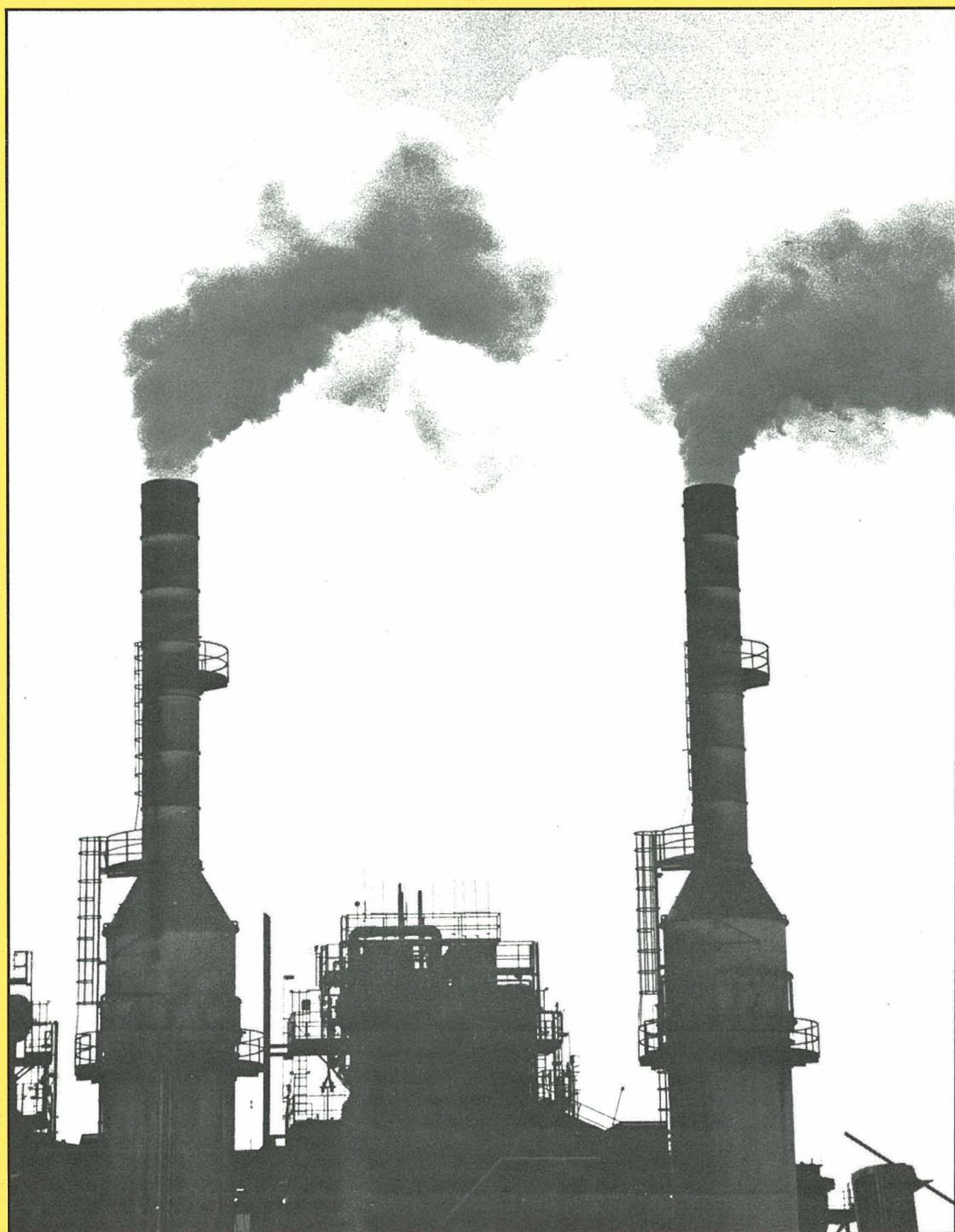


TABLE ROCK

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# SENTINEL

AUGUST 1988



The  
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Southern  
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Historical  
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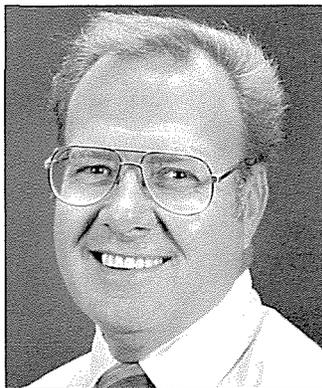
# Commentary

Several long-time county residents as well as staff members have labeled 1988-1989 as a year of new beginnings. The excitement of opening a new History Center and the implementation and continued work on our long-range plan are, I'm sure, major factors for this positive feeling.

The efforts of area communities and the Board of Trustees working together have produced many accomplishments this past year. It is my hope that we use these accomplishments as stepping stones and continue to improve and preserve the historical elements of our area for future generations.

It is important to remember that the Board of Trustees is made up of very dedicated people who give a great deal of their time and energy to the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Without this dedication the Society would falter. It has been a wonderful experience working with the Board and staff. As the new president, I am looking forward to a year in which the Society can implement its long range plan and bring its goals to fruition.

An organization is only as strong as its membership, and one of our primary goals is to expand ours. Every effort will be made to improve communications and bring the Society into the communities we serve. Indeed, 1988-1989 is a year of new beginnings and one I hope will be the start of a new era in which the Society will be able to better serve the residents of Jackson County.



A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Carl R. Shaff".

Dr. Carl Shaff  
President, Southern Oregon  
Historical Society Board of Trustees



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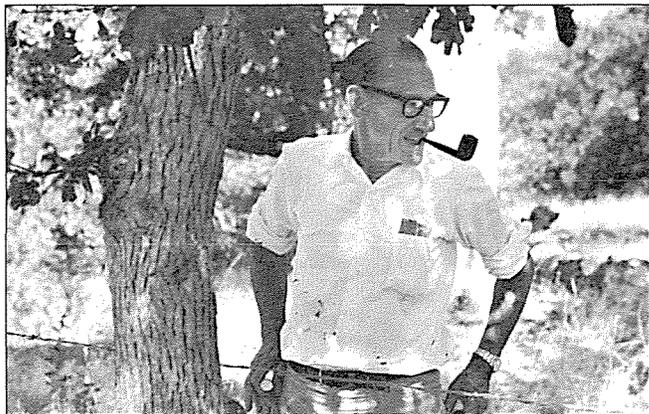
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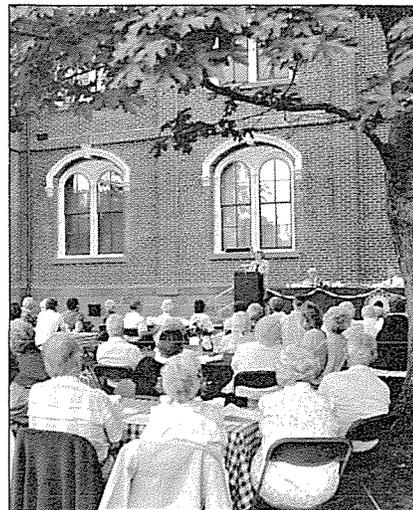
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**Features**

**4 City of Industry, City of Dreams** *by Roger Love*

Utilizing resources invested by the government in the former Army camp, entrepreneur Glenn Jackson's vision of an industrial and residential community in the Agate Desert came to fruition as White City. Today industry thrives, while the residential community seeks an identity.

**14 Remembering History, Preserving History, Making History** *by Barbara Roberts*

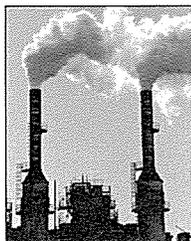
Fourth generation Oregonian and Secretary of State Barbara Roberts addressed the membership of Southern Oregon Historical Society at its recent annual meeting. A transcript of her speech is offered in this issue.

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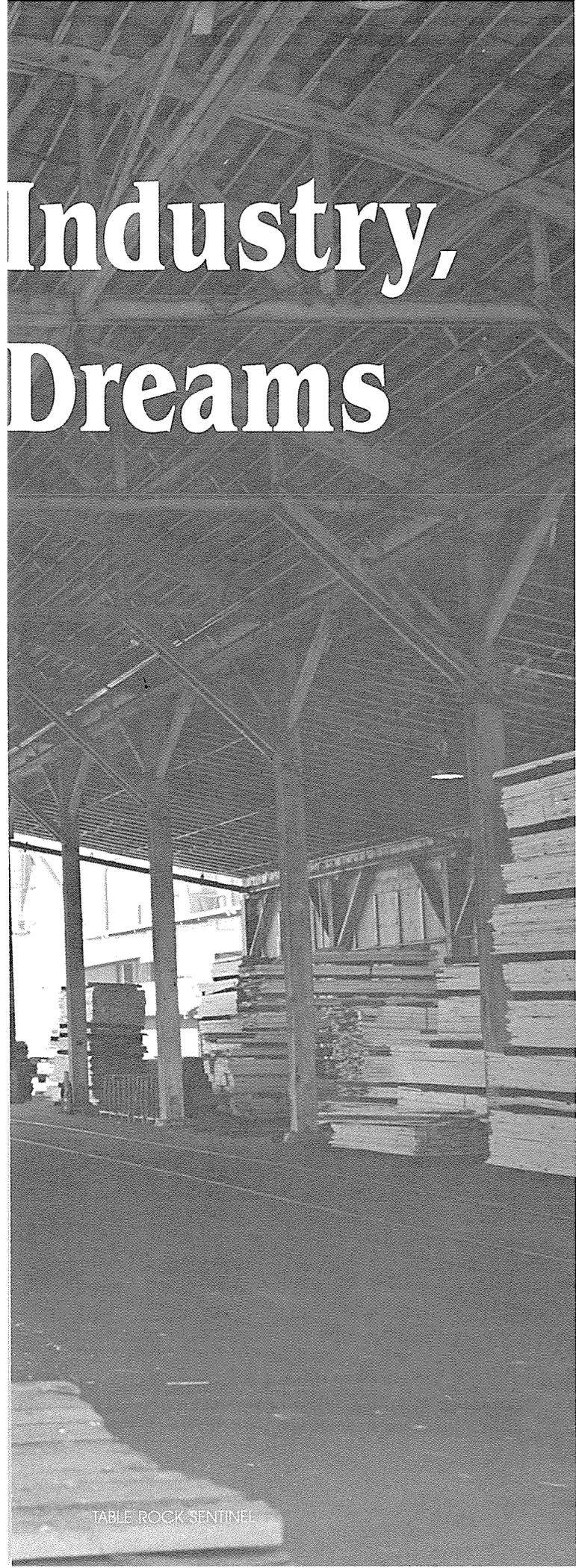
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**cover:** Formerly Camp White, White City now supports a wide variety of industry.  
Photo by Roger Love.

# City of City of



# Industry, Dreams

Boise Cascade's White City operation combines lumber, veneer and plywood mills. In 1976 Boise Cascade purchased the former Olson-Lawyer Lumber Company site, which had moved to White City from Prospect following the second world war.

Photo by Natalie Brown

*by Roger Love*

**Y**ou won't find White City on some road maps, but it's there. Seven miles north of Medford, out on an arid plain, Crater Lake Highway splits White City in half. To the west, you'll find a shopping center, lumber mills, smoke stacks, log trucks and enormous metal buildings throbbing with machinery. To the east, across a sun-browned field, where one might expect more mills, you notice instead a cluster of homes, as if a subdivision from some nearby town had been picked up and dropped in the middle of a desert. Some of the houses boast well-tended gardens and two-car garages; others offer the sight of dried-out lawns and peeling paint. Mobile home parks checker the fringes of the village. And near the highway, gas stations, a pizza parlor, and convenience markets share the flat landscape with a church or two.

While the tourist dollar help lend permanence to many Rogue Valley communities, White City seems to remain a place most people pass through on their way to somewhere else, perhaps to Crater Lake or to their homes in Eagle Point or Prospect. To others, White City is where they go to work. But to more than 5,000 people, White City is home.

Yet why would anyone choose to live in the middle of a desert? What possible reason could there be to locate a community in a spot where, until the 1940s, a lone rancher's cabin and some outbuildings cast the only shadows. And with all the surrounding open space available, why is White City just across the highway from the hustle and bustle of an industrial center?

White City sits in the middle of what we call the Agate Desert, which spans the area between Antelope Creek and Whetstone Creek and pinches off at the foot of Lower Table Rock at the western edge of the Rogue Valley. It is not a true desert, but it certainly takes on that appearance. The shallow, rocky soil and the lack of any natural water source supports little more than scrubby trees, hardy grasses, wildflowers and thistles that quickly turn brown once the spring rains cease.

Even before white settlers moved in, Indians living in the Rogue Valley apparently had little use for the Agate Desert. Even though much of southern Oregon is dry during the summer, the scattered bands of Takelma Indians had no problem finding lush spots near the Rogue River and its many tributaries. The Takelma were a hunting and gathering people, depending on small and large game, fish, berries, acorns and roots, little of which was found on the Agate Desert.<sup>1</sup>

White trappers entering the valley as early as 1827 noted the existence of Indians near the Agate Desert, but it was not until 1852, after gold was discovered in the Rogue Valley, that violent skirmishes broke out around the Table Rocks. The Indians, believing they were being pushed off of their lands, became more and more hostile—to the point where the U.S. Army felt compelled to build Fort Lane on a knoll facing the Table Rocks across the river. And although the Table Rock Treaty was signed in 1853, the violence continued to cost both white and Indian lives until 1856, when the remaining Rogue Indians were removed to a reservation in Siletz.<sup>2</sup>

But even with more and more white settlers moving into the Rogue Valley in the last half of the 19th century, the Agate Desert remained uninhabited. Large donation land claims soon tied up most of the available tillable land, including prime sites along Bear Creek and in the area where Eagle Point would be settled. To the farmers, though, the Agate Desert's poor soil and lack of water seemed a stretch of land to be endured while traveling to other more inviting areas of the valley floor.

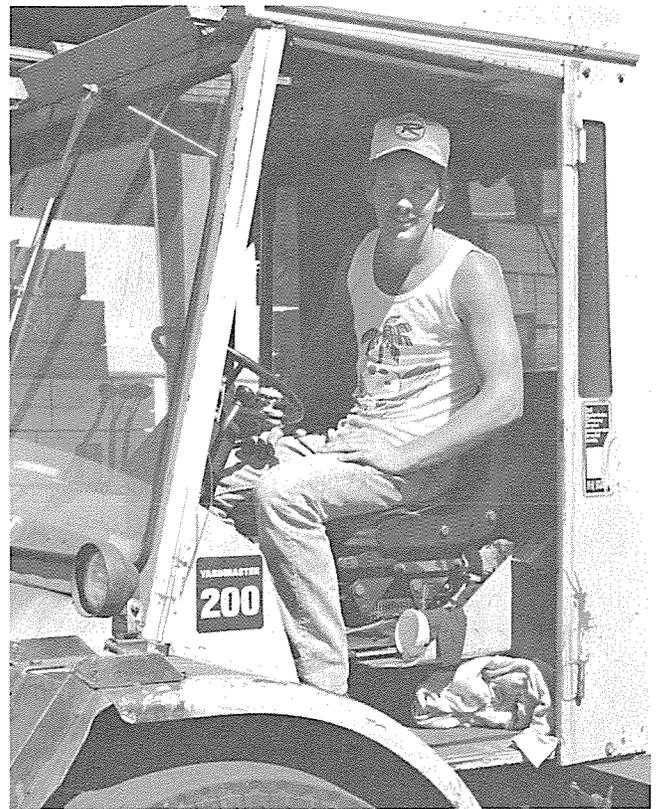
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### **To farmers, though, the Agate Desert's poor soil and lack of water seemed a stretch of land to be endured while traveling other more inviting areas of the valley floor.**

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It was not until 1905, when most of the Rogue Valley was either populated or fenced off in orchards or farms, that the Welshes, a Seattle family, gambled on the Agate Desert, purchasing a huge piece of land encompassing most of the desert.<sup>3</sup> Realizing that the weather in southern Oregon was ideal for growing pear trees, they hired workers to begin planting orchards. Other hopeful orchardists purchased land from the Welshes and began planting trees of their own. The rocky soil was too shallow to properly plant a tree, so holes had to be blasted just to get the trees in the ground. Unfortunately, the underlying hardpan prevented the water the orchardists imported from soaking in and the trees eventually drowned.

