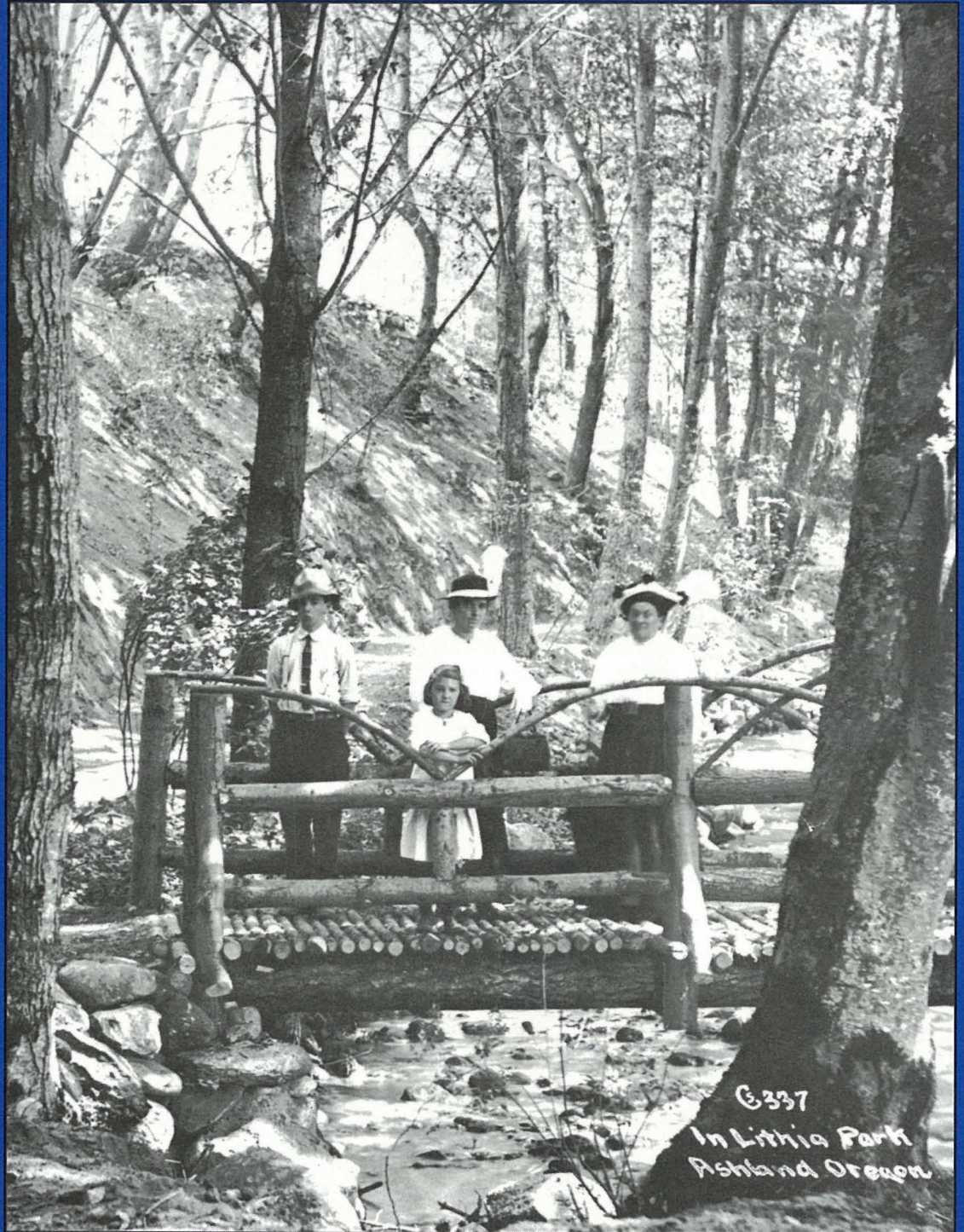


TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

\$2⁵⁰

JANUARY 1988



The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society

Commentary

Crater Lake Lodge is in the news again. You may recall public outcry when the National Park Service first recommended the lodge's removal in return for building a new lodge away from the Rim Area of Crater Lake National Park. Prompted to think things over, the Park Service prepared four alternatives for changes at the park, which are discussed in some detail in the **Regional Digest** section of this issue. But the reason for bringing this subject up here is to alert you to an opportunity to make your voice heard.

Crater Lake historically has been a popular destination for tourists, many of whom pass through the Rogue Valley on their way to and from this scenic wonder. This proximity gives our region a direct interest in the park, its history, and the fate of its cultural landmarks.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society has gone on record as supporting the lodge's preservation. You, too, can have a say. The National Park Service has opened a formal public comment period regarding the fate of the Crater Lake Lodge. One way you can make your voice heard is by attending one of several public hearings scheduled. The other is to put your comments in writing and send them to the National Park Service.

* * *

November 30, 1987 saw the retirement of long-time *Sentinel* editor Ray Lewis. For many years Ray was the driving force behind the Society's newsletter (which became a monthly magazine). He worked long and hard to write articles and news items for every issue. The *Sentinel* became a source of information as well as history written in Ray's easy-going style. He played a big part in making the *Sentinel* a major reason many have become members of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

After so many years of service, Ray has many other things he wishes to do. He gave of his time and talent far beyond our ability to ever repay. Thank you, Ray, for your dedication and hard work.



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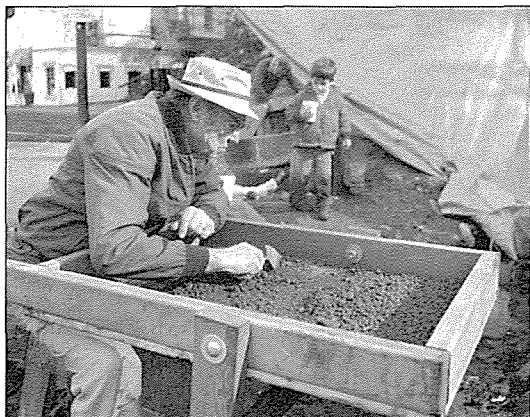
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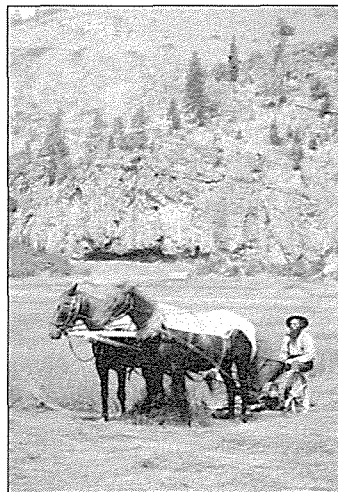
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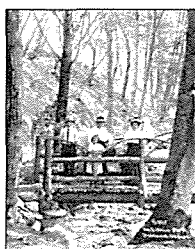
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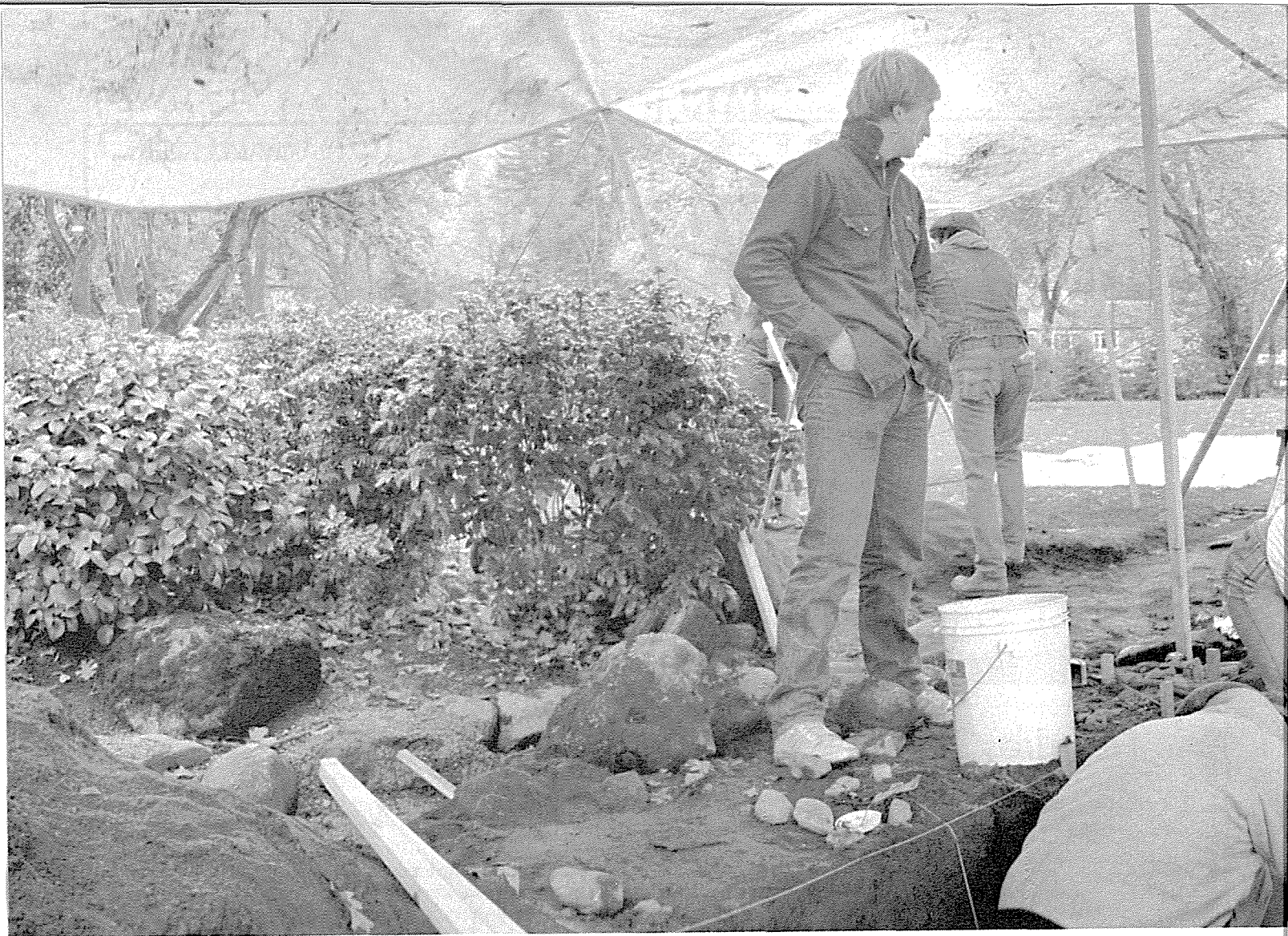
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cover: A family from the early years of this century enjoys the beauty of "Ashland's Crown Jewel," Lithia Park.
SOHS #7000.



"I Dig Lithia Park," was the motto for archaeologists and volunteers who excavated at the site.

Archaeology in the Park

*by Rich Olmo
and Nan Hannon*



photo by Douglas R. Smith

Ashland's first archaeology project began in Lithia Park on the morning after Halloween. Shortly after dawn, while the Parks crew picked up debris from ghoulish revelry, we set up our equipment and greeted volunteers eager to help excavate a site at the front of the park which we hoped would yield both historic and prehistoric information.

The project was a joint effort by the Southern Oregon State College Sociology-Anthropology Department and the Southern Oregon Historical Society to search for remains of the 1854 Ashland Flour Mill and of prehistoric occupation of the Ashland Creek area. The excavation was accomplished entirely with student and volunteer labor.

Although they'd had to drive over the Siskiyou, among the first to arrive were Roy Hall, Jr., his wife Monica and two of their children. Roy is a young man, but he serves as Chair of the Shasta Nation. We'd made a point of contacting the Shasta about the excavation because we had historic evidence that, at least at the time of white settlement, a Shasta village had stood on the site.

On the sidewalk, we'd set up a large signboard explaining the project. While we unloaded buckets and screens from a trailer, Roy and Monica stood silently in the cold, reading from the sign the story of the Shasta

chief Tipsoe, who once lived along Ashland Creek and was killed by his own people when he tried to organize them to drive out the settlers.

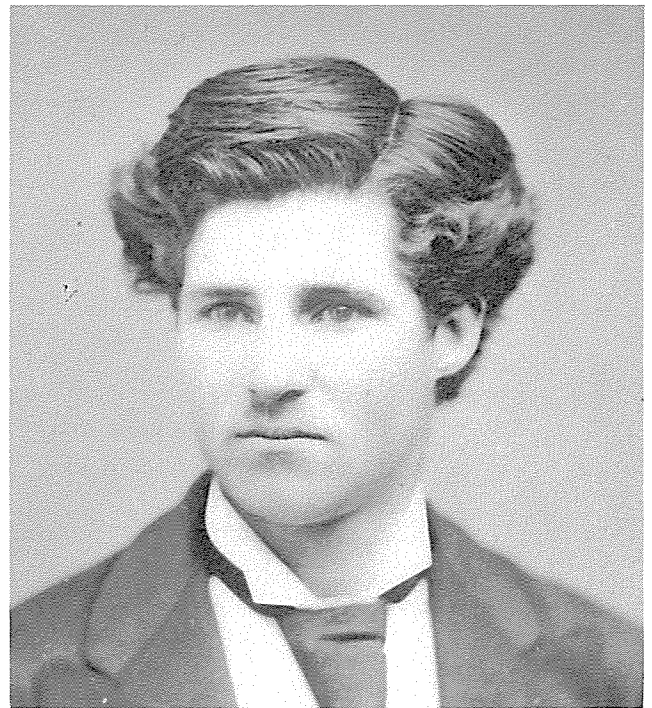
Rich showed the Halls the first area to be excavated. He explained that in addition to historic evidence of an aboriginal village in the Plaza area, prehistoric artifacts had been uncovered when the Bowmer Theatre had been excavated and when the basements of Plaza buildings had been enlarged. Park Horticulturalist Donn Todt had shown us the stone mortars discovered in the playground area by the Parks crew. Other ground stone tools had been found at the front of the park.

The Halls said that the Shasta Nation had a long interest in the Plaza site, and had considered proposing archaeological work there. They supported the effort to recover more information about their ancestors.

While we talked, other volunteers arrived. Among them were Sonja and John Maricle, of Klamath Falls, who served as our official Native American monitors. Veterans of several archaeological projects, the Maricles brought their own equipment and considerable expertise to the excavation. We were also lucky to have Bob Hartwig and long-time Southern Oregon Historical Society member Lawrence Powell. These two retired men became fast friends when they met last summer in Rich's field archaeology class. Volunteers decades

“While the surveying was in progress, the indians *[sic]* seemed to be at a great loss to know how it was that the white men would take compass and chain...and set up a few stakes and call the land their own.”

--James Cardwell (1879)



James Cardwell as a young man.

SOHS #249

younger were hard pressed to keep pace with these two.

Eager to begin and conscious of the Thanksgiving deadline for completion of the project, we raked bark dust from the flowerbed and set up the first excavation unit. Within an hour, we had to rope off the area to keep fascinated visitors from falling into the holes. We were happily overwhelmed by the community enthusiasm and support which prompted the Portland *Oregonian* to call the project “a public adventure.”

The Lithia Park Archaeological Project started last spring when we began creating an archaeological research design for the area. Southwest Oregon is known as “Oregon’s archaeological frontier” because so little work has been done in the area. It’s axiomatic that the archaeological work that gets done has less to do with the distribution of sites than the distribution of archaeologists, and since the mid-1970s there hadn’t been an archaeologist at Southern Oregon State College who could undertake basic work.

Rich came to SOSOC in the fall of 1985 to build an archaeology program. He ran successful field programs in 1986 and 1987, and wanted to continue to encourage his students out of their textbooks and into the field. He also wanted the department to contribute needed research about southern Oregon.

Frustrated by the lack of information about the Native Americans who had lived in this area, Nan had been studying ethnographies, interviewing private collectors about sites they knew, and photographing their collections. She also combed West Coast libraries and historical societies for pioneer memoirs mentioning the Indians.

She located an interesting account in the Bancroft Library--a memoir written by James A. Cardwell in 1879.

Cardwell came to Ashland with the Helman party in January 1852, to build a sawmill near the present Ashland Plaza. According to Cardwell, the partners found about 100 Indians living along Ashland Creek.

