

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



Administrative Staff

Executive Director:

Samuel J. Wegner

Deputy Director, Public

Relations Officer:

Joy L. Comstock

Assistant Director for

Operations and Finance:

Maureen Smith

Assistant Director for History:

Marjorie Edens

Coordinator of Photography and Publications:

Natalie Brown

Membership Coordinator:

Susan Cox

Board of Trustees

President:

Donald McLaughlin, Medford

First Vice President:

Isabel Sickels, Ashland

Second Vice President:

Dr. James Sours, Medford

Secretary:

Marjorie O'Harra, Ashland

Treasurer:

William Bagley, Medford

Vicki Bryden, Medford

L. Scott Clay, Medford

Mary Foster, Medford

Dan Hull, Jacksonville

Jessie McGraw, Eagle Point

Laurel Prairie-Kuntz, Medford

James Ragland, Ashland

Dr. Carl Shaff, Rogue River

Kathryn Stancliffe, Phoenix

Mark Wolfe, Medford

The **Table Rock Sentinel** is published monthly by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Administrative and membership offices are at 205 N. Fifth St., Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480. Subscription is free with membership. Single copies and back issues are available for \$2.50 each.

POSTMASTER: Please send Change of Address (form 3579) to Southern Oregon Historical Society, P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480.

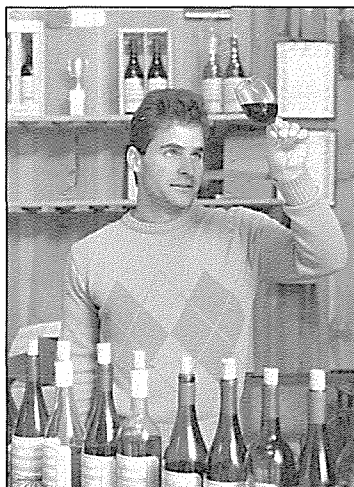
Copyright ©1988 by Southern Oregon Historical Society. ISSN

#0732-0523. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted without written permission from the Society.

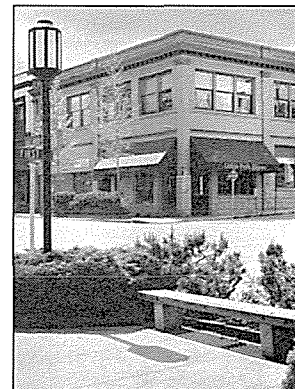
CONTRIBUTIONS: Address all editorial communications to **Table Rock Sentinel**, P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480. We are happy to consider queries and contributions. All material must be identified with the sender's name and address, and will be returned if sent with sufficient postage. Care is taken with contributions, but we are not responsible for damage or loss. The Society disclaims responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in signed contributions.



p. 4



p. 12



p. 16

Features

4 Liquor and the Law: Prohibition in Southern Oregon *by Joseph G. Follansbee*

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.

Departments

19 Society Update

23 Letters


21 From the Collections

24 Calendar of Events



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



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

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

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

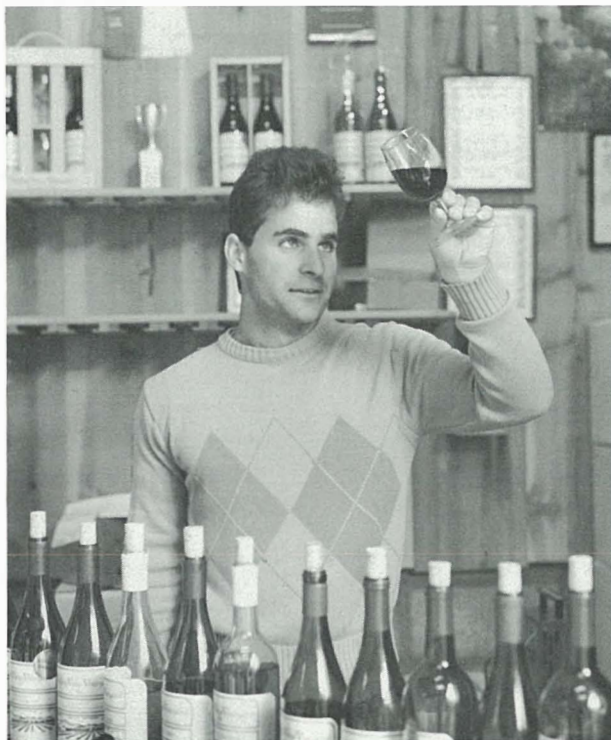


photo by Natalie Brown

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

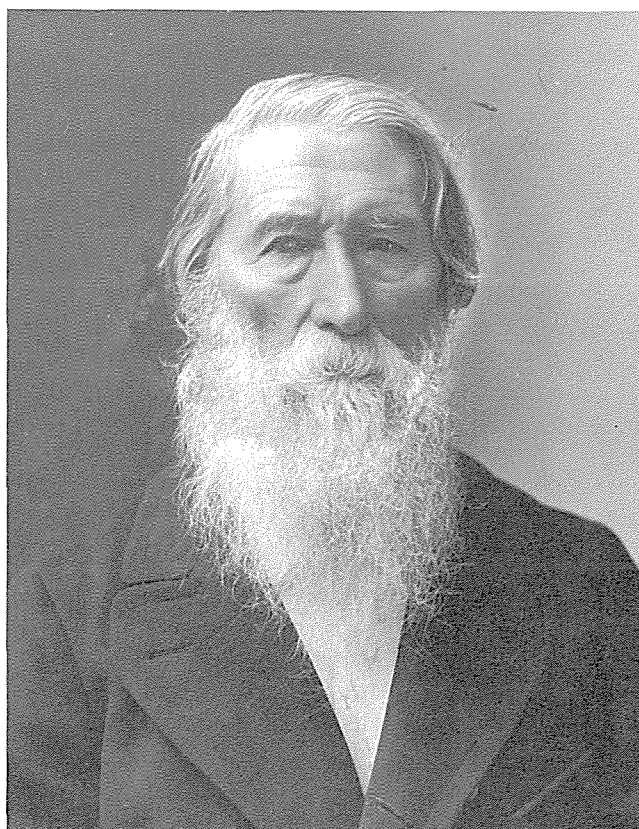
Of course, this vision was not to become a reality. Fifteen years before the Board of Agriculture's glowing report on southern Oregon winemaking, the seeds of the industry's ruin had already been planted. At about the same time Peter Britt was planting what would be Oregon's first commercial vineyard, 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 Britt 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.

services. 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

be made. However, it is possible to document at least a dozen commercial and residential structures designed by Bowen. These include the Atkinson Memorial Bridge on 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 building, 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:

Southern Oregon Historical Society
Membership Coordinator
P.O. Box 480
Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480

Please check category desired.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Contributor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Grantor |
| | <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 Wininger, *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*
 Hazel Yeager, *Portland*

INDIVIDUAL

Rebecca J. Barden, *Central Point*
 Anne Billeter, *Grants Pass*
 Nancy Brendlinger, *Brookings*
 Natalie Brown, *Medford*
 David Chirgwin, *Medford*
 Margaret Ann Cole, *Willows, CA*
 Richard L. Cunningham, *Portland*
 Marthanne Dedrick, *Medford*
 Anna Erickson, *Medford*
 Stuart E. Foster, *Medford*
 Julia Ann Horton, *Medford*
 Richard Lohr, *Ashland*
 Flora MacCracken, *Ashland*
 Raoul Maddox, *Ashland*
 Gail Orell, *Ashland*
 Nancy Hamilton Samson, *Bellevue, WA*
 Bessie Mae Smith, *Gold Hill*
 Nellie Snider, *Medford*
 Sue Waldron, *Medford*
 Paul Wallwork, *Medford*
 Helen Harnish Wolgamott, *Medford*

FAMILY

Dr. & Mrs. Theodore Barss, *Medford*
 Don & Flo Bohnert, *Central Point*
 Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Borchgrevink, *Medford*
 Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Buckley, *Jacksonville*
 Mr. & Mrs. H.L. Bush, *Medford*

Harry & Carma Chipman, *Central Point*
 David & Patricia Cook, *Central Point*
 Harold & Miriann Davidson, *Jacksonville*
 Mr. & Mrs. Victor E. Gardner, *Eagle Point*
 Pat Gordon, *Jacksonville*
 Chet & Janet Guches, *Phoenix*
 Mrs. Tom B. Henshaw, *Portland*
 Richard & Ann Hensley, *Medford*
 Robert & Bette Hyde, *Jacksonville*
 Mr. & Mrs. John A. Keller, *Jacksonville*
 Don & Mildred Marshall, *Medford*
 Clifford & Donna Martin, *Rogue River*
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert S. McClain, *Albany*
 Mr. & Mrs. Jack Nichols, *White City*
 Mr. & Mrs. James Oakes, *Jacksonville*
 Thomas S. Parks, *Medford*
 Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Phillips, *Medford*
 Edgar & Ruby Pleasant, *White City*
 *William & Elizabeth Ryan, *Rogue River*
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Sage, *Medford*
 *John & Lois Sullivan, *Jacksonville*
 Mark W. Taylor, *Medford*
 Alfred & Belinda Theurer, *Central Point*

CONTRIBUTOR

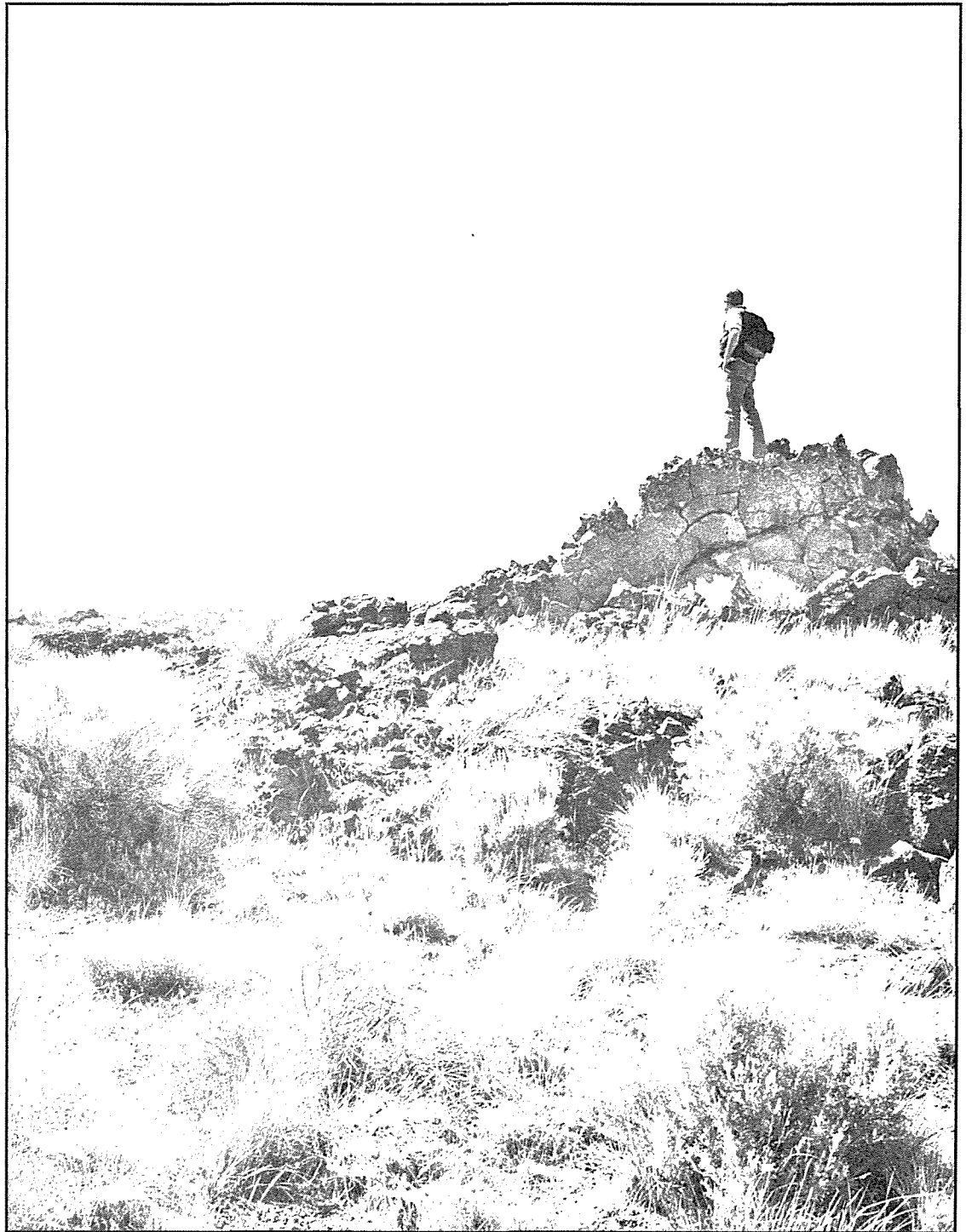
Joan Collins, *Medford*
 John & Helen Collins, *Medford*
 Jack & Margaret Cramer, *Medford*

TABLE ROCK

\$2.50

SENTINEL

JUNE 1988



The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society

Commentary

Membership: one word so critically important to the future of this organization. The Southern Oregon Historical Society *is* its membership. The organization depends on the support of its members—both financially and otherwise. As we look to the future well-being of the Society, the role of the membership becomes all the more important.

