

TABLE ROCK

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QUARTERLY



APRIL 1988



The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society

Commentary

Richard Lethaby (1857-1931), English architect and historian, once wrote of historic buildings:

“Monumental history is a stirring, vital thing: it can be touched and history that can be seen and touched is a strong and stimulating soul-food, entirely different from vague and weary written history.”



May 8-14, 1988 is National Historic Preservation Week. This issue of the *Table Rock Sentinel* focuses on historic preservation with two articles: one featuring an article from *Old House Journal* on researching the history of your home, and another on the Oakdale Avenue area—Medford's first historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.

In its broadest sense “historic preservation” tries to preserve all of history—in whatever form we find it. But National Historic Preservation Week honors a more closely defined aspect: the preservation of historic properties and buildings. The desire to preserve a historic building—the old Jackson County Courthouse in Jacksonville—brought about the creation of the Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1946. Further efforts in Jacksonville, throughout Jackson County and all across the southern Oregon region have resulted in the preservation and on-going use of numerous buildings and historic properties important to our region's past. We invite you to join with us in celebration of National Historic Preservation Week.

* * *

In the February 1988 issue of the *Sentinel* I reported to you on the Board's approval to conduct a survey of the membership and of the general public. By the time you read this you should have received your survey in the mail. I cannot emphasize how important it is that you complete and return it by the May 1 deadline to the Southern Oregon Regional Services Institute. We need to hear from you. Help us determine the Society's future.



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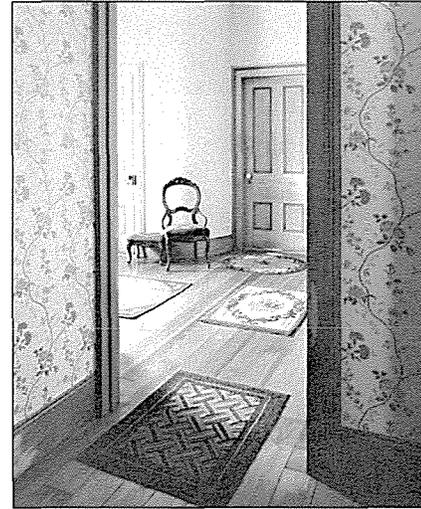
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While trying to protect their tree-lined street, South Oakdale residents unearthed the lives and legends of some of Medford's influential past citizens.

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Numerous clues such as titles, business transactions, photographs, postcards and memoirs can lead a persistent researcher to the history of his home and its former occupants.

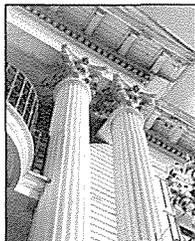
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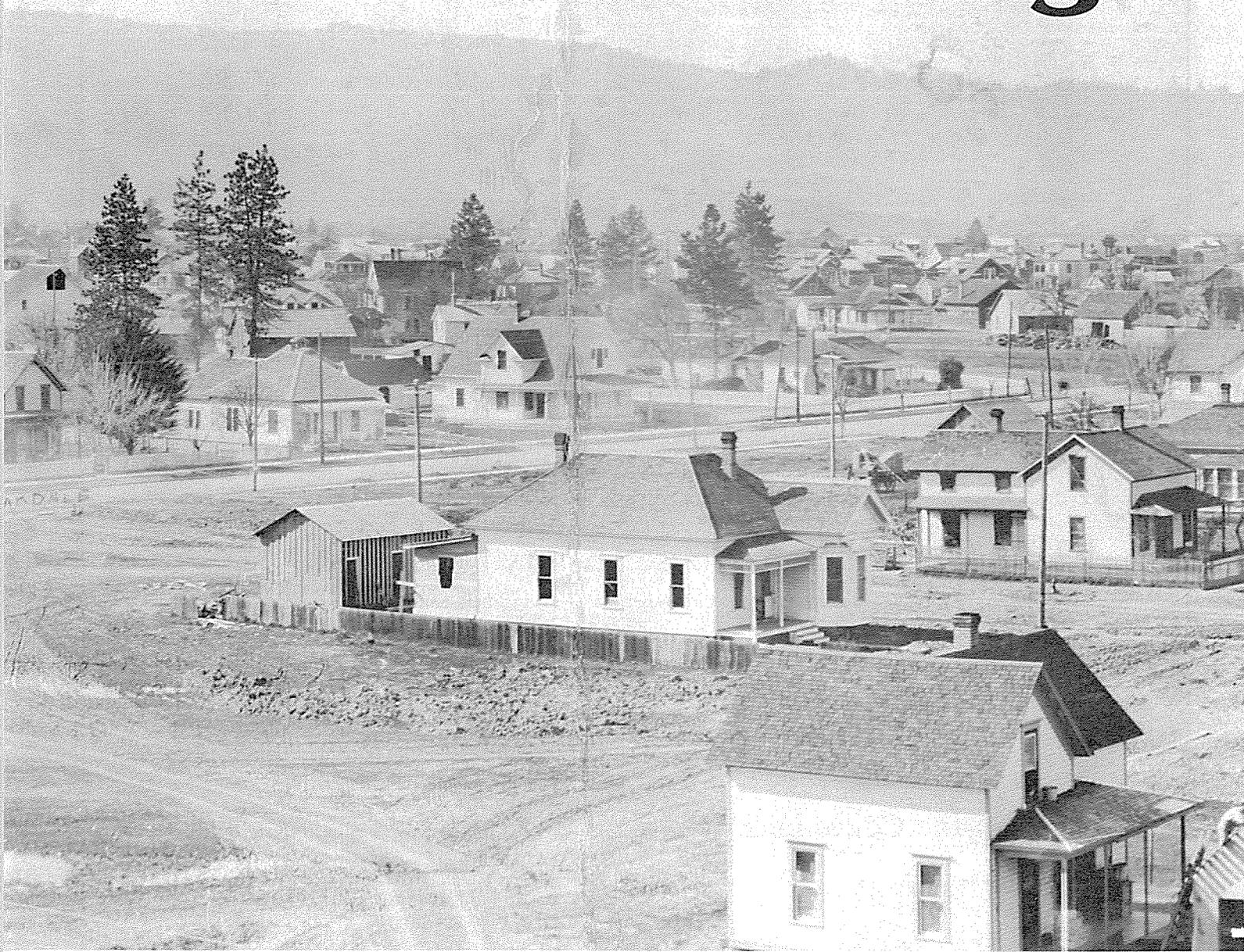
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cover: This photograph documents a lovely architectural detail from the Vawter House which once stood on the corner of 8th and Ivy streets, Medford. The building was razed in 1973.
SOHS #11133.

Saving the Saving th



Medford's South Oak

Street, e Stories

This photograph is cropped from a 1910 panorama of the South Oakdale and neighboring residential areas. SOHS #8852

by Vicki Bryden

Historic preservation doesn't always begin with a noble endeavor to preserve an architectural wonder. It can also be the result of other concerns—a bonus that results while solving other problems.

In the mid-1970s, a young architecture student from the University of Oregon knocked on a few doors on South Oakdale and essentially said, "You have something special here. There are ways you can preserve your neighborhood." A Medford native with a life-long interest in its history, Scott Clay was learning about the new historic preservation laws and saw a chance to apply them in Medford. The residents were flattered, held a neighborhood meeting and listened to some of his ideas and information, but no action was taken at that time.

A year or so later, the late Esther Jensen alerted some of her South Oakdale neighbors to information she had gleaned while attending meetings of the Citizen Planning Advisory Committee. City of Medford maps of proposed arterial street plans showed tree-lined, two-lane, South Oakdale as a four-lane arterial street. Two or three residents made trips to the City Planning Department to get evasive, placating non-answers to their questions: neither yes nor no—just vague talk about progress.

Residents on South Oakdale were angry. Why should they give up the livability of their neighborhood so that someone living out of town could drive home faster? The city councilman for their ward didn't help much either when he met with them. He advised planting any new trees farther back in yards just in case parking strip trees had to be removed at some time in the future. It was this lack of concern for the people residing in the neighborhood that provided the impetus needed to get the neighborhood organized.

South Oakdale Historic District

In the spring of 1976 the intersection of 11th and Oakdale was widened at the loss of two huge, wonderful old trees. Neighbors rallied for a protest walk to City Hall. This time, real action was needed; residents feared waking up to chain saws some morning. The question was, how do we make an impact upon city hall?

Investigating once again the pros and cons of forming an historic district, residents learned that any project that included federal monies must be reviewed at a national level if it impacted a registered historic district. At that time most street projects included federal money as part of the package. Saving trees and the ambience of the neighborhood was the end, and historic preservation suddenly seemed to be the means.

Residents held the first of several neighborhood meetings in April 1978. They invited State Historic Preservation Officer Elizabeth Potter to review the area for its potential as an historic district. Her positive response gave the residents of South Oakdale the green light to proceed. The state office provided both the paperwork and some of the support on how to file an application.

How does an area meet criteria to qualify for listing on the National Historic Register? In the case of South Oakdale, several historic structures would qualify on their own, but many others would not. Filing as a district, however, the structures all had historic value as a group. That value includes the visual impact of the large lawns and the tunnel of trees. The buildings are also representative of the development of popular architectural styles—including 1890 Colonial Revival, the bungalows of 1905–1920s, with Queen Anne and Tudor Revival and builder's styles. Primarily residential, it also includes a major church and rectory, a high school and some professional offices. This was one of the oldest still-intact areas of Medford.

Along with the structures, the neighborhood also had significance because the early inhabitants of South Oakdale played key roles in the development of Medford as a new and growing community. The people building fine new homes in the area were also the ones helping to build the town at large—its business, politics and social life.

Sketching some of the characters who played major roles in the development of South Oakdale and Medford can get complicated. Many were involved in several aspects of the community's financial and cultural growth. In the glimpses that follow, the house numbers of some of these citizens' South Oakdale homes are in parentheses after their names.

The wheeling and dealing of land speculation brought many of the first residents to the neighborhoods. J. H. Stewart (1113) owned vast areas from the east side of Oakdale to the tracks. F. K. Deuel (1018) owned much of the area on the west side. Both had extensive orchards bordering the street. In 1908, Stewart sold to George Marshall, who was responsible for subdividing the east side over many years. A few blocks closer to town, Harry Wortman* (912) acted as a developer, along with Barr (410), Dodge (610), Tuttle (706), Whitman (707) and Warner (519), who all owned large parcels of property.

Neighborhood residents' investments also affected the downtown commercial core. Porter Neff (516 Belmont) was an attorney, and a partner in the Cooley building and the Jackson and Holland hotels. He also played a part in the agreement that Medco be left outside the city limits for tax purposes, an arrangement later to haunt the city of Medford. Captain Nash (822) remodeled the building at Main and Front into the well-known Nash Hotel. Emil Mohr (610) built the Medford Hotel in 1910, then moved to Oakdale to walk to work daily.

Realtor Walter Leverette (611) built his house as a model home of the modern life, featured in a 1928 *Medford Mail Tribune* story. He was a partner in the Holly Theater and the Leverette building on Main among other commercial ventures.

"The" architect for Medford from around 1910 until the early 1940s was Frank Clark. He designed and built nine or ten homes within the district as well as the high school in 1931. He is credited for having a major regional influence on the shape of the valley.

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Along with land development, early entrepreneurs focused on the budding orchard industry. The first commercial acreage in the valley was put into production by Stewart (1113) and Whitman (707) in 1885. Stewart sold out by 1908 to George Marshall, but remained a major influence on later orchardists, having shipped the first carload of fruit out of the valley in 1890. Whitman helped start the Southern Oregon Fair Association.

Many from South Oakdale practiced other professions, but according to the city directory listings, they also dabbled in the orchard business. Included were Deuel (1018), Porter (1010), Patterson (1009), Bardwell (1002), Drury (620, then 1009) and Maurice Spatz (912), who founded Crystal Springs Packing Company. The Naumes family built the unique rock house at 1001 South Oakdale in 1937. It was designed by Frank Clark and built by Frank Applegate with Joe Naumes hauling rocks from all over the country.

*While on the city council, Harry Wortman asked the city to rename 7th to Main and J. St. to Oakdale to correspond to streets where he had lived in Rockford, Indiana. The large stands of native oaks made his request a logical one.



J. H. Stewart built this two-story Queen Anne style home in 1895. In 1908 he sold the home and surrounding acreage to orchardist George Marshall, who later subdivided much of the district. SOHS #4583

Every new community needs financial institutions and the men of South Oakdale again were in the forefront of early Medford banking. The Medford Bank was founded in 1899 with Stewart as president. The First National Bank was incorporated in 1905 with Deuel as a director and later with Charles English (1006) as its vice president. The Farmer's and Fruit Grower's Bank was established in 1909 by owner DelRoy Getchell, who built the home at 1121 South Oakdale in 1916. L. B. Warner (519) was president and director of Jackson County Federal Savings and Loan. He also had the distinction of being postmaster for several years and served in that role at the time of the infamous D'Autremont train robbery.

Merchants from South Oakdale included Wortman (912) as partner in a meat and grocery store. Deuel (1018) was a major dry goods operator. Jewelers included Dr. Reddy (800) and Larry Schade (989). D. V. Myers (609) operated a local auto dealership. A. A. Davis (517 W. 10th) came in 1889 and built the only flouring mill. He was the

founder of the short-lived Crater Lake Railroad Co. hoping to link Eagle Point with the north-south transcontinental railroad line.

In the 1920s, brothers-in-law A. B. Cunningham (616) and O. O. Alendorfer (718) owned People's Electric, until selling to employee Ben Trowbridge, Sr. Bert Theirolf (907) was a lumber broker who owned Big Pines Lumber Co. Hal Deuel (1018 and 1100) and his brother-in-law owned Valley Fuel.

Many neighborhood residents were well-educated professional men coming from the East to find their fortunes. Most came with well-lined pockets, able to build

**Noteworthy among South
Oakdale's residents was Earl
Fehl, who rocked the
community with one of its
biggest scandals.**

fine homes. Attorneys included Porter Neff (516 Belmont) and Yale graduate Stuart Patterson (1009), who rented from W. J. Roberts, a civil engineer whose work took him away from the new home he had built.

Dr. E. H. Porter (1010) represented the medical profession. He built the Medford Sanitorium, the first hospital after Catholic Sacred Heart. At retirement he remodeled it in 1921 into Carghill Court Apartments. Dentist Dr. Riddell (1114) sold his home to another dentist, Dr. Elliot.

Two of Medford's best-remembered educators lived on South Oakdale, their influence touching thousands of students. E. H. Hedrick (503) lived on the street the thirty years he was the popular Medford schools superintendent from 1925 to 1955. Lester Harris (707) came to Medford to live just steps away from where he worked as principal of Medford Senior High, from 1944 to 1965. The district building now located at 517 W. 10th was originally the 1884 school built on Oakdale and Main.

The literary arts were well represented by products of South Oakdale homes. Edison Marshall (raised 1113, lived 1009) gained national recognition as a novelist. He wrote his early works in Medford, but later left for his wife's native Georgia. A prolific contributor to *Good Housekeeping*, and author of more than forty novels, five of them made into films, he was remembered fondly as one of Medford's more flamboyant citizens.

Another colorful figure is Dick Applegate (raised 615) who began his journalism career at the *Mail Tribune*. Applegate renamed the Medford High Tigers the Black Tornado. Leaving Medford behind, he moved up through United Press International to become bureau chief in Singapore and Saigon and then an NBC correspondent in Hong Kong. While there sailing, he strayed into Communist Chinese waters, was captured and held for eight-

een months. Medford citizens rallied to gather thousands of signatures to present the secretary of state to help secure his release.

