

In 1867 he was again elected District Attorney to the First Judicial District of Oregon and resumed his law practice. In 1868, after putting it on hold for almost two decades, he began thinking again of his immortal soul. At the same time General Lane sought to get his sins washed as white as snow. Perhaps they had been in communication with each other and it was a case of "I'll do it if you will" or "Dares go first." At any rate the *Oregon Sentinel* announced:

Colonel T'Vault and General Lane have both professed religion and have joined the Catholic church. The old sinners have deceived the people and have been obedient servants of the devil all their lives, but now in their dotage they are both trying to cheat the devil of his just rights. General Lane has been so strongly impressed with

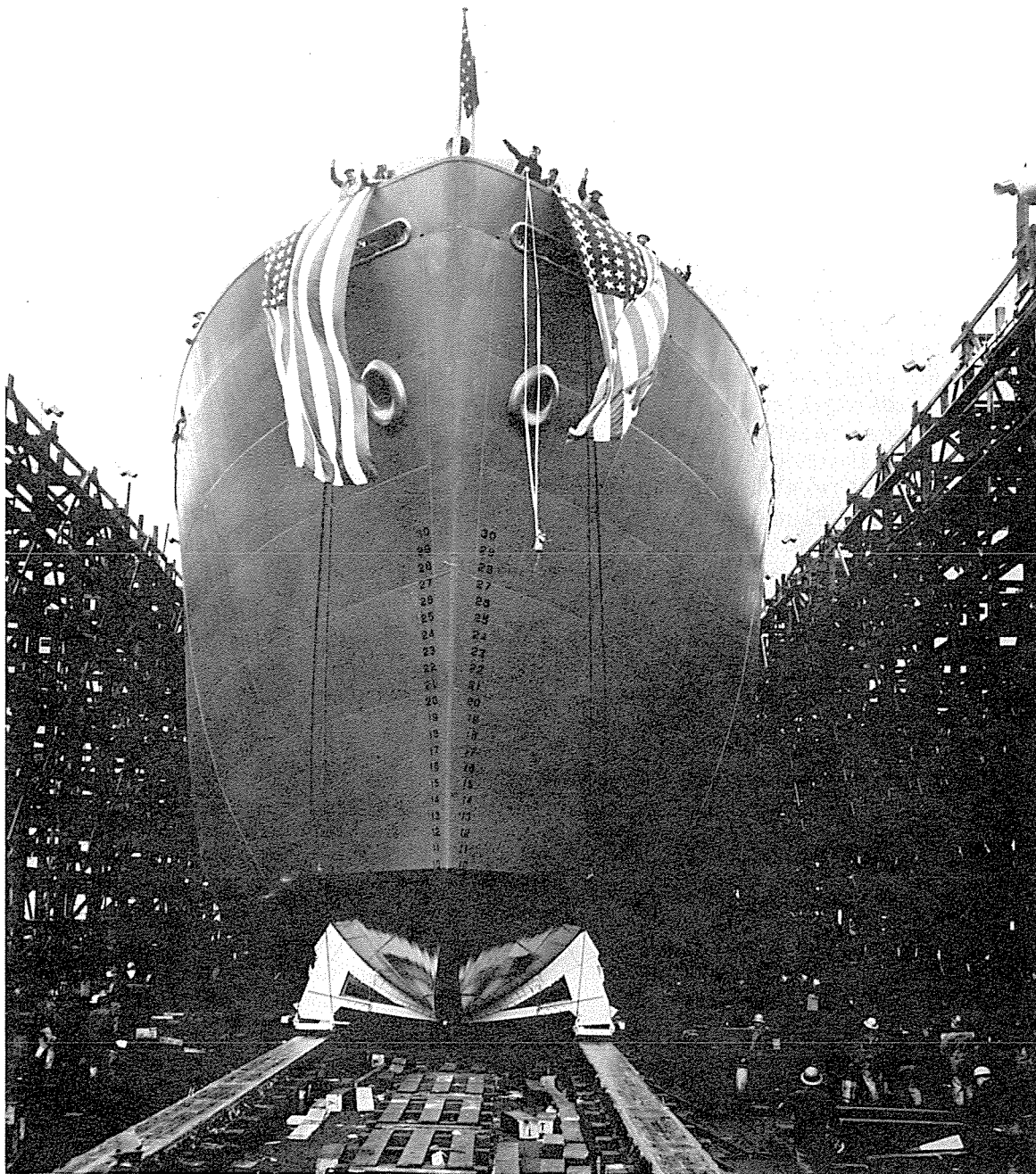
Catholicism that he has remarried his wife. Colonel T'Vault ought to follow suit. It is meet for such worthies to float together and there should be no bastards in the royal family.