In this issue of the *Sentinel*, you will read of a proposal to restructure the membership program. The reason is two-fold:

Even with cost cutting and streamlining of the processes necessary to provide membership benefits and opportunities, the program currently costs far more than it brings in to the Society.

In addition, we need to encourage more active membership involvement in the support of the Society. This involvement must come in two ways: financial support for Society programs and increased membership benefits, opportunities and activities which provide enriching experiences to members.

Please give serious consideration to this proposal and let us know what you think. Keep in mind that it is only a proposal to date. In the best interest of the Society, however, we must deal with this issue in the near future. With input and cooperation of the membership, this can and will be done.



Samuel J. Wegner
Executive Director



Administrative Staff

Executive Director:

Samuel J. Wegner

Deputy Director, Public

Relations Officer:

Joy L. Comstock

Assistant Director for

Operations and Finance:

Maureen Smith

Assistant Director for History:

Marjorie Edens

Coordinator of Photography

and Publications:

Natalie Brown

Membership Coordinator:

Susan Cox

Board of Trustees

President:

Donald McLaughlin, Medford

First Vice President:

Isabel Sickels, Ashland

Second Vice President:

Dr. James Sours, Medford

Secretary:

Marjorie O'Harra, Ashland

Treasurer:

William Bagley, Medford

Vicki Bryden, Medford

L. Scott Clay, Medford

Mary Foster, Medford

Dan Hull, Jacksonville

Jessie McGraw, Eagle Point

Laurel Prairie-Kuntz, Medford

James Ragland, Ashland

Dr. Carl Shaff, Rogue River

Kathryn Stancliffe, Phoenix

Mark Wolfe, Medford

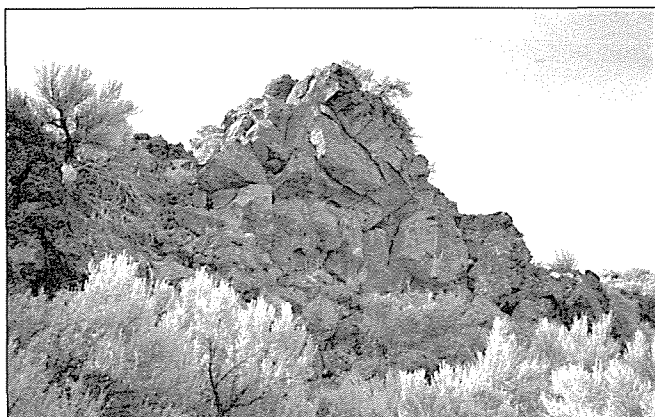
The **Table Rock Sentinel** is published monthly by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Administrative and membership offices are at 205 N. Fifth St., Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480. Subscription is free with membership. Single copies and back issues are available for \$2.50 each.

POSTMASTER: Please send Change of Address (form 3579) to Southern Oregon Historical Society, P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480.

Copyright ©1988 by Southern Oregon Historical Society. ISSN

#0732-0523. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted without written permission from the Society.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Address all editorial communications to **Table Rock Sentinel, P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, OR 97530-0480**. We are happy to consider queries and contributions. All material must be identified with the sender's name and address, and will be returned if sent with sufficient postage. Care is taken with contributions, but we are not responsible for damage or loss. The Society disclaims responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in signed contributions.



p. 4



p. 12

Features

4 The Oregon Militia's Modoc War *by Sue Waldron*

Many early Jackson County residents responded to the call for volunteers to subdue the small band of Modoc Indians located near the Oregon-California border. Unprepared for the rugged terrain and the determination of the Indians, the volunteers found the anticipated short skirmish turned into an entire war.

12 The Birdseye Family of Jackson County *by Chuck Sweet*

The Birdseye home, still standing near Rogue River, Oregon, is a monument to the strength and courage of two women who survived and thrived on the rigors of the frontier and the whims of fate.

Departments

18 Society Update

23 Regional Digest

23 From the Collections

24 Calendar of Events

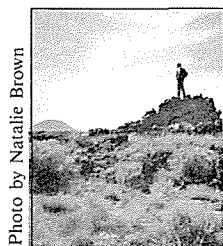


Photo by Natalie Brown

cover: A solitary hiker surveys Schonchin Butte and the rugged lava landscape where one hundred years ago fewer than sixty Modoc Indians fought the U.S. Army and volunteer militia in one of the most expensive Indian wars in this country's history.

The Oregon Militia's Modoc War

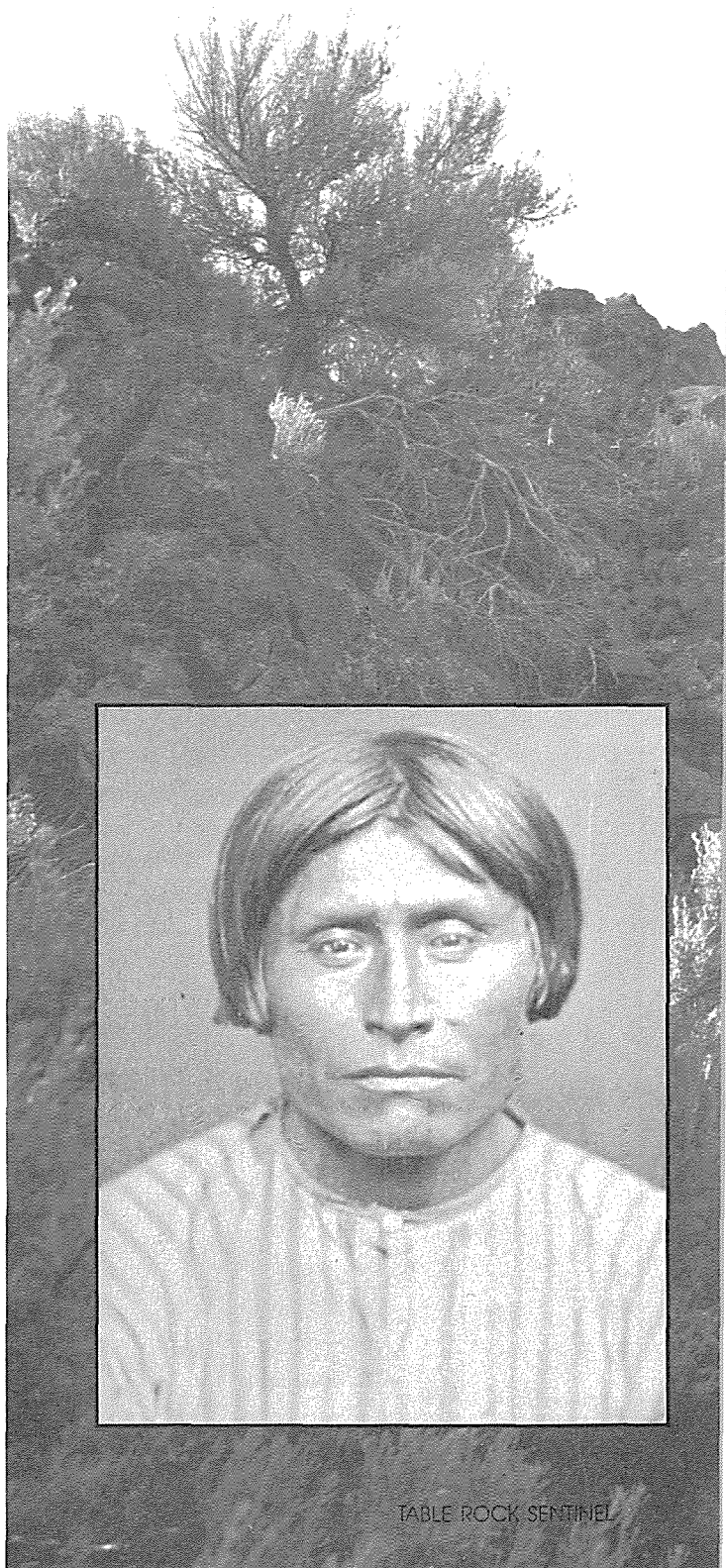
by Sue Waldron

Early in Oregon's history, when a need arose for fighting men and few professional soldiers were available, the territory was given authorization to organize volunteer militia units. Similar to the "Minutemen" organizations in the New England states during the Revolutionary War, these units were made up of soldiers who would answer a call to duty on short notice.

Oregon's Volunteer Militia served the citizens of the Rogue River Valley many times during the early years of the Valley's settlement. Militiamen fought in the Indian wars of 1853 and 1855 and mustered later to protect travelers on the Applegate Trail. During the Civil War they organized local groups to protect the Valley from "insurrection and Indians" and to garrison the various military posts in the state.¹

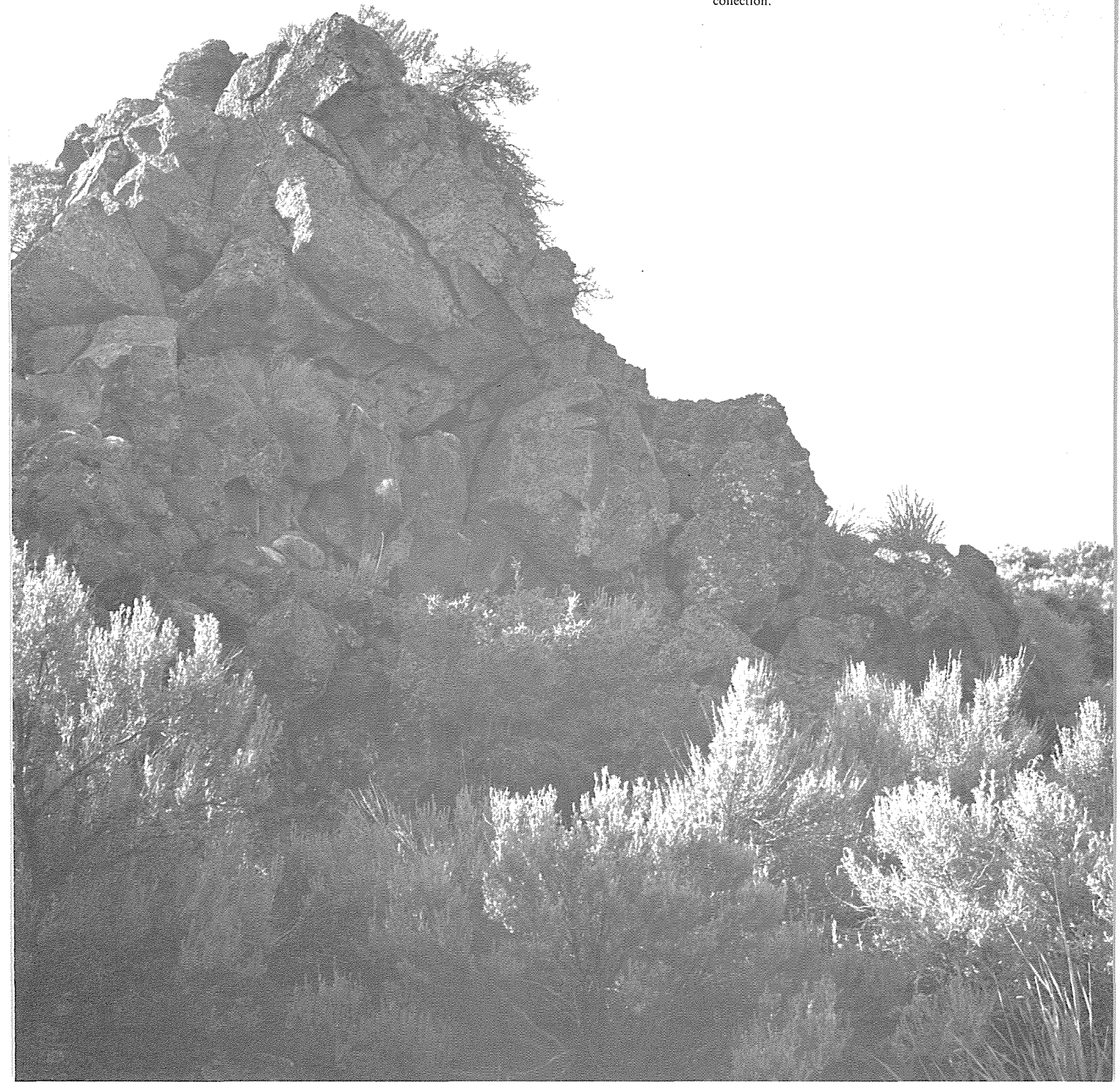
After the war the remaining years of the 1860s were relatively quiet for the local militia. The Rogue Indians were on a reservation in the north and the Klamath and Modoc Indians had signed a treaty in 1864 that set up the Klamath Reservation north of Linkville.