Another literary connection was Alice Applegate Sargent (800), who wrote a short history of the Rogue Valley and a book, *Following the Flag*. John Reddy (raised 800) became an editor at *Reader's Digest*.

Thomas Williams (625) retired from the Indian Service in 1903 and became the city park supervisor. He planned and planted Library Park, now Alba Park. After he died, the Frank Applegate family bought his home and remained in it for more than seventy years.

Noteworthy among South Oakdale's residents was Earl Fehl, who rocked the community with one of its biggest scandals. A carpenter, Fehl bought 504 South Oakdale in 1914. From 1919 to 1933 he published the *Pacific Record Herald*. His editorials violently attacked the government and he soon joined forces with a similar paper, *The Daily News*, owned by Llewelyn Banks. They formed an organization called the Good Government Congress.

Together, the two masterminded a plan to control the county government, electing Fehl county judge. The losing sheriff, however, filed suit demanding a recount. Front page headlines in *The Medford Mail Tribune* uncovered the story over six to eight months, telling of ballot theft, arrests and convictions. The coverage earned the *Tribune* the coveted Pulitzer Prize. Fehl ended up serving time in prison, and returned to a life of dejection on South Oakdale.



Electa and Earl Fehl, SOHS #6751

Politicians of lesser notoriety included Circuit Judge Norton (408), Judge Cruz (707) and Wm. Warner's father-in-law, Judge Colvig (519). Serving as mayors were Dr. Reddy (800) in 1907-1908, Alendorfer (718) in 1927-1928 and Hal Deuel (1940-1942).

In a more pleasant vein, the social life of South Oakdale residents flourished through activity in city clubs and societies as well as entertaining at home. Many of the men belonged to the University Club, considered a "must." Ladies were also organized. Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Warner were charter members of the Lewis and Clark Club, which later evolved into the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Wort-

man, and undoubtedly others, belonged to the Ladies' Improvement Society, donating trees to be planted in Library Park.

Memories of the young people of the time are of parties and car rides. Tennis was popular, and there was more than one court in the district. Eastern ways brought west included calling cards and servants. Formal dress dinner parties were common. Families were close and in many cases the vacant land adjacent to family homes often was used to build homes for newly married family members. The every-other-lot pattern of older and newer homes still can be traced through parts of the district.

the message that historic preservation is valid and good business. The new Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted in 1986 included provisions for historic properties and the recently established Medford Historic Commission is planning its first public event May 15 during Historic Preservation Week: a tour of the South Oakdale Historic District.



SOURCE MATERIAL

Aldrich, William W. *After 62 Years Still Going Strong, Rogue River Valley University Club; A History 1910-1973*. Medford: University Club members.



**The DelRoy
Getchell
House,
built in 1916
SOHS #4584**

Against this surprisingly rich architectural and sociological background, a core group of neighborhood volunteers spent the summer of 1978 researching all possible sources for any information pertaining to Oakdale history. County tax records yielded dates and names. Scott Clay again aided in identifying architectural details with the correct terminology. Old-timers from the neighborhood repeated their remembrances for tape recorders. Microfilms of old *Medford Mail Tribunes* gave up a host of data.

The more the group dug out information the more intrigued they became about the people and the structures that made the district "historical." In seeking to save trees and a neighborhood's livability, the desire for historic preservation of the area had matured.

The author completed the formal application for historic district status. Mailed to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office on August 31, 1978, state and national approval was granted March 15, 1979. The district to be entered on the National Register of Historic places was to consist of sixty individual structures between West 10th and Stewart Avenue. The neighborhood held a celebration party in the 1895 home of J. H. Stewart (1113) with a real feeling of accomplishment.

Ten years ago, the city of Medford was very reluctant to join in any efforts on behalf of historic preservation. Yet in the intervening years, a handful of persevering citizens from all around Medford have continued to carry

Cordy, C. B. *History of the Rogue Valley Fruit Industry*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Extension Service, 1977.

Contemporary Authors, vol. 9-10. Detroit: Gale Research Company Book Tower. 1964.

Kellow, Ferne. *History of the Rogue Valley Pear Industry*. (Southern Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Jacksonville, OR) 1938.

Polk City Directory, City of Medford. 1911-14, 1930-50.

Polk City Directory, Jackson County. 1911-14.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Western Oregon. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1904.

Snedicor, Jan. *History of Medford*. (Southern Oregon Historical Society Research Library) 1935.

Southern Oregon Historical Society Oral History 100. Bertha Bardwell, 1978.

Oral interviews with the following Medford residents were conducted during the summer of 1978:

Elizabeth Applegate Barry	Helen Leavens
Perle Fehl Coverdale	Liberta Lennox
F. K. Deuel, Jr.	Genivieve Wortman McCorkle
Col. Bob Emmens	Joe Naumes
Otto Frohnmayer	Louise Clark Patterson
Calista Handweg	Laura Drury Porter
Sammye Harris	Norris Porter
Bob Keeney	Susan Deuel Robinson
Jerry Latham	Ruth Warner

Vicki Bryden has been on the board of trustees of the Southern Oregon Historical Society for the past six years. Besides writing the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the South Oakdale district, Vicki and her husband, Bruce, bought and restored the Wilkinson-Swem building in Medford.



Photo by Natalie Brown

Ken and Almeda Edwards and other vintage car owners will display their historic automobiles along South Oakdale during the home tours.

South Oakdale Home Tours Offered

If Vicki Bryden's article has brought the South Oakdale Historic District alive for you, you won't want to miss an upcoming tour of more than a dozen significant homes in the graceful old neighborhood.

Organized by the Medford Historic Commission, the historic home tour is scheduled for Sunday, May 15, from 1 to 4 p.m. Cost is \$1.00 per person or \$.75 for Southern Oregon Historical Society members with membership cards.

Tour-goers will park at South Medford High School, where self-guiding brochures will lead them through fifteen homes dating from 1910 to 1947.

Homeowners will be there to greet visitors, point out special features and answer questions about the residences, some in original condition, some in transition, some fully restored.

South Oakdale between Stewart Avenue and 11th Street will be

blocked off for the afternoon's event. Vintage vehicles owned by members of the Horseless Carriage Car Club of America and the Rogue Valley Old Timers Car Club will line the avenue, and members will be present in period costumes. Through traffic will be rerouted to Dakota.

Included among the homes opened to the public will be those once owned by:

- Judge Earl Fehl (504 South Oakdale)
- William Warner (511)
- Beeson (608)
- John Dodge (610, also residence of Emil Mohr, builder of the Medford Hotel)
- Walter Leverette (611)
- Lida Applegate (615)
- Walter Quisenberry (715)
- O. O. Alendorfer (718)
- Ralph Bardwell (1002)
- Dr. Elias Porter (1010)

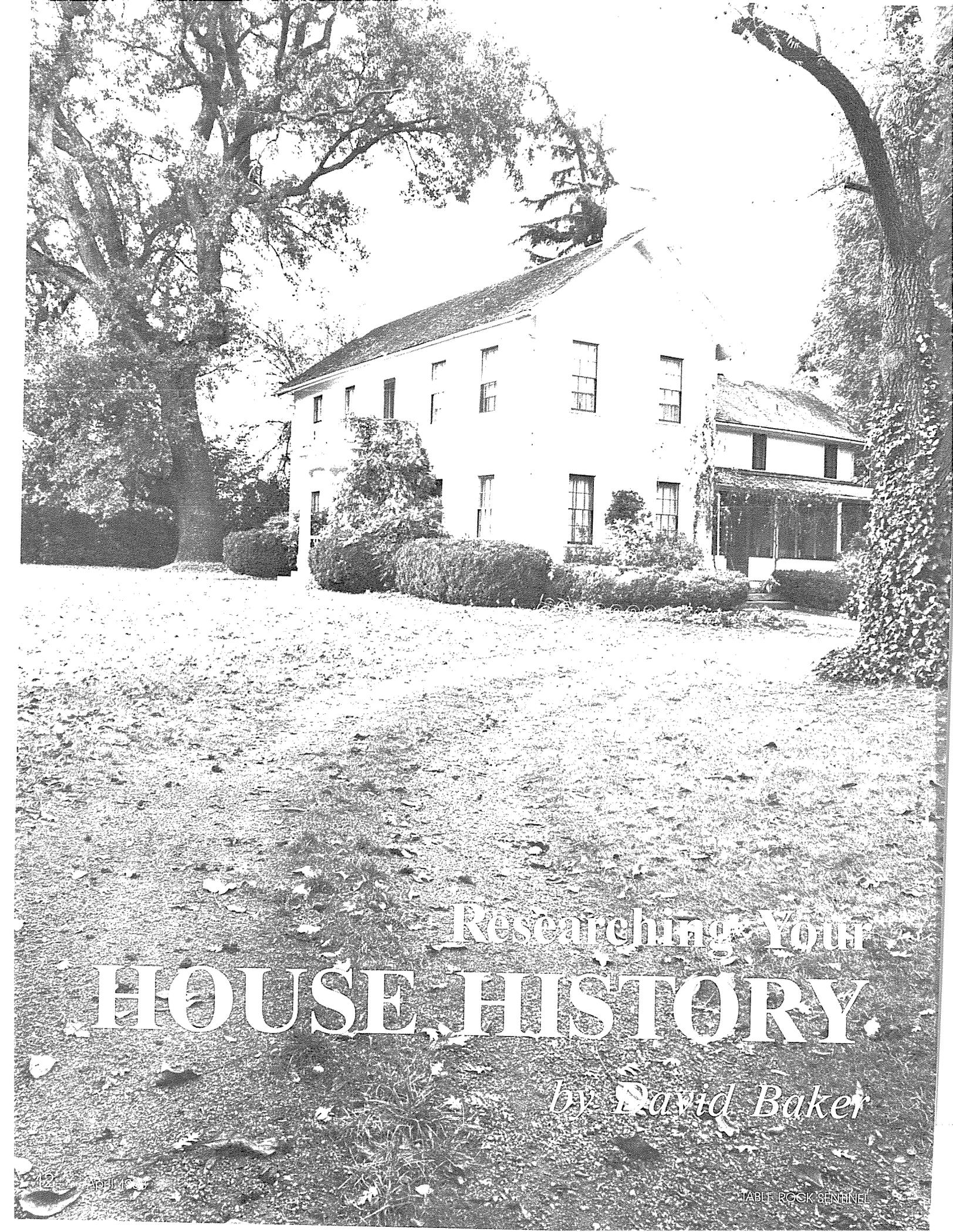
- Thomas Bradley (1108)
- Dr. E. G. Riddell (1114)
- DelRoy Getchell (1121)

The visitor's brochure also will list other historic homes in the district, along with further information on the history of the neighborhood and many of its colorful early residents. Present-day South Oakdale resident Amy Bryden produced the brochure for her senior project at South Medford High.

The Medford City Council appointed the Medford Historic Commission to identify, review and preserve historic properties in Medford. Members include Larry Horton, Merrill Haggard, William Dames, Linda Steinhardt and Mary Foster.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society and Mountain Title are underwriting this project on behalf of the people of Jackson County.

For additional information, contact Mary Foster at 773-7711.



Researching Your
HOUSE HISTORY.

by David Baker

The Willows, formally owned by the Hanley family, has a history that goes back to the early settlement and growth of the Rogue Valley. SOHS #3585

Anyone can trace the history of a house. It is often a complicated jigsaw puzzle; but with equal quantities of luck and patience, the pieces can be assembled.

And when the research is done, you may know both who owned your house and what it looked like in the past — which can mean a more accurate restoration. There are many resources available to the amateur house historian: local museums and historical societies, old magazines and newspapers, physical artifacts, and city maps, to name a few. But your first step should be a title search in the local real estate transaction records. The search will enable you to plot the “chain of title” to your house: when it was built, by whom, who owned it and for how long, how much it sold for over the years. All transactions, whether mortgage, sale, or conveyance by inheritance, are recorded and accessible (as long as the records still exist).

Every community has a Recorder’s Office or Deed Office. It stores the permanent records of all transactions involving real property. You’ll have to unravel the idiosyncracies of the local filing system for yourself, but you can be certain of two things: The office is open to the public, and its information is indexed according to the names of both buyers and sellers of property.

If you know either end of the chain of title, either the current or the original owner, you can recreate the chain of title using what is known as the “grantee” (buyer) and “grantor” (seller) index. You certainly know one end of the chain: your own name, when you bought the house, and from whom.

Start the search with the grantee index for the year in which you bought the property, and go backwards through each year of indexes. Look for the name of the people who sold you the house, to find out when they

bought the house and from whom. When you find their name, read the actual deed to be sure it refers to your property. Take the name of the seller (“grantor”) from that deed and use the grantee index to find out who sold *them* the house, and so on.

If by chance you’re doing this from the original owner on, use grantor indexes to determine who sold the house each time, and then go forward to find out who that person sold to, and so on. Keep in mind that indexes, especially for earlier years, are not bound individually but rather in groups of years.

Each of these transactions can provide valuable clues to the early life of your house. A sizable increase in price, for example from \$1200 in 1860 to \$8000 in 1865, suggests a capital improvement like a new building. A mortgage on a property may coincide with the construction of a new wing or outbuilding. You can often confirm your guesses with a visit to the Building Department in your town. Building and alteration permit files may include the owner’s name, date of construction, architect, builder, cost of construction, roof covering, dates of alterations, plans, even working drawings.

The Office of Taxation, or comparable municipal department in your area, may also yield clues. Increases in tax assessments from year to year may indicate improvements on the property. Be cautious, however, in making assumptions based on these increases. A city-wide re-assessment may have doubled everyone’s taxes in one year. Inflation, real estate booms, and other factors affect property values as well, so it is important to know something about the economic history of your town.

Before tackling the vagaries of the grantee-grantor index system, my wife and I visited our city museum and were fortunate to learn something of our house’s beginnings. The curator told us that our Victorian house in Alameda, California, was built in 1896 for one Max J. Brandenstein at a cost of \$2350, and that Max had sold the house that same year.

Several months later, while drinking coffee at a local restaurant, I spied an old coffee can on display. The label proclaimed the manufacturer’s name: it was none other than M. J. Brandenstein. It was not difficult to verify that this was the same M. J. Brandenstein who built our house. We surmised that Max had speculated in real estate with coffee money.

The longer we lived in the house, the more we came to feel that its design problems as well as its virtues stemmed from a get-rich-quick past. The fashionable architectural features — the façade, front porch, front hall, parlors — are beautifully crafted. But the living quarters left much to be desired: there was a minuscule bathroom and no closets. At first we assumed all Victorians had these glaring design defects, but this is not the case in houses of similar vintage we’ve seen, ones not built on speculation. Max and his contractors had obviously built the house for a quick sale, not for a lifetime of comfortable living.

Armed with the information about our original owner and anxious to learn more, I approached the grantor index for the 1890s, certain I would quickly determine the chain

of title from Max all the way to the present. It did not take long to discover one of the pitfalls of title searching: the older the records, the poorer the indexing. It took an hour to check one year of the 1890s index.

After six hours of examining column after column of handwritten names, I abandoned my attempt to go from past to present, and decided to work backwards from the present. In five minutes I scanned the entries for the 1960s and soon found an entry involving the party from whom my wife and I bought the house. Although this entry did not identify the next link in the chain, it was extremely valuable. It indicated that our previous owner had bought the house from a title company, and that there had been a conveyance.