The irreverent news story is not particularly clever or noteworthy but it does reveal that the editors at the *Sentinel* took lightly any steps made by Colonel T'Vault towards reformation. His seeking comfort in the church came none too soon for before many months had passed he was a victim of the terrible plague. On his deathbed he received the Last Sacrament from Father Blanchet.

His influence on Oregon history is difficult to determine. It is unfortunate that more of the winning side of his personality has not been recorded by those who were his friends. Perhaps, on the other hand, the story that is handed down is the true one. He had an uncanny ability to be on the scene first and his record is not insignificant: he was first editor of the first westcoast newspaper; he was first



Photographed at the Kenney home at Fourth and D streets in Jacksonville are: Emma, Elizabeth T'Vault Kenney, Tom Kenney (her son), Rose Ulrich Kenney (her daughter-in-law), and Frances. Frances and Emma are children of Thomas and Rose Kenney. Frances became Mrs. George Vilas.



It is ironic that of all the valiant settlers, frontiersmen and soldiers of southern Oregon, the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation would select William G. T'Vault as the name for a Liberty ship. It is shown at its festive launching at a Puget Sound shipyard in 1943.

editor and publisher at Jacksonville; he was the first to attempt an overland route from Port Orford to Jacksonville; he was the first Postmaster General of the provisional government; and he was the first speaker of the House in the first State Legislature. Who can beat that record?

In a race it's the first who gets the bravos and ribbons. He doesn't have to be a shining hero to be awarded his honors. That's where we should leave Colonel William Green Harrison T'Vault.

Editors of the *Oregon Sentinel*, who had been aggressive enemies, gave him

a nice obituary with credit for his good deeds. In the second paragraph the eulogist couldn't resist saying, "Like all prominent men, he had many bitter enemies and warm friends. Whatever faults he may have had are now forgotten -- covered with the clods of the grave, and all that was good and generous in him only should be remembered."

The *Sentinel* was almost right. But the reporter who wrote the obituary wasn't counting on the Southern Oregon Historical Society's newsletter which would come along in about 116 years.

Raymond Lewis

KISSES FOR ALL,
SAYS MISS WICK

Grace, in Race for May
Job, Airs Program

(Grace Wick, who was no
for congress in a beet pa
years ago, announced y
that she will be a cand
mover on a platform of "A



Crusading Efforts
Recalled Locally

Miss Grace M. Wick, 71
perennial crusader on man
issues, died Sunday at a ho
nursing home.

Woman Parades
Through Streets
Clad in Barrel

An even 40 carefully worded po
slogans decorated the barrel
in which Grace Wick
she paraded

MERRITT DIVORCE
CASE POSTPONE

MRS. MERRITT IN MOVIES

Grace Wick-Merritt, who left
a few months ago for Los Angeles,
company Madame Tracy of a
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MERRITT DIVORCE
CASE TESTIMONY
THRILLS JURY

Grace Wick-Merritt, Crusader

The story of the short, turbulent marriage of George Merritt and Grace Wick appeared in the Table Rock Sentinel in 1981. Since Grace Wick-Merritt was one of the editor's favorite eccentric ladies, we are running the story again for a second time around. George Merritt has been featured in several stories which appeared in the newsletter, having been the son of Professor J.W. Merritt, the outstanding educator and orator, and Mollie McCully, the oldest daughter of the indomitable Jane McCully. Mollie, having died early in childbirth, left George to be raised and pampered by his Auntie Issie.