The Modoc Indians, though they had signed the treaty, found it difficult to live with their long-time enemies, the Klamaths. In April 1870, the Modoc leader Captain Jack and a group of his followers left the reservation. They traveled south to their ancestral lands in the Lost River area near Tule Lake in northern California. Because the military presence in southern Oregon was not strong enough to force the Modocs back to the reservation, no action was taken against them.



Jagged lava boulders and sagebrush characterize the terrain of the Lava Beds National Monument, Tulelake, California. Modoc leader Kientpoos, or Captain Jack (insert), struggled to preserve the identity of his people against the wishes of the federal government. He was photographed by Louis Heller shortly after his capture while awaiting trial at Fort Klamath.

Photo courtesy of National Park Service, Lava Beds collection.



During the next two years the Modocs were introduced to a new "apocalyptic religion" from the Piutes. The ceremonies included dancing for days. Those who believed "... were told that earthquakes were imminent which would destroy all human beings in the western hemisphere, whether they be white or red. The faithful would promptly rise from the dead, however, and the houses and land and stock of the dead white men would then revert to the resurrected Indians."² The religion preached that Indians should not learn to be like the white man and that they should have nothing to do with the white man's things.

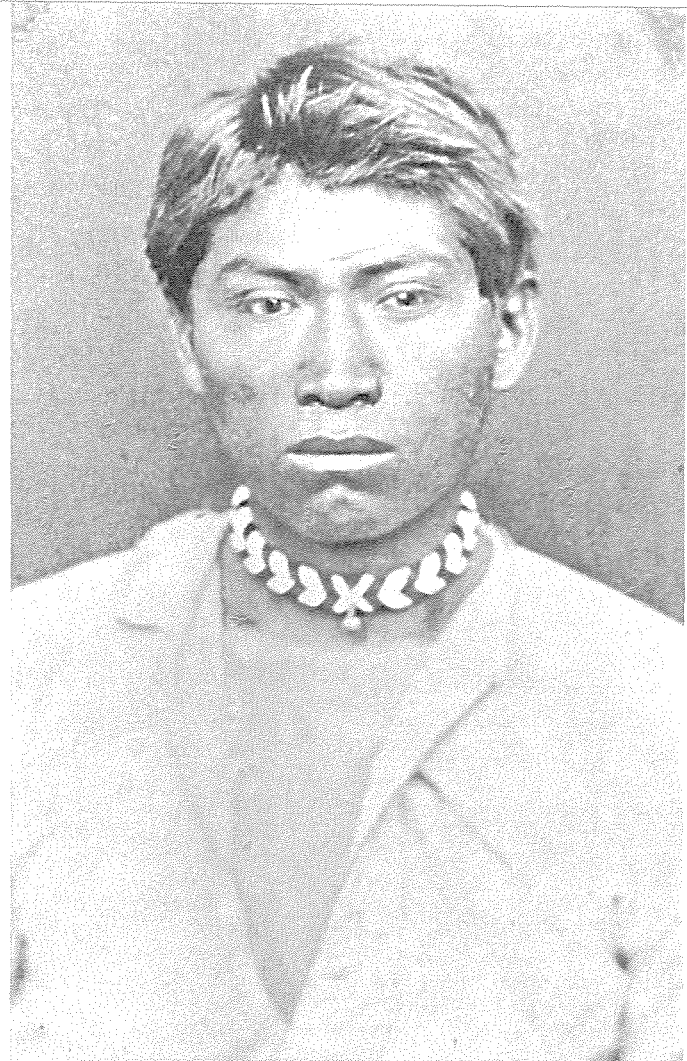
"The faithful would promptly rise from the dead and the houses and land and stock of the dead white men would then revert to the resurrected Indians."

Early in 1871 a major earthquake shook the northern California region. Sure that the prophecies were soon to be fulfilled, confrontations began to occur between whites and Indians in the Tule Lake area. Becoming alarmed at the lack of restraints on the Modocs, sixty-five white settlers petitioned Oregon's governor, LaFayette Grover, to be allowed to form a militia unit to take action against the Indians. Legend, experience and history led many of the white settlers to fear "free" Indians.

Governor Grover contacted the superintendent of Indians for Oregon, Alfred B. Meacham, asking for federal troops to protect the settlers. Meacham, waiting for an answer to his request for a separate Modoc reservation, was hesitant to take any military action. However, he did send troops to the Tule Lake area to monitor the Indians' activities and calm the settlers' fears.

In April 1872, the Bureau of Indian Affairs decided that the Modocs could not have a separate reservation and that Captain Jack and his band must be moved back to the Yainax Station on the Klamath Reservation. Superintendent Meacham could not support the bureau's decision. He was replaced by T. B. Odeneal. Worried that the Klamath Indian reservation agent, J. N. High, would not enforce the bureau's decision, Odeneal replaced agent High with L. S. Dyer. Neither Odeneal nor Dyer had actual knowledge of or experience with the problems at the reservation, but it was thought they would follow bureau instructions.

Ivan D. Applegate was commissary officer at the Yainax Station on the Klamath reservation. Ivan and his brother, Oliver, had assisted their father, Lindsay Applegate, when he was sub-agent for the reservation. Ivan knew the Indians and their problems well, and possessing the characteristic abilities of his prominent family, proved to be a capable administrator of the eastern Indians.³ In May 1872, when asked for advice in dealing with the Modocs, Applegate recommended that they be returned to the reser-



Hooker Jim

courtesy National Park Service, Lava Beds Collection

vation, but that no action be taken to remove them until the early winter months.

Refusing to accept that advice, the bureau sent Dyer and Applegate to talk with Captain Jack. Jack refused to return to the reservation, but promised that he would not harm any of the white settlers. Odeneal was not satisfied with that response and recommended that Captain Jack be arrested and exiled until he agreed to accept reservation life. Noting the small number of federal troops in the area, Army officers advised caution and urged that no action be taken until at least September.

Late in November the military attempted to return Jack to the reservation by force and the Jacksonville *Democratic Times* ran the following story:

The Indian Department having made requisition on the military for troops to force the Modoc Indians to go on the Reservation a company of cavalry was sent from Fort Klamath, Capt. Jackson in command, with instructions to reach the main camp of the Modoc Indians by daylight, if possible, and demand their surrender. The troops, guided by Mr. (Ivan) Applegate, reached the camp soon after daylight, surprised the Indians, and demanded their surrender, which the Indians refused, and commenced getting their arms. After repeated demands on them to surrender and lay down their arms had been rejected, an order was given to Lt. Boutelle to take some men and attempt to arrest the leaders. This was followed by firing on the part of the Indians, then a general engagement ensued.⁴



courtesy National Park Service, Lava Beds Collection

T. B. Odeneal

Later it was learned that one Modoc had been killed and one wounded. The rest of the Indian camp escaped into the Lava Beds. One soldier was killed and seven others were wounded, one of whom died later.

That afternoon, the Modoc Hooker Jim and several followers set out on a retaliatory raid. Moving among the widely scattered settlers, the Indians killed fourteen men and the Modoc Indian War had begun.

On December 1, governor Grover received a telegram informing him of the shootings and of the escape of the Modocs. It also advised that the military forces available were not strong enough to handle the situation. After contacting General E. R. S. Canby, commander at Fort Vancouver, to offer Oregon's assistance in putting down the Modocs, Grover sent out a call for a force of volunteers "... to cooperate with the regular troops, sufficient to quell disturbances and to protect the settlements."⁵

In Jacksonville a recruiting office was set up in the U. S. Hotel. More than forty volunteers signed up and left Jacksonville on December 5, and "... about as many more left Ashland, Phoenix and other places," reported the *Democratic Times*. "There are still several from all parts of the country volunteering and the redskins will have quite an army to fight, who will make it uncomfortably warm for them."⁶

The volunteers were assigned to Company A under the command of General John E. Ross, the well-known sol-

dier from the Rogue River Indian wars of the 1850s. Dr. J. N. Bell was the company's surgeon; W. A. Owen the adjutant; E. D. Foudray and J. R. Neil served as aides-de-camp. Captain Harrison Kelly, 1st Lt. I. W. Berry and 2nd Lt. Evan Reames were the other officers.

As with many volunteer militia units, Company A was a mixed group of men. General Ross was perhaps the oldest at fifty-four years of age, but there were several others also in their fifties. These seasoned men, who had fought the Indians before, served alongside farmers in their thirties and young men still in their teens. Manuel Marks and Evan Reames were dry goods clerks; Morgan Murphy was a school teacher; James R. Neil was a lawyer; W. Jones and John Louzignaut were carpenters; and Alfred Law was a fifty-year-old cook. All had volunteered for thirty days to help settle the Modoc issue.

The company left Jacksonville on horseback. Though the roads were messy from the previous week of continuous rains, the men reached the Klamath Basin on December 7. The volunteers made camp about ten miles from the mouth of Lost River and a few miles from Jackson's camp at Crawley's ranch.

Another company of volunteers was formed in the Klamath Falls area and led by the twenty-eight-year-old Oliver Applegate. This second company included many reservation Indians, some white men from Linkville and a few from Jacksonville who could not join Company A.

Companies A and B shared a camp and assumed the duties of protecting settlers to the north and east of the stronghold where the Indians holed up in the Lava Beds. The patrols helped occupy the volunteers but much of their time was spent in camp waiting for the military forces to be concentrated for an attack. The volunteers had mustered quickly and were poorly supplied. Soon the Army was providing them with blankets, rations and ammunition.

Odeneal recommended that Captain Jack be arrested and exiled until he agreed to accept reservation life.

By December 19, General Ross had grown impatient with the Indians watching his every move and relocated his volunteers closer to Linkville on the Klamath River. While the move relaxed tensions among the vigilant troops, it also cut off their military rations. "... Linkville merchants discovered a bonanza in selling supplies to the poorly equipped army. It was seen that Indian wars were not all blood, mud, sweat, and tears, but profits as well."⁷ This was one of the factors that would make this war one of the most expensive in the Army's history.

The waiting continued while several howitzers were brought in to help blast the Indians out of their stronghold. The winter weather made moving the heavy guns slow and arduous work. The troops filled the time with recon-

naissance missions, and on January 5, fourteen of the volunteers had a skirmish with about twenty Indians. Apparently no one was hurt on either side, but it livened up a rather dull interval in the war.

At the end of the following week governor Grover issued orders ending the volunteers' duty. They had enlisted for thirty days and had fought no battle, so their services apparently were not needed. Grover was playing politics. The Army could not afford to lose more than 100 men just before a battle and requested that they stay. It was finally

“Between the confusing fog and the rough terrain, it was hard to determine who was friend and who was foe.”

agreed that the volunteers would stay, but now provisioning them was a federal responsibility. At the same time the problem of Oregon volunteer troops fighting several miles inside California was settled. Because they were now serving under federal officers, they could fight in California.

With the details settled and the howitzers arriving, orders were issued on January 12. The Oregon volunteers were to march to a bluff southwest of Tule Lake and help prepare a campground for the rest of the Army. All the troops were to be in position on the sixteenth for the battle the next day.

Capt. Harrison Kelly wrote to his wife in Jacksonville, and she allowed the *Oregon Sentinel* to publish the following description of the battle on January 17:

The troops on the west . . . and Gen. John E. Ross' command, consisting of Company A, commanded by Capt. H. Kelly, and Company B, commanded by Capt. O. C. Applegate, and Lieut. W. H. Miller in charge of a section of mounted howitzers proceeded to take a position on the bluff west of the lava bed, which they reached late on the evening of the 16th. Before day on the morning of the 17th all the troops moved into the lava bed—those on the west flanking to the right and those on the east to the left, so as to encircle the Modoc camp and drive in the pickets.

There was a dense fog in the morning which continued during the day. The troops had not proceeded far into the lava bed when the volunteers were fired on. A few minutes later and the firing was heard upon the whole line, which continued until dark. The extent of country over which the Indians were scattered was full of deep holes and frightful chasms, varying from 10 to 100 feet in depth. No human being could imagine such a place, and no one could believe a truthful statement of the explorer without first seeing for himself. Owing to the dense fog and the unevenness of the rock—for there is no ground there—it was next to impossible to keep the line connected.