A reconveyance means that someone is giving back an interest in land. Translated, this generally means that the owner of a piece of property has paid off the mortgage. A reconveyance also allows the house historian to skip many years of indexes.

Make sure you examine the reconveyance document itself. These documents are usually housed in the same building as the grantor-grantee indexes. The reconveyance will refer to the deed or mortgage it is extinguishing. The year in which the deed or mortgage was executed is crucial. In my case, the reconveyance occurred in 1950 and the deed was executed in 1944. Thus I was able to skip the indexes for 1944 to 1950 since I knew the property was held by the same owner in this period.

The reconveyance led me directly to the next link in the chain of title. In 1944, the people we bought from purchased the house. But it was not an ordinary sale: the entry indicated that there had been an "order of sale," and referred to a court file number.

The term "order of sale" (or "decree of distribution") means that the owner died, and the house was sold following legal proceedings known as "probate." The documents contained in probate files frequently offer the house historian a fascinating detour and can provide useful clues for restoration. A will may indicate which family member inherited a lot, a house, or a piece of property. With luck, descendants can be found who might have old photographs. If the property was not willed, the administrator's records will show if the house was sold to pay expenses; often these records include correspondence or affidavits that afford insights into the personality and

activities of the deceased. The file may also include inventories of personal property drawn up when the estate was divided or sold. Lists of possessions and home furnishings can assist researchers in piecing together the life and circumstances of property owner and his family.

In our case the probate office was located in the same building as the recorder's office. The file revealed that the house was sold in 1944 for the same price it was purchased for in 1896, a measure of the neglect it had endured. There was a list of the descendants of the deceased owner, one of whom had an unusual name (giving us hope that we could use local telephone books to track down descendants). The will was lost, unfortunately, and we could find

no records that indicated the contents of the house.

Had the transaction occurred in the late 1800s or early 1900s, a city directory might have given us more information about the owners and their descendants. Directories at the time often listed the occupations of residents, along with their business and home addresses. Public libraries and historical societies maintain these directories.

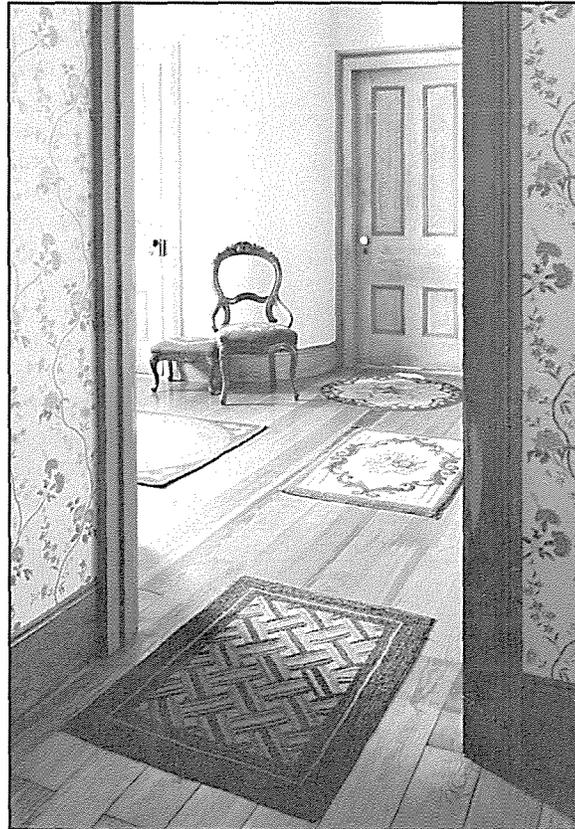
Federal census information is available for years prior to 1880. Your nearest center that houses federal archives may have questionnaires filled out by people who lived in your house.

Our probate file also explained the child's primer we found in our attic. Published in the 1890s, the book was inscribed with a girl's name. According to the file, the girl was the daughter of the deceased owner, and had the misfortune of spending

much of her life in a mental institution.

With the name of the deceased owner, whom we will call "the widow," I returned to the grantee indexes to complete the chain of title back to Max J. Brandenstein. I was aided by a series of reconveyances. From 1930 to 1919, the widow refinanced the same debt four times, graphic evidence of financial distress (each refinancing, we later learned, coincided with some improvement to the house: a new water heater, the house's first wiring). Unhappily (for me), the reconveyances ended in 1919, and I was confronted again with the abysmal indexing of the earlier volumes. This time, rather than going blind examining handwritten columns, I took a calculated risk that resulted in an important shortcut.

The widow had the same last name as the individual to whom Brandenstein had originally sold the house. I made two assumptions: that these people were related,



Interior of Hanley House

Photo by Douglas R. Smith

more specifically that they were husband and wife, and that the house had passed between them at a probate proceeding. This allowed me to use probate indexes rather than grantor-grantee indexes.

A probate index is organized like a telephone directory. By looking up the name of the person who has died, you can determine whether there was a probate proceeding on his or her estate. If such a proceeding took place, the index will list a court file number.

In my case, a five-minute search of the probate index produced the desired result: a 1904 probate proceeding indicating that title to the house passed from the gentleman who purchased from Max J. Brandenstein to his widow. I had completed the chain of title.

Title searching is not simply a technical exercise. The 1904 probate proceeding that completed our chain of title also rounded out the history of the house's first inhabitants, and changed our feelings about its four walls. For nearly 50 years one family conducted life in our home. When her husband died in 1904, the widow was left to cope with meagre financial resources and a daughter with severe emotional problems. Perhaps our widow wanted to keep the house exactly as her husband left it. Perhaps she steadfastly refused the entreaties of hucksters who would clothe the exterior with asbestos siding, put in lowered ceilings, or destroy her beautiful mahogany mantel.

Once you have immersed yourself in the history of your home, it takes on a new personality. Often the desire to remodel diminishes and the wish to restore increases; it becomes more and more difficult to make dramatic changes in a house that has meant so much to so many. I believe our house still bears the dignity of the widow's struggle.

Over the years we continued to learn about the house. We found the widow's obituary in a local newspaper, and it mentions the cemetery where she was buried. Visiting that cemetery, we found records indicating how the deceased buried there had been related — meaning we knew more possible names of descendants. After checking the state death registry (available at the county seat) and probate records that named heirs, we tracked down living descendants. Ironically, the poor widow's relatives were, and their descendants still are, among San Francisco's richest families.

We were excited to learn that one of the widow's relatives had been a photography buff who had taken quantities of pictures. At least one, we were sure, was of our house. Unfortunately, his heirs told us, "We threw them all away." Your experience with living descendants may prove more fruitful.

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OTHER SOURCES

The following sources may help you learn more about your vintage house.

■ Oral history simply means talking to anyone who may know anything about your house: former owners, their descendants and friends; neighbors; an elderly local builder; anyone who's watched the town or neighborhood change. Local telephone directories may list owners or relatives who live nearby. With luck you might find photos (see hints below), or at least stories: how rooms were used, what kinds of additions and improvements were made, how the house was painted or decorated, or how holidays were celebrated, and the like.

■ Photographs are, of course, the most accurate record of how your house looked: how furniture was arranged and walls decorated; how families dressed, planted their gardens. Look for background clues: office signs that would indicate tenants, or any outbuildings behind the house. Along with the "oral history" sources cited above, local libraries and historical societies are

your most likely sources.

■ Paintings, watercolors, sketches, prints, notecards, stationery, and postcards also give information. Beware, though, of artistic liberties.

■ Periodicals are likely resources too. If your original owners were prominent citizens, detailed obituaries may have appeared when they died. Special issues of local papers, used to promote a town, often featured street scenes, or photos of citizens and their homes. If your house is elaborate, an architect may have designed it, in which case an architectural magazine may have written about it. These publications are available at research libraries, including New York Public Library and the Library of Congress; check issues from the year or two around your house's construction date.

■ Business records, if you know the name of the architect or contractor, can sometimes be tracked down. Local historical societies or libraries may have these papers; for more recent buildings, the actual firms may

still be in business. Remember that, unlike law firms, architecture firms change their names when partners die; check old telephone directories to see if you can trace the firm's evolution.

■ In addition to these sources, you also may wish to contact the following organizations for information on historic preservation:

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-9979
(202) 673-4000
\$15 Individual Membership

Historic Preservation League of Oregon
P.O. Box 40053
Portland, OR 97240
(503) 243-1923
\$15 Individual Membership

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
525 Trade Street Southeast
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 378-5001

Old House Journal
69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 636-4514
\$18 Annual Subscription

Society Update

Chappell-Swedenburg to Open New Exhibit

Staff at the Society's Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum in Ashland are busy preparing for the mid-May opening of a new exhibit titled "Home Entertainment."

According to guest curator Nancy Krieg, a student at SOSC, home entertainment is defined as what people do to amuse themselves within the home. Before the advent of mass media, such pursuits might have included playing games and music, reading, and story-telling.

In America, activities have changed over the last century from active participation in family- and group-oriented pursuits to passive participation in individual pastimes. This change is reflected in our material culture—the things we have in our homes that illustrate what we enjoy doing: televisions, stereos, photographic equipment, and so on.

The exhibit, scheduled to remain on display through 1988, will contrast the types of activities pre-dating the advent of the mass media in 1910–1920 with the popular culture of the following decades. From prehistoric to modern times, it will trace the evolution of cultural values placed on home entertainment. Numerous artifacts and photographs of great variety and ingenuity will help tell the story.

What's in Store

The Southern Oregon Historical Society Gift Shop in the Jacksonville Museum has in stock many unusual items relating to railroad history. Railroad books, engineer caps, even train whistles will delight young and old alike! And remember, members receive 15% off any purchase as a membership benefit. Stop in today to see "what's in store."



photo by Natalie Brown

Children from throughout Jackson County discovered the delights of the traditional Maypole dance at last year's Children's Heritage Fair.

Children's Heritage Fair Scheduled

The Society is planning another history-filled week for area fourth graders. The third annual "Children's Heritage Fair" will be held May 3–6, with Saturday, May 7, set aside for the general public.

This year the Society has expanded the event to accommodate forty-four individual classes from throughout Jackson County. Students will re-create traditional skills and crafts such as butter churning, paper weaving, handkerchief doll-making, and "gold" panning. A Maypole Dance and a visit to the

Jacksonville and Children's museums are included in the day's activities.

On Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the public is welcome to join the festivities. Visitors of all ages may participate in the above activities while enjoying traditional folk music, wood carving, wool spinning and weaving demonstrations, plus much more! The event is free. Plan now to join us in Jacksonville for this rare opportunity to experience the past!

Society Bus Tour Season Scheduled

The Society is in the process of developing the 1988 bus tour season. This month's adventure is already set with a trip to the Douglas County Museum of History and Natural History on April 28.

On Friday, May 27, join Society staff for an adventure! The destination? Only the tour guide, bus driver, and host will know. All members need is the spirit of adventure, a camera and comfortable clothing.

(This is *not* a repeat of last year's mystery tour.)

Participants will depart Jacksonville at 9:00 a.m. and return around 3:00 p.m. Cost will be \$17.50 and includes transportation and lunch; scenery compliments of southern Oregon. Reservations required and may be obtained by calling Susan Cox, membership coordinator, at 899-1847.

Details on future tours are yet to follow, but for those who like to

plan ahead, here is the proposed schedule. Keep in mind that, because all arrangements are not finalized, several of the tours and dates are tentative at this time.

July 7 Lava Beds (tentative)
August 11 Crescent City (tentative)
September 8-9 . . Oregon Caves (overnight)
October 6 To be determined

More information will follow in later issues of the *Sentinel*.

Members to Consider Changes in Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

At the annual meeting in June, members will be asked to approve changes in the Society's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.

The change in the Bylaws is a result of the Society's Long Range Plan which outlined the need for the Board to consider a restatement of the Society's mission. At the March meeting, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution to change Sections 2 and 3 of Article II of the Bylaws to read as follows:

Section 2:

The Society shall maintain affiliation with the Oregon Historical Society. The purpose of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, in accordance with the Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 358, is as follows:

- a. The acquisition and preservation of historical objects, real and personal property of historical interest, and other relevant records, materials and data.
- b. The primary focus of this Society will be on the history, objects, and historical properties of Jackson County and southwestern Oregon.

Section 3:

In addition to these basic responsibilities, the Southern Oregon Historical Society shall:

- a. Cause to be placed on public display objects of historical interest, with appropriate interpretation and background information;
- b. Encourage public attention toward the history of this county, region, state and nation;
- c. Make a public accounting of the Society's acquisition and conservator rules and regulations, and of the safeguards established for the collections;
- d. Conduct educational programs within its fields of competence, and publish and issue appropriate books, newsletters and other material in furtherance of the Society's purpose; and
- e. Encourage the continuation of current tax support from Jackson County, and undertake additional fundraising, earned and contributed, necessary to guarantee the future endurance and excellence of Society programs.

Finally, the Society acknowledges an interest in the history of the entire southwestern Oregon region. However, it also acknowledges its major responsibility to, and the support of, the people of Jackson County. Therefore, it will maintain appropriate county-wide representation in the governance of the organization.

* * *

The membership adopted the restated articles of incorporation at last year's annual meeting. Before the document could be submitted, however, a new provision of the Oregon Revised Statutes—ORS 61.311(h)—which became effective July 1, 1987, says that articles of incorporation filed after July 1 must state the manner of electing or appointing subsequent directors and their terms of office. Hence, the Board of Trustees resolved at the March meeting the following restated articles to be approved by the membership at June's annual meeting.

Continued next page

Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Inc.

The SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC., an Oregon nonprofit corporation, adopts these restated Articles of Incorporation pursuant to the Oregon Non-profit Corporation Act. These Restated Articles of Incorporation supersede all prior Articles of Incorporation and all amendments thereof, of the SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

ARTICLE I

The name of this corporation is the SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. and its duration is perpetual.

ARTICLE II

The purposes for which this corporation is organized are:

- a. This corporation is organized and shall be operated solely for charitable purposes.
- b. Specifically and primarily, this corporation is formed to operate museums in Jackson County, Oregon; to collect, preserve, exhibit and publish material, personal property and real property of an historical character, especially relating to the history of Southern Oregon and Oregon; to encourage and develop the study of such history.
- c. In general this corporation is formed to engage in any lawful activity, not for profit, in which corporations are authorized to engage under Chapter 61 of the Oregon Revised Statutes, provided, however, that it will not engage, except to an insubstantial degree, in any activity not in furtherance of the specific and primary purposes set forth in clause "b" above.
- d. No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall inure to the benefit of any private individual or entity.
- e. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distributing of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.
- f. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Article II, this corporation shall engage only in activities which are permitted to be engaged in by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code ("The Code") by a corporation to which contributions are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of The Code and by a public charity described in Section 509(a)(1), (2) or (3) of The Code.

ARTICLE III

This corporation shall have one or more classes of members as specified in the corporate bylaws. The qualifications and rights of the members of each class shall be set forth in the bylaws.