Their noses smelling a quick buck, several unscrupulous



speculators sold stock in a corporation that was to plant 400 acres in pears on the Agate Desert. The unsuspecting buyers, mostly living in the North Central and Eastern states, were assured of two harvests a year due to the rocky soil's ability to retain heat, thus preventing frost damage. Naturally, the trees soon died and the stock became worthless.<sup>4</sup>

Dolph Phillips, a local orchardist, remembers:

You know, any place they had a little dirt, somebody would speculate on it and plant trees. Maybe they'd have to cut the oak trees down and put the trees in, and sell it to the people back East. . . . Where Camp White is now, the trees just died, the soil is just gravel. . . . The investors lost all their money.<sup>5</sup>

Out in the Agate Desert, what trees did survive were later cut down after developing blight or other diseases. Today, the only remaining orchards are on the periphery of the Agate Desert where the soil is better.

The Welsh family representatives finally decided the best way to use the land was to run cattle on it. Desolate as it was, the land was open and flat, and there certainly was enough space to maintain thousands of head. The only problem was how to keep the herds fed when the sparse grass ran out.

Very Brophy, hired by the Welsh family to manage the property, had the answer. At that time, Brophy lived in the only residence in the Agate Desert, a house and out-buildings where decades later White City would be located. He hired workers to dig a ditch from Fish Lake to some acreage near Central Point where he then was able to grow hay to feed the thousands of cattle roaming the desert.



**Undaunted by the opposing industry, Christine Wallace (above) stands justifiably proud of her thriving flower garden. In the six months since she moved from Shady Cove to White City, Christine has turned a barren, brown yard into an extravagant display of roses, gladioli, delphiniums, lilies and sweet williams. She and her husband Kenneth invested hours of tilling, fertilizing and landscaping to bring forth the floral harvest. Cinematography student Dave Azevedo (opposite) pays for his schooling through mill work during the summer.**

Dean Owens, who worked for Brophy in the 1930s and 1940s, remembers the huge, 200-foot-long stacks of hay bales the field hands assembled where there is now a truck shop in White City. Four or five teams of horses and wagons constantly traversed the desert loading and unloading the hay during harvest. These stacks would serve through the spring to fatten up the steers Brophy brought down each year from Canada. When the snow melted enough up in the mountains, Owens and the rest of the ranch hands would drive the herd over to Fort Klamath. Even then the snow would be three feet deep, requiring the men to forge a trail by dragging logs over the snow behind a team of horses. The drive would take an arduous five days.<sup>6</sup>

**I**f nothing else, life must have been tranquil on the Agate Desert. That all changed in a hurry when World War II broke out. The Army decided the Agate Desert was an ideal training camp location, and the men from the General Services Administration negotiated with the Welsh family, Dean Owens and other minor landowners to purchase more than 90,000 acres on which to build Camp White. The sellers were promised they would be able to purchase their land back after the war for a reasonable price.

Almost immediately, the government hired contractors to begin the massive building project. Carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other workers descended on the desert, building roads, hundreds of buildings and a prisoner of war camp, and creating utility systems. They would hardly lose money because the government had promised they would make \$1.10 for every \$1.00 expended; so when a road was to be built that could handle tank traffic, the result was a concrete structure three feet deep. (Years later, county workers would, to their dismay, rediscover this fact when they tried to dig a trench across Avenue G to put in a water line.) A massive hospital, which today serves as the Veteran's Administration Domiciliary, was assembled in short order.

Camp White, named after Major General George White, adjunct general for Oregon, was dedicated on August 15, 1942, and quickly gained a reputation as the "Alcatraz of Training Camps." The camp commander, Major General Charles Gerhard, wanted to train his troops so "they would have a chance to come back alive." Over the course of the war, more than 200,000 men swam the Rogue River in full combat dress, took 90-mile hikes, and hunkered down in pill boxes in the middle of tank battles using live ammunition.

The war ended in 1945, and almost as suddenly, the army began pulling up stakes. The guns, silent now, were crated up to be used elsewhere. Nearly everything that was

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**When he looked over the expanse of the Agate Desert and the remains of Camp White, Jackson did not see the past or the present; he saw the future.**

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not permanently installed was removed, torn down, or moved elsewhere. When the government declared Camp White to be surplus in 1946, even many of the buildings came down. Some were actually moved: the camp's gymnasium was hauled to the junior high school in Eagle Point, and other structures ended up as far away as Southern Oregon College and the University of Oregon. By the time the last truck left the desert, all that remained were the roads, the utilities, some empty barracks buildings and the hospital.

Even before the echoes died down, however, it became apparent that the disappearance of Camp White, almost a boomtown in its own right, had left a gaping hole in the Rogue Valley's economy. Medford, especially, had become accustomed to the life-giving flow of the huge Army payroll.

The Army, meanwhile, was busy selling the bits and pieces of the Agate Desert back to most of the original owners, with the major exceptions the 1,300-acre plot that comprised the core of Camp White, and the property where the hospital stood. Thus, the spot where today White City and the Medford Industrial Park are located was a dream waiting to be dreamed.

Glenn Jackson was the dreamer.

Jackson came from a family of newspaper publishers in the Willamette Valley, a family accustomed to power. After attending the University of Oregon, he owned several newspapers on the Oregon coast. Just prior to his ventures in the Rogue Valley, he worked for California-Oregon Power Company in Roseburg—a company for which he would later be a director. In fact, Glenn Jackson would become one of the Rogue Valley's most powerful men. It was Jackson, as the perennial chairman



**Glenn Jackson (above) repairs barbed wire fence on his Lake Creek ranch, ca. 1975. Jackson's dreams for White City included a prosperous industrial center and model planned community. The government's investments of buildings and services in Camp White (opposite) provided the springboard for the rapid growth of White City. SOHS #7716, 5778**

of the state Highway Commission, who made sure the Interstate 5 went through the heart of Medford. It was Glenn Jackson who was reputed to have sat on the boards of directors of more companies than any other man in the United States. But it was in the Air Force during World War II where he made acquaintances that would later pay off when he hatched the plan to create White City.

When he looked over the expanse of the Agate Desert and the remains of Camp White, Jackson did not see the past or the present; he saw the future. He knew that if he played his cards properly, the Agate Desert could again provide a great economic boost for the Rogue Valley—maybe even more so than in the war years. What Jackson saw was this: a great industrial center, making use of the flat land in the desert and the utilities the Army had installed. He understood the value of the Southern Pacific Railroad which ran almost next door to the site,



stretching as it did from southern California to Seattle. And the land certainly could not be too expensive. The next step in Jackson's plan was to create a built-in labor pool in the form of Oregon's first planned community. Even though there were certain to be employees available from the valley, he felt they should have a place to live close to where they worked; in other words, in White City. The final phase of the plan called for construction of all the necessary amenities for a thriving community.

The question was how to acquire the land. To find the answer, Jackson went to Washington, D.C., and looked up some of his Air Force acquaintances. During the war, Jackson was a colonel attached to a staff of the Air Force's elite power-brokers. They obviously thought well of him because, in the end, the gears were greased and Jackson found himself ready to buy 1,300 acres in the middle of the Agate Desert.<sup>8</sup> Once he was able to purchase the rights

from the Welsh family estate, the property was his.

Glenn Jackson was not the only person interested in developing the Agate Desert. The Hoover family had owned land in the desert before the war and, having purchased it back from the government, also set out to make some money. In an area they once used to feed their hogs reject pears, the Hoovers began subdividing the land into five-acre parcels and selling it through the classified section of the Medford Mail Tribune with an ad that read, "5 acres for sale with well. \$3,000. \$50 down, \$30 a month."<sup>9</sup> Over the years, they sold 7,000 acres to what might be called the pioneers of White City. In a classic twist on the bartering principle, the Hoovers traded plots of land with a well-driller for wells on the remaining lots. By not improving the lots beyond drilling wells, the Hoovers were able to avoid putting any more money into the land.<sup>10</sup>

Photo by Natalie Brown



**M**eanwhile, Jackson shifted his development into high gear. First he gave his newborn a name, White City, basing it on the old Camp White. Next to be formed was White City Realty, an umbrella company under which White City would begin to take shape. The first industry to operate in the industrial park, Southern Oregon Sugar Pine, belonged to Jackson. Knowing that White City would need rail service in order to survive, he formed the White City Terminal Company, based on the old military rail system. He still had to connect to the main line, though, so he convinced Southern Pacific to run a track out to the fledging industrial center. Southern Pacific required

ing cheap rents and often the loan of capital to start up, he enticed even more tenants. The \$100,000 deposit that Southern Pacific had required? Jackson earned that back within a year.

By the early 1960s, with more than thirty companies established in the industrial park, there was still no city in White City, unless one were to count the mini-community of the Veteran's Domiciliary, which at that time housed the only post office in the Agate Desert. Until this time the domiciliary was White City. After the Veteran's Administration began taking it seriously in 1957, the Dom became a community within itself; not a hospital, but a place for troubled veterans to live. And although

**White City industries (left) provide an economic link between southern Oregon and the nation. Developers still seek to attract residents with affordable housing (right).**



Photo by Roger Love

that he put up \$100,000 in front money, which the railroad would pay back at \$15 a car until the money was paid off. "They figured I would get my money back in four or five years. Only I fooled them." he said.<sup>11</sup>

In order to expand the industrial park, though, Jackson needed more cash. The new lumber mill was doing well, but not that well, so Jackson applied for a million-dollar loan from the Small Business Administration. The government representatives never knew what hit them. They were wined and dined in fine fashion before seeing the mill. Then, as they toured the facility, Jackson had his men move equipment, lumber, and logs around so as to make it appear the mill was larger and busier than it really was. It worked. Jackson got his money, opening the door to White City's future (and he paid back the money by the due date).<sup>12</sup>

With working capital and an established mill, White City was really open for business. By offering sewers, streets, water and "no city taxes" to business, he drew seven mills to the site almost immediately. Further, by promis-

civic organizations throughout the Rogue Valley volunteered their services there, there was never much contact between the Dom and the people of White City.

With industry up and running, the next step in the White City plan was to create a ready labor pool for industry. So in 1961, Jackson's White City Realty began the development of what the company called Oregon's first planned community on 100 acres on the east side of Highway 62. Named Cascade Village, the subdivision was located within easy walking distance of the industrial park's mills and factories. Where there had been mostly open fields and ready-made drag strips for Medford teenagers, seemingly overnight the frames of houses sprouted. By the end of 1963, fifty-seven homes had been erected — forty-six of which had been sold, mostly due to a massive promotion campaign which saw more than 30,000 people tour the model homes. Prices were certainly reasonable for the time, ranging from \$10,000 to \$14,500.

Successful as this instant community seemed to be on the surface, there were indications that White City, in the

minds of the powerful, was industry, not people. This would later come back to haunt those who chose to make their home there. Even though the sign on Crater Lake Highway that once announced “An area geared to industry” was changed to “An area geared to progress,” the manager of White City Realty, John Laden, made it clear that industry still came first, that the only reason the realty helped develop Cascade Village was to attract a labor pool. In fact, Laden said, the realty would do its best to avoid any situation such as incorporation that might give residents the power to restrict industry in any way.<sup>13</sup>

Regardless, the realty continued to develop the new community by promoting the third step: providing services to the new residents. The most significant of those was the Cascade Shopping Center, one of the few shopping centers in southern Oregon at that time. The grand opening attracted 18,000 shoppers from around the Rogue Valley in June 1963.



Photo by Roger Love

**The Cascade Shopping Center opened in June of 1963.**

Suddenly, what had seemed an albatross to others, Glenn Jackson had turned into a completed puzzle. Industry was booming, people were moving into the planned community, and businesses were opening up their doors. By 1964, White City Realty had dedicated a new swimming pool for the exclusive use of White City residents. And as the number of residents increased, the Eagle Point school district realized the need for a new school, which was built in the heart of Cascade Village. There were people with enough civic energy to start organizations such as a women’s association, baseball teams, and Brownie troops. Community parties at Halloween and Thanksgiving were well attended. The petition drive to create a local post office got enough support that White City gained its own postmark; the office was based at the hardware store in the shopping center. There was something to be proud about in White City; it was like a new car one wanted to keep washed and polished.

**B**ut White City’s development took a left turn in the mid-1960s when Glenn Jackson decided to sell his interest to a Portland firm, Commonwealth, Inc. Even though Jackson retained his title as president of White City Realty and sat on the board of directors of Commonwealth, it seemed that his force had disappeared. Regardless of the fact that one goal had always been to make money, Jackson at least had a feeling for the community of White City. The same could not be said for Commonwealth, an out-of-area company specializing in industrial parks.

The community spirit began to change. Talk of banding together and incorporating White City, even building a town hall, faltered for lack of interest. To many people, there was little financial motivation to incorporate; most of the services an incorporated city could provide, such as utilities, police and fire protection, were already available. The bottom line in most residents’ minds was money, not civic pride.<sup>14</sup>

It was already true that most people who are typically community leaders—the business owners and plant managers who commanded higher salaries—never lived in White City. They chose instead to reside in what they considered to be more desirable locations in the Rogue Valley. And as industry boomed and the factory workers who did live in White City began making more money, they, too, moved on to other locations.

Worse, support for community services waned. “People just didn’t want to participate,” said one former resident. The swimming pool association disbanded.

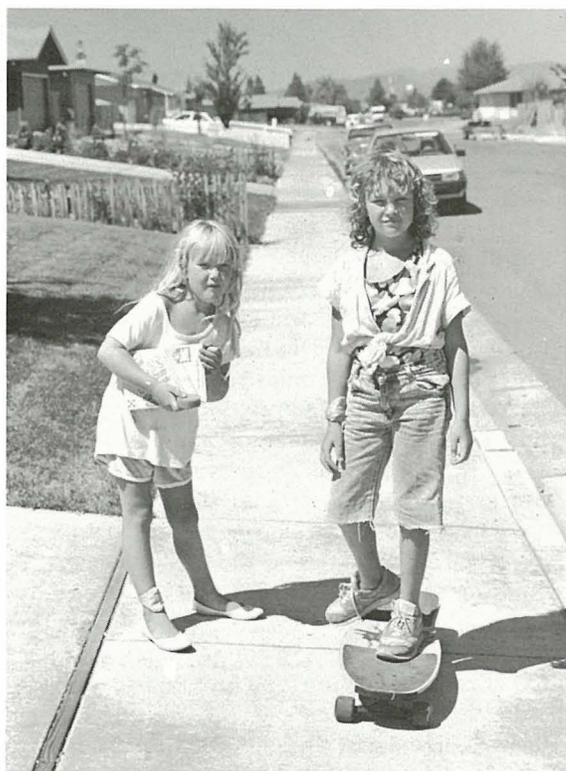


Photo by Natalie Brown

**Stephanie and Elicia McFadden skateboard their way through summer in White City.**



White City still offers residents pool facilities.

Membership eroded in the other civic organizations. And even though White City continued to grow in population, its identity as a planned community continued to wane through the 1970s. Development continued, but in a haphazard way, with fewer houses and more mobile home parks being established.

In 1978, a ripple of civic energy was loosed when a group of people revived the incorporation movement, pointing out that if White City were in fact a city, the people would have a voice in their own and their community's destiny. The group ran a house-to-house campaign and actually managed to collect enough signatures to forward the proposal to the county commissioners. But fate proved no kinder to the proponents of "local control" than it had a decade before. The buzz word "taxes" had attracted enough opposition that the movement finally died, although not before an almost comic event occurred at one of the last meetings when the sheriff's department was called out after a woman opposing incorporation bit the hand of one of the proponents.<sup>15</sup> Opponents also were quick to point out that the movement's leader was in fact a resident of Medford. Once he resigned, no one ever came forward to take over. The call for "local control" has not been heard since.

Not that the Jackson County Commissioners would not like to see White City incorporate. The community remains a disproportionate drain on county services, especially in law enforcement and planning, county officials say. However, officials are not about to force the issue, believing that any incorporation movement should come from the people of White City. Unfortunately, they also realize that most of the residents of the community are among the least able to afford an additional tax base. White City, therefore, is grossly underserved, especially in the areas of streets and community services.

Some say, too, that the last decade has been most cruel to White City. The average income of its residents is significantly lower than the rest of the county. The population, while ballooning toward 5,000, is made up of more single-parent households, more transient families and more renters than other local communities.<sup>16</sup> The crime rate in White City, according to the Jackson County Sheriff's Department, has grown to about twenty-five percent of the department's total. Half of the county's domestic violence calls and a high percentage of drug offenses originate in White City, deputies say. One former resident, now living in Eagle Point, felt squeezed out by the noise and the crime.