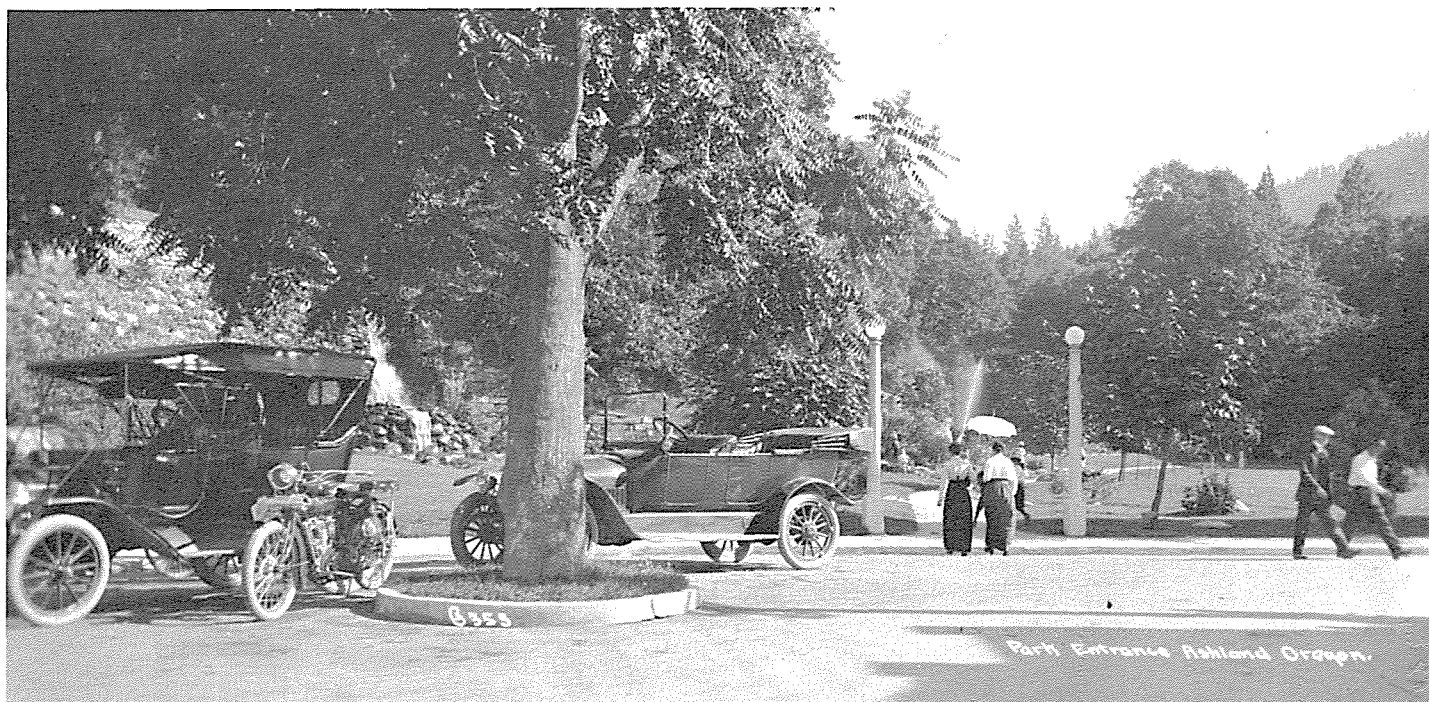
Cardwell described the Indians in detail, especially the chief called Tipsoe. Tipsoe and the other Shasta were astonished by the number of settlers who poured in to the Rogue Valley when gold was discovered near Jacksonville in 1852. They were also bitter that the newcomers failed to keep promises to pay for the land they claimed. Fighting broke out. Members of Tipsoe’s band were killed. Tipsoe’s people abandoned their Ashland Creek homes in 1853. In 1854, Abel Helman and his partners built the Ashland Flour Mill where the Shasta had lived.

The Cardwell memoir confirmed secondary accounts that located an Indian village in the vicinity of the Plaza, but it also added tantalizing new questions to those we already had. We hoped that answers might come from use of ethnographic, historic, and archaeological data.

Through the spring and summer we studied topographic maps, old photographs, vegetation studies, archaeological reports, pioneer diaries, and artifacts in private collections. We took every opportunity to visit potential sites, braving rattlesnakes and poison oak as we scrambled down creek banks and searched caves, trying to imagine prehistoric settlement of southern Oregon.

By summer’s end, we had prioritized research needs for the area. We knew where we wanted to work, and the first place we wanted to dig was Lithia Park.

Why Lithia Park? Another search through the manuscripts in the Bancroft Library had located a memoir by Captain Thomas Smith, who had arrived in Ashland even earlier than Cardwell, in November 1851.



After the mill was razed, the park entrance was redesigned.

SOHS #6998

Smith's eyewitness account was the second that described a village of about 100 people living along Ashland Creek, under a chief called Tipsoe. Smith also described a structure large enough to hold 50 people, which matched ethnographic descriptions of a men's sweathouse. He located the village "where the Plaza now is, and where the Ashland Flouring Mill now stands."

The implications of the sweathouse description were exciting. A structure that size suggested a well-established aboriginal community, perhaps the focus of settlement for the entire upper Bear Creek Valley.

To archaeologically test the idea, Rich suggested that excavation might be done in the annual flowerbeds at the entrance to Lithia Park. When the summer flowers died, small test units could be dug causing only minor disturbance. He visited the park almost daily, checking on the vitality of the chrysanthemums growing right where he wanted to work. We knew that floods and intense Euro-American use of the area since 1852 might have destroyed any intact cultural remains, but we couldn't be sure unless we checked.

Although we had little hope that anyone would take seriously a request to excavate in the park known as "Ashland's Crown Jewel," we sent Ashland Parks and Recreation Director Ken Mickelson a letter asking for a meeting to discuss archaeological work.

Ken surprised us. When we met with him and Donn Todt on October 2, they expressed interest in the possibility of recovering information about early Ashland. Donn kindly offered to move plants in the flowerbeds to accommodate testing. Ken had an even more exciting proposal.

The Department planned major work at the entrance to Lithia Park in November. Two dying trees were to be cut down and new trees planted. The old millrace would be re-channeled, and the sidewalk moved. Since the area

would be disrupted anyway, would we like to excavate there?

Rich thought a moment, and then outlined a strategy for placing a series of excavation units across the front of the park. This would give a cross-section view of the entire floodplain. If anything remained of the mill or village, we'd probably see it.

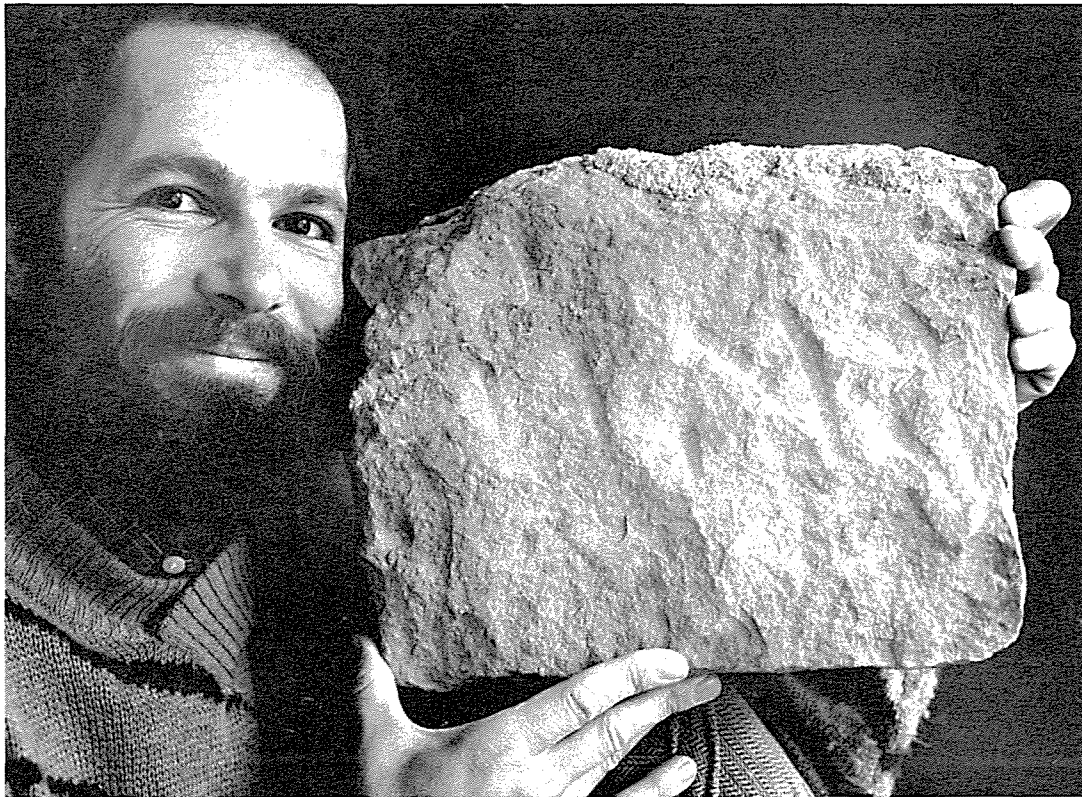
Ken and Donn agreed that if we could fit our excavation into the Department's work schedule--which meant completing the entire project in three weeks--and if the Parks Commission approved, we could proceed.

We left the Parks Department offices sharing big smiles. "Do you realize what a rare opportunity it is to get to excavate in an urban setting?" Rich asked.

Neither of us hesitated about taking on the project, although it was suddenly much bigger than a couple of test units in the flowerbeds. It might be decades before anyone had another opportunity to excavate in that location. And the project met so many of the research and educational objectives dear to our hearts. Not only was it a chance to uncover information about Ashland's history and prehistory, but Lithia Park is the most visible location in Ashland. Working there would reach people who would never visit the museums or a college classroom.

But time was a problem. The Parks Commission would meet on October 28. Work had to begin November 1 if we were to complete the excavations by the Thanksgiving deadline. We decided to count on the Commission's approval and go ahead with preparations for the dig. We had only 29 days to assemble and train a crew, apply for the necessary permits, and arrange for a Native American monitor. Since the Anthropology Department had no field equipment, everything needed for the excavation had to be begged, borrowed, or built.

Fortunately, the community shared our excitement



Rich Olmo holds a dressed foundation stone from the historic Ashland Mill, recovered during the excavation. Marks of the mason's chisel are clearly visible on the stone.

Unearthing the Mill's Foundations

Ashland took its first name, Ashland Mills, from the Ashland Flour Mill, which was completed by Abel Helman and his partners in the summer of 1854. The residents of the small settlement along Ashland Creek gathered to celebrate the completion of the mill, and watch the grinding of the first flour from wheat grown by Eli Anderson on his farm near present-day Talent. It was the first flour ground in Oregon south of Roseburg.

Early Jackson County settlers celebrated the completion of the mill because it lessened their dependence on outside supplies. Pioneer Martha Hill Gillette wrote that before the mill was built, "We paid...\$30.00 for a fifty-pound sack of flour. This flour had been packed on mules' backs, and by the time it reached us it was so full of hairs we had great difficulty in

using it. After all our sieving and straining through fine cloth, we seldom had a baking without finding a few hairs in it."¹

Except for the Chautauqua Dome, the mill was the most prominent and important structure in Ashland through the turn of the century. It dominated the Plaza, and was an essential part of the town's economy.

However, after the building ceased to be profitable, it was abandoned and the owner deeded the land to the City of Ashland. In 1908, the Women's Civic Improvement Club petitioned the City Council to raze the mill and dedicate the land as a city park. They complained that the vacant building was an eyesore to visitors to the Chautauqua and the Plaza business district.

In 1909, the Ashland Flour Mill was torn down.

The archaeological excavation in Lithia Park uncovered the southwest corner of the mill's foundation. Artifacts recovered nearby included thin and bubbled pieces of old window glass, crockery, brick, square nails, a watch chain, marbles, and a hitching post ring. It appeared that the original foundation stones were scattered. Some of the larger boulders were later buried by the Parks Department, but a number of the dressed stones were re-used in a retaining wall located below the present Bowmer Theatre. A dressed stone with the mortar still adhering to it was recovered in the excavation. Marks of the mason's chisel are clearly visible on the stone.

¹ Gillette, Martha. 1975. *Overland to Oregon*. Published by Lewis Osborne, Medford, Oregon; 67.

about Ashland's first archaeological project. Redwood Station and Haptonstall Taxidermy donated wood for screens. Ashland Lumber Company donated hundreds of dollars worth of supplies, and special-ordered trowels, line levels, and metric tapes. Dozens of volunteers signed up to help. Rich held a practice excavation at his Talent home, and volunteers who would serve as crew chiefs at Lithia Park learned to take and record precise measurements.

We wanted to take advantage of the unique educational opportunities the project presented. Rich reported each phase of the preparations to his Introduction to Archaeology class. Nan and Jean Vondracek Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum assistant, prepared a slide program about Ashland prehistory and history which focused on the Shasta lifeways, pioneer settlement, and construction of the mill. Special invitations were sent to Jackson County schools and community organizations to view the slide show and then walk over to the site to see the excavation in progress.

On October 28, the Parks Commission approved the project. On October 30, we received permission to excavate from the Division of State Lands. On Halloween night, Rich finished building two screens. On November 1, excavation began.

Work on the first two units, located in the flowerbeds beneath the Elizabethan Theatre, proceeded at a slow pace and with caution. We didn't know what we would find, and wanted to be certain that we didn't destroy anything valuable in the process of uncovering it. In addition, most of the crew had never excavated before and needed time to get used to digging carefully, maintaining straight sidewalls and accurately measuring depths.

But the dig attracted some seasoned excavators. Besides the Maricles, Jeff LaLande, Forest Service archaeologist and historian, and Barry Hewlett, SOSC anthropologist, worked several days. Student Gaylyn Bradley brought experience from an archaeology practicum with the Bureau of Land Management. And the new crew caught on quickly. Don Vondracek was soon demonstrating how to set up a unit. Students Harold McNamee, Gunnar Engelbach and Richard Pointer did a remarkable job of cleaning out and mapping Unit 2.

That unit bottomed out in bedrock, as did Unit 1. Both yielded bits of plastic, old and new glass, rusted square nails, fragments of bottles and crockery, a prehistoric scraper, and a variety of flakes of chalcedony, jasper, basalt, and chert. The flakes were the by-products of Native American tool-making.

The flakes, although exciting to find in the screens, did not represent an intact cultural deposit. Rather than undisturbed earth, under the topsoil was a sequence of churned earth and abandoned water and sewer pipes which continued to bedrock.

Unit 3, however, located in the flowerbed in front of the Lithia Park sign, yielded exciting materials. After removing surface soil and peat moss, we turned up chunks of jasper and obsidian, which do not occur naturally in the Ashland Creek drainage. Native

Americans had brought in these materials, which make better tools than the creek's granite cobbles.

Unit 3 also yielded charcoal, burnt bone, a deer tooth, whole and broken projectile points, and dozens of tiny jasper and obsidian flakes. These were materials characteristic of a village site, but they were located in flood deposits and had obviously washed to the site from elsewhere upstream. Also, the projectile points were fashioned in an older style than the points Tipsoe and his band would have made. We began to suspect that the floods since 1853 had carried away the remains of the historic village.

We then encountered what Rich described as "a pile of boulders with some soil tucked into the cracks between them." Digging around rocks is slow going. It requires hand-removal of the soil. A continuous series of drawings also must be made before any of the stones are moved. The drawings record the relationships of the stones to each other, and are made in the event that the rocks turn out to be a feature.

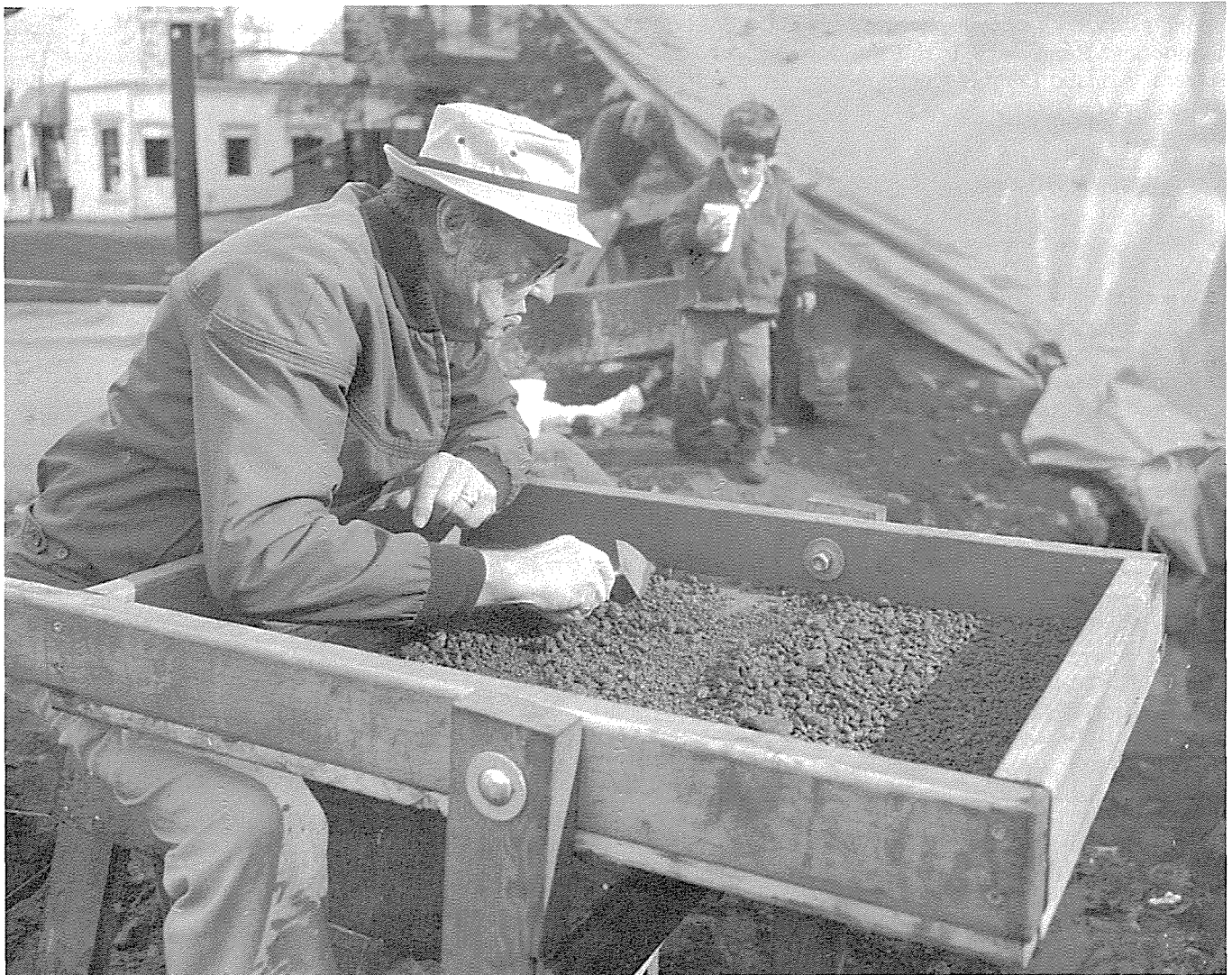
The abundance and position of the boulders appeared to be anomalous, and evidence led to the conclusion that the boulders were the foundation stones of the Ashland Flour Mill that we had hoped to find. A number of the boulders appeared to have been roughly shaped. We recovered flat sandstone chinking. We felt certain that the cluster of boulders remained from the day in 1909 when the Ashland Flour Mill was razed.