ARTICLE IV

This corporation shall have a board of trustees as provided in its bylaws. Each trustee shall hold office for a term not to exceed three (3) years. Trustees shall be elected and vacancies filled in accordance with the following procedure:

- a. Approximately one-third of the Trustees shall be elected each year, subject to adjustment to cover resignations or other premature terminations of Trustees.
- b. The election of Trustees shall be by letter ballot to be cast by members of the Society.
- c. The Board of Trustees shall, at least 60 days prior to the election, publish in a publication of general circulation, the names of members nominated as Trustees by the nominating committee as approved by the Board. The number of candidates presented in this fashion shall exceed the number of positions to be filled by two. The published notice shall also include a reminder that any other member of the Society may also be nominated by petition.
- d. A member of the Society may be nominated by petition signed by 15 other Society members. Such petition(s) must be provided by the secretary not less than 45 days before the election and returned to the secretary not less than 30 days before the election, so that nominees can be included and identified as candidates on the ballot.
- e. The secretary shall, not less than 15 days before the date of election, mail to each member an election notice which also includes a suitable ballot listing the names of members nominated as Trustees, and a brief curriculum vitae on each candidate.
- f. Each member of the Southern Oregon Historical Society may vote for any such nominees, provided that the number of votes cast by any member shall not exceed the number of Board vacancies. Any ballot exceeding that number will be declared invalid.
- g. All ballots must be marked and returned to the secretary by the day specified in the election notice. To insure secrecy, each member is to seal the marked ballot in one envelope (to be provided) having no identification, and to enclose it in another envelope bearing the member's signature for identification. The secretary shall check the signature on the outer envelope to establish that the individual is entitled to vote. The inner envelopes are to be given to tellers to tabulate.
- h. Any vacancy on the Board shall be filled for the unexpired term by a vote of the remaining Trustees within two regular Board meetings after the vacancy occurs.

ARTICLE V

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from the federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (and similar provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

ARTICLE VI

All of the properties, monies and other assets of this corporation are irrevocably dedicated to charitable, scientific and educational purposes and shall not inure to the benefit of any private individual. In the event that this corporation shall be dissolved or terminated at any time, then all of the properties, monies and other assets of this corporation shall be transferred exclusively to and become the property of a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation as selected and designated by the Board of Trustees of this corporation and which shall at that time qualify as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of The Code as that section exists or may subsequently be amended.

Welcome New Members

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Harry Elmore, *Gold Hill*
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Mabel L. O'Brien, *North Highland, CA*
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Viola Purrier, *Rogue River*
Claudia Scruggs, *Medford*
Cameron Slessler, *Medford*
Miriam Taylor, *Medford*

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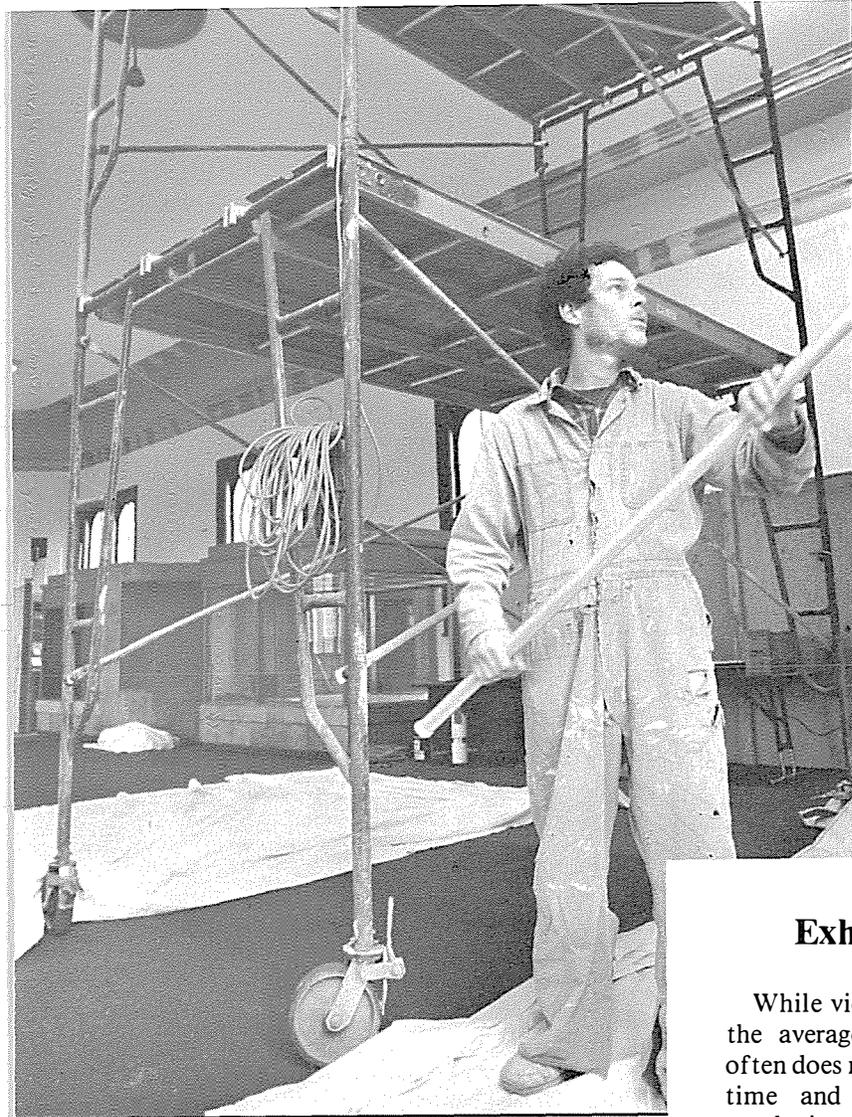


Photo by Bill McClain

Gene Gwin and the maintenance crew completed the enormous job of patching and painting the courtroom as well as later construction and electrical work.

Curator of Collections Marc Pence carefully protects artifacts during exhibit installation.



Photo by Natalie Brown

Exhibits: Not an Overnight Accomplishment

While viewing the final product, the average visitor to a museum often does not realize the amount of time and work that goes into producing major exhibitions. At many large museums throughout the United States, it can take staff five or more years to complete the process from conceptualization to opening reception.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society's newest exhibit, *"Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley,"* began in January 1987, when the theme and educational objectives were developed, and research and data collection got underway.

In September, staff began writing the script and preparing the exhibit design.

November saw the closing of the Jacksonville Museum's courtroom for needed repairs, painting, and carpet cleaning. Meanwhile, artifacts were gathered from the Society's collections and cleaned for their eventual placement in exhibit cases.

Once March arrived, efforts from the entire staff helped to pull the project together. Exhibit cases had to be painted and cleaned, photographs copied, labels produced, exhibit furniture built, track lighting installed, and everything in its proper place for the big opening reception on March 26. And afterward—on Monday, March 28—a sigh of relief for a job well done!

Coordinator of Exhibits Jime Matoush artfully designed and arranged exhibit cases.

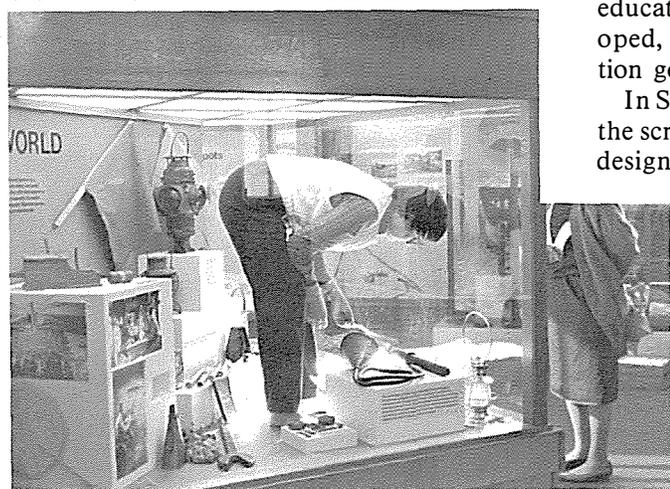


Photo by Natalie Brown

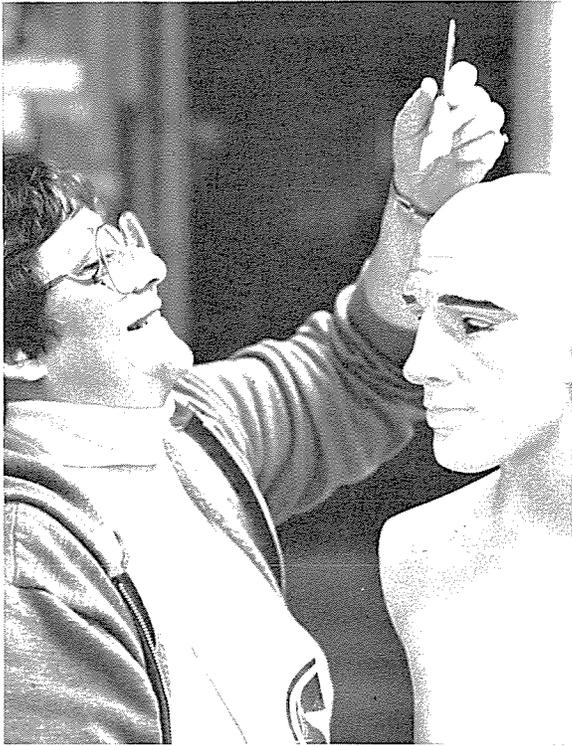
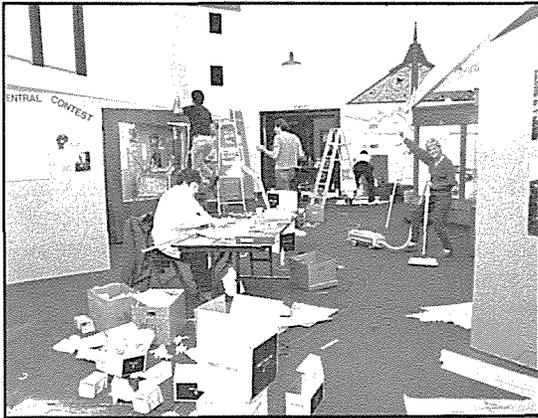


Photo by Bill McClain

(left) Volunteer Carol Rose painted and prepared mannequins.
(below) Children of all ages enjoyed the model trains and activities during the exhibit opening celebrations.



Photo by Natalie Brown



(above) Dozens of staff and volunteers installed the exhibit and did the final cleaning in time for the opening reception *(right)*



Photo by Natalie Brown

Regional Digest

Stealing Oregon's Past

Late nineteenth-century rare books and manuscripts documenting Oregon history and worth more than \$200,000 have been stolen from the Special Collections of the University of Oregon Library.

The theft of 13 rare books and 9,000 to 10,000 letters, overland diaries, railroad records, stock certificates, and Indian treaties was discovered December 29 when a library patron requested to see some of the materials. Police officers believe the theft occurred over a period of time beginning in the fall and continuing through the end of 1987.

"More crushing than the monetary loss, which is substantial, is the obvious blow to Oregon's cultural history," says George Bynon, assistant University librarian. "Unfor-

tunately, there exists a market for the type of materials that were taken. We're hoping that any individual who comes across these materials or has any other information that will help us recover these irreplaceable pieces of Oregon history will come forward."

A few of the missing items may have been marked as the property of the University of Oregon Library, but individual letters and other manuscripts were not marked. About the only way to identify them is by their subject, author, and age. The documents date from the 1700s to the 1880s, but most are from the 1850s and later.

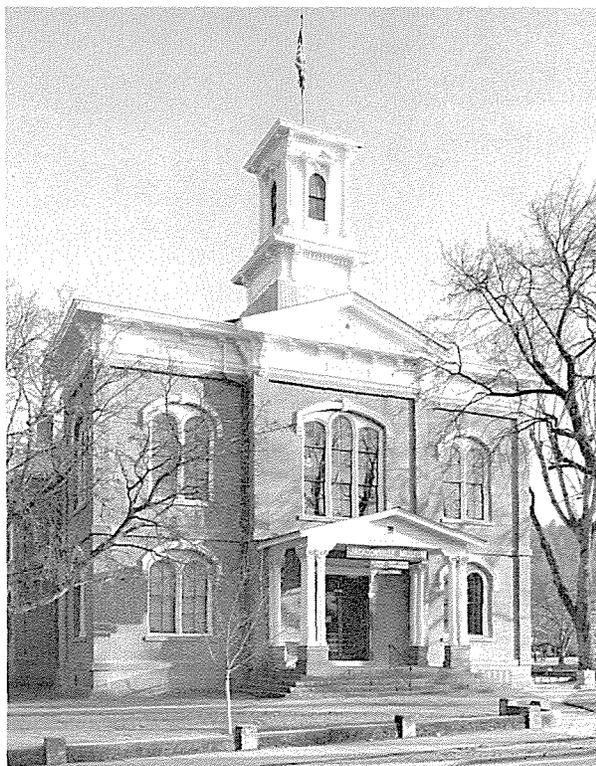
Gold Hill Historical Society Keeps Busy

The Gold Hill Historical Society recently completed stage one in its

efforts to index the Gold Hill city records. In the past year and a half, members worked on an inventory of all records dating up to 1976. They indexed and marked over 200 maps, schematics, and plans for the city that date back as far as the early 1900s. The next step will be to categorize, organize, and store the records in acid-free boxes to preserve them. (Money to purchase the boxes came from a \$866 grant from the Southern Oregon Historical Society's Grants-in-Aid program.)

Student from Hanby Junior High and Patrick Elementary have met with members of the Gold Hill Historical Society to learn more about the city's past. In fact, students from Hanby recently conducted a history project on Gold Hill and offered a presentation on their findings at the Society's monthly meeting on April 19.

From the Collections



In recent issues of the *Table Rock Sentinel*, we featured items from the Society's collection that, owing to exhibit space limitations, are not often seen by visitors. However, in keeping with this issue's theme of historic preservation, we thought we would highlight something often seen but not often viewed as an artifact—the Jacksonville Museum.

Jacksonville, recognized in 1853 as the county seat, was the center for all farming and commercial activities in Jackson County. This important position dictated that the community have a prominent building to serve as its courthouse.

In 1883–1884, the old Jackson County Courthouse was built, replacing a frame structure on the same site. Typical of the Italianate architectural style, the building features a heavy wooden entablature under the low hip roof, Corinthian columns, arched windows with stone sills, and a triangular pediment over the roof which represents the Greek influence on Roman culture. The belvedere, a prominent feature on many Italian villas, sits atop the building.

Historic properties are valued in communities with a deep appreciation of the past. The general public—from tourists to Hollywood film crews to local citizens—benefit from the foresight and determination of those who work to preserve these unique sites.

TABLE ROCK

\$2.50

SENTINEL

MAY 1988



The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society

Commentary

Forty-two years ago this spring a group of concerned individuals gathered together to form the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Their primary aim was to save the old Jackson County Courthouse in Jacksonville. The Jacksonville Museum, as that structure is now called, is an enduring symbol of their foresight and dedication to the preservation of our region's history.



The Society is coming back to its roots, so to speak. This year's Annual Meeting will be held June 25 where it all began—on the grounds of the Jacksonville Museum. This lawn has played host to large social gatherings, meetings, and dinners for many years beginning with pioneer association meetings in the late 19th century. In a way, history will repeat itself as the Society again gathers people who have a common interest in the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of Jackson County's history and the heritage of southern Oregon.

So mark your calendars and reserve the evening of Saturday, June 25, 1988. It promises to be an enjoyable one with a reception in and around the Jacksonville Museum, offering members another opportunity to view the museum and the new exhibit, "Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley." Following the reception, dinner will be served on the museum lawn. And this year, we are honored to have Oregon Secretary of State Barbara Roberts as our featured speaker.