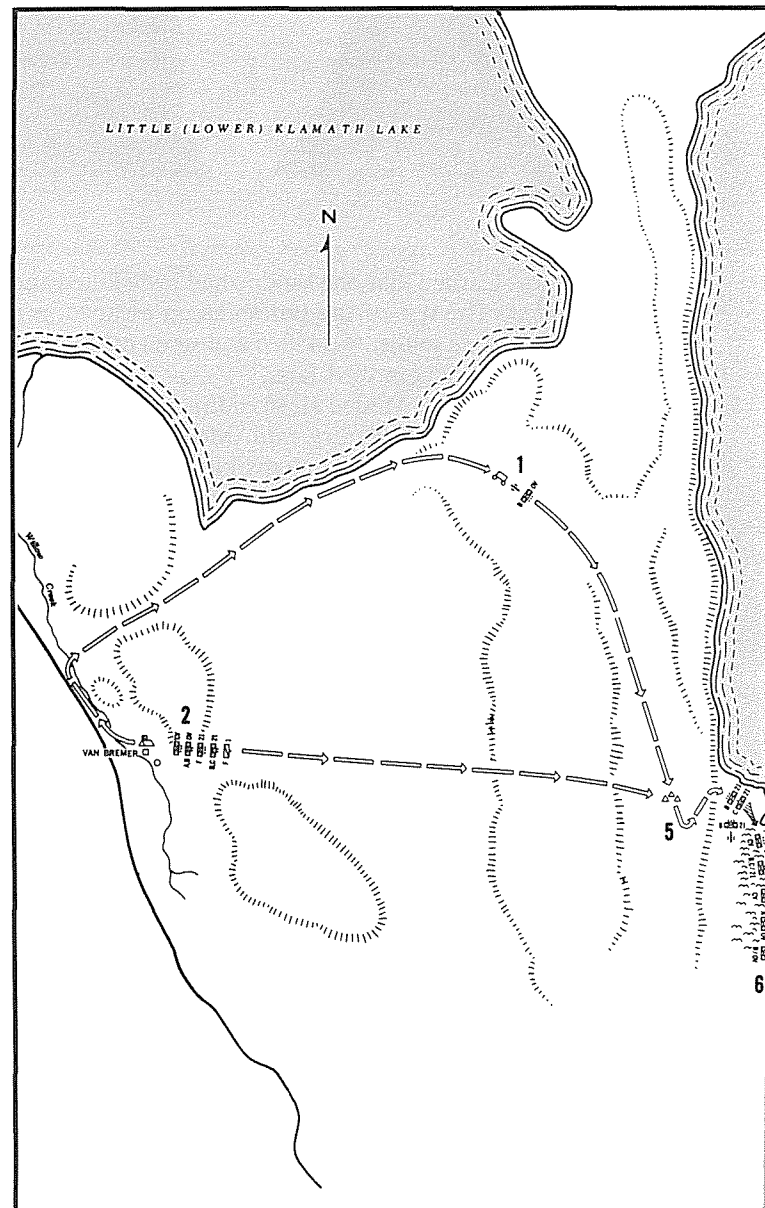
Both the volunteers and regular Army recruits were unprepared for the ruggedness of the terrain and the difficulties it posed. Not only was it impossible to main-

tain planned advances of men and armament, but also rendered difficult the sighting of the enemy and removal of the dead and wounded. Capt. Kelly's letter continues:

The line upon the right was broken early in the morning and Cpts. Perry and Applegate's commands, together with a part of Capt. Kelly's command, became detached from Col. Masson's command, but the line was speedily connected by the daring bravery of Lt. Berry, who went back about a quarter mile and entered our lines, being several times shot at by his own men, who mistook him for an Indian. By this feat he succeeded in reuniting the divided forces. This act was regarded as having been one of the most dangerous performed on the field, as the Lieut. was not only in danger of being lost in the fog and captured by the Indians, but was also in danger of being shot by the troops, who were firing at every moving object.

Lieut. Reams of Company A was wounded in the knee early in the morning but refused to leave the field. He kept his place in the ranks and fought bravely until he was called off after dark, notwithstanding the wound was severely painful and would have honorably excused him from further duty of that day.

The volunteers were cool, and manifested a determination to conquer—never faltering, but prompt to charge

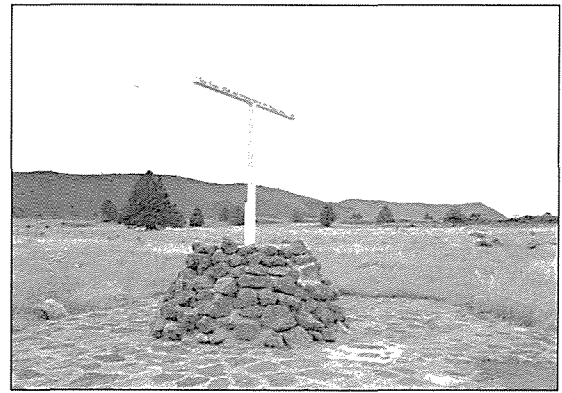


the strongholds of the Indians when ordered. They had many high compliments paid them by the regular officers on that day for their bravery and good behavior. The troops all did well and no fault could be found with either officers or men. No set of men ever fought better together than did the regulars and volunteers, and after the fight was over there was no censuring any one for a fault.

We were all deceived in the character of the ground over which we were compelled to fight and in the number of the enemy. No one who was in the fight pretends to say that the Modoc force numbered less than 200, and some place the number as high as 500.⁸

Despite the figures in Capt. Kelly's letter, there were only about fifty Indians in the fight on the seventeenth. Between the confusing fog and the rough terrain, it was hard to determine who was friend and who was foe. On the Army's side there were 225 regular troops and 104 volunteers. Two of the Oregon volunteers were killed and five others wounded.

The inconclusiveness of the battle on the seventeenth had a bad effect on troop morale. After several days spent recovering, the volunteers began leaving for home. They were officially discharged on January 25 and arrived back



A cross marks the site of General Canby's murder.

The Lava Beds National Monument

The Lava Beds National Monument was created in 1925 and encompasses 72 square miles of desolate, rugged volcanic rock. It is a monument to some of the most recent volcanic activity in the Northwest and to the determination of the Modoc Indians to live on their ancestral lands.

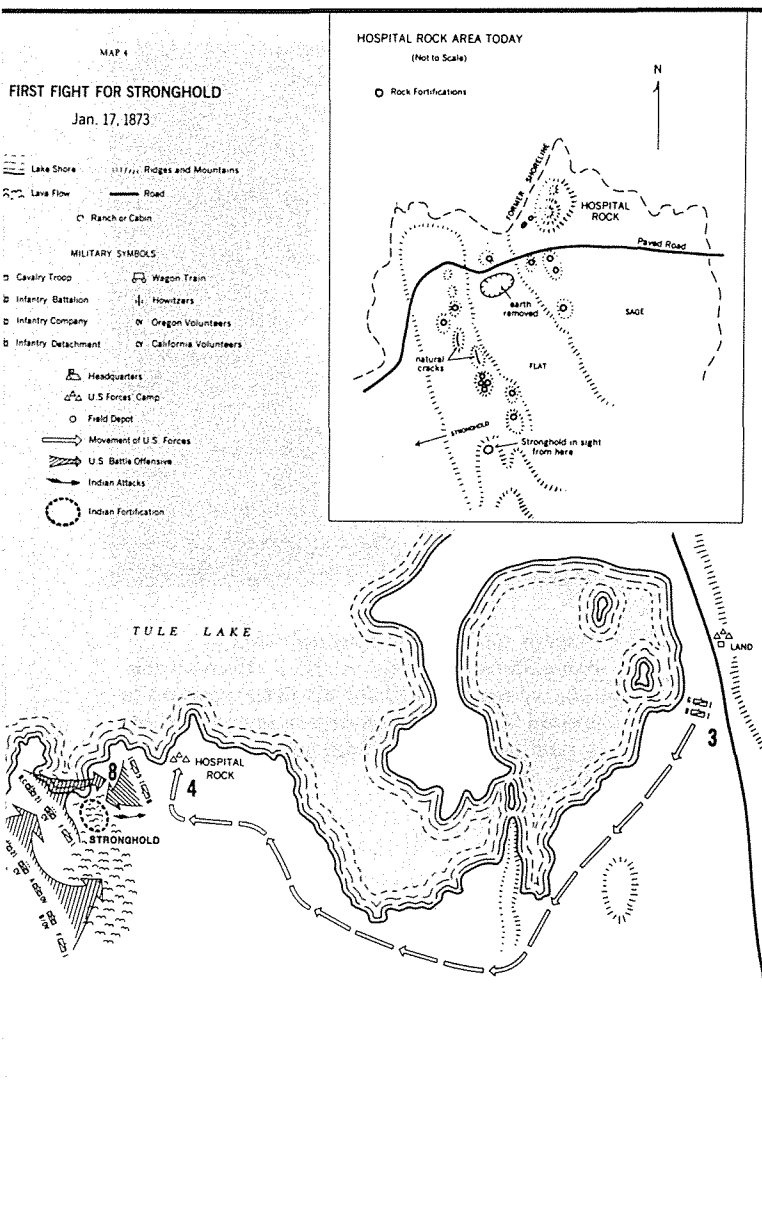
Volcanoes in the area poured forth great volumes of basaltic lava just a few thousand years ago. As the lava flowed over the ground, the surface cooled and hardened while the still-liquid rock underneath flowed on, leaving the caverns and tubes. There are approximately 300 caves within the Monument and dozens of cinder and spatter cones.

When the Modoc Indians escaped into the Lava Beds in 1872, they entered a territory they knew well. The December 21, 1872, *Oregon Sentinel* described the region the Indians were holed up in for its readers:

It is located on the southern shore of Tule Lake, and is situated wholly in California, just south of the Oregon boundary line, containing an area of 10 miles square, all cut up with fissures, deep gulches, and abounding with large caves, the largest being that known as Ben Wright's cave, said to contain fifteen acres of open space under ground, in which there is a good spring, and many openings which a man can crawl through. The main entrance is about the size of a common window. The gulches and crevices range from a few feet to a hundred feet in width and many of them a hundred feet deep. The Indians can travel all through the lava country by trails known only to them and can stand on bluffs over persons 100 feet beneath, where it would require a long journey to go to them. In this lava bed are also small flats, luxuriant with bunch grass.

Once seen the geography of the Lava Beds explains how only about fifty Modoc Indian warriors were able to hold off approximately 1,200 Army soldiers and volunteers.

Today, a system of roads and short trails lead to points of historic and geographic interest within the Lava Beds. Longer trails reach into the wilderness portion of the Monument, where grasslands and sagebrush give way to ponderosa pine forests at higher elevations.



in Jacksonville on the twenty-eighth. The *Oregon Sentinel* described their return:

The boys presented quite a martial appearance as they passed up the street, reminding one very much of the return of a scouting party during the war. Although apparently the worse for wear they still looked hearty and were in the best of spirits. They are certainly entitled to great credit, not only for their promptness in responding to the call for troops, but also for their liberality in remaining so long after their term of enlistment had expired. Their courage and soldierly conduct won for them high compliments, not only from their own officers but from the officers of the regular forces with whom they were associated.⁹