In 1916 Gracie and George eloped to Greenwich, Connecticut, and were secretly and blissfully married. They lived happily ever afterward -- that is, for about six years afterward, until George brought Gracie to the family home in Jacksonville and presented her to his doting Aunt Issie.

Grace, being an actress from the world-ly east, must have alighted from George's touring car into drowsy Jacksonville with all the subtlety of a dollar cap pistol.

The Welcome Home party at the McCully house surely included John F. Miller, the Judge Hannas, Kate Hoffman, probably Emil and Amalia Britt and several other members of the first families, all eager to embrace the wife of dear Aunt Issie's nephew George, and press her to the collective Jacksonville bosom. Did anyone think then that the marriage couldn't last?

Grace Wick was born in Harlan, Iowa, in 1888, the grand-niece of Lucretia Mott, the famous woman social reformer. In 1910 she received a teacher's diploma from the Columbia College of Expression in Chicago and taught school briefly.

A classroom of budding orators might

have been a gratifying audience to an earthbound elocutionist, but it didn't provide adequate recognition for Grace. She soon joined the Forbes-Robertson Shakespearean Company, an English dramatic group which toured the United States and Canada. She was the only American member of the troupe.

It was during this time that she met George Merritt. Coming from southern Oregon, he surely found her glamor pretty heady stuff, but, who knows, both of them certainly foresaw an enchanted future. In any case they soon ran off to find a justice of the peace.

Newspaper reports indicate that from an early age Grace found politics fascinating. Of course political campaigns provide built-in audiences for publicity-minded actresses, and no opportunity for coverage is to be ignored. In 1920, while Grace and George were still living in the east, Grace made a campaign speech for Channing Cox, a Republican candidate for Governor of Massachusetts. She told reporters that "although I am a democrat I happen to know the democratic candidate."

George was a true native of southern Oregon so from the first he probably regarded his stay with his family in the east as temporary. After six happy years he persuaded Grace that her future, like

his, lay in the West and they headed for southern Oregon. They had mutually agreed that she would keep her professional name, but in Jacksonville she was known as Grace Wick-Merritt.

Once in a while the Jacksonville PTA gave a benefit play and frequently folks had musicals where local amateur singers displayed repertoires including gems from "The Bohemian Girl" and "Lo, Hear the Gentle Lark," but there were no big-time theatricals to satisfy a professional performer.

Far from being content to become a domestic minded, everyday young matron, Grace, shortly after her arrival, took a position selling advertising for the local newspaper. In no time at all she jumped into Oregon politics and enthusiastically endorsed Walter Pierce in his campaign for governor. Her political activities in his behalf placed a strain on the romance and it began to grow a little threadbare even though the long-suffering Aunt Issie did her very best to treat *that actress* with kid gloves and love her like a daughter. But Grace began to wander away from the homespun delights of Jacksonville.

Almost every issue of the weekly *Jacksonville Post* reported that Grace was spending several days in Medford or was motoring to Ashland for a weekend with friends. In 1924 George sued Grace for divorce. The *Post* sadly announced that Grace Wick-Merritt had been evicted and was seeking an apartment in Medford for herself and three cats.

The divorce suit, strongly contested by Grace, received state-wide attention. George was represented by Attorney Frank J. Newman; Grace, by Attorney Gus Newbury. For eight days, at least forty witnesses presented testimonies. It was alleged that Grace had used profanity and had smoked cigarettes. But Grace had discovered letters to George written by other women and George's relatives -- meaning Auntie Issie -- had interfered in the marriage. George had a bad temper, but Grace *had* gone to a party wearing her outrageous yamma-yamma pajamas. John F. Miller, a lifelong friend of the plaintiff, testified that as far as he was able to observe Grace "was always lady-like," but George won.