You will be receiving more details in the near future, but I urge you to make plans to join us for an enjoyable, worthwhile evening.



Samuel J. Wegner
Executive Director



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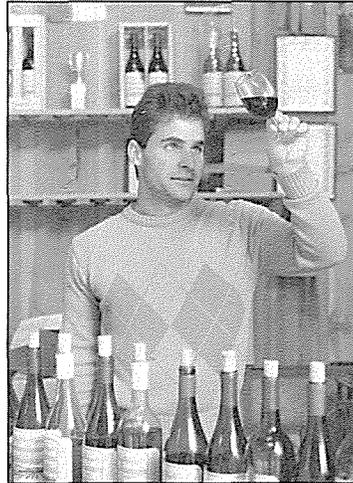
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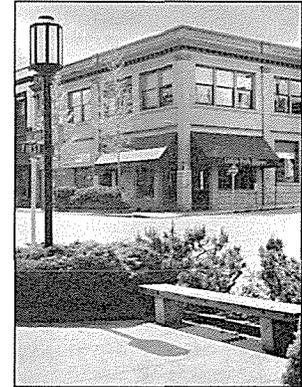
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Features

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Southern Oregon had its share of rum-runners and temperance-touters. But prior to and during Prohibition, the changing social and legal climate provided the impetus for conflict between "liquor and the law."

12 The Rebirth of Oregon's Wine Industry *by Roger Love*

Oregon is rapidly earning an international reputation for producing fine wines. Few people, however, are aware that a century ago Peter Britt and other wine-making pioneers began producing the first southern Oregon vintages.

16 Ashland's Other Architect: William F. Bowen *by Nan Hannon*

Although overshadowed by noted architect Frank C. Clark, Bowen's commercial and residential buildings remain local expressions of the Craftsman movement popular during the first two decades of this century.

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cover: Emil Britt and John Miller display grapes probably grown by Emil's father Peter Britt, who over a century ago established southern Oregon's first vineyards. SOHS #11735.





A party of revelers camped near Ashland during the early years of this century.
SOHS #3121

Liquor and the Law: Prohibition in Southern Oregon

by Joseph G. Follansbee



When people want something bad enough, they'll find a way to get it. Take alcohol, for example, during Prohibition.

"The bootleggers, they say, wore badges so they wouldn't sell to each other, there were so many of them," said Ellis Beeson, a Rogue Valley resident who witnessed the era.¹

Many look back at prohibition, both on the national level and in southern Oregon, with a smile. But the story of how John Barleycorn went underground is more than tales of fast cars, rum-runners, remote stills and under-the-table payoffs. Before prohibition became a law enforcement issue, it was a moral and political issue that dated back to the earliest days of Oregon's settlement.

The Oregon version had its roots in the Oregon Temperance Society, formed in 1836 by Methodist missionaries who had arrived in the Willamette Valley only two years before. They brought with them powerful sentiments about alcohol held by a growing number of citizens throughout the country.

The movement blossomed after the Civil War. National organizations such as the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union set up branches in Oregon and gained enormous political power. National leaders formed a new national political party, the Prohibition Party. Though prohibition was the party's central plank, leaders also argued for direct election of senators, a graduated income tax and women's suffrage, an issue which reflected the strong influence of women in the party.



Ed Dunnington owned and operated the popular Marble Corner Saloon in Jacksonville around the turn of the century. The business was later sold and turned into a confectionery, the Chocolate Corner. SOHS #1937

In Oregon, the party advocated the abolition of bank notes, the use of gold and silver as the only monetary standard (bimetallism) and free lands for actual settlers.

As the Oregon movement grew, so did attempts to legislate prohibition. Organizers put a prohibition measure on the 1887 ballot, but the measure failed.² In 1904, however, prohibitionists scored important victories.

Using the state's new initiative laws, prohibitionists placed local ballot measures called "local option laws" that called for prohibition of alcohol in local political divisions as small as precincts. If the division voted dry, the division went dry, even though a neighboring division might stay "wet."

The election saw Protestant churches allied with the Anti-Saloon League and WCTU on one side, with saloon keepers, distillers, hop growers and owners of business property on the other. But prohibitionists approached the election with political savvy.

They argued that a vote for local option was not only a vote against liquor, but a vote for local political control, thus making prohibition an issue of political autonomy as well as a moral issue. In Jackson County, prohibition failed by less than ten percent of the vote. Coos and Curry counties went dry, but again by less than ten percent of the vote. Fifty saloons in Curry County closed.

Prohibition in Oregon snowballed for a time. In 1908, prohibitionists could claim twenty-three counties and fifty percent of Oregon's population. But the last years of the century's first decade brought setbacks. Liquor interests controlled the state Legislature and the Legislature granted city charters. In granting Medford's charter, the Legislature told the city it could regulate the sale of liquor. The charter overruled the local option law and saloons remained open.

In 1910, the "home rule" amendment to Oregon's Constitution took away the Legislature's power to grant charters. Local residents could now write their own charters, which included references to liquor. Since prohibitionists drew much of their political strength from rural areas, some population centers became wet "oases" in the midst of dry deserts.

"But the story of how John Barleycorn went underground is more than tales of fast cars, rum-runners, remote stills and under-the-table payoffs."

In 1912, the Anti-Saloon League listed only four counties as completely dry. But in November 1913 under home rule, twelve wet cities voted dry and three dry cities voted wet. Thirty thousand people were affected, and sixty saloons closed.

The prohibition juggernaut soon mowed down all opposition. In 1914, voters took up the issue again through a statewide ballot initiative. A key factor would be votes by women, who had gained state suffrage in 1912.

The election drew the nation's attention. National prohibition leaders spoke in Ashland, Grants Pass, Roseburg, Medford and other Oregon cities. The measure passed. Oregon followed at least nine other states in banning liquor within state boundaries. Thirty-two of the state's thirty-four counties voted for "prohibition."

On January 1, 1916, Oregon went dry. Nine hundred saloons and eighteen breweries in ninety-eight towns closed.

After the election, the Legislature passed an enforcement act that spelled out the meaning of prohibition. The act banned all the usual kinds of liquor and defined the places and vehicles where liquor was manufactured, sold or given away as "common nuisances." The act forbade businessmen from taking liquor orders. Printers could not print or distribute ads for liquor. Giving liquor away with intent to evade the law was forbidden. No one could carry liquor into a dance hall.

But the act permitted doctors to prescribe and drug stores to sell liquor by prescription. And perhaps noting that other states were still wet, including California, the Legislature allowed one person to import five gallons of wine and spirits and up to twenty gallons of beer per month.³

But like Patton's army on the way to Berlin, the prohi-

bition movement was not content to stop short of total victory. After all, the country as a whole was still wet. Thus, prohibition remained a major issue in Oregon's congressional campaigns, including that of Charles L. McNary.

After the death of Democratic Sen. Harry Cove in 1917, McNary, a veteran Republican, offered his name in opposition to fellow Republican Robert Stanfield in the 1918 primary. McNary hired Thomas B. Neuhausen of Portland as his political advisor.

McNary soon gained the endorsement of the state chapters of the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU, both dominated by women. These endorsements promised to impress a large number of female voters.

Medford attorney Fred Mears wrote to Neuhausen and commented on the strategies of both Stanfield and McNary.

"What's true of the women of Jackson County is true throughout the state," Mears said. "Stanfield is doing his figuring on the men vote and is forgetting all about the women."

McNary won the primary, with almost all the prohibition vote on his side.⁴

With the passage of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 1919, the United States went dry. John Barleycorn was dead. Or was he?

Mr. Barleycorn was supposed to have been dead in Oregon since 1914, but citizens who enjoyed his intoxicating brews found ways to obtain them in the years before nationwide prohibition. In southern Oregon, many simply rode horse trails through the hills into still-wet California. Beeson remembers how two of his cowboy friends rode from Freeze Out Cabin above Talent to Hilt, California, and bought two cases of whiskey. Back in Oregon at Wagner Gap, the group separated out each other's cattle and divided up the whiskey.⁵



Three unidentified young men by the river SOHS #11764

Rupert Maddox also recalled quite a bit of bootleg liquor circulating in the Rogue Valley, including liquor of good quality, "that is, liquor that could be drunk without poisoning you."

In an aside, Maddox explained the word "rotgut" came from liquor that did poison, and, in a sense, rot your gut out.



Sheriff Ralph Jennings (right) and his sons Paul and Louis chased bootleggers and herded cattle on their ranch in the Applegate area. SOHS #2495

Maddox knew several neighbors who bootlegged, and several who were caught.

"Well, they'd get fined," he said. "But I guess the profit was there enough to make it worthwhile."⁶

Several residents remembered stills in many areas of southern Oregon and northern California, such as along the Klamath River and the Scott River. One report placed a still on the Little Applegate River.⁷ Paul Clayborn Jennings, a former Jackson County deputy sheriff, recounted stills "in every section of the county."⁸

Nor was eastern Oregon free of moonshine. Whole families made their living from illegal liquor in Malheur County's Jordan Valley. In the beginning, bootleggers in that southeastern part of the state smuggled alcohol in from Nevada. But when the whole nation went dry, the local residents perfected the art of making it themselves. Even children were entrusted with part of the process.

Here's one recipe for "Moon":

Ingredients:

- Five hundred to 600 pounds of rye

- Five hundred to 600 pounds of sugar
- Thirty to forty cakes of yeast
- Ten to twelve fifty-gallon barrels with spigots at the bottom
- A reliable still

Dissolve fifty pounds of sugar in lukewarm water. Add three to four cakes of yeast. Pour fifty pounds of rye into one barrel. Add sugar and yeast mixture. Repeat for all barrels. Mix well and let stand six to seven days.

Three to four inches of foam will form on top of mixture. Skim off. Mash is now ready to run. Place a bucket under the spigot, and drain out the liquid. Each barrel will have about twenty-five gallons; one barrel to a still.

Seal the still and fire up. Bring the liquid to a boil. Steam will now flow through the copper tubing through the condenser filled with cold water. Collect product in jugs. Each mash may be used up to four times.

Yield: about 125 gallons.

Proof: 70 to 75.

Moonshine was made along the Owyhee River at night at the rate of one still per mile, one resident said. Woodsmoke from the stills' fires hung heavy over the canyons much of the time.

Folklorist Sarah Baker Munro wrote: "On the whole, the . . . moonshiners (*in the Jordan Valley*) remember their product as superior to that now sold in bottles."

"Prohibition in the Jordan Valley is remembered fondly as the finest time the people knew," she continued.⁸ "There was much more life and spirit than now."

People regarded a bootlegger, the character who transported the moonshine, as a hero. Unlike the moonshiner or the drinker, the bootlegger risked capture on the road and sometimes even his life.

"Usually, he drove a flashy car—a red Studebaker, or a black Packard," Munro wrote. "If he drove a team, it was a large team that hauled two wagons."

A bootlegger could make as much as \$500 a trip. One report has a bootlegger selling ten gallons for \$800.⁹

"Officer Prescott saw the heavily loaded car pass through town, took up the race and stopped the alleged rum-runners on North Main Street."

Bootleggers, like drug dealers today, took great caution in selling their product. Paul Clayborn Jennings recalled "hip-pocket guys"—street dealers. After money changed hands, the buyer would receive instructions.

"You'd go down to the fence corner down there, down so many fence posts, and you'll find a pint there," Jennings said. "You couldn't tie the (*hip-pocket guys*) in with nothin'."

"The only thing you could do was catch the fellow with it and pour it out," Jennings said. "Unless he was a bootlegger, we'd always pour it out right in front of him. And there they'd stand with their mouths waterin'."¹⁰

Judging by the newspaper reports of the day, enforcement of the prohibition laws was largely a hit and miss affair based on tips from informants, careful observation and luck. Peace officers attacked illegal liquor at all levels, from still to bootlegger to consumer.

In Jackson County, Sheriff Ralph Jennings spent much of his energy fighting the liquor trade. Elected in 1916, he gained a reputation in some quarters as someone who turned a blind eye to some liquor producers. Beeson claimed Jennings would leave a moonshiner alone as long as he produced a good product and didn't sell it to children.

"Ralph was a very well-liked sheriff," Beeson said. "There wasn't anything that went on in the county that he didn't know about. If some fellow fired up a still some place, and Ralph heard about it—which probably would be within a couple of days—why, he'd send one of his men to get a sample of the moonshine."

"And if it was good moon, like I say, he'd be left alone," Beeson said. "But if he wasn't makin' good moon, he got picked up and put in jail."

A little later, Beeson clarified his recollection of Jennings' reputed policy: "I think when they were making rotten moonshine, he just destroyed their still and told them to get out of business."¹¹

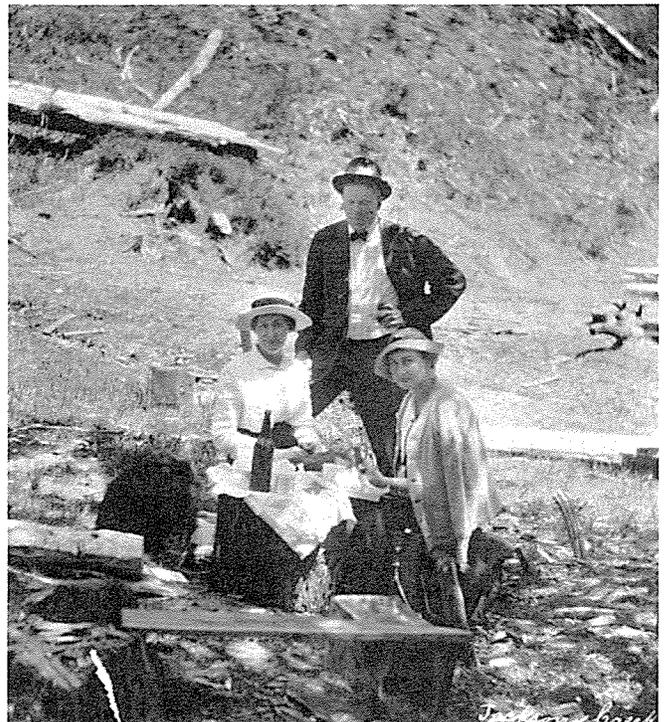
Sheriff Jennings' son, Paul Clayborn Jennings, called Beeson's stories "lies."¹²

Local newspapers painted a more believable picture of Sheriff Jennings. The *Jackson County News* of May 22, 1925 reported how Jennings and three other officers from various law enforcement agencies "swooped down on a bevy of prize fighters and wrestlers" on the Little Applegate River and arrested them for operating a still.

The gang had been conducting "a systematic moonshine business, keeping their tracks well covered, delivering their products to distributors (*in Medford*), who dealt direct with consumers," the *News* reported.

Officers also arrested the owners of the property where the still was located. Curiously, officers had made earlier attempts at a raid, said the *News*, but the operators had been tipped off.¹³

In June of 1925, the *News* published an account of what today's reporters call a "sting" operation. Jackson County District Attorney N.C. Chaney and others set up a "candy store" near the National Guard camp of Camp Jackson.



Despite prohibition, picnickers enjoy wine with their meal along Jackson Creek in 1916. SOHS #11738

A man approached the "proprietor" of the candy store (one of Chaney's men) and asked him if he handled liquor. The proprietor said he did, and set a date for delivery.