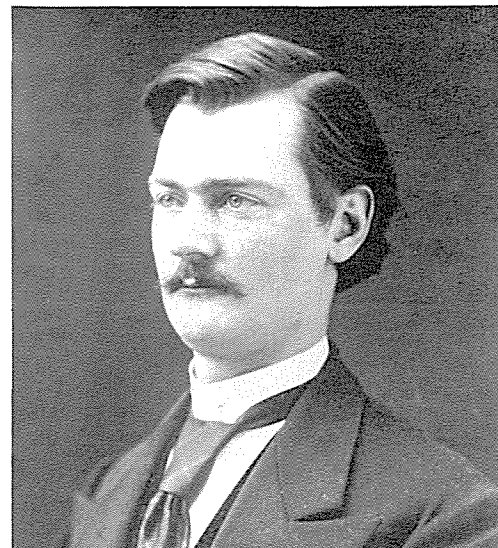
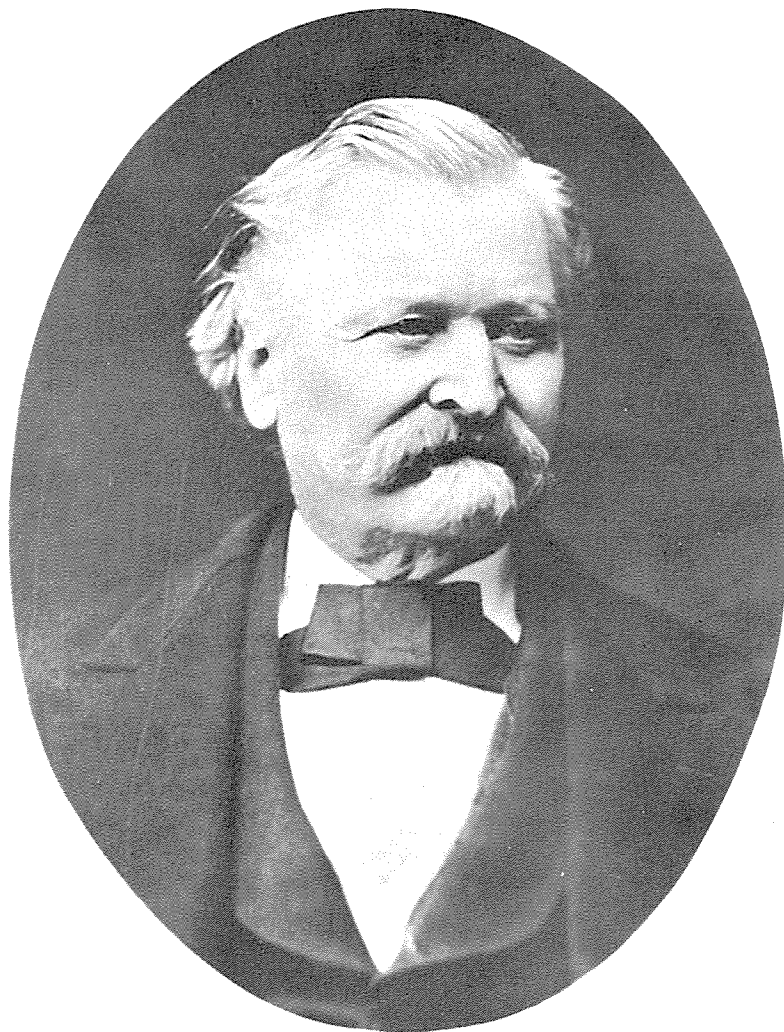
The Modoc Indian War continued with skirmishes off and on over the next several months. On April 11, General Canby and Dr. Thomas were killed during a peace conference with Captain Jack. Everyone was outraged at the murders. Dyer sent a telegram to Washington, D. C., saying "Peace cannot be made with these men." Meacham, recovering from the wounds he also received during the peace conference ambush, wrote, "We believe that complete subjugation by the military is the only method by which to deal with these Indians."¹⁰

The Army renewed the attack on the area called the

Stronghold on April 15. Fierce fighting continued into the next day with little progress. During the night of April 16, the Modocs' water shortage became critical and they decided to leave the Stronghold. While the men directed diversionary fire and verbal challenges at the Army troops, the women and children in the Stronghold escaped through a low depression. It was eleven o'clock the next morning before the escape was discovered. Troops were rallied and sent in pursuit of the fleeing Indians. It was May 10 before the Army won any decisive action against the Modocs. In that fight the Modocs lost one of their best-loved braves, most of their military stores and many horses. The war was becoming very discouraging for the Indians.

Governor Grover was alarmed at the Army's failure to capture the Modocs after they left the Stronghold. He put forward his plan to recall the volunteers that had been discharged in January, stating, "... that the only people who evidently knew how to fight Indians were the settlers, and the Oregonians had allowed about all the time they dared for the Army to defeat the Indians and capture the murderers."¹²

By mid-May, three volunteer militia companies were back in the field: Company C, sixty-five men from Jacksonville and Roseburg led by Joseph H. Hyzer; Company D, forty-



Veteran soldier John England Ross commanded Company A (left). Evan Reams (above) was honored for his determination to remain in the battle despite receiving a knee wound early in the engagement.

SOHS #480 and 11346

three men from Goose Lake country and west to Klamath Lake, under the command of Thomas Mullholland; and Company E, forty-one men from the Willamette Valley, led by George R. Rogers.

The second group of volunteers did not reach the Lava Beds in time for any of the later battles, but did help with the final roundup of the Modocs. The militia, again under the command of General Ross, headquartered in the Langel Valley. They were able to capture a dozen Modocs.

“The Modoc War was ended by the Oregon Volunteers at 12 o’clock last night.”

Hyzer delivered the prisoners to General Ross and wired Grover with characteristic frontier modesty, “The Modoc War was ended by the Oregon Volunteers at 12 o’clock last night.”¹³

The war was over, though maybe not quite the way the militia told the story. The Modocs were taken to Fort Klamath, where six of the leaders were placed on trial July 5. At the conclusion of the trial, the six defendants were sentenced to hang on October 3. In September the sentences of two of the defendants were commuted to life imprisonment at Alcatraz Island. On October 3 at 10:25 a.m. the four condemned Modoc Indians were hanged.

The remaining 153 Modoc captives were taken by wagon to the railroad station at Redding, California. After several stops they were finally settled at Seneca Springs on the Quapaw Agency in Oklahoma.

The members of the volunteer militia returned to their civilian lives, proud of the part they had played in quelling the disturbances and protecting the settlements—and, of course, ending the Modoc War.



ENDNOTES

1. Marjorie O’Harra, *Ashland: The First 130 Years* (Jacksonville: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1981) p. 15.
2. Keith A. Murray, *The Modocs and Their War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 63.
3. Erwin N. Thompson, *Modoc War, Its Military History and Topography* (Sacramento: Argus Books, 1971), p. 7.
4. *Democratic Times*, December 7, 1872, 3:3.
5. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 95.
6. *Democratic Times*, 3:1.
7. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 105.
8. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 105.
9. *Oregon Sentinel*, January 25, 1873, 2:2.
10. *Oregon Sentinel*, February 1, 1873, 3:2.
11. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 202.
12. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 240.
13. *The Modocs and Their War*, p. 273.

Sue Waldron is a Southern Oregon Historical Society research assistant and contributing writer to the Table Rock Sentinel.

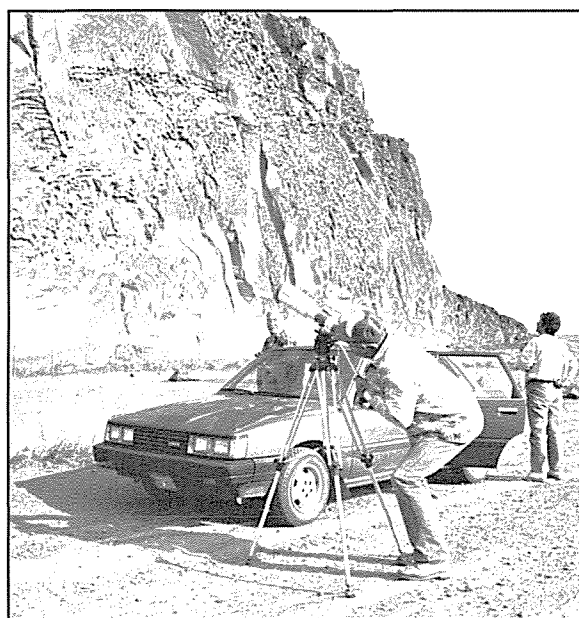


photo by Natalie Brown

The lava beds offer unique glimpses of the geography, history and natural history of the area.

Society to Tour Lava Beds

If this article on the Lava Beds has captured your interest, you are invited to explore the national monument more closely by joining the Society’s tour on Thursday, July 7.

The bus will leave the Jacksonville Museum at 8:00 a.m. for the journey to the site where Modoc leader Captain Jack and his warriors defended their position against the U. S. Army and the Oregon Volunteer Militia. National Park Service interpreters will lead the group on a guided tour through this “stronghold.” Participants also will have an opportunity to explore a couple of the lava tube caves found in the national monument.

Lunch will be on the grounds of the park headquarters. Participants should bring their own brown bag picnic as no food or concessions are available at the Lava Beds National Monument. Furthermore, paths across ancient volcanic surfaces can be very rugged; appropriate clothing should include **very good walking shoes** or hiking boots, long pants, and a hat to shield the sun. Of course, cameras and binoculars are welcome.

The cost of the trip will be \$21 per member, \$36 for non-members. (The extra \$15 equals the cost of an individual membership in the Society. Once paid, it’s good for a year!) Cancellations after July 1 are non-refundable.

For more information, call Susan Cox, membership coordinator, at (503) 899-1847.

Next trip: Crescent City on August 11. The trip will include interpretive walks along the beach and through the Redwoods, lunch at the Grotto in Crescent City, and a visit to Crescent Harbor (Art) Gallery. And keep your calendars open for September 8 and 9 for an overnight trip to the Oregon Caves.



Young Victor Birdseye is dwarfed by a large black oak tree on the Birdseye farm. SOHS #3989

THE BIRDSEYE FAMILY of Jackson County

by Chuck Sweet

Much of the family history related in this story must be credited to the book "Clarissa—Her Family and Her Home" authored by Nita Birdseye and based largely upon the record kept by Clarissa's daughter-in-law (and Nita's mother-in-law), Effie Birdseye. The book is recommended reading for those who desire to know more about this fascinating pioneer family.

Few, if any, of the pioneer dwellings still to be seen in Oregon's Rogue River Valley have as engrossing a story to tell as the 132-year-old Birdseye House. Located on a bend in the Rogue River between today's towns of Gold Hill and Rogue River, members of the fifth and sixth generations of Birdseys presently occupy this house.

Each generation of this family has produced men and women who led interesting lives and left substantial imprints upon the history of southern Oregon. Not only the pioneer men conquered the West; the women also played important roles. And in no instance was this more true than in the story of the Birdseye family.

The history of the Birdseye house and farm has been dominated by two forceful women who were members of the family only by marriage.

The first Birdseye to settle in the Rogue Valley was David Nelson Birdseye. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on July 11, 1827, he was a direct descendant of John Birdseye, who arrived in America from England in 1636. David was educated in Connecticut but was teaching school in Ohio when

he decided to seek his fortune in the California gold fields. His uncle, Charles Birdseye, also had gone west and in 1852 the two men opened a trading post in the mining camp that was to become Jacksonville, Oregon.

At first, Charles ran the store, known as the Birdseye Mercantile Company, while David operated pack trains hauling goods from the Columbia River to their store. Soon after Charles got settled, he sent to Ohio for his wife Mattie (Matt to her family and friends). Matt was unhappy living under the primitive conditions in the mining camp. Consequently, her husband bought a house in Portland, moved Matt up there and hired a maid for her. He visited his wife whenever he could get away. Mrs. Birdseye's residence was also a place where David could stay when he went north to pick up supplies arriving by boat or to do business with incoming wagon trains. It was on one of these trips that David was to meet his future wife, Clarissa Stein "Clara" Fleming.



Clara Birdseye SOHS #278

The Flemings had been a prominent Virginia family since colonial days. Clarissa's father, James Fleming, was a harness maker living in Wellsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), when he began hearing tales about the opportunities to be found on the Pacific Coast. In 1848 he decided to head west with a friend, Gus Hesselman, who had just returned from the Oregon Territory. James leased his shop and bade goodbye to his wife Catherine (Kitty) and their six children. Traveling by sea and across the Isthmus of Panama, he arrived in California just as the gold rush started. He found some gold, not enough to make him rich, but still a nice little nest egg for his family. When he returned home in a couple of years, he discovered that his three youngest children were dead and that Catherine was suffering from severe depression.

During the time that James had been gone, the scourge of scarlet fever had swept through Wellsburg leaving many of the children in town, including the Flemings' youngest, buried in the Methodist Church graveyard. Daughter Clara, her sister Jane and her brother Wells escaped the disease.

By now the two teenage girls were attending a boarding school and both had acquired beaux. Clara's suitor was Wesley Hobbs. When James observed the condition of his wife and the tragedy that had struck the family in his absence, he concluded that they should join a wagon train and emigrate to Oregon. All of the Flemings except Clara acquiesced to his plan, but she had no intention of leaving Wesley. However, when young Hobbs asked James for his daughter's hand, James refused to let Clara marry him and remain in Wellsburg. The young lovers therefore set upon a plan to outwit Mr. Fleming.

Their scheme called for Clarissa to start out with the rest of the family and stay with them until they reached St. Joseph, Missouri. Here, her father would have to take time to acquire a wagon, oxen and supplies for the journey over the Oregon Trail. Wes was to time his departure from Wellsburg so as to arrive at St. Joseph about the time the Fleming's wagon train would be pulling out. At this point the couple expected to elope and catch the next riverboat back to Virginia.

Plans went amiss when the wagon train with the Flemings started over the Oregon Trail before Wes arrived.

The 300-mile journey south started right after the wedding breakfast, with Clara's wedding dress packed in one of her saddlebags.