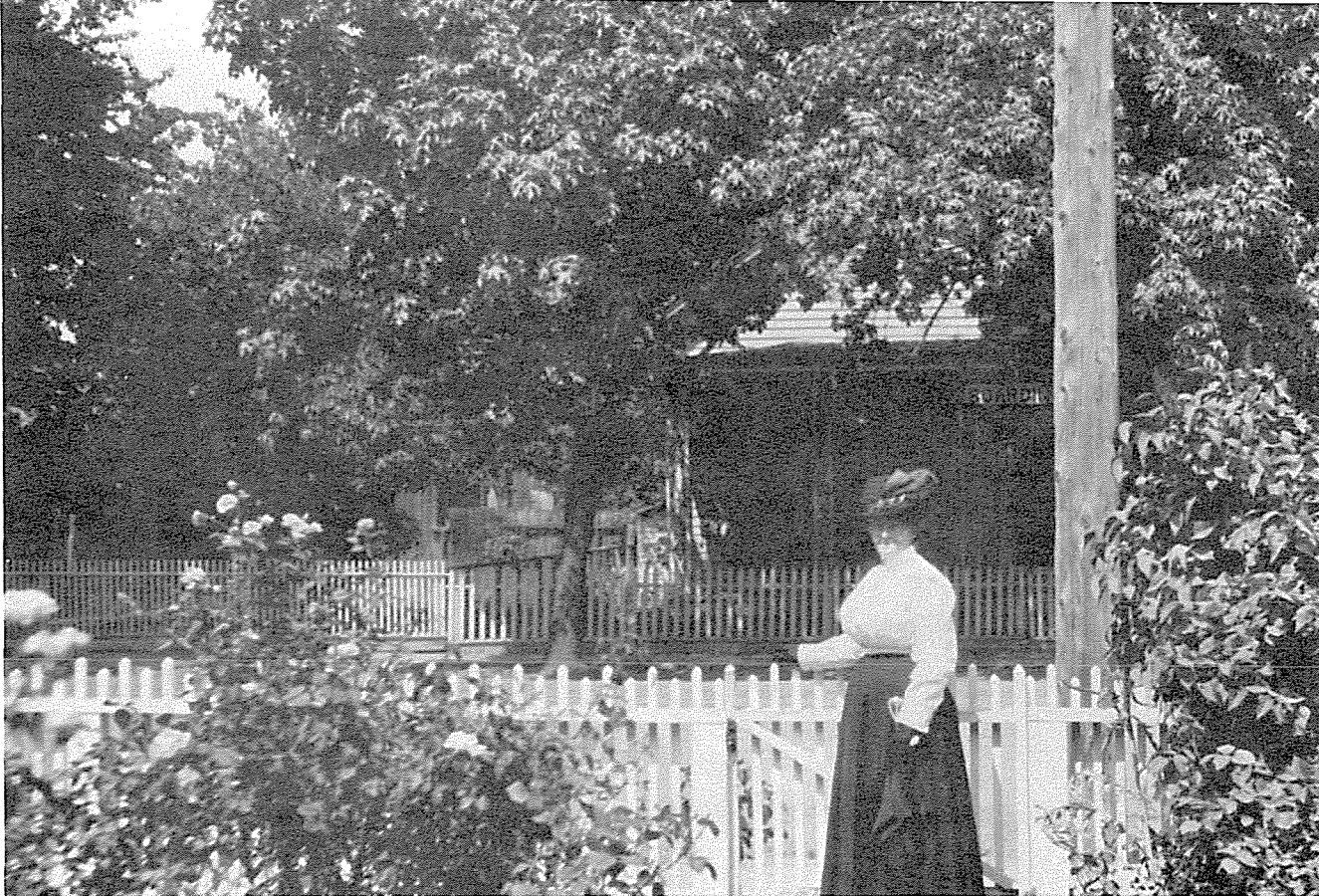
In a January 2, 1925, issue the *Jackson County News* reported that "Mrs. Grace Merritt was given ... a Christmas present ... a divorce decree." Lucky Grace. She was awarded \$30 a month and George had to pay all court costs. He had successfully disposed of his only claim to immortality and could now settle down to a comfortable life as a bachelor, fed and tended by his adoring Auntie.