Seven armed men, including Sheriff Jennings and the D.A., arrested four people when they tried to make their delivery. Officers confiscated thirty gallons of alcohol.¹⁴

Paul Clayborn Jennings remembered one incident on Reese Creek, just off the Crater Lake Highway. As he and several other officers combed the woods looking for a still, they stumbled on a stash of mash guarded by two suspects. One ran and Joe Cave, a Medford police officer, fired at him. The shot “just blew the top of his head off,” Jennings recalled.¹⁵

The bootlegger, the darling of dime novelists and moviemakers, sometimes fell into the net of the law as he drove the roads of Jackson County on his way to a delivery. On December 17, 1930, *The Ashland Daily Tidings* reported one cargo of fifteen gallons of “alleged wine and a flask of alleged brandy” confiscated on the Greensprings Highway. A man named “Blondy” was charged with possession of illegal liquor.

On December 20, 1930, the *Tidings* reported the arrest of a traveling salesman and the confiscation of fifty-five gallons of “alleged booze.” A 1930 Buick Master-Six was also taken. The Seattle salesman claimed he had no plans to operate commercially with the cargo. Instead, he said, he planned to distribute it among the customers of his trade.¹⁶

arrested two men as they drove through Ashland in their 1927 Willys-Knight sedan.

“The heavily loaded car attracted the attention of the officer,” the *Tidings* reported.¹⁷

On December 27, 1930, Prescott arrested two San Francisco men in a stolen DeSoto and took nineteen cases of liquor worth \$2,000.

“Officer Prescott saw the heavily loaded car pass through town, took up the race and stopped the alleged rum-runners on North Main Street,” the *Tidings* said.

The load was the fifth taken by Prescott in three months.¹⁸

Prescott took another load on January 3, 1931, this time worth \$3,000.¹⁹

Then, on January 24, at about 5:30 a.m., Prescott watched thirty-three-year-old James C. Kingsley, alias J.C. Adams, drive through town in a stolen DeSoto. Suspicious, Prescott stopped the car on Siskiyou Boulevard between East Main and Union Streets. His uncanny sense had served him well again.

But Prescott’s sixth sense failed him as he approached the car. Prescott asked Kingsley for the car’s papers—Kingsley had none. Instead he pulled a .32 caliber revolver and shot Prescott in the back. Prescott fell to the pavement. Kingsley fired twice more, again hitting his victim in the back. As Kingsley sped away, Prescott bled to death. He was twenty-five years old.

“Gee, the way he fell made me and my momma sick,” said eyewitness Allen Batchelor, age twelve.

The youngster “half-sobbed as he repeated the story of what he had witnessed,” the *Tidings* said.

Kingsley was captured an hour and a half after the shooting at Shady Springs automobile camp just outside Ashland. Six hundred people attended Prescott’s funeral.

“He was the Nemesis of rum-runners,” eulogized *Tidings* city editor Regina Johnson. “Even though rum-runners resented his vigilance, which proved costly to them, they respected him and knew there would be no “railroading” or more serious charge than the offence justified.”

“We pass no judgment on his murderer,” Johnson wrote. “We grieve that so promising a life should have been so ended.”²⁰

Needless to say, the paper covered the Kingsley trial with a vengeance. Headlines included: “Hanging will be demanded.”

A jury convicted Kingsley of first-degree murder on February 7, 1931, and the judge sentenced him to death. Kingsley waited at the Oregon State Penitentiary until October, when William A. Goodwin of Cornelius offered to hang in Kingsley’s place.²¹ The offer came to nothing, and Kingsley appealed to Gov. Julius Meier for clemency. Kingsley claimed his conversion to religion had reformed him.

On October 29, Meier denied Kingsley’s appeal. The next day, at 8:29 a.m., Kingsley was led to the gallows.

“Pale and Wan, the Slayer of Sam Prescott Goes to Death as 75 Watch,” said the *Tidings* headline.

Kingsley quoted Milton, and was hanged.

“He died in loneliness,” the story said.²²



E. H. Helms, proprietor of the Table Rock Saloon
SOHS #1941

Like newspapers and broadcast news departments of today, most newspapers of yesterday loved crime stories, and the Prohibition era was full of them. Crime was simple, straightforward and, if the details were particularly weird or grisly, entertaining. Each crime had a good guy and a bad guy. Stylistically, the local newspapers of the 1930s paid somewhat less attention to treating the bad guy fairly. On the other hand, newspapers treated the good guy, usually the police officer, not as a man doing his job, but as a hero.

Such was the case with Sam Prescott. The son of Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Prescott of Ashland, Sam, graduated from Ashland High School in 1926. In 1928, he joined the Ashland Police Department.

As rum-running and other liquor-related crime grew worse in the late 1920s and early '30s, Prescott grew skilled at spotting bootleggers. On November 22, 1930, Prescott confiscated forty gallons of alleged “dago red wine” and

Though Prescott's murder was unrelated to Prohibition as such,²³ his death traumatized Ashland much as other crimes tied directly to Prohibition traumatized the nation. Criminals were criminals, whether they were rum-runners, loan sharks or car thieves like Kingsley.

Perhaps the rampant crime committed even by average citizens who stole a drink now and then showed the futility of Prohibition, or perhaps plain hypocrisy showed the same thing. In any case, as the 1930s moved on, the country grew tired of Prohibition.

Ashlanders were no exception. Ashland had been bone dry since at least the teens, but many subverted the law by home-brewing and other means. Seeing reality, the Ashland City Council moved slowly toward modification of the city's dry ordinance.

**“Many who never missed the beverage
resented being told they couldn't
have it.”**

In April 1933, after intense debate, the council approved the sale of 3.2 percent beer within the city limits. If Ashlanders greeted the event with curiosity, the *Tidings* greeted the event with apprehension, noting that an increase in drunkenness and violations of the regulations would again bring drink into disrepute.

But, “it is believed by many that this date will usher in a period of improved conditions, that it will be an improvement over recent times in regard to temperance and business activities,” wrote editor Johnson.

She added that the focus of public energy should now go to law enforcement, not “law evasion.”²⁴

A month later, Johnson noted a “big rush” to try the new beer, even though demand was not as great as anticipated.

“Presumably, hot weather will boost the sales,” she wrote. “Many people who have been loudly demanding beer since the advent of Prohibition have suddenly lost their raging thirst. It can be said that legalizing beer has thus far done nothing to cause any misgivings upon the part of those genuinely interested in temperance.”

“Probably the greatest gain from the new order of things is the fact that a constant sort of resentment had been removed,” Johnson added. “Many who never missed the beverage resented being told they couldn't have it.”²⁵

Four months later, a new city editor, G.M. Green, recognized that police couldn't handle the illicit liquor traffic, partly because many average citizens drank in spite of the ban. Monshiners and bootleggers capitalized on the demand.

“However, shortly after the return of “unintoxicating” beer, the strong-liquor traffic dwindled, at least here,” Green wrote.²⁶

Prohibition as a political, moral, legal and law enforcement movement was dying. The nation went wet in 1933, when the 18th Amendment was repealed. The same year,

Oregon established its own Liquor Control Commission and took over the sale and distribution of strong liquor by the bottle. The business of liquor, outside of manufacturing, was no longer a private concern.

But the local option law lived on, and Ashlanders asked themselves whether to remain dry or wet. In 1933, Ashland voted sixty percent to forty percent to stay dry. In 1934, after a bitter public debate, Ashland voted forty percent dry, sixty percent wet.²⁷ Prohibition was over.



ENDNOTES

1. Southern Oregon Historical Society oral history interview (tape 46) with Ellis Beeson, 25 Aug 77, p. 20.
2. John E. Caswell, “The Prohibition Movement in Oregon: 1836-1904,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 39 (1938), 235-261.
3. John E. Caswell, “The Prohibition Movement in Oregon: 1904-1915,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 40 (1939), 60-82.
4. Howard A. Dewitt, “Charles L. McNary and the 1918 Congressional Election,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 68 (1967), 125-140.
5. Beeson interview, p. 6.
6. Southern Oregon Historical Society oral history interview (tape 177) with Rupert Maddox, 23 Jan 81.
7. “Still Owners Are Arrested,” *Jackson County News*, 22 May 25.
8. Southern Oregon Historical Society oral history interview (tape 75) with Paul Clayborn Jennings, 21 Jun 78, p. 9.
9. Sarah Baker Munro, “Basque Folklore in Southeast Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 76 (1975), pp. 159-163.
10. Jennings interview, p. 10.
11. Beeson interview, p. 20.
12. Jennings interview, p. 10.
13. “Still Owners.”
14. “Four Arrested in Attempt to Deliver Liquor,” *Jackson County News*, 19 (14?) Jun 25.
15. Jennings interview, p. 6.
16. “Two Cargoes Confiscated,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 20 Dec. 30, p. 1.
17. “Holiday Cheer Cargo Is Held,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 22 Nov. 30, p. 1.
18. “19 Cases of Booze Taken Here,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 27 Dec. 30, p. 1.
19. This could not be confirmed by a primary source. But there is a reference to an *Ashland Daily Tidings* headline in *Ashland Daily Tidings Index*, Vol. 1, June 17, 1876 to June 1, 1936. There is also a reference to this in a *Daily Tidings* story in the late 1970s or early 80s, exact date unknown.
20. “The Editor's Last Word,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 24 Jan 31, p. 1.
21. “Offer to Pay Price for Crime,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 20 Oct. 31, p. 1.
22. “Pale and Wan, The Slayer of Sam Prescott Goes to Death as 75 Watch,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 30 Oct. 31, p. 1.
23. Some sources have mistakenly said Prescott was killed by a bootlegger. At the very least, Kingsley was never accused of carrying liquor at the time he shot Prescott.
24. “The Editor's Last Word,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 6 Apr 33, p. 1.
25. “The Editor's Last Word,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 19 May 33, p. 1.
26. “The Editor's Last Word,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 25 Sep 33, p. 1.
27. “Local Option is Beaten at Polls,” *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 7 Jan 34, p. 1.

A former Ashland Daily Tidings reporter, Joseph G. Follansbee is a free-lance writer residing in Ashland.



Peter Britt composed this still life of grapes grown in his original Valley View Vineyard, ca. 1885. SOHS #11762
Opposite, Bob Wisnovsky examines the clarity of a Pinot Noir at the family's Valley View Vineyard, named for Britt's pioneering efforts in the local wine industry.

JACKSONVILLE
GRAPES

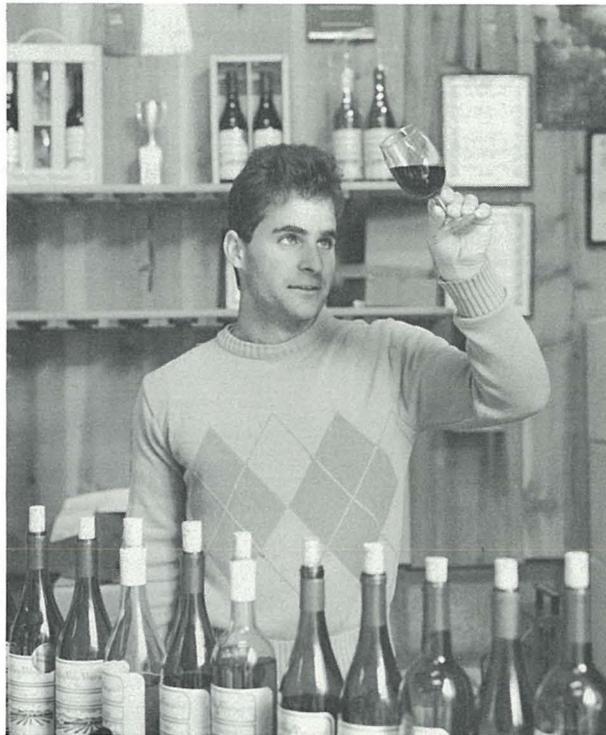


photo by Natalie Brown

The Rebirth of Oregon's Wine Industry

by Roger Love

We are told that history repeats itself; that it is only a matter of when. So it is with southern Oregon's wine industry. Here in the Rogue Valley, one need not look far to find in a wine shop or on a restaurant wine list a bottle of wine vinted at the Valley View Vineyard, located near Ruch.

In this bottle, one can see a reflection of Peter Britt's influence on the 19th-century origins of Oregon's winemaking industry. But the vines Peter Britt cultivated in the 1850s at what he later named Valley View Vineyard are not the same vines the Wisnovsky family harvests to produce today's Valley View wines. For this story has a beginning, and end and a new beginning. This is the story of how the making of fine wine in southern Oregon was born of Peter Britt, how Prohibition destroyed a developing industry and how, many years later, present-day pioneers revived a dormant art.

No one is sure just when Peter Britt decided to plant his first grapevines. Unauthenticated family tradition would have us believe that upon observing that native grapes grew so well around Jacksonville, he decided sometime in the early 1850s to secure some cuttings from old mission grapevines in California, and by 1858 he was making the first wine in the Oregon Territory.¹ The earliest

record of public acceptance of Britt's winemaking venture came in a Jacksonville newspaper in 1866:

Mr Britt has successfully demonstrated the problem that a first quality of wine can be manufactured here and if we may be allowed to prophesy, this will be no unimportant branch of agricultural industry in our valley ere long.²

In the 1870s, encouraged by his success, Britt expanded his operation, experimenting with dozens of grape varieties on a new vineyard one mile north of Jacksonville. Among his more popular wines were a claret, a zinfandel, a muscatel and a port. After losing a dispute with the Internal Revenue Service concerning a business license, Britt began marketing his wine under the label of the Valley View Vineyard, which by 1880 covered fifteen acres and produced between 1,000 and 3,000 gallons of wine per year.³

Apparently, Valley View was able to sell nearly all the wine it produced, in no small part due to Britt's promotion. He normally sold his wine for fifty cents a gallon⁴ to locals who would send over a Chinese cook or other helper with jars or bottles to be filled in Britt's cellar. He also arranged to send bottles and larger ten-gallon

demijohns of wine both north and south on the stage-coach and railroad. Britt let it be known there was a standing invitation for traveling correspondents to stop by Valley View Vineyard for a tour and a taste of wine, obviously in hope of a good review. One *West Shore* magazine writer who took the bait wrote:

... at Mr. Britt's place we tasted a one-year-old claret of his own growth and manufacture; and we very much doubt if it can be surpassed in the much boasted of California vineyards.⁵

By that time viticulture was being recognized by the government as a viable form of agriculture and an economic force in the Rogue Valley. In its annual report for 1890, the Southern Oregon State Board of Agriculture noted that "Jackson County is specially adapted to the raising of grapes."⁶ According to the report, Oregon's largest vineyard, at about twenty acres, was at that time owned by Col. J.N.T. Miller. Vineyards in the Rogue Valley had by that time been planted as far south as Ashland and as far north as Central Point, as well as in various locations in Josephine County. And, in a final flourish, the board boldly predicted:

With the hills of Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas dotted with vineyards and beautiful villas, . . . the castled Rhine will need to look to her laurels in the realm of song, while the classical vales of Italy and the sunny slopes of France will find a rival in the land of the fabled West.⁷

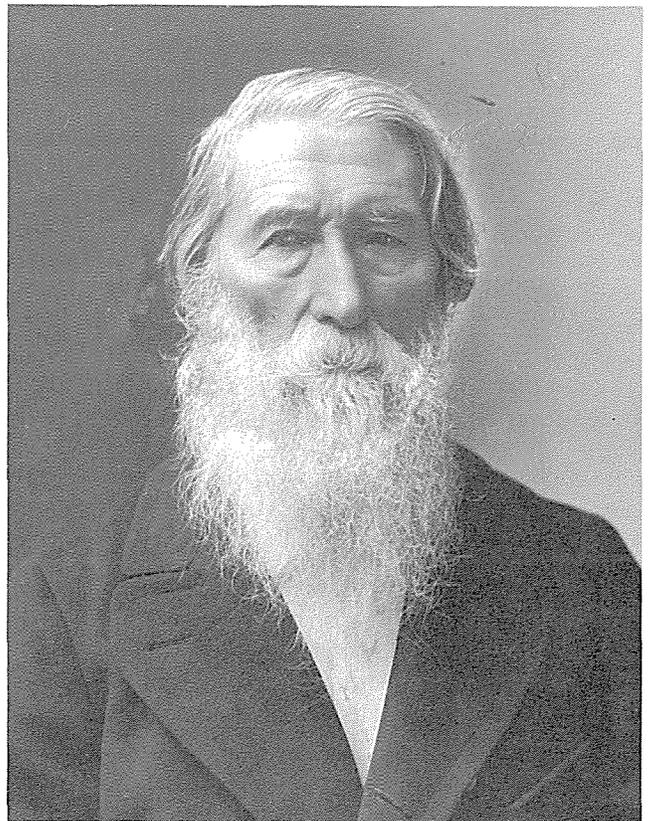
Of course, this vision was not to become a reality. Fifteen years before the Board of Agriculture's glowing report on southern Oregon winemaking, the seeds of the industry's ruin had already been planted. At about the same time Peter Britt was planting what would be Oregon's first commercial vineyard, the movement that ultimately resulted in Prohibition was being born, a movement that would include the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League, among others. The WCTU gained popularity and political clout through the end of the century, and snowballed as the 20th century began.