Another westward-bound family had been forced to abandon their outfit and James immediately purchased the equipment and stock that he needed, making it possible for an earlier departure than anticipated. Clara felt humiliated when her sweetheart didn't show up and throughout the long journey she nursed her anger and resentment. The rest of the family were not very sympathetic to her misfortune and her sole source of comfort on the trip was the family dog, Trimmer. Later Clara learned that Hobbs had reached St. Joseph on the date he said he would, only to find that she had been gone several days.

Arriving at the Dalles on the Columbia River in the fall of 1852, the wagon train was met by traders who were anxious to sell goods to the travelers or to buy any excess items the emigrants were willing or forced to part with. James observed that most of these traders were rough, unkempt and poorly educated, however, one young man, David Birdseye, seemed a cut above the rest. The Flemings stayed in a hotel while waiting for a boat to take them down the river. One evening James invited David to the hotel for dinner and to meet the family. The three Fleming ladies were favorably impressed with the young trader, and even Clara came out of her shell a bit to talk to him. David told them about his work and described the beauties of southern Oregon.

After disposing of their wagon, oxen and surplus possessions, the family proceeded down river to Portland where they took rooms in a residential hotel. The Flemings discovered that Portland was still a frontier town with unpaved streets and no sidewalks. Heavy rains that winter required them to wade through a great deal of mud when they went shopping. Catherine and the girls first had to buy suitable shoes, for they were almost barefoot after walking many miles over the Oregon Trail during the five-month journey. While the ladies shopped, James sought a business in which to invest and soon purchased a residential hotel for upper- and middle-class patrons. He named it the Willamette House.

David soon left for Jacksonville with his pack train. But before leaving, he introduced James to his aunt, Mrs. Charles Birdseye. Shortly thereafter, Catherine and her daughters received an invitation from Mattie to attend a four o'clock tea at the Birdseye home. From then on the three Fleming ladies became a part of the social life of Portland. The two girls were much in demand at parties and it was not long until Jane was engaged to Nat Lane, a young widower with two children. Nat's father was General Joseph Lane, the first governor of the Oregon Territory.

She observed drunken men on the board sidewalks and saw a few women that she suspected were streetwalkers.

In the meantime, David Birdseye called on Clara every time he came north with his pack train and the two managed to spend many hours together while he was in Portland. By now Clara's father was suffering from the malaria he may have contracted while crossing Panama on his first trip west. Wells Fleming was now old enough to help his mother manage the hotel. The Willamette House had a ballroom for dances and parties. Clara seemed to schedule a party whenever David was expected to show up. On one of his trips north in the spring of 1853, David took Clara and a group of their friends on a riverboat excursion up the Willamette River. Enroute the young people were invited to a tea at the Oregon City home of Dr. John McLoughlin, the former chief factor of the Hudsons Bay Company and one of the most prominent figures in the Northwest. The McLoughlins were gracious hosts and left Clara greatly impressed to learn that her escort had such influential friends.

On the return journey down river, David asked Clara to marry him and she readily accepted, although she still hadn't been able to completely forget her first love, Wesley Hobbs. At first her father objected to the marriage because David was a Yankee. But James finally relented and gave his approval. The wedding was held in the Willamette House parlor on June 18, 1853. The 18-year-old bride's wedding gown was a pale green and white checked taffeta, but her going-away outfit was a divided skirt made for rid-

ing side-saddle. They spent their honeymoon traveling horseback to David's 360-acre donation land claim located along the Rogue River. The 300-mile journey south started right after the wedding breakfast, with Clara's wedding dress packed in one of her saddlebags. In a second bag she packed cuttings of plants brought from Wellsburg, including roots of a Virginia creeper and a wild rose. Pack animals carried her other possessions. As the newlyweds rode out of Portland, they joined David's men and the pack train on the outskirts of Portland.

The riders were on the trail for about two weeks and slept on fir boughs laid on the ground every night but one. That particular night, the pack train had reached a small tavern in one of the canyons they crossed. By then Clara was so stiff and sore that David thought she should sleep in a comfortable bed overnight. They spent the night in the tavern's only bed, the one usually occupied by the proprietors. The bed turned out to be far from comfortable and they discovered the next morning that they had shared it with bedbugs. There were to be several more nights sleeping on fir boughs. Clara would remember those nights for many years to come whenever she caught the spicy fragrance of fir trees.

When the pack train finally reached David's crude, one-room log cabin on the Rogue River, he decided that it would be unsafe to stay there because the Indians were once more harrasing white settlers. They were greeted at the cabin by David's all-around helper, Bob Milligan, who ran the farm in his employer's absence. After a meal of venison stew and Indian bread prepared by Bob, the Birdseys rode the twenty miles to Jacksonville. Until cessation of Indian hostilities, they stayed with David's friends, the Overbecks, who had a furnished home on the north edge of town. Clara was now near exhaustion from the arduous journey but had recuperated by the next morning after enjoying her first bath with warm water in two weeks and sleeping between clean sheets in a good bed. One of the first items she unpacked from the saddlebags was her beautiful taffeta wedding gown and she was heartbroken to find it covered with mildew.

That first afternoon in Jacksonville, Sarah Overbeck took Clara on a tour around the little settlement, stopping to visit the Birdseye Mercantile Company trading post. Although frontier Portland had left a lot to be desired by a girl with Clara's upbringing, she had found it far superior to the crude mining town in which she was now residing. She noticed that the sides of all the commercial buildings were constructed of rough boards standing on end and that the relatively few small window openings were covered with oiled paper to let in a little light. Clara even thought that the Birdseye store was smelly and in considerable disarray. To make matters worse, she observed drunken men on the board sidewalks and saw a few women that she suspected were streetwalkers.

After a couple of days Clara informed her husband that she would prefer living at the ranch cabin regardless of the danger from Indian attacks. Besides, she was anxious to have something to do and wanted to plant vegetables for winter. David agreed to this but pointed out that she prob-



David Birdseye SOHS #1788

ably would be lonely during those periods when he was away on his pack trips. Clara wasn't as concerned about the possibility of loneliness as she was about never having learned to cook. In addition, she soon discovered she was pregnant.

One of the terms of the 1853 treaty provided that land north of the Rogue River was to be granted to the Indians for a reservation. This meant that the Birdseyes would lose their acreage across the river. However, David compensated for this loss by acquiring more land on the south side of the river and along Birdseye Creek. The uneasy truce with the Indians lasted almost two years. But in October 1853, David concluded that it would be prudent to build a stockade around his log cabin. About this same time, his brother Fred arrived from Ohio and was helping out at the Birdseye trading post. Fred soon filed for a claim on Birdseye Creek, then offered to supervise construction on the stockade, which became known as Fort Birdseye. Prior to starting work on the stockade, the builders added additional rooms to the cabin to provide sleeping quarters for those seeking shelter at the fort. They also excavated a deep trench around the cabin, with large logs standing on end in the ditch. Once the ditch was backfilled, the logs stuck about fourteen feet above ground level. At intervals, small openings were left as gun ports. During construction, many of the neighbors pitched in to work on the fort. For a brief period during the Indian wars, U. S. Army regulars and volunteers were stationed at Fort Birdseye.

One morning when he informed Clara that he was going to Grants Pass, she asked him to bring home some seed corn for spring planting. David brought back the corn; the only trouble was that three years had elapsed before he returned.

As Clara's time drew near, she had very little fear of giving birth in the wilderness and was comforted by the knowledge that Dr. Miller lived nearby. However, to provide a companion for her and to assume some of the more demanding tasks on the farm, David brought a young woman named Rhoda to live at the fort. Rhoda had come to Jacksonville with her parents and soon proved her worth at the farm, especially after the baby arrived. James Gould Birdseye* was born at the fort on April 15, 1854, reportedly the third white child to be born in Jackson County.

That September, the Indians were observed holding a pow wow across the river. This and other incidents in the Rogue Valley resulted in rising tensions among the settlers. The Savage family, who lived four miles down river, were the first to seek shelter at the fort. Edwin Magruder and his two sons soon followed.** Despite the threat of renewed

*James Gould learned the blacksmith's trade in his youth, mined gold for several years, served six years as Jackson County constable, and was the sheriff four years. He married Kate Ruch in 1882, but she died within five years following a serious cart accident. In 1890 James married Fannie Johnson, a widow. He retired to his farm located nine miles north of Jacksonville in 1892 and died four years later.

**Edwin Magruder owned about 1,000 acres along the Rogue River. Late in 1856, he married Clara Birdseye's widowed mother, Catherine Fleming. The Magruders moved into the house that Edwin had built in Jacksonville. The house still may be seen today just east of the Presbyterian Church on California Street.

Indian troubles, David Birdseye took this occasion to start building a house to replace the crude log cabin. The house was located about 200 feet in front of the fort, and he hoped to have it finished before their second child was born. However, the building was still incompleted when Adelaide arrived on January 28, 1856, the second child born at Fort Birdseye.***

back of the house, an arbor may be seen covered with the grapevine Clara planted about 1860 after one of her visits to Jacksonville. She had ridden her horse Prince into town and when she was ready to return, Prince was reluctant to move. Granville Sears, who operated a winery, observed Mrs. Birdseye's problem and handed her a switch that he cut from one of his Blue Mission grapevines. With the

In 1974, the Birdseye family home was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A year later, Gregg Olson supervised the restoration of the 1856 structure, which can be viewed today along Rogue River Highway.

SOHS #3987



The Birdseye house was built of hand-hewn logs harvested from a grove of pine trees along Birdseye Creek. Sam Steckel was hired to hew the logs and dovetail the timbers, hand-forged nails being too expensive. Once the timbers were ready, neighbors came from miles around for the house-raising. After the walls were up, a daubing mixture of lime, sand, animal hair and milk was tamped into the cracks. James Campbell, who later became a Grants Pass banker, made the doors, window frames and some of the furniture still to be seen in the house today. The downstairs consisted of a kitchen, dining room, living room, master bedroom and children's bedroom. The second floor was divided in half, with two rooms each. One half was reached by a stairway leading from the master bedroom, the other half by stairs from the living room. Children, hired hands or travelers slept upstairs.

Throughout the years, Clara continued to make improvements on the house and grounds. One of her first acts was to set out the plants she had brought from Virginia. The wild rose bushes in time became more of a nuisance than a blessing when the bushes began springing up in the farmers' pastures and grain fields. Even today, the flat-stone path leading from Highway 99 to the front porch passes through the flower beds and shrubs that she planted. In

switch she had no further trouble getting the horse to return home. The following day she stuck the grape cutting in the ground and that vine is still growing and producing grapes more than 125 years later.

A week before Christmas, 1861, the Birdseyes' second daughter was born. Named for David's cousin Theodora, she was called Dode by the family. It was about this same period that David became involved in promoting a scheme for recovering gold from the bottom of the river. The proposal called for construction of a diversion dam in the Rogue River. Then, when the stream had been diverted, the promoters would collect any gold they found in the stream bed. David had no trouble getting financial backers for the project, and work began in the spring. The dam was nearly completed by the fall when disaster struck. Early fall rains set in that year, and two weeks before the water was to be diverted, the river rose. Within a few days the dam and the investors' dreams were washed away. Some investors had mortgaged their homes and possessions hoping to become rich. David had to sell his store and packing business and would never recover from this financial setback, although in time he was able to pay back the investors.

David's drinking problem also had become very apparent. One morning when he informed Clara that he was going to Grants Pass, she asked him to bring home some seed corn for spring planting. David brought back the corn; the only trouble was that three years had elapsed before he returned. His explanation to the family was that he had gone to Montana after hearing of some

***Adelaide Birdseye and William Mason Colvig were married in front of the fireplace at the Birdseye house on June 18, 1879. William (later called Judge Colvig) managed David and Clara's farm for a few years after the wedding. The Colvig's first two children were born on the farm. (The story of the Colvig family appeared in the September 1986 *Table Rock Sentinel*.)

silver strikes in that state. During her errant husband's long absence, Clara continued to manage the farm with some help from young James. She had a bay window built on the east side of the house and added some small buildings to shelter the baby pigs and lambs on the farm. She even found the time to go into Jacksonville and participate in social or political affairs.

In 1866, on Adelaide's tenth birthday, her father bought her a lovely rosewood piano. The piano had been ordered from Chickering in Boston (along with another one for Rose Haymond who lived at Rock Point) by Major Glenn, an army officer stationed in Jackson County. The pianos were shipped around Cape Horn, and David Birdseye had contracted to haul them from Crescent City to their destinations. Before the shipment arrived, the major was transferred to San Francisco and David bought his piano. The beautiful instrument has gone through five generations of Birdseyes with scarcely a scratch and still occupies a prominent place in the living room of the old log house.