But the "largest unincorporated, uninhabited city in southern Oregon" is not without its supporters. One retired mobile home resident stated, "I like it because it's inexpensive and built to stay that way!" Others, mostly those who live on the fringes of town where the lots are larger, say they enjoy the conveniences of a city while not feeling hemmed in.

So, whether White City is the community Glenn Jackson envisioned in the 1940s is doubtful. Certainly the Medford Industrial Park is a success, providing jobs for thousands of Rogue Valley residents and contributing millions of dollars to the tax rolls. That is the irony of White City: the highway that splits it in half separates the two sides of Glenn Jackson's dream, one side prosperous and sure of itself, the other unsure of its direction and still searching for an identity.



#### ENDNOTES

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2. Heckert, *People and the River*, p. 202.
3. Personal interview with Dean Owens, July 16, 1988.
4. Atwood, Kay, *Blossoms and Branches*, Gandee Printing, Medford, Oregon, 1980, p. 37.
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6. Personal interview with Dean Owens.
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8. Personal interview with Roger Leonard, July 13, 1988.
9. Trippett, Marlys, *Historical Overview for Area of White City, Oregon*, June, 1986, p. 5.
10. Personal interview with Roger Leonard.
11. "Businessman's Foresight Results in Thriving White City," *Portland Oregonian*, Aug. 21, 1961, p. 36.
12. Personal interview with Roger Leonard.
13. "White City: A Growing Community," *Medford Mail Tribune*, Jan. 5, 1964, p. B1.
14. Personal interview with Roger Leonard.
15. "Incorporation Fracas Prompts Call to Sheriff," *Medford Mail Tribune*, Mar. 14, 1980.
16. Personal interview with Richard Soderburg, July 19, 1988.

Ashland writer and photographer Roger Love is a frequent contributor to the **Table Rock Sentinel**. Included among his recent articles are the history of southern Oregon winemaking and Ashland's *Buckhorn Springs*.

*Oregon Secretary of State Barbara Roberts (right) spoke at the Society's annual membership meeting (far right) Saturday, June 25, 1988 on the grounds of the Jacksonville Museum. The following is a transcript of her speech concerning the preservation of Oregon's history.*



# Remembering History, Preserving History, Making History

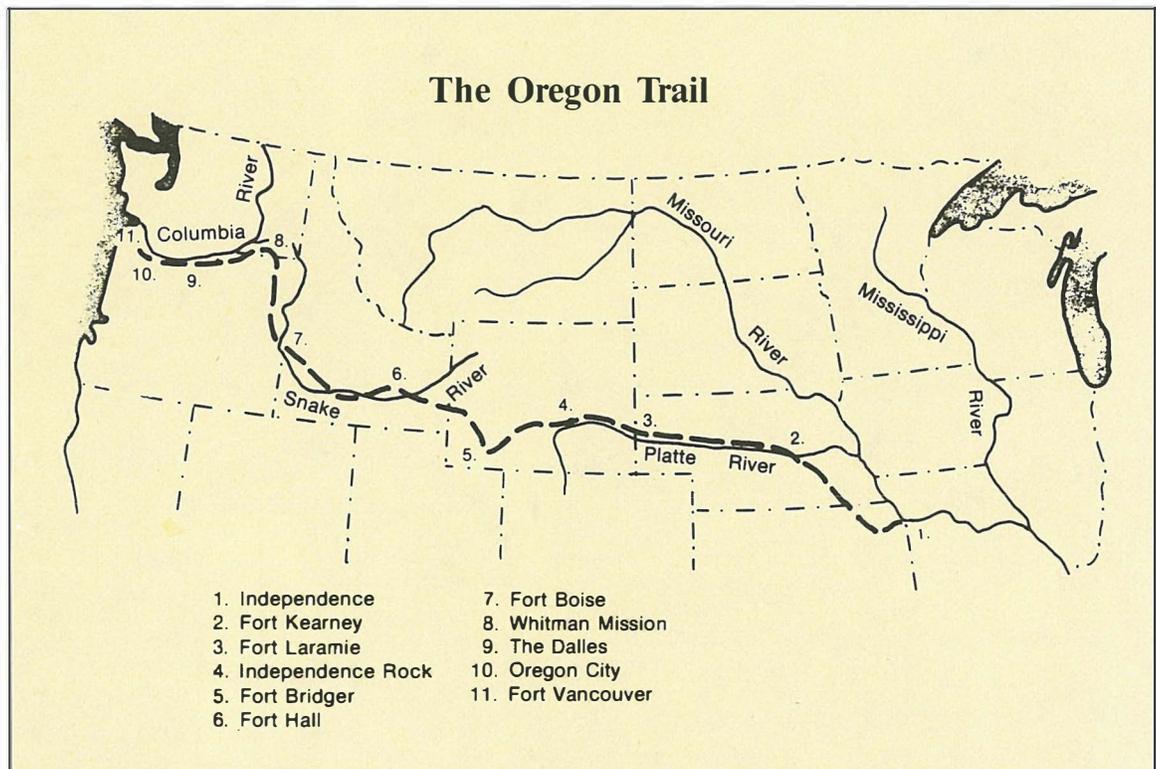
by Barbara Roberts

**T**he first of my family arrived in Oregon City in 1853. My great-great-grandparents on my father's side, James and Almeda Boggs, left Iowa and traveled overland by ox train, burying a daughter beside the trail but never burying their dream of reaching Oregon. In 1854, they settled on a donation land claim on Salt Creek in Polk County where my great-grandmother, Anna, was born. In the year of Oregon's statehood, 1859, the family moved to Roseburg and, in 1873, Anna married Francis Stephens. I remember so clearly the day I found the certificate of that marriage in the basement of the Douglas County Courthouse. I copied it on a modern Xerox machine and presented the copy to my Dad as if it were a million-dollar check. And he felt the same way!

Following their marriage, my great-grandparents then settled in Umatilla County where my grandmother was born in Pilot Rock in 1878. My grandmother bore ten children, eight of whom survived, each child born behind the



Deep ruts left by pioneer wagons can still be seen on parts of the Oregon Trail which stretched from Independence, Missouri to Fort Vancouver in Oregon.



Map courtesy of Edwin Bingham

closed door of her bedroom, without help, assistance or comfort. One of the youngest of her brood is my father, born in Philomath in 1912. I was born in Corvallis in 1936 and my youngest son, Mike, my only Oregonian, was born in McMinnville in 1958. Mark turned thirty in March and I am hopeful, as mothers sometimes are, to one day soon see the sixth generation of my family born in the Beaver State.

My other set of paternal great-great-grandparents arrived from Kansas to Forest Grove, but not until 1870, and they and the next two generations managed to move back and forth between Oregon and Washington so frequently that I didn't manage to actually get an Oregonian out of that branch of the family until my Dad was born in 1912.

But you can see the advantage I have as a statewide Oregon politician. When I'm in Eastern Oregon, I can talk about my Pilot Rock grandmother; when I'm in Southern Oregon, I can talk about my Douglas County roots, and when I'm in my hometown of Sheridan, I can mention the donation land claim on Salt Creek or my McMinnville son. More than a 100 years span the family history in the Polk-Yamhill County area.

And I do mention those things when I travel and speak around Oregon but not because there might be some political advantage but because I'm very proud of my family history in Oregon. I'm very proud to be a fourth-generation Oregonian and I'm also proud to link my personal history with the history of this unique and wonderful state.

**I**n August of last year, my oldest son and I took a week's vacation to Eastern Oregon. We visited Lake County, Harney County, Malheur and Baker Counties before crossing back home through Grant, Crook, Wheeler, Gilliam, and Sherman Counties. We saw lots of great open country, stopped at a number of museums and landmarks, took some fun back roads and just got to know that part of Oregon a little better. But, without a doubt, the highlight of that trip was a side trip we took that gave us the opportunity to stand on one of the sites of the Oregon Trail. To stand there on that hot August afternoon, looking at the deep ruts left by wagon after wagon following their dream, to feel the lack of water in that summer heat, and to also sense the bitter cold of the winter season, the weariness, the death, the pain, the hardship. It was all around me as I knelt and touched my fingertips to the ground where our ancestors left their mark on the Oregon land.

It was still and hot that afternoon and a tiny breeze moved the brown grass and weeds almost as if something—or someone—was passing. As I stood and looked where the trail disappeared over the horizon, it was as if those ruts had been carved in the ground only last winter rather than by people like my great-great-grandparents—135 years ago.

That is the heritage that each of us understands and feels.

As an Oregonian, one of my greatest honors will always be the opportunity I have had to serve as your Secretary of State. The privilege Oregonians have afforded me in

electing me as one of this state's statewide constitutional officeholders is one that has never been anything less than thrilling, even after almost four years in my position.

But I must tell you that there is another special bonus in being Secretary of State. That bonus is having the State Archives Division as one of my responsibilities.

Our Archives Division houses Oregon's historical records—our "paper heritage." We have the records of our provisional and territorial government, the state's constitution, our legislative records, Supreme Court records, most of our governor's records, birth records, death records, immigration and naturalization records, county records, and so much more.

When I arrived in January of 1985, that historical fortune was housed in a fifty-year-old hops warehouse, with no fire alarm, and the other side of the warehouse was a discount carpet operation. The roof leaked, there were no protections for burglary or vandalism on any door or window; there was a huge, antique paper pulper being used that belched steam and heat and moisture throughout the building; we had no inventory of our holdings, and we were refusing new records from state agencies and local government because we were full. We were understaffed, under-equipped, our collection of legislative audio tapes was rapidly deteriorating, we had no volunteers and no active advocates for our program. And there were no plans for improvement on the drawing board or in the budget.

Today—three and one-half years later—we have just secured the second of two federal grants, for the first time in division history, and we will soon finish the complete inventory of our records with those grant funds. The legislature budgeted \$50,000 to retape the legislative tapes that go back to 1959. We will do half the project in this biennium and the remaining work is planned for the 1989-91 budget. We have a fire alarm system, a vandalism alarm system, and we scrapped that old pulp machine monstrosity!

We have a small volunteer group working in the division and a real group of supporters who believe in preserving and sharing the historical documents in our care. We now publish a newsletter three times a year called "Historical Perspectives" that tells our readers what's happening in our program. The mailing list grows with every new edition.

We published a wonderful classroom teaching supplement for Oregon high school students called "Echoes of Oregon" that shares replicas of documents from our territorial period. It has been very well received and we hope to do a second version covering another period of Oregon history next year. Our first version went to every high school in Oregon without charge. I want younger Oregonians to understand and care about the history of our state and its people.

The documents we used for "Echoes of Oregon" are not about famous Oregonians but, rather, about early settlers and pioneers and what their life was like in that territorial period. I want our young people to understand

that history is something each of us is part of, every day. The history of a people is not just a history of prominent figures and government leaders.

And history is not just a reflection of the things we did right and feel pride in. It is also the record of the things we did wrong and hope not to repeat. "Echoes of Oregon" gives young Oregonians a balanced picture of the real Oregon in territorial days.

I am excited about the work we have been able to do to preserve and share Oregon history.

But our most exciting accomplishment of the past three and one-half years for Archives has been our successful effort to convince the legislature of the importance of designing a new building to house and preserve our entire historical collection. On March 31, 1987, the governor signed the budget bill that contained \$122,000 for the architectural design of a state archives building. In January, the contract was awarded for the design, and only two weeks ago, the site was approved by the Capitol Planning Commission.

In January of 1989, I will return to the legislature with a building design, the cost figures, and a dream—the dream of a wonderful new Archives Building to protect this large part of Oregon history, to restore what we are losing daily, as documents deteriorate in inappropriate temperature and climate, and to have a small display gallery in the new building where Oregonians of all ages can view out past in the documents and letters and maps and photographs now dangerously housed and somewhat hidden in a 1935 hops warehouse.

That's my dream and I hope it's one that you can share and support.

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**The history of a people  
is not just a history of  
prominent figures and  
government leaders.**

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We have so much that we want to share and show off to visitors when the Archives Building is finished. Just as your Historical Society shares your collection, we look forward to sharing ours.

For instance—our state constitution. Our constitution is in a lovely leather-bound book. It was found rolled and standing in the corner of the secretary of state's storage room in 1880. In March of 1880, it was properly bound for preservation and protection. It is now kept in a heavy metal box, in a locked cabinet inside the huge safe in my office. I imagine I am one of the few Oregonians who have both seen and held that great document.

Last year—under careful security—we allowed our state constitution to travel to Eugene and Jacksonville as part

of the Oregon Historical Society's Magna Carta display. I hope you saw it then. In a few years, I hope thousands of Oregonians will see it every year, just as the National Archives in Washington, D.C. displays our U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and our Declaration of Independence.

The first time I opened that metal box and took out the contents, holding in my hands our own constitution, I felt somewhat as I did standing on the Oregon Trail last summer.

A special bond—a link with the past.

And I looked at those long-ago written words that formed the Preamble to Oregon's Constitution, "We the people of the State of Oregon to the end that justice be established, order maintained, and liberty perpetuated, do ordain this constitution."

A special bond, a link with our past. For me, it grows stronger every day—partly because of my job, my office in our Capitol Building, my constitutional responsibilities. I feel surrounded with history, every day. But, also, I know more clearly every day that the accuracy with which we record state history, the dedication we commit to preserving state history, the resources Oregon allocates to protecting and restoring state history are at this time, to a large degree, resting on my shoulders.

I would not want history to record that some other priority, some stronger political issue, some sexier "press getter" caused me to set aside my bond with the past, causing Oregon's "paper heritage" to be lost to the future.

I will continue to work hard on my responsibilities for Elections, Audits, Corporations, the Land Board and all my other agency duties, but my job for Oregon's Archives will hold a place in my heart that will reflect my special bond with Oregon's past.

I hope you will continue to see that bond demonstrated in many ways.

When you visit the State Capitol, please stop and see the original manuscript of our state song, "Oregon, My Oregon." I worked with Sandy Union High School in my role as Chair of the Oregon Historical Properties Commission to secure that original sheet music and to have it put on display in the Capitol gallery.

When you received your Voters' Pamphlets in 1986, you hopefully noticed the historical photographs that were used on the cover and as divider pages. They each represented an Oregon "first." We had such positive response to the photos, that we are again using historical photographs in the 1988 Voters' Pamphlets. Most of those photographs have been furnished by the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. But I have just talked the staff of Southern Oregon Historical Society into sending photos from their fine collection to use in our November 1988 Voters' Pamphlet.

In the two Oregon Blue Books published since I became Secretary of State, we have had a new, beautifully written Oregon history included, as well as a number of historical photos.

There are so many stories to tell.

In 1985, in some old county records and papers from Clackamas County awaiting destruction, we found a letter written by Dr. John McLoughlin asking the Clackamas County judge for permission to vote in the election of 1850. The Father of Oregon was refused that right! That badly damaged letter is being specially protected and will receive careful restoration work very soon.

Last year in papers from a long-ago-deceased Oregon judge that were given to the State Library by his family, the State Librarian found a document that was kindly and properly returned to the State Archives. It was an original bill passed by the Territorial Legislature that said negroes could not live in Oregon. Everyone knew such legislation had passed but the actual bill had disappeared decades ago. It is almost a miracle that that infamous but important piece of history is now back in safekeeping. Think how easily it could have been lost forever. The document is in beautiful condition with the hand-cut territorial seal attached with small blue ribbons.

I hope when our new building is done that we are able to secure more such "lost" pieces of the state's history. Certainly it will be very clear, then, that such documents are safe and protected for future generations of Oregonians.

Sometimes, when I look up from my desk and look around my office, or I'm conferring with the Governor, or when I'm introduced as Secretary of State, or when I'm attending the national Lieutenant Governor's conference, I stop and think about the early women who made it possible for me to be in my position—the pioneer women, the suffragettes, the early elected women. They were real path breakers.

But I also think about the pioneers who walked across this continent, pioneers like my great-great-grandparents, who gave so much, and gave up so much that they might reach this beautiful state where I was fortunate enough to be born.

And it is for me a double obligation I feel, to both those pioneers and those women path breakers, to make my time and service as Secretary of State a record worthy of the standard they have set. I don't want to fall short and not reach my goals for Oregon any more than James and Almeda Boggs would have stopped short of their dream to reach the end of the Oregon Trail.

I'm very proud to be an Oregonian, very proud to be your Secretary of State, and I'm honored to join one of Oregon's most respected and successful Historical Societies as your annual meeting speaker. Thank you for letting me share this special evening.