The marriage wasn't the only thing that went badly. Grace, who had been so fervent in her praise for Walter Pierce in his successful campaign for governor, now felt that he betrayed her. The Cody family, an older couple living on the hill behind the Nunan house, had won her friendship. They were gentle unassuming people, but their son, Archie, had got into trouble with the law and had killed the sheriff of Harney County. He was sentenced to be executed, and Grace immediately came to his defense. She pleaded with the governor to pardon the young man, but Pierce refused to intercede, and Archie Cody went to the scaffold. Grace was vehement in her denunciation of Governor Pierce. She waged a one-woman campaign against him and wrote and published a pamphlet, "The Mascot," which was scathing in a satirical attack upon him.

During visits to Ashland Grace had become a close friend of Madame Tracy-Young, a concert pianist and teacher. Madame Tracy reportedly had studied in Vienna with Leschetizky, although it seems that in those days almost every serious pianist studied with Leschetizky. There had to be a covey of Leschetizkies. As soon as the adolescent student had plowed through the Theodore-Presser Graded Piano Studies, Book VI, his teacher began hinting at advanced study with -- catch your breath -- Leschetizky!

In any event Grace decided it was time for the world to hear Madame Tracy-Young and, acting as her agent, she booked Madame Tracy on a grant west coast tour. Not long after the divorce was granted, Grace and Madame Tracy left southern Oregon, headed for Los Angeles.

Perhaps it would have been better if Madame Tracy had acted as the agent and Grace as the performer, because



Aunt Iessie in her front yard.

in Hollywood Grace decided that with her theatrical background and her training in elocution, she could lend the pictures a touch of class. She abandoned Madame Tracy, who continued her triumphal tour alone as Grace settled in to become a luminary of the silent silver screen.

By June of that year she had appeared in a motion picture but her performance was not destined to become one of Hollywood's immortal highlights. *Movie Digest* announced however that she was on the threshold of a successful screen career and "had demonstrated great beauty and talent." Included in the magazine was "a very artistic photograph of Miss Wick." When she was not emoting at the film studios, she supported herself posing in dramatic tableaux which were used to illustrate the confessional stories appearing in *True Story* magazine. Her agent did what he could to promote her charms, but at a time when youth was the prime virtue of the ingenue and when the ideal beauty was as fragile and blond as an unbaked biscuit, Grace, who was nudging forty, was no instant threat to Lillian Gish. Apparently no one asked her to sink her little feet into a slab of concrete for the future ecstasy of her fans.