Oregon's winemakers may well have been too busy to notice. At this time, Oregon's wines were developing at a fast pace. The Pinot Noirs, Chardonnays, Zinfandels and Cabernets were winning awards over California wines in exhibitions. Even if Oregon wines could not compete with those from California in terms of volume, they certainly measured up in quality, and the vintners had no trouble selling all they could produce. Peter Britt's own receipt books indicate that Valley View Vineyard sold quantities of wine until his death in 1905, and most likely through the first decade of the new century.⁸ Even so, the Britts and the other Oregon winemakers had to have realized the future of the wine industry was precarious at best.

By 1916, when Oregon preceded the rest of the nation into the era of Prohibition by four years, the wine industry lay in ruin. The market for wine, so promising at the turn of the century, disappeared nearly overnight. The only markets for grapes that remained by 1920 were for

table grapes, not the varietals so carefully developed for fine wines. Over the next fifteen years, acres and acres of Oregon's grapevines were uprooted or allowed to run rampant, effectively destroying them.

What little winemaking that remained took place in the cellars of private citizens, one step away from the bootleggers. Winemaking regressed to its former state, with home vintners using elderberries, local fruits and wild grapes to make their own concoctions. People rapidly discovered that it was easy to make good wine. In contrast to Oregon, many California vineyards and wineries managed to stay afloat by producing grape juice and grape juice concentrate, thus not losing their acres of carefully tended grapevines. It was not long before their customers realized they could legally purchase the grape juice or concentrate and ferment it themselves into a marginally drinkable wine.



Peter Britt established the first vineyards in southern Oregon. SOHS #10554

In the mid-1930s, after nearly two decades of forced temperance in Oregon, Prohibition was finally repealed by the Federal government. Given this green light, many people may have expected the wine industry to rebound. It did in the wine country of California, where vintners were ready to begin production almost immediately. But Oregon had few producing vineyards; its wineries had been long deserted; and its network of producers had long since disbanded. As a result, no one took the chance of starting anew against the competition from California. In fact, with the exception of two bonded wineries in northern Oregon which produced fruit wines, Oregon's wine country lay fallow for the next quarter of a century.

Oregon's prime combination of grape-growing conditions had to await rediscovery until 1961, when Richard Sommers, the second "father of Oregon's wine industry," planted the first of a new generation of vines near Roseburg. Sommers knew, as Peter Britt did, that Oregon was prime wine real estate. But it was only after extensive research in California and through a network of friends and relatives that he selected southern Oregon as the area to begin his enterprise. In 1966, the first bottling of white Riesling under the Hillcrest label was ready to enter the market. And just as in Peter Britt's time 100 years earlier, one man's success attracted the attention of others who followed Sommers' lead and started vineyards of their own.

"It was a unique situation where people were actually migrating to Oregon just to grow grapes," said one winegrower who moved here in the early 1970s. "There was, and still is, a pioneering spirit among the winegrowers. It is kind of a last frontier. It brought a lot of us here."

By the 1970s, the Oregon wine industry had really begun to take shape once again. As the number of vineyards and wineries increased, the number of people involved in the winemakers' network also grew, the same type of network that California winemakers had been able to depend on for so many years. The Wisnovsky family planted the first grapes of what is now known as Valley View Winery just outside of Jacksonville in 1972, and finally received the permits to build a winery on the property in 1975. These vines were the first ones planted for commercial production in southern Oregon since before Prohibition. The Sommerses, the Wisnovskys, and all



Peter Britt's vineyard, ca. 1880 SOHS #2009

their compatriots in the Oregon wine country have shown there is a future for Oregon wine, that Oregon wine was beginning to be taken seriously in the international wine industry. It seemed that maybe, just maybe, the run of bad fortune for Oregon wines had ended.

The industry has improved since Peter Britt and his contemporaries experimented with numerous grape varieties and production methods. Modern vines produce a better grape and are more adaptable to weather and resistant to disease, the result of generations of selective breeding. Today's winemaker has the tools to measure the exact sugar content of a grape, which indicates whether it should be picked today or tomorrow. And after the har-

vest, the winemaker might be found surrounded by beakers, hydrometers, graduated cylinders and colored solutions as he tests the grapes for their acid level, which must be precisely balanced with the sugar to result in a good-tasting wine. The filtering and fermentation process has been refined since Peter Britt's time too, enabling the winemaker to more precisely control what happens as the crushed grapes become fine wine. Finally, even bottling the wine has changed: modern wine can last much longer on the shelf owing to more sanitary conditions and the use of better bottles and corks.

And in a stroke of good fortune, the mid-1970s found the United States in the midst of a "wine boom." Americans suddenly became interested in exploring the subtleties of domestic varietal wines. Domestic wines, of course, meant California wines, and to a lesser extent, New York wines. But quietly, almost unnoticed, wine from another region began to make inroads on the market and on American palates. Oregon Cabernets, Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays began to fare well in tastings and exhibitions in California and on the East Coast. It became easier to purchase an excellent Oregon wine in stores and restaurants outside of the Pacific Northwest.

In response to the demand, Oregon's annual wine production leaped from just 4,600 gallons in 1970 to 550,000 gallons in 1985. And all this from fewer than fifty bonded wineries and less than 160 vineyards. Certainly, Oregon is small by California standards; even the largest Oregon wineries produce no more than 100,000 gallons of wine a year, and the largest vineyards are little more than 100 acres.¹⁰ Oregon's wine industry will never compete with California's in terms of volume. But, as was noted by writers and critics a century ago and by reviewers today, Oregon's first-class wine vintages compete extremely well against domestic and European varietals.

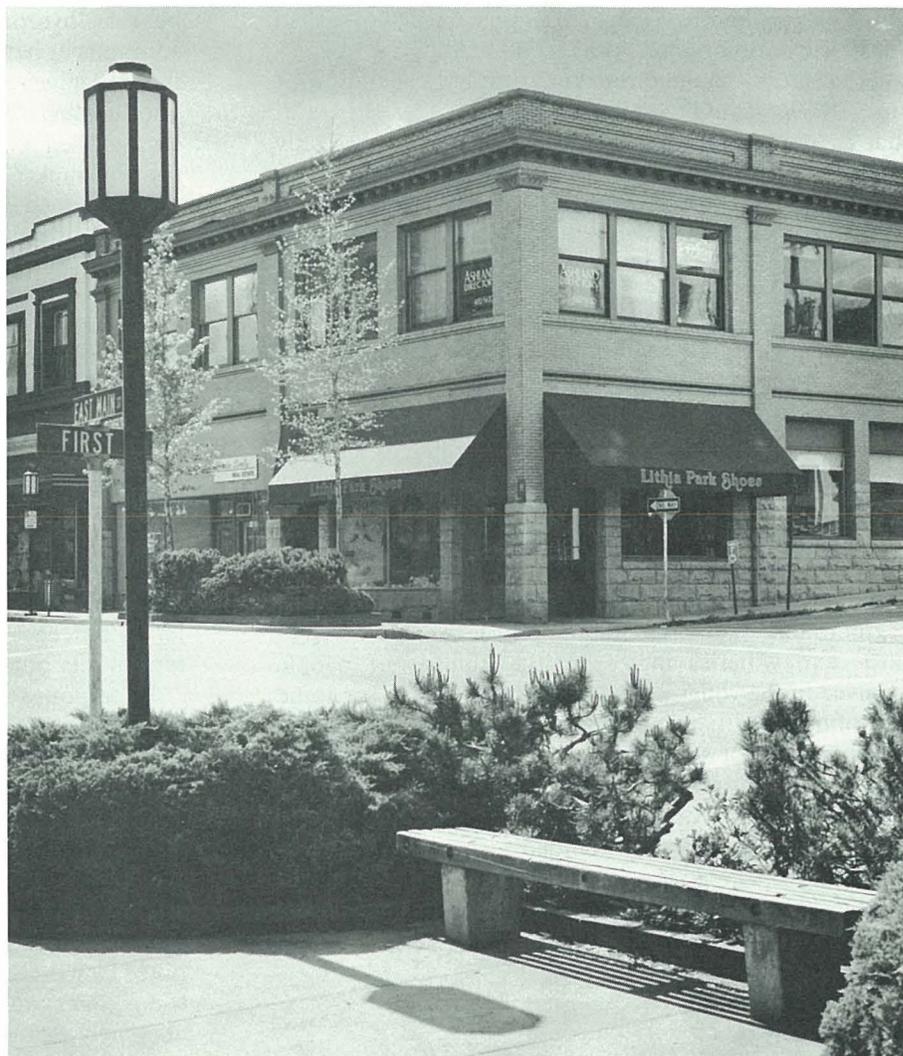
A decade ago, Valley View Vineyard released a Cabernet Sauvignon with a label duplicating the one Peter Britt designed and used on bottles of his own, somehow completing the link between past and present. Their histories are parallel: one man started it all; one man started it over again. Two groups of pioneers followed them and expanded their visions. And two publics responded with their respective toasts to the products of two fine wine industries.



1. *Medford Mail Tribune*, January 16, 1955, 122:1-8.
2. *The Oregon Sentinel*, September 29, 1866, 3:1.
3. Alan Clark Miller, *Peter Britt: Pioneer Photographer of the Siskiyou* (M.A. thesis, Trinity College, 1972), p. 77.
4. *Peter Britt: Pioneer Photographer*, p. 79.
5. *Peter Britt: Pioneer Photographer*, p. 79.
6. *The Resources of Southern Oregon*. The Southern Oregon State Board of Agriculture (Salem: Legislative Assembly of Oregon, 1890), p. 51.
7. *The Resources of Southern Oregon*, p. 53.
8. Receipt book, Peter Britt MSS., Jacksonville Museum.
9. "State recognizes bright future for Oregon wine-makers," *The Oregonian*, July 30, 1985, p. FD2.
10. *The Oregonian*, p. FD2.

In addition to his research on Oregon wines, Ashland writer Roger Love completed a history of the Crater Lake Lodge, published in the Feb. 1988 issue of the *Sentinel*.

The Citizen's Bank and Trust Company Building was designed by Bowen in 1910 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Built of locally quarried granite and brown brick for \$25,000, the building originally housed a doctor, dentist, lawyer, realtor and architect over the bank.



Ashland's Other Architect: **WILLIAM F. BOWEN**

by Nan Hannon

In just four years, from 1910 to 1913, architect William F. Bowen managed to leave a significant work on Ashland's downtown and residential districts. His work, however, and that of many other architects, has been overshadowed by the accomplishments of noted southern Oregon architect Frank C. Clark. Clark had a long and productive career in the Rogue Valley, extending from 1902 into the 1950s.¹ Because of Clark's popularity and longevity, history has largely neglected the contributions of the designer-builders and vernacular architects, including Bowen, who played a large part in shaping Ashland's landscape shortly after the turn of the century.

Yet Bowen's work remains an important part of Ashland because of its visibility and its architectural integrity. His commercial and residential buildings remain local expressions of the ideals of the Craftsman Movement that swept the nation during the first two decades of this century. They also embody the civic pride that Ashland residents felt during this period of rapid growth and modernization.

Most of Bowen's Ashland contemporaries are dead. His former partner recalls little personal information about him, and still less about his West Coast career. Local records contain almost no information about him.

Nevertheless, it is possible to piece together some facts about William Bowen's Ashland years.

Records in the archives of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) place these facts in a larger biographical context.

William Francis Bowen was born July 13, 1884, in Jacksonville, Illinois. He graduated from high school in the same city in 1904.

In his application for membership in the AIA, he described his father as an architect. Bowen himself had no formal architectural training, acquiring his skills through what he described to the AIA as "constant practice," although he did take architectural courses from the International Correspondence School and the American Correspondence School. He refined his talents as a draftsman while working for the C & H Sugar Company and the Columbia River Steel Corporation before arriving in Ashland in 1910 at the age of 26.

The advertisement became a fixture on page 7, column 1 of the *Tidings* for the next two years.

However, Bowen must have been practicing in the area before that November ad appeared, because less than two months later, on January 5, 1911, the *Tidings* ran a story describing Ashland's growth during the previous year, and noted that "Residence construction is also keeping abreast of the times. Architect Bowen alone reporting having planned over 25 homes in Ashland and vicinity during his residence here."⁵

About the same time that Bowen began running advertisements for his professional services, an E.O. Smith also advertised as an architect. In February of 1913, Bowen and Smith joined forces and advertised jointly, until July 31, 1913. It was probably shortly thereafter that Bowen moved to California.

It is unlikely that a complete inventory of Bowen's southern Oregon and northern California buildings can



Bowen designed the Craftsman-style home at 277 Almond Street, Ashland, featuring a two-story porch which extends the width of the building.

Bowen's stay in Ashland was brief. He moved to California in 1913, then to Texas in 1925, where he worked with the C.D. Hill Company of Dallas. In 1932, Bowen made his last move, to Louisiana. In 1940, he was licensed to practice architecture in that state, and in 1958, he was certified as a member of the AIA.

At the time, Bowen was a partner in the firm of Bowen and O'Rourke, Architects and Engineers, in Lafayette, Louisiana.² The Bowen and O'Rourke partnership lasted for almost seven years, until Bowen's retirement.³ Bowen died in February of 1974.⁴

Even though Bowen's time in Ashland was short, he apparently had a busy professional life. The first mention of him in local records is in the *Ashland Tidings* of November 17, 1910, in an advertisement for architectural

services. However, it is possible to document at least a dozen commercial and residential structures designed by Bowen. These include the Atkinson Memorial Bridge in Lithia Park, the Citizen's Bank and Trust Building on Ashland's East Main Street, the Merlin School, and the Water Street Laundry in Ashland, which is now occupied by Lithia Creek Arts. Bowen also drafted plans for a number of residences that are in the Craftsman architectural style.