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*Barbara Roberts served two terms in Oregon as a state representative and in 1983 was the first woman majority leader of the House of Representatives. In 1984 she was elected secretary of state.*

# Society Update



Visitors on the next Society bus tour may have the chance to view such wonders as this 80,000-year-old mammoth column. SOHS #2453

## Bus Tour to be an Overnight Success

The last Society bus tour of the 1988 summer season will be an overnight trip to the Oregon Caves National Monument on Thursday and Friday, September 8-9. Discovered by pioneer Elijah Davidson while hunting in the autumn of 1874, the cave's long corridors tell a story covering 200 million years of geological history.

Buses will leave the parking lot behind the Jacksonville Museum at

10:00 a.m. Lunch will be in Cave Junction at the Junction Inn.

Arriving at the Oregon Caves around 1:30 p.m., participants may explore the caves on a 75-minute guided tour. Approximately 6/10 of a mile in length, the tour climbs a vertical distance of 218 feet and includes 550 stairs. Walking shoes with non-skid soles and jackets are necessary in the passageways which may be slippery, damp and cool.

Overnight accommodations and dinner will be at the Chateau, a lodge located near the entrance of the cave. After the evening meal, a program on the history of the national monument will be presented to the group.

Friday morning is set aside for time to discover the plant and animal life on some of the many trails within the park or a leisurely breakfast. The return trip will begin at noon with a scheduled arrival in Jacksonville around 2:00 p.m.

The cost of the trip for members is \$48.25 per person for double occupancy, \$68.75 for single occupancy which includes lodging and transportation. Meals are extra. **Reservations and payment are required and must be made no later than 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 24.** Cancellations after this date are non-refundable. A minimum number of 30 is necessary for the trip to take place. For information, contact Susan Cox, membership coordinator, at (503) 899-1847.

## Society Offers Grants Assistance

Each year the Society sets aside monies for its Grants-in-Aid Program to help local non-profit organizations preserve, interpret, and promote history in southwestern Oregon. In FY88/89, \$30,000 is available to help support history-related activities and projects throughout Jackson County.

To be eligible for funding, a project must be accessible to the public in its final form and be non-commercial in nature. The applicant must be established as a non-profit organization prior to making application under the Grants-in-Aid Program.

Additional information and application forms are available by contacting the Society's administrative offices at (503) 899-1847. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than October 1, 1988. Grants will be awarded shortly after January 1, 1989.



Stacey Williams demonstrates hand plowing at The Willows during Farm Days, proving once again that a woman's work is never done.

Photo by Natalie Brown

## Farm Day Brings Out Crowds

Bus after bus transported 427 "time travelers" from Jacksonville to The Willows on Sunday, July 17 to celebrate the Society's fifth annual "Farm Day." Visitors to this historic farm toured the house and grounds, viewing demonstrations of mule and horse plowing, blacksmithing, soapmaking, butter churning and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farming techniques.

The Rogue Valley Live Steamers returned again this year to operate the 1911 Case steam-powered tractor—surely a highlight of the afternoon for many farm and ranch veterans! And the afternoon heat did not seem to reduce the enthusiasm of the crowds as they tapped their feet (and occasionally swung their partners) to traditional tunes performed by the

local chapter of the Oregon Old-Time Fiddlers.

Ticket stubs indicated that 281 individuals took advantage of the guided tours of the Hanley home, just missing the record of 284 set the previous year for the greatest number to tour the house in a single day.

Tours will be offered again Saturday and Sunday, August 20–21, 1–5 p.m., which will be the final weekend The Willows will be open for the 1988 season. Members are invited to take advantage of this opportunity to see one of the most significant historic sites in southern Oregon!

## Board Adopts Revised Membership Program

Following considerable rework by the Development Committee and incorporating much input from the general membership, *Sentinel* readership, and staff, the Board of Trustees adopted a revised membership benefits program and dues structure at its meeting July 26th.

The new dues structure (see accompanying chart) takes into consideration comments from *Sentinel* readers, especially those regarding the **Senior** (age 65 & over) category and the importance of the *Sentinel* subscription. Instead of the proposed \$8 per year increase, the Trustees adopted a \$5 per year increase for Senior members, so the dues go from \$12 to \$17 per year. The other most often mentioned benefit was the annual calendar. While the recommendation did include the calendar as a benefit of the **Applegate Club** (\$100 to \$249 dues) and above, it was pointed out that with the 15% membership discount, the calendar *could* actually cost less than \$3, depending upon the actual cost of each year's edition.

The new dues structure and categorization begins September 1st, however, it will not take effect until your renewal date. Therefore, if you just recently renewed, you will not pay any additional dues until your next renewal date. Due to the elimination of the Family/membership category, all former Family members will now be **Active** members. Since there was no real change in the benefits of

## Revised Membership Benefits & Dues Structure

<b>LEVELS OF SUPPORT</b>					
<p><b>Senior (Age 65 &amp; Over) \$17</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bimonthly <i>Sentinel</i> &amp; newsletter</li> <li>• Vote for Society Trustees</li> <li>• Attend annual meeting</li> <li>• 20% discount on Oregon Historical Society membership</li> <li>• 15% discount in gift shop, plus purchases of historic photo reprints, Society publications, and annual calendar</li> <li>• Invitation to special events</li> <li>• Reduced admission to events and activities</li> <li>• Discount on bus trips</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Active \$30-49</b> SAME as above</p>					
<p><b>Patron's Club \$50-99</b> SAME as above <b>PLUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One free historic photo reprint</li> <li>• Special members-only workshops</li> <li>• 15% discount on research assistance in research library</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Applegate Club \$100-249</b> SAME as above <b>PLUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One free annual calendar</li> <li>• <b>Additional 10%</b> discount on Society book purchases incl. gift shop, annual calendar, historic photo reprints, and publications</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Siskiyou Club \$250-499</b> SAME as above <b>PLUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public recognition in history center</li> <li>• Membership wall plaque</li> <li>• "Behind-the-scenes" tour</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Peter Britt Club \$500-999</b> SAME as above <b>PLUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two free admissions to all events</li> <li>• Invitation to exclusive special events</li> </ul>					
<p><b>President's Club \$1,000 and above</b> SAME as above <b>PLUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to President's Dinner</li> <li>• One free U. S. Hotel room rental</li> <li>• Free Society bus trip for two</li> </ul>					

See below for additional categories

membership in that category, families are still welcome to attend all facilities, activities and events. Simply use your old membership card until it expires. The former Individual and Contributor member categories will also be considered **Active** members under the new program. We will not have any special mailing to all members on the new structure because everyone will receive all necessary information in the renewal notice.

Finally, the intention of the Board and the Committee which worked and reworked the program was and is to provide the most attractive membership package to the largest number of people possible. We know that in order to grow, some things have to change; and any time things are changed there is the possibility that someone, somewhere might not fully agree with those changes. The Board believes that the adopted changes will be attractive to prospective new members and renewing members and help form a solid financial basis for the Society's future. If you have any questions or further comments, please don't hesitate to write to the Board or staff at any time.

### Additional Membership Categories

Additional categories include **Junior Historian**, which has dues of \$5 per year and benefits include: Junior Historian badge, for admission to events; the Junior Historian *Tell-A-Gram*, and invitations to special events.

The new business membership categories include: **Business Contributor**, with dues from \$100 to \$499, and has the same benefits as the Siskiyou Club; and the **Business Benefactor** category, with dues of \$500 and over, with the same benefits as the **President's Club**, except for up to *Sentinel* subscriptions instead of the free bus trips.

There are also three categories for nonprofit organizations to join the Society based upon budget: Budgets from \$1 to \$49,999 pay dues of \$30; budgets from \$50,000 to \$499,999 pay \$50; and nonprofits with budgets above \$500,000 pay \$100.

## Pottery Exhibit Scheduled

The Society has planned the opening of a new exhibit, "Hannah Pottery," for October 8, 1988, in the Jacksonville Museum. Since last summer, a regional search for additional Hannah wares has identified approximately thirty pots in the Society's and private collections as products of the nineteenth-century pottery near Shady Cove.

These sturdy utilitarian crocks, jugs, churns, bowls, and irrigation pipe may lie in unused corners around southern Oregon. It's not too late to find out if that ceramic pot on the shelf at home is a "Hannah" or not. For assistance with identification or more information, contact Jim Robinson, 535-4281; Nancy Ingram, 535-1416, both members of Clayfolk, a local organization of potters; or Coordinator of Exhibits Jime Matoush, (503) 899-1847.

## A Living Memorial

Last month several families made living memorial contributions to the Southern Oregon Historical Society to commemorate family members who recently passed away. The Society wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to the family and friends of Fred Middlebush, George and Annie Burg, and Docia Stokes for their generous and thoughtful gifts to the Society.

Mr. Middlebush's gift came from the E. Homer Edgecombs in Redding, California, because of an article that appeared in the November 1987 issue of the *Sentinel* including a photograph of Fred Middlebush in the story on "The Game Warden and the Poacher."

The gift in memory of the Burgs came from their nephew Charles Fosterling of Portland because his aunt and uncle had lived in Jackson County most of their lives.

The memorial to Docia Stokes came from a distant relative in far off East Bloomfield, New York, and was accompanied by a most interesting letter on this fascinating pioneer

woman who died at the age of 104 in Portland last spring.

Ms. Elle's grandmother was a southern Oregonian born in Medford, and she fondly recalls visiting her great-grandmother in Medford when she was but a small child. She still claims Oregon as her home even though she lives in New York.

Contributions and outright bequests of this type are lasting benefits to the Society in its pursuit of the goals to preserve, promote and interpret the rich history of this region to all citizens. With the recent changes in the tax laws, you may wish to consider a living memorial gift or bequest to the Society in your will. In that manner you may help unlock the door of history to the future for generations to come.

## History Center Update

Ronald Slusarenko, principal, and Rick Heiserman, representing the W. E. Group architectural and planning firm from Portland, presented revised plans for the History Center to the Board at its meeting July 12th.

Following significant input from the Society's Development Committee and staff, the Board authorized the architects to prepare construction bid documents for Phase I of the project. Current plans call for bidding the project in September with a six-month construction period to begin in October. The plans will allow the Society to open this new facility, with a minimum of extra interior remodeling, for the amount currently in the building fund. The Society will undertake Phase II of the project as development funding is secured.

The Society really owes a debt of gratitude to members of the Roxy Ann Gem and Mineral Society, who operate the Crater Rock Museum in Central Point, for helping remove shelving and miscellaneous building materials from the interior of the building. The volunteer crews worked tirelessly for many long hours saving building materials of all types for reuse in their museum and storage area. These dedicated senior citizens literally saved the Society several thousand dollars in demolition costs.

## Society Officers Elected, New Board Members Announced

Dr. Carl Shaff, superintendent of the Rogue River School District, was elected president of the Southern Oregon Historical Society for the 1988/89 Society year by the Board of Trustees at its meeting July 12th in the Jackson County E.S.D. offices, Medford.

Dr. Shaff is in his second year on the Board and has been an active participant in determining the policy direction for the Society.

Joining Dr. Shaff as officers for 1988/89 are: Donald McLaughlin, immediate past president from Medford who was elected 1st vice president and will remain on the Board's Executive Committee; Dan Hull, second year Board member from Jacksonville, elected 2nd vice president; Mary Foster, also in her second year on the Board and from Medford, elected secretary; and William Bagley, re-elected to a second three-year term on the Board in June also re-elected for a second term as treasurer.

Two long-standing, hard-working contributing members went off the Board in June. Vicki Bryden, Medford, and Laurel Prairie-Kuntz, also Medford, had completed two full three-year terms on the Board.

Mark Wolfe, recently elected to a three-year term, resigned to attend a museum studies graduate program in Vermont. Mark was replaced by Thomas Parks, Jacksonville, by appointment at the July 12th meeting.

Tom Parks is a Jacksonville attorney and former mayor of the city. He has been a teacher, computer programmer, and forklift driver, not necessarily in that order. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University, a masters degree from the University of Illinois, and his law degree from Duke University. Tom has been very active in community affairs including serving as president of the Cascade Community Hospital Community Board and working with the Britt Festivals.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### SENIOR

Joe E. Barrette, *Medford*  
Mrs. Grace Berg, *Medford*  
Marie Fernandez, *Medford*  
Mary Fuller,, *Medford*  
Esther Hobbs, *Medford*  
Eula Kroepsch, *Ft. Bragg, CA*  
James Melton, *Medford*  
Mrs. Carl E. Milliken, Jr., *Medford*  
Mrs. Bob Norris, *Grants Pass*  
Sylvia Smith, *Medford*

### INDIVIDUAL

Ashland Historic Commision, *Ashland*  
Peggy Kirk, *Bellevue, WA*  
Susan Vilas Manuel, *Balboa, CA*  
Margo Mitchell, *Jacksonville*  
Jill L. Pruet, *Portland*  
Mr. W. W. Ruitter, *Eugene*  
Jeanette A. Savage, *Citronelle, AL*  
Charlotte Spanler, *Medford*  
Baird K. Smith, *Sacramento, CA*

### FAMILY

George & Betty Chamberlin, Jr., *Medford*  
John & Lois Studebaker, *Medford*  
Jerry & Bobbie Vawter, *Medford*

### BUSINESS

Medford Computer Instruction, *Medford*  
Stanford Historical Society, *Stanford, CA*

### BENEFACTOR

Lithia Motors, Inc.

## RENEWING MEMBERS

### SENIOR

LeOna Bestul, *Medford*  
A. Gayle Caldwell, *Ventura, CA*  
Lillian Connolly, *Medford*  
Richard G. Eastin, *Phoenix*  
Mayme Frank, *Medford*  
Iris D. Glanzman, *Medford*  
Joseph King, *Spokane, WA*  
Mrs. Richard Krumhansl, *Medford*  
Henrietta Leon, *Medford*  
Vern Voss, *Medford*  
Mrs. Eleanor S. Williams, *Medford*

\*Nedra B. Belloc, *Medford*  
Phyllis Courtney, *Ashland*  
\*Wendell Clausen, *Cambridge, MA*  
Theresa Fisher, *Eagle Point*  
Calista Handweg, *Medford*  
Mrs. Maxine Kinkade, *Ashland*  
Sharon Linford, *Medford*  
Lillian Mallut, *Central Point*

### FAMILY

Willard & Joan Bennett, *Medford*  
Kent & Marilyn Balckhurst, *Medford*  
Raymond Colvig, *Berkeley, CA*  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Hull, *Jacksonville*  
Craig & Juanita Mayfield, *Medford*

William & Diane Gravatt-Meyer, *Medford*  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Reavis *Jacksonville*  
Rogers & Nancy Roberts, *Central Point*  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Russell, *Medford*  
\*Ben Stinson, *Ben Lomond, CA*

### CONTRIBUTOR

Margaret Frakes, *Medford*

\*Indicates upgraded membership category or monetary contribution in addition to membership dues to further support Society programs.

### INDIVIDUAL

Bancroft Library, *Berkeley, CA*

## From the Collections



Eva Demmer, collections assistant, inventories petticoat collection.

Forty years of collecting artifacts relating to the history of area have given the Southern Oregon Historical Society a wide range of objects—from armadillos to yoyos—to preserve and interpret. This collection is far too large and varied to exhibit all at once; for every item on display, there are approximately ten in storage. The Society changes exhibits often to try to show as many of these artifacts as possible.

Most of the objects not on exhibit are housed in a storage building located in White City. Built in 1980, the 11,400 square foot, two-story structure is monitored for correct temperature and humidity levels to help preserve the items stored there.

Curator of Collections Marc Pence is in charge of managing the building and its contents. The process of keeping track of all these items—cataloging, researching, conserving and storing them—is handled by the Collection Department staff, consisting of Marc, Rosemary Bevel, Tiffany Mayo, Roy Bailey, and Eva Demmer.

For the past two and one-half years most of the staff has spent two days a week at the facility conducting the first true inventory of the artifact collection in the Society's history. This inventory should be completed in about two years and will enable the Society's Collections, Exhibits, and Interpretation departments to work more efficiently in identifying and locating appropriate artifacts for future exhibits and programs.

# Calendar of Events

**Through 1990** The Society's newest exhibit, **Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley** at the Jacksonville Museum traces the coming and going of the railroad, how it changed people's lives and the valley economy, its local role in the nation's battles overseas, and the introduction of the railroad worker as an important part of the valley's communities. Admission is free. Hours listed below.

**Through March 1989 Home Entertainment: 1852-1988** exhibit that looks at the variety of pastime activities that families and individuals have pursued during their leisure hours at home. Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum. Free.