Clara's fourth child was born January 30, 1872. She named him Frederick Fleming Birdseye, calling him Fred after David's brother, who she had always liked and admired as a true friend. Nine years later when she was forty-six, she gave birth to her last child: Victor Wesley Birdseye, born May 1, 1881. Remembering her first love, Clara had chosen this name and called him "Wes," probably to annoy her husband. David would always refer to the boy as "Jack." Young Fred was never a robust child, but Victor Wesley was a healthy, active boy and frequently up to some mischief. The two brothers had one thing in common, however, their love of music. both played the violin and Fred showed real talent as a musician. He enjoyed fiddling at square dances, whereas Wes preferred either dancing or calling the dances.

With each passing year, David's drinking problem became worse. Back in 1853, when Clara began dating him, his Aunt Mattie had said to her, "David is a charmer and knows very well what he's about. I just wonder if he'll ever love anyone more than he does his brandy." At the time Clara couldn't believe that her future husband was much of a drinker, and it was a number of years before she realized the truth of Mattie's observation. As their son Fred's health deteriorated, David no longer confined his drinking to this visits to Jacksonville's Bella Union saloon and was seldom sober at home. Matters got so bad that Clara finally issued an ultimatum to him: either quit drinking or get out. The result was that he took her best farmhand and moved across the creek to live in the house that he had built for Bill and Addie Colvig back in 1879. Very little is known today about David Nelson Birdseye's last years except that he eventually returned home because of illness and died on February 11, 1898. The following year his son Fred died at age twenty-seven.

The Birdseyes' youngest son, Victor Wesley, was seventeen at the time of his father's death and by then was doing a large share of the farming. However, his mother was aware that Wes, like his father, couldn't stay away from the bottle at times. Probably because of this, nothing he did seemed to please his mother and they quarreled frequently. As a result, Wes would occasionally leave home and get jobs in the mines or driving the stage between Grants Pass

and Crescent City. Then, one night at the Woodville Saturday dance, he met a pretty and vivacious young lady and discovered that he no longer had a desire to be very far from home. The girl was Effie Cameron and she was destined to play a significant role in the history of the Birdseye family.



The second and final part of "The Birdseye Family of Jackson County" will continue in the July 1988 issue of the Table Rock Sentinel.



courtesy of Nita Birdseye

Over a hundred years later, Clara's grape switch has grown into an enormous grapevine.

SOURCE MATERIAL

Birdseye, Effie and Nita. *Clarissa—A Story of the Birdseye House*. Rogue River: Springs Printery, Inc.

Burkhard, Janice. *Life of Clara Birdseye*, 1959. Southern Oregon Historical Society manuscript files.

Linn, Fletcher. *Reminiscences*. Southern Oregon Historical Society manuscript files.

O'Harra, Marjorie. *Southern Oregon: Short Trips into History*. Jacksonville: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1985.

Oregonian. April 4, 1948.

Southern Oregon Historical Society biographical files on the Birdseye and Overbeck families.

Table Rock Sentinel. Southern Oregon Historical Society, 8:9.

Chuck Sweet is a Medford resident who has found numerous outlets for his interest in history. In addition to writing articles for the Table Rock Sentinel, he has participated as researcher and greeter for the Society's living history program and currently volunteers as docent in the Jacksonville Museum.

Society Update

Society Recognizes Preservation Projects

Each year during National Historic Preservation Week, the Society gives special recognition to specific projects, persons, or organizations that promote preservation in Jackson County.

Restorations of structures or districts, educational events or projects that foster public understanding of preservation, and individuals or organizations who have worked to promote preservation issues are eligible for the Society's Historic Preservation Awards.

This year the Society has chosen three projects for special recognition:

The community of Eagle Point (representing the support and assistance of all contributors to the project) for the preservation and adaptive use of the Antelope Covered Bridge. This historically significant Jackson County landmark was relocated and restored in 1987 as a pedestrian walkway over Little Butte Creek in Eagle Point.

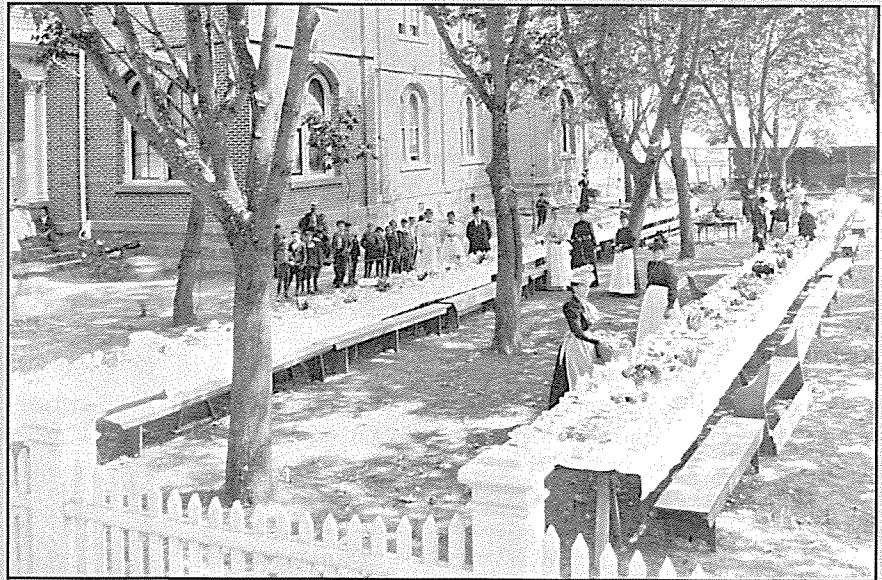
The First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville for the renovation of the church's exterior and seeking professional expertise for maintaining consistent historic preservation standards with regard to the carpentry work and stained glass windows. The church was built in 1881.

Ms. Pam Burkholder and Mr. Gary Turner, owners of a c.1918 Craftsman-style bungalow at 108 2nd Street in Ashland, for their contribution to maintaining the architectural integrity of Ashland's Railroad District and insuring the sensitive balance between the residential and commercial areas of the District.

The recipients will receive the certificates at the Southern Oregon Historical Society's annual meeting on Saturday, June 25, on the grounds of the Jacksonville Museum.

Quilters Schedule Show

The Jacksonville Museum Quilters will present their latest creative works at the "Tenth Annual Quilt Show" in the ballroom of the U. S. Hotel in downtown Jacksonville. Over 40



Society Members to Meet

Re-creating the old-fashioned pioneer picnics once held on the lawn of the old Jackson County Courthouse, the Society's annual meeting is certain to be a special treat this year. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, June 25 when we will gather under the shade trees on the lawn of the Jacksonville Museum for our informal get-together.

The half hour between 6:00-6:30 p.m. is reserved for a "social gathering," a time to meet or reacquaint ourselves with each other while enjoying refreshments, the sounds of Dixieland jazz performed by Lyle Ames' "Dixie Dudes" (members of the Southern Oregon Traditional Jazz Society), and possibly an old-

fashioned game of croquet or two!

Dinner, consisting of elegant boxed lunches from Soup to Nuts Catering in Ashland, will begin at 6:30. Three main courses are offered this year: real southern-fried chicken, fresh Oregon fruit and cheese plate, and ham and cheese puff pastry tart. Each meal includes new potato salad with peas, fresh Applegate asparagus with honey lime mayo, Oregon strawberry shortcake, and beverage.

Following dinner, the Society will conduct its annual business meeting. Oregon Secretary of State Barbara Roberts will be our guest speaker.

This event is sure to be a very special evening for our members. We hope to see you all there!

hand-quilted pieces will be displayed July 16-24, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

This year each member of the group will have on display an example of her work. These small wall hangings, many with curved pieced or applique surfaces, illustrate the skills of each creator. Curved surfaces are the most difficult to handle but are

quite attractive when combined with straight line stitching. The group's announcement of the show includes a quote by Mae West that reflects the quilters' interest in this particular style: "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points, but a curve is the most beautiful."

A \$1.00 admission is charged at the door with seniors admitted free.

Dear Members:

Membership in the Southern Oregon Historical Society has always played an important role in the organization's ability to fulfill its mission statement. However, in the Society's entire forty-two-year history, the size of the membership has remained relatively small with membership dues playing a significantly small role in the financial viability of the organization.

To date, the approximate 1,720 Society memberships bring in about \$26,000 per year. This averages out to approximately \$15 per membership per year. On the other hand, the cost of providing that membership, including salaries, supplies, and services, comes to approximately \$50 per membership per year, or an average net loss of \$35 per membership annually to the Society. Obviously, this cannot continue. This cost is based on figures derived after the change in the format and appearance of the *Table Rock Sentinel*. It is important to note that with these changes the costs of producing the *Sentinel* have actually gone down due to a streamlining of operations and production costs. However, the simple fact of the matter is that the Society is losing money on its membership program. As part of the effort to deal with this problem, the Society's Development Committee has recommended to the Board of Trustees that the *Table Rock Sentinel* be changed to a bimonthly magazine to be supplemented by, and to alternate with, a bimonthly newsletter.

The Long Range Plan and the upcoming Society budget call for major expansion in the membership base for the organization. At the same time, the Society must come up with a solution to the perplexing problem of the membership program costing far more than it is financially helping the organization. We feel it is feasible to restructure the membership program to continue to provide significant benefits to the membership while reducing the cost of the membership program to an average of approximately \$20 per membership.

In order for the Society rightfully to expect a major increase in the size of its membership, and to improve that source of financial support, the Society must provide membership opportunities sufficient to attract interested persons to all levels of categories. I am sure you are aware that at present all membership categories receive the same benefits regardless of the amount paid annually in membership dues. Consequently there is no incentive to enroll in a higher membership category.

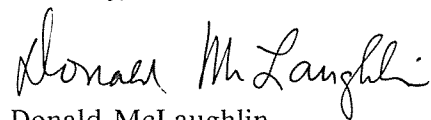
The Society's Development Committee has been working on the membership question for the past several months in an attempt to come up with a recommendation which will increase the attractiveness of membership in the Society and provide additional benefits and incentives for existing members to enroll in a higher membership category. Using membership categories of several local nonprofit organizations such as the Britt Festivals, Schneider Museum of Art, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and other historical societies in Oregon and throughout the region, the Development Committee has recommended a restructuring of the membership program. This proposal is affordable and manageable for the Society. It should also be more appealing to the existing membership as well as to members who will be recruited in the future.

This proposal was recommended to the Board of Trustees at the May 24 board meeting. A change in membership categories would require an amendment of the Bylaws. The Board has directed that the membership be notified and be requested to comment on the change in categories and also on proposed benefits and dues prior to action being taken at the July 1988 meeting.

The Board acknowledges that the proposed changes are significant. However, when the Society's reorganization took place about two years ago, it was recognized that changing times and demands required realistic policies and administration. We believe the proposed changes reflect that recognition.

The Board of Trustees urges you to give careful consideration to the proposal. In order to guarantee proper consideration of all responses I ask that you provide comments **in writing** to the Development Committee no later than July 1, 1988. The committee will carefully review all comments and suggestions before the matter is taken up at the July board meeting.

Sincerely,



Donald McLaughlin
Society President

Current Membership Program

Category & Dues

Jr. Historian (18 & under)	\$ 8
Senior (65 & over)	12
Individual	15
Family	20
Contributor	30
Business	50
Donor	75
Sponsor	100
Benefactor	250
Grantor	500
Lifetime	5,000

Benefits (available to all categories)

- Free subscription to the *Table Rock Sentinel*
- Right to vote for Society trustees (except Jr. Historian category)
- Right to attend the annual meeting
- 20% discount on Oregon Historical Society membership
- 15% discount in Society gift shops
- Invitations to Society events
- Free or reduced admission to Society events
- Participation in Society bus tours
- Free annual calendar
- 15% discount on Society publications

The Society's Development Committee has been examining the high cost of the current membership program. They have proposed to the Board of Trustees a new structure. For additional information, see the letter from Society President Donald McLaughlin on the preceding page.