Work stopped in Unit 3 about five feet down, because the heavier boulders could not be lifted out. But we were elated that we had literally touched Ashland's foundations. That unit was kept open until Thanksgiving weekend in order to show schoolchildren and other visitors these early traces of Ashland Mills.

**"Now when we visit Lithia
Park and the Plaza, it will have
new meaning."**

**--Trisha Mullinex
teacher, Bellview School**

Over 350 schoolchildren viewed the slide show and visited the site. Despite the rain, they lingered at the excavation, peering into the deep units, touching the foundation stones from the mill, admiring the prehistoric knives and scraper. We encouraged the students to consider why both the white settlers and the Native Americans used the Ashland Creek area. "Dig closer to the creek," one third-grade boy advised. "If you were an Indian, wouldn't you live by the water and the fish?" Another special visitor was Dr. C. Melvin Aikens, University of Oregon anthropologist and the author of *Archaeology of Oregon*. Mel, a slender, soft-spoken man, admired our units and was properly enthusiastic



Lawrence Powell searches a screen for tiny prehistoric and historic artifacts.

photo by Douglas R. Smith

about the project. It was Mel who had called southern Oregon "the archaeological frontier," encouraging the development of a regional research design. We appreciated his blessing on the Lithia Park excavation.

Hundreds of people each day stopped to ask questions and read the interpretive sign. Visitors enjoyed pacing off the distance between the surviving Plaza buildings and the mill site and learning about the Native Americans that once lived along Ashland Creek. Although it slowed work down considerably, we tried to answer all questions and show what artifacts we'd found. A number of passers-by became so intrigued that they volunteered.

By mid-month, worsening weather threatened the project. Black clouds blew in over Ashland Canyon, and a cold downpour began. What if it rained all through November? We worried about supervising the crew and having to cancel work because of the weather. We tried to figure out a way to keep the site dry.

There was no money to rent a canopy. Jean Vondracek spent one afternoon calling people who might loan canopies or tents. No one had anything large enough to be helpful. "You know who has canopies,"

she realized, "--funeral homes. For funerals in the rain." She began to call mortuaries.

But no canopy materialized, and the downpour continued.

The next morning, Walker Elementary School teacher Ted Holden arrived at the cold, muddy, and deserted site. "Hey, where is everybody?" he telephoned Nan.

"I think it's too wet to work."

"But I want to work," Ted protested. "This could be the day we find something really big."

"Can you rig a shelter if it rains?"

"Sure," Ted promised. "Get down here."

It turned out to be one of our most productive days. Ted rigged a canopy. Students Geoff McPherson and Dave Henry appeared with tripod, transit, and hundred-meter tape to do more surveying. The Maricles drove over from Klamath Falls and set up their screen. Thirty other students and volunteers arrived and started work. Nancy Krieg ran to Munchies Restaurant to ask for more empty buckets. Michael Bennett of Ashland Bakery Cafe brought over coffee. Under the bright blue canopy the site looked like a circus, but people worked efficiently, digging, screening, mapping units, and

The Shasta Village

At the time of white settlement of the Rogue Valley, in late 1851 and early 1852, the present Plaza area was probably occupied by a Shasta winter village of about 100 men, women, and children.

The winter village was probably used during the cold, rainy months of October through March, when the Indians lived on stored acorns, game, and dried salmon.

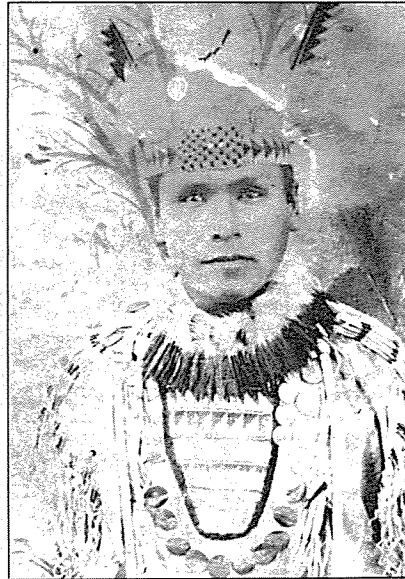
The village probably consisted of pit-houses excavated two to five feet into the sandy soil near the creek, with walls and roofs of pine or cedar planks. The settlers described them as "stick houses."

The settlers recognized two headmen in the village. Their true names are unknown, but in the Chinook jargon that was the *lingua franca* of the frontier, they were called Tipsoe and Sullix. Tipsoe means "bearded" or "hairy." Sullix means "angry." Tipsoe had long hair, a beard, hazel eyes, a powerful build, and stood five feet seven inches tall. Sullix had a scarred face.

Despite the hostile reputation of the "Rogue Indians," relations between the Ashland Creek Shasta and the earliest settlers were friendly. However, when gold was discovered near Jacksonville in early 1852, the rapid influx of miners and settlers disrupted native life. Mining operations muddied the creeks, killing the fish. The settlers hunted out the game and fenced in the land where the Indian women had gathered acorns and other plants. Promises to pay the Indians for their land were not kept by the settlers or the government.

In August 1852, a miner was murdered in northern California

by an Indian with a scarred face. Believing Sullix to be the killer, a party of vigilantes from Yreka



Sargent Sambo. SOHS #1484

rode to Ashland. The son of Sullix happened to be visiting the Ashland Sawmill at the time. The Yreka men took him prisoner, and shot him a few days later. When Sullix came seeking his son at the mill, the settlers shot him three times. Sullix turned and rode back to the mountains to warn the other Indians. Whether he survived his wounds is unknown. There is no further mention of him in early records.

In the spring of 1853 Tipsoe and his people left their home on Ashland Creek and went to live on the Applegate River. They made periodic raids on the white settlements, and refused to sign treaties or live on the Table Rock Reservation. In 1854, Tipsoe, his son and his son-in-law crossed the Siskiyou to persuade the northern

California Shasta to join them in driving out the settlers. In fear of the white soldiers, the Indians killed Tipsoe and his relatives. Those Shasta remaining on the Applegate continued to steal from the settlers in order to survive. Many starved, died of diseases brought by the whites, or were killed in raids by soldiers and militia volunteers. Those who survived were sent to a reservation on the Oregon coast in 1856.

However, a part of Tipsoe's people did not relocate to the Applegate, but remained near the present Emigrant Lake, under a chief called Sambo. After conflicts with the settlers, Sambo and his people went to live with their Klamath River kin.

Sambo's son, Sargent Sambo, was probably born about 1865. He became the principal informant for the ethnographers collecting information on the Shasta. Much of what we know about traditional Shasta culture comes from Sargent's memories, which were rooted in the upper Bear Creek Valley.

When Sargent died in 1962, he was the last full-blooded Shasta, and one of the last speakers of the Shasta language. Today, about 1200 Shasta descendants are officially enrolled in the Shasta Tribe, according to Betty Hall, enrollment clerk for the the Shasta Nation. Many of the Shasta have been involved in archaeological work in this area. "Every little piece of information recovered is precious to us," Hall says. "We have so little information because of the way our people were massacred. Everything recovered tells a story."

recording data on level sheets.

Content, Ted settled down to his favorite task of screening. Sheila Annis, another teacher from Walker School, came by to work. Ted showed her how to screen. "You shake the screen so that the dirt sifts out, and then you look in the remaining gravel for things like this." He reached into the screen and pulled out a projectile point of red jasper. The crew crowded around to admire the find. Although the point went into a ziploc bag with other artifacts from the same level, Ted took it out many times that day to show to passers-by who asked, "What have you found?"

People examined it carefully. The most tangible link to the previous residents of the Ashland area was a small, red stone.



photo by Natalie Brown

Projectile points, flakes, and a rusted nail were among the artifacts recovered in the Lithia Park excavation.

In evaluating the data from Lithia Park, Rich pointed out that the important question to ask of any excavation is: How did the artifacts come to be associated with the soil in which they are found?

If we assumed that we had found the village once we began to recover prehistoric materials--an event which we anticipated based on historical documents--we would have come up with a very strange idea of what a Shasta village looked like.

We found artifacts which were secondarily deposited on the Ashland Creek floodplain; no cultural materials remained in their original context. We had not found the Shasta village.

Of course it was disappointing not to have uncovered an intact prehistoric site, but the results of the excavation pointed to exciting new research questions. Could we find the upstream source of the artifacts that had washed to the Plaza site? Could we find materials from Tipsoe's village downstream, where post-1853 floods had deposited them?

We wanted to look. The Ashland Planning Commission had already approved our request to test the pasture on the floodplain at the corner of Oak and Hersey Streets, where the Ashland Christain Fellowship plans to build a church next summer. As we shoveled backdirt into the completed units at the park, we planned the spring work at Oak and Hersey. It made it easier to end the excavation.

The Lithia Park project required hard work, but was rewarding. We'd touched the foundations of the Ashland Flour Mill. We'd trained a dedicated crew eager for future projects. We'd sensitized the public to the need for archaeological study in the area--many people telephoned, eager to show us sites. We'd shared information with the Shasta Nation. We'd recovered interesting artifacts already being analyzed in the SOSC Archaeology Lab. (Katie and Rob Winthrop, Ashland archaeological consultants, offered to fund obsidian sourcing studies on the obsidian collected from the site.)

Most important, we'd shared with hundreds of people our excitement about southern Oregon's prehistory and history, and our belief that we need to understand the past in order to make good decisions for the future. As we loaded screens in the trailer for the last time, we looked forward to further archaeological adventures in the spring.



Rich Olmo is an archaeologist at Southern Oregon State College. He has previously taught at the University of San Diego and Grosmont College, and has done field work in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Oregon, and California.

Nan Hannon is the coordinator of the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum, Ashland. Her poems about southwest Oregon archaeological sites appear in The Anthology of Native Poetry.

Interested in volunteering on an Ashland archaeology project next spring or summer?

A variety of jobs are available for volunteers on the next phase of the Ashland archaeology project. We can use your unique skills. Interested persons should send a postcard with name, address, and telephone number to:

Nan Hannon
Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum
P.O. Box 86
Southern Oregon State College
Ashland, OR 97520



Freight wagons arrive at the Ashland Flour Mill.

SOHS #61

Kay Atwood's Mill Creek Journal: Building the Mill

by William Powell

Like people and their families, businesses and communities have pasts that shape their presents. Ashland is no different in this respect, but it differs in another in that its past is not inscrutable but available. Drawing from original and traditional sources, Ashland writer Kay Atwood has assembled an unusually animated view of Ashland's controversial first decade in her recently published book, *Mill Creek Journal*.

In it, Atwood brings to life the hopes, cares and motivations of the handful of men and women who struggled to birth their settlement and see it survive.

The journal centers on the industrious activities of one of Ashland's earliest settlers, Abel Helman. Helman first crossed the Siskiyou summit from the forlorn gold camps of northern California in 1851, bound for the Willamette Valley to remind himself there were other ways to make a living besides placer mining. He soon backtracked, however, to stake a claim in January 1852 near where a vigorous stream poured

from a narrow forest valley at the head of Bear Creek, then called Stuart Creek.

With the help of carpenters and fellow Ohioans Jacob and Eber Emery, and that of Tennessean James Cardwell, Helman gave shape to his first dream: a sawmill to supply the booming community of Table Rock City--Jacksonville. The venture was a success from the start in June 1852, and prompted Helman to name the mill locality after the county of his birth. Thus was born the settlement of Ashland Sawmill.

Taking an almost fatherly interest in the community, Helman sought to duplicate the success of the sawmill by proposing the construction of a grist mill to supply the other staple of a pioneer economy besides lumber: flour. Helman's instincts proved correct. The two mills would help cement Ashland's permanence as a community. But the story did not turn out the way Helman thought it would, as Atwood deftly makes clear.

Following are excerpts from *Mill Creek Journal* which bring to life the story of the Ashland Flouring Mill, and the men who sweated and worried over an enterprise that proved more than they could manage.

* * *

1852

By October, the valley was deep in autumn and the oaks dotted the hills with dark bronze. Abel Helman worked while the weather held, but when the south-facing slopes greened with the first fall rains, he prepared to return to Ohio for his wife and daughter. Eber Emery paid for his family's passage--Sophia and young Henry Emery would return to Ashland Sawmill with the Helmans..

Helman and Eber Emery struck a bargain. Neither of them had a mind to farm and the sawmill's success encouraged them toward new endeavors...

In addition to expanding the sawmill's operation Helman planned a new enterprise for his return--a scheme for which he needed the able Emerys. Together they would construct a flour mill on Mill Creek and master the necessary skills with a decent miller's guide and some practice. Flour was in great demand locally and the packing prices exorbitant. While filling a critical demand, the flour mill would ensure additional income. The sawmill already drew many customers and travelers frequently stopped during the year at the log house. It wasn't hard for the departing Helman to envision a real settlement established on his land and himself as the man in possession.

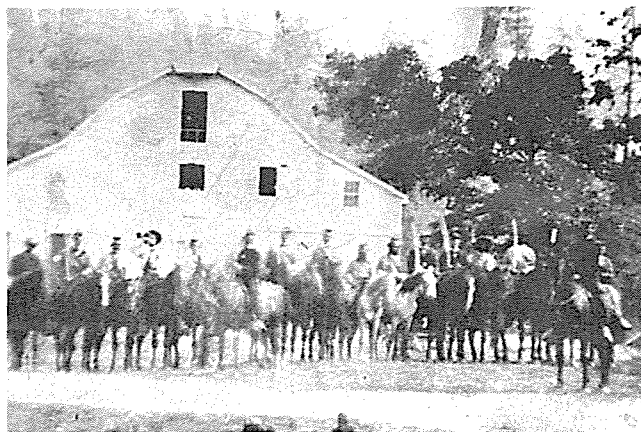
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The raw winter of 1852-53 proved the potential value of a local flouring mill. As Atwood writes: "Obtaining firewood and food took most of the settlers' time. Pack trains struggled over the snow-bound Siskiyous carrying high-priced flour, coffee, and sugar--salt couldn't be had. Flour reached \$1.25 per pound that winter--four times its price the year before."

Early in the summer of 1853, Abel Helman arrived home in Ashland Sawmill after the long journey from Ohio with his wife Martha Jane and young daughter

Almeda, and his partner Eber Emery's wife Sophia and son Henry. "By the time they reached the ford at Mill Creek," Atwood writes, "Helman saw plenty of changes for himself. New cabins stood beside cultivated fields; creeks, unnamed eight months earlier, now bore names and bridges."

What had been a handful of claims was fast becoming a real settlement. That summer, Helman and Emery busied themselves with building new homes for their families and with keeping the sawmill running. A brief but bloody Indian war that flared up in August put a stop to most pioneering activities until negotiators reached and uneasy peace in September. But as immigrants continued to trickle into the Upper Bear Creek Valley, Helman and Emery delayed no longer and began construction of the flouring mill.



The Ashland Mountain Rangers in front of the mill before its first remodel, ca. 1865. SOHS #8318

* * *

October, 1853

With cold weather settling in, the immigration slowed. In two months, 159 wagons carrying 400 men, 120 women, 170 children, 2,600 head of cattle, 140 loose horses and forty mules had come down the Green Springs route.

Eber Emery and Abel Helman worked steadily at the sawmill producing lumber for customers who hurried to construct cabins and barns by winter. Eli and James Anderson were also busy. The brothers harvested twelve acres of grain and sold it for \$8 a bushel. Firney Condrey constructed a water wheel on Bear Creek near his house and fashioned a primitive mill to grind flour for his and neighboring families...

In mid-November when the gray rains softened the ground, Abel Helman, Eber and Jacob Emery began work on the flour mill. The season's excellent wheat crop and continued demand for flour encouraged their tremendous investment of labor and capital. Helman had selected a suitable site for the mill--a short distance from the main road on Mill Creek. Observing the creek in all seasons, he knew it to have a continuous flow of water. Following instructions in the miller's guide,

Helman and Emery calculated that the stream would provide an ample fall. They cleared brush and trees and hired two men to dig the shallow millrace along the hillside above the mill. The race would carry water from the diversion point on Mill Creek to a sluiceway that regulated the flow. They cut huge logs for a dam to be located just upstream from the mill. The dam would create a small millpond to deliver water steadily through the diversion point into the millrace. After studying the dimensions drawn on their sketch, the men set large rocks in place for the mill's foundation. Hewn timbers, 6 by 12 inches, were prepared for the sills and floor joists. The men worked on the mill each day from sunup to dusk to finish it in time to grind the next season's wheat...



Ashland Flour Mill, ca. 1880.

SOHS #4878

1854

...During the March warm spell, Abel and John Helman, Eber and Jacob Emery, and Madison Morris toiled daily at the flour mill site. Work progressed smoothly but Helman's plan to build the valley's only grist mill floundered when he learned that another flour mill would soon be built on Bear Creek. Michael and Tobias Thomas, Yreka merchants, had formed the Gilead Mill Company with William Hoffman and others. The mill was now underway on John Barrett's claim about three miles north of Ashland Mills...

Other buildings were also planned--a grain storage warehouse, blacksmith shop and store.

The mill property would be divided into four equal shares: one for John S. Lakin, one for Barrett, and two for the Thomas brothers. The company renamed its venture Eagle Mills and signed the contract.

Abel Helman was further agitated to learn that his competitors had laid out a townsite around the Eagle Mills. He and others struggled with the framing on the Mill Creek structure, motivated more by fear than excitement. The 40 x 50 foot mill progressed slowly. Twelve-inch hewn beams firmly supported the three-story structure. The men built stairs between the floors, cut plank siding at the sawmill for the walls and split shakes for the roof. They laid plank flooring over the dirt.

Through a wet April the Ashland men pushed forward. Following diagrams in the miller's guide Helman and Emery crafted the overshot wheel. Paddles formed into buckets would catch the water as it fell over the wheel. The wheel's wooden shaft and master gear were shaped to power various parts of the mill and a gear was specially constructed to turn the top millstone. Expenses mounted rapidly as additional labor and equipment were required. Madison B. Morris, who had already invested several thousand dollars in the project, was forced to pay more for the machinery to complete the mill's fitting.