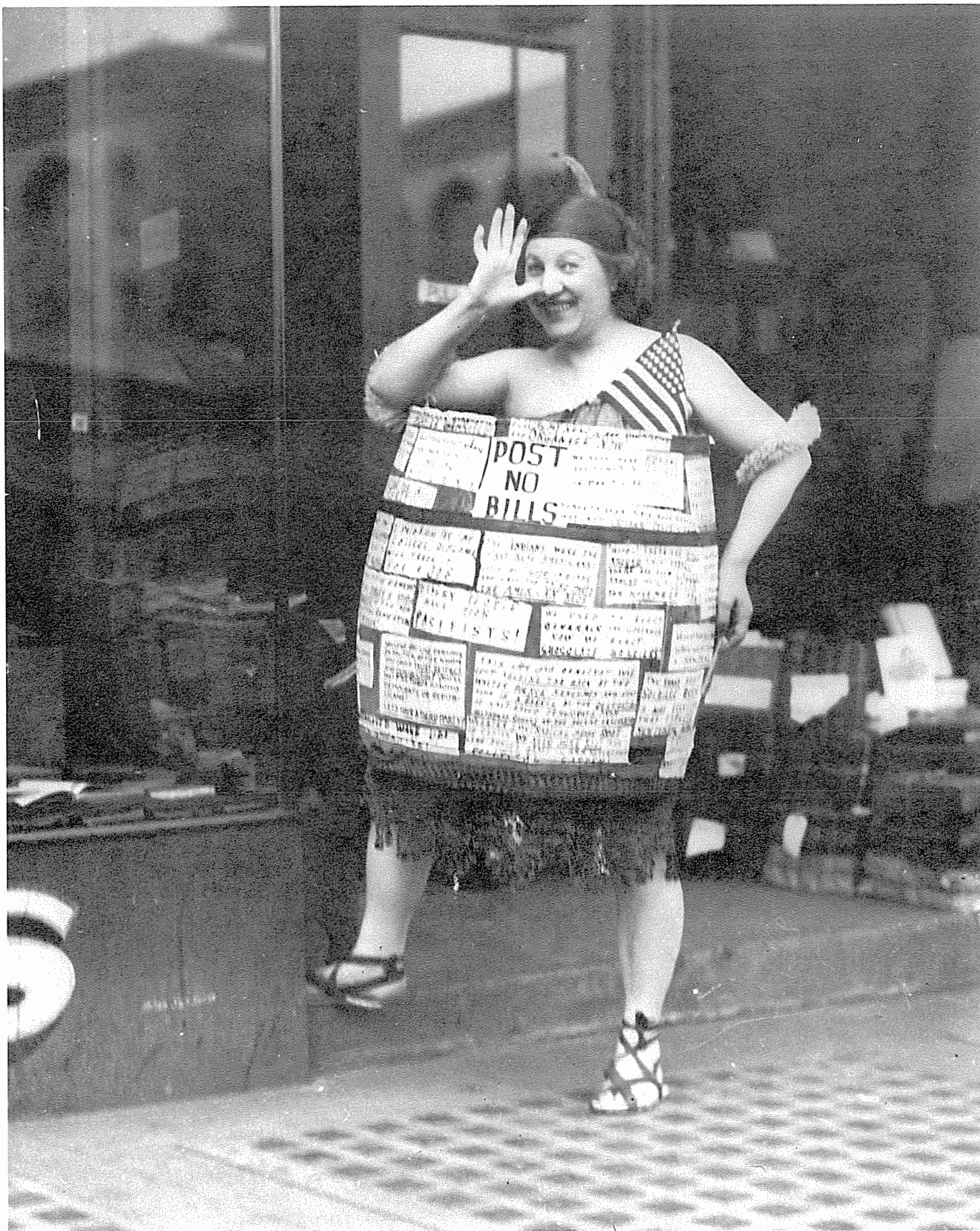
The *Jacksonville Post* on June 12, 1925, reported that Madame Tracy-Young, having

completed a strenuous season of concerts, was spending the summer revitalizing her energies at the Summit Ranch in the Siskiyou. Faithful to the end, she told the press that Grace was winning recognition in Hollywood, and that the movie world was predicting great success for her.

*I*n 1927, however, Grace invaded Portland, Oregon. She had turned her back to the films and had returned to her first love -- politics. The *Oregonian* reported that during the year she stormed the City Council chambers several times and frequently picketed agencies "with which she was at outs, among them state public welfare."

Still a wavering democrat, she backed Al Smith in his campaign for president and in 1928 she was named Chairman of the Oregon State Women's Smith-for-President Club. During the depression she championed the cause of pensioners and the unemployed and began her continuing campaign to seek higher payments to senior citizens.

By 1934, thoroughly disenchanted with the democratic party, she ran unsuccessfully for Congress on the Progressive-Independent ticket. She announced her candidacy at the Columbia Gardens, a



Photograph courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society, Negative #67464

Grace Wick-Merritt demonstrating her appreciation of the New Deal.

'beerhall in Portland, where she secured the 100 necessary names for her petition from the patrons during the floorshow. The master of ceremonies nominated her from the stage of the bistro and Miss Wick made a gracious appearance.

In 1936, again as an independent, she ran for the same office. To announce her candidacy she made plans to enter the Rose Parade as a float. She appeared dressed as an enormous red crepe paper rose. The officials ousted her. Either they didn't want to sponsor her platform or they were fearful that if she lit a cigarette, she might burn up half the parade. She was unsuccessful in her second campaign as well.

That same year in the primaries she ran as a candidate for mayor under the slogan, "A Kiss for Everyone in Portland." Before the final election, however, she withdrew in favor of Ralph C. Clyde and donated her supply of candy kisses to some other more promising undertaking.