Benefit	Jr. Historian (15 & under) \$5
Jr. Historian badge	●
Jr. Historian newsletter	●
Special Jr. Historian events	●
Bimonthly <i>Sentinel</i>	
Bimonthly newsletter	
Vote for Society trustees	
Attend annual meeting	
20% discount on Oregon Historical Society membership	
15% discount in Society gift shops	
Invitations to special events	
Reduced admission to special events & activities	
Discounts on Society bus tours	
15% discount on annual calendar	
15% discount on Society publications	
15% disc. on reprints of historic photographs from Society collections	
15% discount on research assistance in Research Library	
Free historic photograph reprint	
Special members-only workshops	
Free annual calendar	
25% discount in Society gift shops	
25% disc. on reprints of historic photographs from Society collections	
Public recognition in the History Center	
Framed membership certificate	
"Behind the scenes" tour	
Free admission to all Society events	
Invitation to exclusive special events	
Invitation to President's Dinner	
One free U. S. Hotel meeting room rental	
Up to five free <i>Sentinel</i> subscriptions	
One free Society bus trip for two people	

PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Senior, Single (65 & over) \$20	Senior, Double (65 & over) \$25	Active \$30 to \$49	Patron's Club \$50 to \$99	Applegate Club \$100 to \$249	Siskiyou Club \$100 to \$249	Peter Britt Club \$500 to \$999	President's Club \$1000 & over	Nonprofit \$50	Business Contributor \$100 to \$499	Business Benefactor \$500 & over
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
•	•	•	•					•	•	
•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	
			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
				•	•	•	•			•
				•	•	•	•			•
				•	•	•	•			•
					•	•	•			•
					•	•	•	•	•	•
					•	•	•		•	•
					•	•	•			•
					•	•	•			•
						•	•			•
						•	•			•
							•			•
							•			•
										•
							•			

Weekends at The Willows

The Hanley Farm, known traditionally as The Willows, will open again to the public this summer from 1-4 p.m. on July 16-17 and August 20-21.

Named for the weeping willow growing near the springhouse, The Willows represents over one hundred years of farming tradition in the Rogue Valley, spanning three generations of the Hanley family.

In 1857 Michael and Martha Hanley purchased the property from the original donation land claim owners. They lived in a log house until the 1870s when they built their own Classic Revival home. This house still stands today with some of the origi-

nal wall treatments and furniture on display.

By 1890 both Michael and Martha had died, leaving the main portion of the farm to their daughter, Alice. When she died in 1940, her niece, Claire, who had grown up at The Willows, inherited the farm. Along with her sisters, Mary and Martha, Claire Hanley managed the farm operations. In 1982 the last surviving sister, Mary, generously gave The Willows to the Society to be preserved for the public's enjoyment and education.

Tours of the home are available for \$1.00 per person age 13 and over, 50 cents for Society members **with their membership cards** and children 6-12. Tickets may be purchased at the main

house on the farm property.

As there is no parking at The Willows, the Society will provide shuttle bus transportation to the farm between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. For August 20-21, visitors should park and meet the bus near Courthouse Square in Jacksonville.

Sunday, July 17 is "Farm Day" at The Willows. Visitors to the historic farm may view or participate in demonstrations of traditional farm equipment and activities, including butter churning, field plowing, blacksmithing, and much more! On that day and Saturday, July 16, busses will depart from the Britt parking lot, corner of D and Oregon Streets, Jacksonville.

Children's Heritage Fair Fun

The Society's third annual Children's Heritage Fair, held May 3-7 on the grounds of the Jacksonville and Children's Museums, provided area fourth graders with many opportunities to discover what life was like for the early settlers of the Rogue Valley. Over 857 students (accompanied by 47 adults) took part in this year's fair. During the following weeks, thank you letters from the participants flooded the mailbox of Coordinator of Children's Programming, Stacey Williams. In their own words, here is a sample of the students' comments:

I really like the panning for gold. I loved it. It was really fun. If you want to no are teacher made us do this. I would like to come back.

Jason McNair
Little Butte Intermediate
Eagle Point, Oregon

Thank you for the demonstration in "Pioneer Chores." I enjoyed it a lot. Churning in the Children's Heritage Fair was fun but doing it as a regular chore would be awful! I have always wanted to have lived in the pioneer days but I just want to live there 2 weeks now. Making yarn is along process. I'll just buy it, thank you.

Andrea Castaneda
Prospect Elementary
Prospect, Oregon

Thank you for having us. Thank you Southern Oregon Historical Society to. I had a fun time and hope we can go again some day. My favorite part was the dance, and making the dolls. I like getting interviewed the most. I hope that you had fun to with us.

Vicki D.
Applegate School
Applegate, Oregon

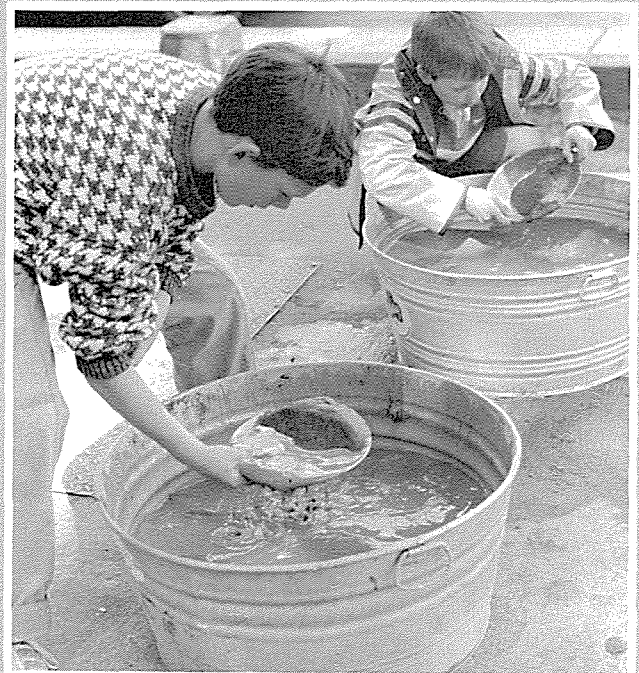


photo by Natalie Brown

Fourth graders from throughout the county learned the art of panning for gold at the Children's Heritage Fair.

Thank you for letting me come to your museum. I liked the childrens museum alot. My favorite parts were the kitchen, the operator booth, and the train. I also liked the furniture and things on display. The washing clothes, churning butter, grinding coffe grounds and making yarn was neet. But we could not have done it without the docent.

Shauna Bryan
Evans Valley School
Rogue Valley, Oregon

Regional Digest

Tour to Highlight Ashland Homes

The Ashland Heritage Committee is sponsoring a self-guided tour of five historic Ashland homes, a sculptor's studio, and an antique doll collection on Saturday, June 25.

From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., sculptor Jeffrey Bernard will open his studio at 139½ Granite Street. Bernard will be working on the restoration of the marble statue of Abraham Lincoln soon to return to Lithia Park.

Between 1-4 p.m., early Ashland homes at 117 N. Main St., 125 N. Main St., 131 N. Main St., 94 Bush St., and the early 20th century Methodist Church parsonage at 165 N. Main St. will be open to the public for viewing. The antique doll collection of Blanche Chick may be seen while visiting 117 N. Main.

The cost of the tour is \$3 per person, \$2 for Southern Oregon Historical Society members with their

membership cards. Children under 12 may participate for free with an accompanying adult. Proceeds will be used to help finance the Ashland Historical Commission's project to restore the Lincoln statue and Ashland Heritage Committee activities.

Tickets are available for advance purchase between June 15-25 at the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum, City Farmhouse, Hanson Howard Galleries, and Patricia Sprague Real Estate office, all in Ashland.

Local Histories Published

The history of the upper Rogue River region is the focus of two new publications: *Unforgettable Pioneers* by Barbara Hegne and *Gold Hill and Its Neighbors Along the River* by Linda Genaw.

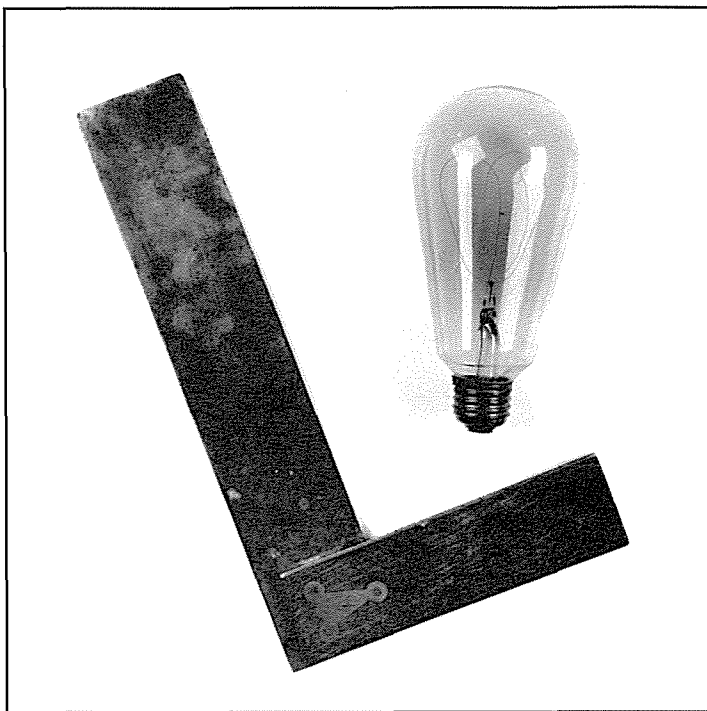
A Butte Falls native (now living in Nevada) Hegne concentrates on the

early settlement of the Eagle Point, Butte Falls, and Shady Cove-Trail areas. Her book weaves together the stories of the rugged pioneers, the problems encountered in a new land as well as the lighter side of pioneer life.

In her book, Genaw, currently president of the Gold Hill Historical Society, focuses more specifically on the city of Gold Hill and its environs: Dardanelles, Foothills Creek, Galls Creek, Sardine Creek, Rock Point, Sams Valley, and others. Filled with facts long forgotten such as how certain areas were named and the cost of peddler, saloon, or photographer licenses, the book traces the development of Gold Hill from its mining days through much of the twentieth century.

Unforgettable Pioneers costs \$10; *Gold Hill and Its Neighbors Along the River*, \$9.95. Both are available through Genaw at 7477 Maple Lane, Central Point, Oregon 97502.

From the Collections



This summer at the Beekman House, visitors may meet and chat with handyman John Renault. A Civil War veteran, Renault may be found "fixing" something in or around the house. The observant guest even may catch a glimpse of an early light bulb and a carpenter's square in John's tool kit.

Electricity came to Jacksonville in 1905. In a letter dated March 24, 1906, to her sister Florence, Mrs. Beekman writes, "We are all torn up, carpets up, and general disorder prevails. We have had the house wired for electric lights. Have sent for the fixtures, and hope to get them completed in two weeks . . . Jacksonville is coming to the front. All the business houses are lighted and many dwellings. Electric cars are talked of between here and Medford . . ." This light bulb is an original Beekman House object. Known as a carbon-loop filament Edison bulb, it was made before 1909.

The carpenter's square dates to the same period or earlier. Martin Purkeypile, a Civil War veteran who came West after the war, probably used it while working as a bridge carpenter for the railroad. His son, F. C. Purkeypile, donated the item to the Society in 1963.

Calendar of Events

June 25 **Southern Oregon Historical Society Annual Meeting** See "Society Update" inside for details.

June 27 **A Step In Time:** In cooperation with the Ashland Public Library, the Society will sponsor a children's program featuring African drummer and dancer Chata Addy and storyteller J. B. Phillips on the lawn of the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum. From 2-3 p.m. Free.

June 28 **The Southern Oregon Historical Society Board of Trustees** will hold its monthly meeting in the conference room of Jackson Education Service District building, 101 N. Grape, Medford, at 6:30 p.m. Members and the general public are invited.

June 30 **Can You See What I See!!!:** Kids, ages 7-12, are invited to join us for a program featuring a look at a variety of old-fashioned optical toys: stereoscopes, kaleidoscopes, and a magic mirror. Participants will learn the techniques of casting "hand shadows" on the wall and create their own magical kaleidoscope to take home with them. From 1-4 p.m. at the Children's Museum in Jacksonville. Free.

July 17 **Farm Day at The Willows:** A popular annual event, join us at the historic Hanley Farm for an afternoon sure to please young and old alike. See "Society Update" inside for more information.

July 7 **Workin' On the Railroad:** At this workshop, children, ages 7-12, can become "railroad engineers" as they construct a small scale model of the O & C Railroad out of boxes and other materials. Participants also will sing railroad songs and create a "human train" using such props as a conductor's cap, luggage, whistles, and lots of imagination! From 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Children's Museum. A \$2 fee per child will cover costs.

Storytime: In cooperation with the Ashland Public Library, the Society will present a children's program with storyteller Carolyn Myers on the grounds of the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum. 2:00 p.m. Free.

July 10 **Who Done It? Tour:** Ashland author Kay Atwood will lead a walking tour of the area where Dr. David Sisson was murdered a century ago. This unsolved mystery is the focus of Atwood's recent book, *Mill Creek Journal*. Limited to 15; reservations required. Call the Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum at (503) 488-1341. Free.

July 16-24 **Tenth Annual Quilt Show:** The Jacksonville Museum Quilters will display over 40 handmade quilts in the ballroom of the U. S. Hotel in downtown Jacksonville. See "Society Update" inside for details.



P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530-0480

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

Non-Profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Permit No. 13 Jacksonville, OR