Bowen's brief tenure in Ashland was coincident with a building boom following the arrival of the railroad and a period of rapid population growth. A growing and successful middle class in Ashland chose to build in the Craftsman idiom that enjoyed national popularity from 1900-1920, and particular popularity on the West Coast,

because its informality suited the western lifestyle.⁶

Craftsman architecture emphasized quality workmanship, use of natural and native materials and simple lines. In contrast to the architecture of the preceding Victorian Era, which often had a strong vertical thrust and rich, applied ornamentation, Craftsman structures had a horizontal, ground-hugging quality and minimized decoration. Because of their simplicity, Craftsman homes were affordable, and appealed to the democratic spirit of the times. There are about 200 structures in Ashland that may readily be classified as Craftsman homes, and approximately fifty more that show a strong Craftsman influence.

Bowen's Craftsman homes successfully realized the aesthetic ideals of the Craftsman Movement. They are

mostly residential work.

There also may have been stiff competition for residential jobs from Franklin E. Conway, an Ashland contractor who developed whole "bungalow blocks" of homes in the Craftsman style. Conway also did brisk business in northern California and in Coos Bay, areas in which Bowen had little presence. Conway advertised aggressively and offered financing to buyers.

When Bowen moved from Ashland in 1913, though, he left behind several landmarks that still testify to his competence and architectural vision. His southern Oregon work deserves recognition. Understanding his niche in local architectural history adds a pleasant dimension to appreciating Ashland's landscape.



The Mathes family, shown at right on their porch in 1908, hired Bowen to design their residence at 115 N. Main. SOHS #11765

balanced, well-proportioned structures with broad, inviting porches, richly textured chimneys, and comfortable interior floor plans. Bowen's clients included banker V.O.N. Smith, pharmacist James McNair, and contractor John Huntley, who commissioned spacious, family homes above the Ashland Boulevard.

Despite the artistic success of Bowen's work, it may not have been economically successful. Bowen's move to California may have been for personal reasons, but it may also have resulted from difficulty in competing for business with other architects and contractors in the area. Frank Clark had been practicing in southern Oregon for eight years before Bowen arrived, and had become an important member of the business and social community. Clark and his wife frequently were mentioned in the civic and social news of the *Tidings*; Bowen's name appeared only in connection with projects. Clark built a large, imposing home on Siskiyou Boulevard; Bowen rented a small house on Laurel Street, below the boulevard. Clark attracted important commercial contracts; Bowen did

ENDNOTES

1. Kay Atwood, *Frank Chamberlain Clark, 1872-1957: A Biography*, (prepared for the Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1982), 6-16.
2. William Francis Bowen, Application for Membership, The American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C., 1958.
3. Donald J. O'Rourke, personal communication.
4. Tony Wren, A.I.A. Archivist, personal communication.
5. *Ashland Tidings*, January 5, 1911, p. 4, col. 2.
6. Rosalind Clark, *Architecture: Oregon Style*. Portland: Professional Book Center, 145-149.

Special thanks to George Kramer for valuable assistance with research for this article.

Nan Hannon is coordinator of the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum and a member of the Ashland Heritage Committee. She curated the exhibit "Ashland Residential Architecture: There's No Place Like Home" displayed at the museum in 1985.

Society Update

Summer Openings Fast Approaching

With the railroad exhibit completed, the Society's Interpretation Department has turned its attention toward the summer programs at the Beekman House and Beekman Bank. Both historic sites will be open to the public from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. daily, beginning Saturday, May 28.

This will be the fifth season for the living history program at the Beekman House. A costumed greeter will meet visitors at the gate and introduce them to the Beekman family history before entering the house.

Once inside, it's the year 1911. Guests will meet Beekman family, relatives, neighbors, or household help. These characters, while performing routine tasks (laundry, cooking, cleaning, playing music, reading, or needlework), will chat with visitors, sharing insights about local history and telling stories about "their" lives in 1911 or before.

Besides Mrs. Beekman, sister Kate Hoffman, daughter Carrie, niece Corin, or the hired girl Louise Ensele, a new character joins the ranks. John Renault, a Civil War veteran, was the Beekman's hired hand for several years. Visitors may find him "fixing" something in or around the house or puttering in the garden.

Year four of the living history program at the Beekman Bank sees the return of "Mr. Beekman," (actually Bob Miller) on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. During the week, a costumed greeter will describe the bank's history and role in the town of Jacksonville.

This summer the Society will present its second season of guided walking tours of Jacksonville's business district. Costumed guides will lead groups past some of the town's oldest buildings, recounting how early lawyers, builders, and businessmen transformed Jacksonville from a rough-and-tumble gold



photo by Marian Lahr

Roberta Gregory and other Society members enjoyed the 1986 Mystery Tour to Juniper Ridge Ranch. Hosts Rosanna and Kelly Hart provided a luncheon and escorted a walk with their llamas.

Mystery Surrounds Next Society Bus Tour

Where will it be? Join staff on Friday, May 27 for the Society's third annual Mystery Tour. The destination? Only the tour guide, bus driver, and host know for certain. All participants need to know is to bring a camera and wear comfortable clothing.

We'll depart Jacksonville at 9:00 a.m. and return around 3:00 p.m.

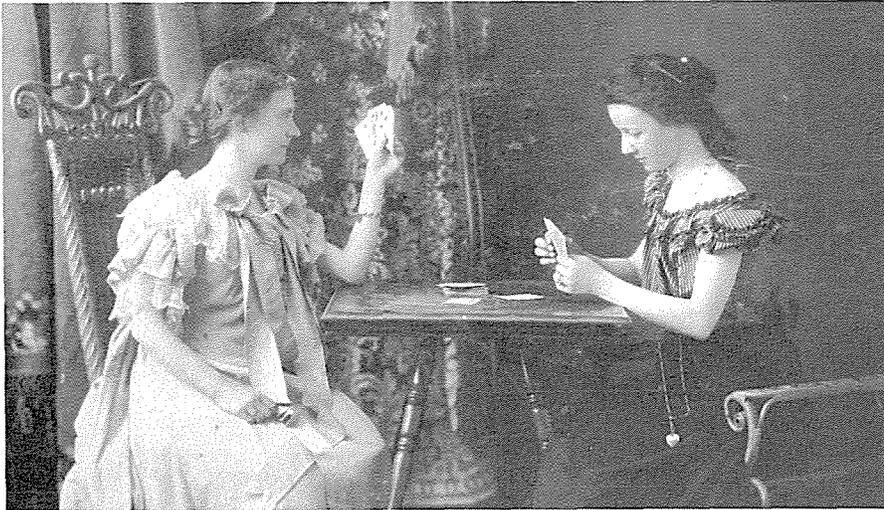
Cost will be \$17.50 and includes transportation and lunch. Reservations are required and may be obtained by calling Susan Cox, membership coordinator, at 899-1847.

Future tours were listed in last month's *Sentinel*, but feel free to call Sue for additional information.

camp to a vital Victorian community and major trade center of southern Oregon.

The 40-60 minute tour will be offered once each day at 11:00 a.m. between May 28 and September 5.

Admission is \$1.00 for adults (Society members and children 13 and under free). Tickets may be purchased in the Jacksonville Museum gift shop. There is a 15 person limit per tour.



Unidentified Victorian ladies playing cards SOHS #2932

Exhibit Opening Celebration Scheduled

Staff at the Society's Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum have put the finishing touches on two new exhibits in the Ashland museum. "Home Entertainment" and "The History of Southern Jackson County" are scheduled to open to the public on Sunday, May 22, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

"Home Entertainment" traces the evolution of America's pastime activities in the home over the last one hundred years from active participation in family- and group-oriented pursuits to passive participation in individual ones. Toys,

games, music boxes, early television and radio sets, computer games, and other mechanical and electronic devices help tell the story.

Ashland interior designer Nancy Krieg conducted the research and identified artifacts and historic photographs for "Home Entertainment," which is scheduled to remain on display through March 1989. Krieg is a graduate student at SOSC and has had two terms of practicum at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum.

On a more long-term basis, the exhibit "The History of Southern

Jackson County" features important events and people in the development of Ashland and Talent. Through the use of historic photographs and artifacts, it describes the area's prehistory, early settlement, industries, cultural groups, and environment.

To celebrate the two exhibit openings and National Historic Preservation Week, the Society and the Ashland Historic Commission are co-sponsoring a series of lectures at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum on the afternoon of Sunday, May 22. Historian and author Kay Atwood, who has written many successful National Register nominations, will speak on "How to Research the History of Your Home" at 2:00 p.m. SOSC archaeologist Rich Olmo will present "Preserving Jackson County's Prehistory" at 2:30 p.m., and restoration contractor Rod Reid will show slides on "Ashland's Architectural Style" at 3:00 p.m.

Since making and eating home-baked treats has always been a popular form of home entertainment, Society staff and docents are preparing a number of dessert recipes from the 1903 *Ashland Ladies of the Saturday Afternoon Cookbook* for the May 22 opening. Guests may sample Miss Russell's ginger drop cookies, Mrs. Lovejoy's snippidoodles, and Mrs. Carter's

Discover the history of Jackson County and the southern Oregon/northern California region.

Enjoy the lively magazine, the *Table Rock Sentinel*, and the numerous programs, exhibits and publications of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Join today! Fill out this form and mail with check or money order to:

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Please check category desired.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$8 Jr. Historian (18 & under) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$12 Senior (65 & over) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Donor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sponsor |
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| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5000 Lifetime |

Welcome!

name _____ amount enclosed: _____
address _____
city, state _____ zip _____
Telephone: _____

8-5

prune cake. (See accompanying recipe.)

Admission to the opening reception and the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum is free.

Mrs. Carter's Prune Cake

Mrs. E.V. Carter, of Ashland, was the first president of the 1892 Ashland Library and Reading Room Association. She served on the Library Board for thirty-six years.

One cup sugar, one-half cup butter, yolks of three eggs. Stir together, then add one cup prunes (cooked and chopped fine), one teaspoon cinnamon, one and one-half cups flour, three tablespoons sour cream or milk, one teaspoon soda, vanilla. Bake in layers and put together with frosting.

Modern version: You may substitute two whole eggs for the three egg yolks and bake as a loaf instead of layers. This cake is sweet and rich enough to serve unfrosted. Bake 300° for one hour or until cake tests done.

Society Contributes to McKee Bridge Fund

As part of its Grants-in-Aid program, the Board of Trustees has approved a \$10,000 grant request from Jackson County to help with the restoration of the McKee Covered Bridge. These funds have gone into an account administered by the Rogue Valley Foundation to await additional funding from the state.

McKee Bridge spans the Applegate River and is one of only four covered bridges remaining in Jackson County. Built in 1918, it was used for mining and logging traffic until 1956 when it closed to vehicular use.

County officials estimate that it will take approximately \$100,000 to restore the 70-year-old structure. Nearly \$13,000 has been raised thus far (including the Society's grant), but an additional \$7,000 in private donations is needed. The county hopes to obtain the \$80,000 from the state's regional strategies program to meet the \$100,000 price tag for the project.

Individuals and organizations interested in preserving this historic

structure are urged to send their tax-deductible contributions to:

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



What's in Store?

Commemorative mugs celebrating the 1987 centennial of the Oregon & California Railroad and the opening of the exhibit "Making Tracks" are available in the Society's gift shop in the Jacksonville Museum. The mugs come in brown/tan or black/gray and cost \$5.95 each (\$5.05 for members). The perfect gift for that railroad buff or anyone who appreciates southern Oregon history!

From the Collections



Bottle manufacturing in America dates back to 1609 when the Jamestown (Virginia) colonists established a glasshouse near the banks of the James River. A century later, American bottle makers began to produce bottles specifically for whiskey for domestic and foreign trade.

By the mid-1800s, the sizes and shapes of whiskey bottles were fairly standardized. Occasionally, however, a bottler would come out with a "collectible," and the bottle to the right in the photograph probably fit into this category. U. S. Mail Box Rye, made appropriately in the shape of a mail box, was bottled in San Francisco. The clear glass bottle carries a patent date of December 16, 1891.

To its left is an I. W. Harper Whiskey bottle. It is especially significant to this area as this brand was bottled by E. H. Helms of Jacksonville. Helms ran the Table Rock Saloon on Oregon Street until he retired in 1914. His father, Herman V. Helms, who settled here in 1865, started this prominent Jacksonville establishment.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society houses numerous objects that, owing to limited exhibit space, are not often seen by visitors. We hope that featuring an item or two each month in this column will provide an enjoyable and educational view of the scope of the Society's collection.

Welcome New Members

SENIOR

Mrs. O.B. Harrison, *Medford*
Inita Kaiser, *Eagle Point*
Mario Sbrazza, *Medford*
Chester N. Smith, *Medford*
Marjorie Snyder, *Medford*
Thelma Snyder, *Medford*

INDIVIDUAL

Harris J. Allen, *Central Point*
Dr. Kent DeYarman, *Medford*
William Hallen, *Jacksonville*

Sara R. Hedberg, *Palo Alto, CA*
Diane M. Henri, *Central Point*
Michael Kaiser, *Eagle Point*
Sandra Lucia, *Medford*
Betty I. Miller, *Jacksonville*
Dorothy Morris Reimers, *Saratoga, CA*
Marilee Winingler, *Medford*

FAMILY

Lisa Asher, *Ashland*
Wesley & Helen Faust, *Medford*
John & Bertinia Hilliard, *Rogue River*

Jack & Anita Katzenmeyer, *Medford*
James & Cheryl Lewis, *Ashland*
Lee & Donna Niedermeyer, *Medford*
Gene & "A" Peterson, *Medford*
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Taylor, *Eugene*
Paul & Sylvia Traver, *Medford*
Mr. & Mrs. T.E. Wightman, *Jacksonville*

BUSINESS

Security Insurance Agency, Inc., *Medford*

Renewing Members

JR. HISTORIAN

Miss Laura Schriener, *Central Point*

SENIOR

Mary Algeo, *Medford*
Louis Applegate, *Fairbanks, AK*
Velma Bailey, *Ashland*
Gladys Bartelt, *Ashland*
Leeda Bishop, *Ashland*
Robert Blankholm, *Ashland*
Virginia Bothwell, *Medford*
William Briggs, *Phoenix*
Mabel Brock, *Talent*
Mrs. Alice Burnette, *Talent*
Mrs. Graham Butler, *Medford*
Leona Cartwright, *Medford*
Gladys Curran, *Phoenix*
Gertrude Easterling, *Ashland*
Eleanor S. Everett, *Ashland*
Jody Ferg, *Brookings*
*Mrs. Walter G. Garner, *Central Poi*
Margaret E. Hall, *Talent*
Melvin Hall, *Medford*
Betty Hennessy, *Pollack Pines, CA*
Thada Hilton, *Medford*
Maxine Hunnell, *Ashland*
Lucile Jones, *Washington, IL*
Mary Grace Kirby, *Medford*
Albert Meyer, *Ashland*
Margaret E. Miles, *Medford*
Mary Moore, *Medford*
Margarite Pote, *Central Point*
Margaret Ramsay, *Ashland*
Mrs. Billie H. Robertson, *Eugene*
Frank E. Ross, *Medford*
Mrs. E.V. Silva, *Ashland*

Weldon Sloan, *Wilsonville*
Mrs. Fred H. Stabler, *Ashland*
Novus Webb, *Jacksonville*
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INDIVIDUAL

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