Saturday, April 22, 1854

Although it was far from finished, Helman's flour mill assumed a new importance. From this day, mail to and from Ashland Sawmill would be handled at the mill's office...For the first time, Ashland Sawmill residents could count on fairly regular local mail service...

Late in May, both Helman and the Eagle Mill company were stunned to learn that a third competitor was entering the field. Sylvester M. Wait was constructing a large flour mill about eight miles down the valley on Bear Creek to serve area residents...

In June, Eli and James Anderson traded wheat for a one-quarter interest in Helman's flour mill. Soon after assuming joint ownership, Eli Anderson left for San Francisco to purchase irons for the overshot wheel and a pair of French Burr millstones. The irons and the burrs, which were in sections, were shipped to Scottsburg, Oregon, on the lower Umpqua River. Upon his return Anderson and two assistants drove an ox team to Scottsburg to pick up the equipment. Finally the mill's machinery could be fitted. When the stone pieces were joined and bound with iron hoops, the millstones measured four feet in diameter. Anderson, who had experience as a miller, supervised the furrowing of the upper and nether stone. This critical task prepared the channels that would rip off the outer husk of the grain, move the ground flour to the edge of the stone, and allow air to pass

through the stone to carry out the heat generated by friction during the grinding. Faulty work could result in a ruined product and fire.

Friday, August 25, 1854

At 8 o'clock in the evening the clearing in front of the flour mill was choked with wagons and teams. The building was finished. The siding was on, the shake roof was in place, small panes of glass sparkled in the windows, and the massive wooden door was hung in its frame. Families and bachelors celebrated at the biggest community gathering yet held. Musicians filled one corner and soon the sounds of fiddles and laughter drifted down the creek. Clothing long saved for such an occasion was brought out for this evening. Special dishes filled with potatoes, meat and fruit pies crowded the table.

Abel Helman climbed to the mill's top story and stood by the barricade he had built across the open loading door. He peered out across Bear Creek toward the light that backed the hills. He had beaten his competitors. Now this small settlement on his land could properly be called Ashland Mills.

* * *

But Helman's optimism was to be tried and his satisfaction blunted by events that lay ahead. By mid-September 1854, all three Bear Creek Valley flour mills were producing great quantities of flour--a boon for consumers but hard on investors. As a result of the glut, both wheat and flour prices plummeted. At the lowest point that year, flour that had sold for \$1.25 per pound during the winter of 1853 sold for only 15 cents a pound.

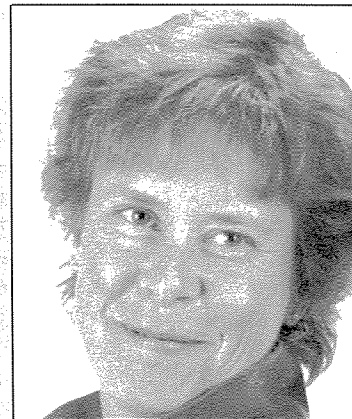
Indebtedness connected with the construction of the mill also taxed Helman's finances. He and his various partners mortgaged and borrowed on the mill repeatedly over the next three years, regularly appearing in court to settle financial disagreements. By 1857, Helman had had enough. On May 22, he sold the mill to James Russell, then of Siskiyou County, for \$12,000. After paying his debts, Helman realized only \$1,258.65 on the sale.

The mill continued in operation until 1891, when its owner sold it to the city of Ashland. In 1908, two years before Abel Helman's death, city residents voted to demolish the abandoned mill, which had become an eyesore. The following summer, the Ashland Flouring Mill was razed to make room for an ambitious new park that would open onto the plaza and extend up the creek valley toward Mount Ashland.

It would not be until archaeologists excavated the site in the fall of 1987 that Ashland citizens would again look upon those first foundation stones of the mill that provided the community's flour for nearly half a century.



(Editor's note: To preserve space, footnotes contained in Kay Atwood's original book have been omitted from these excerpts.)



Kay Atwood

Drawn to Ashland in 1969 to put her master's degree in theater design to use with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Kay Atwood shortly joined the staff of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

While employed with the Jackson Intermediate Education District during the Bicentennial period, she produced her first book, *Jackson County Conversations*, in 1976. Two years later, she published *Illahe: the Story of Settlement in the Rogue River Canyon*, followed in 1980 by *Blossoms and Branches: the Story of Orchardng in the Rogue River Valley*.

But an intriguing passage she had encountered years earlier while reading A. G. Walling's *History of Southern Oregon* (1884) haunted Atwood. Walling referred to the mysterious and unsolved murder in Ashland Mills of Dr. David Sisson in 1858 as a "dark page in the history of Ashland" that "cast a shadow over the community that was not easily dispelled."

It was while trying to uncover clues that might solve the long-ago homicide that Atwood realized how little was known of the people and events that shaped the decade of Ashland's founding.

After a careful study of land records, legal documents, old newspapers and diaries, Atwood brought to life Ashland's settlers in all their humanity in *Mill Creek Journal: Ashland, Oregon 1850-1860*. The book is 216 pages and includes maps and pencil illustrations by the author, photographs, appendices, profuse footnotes and a bibliography. It is available in local bookstores and at the Southern Oregon Historical Society gift shop.

Peter Britt photographed this unidentified settler haying near Shovel Creek.
SOHS #2054



Reminiscences of Pioneer Days

by Orson Avery Stearns

*This is the last of four installments of Orson Avery Stearns' delightful diary of pioneer life in southern Oregon. The October issue of the **Table Rock Sentinel** featured incidents from his school days. *Reminiscences of his first dance and the early days of the Civil War appeared in the November issue. The December issue described the characters and circumstances of military life. This month, Stearns continues with the development of his ranch in the Klamath basin and the construction of the road over the Siskiyou.**

The spelling and syntax are the author's own.

The winter of 1865 and '66 passed at last after its rather strenuous times, and in the spring came orders for all the cavalry at the post to proceed to Vancouver to be mustered out of service, leaving just "I" Company with the major in command of the post and Lieutenant Oatman in command of the company. In little less than a month, the Major also was ordered away to be mustered out, and he had scarcely gone when our Captain, Sprague, with four of our Company who had been with him out at Camp Alvord returned to Klamath and took up the usual routine of post duty with occasional forays out in the Indian country.

Having made several trips over the mountain by way of our entrance, the old emigrant road and seeing the country at different seasons, I formed the opinion that the country at the south of Klamath Lake was a very desirable country to settle up and talking with Bob

Clark of our company he and I made up our minds to locate ranches there just as soon as we were mustered out, which we were confident would be some time in 1867. Lew Colver finally concluded he would join us to locate at a point on the trail by which we had marched in coming to the Fort, a spring with a nice piece of meadow and plow land beside it that we regarded as a desirable place to live. O.T. Brown, who with his wife and son, went from Gassburg to Fort Klamath about the time our Company did, and who had been engaged in furnishing the garrison with beef during the time we were there, concluded he, too, would locate at the East foot of the mountain on what was called by the Indians "We-tass" creek, about eleven miles below where we expected to locate.

Soon after we were mustered out Bob Clark got a letter from his mother in Tennessee, begging him to go back there to visit her before settling down, so he took vessel from San Francisco to go around by Panama and never came back, leaving Loui and myself to the sole ownership of the ranch. Uncle Sam Colver had been very anxious for Loui to join with me in taking up the ranch, and persuaded us to take his herd of horses, some fifty head, on shares. Uncle Sam and I took the horses out there within two weeks after we were mustered out and, after putting the horses across the river from Brown's who had built himself a cabin and moved his family and stock there before we were moved out; I was left out on the ranch alone except for a dog

and with my scythe went to mowing grass as it was late and we needs must hurry to get enough hay up to winter the horses. I was there working alone for two weeks before Loui came out with a wagon, some supplies, and more tools. I had no grind stone, and after two days mowing my scythe was too dull to cut any more, so I used to walk eleven miles to Mr. Brown's and grind my scythe, generally staying all night and having two good square meals each time.

The only company I had was a camp of Klamath and Modoc Indians about a quarter of a mile away who were engaged in digging roots (or the squaws were) the Indians were loafing and hunting a little.

I had no shelter of any kind but built my blanket bed by my camp fire, and after supper went to bed and to sleep, when the mosquitoes would let me, and wakened only when the coyotes came around to serenade me, when my dog would bristle up, get onto the side of my bed and growl fiercely until the serenade was over. But I worked early and late and despite the loss of every third day in visiting the grindstone at Brown's I had quite a start in haymaking when Loui came with more provisions and tools including a grindstone. While the team and wagon was there we could sleep and keep our provisions. We had our campfire outside. Henry Roberts came out with Louis and took Jack and Barney with the wagon back to the valley leaving the two of us to finish haying. This accomplished we went to work getting our logs hewed up in the timber

We thought we would not build a cheap rough log house; we would hew the logs on all sides. Two sides would have been much better, but we did not know so we took more than double the time and work to hew them nicely on all four sides and dovetail them together.

Before we had the logs ready we had a severe two days rain, and as we only had a few tules thrown on top of our pen for shade it sifted the rain thru on our bed in great shape. It was so cold and damp we could only keep warm by remaining in bed. This we had to do for two days and nights, as there was too much wind to allow us to build a fire, and only by remaining inside our wet blankets could we retain any warmth. Loui had a little wooley fiste he called Jeff, who was always trying to crawl into Loui's side of the bed nights, and I was in the habit of catching him in the act and grabbing him by his wooley hide and would throw him outside the pen and make him sleep with the larger dog; but during the storm I had an inspiration that Jeff would make a good foot warmer, so when he came begging to be let into the pen we let him in and putting him in the blankets at the foot we used him to our advantage and his eminent satisfaction to keep our feet warm during the entire time of the storm. Our logs cut, we borrowed a team and wagon from Brown to haul our hay and logs, as well as a few poles to build a corral and a stable, then we went with Brown to the valley where we purchased a wagon, loaded it with provisions and getting Jack and Barney,

and a big team of horses from my father we started back with Mr. Brown who had a six horse team and wagon.

It took us several days to make the return trip as there was four different places on the mountain where we had to unload our wagons and pack the contents on the backs of our team, to the top of the hill, when it required the entire strength of the team to pull the empty wagons to the summit.

This method we had to repeat three separate times on the road. On one occasion one span of Brown's horses which were left unhitched at the head of his team for a few moments took it into their heads to runaway dragging the stretchers in a headlong flight down the mountain. They ran several miles before some one caught them, and the delay kept us a full half day longer on the mountain.

"On one occasion one span of Brown's horses which were left unhitched...took it into their heads to runaway dragging the stretchers in a headlong flight down the mountain."

But as there is an ending to all trials, so our trip ended without further serious mishap and our winter's supply was safely housed. Our cabin was up and covered, a fireplace built, and a corral and pole stable with a shake roof over our hay, also constructed. It was unfortunate that in getting out our logs we made a miscalculation in the number it would require, and when we had built up the walls as far as the logs would reach, we found that the joice was only six feet above the floor while we intended to have it seven feet high. It was night when we got the walls up and we debated that evening whether we would go to the timber in the morning and get out enough more logs to raise the walls another foot, but were undecided until we awakened in the morning to find our bed covered with two inches of snow, when we concluded that we had better get a roof over us as quickly as possible. However, we only occasionally had a visitor whose head bumped the joice. On one occasion we had a cattleman who was driving a large herd of cattle into eastern Oregon put up with us over night, whose head reached up between the joice eight inches, he being six feet eight inches high. His name was Robert Hutchison, and he had a brother equally lengthy. It seemed that part of Oregon was quite prolific in lengthy men, there having been three or four families of giants come out of Umpqua to Eastern Oregon, in order I presume, that they might have room to grow up.

Some time in late November Uncle Sam came out to our house bringing with him a big fellow who claimed to be a horsebreaker who was broke and wanted a winter job, and Uncle Sam thought

it would be a good scheme to give him a job breaking some of his big geldings, so Loui and I could have teams to work. This man's name was Hutchins; we always called him Hutch, for short.

Soon after Hutch came out, Dennis Crawley came out with a spike team consisting of two more or less crippled mules, and a blind horse. He had been several years in the insane assylum and having come out to find that his former partner Charles Boxley had gotten away with his property up at 49 diggings, and on the strength of old acquaintanceship with Uncle Sam he came out to locate near him expecting to partake of our hospitality to the extent of living in our house, using our stable and feeding our hay to his team. This he did, until near spring when he got a cabin built about two miles away.

Winter set in early in December and as we could do little in the way of improving during the prevalence of snow, Loui and I concluded to go over to the valley to spend the holidays, and some little time besides leaving Hutch and Dennis to look after and feed the horses, accordingly on the 18th of December in a heavy snow we started out and thru snow from 18 inches to over two feet deep we crossed the mountain, and spent a very delightful four weeks visiting and attending parties, the first of any consequence since we first went East of the mountains to Fort Klamath.

The 24th of January we started on the return home, accompanied by Charley Root, and Dennis' partner H.M. Thatcher, a school teacher whom Dennis had persuaded to go into partnership with him. Thatcher was to furnish the money in the shape of \$50 per month while Dennis was to do the work on the land which Dennis was to take up and improve for them jointly. Thatcher had two pack horses loaded down with provisions, Loui and I had each a pack horse and Charley Root another. As the snow had piled up very deep on the mountains

"The snow was near four feet deep, and the only way we could keep the trail after it become dark was for one of us to walk ahead and feel the trail with our feet."

and no one had been over the emmigrant road to break the trail since Loui and I came over in December, we were forced to go over the Siskiyou and around by way of the old Indian trail up the Klamath. It took up well into the night of the third day to get to Brown's. The snow was near four feet deep, and the only way we could keep the trail after it bacame dark was for one of us to walk ahead and feel the trail with our feet, as the government expressman from the Fort went over the trail both ways every week, so that there was a packed trail underneath the freshly fallen snow that one could feel with the feet. We came within sight of the lights of Brown's house just as they extinguished them to go to

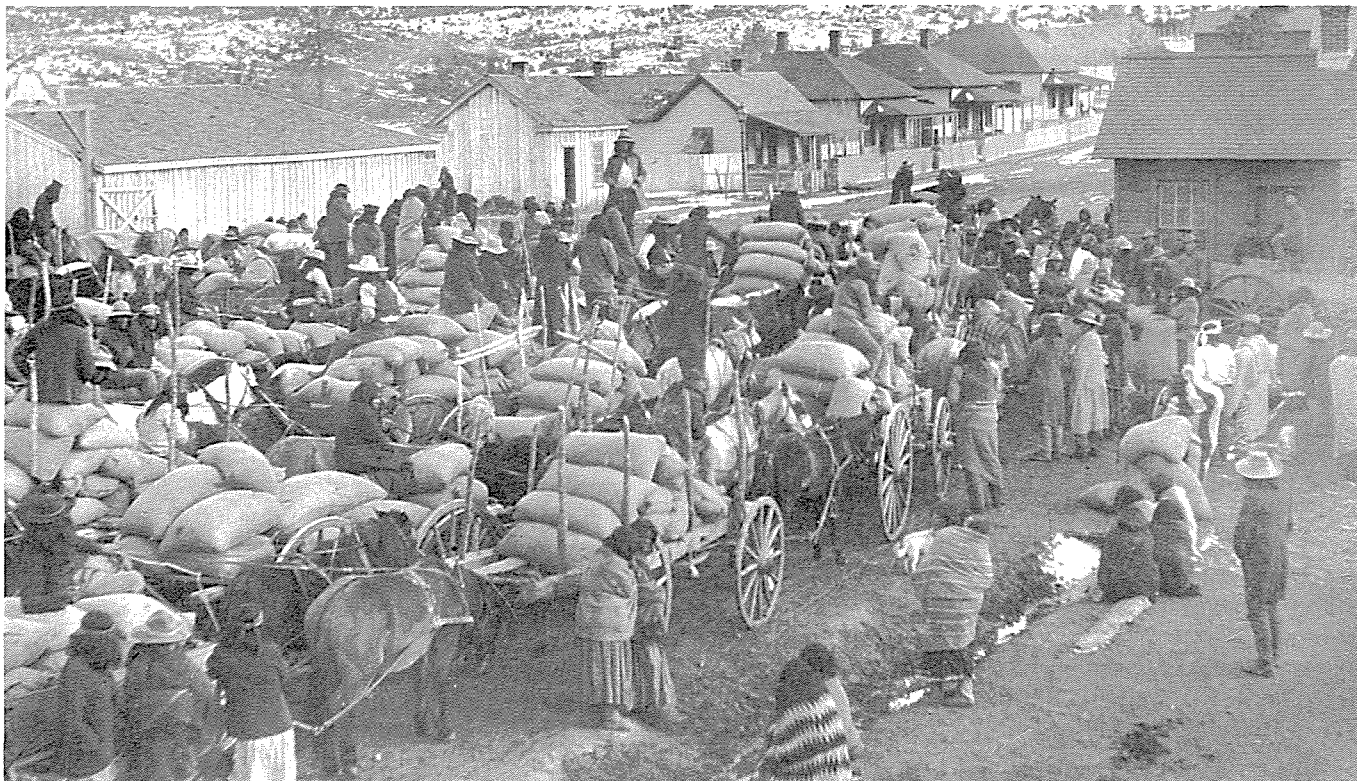
bed, about 10 p.m., and a half hour later we reached the house and routed them up again. By the time our animals were attended to, Mrs. Brown had a good hot meal ready for us.

Next day we got home and found the snow two feet deep and so fine and dry that it would not pack into a trail. The wood was about all gone and no sled nor wagon to haul more on, so it became imperative that we get some material down from the timber, two miles away, and construct a sled. The only course was for four or five of us to walk to the woods breaking a trail and with ropes draw the necessary timbers down to the cabin. This we finally accomplished and, as it was terrible cold, we had to do all the work in the cabin in front of the fireplace. Hutch was a pretty good carpenter and understood sled-making, and with the help of as many of the others as could get at the work it was only a few days when we had two pair of bob sleds ready to use. Dennis took one sled to use hauling logs for his cabin. We used one set to break colts by and haul firewood, and while the mercury must have been way down below zero for weeks and our cabin was none too well chinked up, we managed to keep from freezing. Our only way to cook was by the open fireplace consequently we cooked and ate at the same table aiming to use about equally from each store in proportion to the numbers of each group.