**August 23** The Southern Oregon Historical Society Board of Trustees will hold its monthly meeting in the Education Service District building, 101 N. Grape, Medford, at 7:30 p.m. Members and the general public are invited.

**August 24 & 26 Piece by Piece:** This children's workshop will introduce and explore the art, history, and traditions of quilt making. Both old and contemporary examples will be available for study. During the two days, participants, age 9-14, will piece and quilt their own block for a pillow cover or pot holder. Pre-registration is required and limited to 15. A fee of \$5.50 (\$4.50 for members) covers the cost of materials. Call (503) 889-1847, ext. 227.

**September 3** Southern Oregon Historical Society Research Library will be closed to the public.

**September 5** Final Opening Day for the Beekman House.

**October 8** Harvest Festival: An afternoon of traditional craft demonstrations and activities at the Beekman House.

**Opening of the Hannah Pottery Exhibit** At the Jacksonville Museum. (See "Society Update" inside for more information.)

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

**Jacksonville Museum**, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Mon.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Research Library** in the Jacksonville Museum, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Mon.-Sun., 1-5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Children's Museum**, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Mon.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum**, 990 Siskiyou Boulevard, Ashland, OR 979520. Open Tues.-Sat., 1-5 p.m.

**Administration Offices**, Armstrong House, 375 East California Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**October 15** Concert: Bob Bovee, a musician from St. Paul, Minnesota, will perform a variety of traditional railroad tunes at the U. S. Hotel in conjunction with the exhibit "Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley" on display at the Jacksonville Museum.



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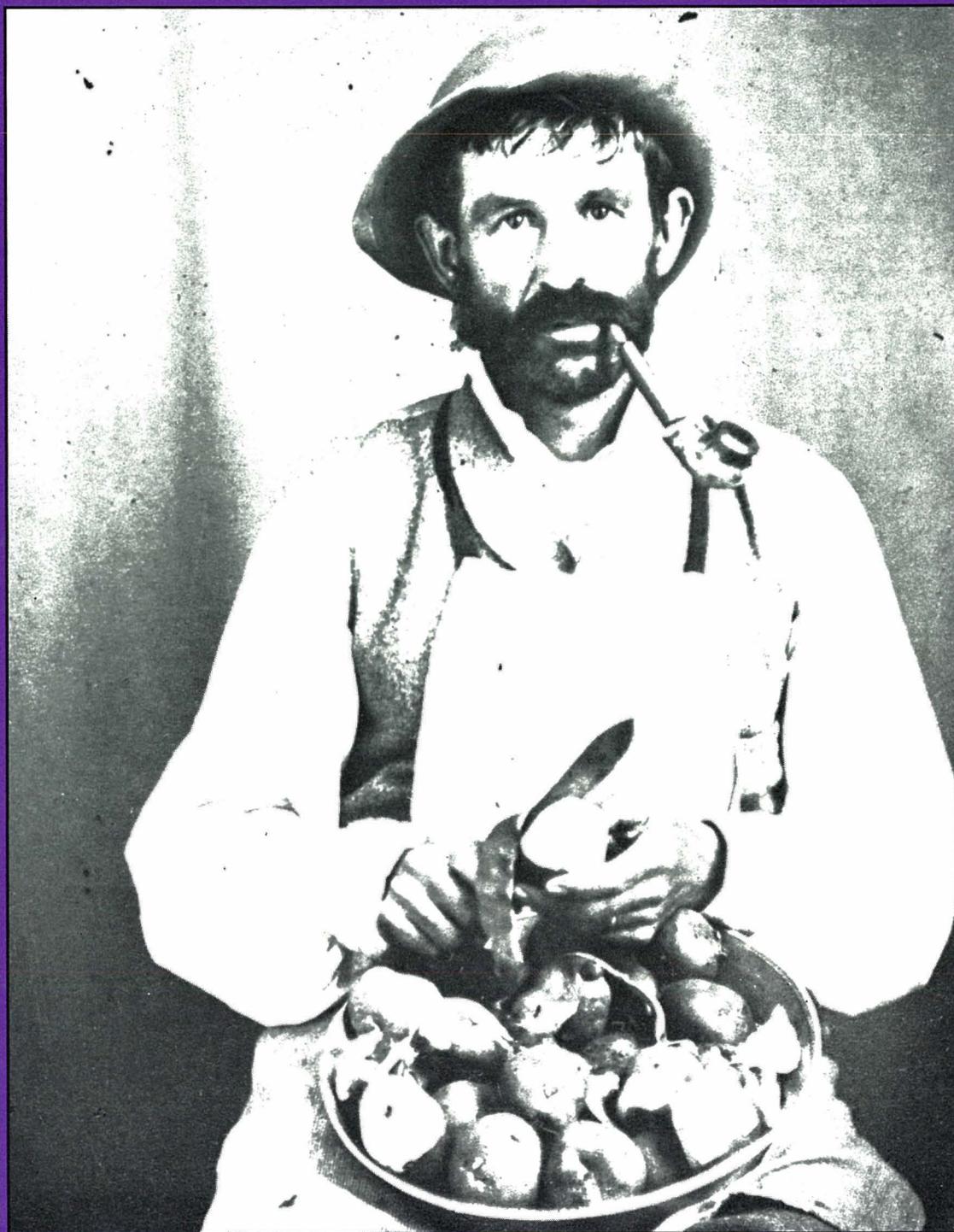
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# TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER 1988



The  
Magazine  
of the  
Southern  
Oregon  
Historical  
Society

# Commentary

"The magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society," a high sounding statement, but one which aptly describes the *Table Rock Sentinel*.

With this issue, the *Sentinel* enters a new phase of its life. Information on Society and membership activities and history news from throughout Southern Oregon will be carried in the Society bimonthly newsletter debuting in October. The *Sentinel* will expand its coverage of articles and other features on the many aspects of our region's rich and varied cultural history.

There are innumerable avenues to take in fulfilling the Society's threefold mission to preserve, promote, and interpret the history of Jackson County and Southern Oregon: exhibits, interpretive programs, tours of historic districts, historic building restoration, archaeological digs, living history, etc. But history has proven the enduring value of the written word. Every time a reader picks up an issue of the *Table Rock Sentinel*, they will have the opportunity to take a personal glimpse through the window of time into the heart and soul of our past. It is a past lived by people as real as you and I; where truth is sometimes indeed stranger than fiction.

The *Sentinel* will continue to present feature articles, including topics that are headlines in today's news such as the Hotel Medford and its destruction in the fire of August 8, 1988. The *Sentinel* will carry articles from a wider circle of authors throughout the region and state—articles which are scholarly, make a distinct contribution to the history of Southern Oregon, yet are still written in an easy to read and enjoyable style. You will also see new features and surprises in the coming issues we think you will find of great interest.

The *Table Rock Sentinel*, the magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, enters a new phase with this issue. However, its commitment to providing a better understanding of the region's history remains as strong today as it did when the concept of a Society periodical magazine was first introduced. We hope you enjoy the *Sentinel* and welcome your comments and letters



Samuel J. Wegner  
Executive Director



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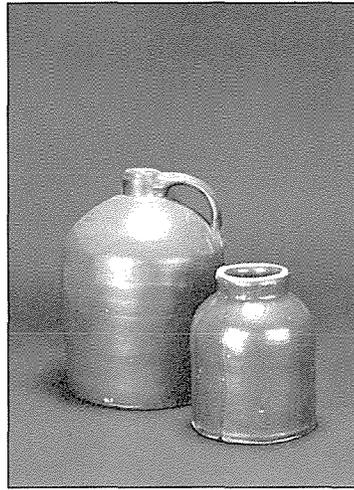
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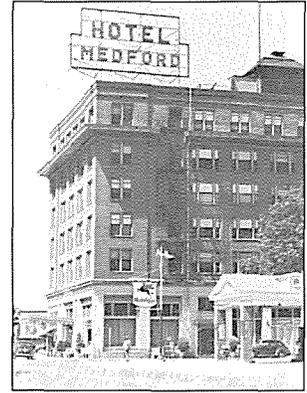
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## Features

### 2 Purple Harvest: Huckleberry Fields and History *by William B. Powell*

Southern Oregon's bountiful berries have lured area pickers to the mountains for generations. Residents recall past berry camps where families and fellowship were as memorable as the harvest.

### 10 Pioneer Pottery: Wares for Southern Oregon Homesteaders *by Jim Robinson, Nancy Ingram and Sue Waldron*

Former Shady Cove potters Joseph and Josiah Hannah produced crocks, jugs and other household ceramics for Rogue Valley residents. To produce these sturdy pots, they faced unforgiving local clays and the challenge of processing natural salt.

### 18 Hotel Medford: Echoes of Grandeur *by Michael E. Oliver*

Although a recent fire destroyed this Medford landmark, its illustrious past remains a vital part of Rogue Valley history.

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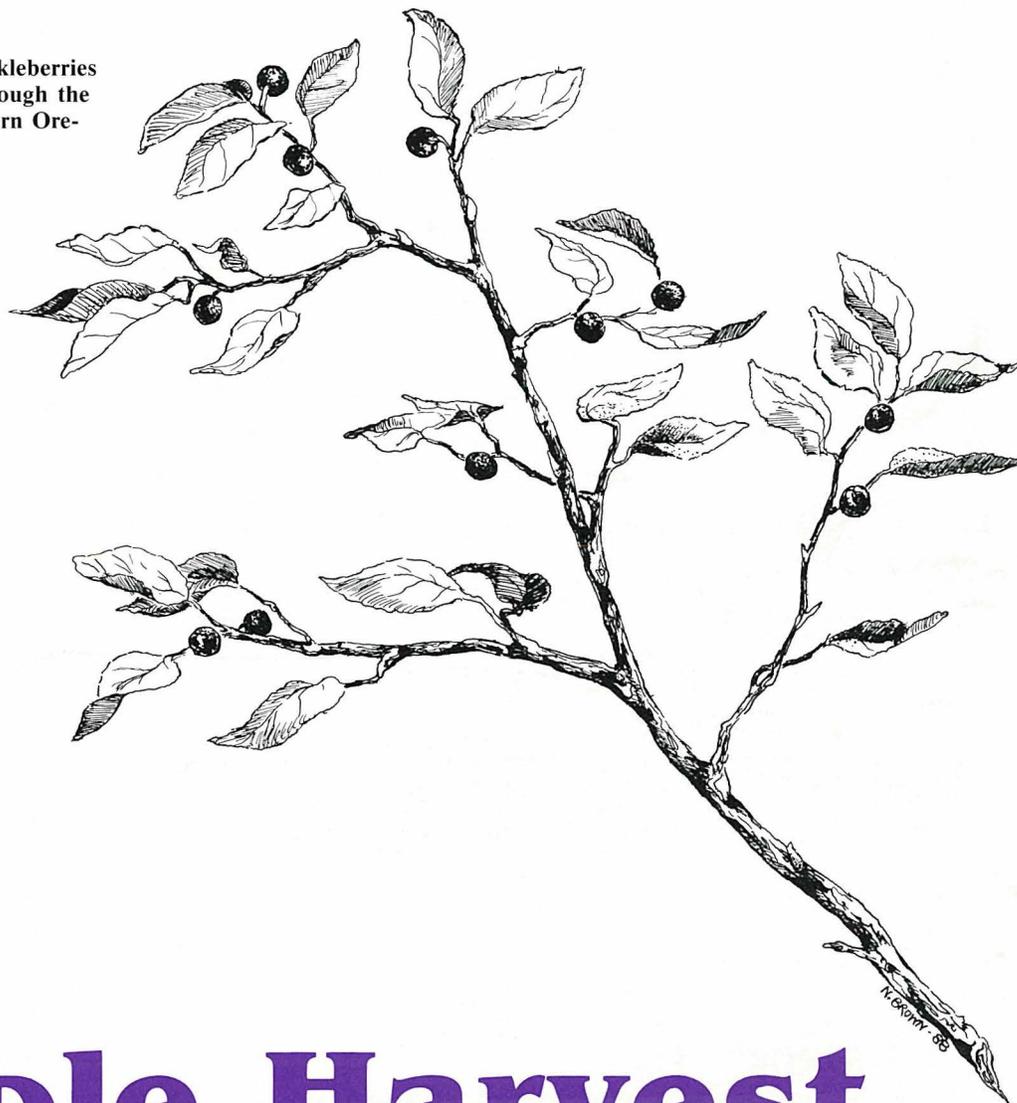
**cover:** Former publisher/editor of the Ashland Daily Tidings not only peeled potatoes but also participated in the settlers' discovery of Crater Lake. SOHS #496.



**back cover:** An unidentified cook serves donuts on a river expedition. SOHS #12041

The search for mountain huckleberries (right) often leads pickers through the spectacular scenery of Southern Oregon (opposite).

Photo by Natalie Brown



# Purple Harvest

## Huckleberry Fields and History

by William B. Powell

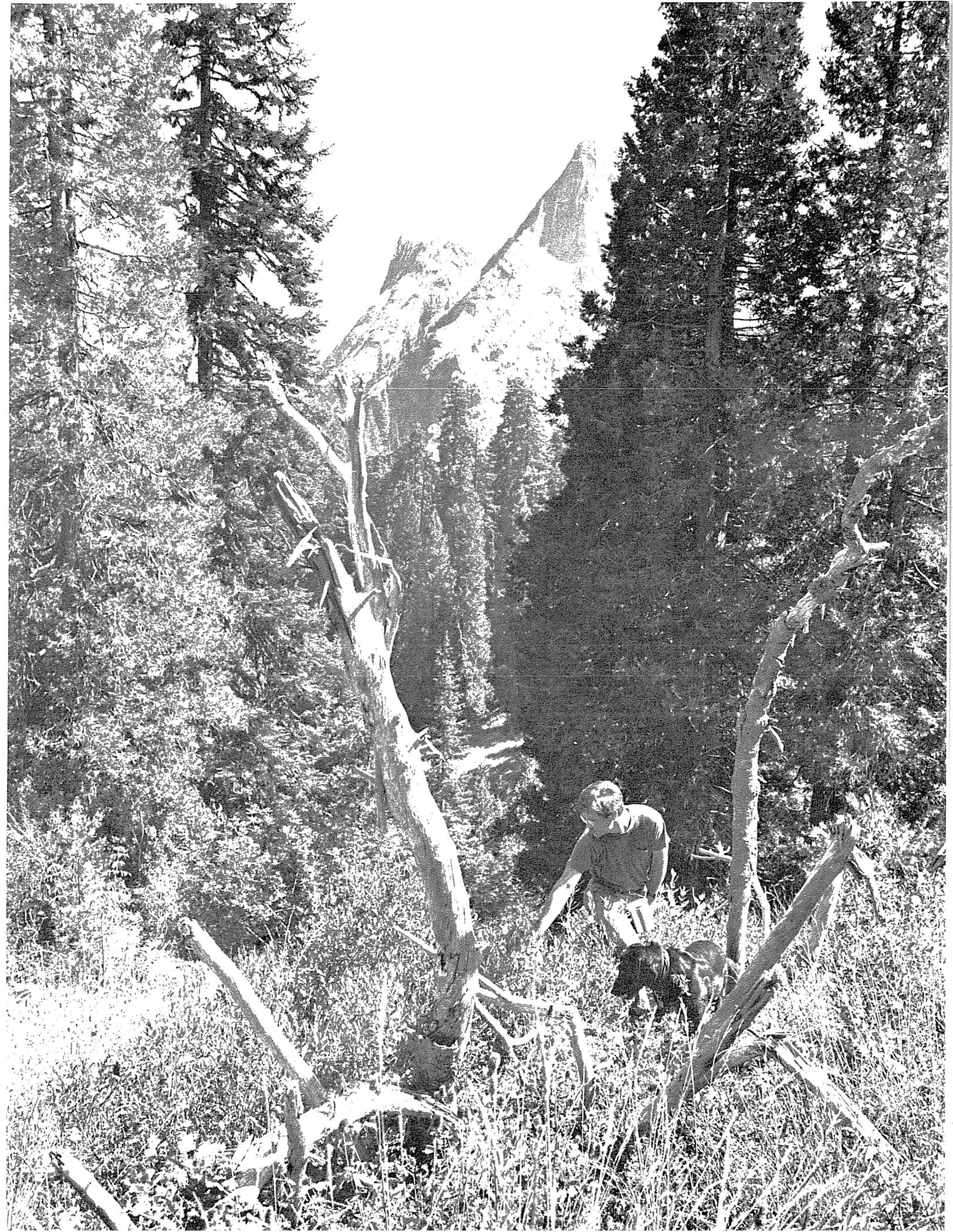
**F**or millennia, huckleberry bushes (*Vaccinium spp.*) have filled in the meadows and burn scars of the high Cascades with their spare branches and mottled green leaves. And except in years with light snowpacks or heavy spring frosts, the huckleberry patches of the upper Rogue drainage have offered up a late summer crop of berries to birds and bears, hunter/gatherers and pioneers.