As the depression continued she grew increasingly bitter toward President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the WPA, welfare and "social insecurity." She became an avowed enemy of communism and an exponent of adhering to the Constitution. She published a booklet presenting her stand on "returning to the pioneer principles of this country." She backed the Frazier-Lundeen Social Insurance Bill, designed to provide for the poor by taxing those who were making \$5,000 or more each year. In May, 1935, she walked down Broadway in Portland wearing a barrel plastered with 40 carefully worded political slogans. Some were:

We must have new cards before we can have a new deal.

Smelling salts, Farley! The New Deal of Oregon stinks!

If Eve's fig leaves, I hope my barrel stays.

"Red" as I seem, I'm as white as you are, you yellow *Oregon Journal*!

In middle age Grace's interests grew more and more right wing. She wrote hundreds of letters to elected officials -- local and national -- and many letters to Portland newspapers.* She joined radical organizations such as the America First Party, the Auxilliary

* Grace M. Wick, Papers, Ms 49, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

of the Sons of Union Veterans, and the National Gentile League. She enthusiastically supported any association which stood against Roosevelt (and later Eisenhower), integration, conscription and the United Nations. During the 50s she campaigned against flouridation, the zoo and Monroe Sweetland.

In 1951 she announced that she had received articles of incorporation for the establishment of a new American Women's Party in Oregon. She informed the press that she would be the first Chairman. To put the party's ticket on the ballot at that time would have required almost 25,000 signatures. What became of the petition is not known.

She never ceased protesting. There's always some cause to march for and Grace marched. She carried petitions, arranged protest meetings and stirred up the voters. If a crusading, concerned citizen is a good citizen, then Grace was a champion; if one has to end up in the winners' circle, then Grace was a wet sky rocket.

During her years of crusading she had to support herself. George Merritt was dead and her token alimony payment had long since been terminated. She worked as a proofreader and as bookkeeper for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

For years her future plans had included the publication of a book about her beliefs and about the important people with whom she had associated. But by the middle 1950s Grace had been on the political scene for a long time, and she dropped the project, finding it too depressing because so many were gone.

In November, 1958, after an illness of several months, she died. For the most part she had been destined to endorse the losing candidate and to back the failing cause. Perhaps she was ahead of her time, but, more likely, she was behind it. She had only rarely approached the victor's tape. At the time of her death she lived alone with a dog and four cats.



We are grateful to Arthur Spencer, Steven Holloway and Layne Wollschlager of the Oregon Historical Society, and to Miss A. Byrnes of the Multnomah County Library for providing us with information about Grace's political experiences in Portland.

SOCIETY PLANS THREE SUMMER TRIPS

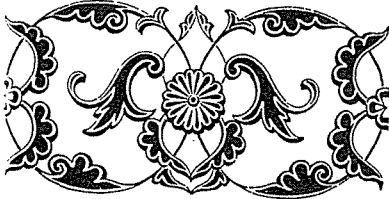
The Southern Oregon Historical will sponsor three historical trips during the summer of 1985. They will visit northeastern Oregon, north central Oregon and south central Washington, and central Oregon. Here are the brief itineraries and dates:

June 27-29 - Astoria - visit Captain Flavel's House, a real delight. We will then tour the beautiful Columbia River Maritime Museum, a multi-million dollar new facility. We will overnight and visit the Fort Clatsop National Memorial before returning. \$115.00.

July 25-26 - The new High Desert Museum at Bend will be the focus of this trip which will have a stop at Crater Lake. We will overnight in the Bend area and return to Jacksonville via McKenzie Pass. \$65.00.

August 21-23 - The first night will be spent at the beautiful Kah-Nee-Ta Lodge and hot springs in north central Oregon. On the second day, we will head north, cross the Columbia and visit Maryhill Museum, a beautiful mansion built by a railroad baron. We'll spend the second night at Timberline Lodge, which is an experience in itself. \$153.00

If you have questions about any of these trips, please call Nick Clark at 899-1847.



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206 N. Fifth St., P.O. Box 480
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