There were just six of us cooking, eating and sleeping in the 10 X 12 cabin, four of us sleeping in bunks, two on the floor, and sometimes we would have to keep people traveling who could not reach the ferry at Linkville and had to put up with us. I remember one night when a pack train of mules got there late a stormy night and we had to put up the four men and bout thirty mules. I cooked breakfast standing on the hearth while the floor was crowded with sleeping forms wrapped in their blankets. I did not serve a very elaborate meal, but a hearty one, such as all of us frontiers men were used to.

We helped Dennis build his house early in March, and he was ready to move into it by the time grass was starting. He moved away one day when the rest were away, and took many of our provisions with him. Our provisions were stored overhead on one side of the house while his were stored on the opposite side all in sacks, ours being for four of us were much larger than his that were intended for but two. But he made the mistake of taking the larger sacks of sugar and coffee and took a fifty pound sack of salt that Uncle Sam had brought out for to salt his horses. Dennis never paid for his horse feed nor for his own accommodations and was always a thieving neighbor. He finally died in the assylum.

The coming spring Ivan Applegate persuaded Loui and I to allow him to propose the name of one of us for the position of assistant farmer on the reservation as that position was vacant, and he thought he would prefer to have one of his old chums to have the position and it would give us a little income, which was very much needed, as what little money we had saved up in the Army was about all gone. When the appointment ar-



Indians receive supplies at Beatty, on the Klamath Indian Reservation.

SOHS #11144

rived it was made out in my name while I supposed it would be made out in Louis' name, as he was tired of ranching and wanting to quit, but Loui agreed to take the position until I could get the hay put up and other necessary work done so I could occupy the position without sacrificing anything. So I remained on the place and went to the Agency to stay until August.

I remained at the Agency until about the 20th of December, hewing logs for buildings, splitting shakes to cover the buildings, and even quarrying stone and building fireplaces and chimneys. Helped construct quite a number of log buildings at the present Agency site some of which are still standing. Applegate had put in nearly a hundred acres of grain that spring mostly bald barley, and had it harvested and stacked at the old Agency site which is about three miles below the present site. In the fall he purchased an old second hand threshing machine from either Hanley or Ish, over in the valley, had it hauled out and started to thresh his Agency crop. It is needless to say that most of his help was Indians who knew little about such work. There was a very heavy crop of straw and Applegate wanted it all stacked for feed. He put me in charge of the straw division of the threshing forces, and when I marshalled them found there were no hay forks, so I sent some of them down into a willow thicket and had a supply of forked willow brush cut, and after peeling and shaping the forked ends into the semblance of fork tines, I was ready to start to work. With such inadequate implements and inexperienced workers it took a double crew to keep the straw away from the machine and up to me, as I did the shaping of the stack, while the poor Indians had to work in the tail of the machine in the dust and smut. I must

confess that some of my workers came out so much darker than when they went in that I could scarcely recognize them, whether their squaws got them recognizable or not I never learned.

My sphere of action while "assistant farmer" on the reservation embraced every known activity on a pioneer ranch. I was even sent down the lake in a boat to secure some oak wood that grew on what was known as the peninsula; the wood being needed for axe helves and handles for various farming and other tools. I went down in a white boat with a number of soldiers who were going down to gather the vegetables they had raised in a garden at the lower end of the lake, and which they were to bring back in a large barge that had been built for a ferryboat the year before. I got my hard wood over to where the barge was before the soldiers had their vegetables loaded so had to wait a day for them to get ready. We started back with our barge load about midafternoon and pulled across to the tip of the peninsula where we camped for the night. The next morning the lake was frozen over with from 1 ½ to 2 inches of ice. However, we could move slowly as we had three long sweeps, two to propel with and one for rudder. With two men to man each side sweep they would drop the blade thru the ice and by pushing on the sweeps gradually force the prow of the boat onto the ice breaking it down a head, then carrying the sweep blade forward again they could propel the boat at the rate of two miles per hour. It was imperative that we get thru as we had eaten all our provisions up and could get no more until at the other end of the lake.

By changing oarsmen frequently and keeping steadily

at it we managed to reach the mouth of the Williamsons river by sundown and here we were compelled to make camp, and finding drift wood roasted some potatoes, which with raw turnips, cabbage and carrots had to do us for supper and breakfast. Next morning there was an added inch or more to the thickness of the ice so we realized the impossibility of proceeding up the lake to Agency landing. Our only alternative was to tow the craft up Woodriver, and this looked like a hopeless task, as there were drifts, logs both submerged and partially submerged for miles up it. We put one man ashore

“Next morning there was an added inch or more to the thickness of the ice so we realized the impossibility of proceeding up the lake to Agency landing.”

with instructions to make his way by land to the fort and Agency for teams and men with provisions to assist us. We then went to work removing logs and brush, working mostly in the water, sawing, chopping and pulling up stream and met men coming to aid us, and with the welcome knew that the wagons were coming, and something warm for us to eat was awaiting. We made the Agency and for next day, glad to get off the lake.

Soon after this, about Dec. 20, I got a furlough of twenty days, and with several others started for the valley to spend the holidays, and never went back to the Agency, as while I was in the valley, the epidemic of small pox broke out, and my mother and youngest brother were both stricken and died, while I was put under quarantine for about six weeks. Another was put in my place at the Agency, and when I went back to the ranch the spring of 1869, Loui turned his interest in the ranch over to his father, and as all improvements, wagon, harness and tools were owned equally, and the team we had broken was Uncle Sam's and he gave them to Loui, it left me in bad shape financially.

Having long realized the necessity of a road from the valley over the mountain so that the country would be more accessible, as an inducement to settle the country up, I drew up a petition to the County Court of Jackson County and [secured] practically every settler's signature east of the mountain...A sum of six hundred dollars was raised, four hundred of which was subscribed east of the mountains, where the entire voting population was but thirty. Uncle Sam and my father were the only subscribers to the fund below Ashland. Many in Ashland were opposed to the road as they were in favor of putting a land grant thru by way of Dead Indian; nearly half the subscription raised in Ashland was paid in provisions by the stores, which were charged at exorbitant prices.

Uncle Sam Colver volunteered to take charge of the work, and raised a lot of laborers and commenced early the spring of 1869 at the Songer place on the stage road and by early fall had it opened clear thru to the Klamath Valley. While it could not be expected that such a small sum of money would build near fifty miles of mountain road, it remains as a fact that teams of two horses could haul over it a full ton without having to unload and pack up the steep places as formerly. In fact Uncle Sam did more actual road work with that six hundred dollars than has ever been done at any time since with ten times that sum. The building of that road was the beginning of the development of the great inland empire consisting of what is now Klamath and Lake Counties in Oregon, and the valleys of Surprise, Hot Springs, and Big Valleys in California, because it was their nearest and only route over which they got their supplies for many years.

I think it was during the fall of 1869 that my father and mother together with my sister and Bell Colver came out to pay us a visit. They visited also on Browns but the two girls came up and spent one night at our cabin. We gave the girls the cabin to sleep in while we spread our blankets under the porch or on the ground. Sometime in the night I was bitten or stung on one knee, which felt like a yellowjacket, but when we went to fold up our blankets in the morning, out came a large fat scorpion, which showed the cause of the pain. The effect was not much worse than had it been a wasp, and soon passed away.

I remember calling the attention of the girls to the neatness and orderliness of our household; that we had a place for everything, and that everything was in its place. That place was under the bunk, as all our winter provisions as well as boots and boot jack were there. Charley Root made his home with me for nearly a year after Loui quit. Uncle Sam was there some of the time but, as was ever his habit was very erratic and uncertain. We had divided the young horses, Loui and I getting each a fourth of the increase, taking choice about until all were divided. Believe my share was six one and two year old colts for my interest in two years work.

After the place was divided, Uncle Sam got Brown to take up a piece of land adjoining his, on which he built, and rented Uncle Sam's portion and kept his horses there for several years, finally buying Brown out when he had over eight hundred acres in the farm which he later mortgaged to Ammerman, and which the latter foreclosed at his [Uncle Sam's] death.

Orson Stearns concludes his reminiscences on this note. He originally wrote this composition as a gift for Mrs. Effie Taylor, Sam Colver's granddaughter. In his correspondence with her he wrote:

I mentioned many things...because while they may not be of great interest to you they are true matters of history that, as far as I know, have never been recorded, and the time may come when such facts may be of interest.



Society Update

New Staff Member Makes Clean Sweep

Sharon Karnbach joined the staff in October as a custodian in the Maintenance Department. Each week she tends to the daily cleaning of the Society's museums, offices, and other historic properties in and near Jacksonville and the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum in Ashland.

Visitors may not see Karnbach often, but they no doubt appreciate her work. Thirteen of the thirty-four buildings managed by the Society are open to the public at least part of the year.

Holiday Spirit

Over 200 youngsters came to the Children's Museum over the holidays to visit Nana Claus and make ornaments for the Museum's Christmas tree. Society volunteer Mary Schweiger, alias "Nana," has been assisting old Saint Nick for ten years. Her grandmotherly appearance, Christmas spirit, and gingerbread cookies help younger children, who may be a little leery of Santa, feel comfortable in sharing their holiday wishes.

Asked what were the most popular requests this year, Nana replied, "Dolls and dinosaurs are a favorite, but the most special request came from a brother and sister who hoped Santa might 'bring Mom and Dad something.'"

The Move to Medford

The Society is moving forward with its plans for the renovation of the former J.C. Penney building in downtown Medford. The Board of Trustees has appointed an *ad hoc* building committee to oversee details of the project. This committee is comprised of Board members Don McLaughlin, Laurel

Prairie-Kuntz, Carl Shaff and Isabel Sickels, and staff members Sam Wegner and Joy Comstock.

Currently the committee is reviewing proposals for architec-

tural services. The Board of Trustees expects to select an architect by late February 1988. The design phase will follow in the next few months.



photo by Jean K. Hagen

Jeff LaLande autographed copies of his new book at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum.

Authors Honored

Local authors Kay Atwood and Jeff LaLande autographed copies of their new books for over one hundred guests attending a book-signing party at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum on December 12, 1987.

Each publication contributes to the understanding of southern Oregon's history. Atwood, a respected regional historian, documents Ashland's first ten years of history and brings to light details of an unsolved 100-year-old murder in *Mill Creek Journal: Ashland, Oregon 1850-1860*. LaLande, the archaeologist and historian for the Rogue River National Forest, traces the Oregon and California route of the first white people to travel through this area--the Hudson's Bay Company explorers--in *First Over the Siskiyou: The 1826-1827 Journey of Peter Skene Ogden*. This book

is the latest publication of the Oregon Historical Society.

Both authors spoke about the painstaking research that went into their books. Atwood made several trips to the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley to check original sources on Ashland history. LaLande showed slides he had taken during his travels through the backcountry of southwestern Oregon and northern California while retracing Ogden's exact route.

Mill Creek Journal and *First Over the Siskiyou* are available at the Society's gift shops at the Jacksonville Museum and the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum. Members, with their 15 percent discounts, can purchase them for \$10.15 and \$16.95 respectively. (Non-members: \$11.95 and \$19.95 respectively.)

Exhibit Reminder

The second floor of the Jacksonville Museum will remain closed through March as the Exhibits Department begins building our next major exhibition, "Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley." A special "Members Only" reception is

scheduled for Saturday, March 26, 1988. The exhibits's public opening will be held the following afternoon. Details will arrive in members' mailboxes in a couple of months. Stay tuned.

Oops!

In the last issue of the *Table Rock*

Sentinel, we mistakenly identified Darren McGavin as Jason Robards. The two actors were both on the set of the movie, *Inherit the Wind*, filmed in part in Jacksonville last November. Robards was not in the photograph on page 20.

We also stated that the First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville was built in 1884. It was built in 1881.

1988 Calendars Available Now!

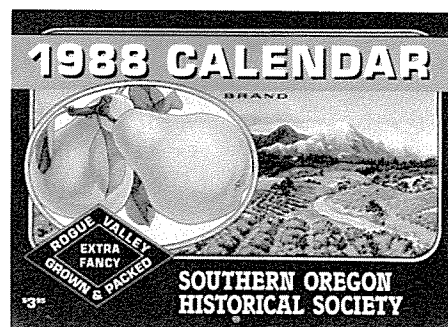
Last month the Society issued its 1988 calendar featuring a collection of historic pear labels reproduced in full color. All members should have received their copy by now, but extras are available for gifts, or home and office use. Calendars may be purchased at the Society's Gift Shop in the Jacksonville Museum or by using the mail-order form below. (Mail-orders, please add \$1.00 for the first and \$.50 for each additional calendar to cover postage and handling.)

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in the 1880s meant fruit growers could ship their produce to eastern and midwestern markets. Fruit packed in wooden crates for shipping was identified by the small colorful label pasted on the end of the box.

Thousands of label designs were used on billions of crates until the 1950s when shippers began using cardboard boxes with preprinted information.

Today, pear labels have become popular collector's items. The twelve selected for the Society's calendar provide a colorful glimpse of the history of Rogue Valley orchards.

For more information on the orchard industry in the Rogue Valley, members may purchase a copy of Kay Atwood's *Blossoms and Branches*, available for \$8.95 (\$9.95 for non-members) in the Society's Gift Shop. While there, members can also pick up extra calendars for \$3.35 each. Like the pear labels, these calendars are sure to become collector's items, too. Supplies are limited, so hurry!



YES! Please send me:

1988 historic pear label calendars total: _____
member price: \$3.35 ea.
non-members: \$3.95 ea.

Copies of *Blossoms and Branches*, by Kay Atwood total: _____
member price: \$8.95 ea.
non-members: \$9.95 ea.

For shipping and handling, please include \$1.00 for the first item, and \$.50 for each additional item. shipping: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Mail to:

name _____

street address _____

city, state _____

zip _____

8-1

Enclose check or money order in an envelope with this form and mail to:
Southern Oregon Historical Society, P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530-0480.

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Evelyn Cotton, Jacksonville
June Doyle, Heraldsburg, CA
Eliz Ely, Milwaukie
Bernice Hicks, Bellingham, WA
Liz Hubbard, Medford
Mrs. Alfred Krohn, Portland
Louis Kula, Medford
Lee Merriman, Ashland
Mrs. A.J. Moore, Medford
Mamie Moore, Medford
Audrey Parsons, Eagle Point
Nell Ramsay, Brookings
Lucille Schoppert, Medford
Ruby Semon, Talent
Irene Thomas, Medford
Lloyd Walch, Central Point
Twyla Weiss, Eagle Point
Robert Wobbe, Medford
William Zacha, Mendocino, CA

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Robert Blanton, Medford
Kimber Church, Ashland
Gregory Durand, Ashland
Martin Grubb, Lakeside, AZ
Beverly Jones, Medford
Mrs. C.D. Julian, Pasco, WA
Laura Kirk, Springfield
Paul Lasky, Euclid, OH
Shirley Melvin, Yuma, AZ
Erin Parmelee, Allenstown, NH
Dick Phillips, Medford
Chet Rapp, Ashland
Bill Slack, Ashland
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Sally Upatisinga, Eureka, CA
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Marjorie Beach, Medford
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Ashton Foerst, Grants Pass
Aletha Foy, Seattle, WA

Become a member—discover the history of Jackson County and the southern Oregon/northern California region.

Become a member—you'll enjoy the lively monthly magazine the *Table Rock Sentinel* and the numerous programs, exhibits and publications of the **SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**.

Become a member—fill out this form and mail with check or money order to: Southern Oregon Historical Society
Membership Coordinator
P.O. Box 480
Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480

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8-1

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From the Collections

The Society and S.O.S.C.'s recent archaeological project at Lithia Park has focused attention on the prehistoric materials early southern Oregon residents left behind. One fine example from the Society's collections is this rare stone tool--the base of a fluted point, worked by human hands to have sharp edges for cutting, scraping, or spearing.

Authorities have estimated the point's age at about 9,000 years. The green jasper has weathered over time to a more common reddish color on the worked or outer surface.

Ashland resident Jack Benedict discovered the point one mile from where Oregon Highway 66 crosses Greensprings Summit. He donated it to the Society in 1976.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society houses numerous artifacts that, owing to limited exhibit space, are not often seen by visitors. The Society hopes that featuring an item each month in this column will provide an enjoyable and educational view of the scope of its collections.



Regional Digest

Bridge Project Begins

A group of area residents and county officials met December 18 to begin planning the restoration of the McKee Covered Bridge. The 70-year-old historic structure spanning the Applegate River is one of only four covered bridges remaining in Jackson County.

The McKee Bridge is in need of major repairs and restoration. Extensive deterioration of its structural supports threatens its future.

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the Southern Oregon Historical Society have provided monies for emergency repairs. Additional funds, however, are needed to restore this prominent historical landmark. Public support is critical and welcomed. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to:

Rogue Valley Foundation
304 S. Central Avenue
Medford, OR 97501

(Checks should be made out to "Rogue Valley Foundation" with a notation that the contribution is for the McKee Covered Bridge Preservation Project.)

The McKee Bridge, 112 feet long and over 15 feet wide, was built by Jason Hartman in 1918 and named for Adelbert "Deb" McKee who donated the bridge site. It was used for mining and logging traffic until 1956 when it was closed to vehicular use.

Originally one of more than 30 covered bridges in Jackson County, McKee Bridge was repaired in 1965 following damages resulting from a severe storm. These measures were undertaken to stabilize the structure but continuing deterioration now requires extensive restoration.

HPLO Elects Local Man As President

Last November the Historic Preservation League of

Oregon (HPLO) elected Jackson County resident Jim Kuntz as its new president. A member of HPLO for several years, Kuntz is the housing quality inspector for the Housing Authority of Jackson County and a local roofing contractor.