Today, the berry fields flanking the west slope of the Cascade crest and crowning the ridge openings of the Rogue-Umpqua Divide still lure pickers waist-deep into patches where people have picked for centuries. And in some places, pickers camp beneath the same trees the

pioneers did; motor homes now shelter families where a century ago parents and children slumbered beneath the taut canvas of spacious wall tents.

But though the huckleberry season still brings people together on the high mountain plateaus to harvest and process the luxuriant crop of sweet berries, those who still remember the special atmosphere of the old-time huckleberry camps now say that golden era is past.

Forest management practices indifferent, if not hostile, to the value of an unimpressive shrub in the shadow of merchantable timber may be partly to blame. However, the lost spirit of the camps most likely is a victim of changes in the pace and priorities of the modern lifestyle.



Few people today are willing to take the time to journey to the remote fields and camp for weeks at a time in the single-minded pursuit of berry harvest and preservation.

The berries may be free for the picking, but the picking demands both time and patience. A fast picker may harvest a gallon in two hours in a good berry year. Securing a family's supply of huckleberries for a year's worth of pies, pancakes and preserves can take days, especially when extra time is allowed for cleaning and canning.

Fire of 1910 destroyed this patch and led to severe erosion of the steep wagon road that provided access to it; the area never regained its former importance as a picking site.

More recently, the Forest Service permitted heavy logging in the 1960s in the vicinity of Lens Camp, an old sheepherder's site at the head of the Ginkgo Basin just southwest of Huckleberry Mountain camp. Prospect resident Violet Garrett, who has picked at Huckleberry

**Upper Rogue residents packed supplies into Huckleberry Lake, ca. 1928: (l-r) Geneva Pence, Mabel Sandoz, Peter Sandoz, Ali Sandoz, Fred Sandoz and Paul E. Sandoz (on horse).**

Photo courtesy Rogue River National Forest Historic Photograph Collection.



Although nine species of huckleberry inhabit the meadows, valleys and plateaus of Oregon, it is primarily the mountain huckleberry (*Vaccinium mebranaceum Douglas*) that has been historically significant as a food source for the pre-historic and historic peoples of Jackson County.<sup>1</sup>

In southern Oregon, this species grows at elevations ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 feet, with the biggest patches at the higher altitudes. Although it also grows as a low shrub beneath the mature forest canopy, huckleberry also is an opportunist, filling in areas where forest fires have killed other plants and trees. In fact, fires hot enough to burn to mineral soil without killing the bushes' roots often have a revitalizing effect on a huckleberry patch and allow it to take over from competing grasses and shrubs.<sup>2</sup>

Indians as well as pioneers seemed to understand this, and so esteemed the huckleberry that they periodically set fire to forest lands in order to provide clearings that would encourage the plants' spread.<sup>3</sup>

But fire, as well as timber harvesting activity, also can damage the resource. The large huckleberry patch at Twin Ponds, just north of Mt. McLoughlin on the circa-1863 military wagon road to Fort Klamath, once drew hundreds of pioneer families. The disastrous 30,000-acre Cat Hill

Mountain all her life, remembers that before the Lens Camp area was logged, the huckleberry brush was so thick it towered over the pickers' heads. Only in the last few years have the berries begun to fill in the scars left by the logging and subsequent burning.

"I think when they first logged it, everybody thought brush was brush, and nobody realized that the huckleberries might not come right back," Garrett says. "Now, I think things have changed, and [the government] realizes the recreational value of the berries."

Nonetheless, Cindy Cripps, sensitive plant coordinator for the Rogue River National Forest, acknowledges that the Forest Service has no specific management plan to enhance or even maintain huckleberry production on the forest; the plants just aren't rare enough.<sup>4</sup>

But as evidence of the Forest Service's openness to recognizing the berries as a recreational resource, Cultural Resource Specialist Jeff LaLande cites the forest's cooperation on the 1986 Huckle Burn sale. In designing the sale located near Huckleberry Mountain, Forest Service personnel consulted with a biologist working on behalf of the Klamaths to try a series of post-harvest treatments in order to see which ones most enhanced the vigor of the huckleberries. The trials still are underway.<sup>5</sup>

**T**he most significant berry patches in the Rogue Basin occurred east of Butte Falls at Twin Ponds and north along the western crest of the Cascades at Robinson Butte, at Parker Meadows, at Blue Rock near Gypsy Springs camp and on the headwaters of Wickiup Creek. The extensive patches at Huckleberry Mountain are the best-known, and once drew Klamath and the mysterious mountain-dwelling Molala in great numbers. Native Americans have continued to use the patch to this day. Important patches also thrived at Huckleberry Gap and Huckleberry Lake on the Rogue-Umpqua Divide, patches which at times may have been shared with Upper Umpqua tribes spilling over the divide from the South Umpqua drainage.<sup>6</sup>

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### The huckleberry brush was so thick it towered over the pickers' heads.

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No records exist to tell us how long the Huckleberry Mountain patches had been used by the Indians before the coming of white settlers. The Upland Takelma undoubtedly gathered huckleberries in the Upper Rogue drainage, and may have contested control over some berry patches with the Klamaths, who regarded them as enemies, as well as with the Molala who may have pushed into the Cascade ridgetop country from the north in the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Archeological evidence directly from the high-elevation patches is sketchy. A limited collection of stone tools proves prehistoric use, although the small, barbed projectile points typically found at the berry sites are of a recent style.

The best record of Native American use of the upper Rogue berry fields comes from the Klamaths. Ethnologist Leslie Spier of the University of California at Berkeley gained an understanding of the importance of the Huckleberry Mountain patch from personal interviews with elderly Klamaths in 1925-26.

In late summer and autumn, Spier wrote in his study of Klamath culture, *Klamath Ethnography*, many of those living in the Klamath Marsh vicinity moved directly to Huckleberry Mountain. "The huckleberry patch some fifteen miles southwest of Crater Lake (called *iwumkani*, huckleberry place; *iwum*, huckleberry) is a favorite camping place. Here, Molala from west of the Cascade range join them. Williamson River people (*aukckni*) on Klamath marsh cross directly westward to this spot afoot."<sup>8</sup>

**Huckleberry Mountain once boasted a fire lookout tree, later replaced by a more modern lookout station.**

Photo courtesy Rogue River National Forest Historic Photograph Collection.

The Indians apparently approached along the gentler elevations from the north and east toward the foot of Huckleberry Mountain along the headwaters of Union Creek. There, the trail steepened sharply for the last three to four miles. Turn-of-the-century whites parked their wagons at a natural staging area called Wagon Camp on Union Creek at the base of the hill to make the final climb to the campground on foot or horseback following the route of the Indians before them. A deeply rutted trail worn by generations of Native Americans, as they dragged their families and possessions up the hill, was long visible near Wagon Camp.

"It was quite a rut, six feet wide and three feet deep in places," says Garrett, who remembers having the old



Present huckleberry pickers construct a variety of containers to hold the berries while gathering on sometimes steep slopes. A coffee can looped with string is an old standard. Other pickers prefer gallon plastic milk containers, wide-mouth water bottles or buckets.

Photo by Natalie Brown



trail pointed out to her as a child in the 1930s. "You could just tell it had been used for centuries."<sup>9</sup>

Once they reached the great meadow atop the mountain, the Indians camped for the berry season. A nineteenth-century botanist reported that the Klamath women made berry buckets out of the bark of the lodgepole pine. After peeling a cylinder of bark from a lodgepole trunk, a woman would sew up the slitted side and one end, making a wedge-shaped receptacle in which berries could be stored with leaves over the top to keep them cool.<sup>10</sup>

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**By 1900, the Huckleberry Mountain berry patch had gotten so popular that the camping area began to resemble a temporary city.**

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The harvest must have been bountiful in good berry years. Writes Spier: "Huckleberries are gathered in enormous quantities, especially at Huckleberry Mountain, southwest of Crater Lake, where the Klamath congregate in the third week of August. These are sometimes boiled so that the liquor may be drunk. Besides the common huckleberry, a low variety of the mountain slopes is eaten fresh or dry."<sup>11</sup>

The late Frances Pearson, a native of early Prospect, said the Klamaths dried virtually all their berries, usually by spreading them on canvas sheets in the sun.<sup>12</sup>

Some families of Native American descent still pick at Huckleberry Mountain in August. Garrett, for example, is one-eighth Klamath, and family traditions are that her mother, grandmother and full-blooded great-grandmother all picked at Huckleberry Mountain virtually every season of their lives. Indeed, Garrett's late aunt Alice Allen Hamilton was widely known as Huckleberry Alice. She had the same campsite on the mountain for sixty-five years, and the site, until recently, was listed on Forest Service maps as "Alice's Camp."

Southern Oregon pioneers first learned of the huckleberry fields probably as a result of intercourse with the Klamaths and as a result of exploring, hunting and road-building activities in the Cascades in the early 1860s.

By the 1870s and 1880s settlers had discovered Crater Lake and opened additional trans-Cascade trade and travel routes. Along with the increased mountain traffic, the pioneers quickly developed a passion for the purple berries that at some point must have worried Indian pickers, or should have.

According to a news item in the Jacksonville *Democratic Times* of August 17, 1883, most of the Big Butte neighborhood's citizens had temporarily abandoned their homes for the berry fields: "Forty-five souls from this District were camped at Twin Lakes at one time, and the huckleberries they brought home aggregated to 100 gallons."

Six years later, the same newspaper suggests that congested berry fields had already become a summertime problem: "Parties recently returned from the berry patches at the head of Rogue River report a large crop of blackberries, especially at Union Creek Mountain, and a good many huckleberries. As usual, the pickers also are numerous."<sup>13</sup>

**B**y 1900, the Huckleberry Mountain berry patch had gotten so popular that the camping area began to resemble a temporary city. Mrs. Pearson recalled her family staying at Wagon Camp one year and hiking up to the berry fields every day, apparently because most of the campsites up on top were taken.<sup>14</sup>

In those years, families would come to camp for a month or more. They would leave their wagons at Wagon Camp and pack in the last four miles to the berry patch. Local residents saw the picking traffic as a business opportunity. In 1910, George Woodruff built a toll wagon road from Wagon Camp to the summit. But retired rancher

As many as 500 campers a season (and perhaps as many as 1,500 in an outstanding berry year) had their choice of sites scattered in several areas.<sup>17</sup> The site later known as Huckleberry City was called Brandenburg Camp after a wealthy eastern Oregon family, while Huckleberry City was further down the slope. Other areas included Crawford Camp and Squaw Flat.<sup>18</sup>

By the 1920s, the scene at Huckleberry Mountain was beginning to change. Ed Beckleheimer built the Union Creek gas station and restaurant in 1923–24, and a road passable by automobile to Huckleberry Camp was completed about the same time, as was a thirty- by forty-foot wooden dance platform at the campground.



**Families also cleaned and canned the fruit while camping, as demonstrated by these industrious women at Huckleberry City, ca. 1938.**

Photo courtesy Rogue River National Forest Historic Photograph Collection.

Jack Hollenbeak, who first moved to Prospect as a boy in 1913, says the road was a poor one that wasn't very successful.<sup>15</sup> According to Mrs. Pearson, the road was so steep that it took four horses to pull a wagon up the road and a tree tied to the rear as a brake on the way down.<sup>16</sup>

In 1916, Klamath Falls packer and rodeo show promoter Bill Sims headquartered a string of mules at Wagon Camp to ferry pickers' gear to the top. Sims reportedly used cheap, green mules, snubbing them down and blindfolding them while they were loaded with packs. Once the string was ready to head up the hill, he let loose the blindfolds and ropes and relied on a well-trained heeling dog to keep the mules from getting too fractious. It must have been some dog. "Sims guaranteed those packs, jars and all, against breakage both coming and going," Hollenbeak recalls.

Music had always been an important part of pioneer society, and so was dancing. But dancing on bare soil leaves something to be desired. As they stepped and twirled to songs like *Skip to My Lu*, pretty soon "those dancers would kick up a cloud of dust that would make a buffalo ashamed," remembers Hollenbeak.

The dance platform didn't last long, though. With the dancing came behavioral problems that marred otherwise cordial human relations on the mountain. Some of the problems likely resulted from boredom and smuggled quantities of "White Mule" moonshine. Hollenbeak says much of the friction stemmed, however, from resentments that grew between the young white and Native American men. "The white fellows would dance with the Indian girls but the white girls weren't as anxious to dance with the Indian boys. After a while, the Indians would get to feel-

ing that 'they were using up our girls but they won't lend us any of theirs.'" Campers would call on the forest ranger stationed at Huckleberry Guard Station to maintain order, but the dance platform soon was torn down.<sup>19</sup>

By the late twenties and early thirties, families from the old days still came to camp and pick, but the camaraderie was somehow less spectacularly social and more down-to-earth, reflecting perhaps the diminishing sense of spare time that the post-World War I age of automobiles, aeroplanes and rural electrification brought with it.

The desperate economic pressures of the Depression may have added to the sense that less time and fewer

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**This left a number of the park's black bears at a loss as to where to find food, and many of the dislocated bears ended up attempting to share the campground and berry patches at Huckleberry Mountain.**

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resources could be justified on the "frivolity" of berry picking. But for many families, picking was far from a frivolity. "It was an important source of income," says Garrett.

"After we had gotten all we needed, we'd sell the berries," she says. "People were wild about them. They would come to the camp all the way from Medford and Klamath Falls and ask you if you had any berries to sell. Sometimes the Indians would buy them too. For years and years they were \$1 a gallon."

After the automobile road had been completed to the camp, Garrett says the first families would set up camp at the mountain as soon as the road opened in late July. "You'd go up and probably stay two weeks and pick berries, then you'd go home and get more provisions and then go back."

Garrett and her mother, Grace Allen Rambo, would walk to the picking site from the campground about eight a.m. and pick until noon, she recalls. Most pickers used coffee cans with bails attached. "Lard buckets were real popular too," she says.

After lunch, the pickers would return for another three hours of picking. In late afternoon, families would filter back into camp with their days' harvest. Sometimes the men would carry in the berries in five-gallon cans rigged as backpacks. Garrett says five gallons of berries was an average day's yield between her and her mother.

As the dinner hour approached, each campsite grew busy with the work of caring for the berries. After they were washed and cleaned, campers would boil the berries in kettles over a campfire before hot-packing them in heat-sterilized Mason jars. Garrett says her mother

always canned at least three cases of quarts and a case of jelly each season. Hollenbeak recalls his mother canning up to seventy-five half-gallon Ball jars with the screw-on lid and separate rubber gasket.

In the earlier days, canning jars were harder to come by and settlers used old tin cans, beer bottles and other miscellaneous containers in which to preserve what they'd picked, sealing the containers with wax.

What wasn't canned or sold had to be consumed before the berries got moldy. Those skilled at the use of Dutch ovens became pretty good at making pies and biscuits. Another popular way to use the berries was to make huckleberry dumplings. Garrett says her mother would boil half a gallon of berries with water and sugar, then drop in dumplings to cook. "They would come out purple on the outside and white in the center. Oh, they were good!" she recalls.

In the evenings after dinner, the children would play games of tag or catch or would chase through the woodlands and meadows while the adults visited. The twenty to thirty families who were regulars at Huckleberry Mountain in the '30s had all known each other for years, so there was lots to talk about.

People also brought along musical instruments, just as in the old days. "It didn't happen every night," says Garrett. "But someone like Aunt Alice would take up her fiddle or mom would get her guitar. People would gather near a fire. You could hear that music across the meadow and you couldn't believe how sweet it sounded."