Kuntz recognized the importance of saving quality architecture for future generations while studying to become an architect. Today, he and his wife, Laurel Prairie-Kuntz who is a member of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's Board of Trustees, are restoring an eclectic Craftsman-style bungalow in Medford.

HPLO has the reputation of being one of the country's finest statewide preservation organizations. Over the years its members have successfully saved numerous historic structures and, conse-

quently, part of Oregon's unique heritage.

KTVL Wins Award for Society Programs

Medford's KTVL Channel 10 won a 1987 Golden Pioneer Award from the Historic Preservation League of Oregon for a series of short programs on the history of southern Oregon. The "Share the Spirit" one-minute spots featured communities in the region and their heritage.

The project was cosponsored by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Marjorie Edens, assistant director of history, conducted the research for the series, which ran from January through September of last year.

Crater Lake Lodge Hearings

The National Park Service (NPS) has proposed four alternative development plans for lodging, visitor services, and interpretation at Crater Lake National Park. Each option has an impact on the fate of the existing historic Crater Lake Lodge.

NPS is seeking public opinion on each alternative before making its final decision. Individuals may make comments and recommendations at one of four public hearings in late January 1988, or by writing to the NPS Regional Director in Seattle by February 8, 1988.

The four alternatives under consideration are:

***Alternative I:** Rehabilitate existing lodge to provide 80 rooms with baths to be open summers only. Construct interpretive center. Estimated cost: \$25,472,000.

***Alternative II:** Construct a new

90-room lodge in the Rim Village to be open year-round. Remove the 1922 annex from existing lodge and convert remaining structure into an exhibit center and a fine dining room to be open summers only. Estimated cost: \$33,495,000.

***Alternative III:** Construct a new 60-room lodge in the Rim Village to be open year-round. Remove the 1922 annex from existing lodge and rehabilitate remaining structure to provide about 30 rustic guest rooms and a fine dining room to be open summers only. Construct interpretive center. Estimated cost: \$33,267,000.

***Alternative IV:** Construct a new 90-room lodge in the Rim Village to be open year-round. Remove 1922 annex from existing lodge and rehabilitate remaining structure to provide about 30 rustic guest rooms and a fine dining

Crater Lake Lodge.
SOHS #9116



room to be open summers only. Construct interpretive center. Estimated cost: \$33,267,000.

At its January 5 meeting, the Society Board of Trustees reaffirmed its 1986 resolution calling for the lodge's preservation and future use as a lodging and dining facility. This resolution has been sent to the National Park Service. The Society also will have a representative at the public meeting in Medford.

Society members and other interested persons are urged to attend one of the following hearings:

January 25, 1988, 7:00 p.m. at

the Klamath County Board of Commissioners Hearing Room, Courthouse Annex (2nd floor), 305 Main Street, Klamath Falls;

January 26, 1988, 7:00 p.m. at the Red Lion Inn, Crater Lake Room, 200 North Riverside, Medford;

January 27, 1988, 7:00 p.m. Douglas County Courthouse, Room 216, 1036 S.E. Douglas, Roseburg;

January 28, 1988, 7:00 p.m. at the World Forestry Center, Forest Hall, 4033 S.W. Canyon Road, Portland.

Written comments can be sent, no later than February 8, 1988 to:

Regional Director
National Park Service
Pacific Northwest Region
83 South King Street, Room 212
Seattle, WA 98104

The National Park Service's summary brochure and *Supplement to the 1984 Development Concept Plan and Environment Assessment for the Rim Village Area* provide more details on each of the alternatives. Both publications are available for public review in the Society's Research Library in the Jacksonville Museum.

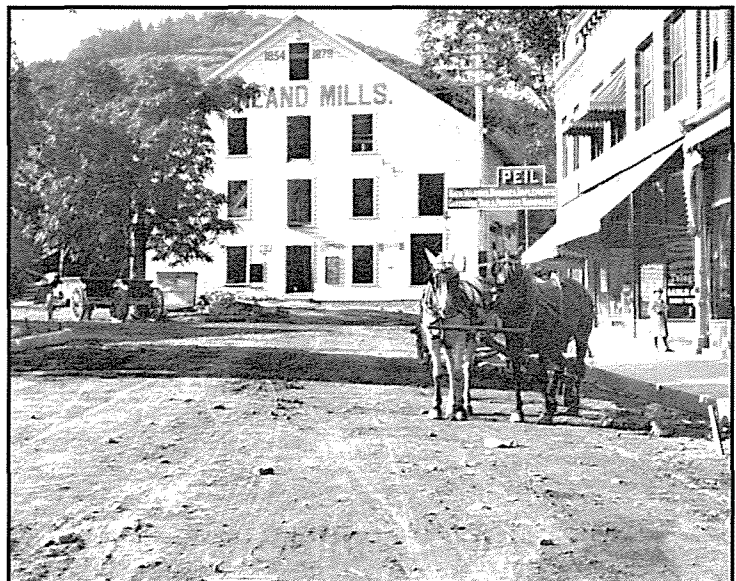
Historic photos available

Reproductions of photographs published by negative number in this magazine or housed in the Society's extensive photo collection are available to individuals or commercial businesses. Rates start at \$4 for one 8x10" print, \$2 for one slide.

For fees and information contact:

Library/Archives
Southern Oregon Historical Society
P.O. Box 480
Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480
(503) 899-1847

Or examine photographs in the library located in the Jacksonville Museum, 206 N. Fifth Street, Jacksonville, Oregon.



SOHS #5743

Calendar of Events

January 26 "Crater Lake Lodge Public Hearing" will be held at the Red Lion Inn, Medford, at 7 p.m. For more information see inside article or call the Society at (503) 899-1847.

January 26 The Southern Oregon Historical Society Board of Trustees will hold its monthly meeting in the conference room of Jackson Educational Service District building, 101 N. Grape Street, Medford, at 8 p.m. This is one-half hour later than usual to accommodate those interested in attending the Crater Lake Lodge hearing at 7 p.m.

Through March 1988 "Ashland's Railroad Centennial," an exhibit celebrating the completion near Ashland of the circuit of railway around the United States, is open at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum, Siskiyou Boulevard and Mountain Avenue, Ashland, from 1-5 p.m., Tues.- Sat.



photo by Jean K. Hagen

Area archaeologists will search for historic and prehistoric artifacts at this site on the corner of Oak and Hersey Street, Ashland, this spring or summer.

All offices and departments of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, except the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum, may be reached by calling (503) 899-1847. The Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum's phone number is (503) 488-1341.

The Society's winter hours are:
Jacksonville Museum: Tues-Sun, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Research Library: Tues-Fri, 1-5 p.m.;
Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Children's Museum: Tues-Sun, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum: Tue-Sat, 1-5 p.m.

Administrative offices: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



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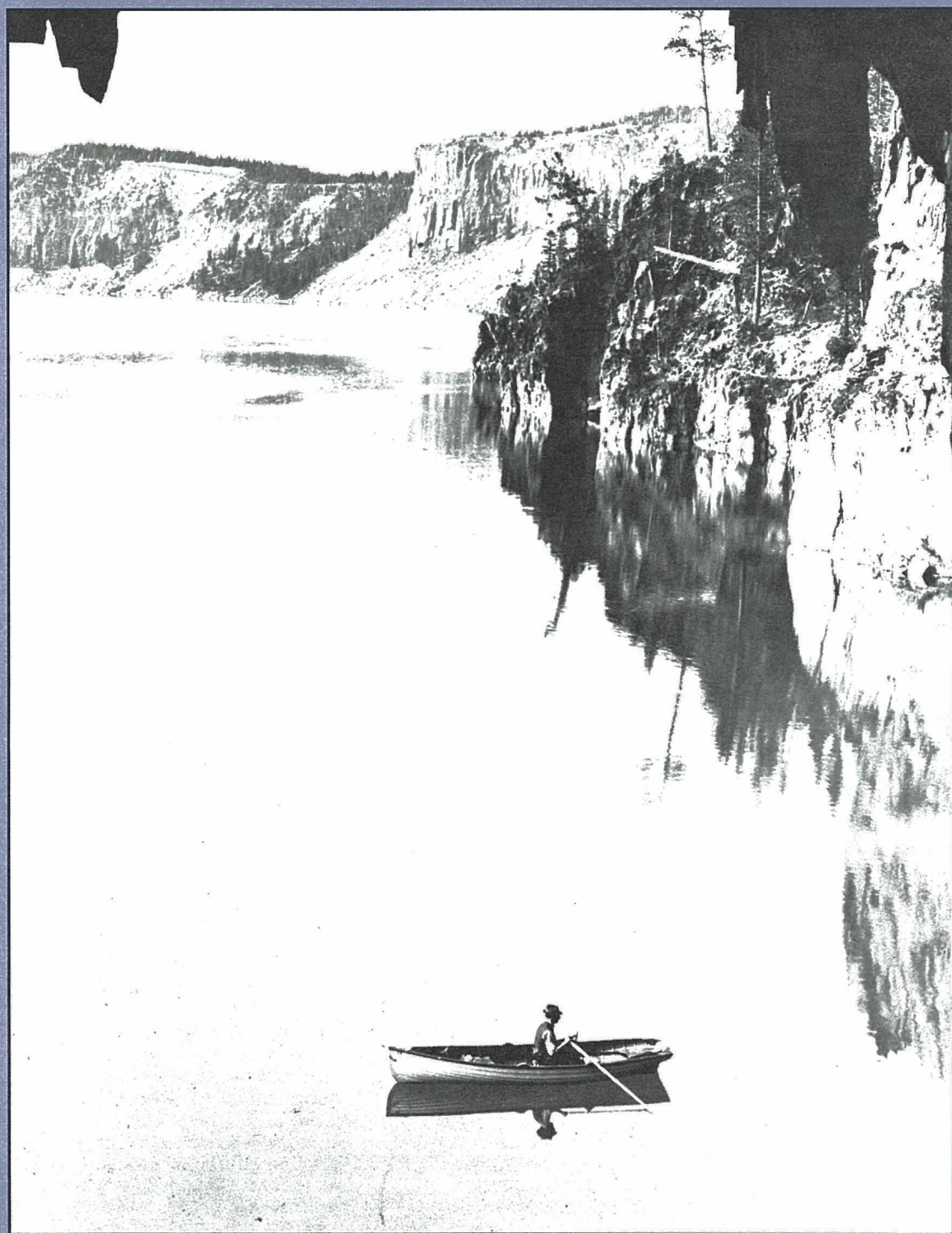
The
Table Rock Sentinel
is the monthly
magazine of the
Southern Oregon
Historical Society

TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

\$2⁵⁰

FEBRUARY 1988

The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society



The December 1987 issue of the *Table Rock Sentinel* reported on the Board of Trustees approval of a five-year long-range plan. Approval is only the first step. Now the plan must be executed and its recommendations put into effect. We will be reporting in future issues of the *Sentinel* as progress and developments occur. Already several things have happened.



The Board of Trustees have established ad hoc committees to make recommendations as outlined in the long range plan. The **Properties Committee** will establish guidelines for determining whether the Society should accept offers of property management. The committee will also determine which properties the Society will continue to manage, how those properties should be used and what to do with properties which we no longer need. The **Willows Committee** will look exclusively at the Willows Farm Museum property to determine whether it is economically feasible to operate, and, if so, how it should be developed and interpreted.

The Board also authorized a standing **Development Committee** to analyze current and potential sources of funding. Specifically, this committee will review all existing fees including membership dues, donations, Gift Shop income and other revenues, and explore other sources of income such as grants, contributed and earned income and potential fund raising activities which will provide a broader base of support for the Society in future years.

The Board also authorized a survey of membership and of the general public of Jackson County concerning the quality and effectiveness of current programs and services as well as suggestions for the future. Simply put, we are interested in how much people know about the Society and what it offers, how well the Society is doing what it does, and what else the Society should be doing now and in the future.

The survey will be conducted this spring by the Southern Oregon Regional Services Institute, Ashland. The results will be extremely valuable in determining the Society's future and how it can best serve the needs of its membership and the general public. When the time comes I urge you to give careful consideration to the survey. Here is your chance to let us know what you think.



Samuel J. Wegner
Executive Director



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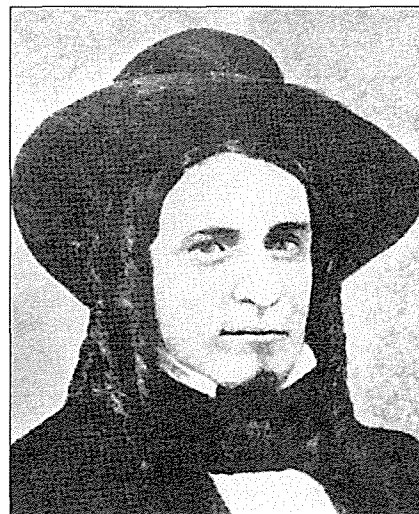
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by Roger Love

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Both Indians and settlers suffered during the Indian wars in southern Oregon and northern California. Benjamin Wright lived and died in the violence of the times.

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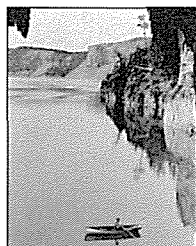
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cover: A solitary rower glides across the pristine waters of Crater Lake. This photograph was taken in 1912 by the Miller Photo Co., Klamath Falls. SOHS #7600.



photo by Natalie Brown

Perched on the rim of the caldera, Crater Lake Lodge overlooks the wild beauty of Crater Lake while awaiting decisions regarding its future. (opposite:) Details such as dormers and shingle siding are characteristic of the Rustic style of architecture.

Time is catching up with

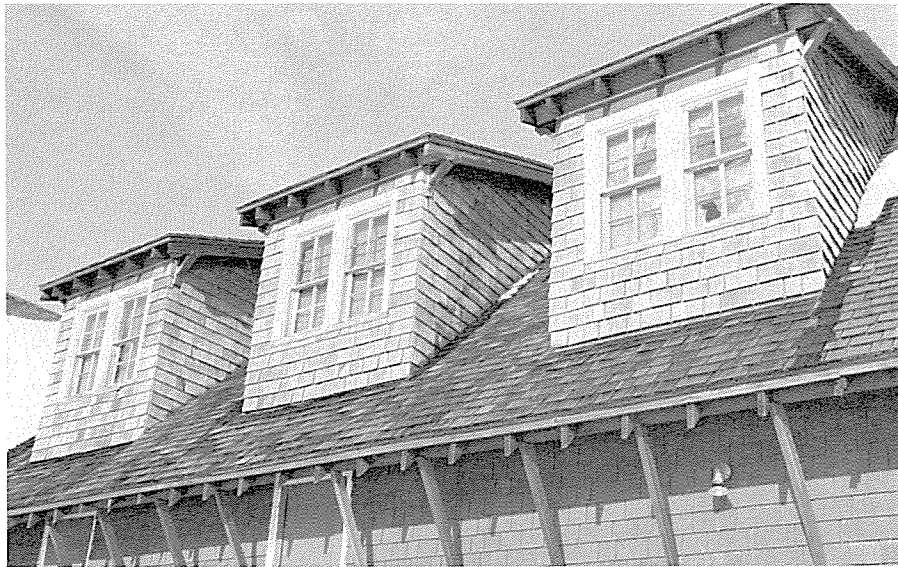


photo by Natalie Brown

Crater Lake Lodge

by Roger Love

Long neglected, denied needed rehabilitation, the aging structure stands perched on the knife-edged rim of Mt. Mazama's blue caldera groaning under a winter snowload. Roof shingles are missing. Paint is peeling. A third-story door leads into thin air where a rusty fire escape once hung.

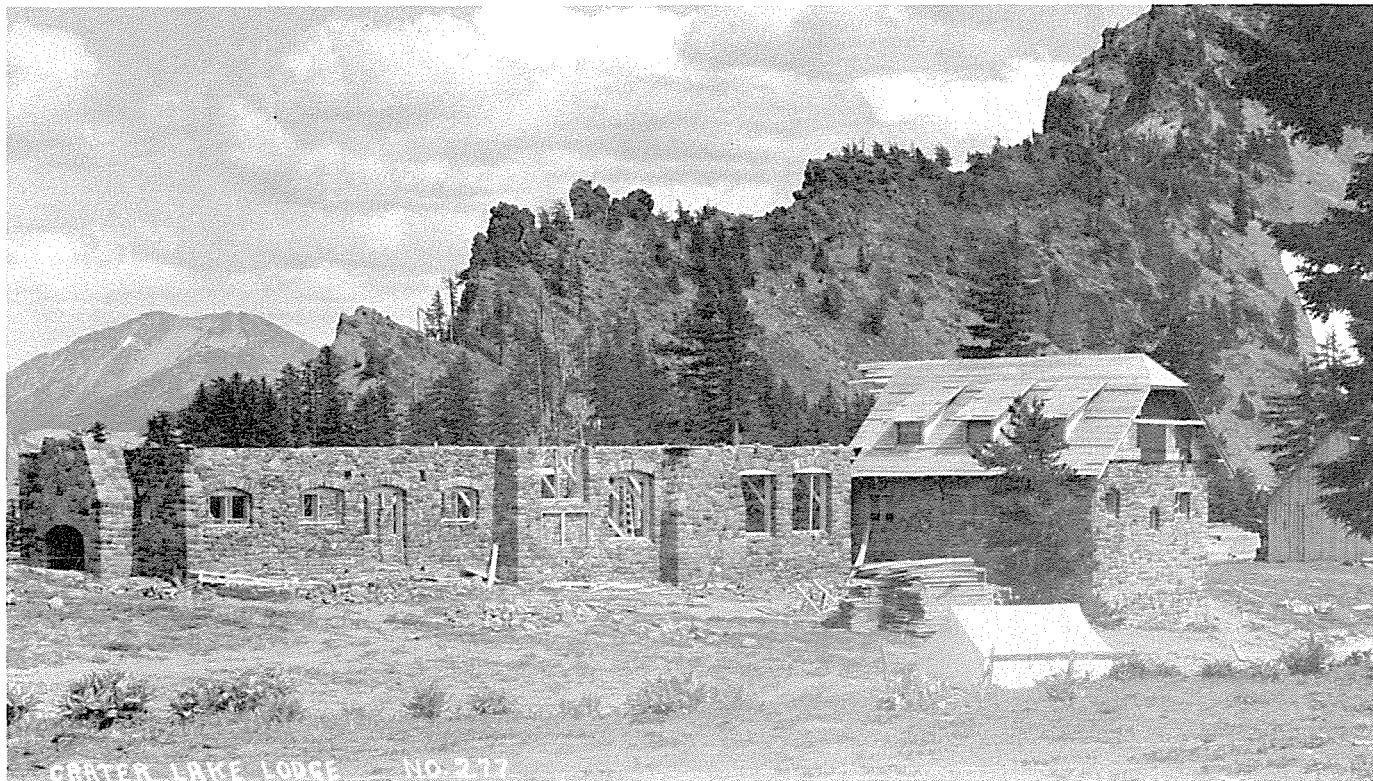
The lodge has been in trouble since workers first laid the cornerstone in 1911. For three-quarters of a century, the rambling, rustic building has weathered Crater Lake's gale-force winds and fifty-foot annual snowfalls. And as might be expected, the years and the elements have taken their toll. Even so, the lodge remains a monument to the vision of the park's founders and to the pioneers of the American conservation movement.