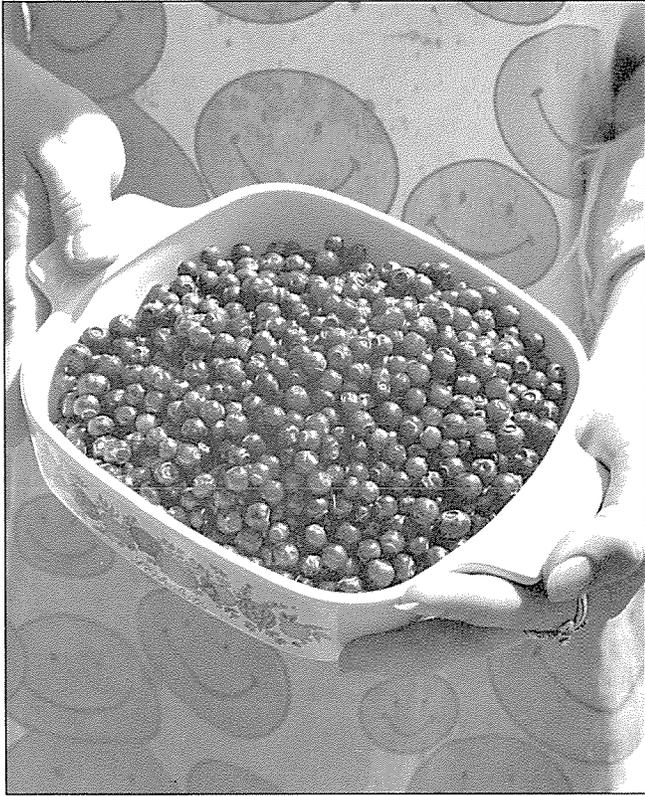
**T**he advent of World War II made a difference in the rhythm of the berry camp. With gas rationing coupons scarce, it was essential to plan for needed provisions to avoid gas-wasting restocking trips. People still went, but they stayed longer.

The war also provided some old-fashioned excitement for pickers. Because of wartime scarcities, tourism at Crater Lake National Park fell off and the park service virtually closed the park, along with the park's garbage dump. This left a number of the park's black bears at a loss as to where to find food, and many of the dislocated bears ended up attempting to share the campground and berry patches at Huckleberry Mountain.

"People must have killed four or five bears that season," says Garrett. "I think Aunt Alice accounted for at least one of them." Garrett also remembers Alice rendering the surprisingly clear, odorless bear oil from the fat and using it to fry raised doughnuts over the woodstove in her cooking tent.

Many of the regulars continued to camp at the mountain after the war. But within twenty years of the war's end, the ambiance at Huckleberry Mountain seemed to have vanished. Families grew older and changed, like the succession stages of a maturing forest. "You'd go up there and you didn't know anybody anymore," Garrett says.

"And part of it was that people didn't camp like they used to. We were talking about a time when there weren't many jobs, when it was hard to get work," says Garrett. People would stay at the mountain until the first storms



**Picked, prepared and ready for a pie, a Rogue Valley resident displays the fruits of several hours labor.**

Photo by Natalie Brown

of September—or until Labor Day if they had children who had to get back to school. “Nowadays, you talk about taking two weeks off to pick berries and people would think you were crazy.”

The family that now owns the Union Creek Resort wishes people didn’t think berry-picking was such a crazy way to spend late August.

The resort includes Beckie’s, the still-popular cafe first opened by the Beckleheimers in 1924. Huckleberry pie has been a mainstay of Beckie’s menu right up to the present, and the eatery has bought berries from local pickers every season since it opened.

Prices have changed, though. While Garrett remembers getting one dollar a gallon for decades, Beckie’s pie baker Kristine Lee today pays twelve dollars a gallon for the precious berries. “In a good year, we buy 200 to 300 gallons to last us through the year,” she says. “We get about four pies to the gallon.”<sup>20</sup>

Lee says summer tourists sample the pie more out of curiosity than anything, but it is the local residents who really appreciate it. “We get a lot of people who come up here for the pie and say ‘I remember when . . .,’” she says.

Locals sometimes get cranky, too, when the berries run out, as they are likely to do this year. May frosts killed the huckleberry blossoms at the higher elevations and much of the surviving crop has fallen victim to the intervening drought. As a result, Lee says Beckie’s will just have to make do this season. She said she bought berries two years ago from a source near Bandon, but the coastal species “tasted different and they looked different, so we gave up on that idea.”

There is something indefinably special about huckleberries, something in the light in August, something about the ancient ridgetop patches under the towering Shasta red firs where generations of men and women have learned patience and gladly given away their time in return for a purple harvest.

“I look back on it now and it was a wonderful time,” says Garrett, shaking her head. “But I was up there on Huckleberry Mountain the other day and there wasn’t a soul around. It was so odd.”



ENDNOTES

1. Leslie Spier, *Klamath Ethnography* (Berkeley: the University of California Press, 1930), p. 167
2. Personal interview with Tom Mountz, assistant fire management officer, Prospect Ranger District, Aug. 22, 1988.
3. Jeffrey M. LaLande, *Prehistory and History of the Rogue River National Forest: a Cultural Resource Overview* (USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1980), p. 135.
4. Personal interview with Cindy Cripps, sensitive plant coordinator, Rogue River National Forest, Aug. 22, 1988.
5. Personal interview with Jeff LaLande, Aug. 23, 1988.
6. Oral history interview recorded by Jeff LaLande with Elk Creek native Marcel Sandoz in 1982.
7. LaLande, *Prehistory and History of the Rogue River National Forest*, pp. 165-166.
8. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 160.
9. Personal interview with Violet Garrett, Prospect resident, Aug. 20, 1988.
10. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, citing Frederick Colville, p. 176.
11. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 165.
12. Oral history interview recorded by Jeff LaLande of Prospect pioneer Frances Pearson, April 1981.
13. Jacksonville *Democratic Times*, Aug. 15, 1889, in the Southern Oregon Historical Society research library collection.
14. Frances Pearson oral history.
15. Personal interview with Jack Hollenbeak, Prospect resident, Aug. 22, 1988.
16. Frances Pearson oral history.
17. Personal interview with Jack Hollenbeak.
18. Personal interview with Jack Hollenbeak. Hollenbeak said he could not recall seeing more than 500 campers at Huckleberry Mountain during the teens and twenties. But a 1909 Forest Service report refers to estimates of up to 1,500 pickers using the patch in 1908. (LaLande, *Prehistory and History of the Rogue River National Forest*, p. 186.)
19. Personal interview with Jack Hollenbeak.
20. Personal interview with Kristine Lee, Union Creek, Aug. 22, 1988.

*William B. Powell has tramped the drainages and divides of the Rogue and Umpqua basins in search of huckleberry patches. He is also editor of the Upper Rogue Independent.*

# Pioneer Pottery

Wares for Southern Oregon Homesteaders

by Jim Robinson,  
Nancy Ingram  
and Sue Waldron



Although the Hannahs did not sign their pots, they marked the capacity on this four-gallon "ear-handle" crock. Other sturdy pieces (*opposite*) show the wide rims and characteristic simplicity of Hannah wares.

Photos by Natalie Brown



**H**omely but homey, the stoneware pots, crocks and jugs made by the Hannah family are part of early Rogue Valley history. Used to preserve and store food more than 100 years ago, Hannah stoneware was once quite common in the valley. But very few pieces exist today, perhaps because potters and pottery once seemed so commonplace that family pottery businesses like the Hannah's were taken completely for granted, eventually to vanish unremembered, uncollected and unchampioned. And as one pottery historian admitted, the seemingly unheroic craft of pottery "... was a messy business — [making] these objects made of mud."<sup>1</sup>

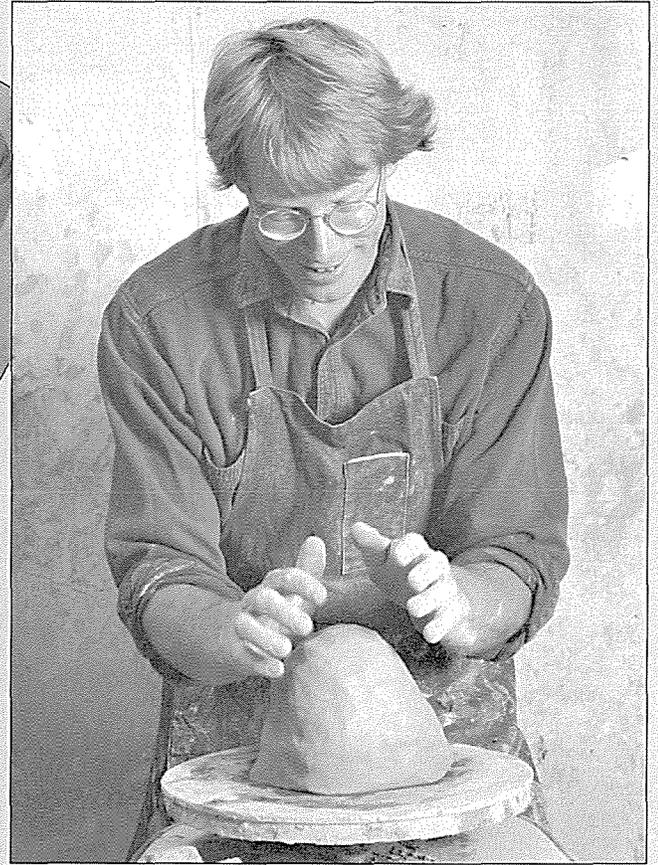
Josiah Hannah was born June 10, 1809, in Kentucky. Early in his life the family moved to the area around Cincinnati, Ohio, where in 1838 Josiah met and married Mary S. Caldwell. It is likely that in 1840 Mary and Josiah and their small son Joseph moved to Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri. Members of Mary's family ran a pottery southwest of Fulton and Josiah worked there learning the potter's craft.

Mary's uncle Thomas Caldwell, Sr., established a pottery in Missouri as early as 1826.<sup>2</sup> He had apprenticed with a German potter named Lears in Paris, Kentucky, where he learned to manufacture traditional German high-fired, salt-glazed stoneware. The Caldwell Pottery operated in Missouri for seventy-five years using fine, local, high-temperature clays for its wares.

Josiah worked in Missouri for approximately twenty years, and in 1862 decided to move to Oregon. Why he left Missouri is not known; perhaps a friend wrote convincingly of the beauty of the country and fertility of the Oregon soil. The promise of the Homestead Act, which became effective January 1, 1863, also may have helped to lure Josiah and his family to Oregon to claim 60 acres of free land.

Some of the Caldwell family had strong southern sympathies and a few owned slaves. The uneasiness that affected much of Missouri before the Civil War may have led the fifty-three year old Josiah to leave his home, job, position as benefactor of the Westminster Men's College and his charter membership in the New Bloomfield First Presbyterian Church, to move west.

Whatever their reasons, Josiah, Mary, twenty-two year old Joseph and twenty-one year old Jemima joined the wagon trains moving west in 1862. The Oregon Trail, already in use for almost twenty years, was well marked with ferries and bridges built at many of the more dangerous crossings. Nonetheless, problems experienced by the pioneers in 1843 still existed in 1862: dust, mosquitos and the constant search for drinkable water and sufficient grass for the teams of horses pulling the Hannah wagon. The family chose horses over oxen for their wagon as they had "... always loved and owned good horses."<sup>3</sup> Indians also were a concern on the 1862 trains. Sensing the com-



**Differing from traditional methods only by use of an electric wheel rather than kick wheel, Phoenix potter Jim Robinson demonstrates throwing a pot. He prepares ten pounds of clay (l-r) by kneading out the air bubbles and places it on the wheel. While turning at a high speed he centers the clay, carefully opening the mouth of the vessel. He then begins a series of pulls, increasing the height of the pot and thinning the walls.**

Photos by Natalie Brown

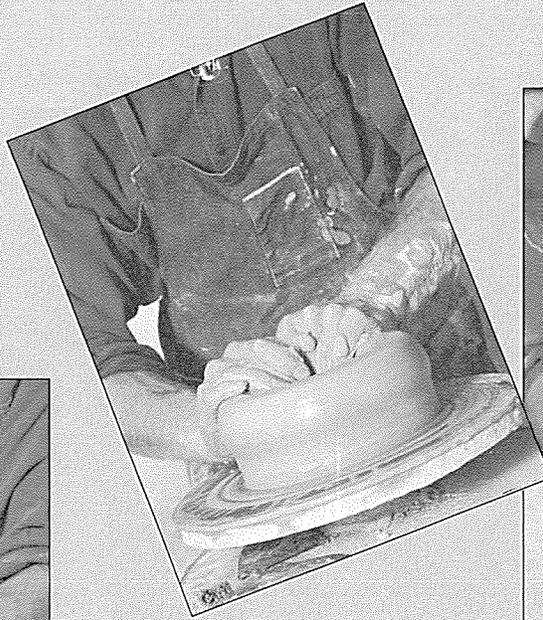
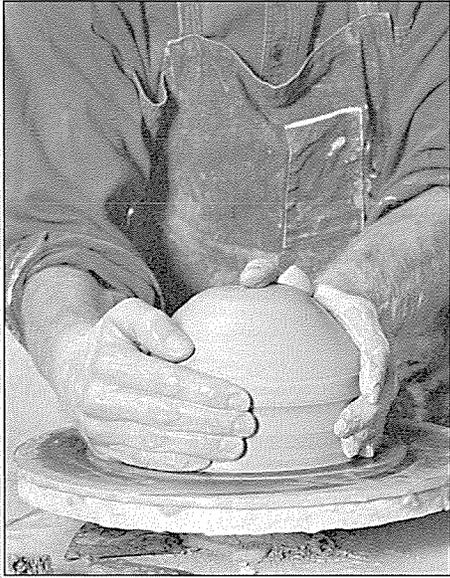
ing distraction of the Civil War and definitely unhappy with the continuing flood of white settlers across their land, the Native Americans struck out at the wagon trains. In August, several of the trains suffered attacks in southern Idaho at a place known as Massacre Rocks.<sup>4</sup>

“When the family reached Oregon they came south to the Rogue Valley,” says a newspaper account of the family’s history. “They came over the top at the Phipps place where Medford is now; it was just chaparral then. They camped under the oaks. When they set forth to take a look at more of Jackson County they continued up the Rogue River. They were fascinated with the tall timber and the lush growth of grass. They bought the Tom Rainy (Raimey) property”<sup>5</sup> on the north bank of the Rogue River just below Shady Cove.

Once a cabin was built and the farm and orchard laid out, Josiah began the search for suitable clay to use on the potter’s wheel brought from Missouri. There are not many places in Jackson County to find high-fire, refrac-

tory clay. But the Gardner family on Coal Creek in the East Evans Creek drainage had discovered clay while planting their orchard. That clay proved to be just what the Hannahs were looking for. Josiah avoided the underlying white clay, a gummy, high shrinkage substance that would have caused the pots to crack as they cooled in the kiln, for the more usable brown clay.<sup>6</sup> This more workable, iron-rich clay produced a dense, watertight vessel. There were problems with warping and sagging in the stoneware during firing with this clay, but in time the Hannahs learned to construct their large crocks with inch wide rims and fairly heavy upper walls to compensate for deficiencies in the load-bearing strength of the earthen substance.

Josiah and Joseph hauled wagonloads of clay to the farm almost twenty miles over the ridge on primitive roads. In those days, the clay was prepared for pottery use by dumping it into a shallow pit, covering it with water and thoroughly mixing it with wooden spades. “This preliminary mixing of the clay and water into a ‘slurry’ served two purposes: it brought the mass of clay to a uniform consistency, and it allowed the rocks and pebbles to sink to the bottom of the pit. The slurry was then dipped from the bunting pit and strained through a horsehair sieve into the second adjacent pit which was called a ‘sun kiln’.”<sup>7</sup> When the malleable earth had dried enough



it was wedged or worked into handy-sized pieces and stored in a damp location.

The first Hannah project would have been making the bricks for a kiln. Using wagonloads of clay and hundreds of bricks, a round, domed, kiln was constructed. Kilns of this type were generally eight to ten feet in diameter

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**Once a cabin was built and the farm and orchard laid out, Josiah began the search for suitable clay to use on the potter's wheel.**

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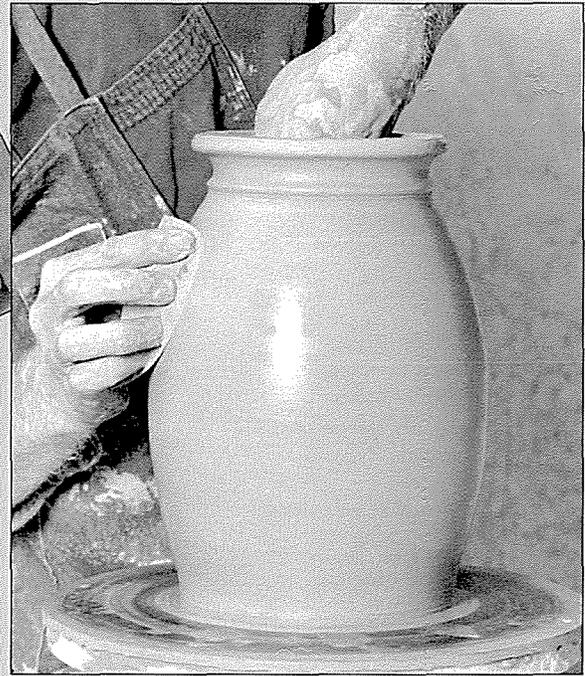
with an eight-foot vaulted ceiling in the center. Four fire boxes and a chimney to the side would complete a working kiln.