The history of Crater Lake National Park is tightly interwoven with the history of our national park system. Crater Lake's preservation was a direct result of the awakening conservation movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which sought protection for America's scenic natural wonders. Pioneers of the movement soon discovered, however, that preservation often boils down to a question of economics. Scenic sites often had to be purchased before they could be preserved, and even more capital was necessary to develop and maintain a new park.

This notion to develop a national park system coincided with a rapidly developing tourist industry within the borders of the continental United States. Prior to 1915, the bulk of tourism money was spent in Europe. World War I changed that. Suddenly travel abroad lost most of its appeal. Further, San Francisco would host the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, drawing thousands of visitors to the West Coast. The time was right to promote Crater Lake National Park as a tourist attraction of national stature.

Established in 1902, Crater Lake was among the earliest of America's national parks, even predating the formation of the National Park Service. The original plans proposed by the Department of Interior called for minimal park improvements including a road system, a network of hiking trails, and several campgrounds. It was not until two of the most influential figures in Crater Lake's development, William Steel and Stephen Mather, began improvement plans that the idea evolved of building a hotel or lodge as the park's centerpiece.

Steel, often called the "father of Crater Lake," was the earliest supporter of the creation of Crater Lake National Park, having begun his campaign for the park in 1885. After Crater Lake officially became part of the park system, Steel turned his attention to devising methods to make it more accessible to visitors. Mather,



Crater Lake Lodge under construction, ca. 1913. SOHS #4469

the director of the newly formed National Park Service, agreed with Steel that in order for the park to succeed, an economic base had to be created—and that base would be income derived from tourists. To Mather, park development and the resulting revenues would make possible his vision of an expanded park system throughout the United States.

To encourage park development without having to lay out large sums of money, Congress made available franchises for private companies to improve park sites, especially by erecting hotels and creating road and rail systems. The railroad companies often took the lead in establishing these facilities. Parks such as Yellowstone, Mt. Rainier, and Yosemite were adjacent to rail lines and thus were more easily developed.

Crater Lake was an exception. Because it was far from an existing railroad track, it was left to private individuals to improve the site. William Steel formed the Crater Lake Company with two other men in May 1907, and immediately began selling stock throughout Oregon to raise development capital.

Steel had been looking for a way to build a hotel on the rim since 1903, but it was not until February 1907, that he actually petitioned the Department of Interior for the rights to construct the lodge and begin transportation services to and from the park. The government stopped short of agreeing to any major construction, reasoning that the poor roads approaching the park would doom the success of a hotel on the lake rim.*

Steel's company, however, was given the right to take groups of people into the park, and establish "tent

cities" within the park boundaries during the 1907 season.

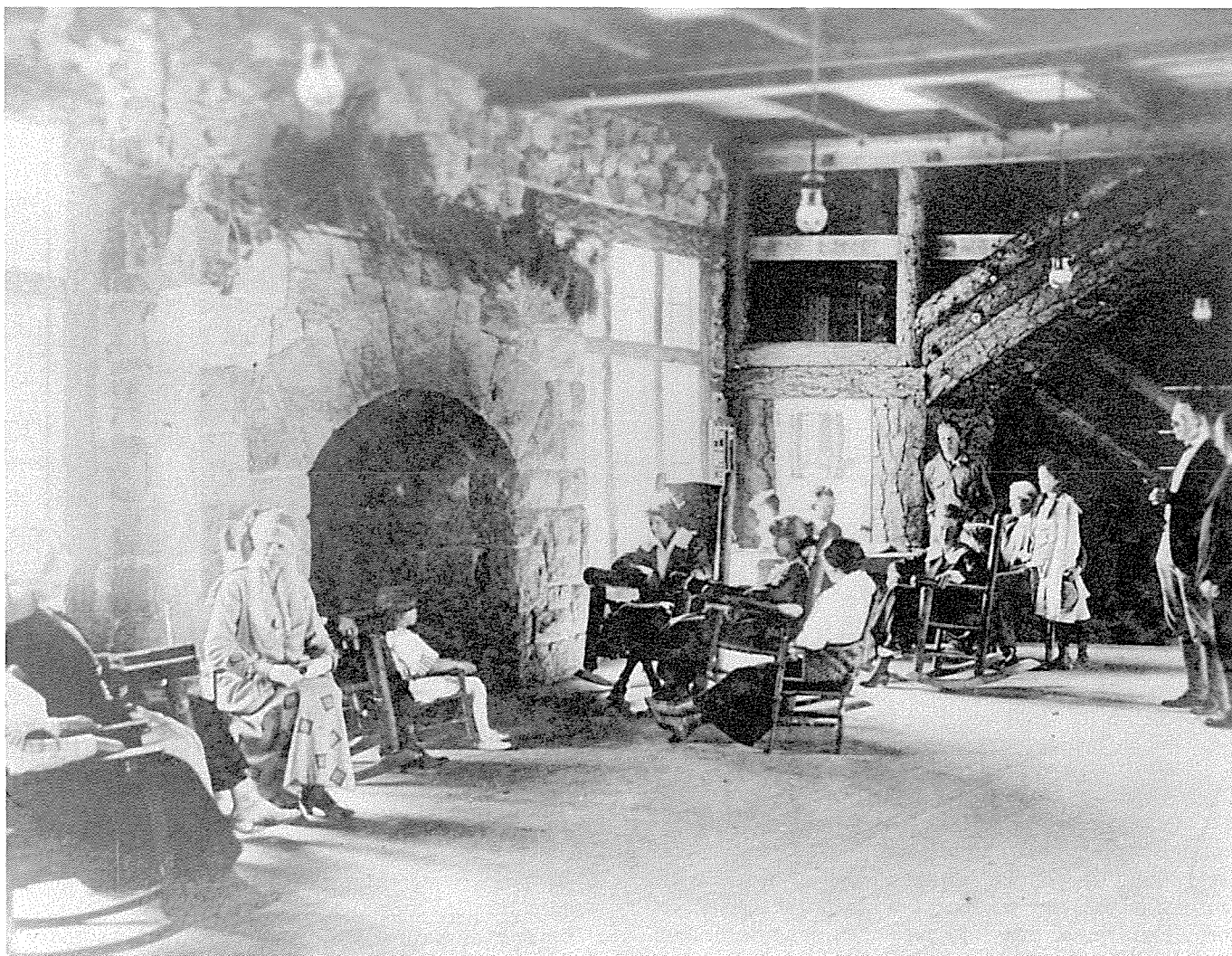
It was that summer, near a tent city on the lake rim, that Steel chose the site of the Crater Lake Company's future lodge:

on the divide over which the road from Klamath reaches the lake's brim. A spring on the mountain side above will furnish plenty of water. It is the company's intention to erect an elevator down the precipice leading to the water's edge, so that tourists can avoid taking the 1,500-foot climb from the water to the hotel.¹

At this point the situation looked good. It was obvious Crater Lake was a tourist attraction. As the Crater Lake Company continued to add overnight accommodations and serve meals, tourists flocked to the lake, only to find that all the tents were full. The demand was there and it was only a matter of time before a full-service hotel could be justified. Indeed, Steel's company must have realized this; they began constructing a log cabin kitchen in 1907, projecting it to be the nucleus of a hotel to be built the next year.

Steel may not have realized it at the time, but the deck was stacked against his company and the future of Crater Lake Lodge, even as his plans for rim

* This seemed reasonable at the time. It was not until 1907 that the first automobile made it all the way to the lake's rim. However, nearly all the traffic to the park, an arduous twelve-hour journey from Medford, continued to be horsedrawn vehicles until 1916.



Visitors circle the stone fireplace in the lodge lobby, 1917.

photo courtesy of National Park Service

development were put into motion. The spring of 1909 found the proposed kitchen structure as yet unfinished, most likely because it, along with several other company buildings, was demolished by the winter snow. At an elevation of 7,200 feet, almost 1,000 feet higher than Mt. Hood's Timberline Lodge, the proposed hotel would have to endure severe weather nearly nine months in twelve. At this elevation snowfall is measured by the foot, not by the inch, and wind gusts as high as ninety miles per hour toss snowdrifts around like ocean waves.

Nevertheless, Steel was determined that the lodge would be built, at an estimated cost of \$5,000, on the western edge of Crater Lake. In the summer of 1909, he convinced Alfred Parkhurst, a Portland businessman, to take charge of the Crater Lake Company, making him responsible for the construction of the hotel, the installation of a water system, and the building of an electrical generation plant. Parkhurst immediately initiated work on the lodge and completed the foundation that same year.

In addition to the lodge, Steel prepared to build what he considered would be the flagship of Crater

Lake Park: a \$100,000 hotel on the east rim of the lake. This hotel, which Steel planned to start building in 1912, would accommodate affluent passengers from a proposed railroad spur out of Klamath Falls. Steel got as far as gaining concession rights for the structure and retained Klamath Falls architect I. Jay Knapp to assemble the plans. However, the project progressed no further for a very good reason; the railroad into the park was never built. Just what affect the concept of a "grand hotel" had on Crater Lake Lodge is unclear. Certainly, the Crater Lake Company did not plan to make the original lodge a first-class hotel. Rather, the plans called for a relatively modest facility that would serve middle-income families arriving by automobile or horsedrawn vehicle.

By 1911 the progress on the lodge construction had slowed dramatically, while the cost estimate spiraled upward from the original estimate of \$5,000 to more than \$30,000. At summer's end, the stone section of the structure was still incomplete owing to the short building season and the time-consuming task of quarrying the rock for the walls and hauling it by wagon

up to the rim. Lumber had to be transported from beyond Fort Klamath. In January 1912, as part of an application letter for a new lease on the Crater Lake concessions, Parkhurst noted that during the entire year there had been only one month when the road to the rim was open and free of snow or ice. Further, materials that had been hauled from Klamath Falls had to be stored at extra expense until the next year. "The lodge is ...3,000 feet above and 66 miles distant from the nearest base of supplies, Klamath Falls," wrote Parkhurst.²

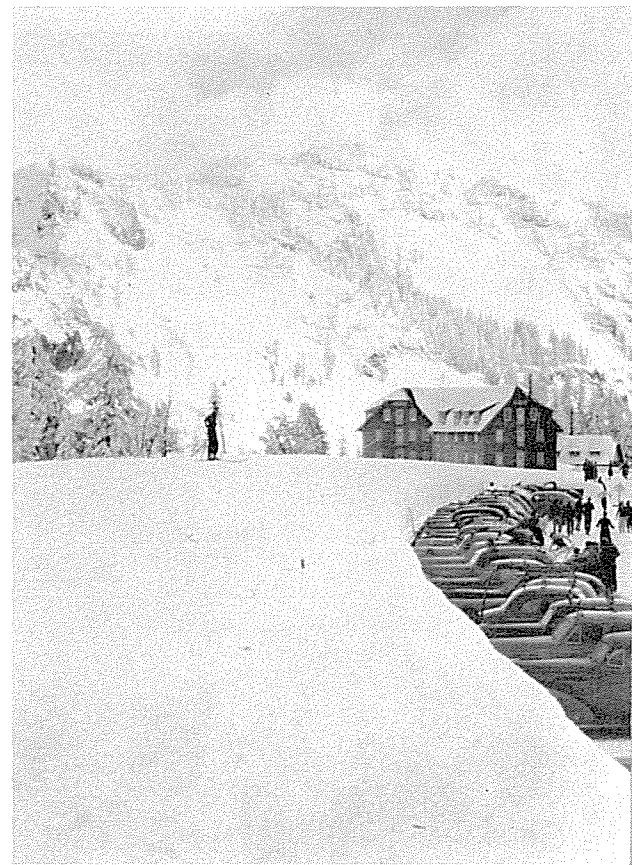
The frustrations of 1911 aside, the Crater Lake Company maintained its optimism, still confident it could open the lodge, even if unfinished, in the summer of 1912. A brochure advertising the park facilities included a description of the new accommodations:

It will have a commodious assembly hall, and a dining room of sufficient size to seat 100 guests. There will be massive stone fire-places in both these rooms, and an immense one will be constructed on the outside of the Lodge, to be used for campfires...A frame building, 30x40 feet, is now complete on the rim of the lake. It is equipped as a culinary department, and will be used, pending the completion of the Lodge. First-class meals are served in a comfortable dining room, and sleeping accommodations consist of good beds in floored tents...the Lodge, when completed, will have sleeping accommodations with all modern conveniences for a large number of guests.³

Once again, the Crater Lake Company was too optimistic: the lodge did not open for the 1912 season. July found the building less than half-finished, and the cost estimate higher yet. That fall Edward W. Dixon, on behalf of the secretary of interior, made an inspection tour of the park. In his report he wrote, "It is estimated that the stonework, which is the slow and expensive part of the construction, is ninety percent completed, and that the entire structure is forty percent completed...The approximate cost of the hotel completely furnished is \$40,000."⁴ Parkhurst and the Crater Lake Company were now in a race with time. They desperately wanted to open for business no later than 1915, when San Francisco would host the Panama-Pacific Exposition and tourists from across the country would flood the West Coast.

The stonework for the first floor of the lodge was finally completed in 1913 and, through the summer of 1914, the wooden upper section was assembled as quickly as could be expected. A slight setback, in hindsight perhaps a portent of future structural problems that plague the lodge even today, occurred in early 1914, when heavy snows collapsed part of the building's roof. Carpenters repaired the damage, and by the end of the construction season the lodge was about ninety-five percent complete.

But why did that roof section collapse? Was it because it was unfinished? Was it because of unusually heavy snowfall that winter? Or was the damage caused by improper building methods? The answer is unclear. We only know that there was a problem with the roof.



Ski meet at Crater Lake, ca. 1930.

The builders regrouped, repaired the damaged section and continued construction.

The answer may not really matter. In today's debate over Crater Lake Lodge's fate, the major expense in restoring the lodge is the need for structural remodeling. That the lodge has withstood the cumulative effects of seventy-three winters is in itself a

**...Parkhurst noted that
during the entire year
there had been only one month
when the road to the rim
was open and free of snow or ice.**

wonder. The building's basic load-bearing elements were grossly inadequate to resist the pressure exerted by the snow that accumulates against the front and rear walls and on the roof.

Where to place the responsibility for this design error is unclear. Very little is known about either the lodge's architect or its original plans. Crater Lake Company commissioned Raymond N. Hockenberry, a Portland architect, to design the building, probably in 1909. Aside from the lodge, the only known examples of



photo courtesy of National Park Service

Hockenberry's work are several Portland residences. The blueprints for Crater Lake Lodge were submitted to the Department of Interior in 1911, but apparently no copies of the plans exist today. In fact the only known illustration of the lodge prior to its completion is a line drawing that appeared in the *Klamath Chronicle* on May 21, 1911. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether Hockenberry's structural design of the lodge was appropriate prior to its construction.

Even though Crater Lake Lodge may well have been designed with less fundamental structural support than other similar lodges of its time, the original plans may have been altered during construction. There is no general contractor of record for the lodge project. Apparently, the Crater Lake Company acted as its own contractor and builder, hiring its own work force and subcontractors. In addition Parkhurst apparently underestimated the construction costs, not foreseeing how difficult it would be to erect the lodge at Crater Lake.

Hockenberry's structural design resembled that of a typical residence at lower elevation, but he probably planned the structure to have more integrity than the building that resulted. For example, where heavy load-bearing beams might have been called for, the builders used the alternate method of nailing together 2x10 inch or 2x16-inch planks to form the beam--certainly less expensive, but also weaker. In forming the roof section, logic suggests the use of heavy roof trusses. However,

carpenters chose a different, less stable method resulting in incomplete trusses. The list goes on. It may have been ignorance of good building practice. Perhaps it was the lack of the proper materials. Maybe it was the pressure to finish the building on time or the lack of money to hire the right people and purchase the right materials. The result was inevitable. Crater Lake Lodge was born with serious defects.

The final push to finish the interior in the spring of 1915 was successful. The lodge was ready for the 1915 summer season even if some of the rooms were not finished. Oregon's Governor Withycombe attended the formal opening on June 28, and Crater Lake trout (most likely descendants of the trout William Steel planted in the lake in 1885) was the main course at the first dinner served at the lodge.

If a hotel's occupancy rate is any measure of its success, Crater Lake Lodge was booming. From the day it opened, its owners had no trouble filling the lodge's sixty-eight rooms, nor was there often a vacancy in the nearby wooden-floored tents which could accommodate 100 more visitors. The new lodge was certainly popular.

Perhaps too popular. Overcrowding became an issue over the next few years. One overnight visitor wrote in 1919;

This is the only building here and able to accommodate only about 200 guests. The management provided a number of tents where the chauffeurs and some of the men were obliged to sleep. Others slept on the floor of the lodge while some occupied chairs.⁵

This is probably not what the owner had in mind when they wrote in their brochure, "...the Lodge...will have sleeping accommodations with all the modern conveniences for a large number of guests."⁶ Yet another guest that same year was even more critical:

...there was absolutely no system at all to the scheme for assigning rooms. In fact, there wasn't even a scheme. The man in charge did not place a number after your name on the register when the room was assigned. He wrote it on a piece of paper and afterwards scratched it out. He seemed to be playing one old cat.

Men were told to go to the top floor and take a room and put their names on it. When asked what particular room to take they were told to take any that was vacant.

Women must have had some other instructions, for they were notorious claim jumpers. Most of the rooms on the top floor were...assigned to half a dozen parties. There were no keys to the doors....

The confusion never seemed to worry the landlord a bit. He told all comers that they would be taken care of and then sort of washed his hands of the whole matter.⁷

Unfortunately, the circus-like atmosphere was the least of the lodge management's troubles. From the first season on, the company found itself in financial trouble. In 1918, after the lodge's fourth season of

operation, Parkhurst wrote, "...we have had a very good season in attendance...but because of the high prices of everything in the food line and for the help we had to pay out most every cent taken in."⁸

Short on capital, barely able to pay the daily overhead, the company had yet to face up to its biggest task: completing the lodge. The guest rooms remained unfinished with tar paper covering the walls. The water supply was undependable, sanitary facilities were often deemed unhealthful and the anticipated electrical lighting system--when it finally appeared--was unsatisfactory. Furthermore, it appears little consideration was given to fire safety prior to opening. In the summer of 1916, Oregon Congressman Nicholas Sinnot received a letter saying:

I would not have my family stay in that hotel again under present conditions. It is illuminated above the first floor by kerosene lamps and candles, and its imperfect water supply and lack of fire escapes make a dangerous situation.⁹

This issue, which has never really been resolved, was partly due to the interior design and partly due to the owners' inability to complete the structure. The only interior escape route was a central staircase which served all three upper floors, a natural route for any major fire to follow. Any occupants trapped upstairs would be forced to exit through upstairs windows and down a very steep roof. The inadequate water supply and the primitive lighting system increased the fire hazard.

A major blaze never occurred, but Parkhurst was under fire, the object of a barrage of criticism from Mather, the National Park Service director. The Crater Lake Company fell deeper into debt, even though records show it turned a modest profit in 1920. The company ceased making lease payments, and the amount owed to creditors ballooned. Mather, never really satisfied with Parkhurst's performance, stepped up his campaign to oust him and his company. Following Mather's announcement that he intended to replace Parkhurst, the majority of lodge employees resigned and left the company with a skeleton crew to operate the lodge. Parkhurst finally surrendered in 1921, a victim of impossible circumstances. A new company, the Crater Lake National Park Company, assumed control of the concessions operation and was able to buy out Parkhurst at relatively little cost.

In the coming years fate would be no kinder to the Crater Lake National Park Company than it was to its predecessor. During the next sixty-five years the operators of Crater Lake Lodge walked the tightrope between remaining solvent and maintaining the lodge to the point where they could keep it open.

On July 11, 1922, perhaps knowing by then that William Steel would not succeed in his plan to build a hotel on the eastern rim of the lake, the company embarked on an improvement program. Scheduled for completion in 1929, the program included an eighty-room wing at an estimated cost of \$80,000, construction

of more housekeeping cabins, landscaping and a veranda on the lake's edge. Of course, the construction season would disrupt the tourist season, leading to further criticism by the Park Service and by customers. When the depression struck in 1929, the building program, still unfinished, was stalled until 1936.

Oddly enough, the Crater Lake National Park Company showed enough profit in 1934 to retire nearly all its \$20,000 debt. But the reason for this was apparent in a letter to the director of the Park Service:

...in bringing about this better financial status, the operator has been giving curtailed and poorer service. For example, the dining room in the main lodge building has been closed and is now used for the storage of automobiles. There is no table d'hôte meal service available...¹⁰

Over the next thirty years it became apparent that the cost of proper maintenance and repair of the lodge precluded any owner-operator from making a profit. Certainly a succession of groups tried after the Crater Lake National Park Company sold out in 1948, a victim of the roller-coaster ride between the depression, World War II and the great surge in public attendance after the war.

The government continued to demand, as it had since the first concerns arose soon after the lodge

"...the dining room in the main lodge building has been closed and is now used for the storage of automobiles..."

opened, that the owners be responsible for fire safety. However, even though certain stop-gap improvements were made periodically, nothing substantial--or expensive--had been done. In 1941 the government requested the installation of a sprinkler system if the Crater Lake National Park Company were to continue renting out rooms above the second floor. The company balked, pointing out that the estimated cost of installing sprinklers was about \$60,000 which was \$13,000 more than the book value of the entire lodge. The automatic sprinkler system was finally added to the lodge twenty-six years later. This basic conflict between profit margin and lodge maintenance would not begin to be resolved until the Park Service purchased the lodge in 1967 from Crater Lake Lodge, Inc., and in turn leased the business back to that company.

The Park Service did not appear any more able to ensure public safety. In 1975, sewage contaminated the lodge's water system and 1,500 employees and patrons became sick. Although the concessionaire was ultimately deemed responsible for the accident, the defense



Unidentified employees sort mail in the lodge dining room.

photo courtesy of National Park Service

attorney argued that the government must bear part of the blame. Less than a year later, Crater Lake Lodge, Inc., sold its lease to the present operator, Canteen Corporation of Oregon. In 1979, the first fire safety inspection in a quarter-century revealed that the exterior and interior lodge walls were not fire-resistant throughout, the fire exits were insufficient and the automatic sprinkler system was inadequate. These deficiencies were corrected by the Park Service over the next several years.

The fact that Crater Lake Lodge needs a complete overhaul is no secret. Over the years, more and more reinforcement has been required to keep the building standing until the spring snow melt. Even some of the extra support the lodge has received in the form of temporary braces after the fall closures has further weakened the structure. Just prior to the Park Service's purchase of the lodge in 1967, Crater Lake Lodge, Inc., pledged to renovate the lodge, saving only the original stonework, in a \$2 million, nine-year project. Thirteen years later, a Park Service report stated, "If the intent is to continue occupancy of the lodge over the long term, the structural system should be completely rebuilt..."¹¹ Unfortunately, the Park Service's \$4.9 million project was put on indefinite hold when it was discovered that the earth under the lodge was unstable and would require much more extensive foundation work than first thought.

Crater Lake Lodge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in May 1981 based on its significance "as an example of the architecture associated with the early twentieth century movement for development of the western national parks." Regardless of its problems, the lodge remains a nearly unaltered example of an early national park resort. It played a major part in the development of tourism in Oregon, and has certainly added to the depth of public support for national parks and the preservation of

scenic wonders. Part of the lodge's--and the park's--appeal is its breathtaking location on the rim overlooking the lake below. This is how our parks historically were developed: other lodges contemporary with Crater Lake Lodge were built to be a significant part of the landscape. This vision, a vision William Steel had while standing on the rim of Crater Lake at the turn of the century and imagining what could be, is part of the history of Crater Lake and of Oregon.

For tourists today, the drama of the lodge is not its lack of adequate trusses or its weak beams. The drama is that of place and setting, of a grand old lodge reclining at the edge of a precipice. It is the drama that Steel had in mind all along, and it leaves an impression that makes a visit to the lodge unforgettable.



ENDNOTES

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2. Staehli, Alfred. Crater Lake Lodge: Additional Notes on its Architectural Significance and about its Architect. The Historic Preservation League of Oregon, 1988, p.8.
3. "Crater Lake National Park, Oregon," pamphlet issued by the Crater Lake Company, ca. 1912, in Steele Scrapbooks, v.II.
4. Arbogast, David, et al. Historic Structure Report, Crater Lake National Park, Crater Lake Lodge. (Denver, Co.: National Park Service,)1982, p.38.
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7. Arbogast, David, et al. Historic Structure Report, p.51.
8. Mail Tribune (Medford, Ore.), September 25, 1918, in Steel Scrapbooks, v.III.
9. Arbogast, David, et al. Historic Structure Report, p.45.
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11. *ibid.*, p.129.

Roger Love has lived in Ashland for seventeen years. He has been an English teacher, a librarian, a photographer. He likes to find out new things about old things.



Soldiers stand for a photograph behind graves of four Modoc chiefs at Ft. Klamath. SOHS #11533

Ben Wright, Indian Fighter

by Charles Sweet

One of the most colorful and controversial figures in the early history of southern Oregon and northern California was mountain man and Indian fighter Benjamin Wright. His short career in this area lasted less than six years, but he nevertheless played a prominent role in the Indian wars of the 1850s.

Wright's story is difficult to piece together. Various historians give somewhat contradictory versions of his activities. Even among Wright's contemporaries, some thought him a hero and others thought him a scoundrel.

Historian A.G. Walling, who it appears had no great love for the Indians, described Wright as a courageous scout and skilled mountaineer in the same mold as Kit Carson. But other historians including Keith Murray have portrayed him more as a violent outlaw who surpassed his opponents in both cunning and a willingness to spill blood.

Throughout the history of the West, the instances of Indian treachery often were matched by whites. This

was particularly true in the rowdy mining camps with their populations of lawless men. Many of the tales of Indian atrocities undoubtedly stemmed from lurid rumors started by Indian-haters to justify their claims that the race should be exterminated. It was in just such a mining camp environment that Ben Wright found himself in the spring of 1851.

Wright is reported to have been born in Indiana about 1828, the son of religious parents. One source claims he came from a Quaker family, while another says he was the son of a Presbyterian minister. He apparently left home at about eighteen years of age when his mother died. After a fight with an employer, he traveled to Leavenworth, Kansas, and joined a wagon train heading for the Oregon Territory.

On the way west, Indians attacked the wagons and killed the daughter of the wagon train captain. Perhaps it was this incident that transformed Wright into an Indian-hater. More probably, he was just another of

those restless young men who headed for the frontier and took pleasure in living a lawless and sometimes violent way of life.

The young Wright rode into Oregon City during the fall of 1847 shortly after the missionary Dr. Marcus Whitman was murdered. The Whitman Massacre precipitated the short-lived Cayuse Indian War. Wright took part in the fray, joining in the fighting along the Columbia River. It is possible he received his first training in cruelty during this campaign.

After hostilities ceased, he tried farming. This proved too tame an occupation, however, and he spent several years hunting beaver and Indians. By now, he was beginning to resemble an Indian both in appearance and habit. He let his naturally curly hair grow long and he dressed in buckskin. He also had learned to fight like the Indians, using what some whites would call treachery, taking scalps and mutilating the dead. Wright was known to display the fingers and noses he had taken as trophies from dead or wounded adversaries.

In March of 1851, prospectors discovered gold in Northern California, and gold-seekers rushed to the area. With news of the gold strike, Wright, who had spent three years fighting and living among Indians in northern Oregon, headed south and commenced mining on the Scott River. He also began living with a Shasta Indian woman.

Because his reputation as a fierce Indian fighter had preceded him, the local tribes already regarded Wright as a brave and fearsome warrior. Only weeks after he had arrived in Scott Valley, a roving band of Modocs stole some stock from a pack train. A search party was organized in Yreka under the leadership of John E. Ross, who would later become prominent in Jacksonville. Wright joined the party of vigilantes set on securing the stolen stock and punishing the Modocs. Some of the miners wanted Wright as their leader, but because he was new to the area and because of his youth (he was only twenty three), he deferred to Ross.

Because his reputation as a fierce Indian fighter had preceded him, the local tribes already regarded Wright as a brave and fearsome warrior.

When the party came upon a Modoc village near Tule Lake, they camped close to the Indians and pretended to settle down for the night. But while the Indians slept, a group under Wright's leadership quietly surrounded the village. At dawn, they attacked, catching the Indians completely by surprise. The women and children were captured, and the men who weren't captured or killed were driven into the swamp around the lake. The Modocs caused no further trouble during the remainder of 1851.

That summer, however, a Shasta Indian named Scarface¹ murdered Calvin Woodman on a tributary of the Scott River. Wright served as an interpreter for a posse of volunteers headed by Yreka attorney Elijah Steele which was formed to hunt down Woodman's killer. In the search for Scarface, the posse split into two groups. Steele's group went north into Oregon to investigate a report that Scarface had joined a band of Rogue Indians under Chief Sam. Wright led the other group to search for Scarface in the Klamath River country. On the Salmon River, they finally captured Scarface and an accomplice named Bill. Both Indians were hanged, but only after a lawful trial rather than the lynching that was so common in those days.

For the immigrants traveling through Modoc territory along the Applegate Trail, 1852 turned out to be a dangerous year. The Modocs ambushed several wagon trains in the vicinity of Bloody Point and Tule Lake. Estimates of the number of white men, women and children killed by marauding Modocs that summer vary between sixty and one hundred.

In response to the threat, a party of thirty to forty Yreka men under Charles McDermit had gone east to the hostile Modoc country for the purpose of escorting wagon trains bound for Yreka. While the McDermit party was busy elsewhere along the trail, though, Modocs attacked and killed seven men near Bloody Point. An eighth man escaped and managed to reach Yreka with word of the massacre. Wright, then mining on Cottonwood Creek, promptly raised a company of volunteers to reinforce McDermit. If there was going to



Ben Wright photo courtesy of National Park Service

be trouble along the Applegate Trail, Wright wanted in on it.

By the time Wright's party reached the Tule Lake area, some of McDermit's men already had died in clashes with the Indians. His remaining force was defending a wagon train under siege by the Indians. The

defenders were almost out of water and ammunition when the rescue party arrived. Wright's men managed to kill several of the attacking Indians as they fled. The rescued immigrants were loud in their praise of the Indian fighter as they rode into Yreka.

After escorting the wagon train beyond danger, the Wright party returned to Tule Lake. Here, they came across the mutilated bodies of the seven men mentioned earlier as well as three of McDermitt's men who had died at the Modocs' hands. These killings prompted Wright to attack the Indians in their stronghold on the shore of Tule Lake. In the ensuing encounter, thirty or more Modocs were shot down and the remaining warriors escaped to an island in the lake.

Trying subterfuge, Wright unsuccessfully attempted to lure the Indians off the island. When this failed, he returned to Yreka and had boats built for use in storming the island. This maneuver failed as well, and the Modocs managed to withdraw from the lake and retreat into the inaccessible lava beds made famous twenty years later during the Modoc War. But Wright did find evidence on the deserted island that many immigrant captives had been tortured by the Modocs before they were murdered.

Word of the renewed Indian hostilities on the Applegate Trail had also reached the rapidly growing southern Oregon settlement that gold-seekers called Table Rock City and which soon would be known as Jacksonville. Upon learning of attacks on wagon trains, the miners in town immediately organized a volunteer company of twenty-two men to help convoy Jacksonville-bound immigrants through the dangerous Modoc territory. John E. Ross took over command of the volunteers and headed for the Applegate Trail.

This company arrived in the Tule Lake Basin shortly after the Yreka volunteers under Wright had reached there. The two groups joined forces and on a few occasions were able to attack and rout Indians just as they surrounded hapless wagon trains. As the volunteers scouted the immigrant trail, they discovered many bodies of slain victims and the remains of burned wagons stripped of their cargo. Whenever possible, the volunteers buried the victims where they found them.

Wright and his men had been further infuriated when they came upon the mutilated corpses of women and children. They were determined to punish the Modocs and try to recover stock and property taken from the immigrants. With the Applegate Trail well-patrolled, no further attacks occurred that fall and the Jacksonville contingent under Ross returned home.

Wright, however, did not wish to leave the Tule Lake area without avenging those murdered by the Modocs. When some of his men began drifting back to Yreka, Wright felt it was imperative that he punish the Indians before winter set in and his force became too small to strike. By November he was running low on supplies and sent four of his crew back to Yreka for food and ammunition. The four men happened to ride into town on presidential election day. After casting their votes for Franklin Pierce they proceeded to celebrate by going on a drinking spree that lasted several

days. When they finally got back with the provisions, Wright's men were so hungry they were considering butchering a horse.

As winter fell upon the volunteer company, their numbers dwindled to eighteen men. At the same time, however, the Modoc camp had grown to the point where the warriors outnumbered the volunteers by as much as three to one. Wright realized he had to act soon.

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Versions differ as to what happened next. With the arrival of provisions from Yreka, the Indians were invited to a feast and a peace parley. One story has it that only two Modocs showed up. Another version claims that a friend of Wright purchased strychnine from a Yreka doctor and that the poison was to be added to the Indians' beef at the feast. Most historians discount this allegation, but during the 1872 Modoc Wars, those who favored the Indian case repeated the story. Yreka volunteers who were members of the expedition later admitted to their planned treachery, but insisted the intent was to use bullets rather than poison to exterminate the Modocs.

What actually happened at the proposed feast may never be known, but both sides are in agreement as to what occurred next. Early one morning soon after the feast, Wright quietly stationed well-armed men at strategic locations around the Modoc camp near the natural bridge on Lost River. According to a plan, the Indian fighter strode into the enemy camp wearing a blanket for an overcoat and carrying a pistol underneath. He would make one last demand for the return of captives and stolen property. If the chief refused, he would shoot him and fall to the ground immediately. This was the signal for his men to open fire while he scrambled to safety.

The plan worked. The chief refused the demand and Wright fired through the blanket, killing him. The volunteers then opened fire, and shot down all but five of the forty-six warriors who tried to escape into the sage. Only four of the whites were wounded during the skirmish. At that point, the volunteers' blood lust got the better of them and they scalped and mutilated the Indian corpses before returning to Yreka for a triumphant drink. The company was disbanded on November 29, 1852.³

An uneasy peace followed and held throughout 1853, with relatively few incidents of hostility reported in northern California. No record exists of Wright's activities during the year, but it was a significant one for