The work of "turning" the pots began once the clay was prepared. Using the wheel from Missouri, Josiah, Joseph and possibly Robert Caldwell, Mary's brother who traveled to Oregon with the Hannahs, duplicated the shapes and sizes of the pots they had made back home. Crocks

in several sizes, jugs, churns, pitchers and milk pans were a few of the shapes turned. Each piece was carefully shaped, cut free of the wheel with a fine wire and transferred to a drying rack.<sup>8</sup> Unlike many potters, the Hannahs did not mark their pots. But the Hannahs often impressed a hand-written number on the side of the crocks along with a double scored line pressed into the wet clay while the wheel still turned.

When the pieces reached a leather-like consistency during drying they were coated with a thin slurry, or slip, of a more fusible clay and set back on the rack to continue drying. When the pots were bone dry they were loaded into the kiln. The pieces were placed rim to rim and foot (base) to foot in tall stacks. Odd sized pieces such as jugs were often laid on top of the stacks on their side. When fully loaded, the kiln held anywhere from fifty to one hundred pots. They would be separated by wads, raw clay spacers that helped keep the pots from fusing together and allowed the heat and salt vapors to reach the interior of the pots.

When the kiln was filled the door was bricked closed. Firing would begin and continue for sixty hours night and day. Each of the fire boxes around the kiln had to be fed. A firing required many cords of dry wood. Using a wet wood produced a smokey fire and affected the iron in the clay, turning it black and rendering a less satisfactory



product. Toward the end of the firing, activity increased with the use of more finely split wood and faster stoking to push the temperature in the kiln to approximately 2200 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature necessary for salt-glazing.

The Hannahs' salt-glazed much of their early stoneware. Salt-glazing gave the pots a low-gloss finish, and when fused to the iron rich clay created a variety of colors such as brown, rust, plum and yellowish green. When the kiln had reached sufficient temperature, a long-handled scoop was used to introduce salt in the rear of the fire boxes. The heat would make the salt crystals vaporize and the vapor would spread through the kiln, collecting and fusing on the surface of the pots. As the kiln cooled, the vapors solidified into a low-gloss glaze.

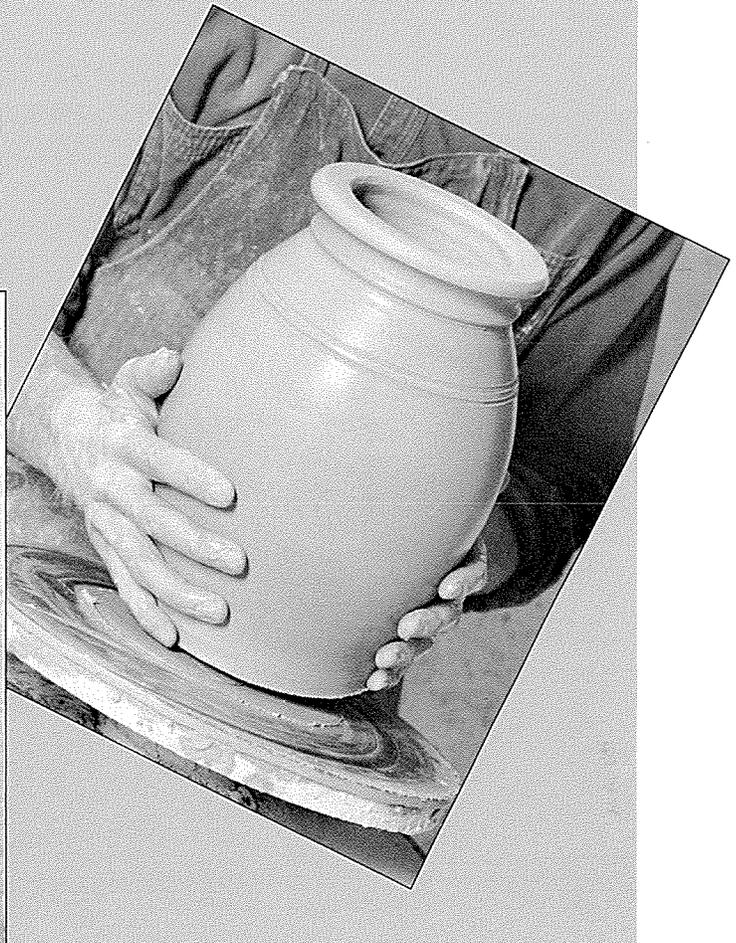
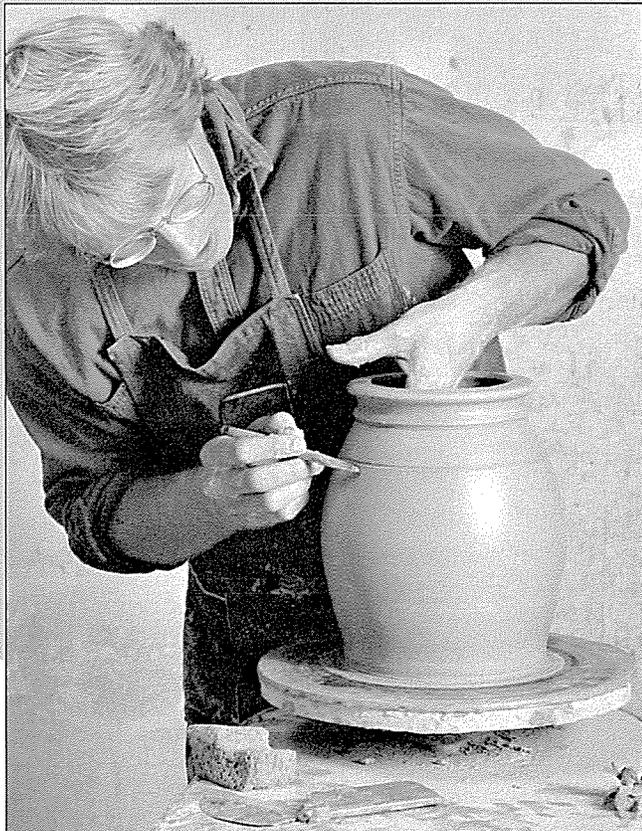
Each firing of the kiln required ten to twenty pounds of salt to glaze the stoneware, and before the arrival of the railroad in the Rogue Valley in 1883, salt was a high priced commodity. Josiah signed the petition to the county in 1872 for a road to the Sizemore Salt Works on West Evans Creek.<sup>9</sup> The salt works were about twenty-five miles from the Hannah farm, using the new road. Each trip to the salt works would require two days of travel time and several more days to evaporate the salt from the water in the spring using the metal vats<sup>10</sup> provided by the salt works.

When the kiln cooled, it was unbricked and an inventory of the finished stoneware began. Pots that had cracked, sagged or warped excessively were "wasters" and were discarded. Pots that fused together and could not be separated without damage also were thrown out. In the early years of the pottery, the number of "wasters" was probably high as the Hannahs learned the characteristics of Jackson County clay.

**J**osiah apparently sold his pots in Eagle Point, Jacksonville and Ashland. "The jugs and crocks sold in the manner of their later contents, by the gallon . . . The price was 15 cents a gallon. This meant that a ten gallon crock sold for \$1.50."<sup>11</sup> A wagon was loaded with loose straw and the crocks and jugs placed securely within it for the drive to town. One story notes that Peter Britt of Jacksonville bought a whole wagonload of unsold pots from the Hannahs. The pots were in high enough demand to warrant a notice in the local newspaper: "Joseph Hannah of Upper Rogue River is burning a kiln of earthenware (stoneware), so says the Big Butte correspondent of the *Tidings*. The clay in that part of Jackson County is admirably adapted for pottery purposes and the industry of Mr. Hannah should be encouraged."<sup>12</sup>

Using hands and simple tools, Jim Robinson throws a pot similar to those the Hannah family produced a hundred years ago. Continuing with a demonstration of traditional techniques (*l-r*), he keeps the clay moist but not soaked, swabbing out excess water as it collects on the bottom. He applies pressure from the center to bulge the correct contour and smooths the exterior with a rib. The lines are etched into the finished crock, and it is removed from the wheel to dry before firing.

Photos by Natalie Brown



Josiah became as involved in Jackson County life as he had been in the Callaway County community. In addition to the farm and orchard, the Hannahs ran cattle on their property. They also constructed and operated a ferry across the Rogue. Josiah applied to the county for a license to run the ferry in June 1869. The county commissioners granted his license and gave him a fee schedule. The license was renewed each year, finally expiring in 1874.<sup>13</sup> Josiah also became a county assessor and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Josiah died August 21, 1884, and his wife Mary died about a year later.

Joseph kept the pottery open for another ten or fifteen years. The severe winter of 1889-90 caused the Rogue River to change its channel and flooded the house, shop and kiln. "J. C. Hannah sustained a heavy loss on his ranch on Rogue River, by a change in the channel almost ruining his fine orchard, standing on the banks of the stream. His place, prior to 1862, was one of the finest bodies of land on the Rogue River, but repeated freshets have

reduced the quantity of the bottom land more than two thirds. A barn at Mr. Hannah's collapsed under the snow."<sup>14</sup>

Joseph relocated the pottery to a knoll nearby. His new kiln seems to have been more efficient and cleaner firing, for the pots from this kiln are much lighter in color. He also changed his potting techniques to include slip-glazed wares. This slip fused during the firing to a dark brown satin glaze. No salt was used on these later wares. Many of the later pots also seem to have been made using

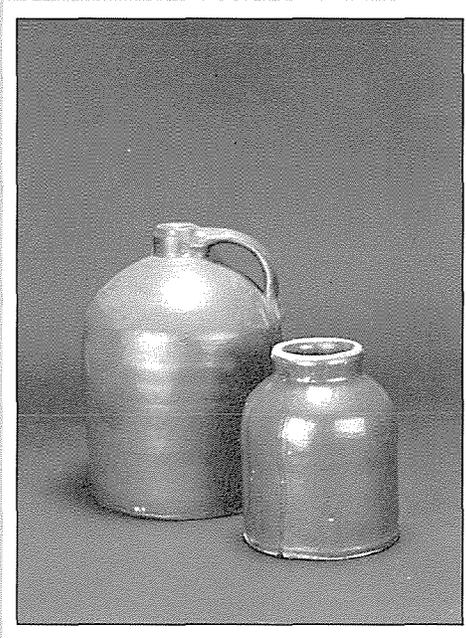
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**Unlike many potters, the Hannahs did not mark their pots.**

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a jigger mold. The jiggering into plaster molds while the wheel turned gave these pieces a more refined and mechanical character not found in the earlier hand-thrown wares. Joseph also continued making low-fired, nesting water pipes about eighteen inches long with an interior diameter of one and a half inches.

In the early 1900s Joseph apparently closed down the



**Jacksonville artist Eugene Bennett discovered these two Hannah pots in his collection. The Southern Oregon Historical Society and *Clayfolk* are attempting to locate other examples of existing Hannah wares.**

Photo by Natalie Brown

pottery and relocated his farm to a homestead a few miles away. He died March 29, 1928, in Medford.

Hannah stoneware played an important part in a housewife's life. The crocks and pots in various sizes were used for pickling and preserving. Sauerkraut was made in large crocks and eggs were water-glassed in smaller ones. Sorghum, cider, water and possibly liquor were stored in Hannah jugs. Hannah churns were used to produce butter from cream skimmed off fresh milk in Hannah milk pans. Hannahware was watertight and the salt-glazed surfaces were easy to clean. With candle wax or egg whites and paper, most of the pots could be sealed to preserve fall's abundant garden produce for the long months of winter.

However, glass canning jars, tin and enameled wares became readily available in the 1880s when the railroad arrived and were undoubtedly a factor in Joseph's decision to close the pottery. The new kitchen equipment was of lighter weight and with glass you could see the contents. Heavy stoneware became obsolete.

Today there is a rebirth of interest in the history and craft of making hand-thrown pottery. A group of local potters organized *Clayfolk* in 1975 to share information, support each other, provide educational assistance and organize an annual pre-Christmas pottery sale.

Still on a small scale and with an emphasis on decorative rather than functional use, the wares produced by many of today's potters employ techniques similar to those

used by the Hannah family a century ago. While the Hannahs used the old techniques because that is what they knew, potters today choose the old ways because they are more conducive to self expression. Made on an electric wheel now instead of the old kick wheel, today's pots retain the character of earlier hand-thrown wares. Fired

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**Potters today choose the old ways because they are more conducive to self-expression.**

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in small periodic kilns, modern pottery highlights the characteristics of various clays to the best advantage. Large industrial pottery firms slip cast, jigger and ram-press their wares, giving the pieces a mechanical perfection, while modern studio potters keep alive a connection with their ceramic heritage, producing pieces full of the character associated with the heyday of American handmade pottery.

The Hannahs brought a much needed skill to Oregon when they arrived in 1862. Another stoneware pottery, the Oregon Pottery Company in Buena Vista on the Wil-

lamette River, produced wares but those wares only reached as far south as Roseburg where the train stopped in 1874. Housewives in the Rogue Valley were therefore deprived of the many advantages of stoneware until the Hannahs began producing pots locally. Pottery may have been a part-time activity for the Hannahs though; the family members are always listed on the census rolls as "farmers."

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## Sorghum, cider, water and possibly liquor were stored in Hannah jugs.

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Although they also farmed and ferried, the Hannahs developed a successful pottery employing local clays to produce stoneware for nineteenth-century Rogue Valley residents. Plain yet practical, the churns, crocks and jugs met a family's most basic food preserving and processing needs. And today, these valuable historic artifacts testify to a time when life's daily demands bound craft and community together.



### ENDNOTES

1. Jeanette Lasansky, *Made of Mud* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1979), p. 2
2. Clyde M. Evans, "Early History of Fire Clay and Refractory Industry of Callaway County" *The Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 19, (October 1962) p. 2
3. *Medford Mail Tribune*, May 10, 1970, 4:1.
4. Bert Webber, *Diary of Jane Gould in 1862*, (Medford: Webb Research Group, 1987) p. 62.
5. *Medford Mail Tribune*, May 10, 1970, 4:1.
6. A. N. Winchell, *Petrology and Mineral Resources of Jackson and Josephine County*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Aug. 1914.
7. Harold F. Guiland, *Early American Folk Pottery* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971) p. 16.
8. *Medford Mail Tribune*, May 10, 1929, 4:1.
9. *Jackson County Commissioner's Journal*, May 8, 1872, Vol. 3, p. 209.
10. Conversation between Ralph L. Weide and S. Waldron, July 15, 1988.
11. *Medford Mail Tribune*, May 10, 1970, 4:1.
12. *Oregon Sentinel*, July 21, 1888, 3:3.
13. John and Marguerite Black, *Early Jackson County Roads and River Crossings, Part I, Upper Rogue*, personal papers, 1979.
14. *Democratic Times*, February 13, 1890.

*Special thanks to Marguerite and John Black, the Gold Diggers, Bill and Mary Whitlow of Missouri, Bill Cottrell, the Everett Hannah family, Blaine Schmeer and Dr. Daniel Scheans for providing information needed to produce this article.*

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*Jim Robinson and Nancy Ingram are both potters and members of Clayfolk, a group supporting the interests of ceramicists in southern Oregon. Sue Waldron is research assistant for the Southern Oregon Historical Society, and frequent contributor to the Table Rock Sentinel.*

## Pots and Food Preservation: A New Exhibit Opens

Over a hundred years ago housewives in southern Oregon stored sauerkraut in crockery pots, preserved fruits and vegetables for the winter and knew how to keep eggs fresh for several months. Their household secrets, the tools they used and the pottery used for storage are explored at the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History's newest exhibit, *HANNAH: Pioneer Potters on the Rogue*.

Opening Saturday, October 8, the exhibit will focus on the ceramic wares produced by pioneer potters Josiah and Joseph Hannah at their home-site in Shady Cove. Salt-glazed crocks, jugs, churns, bowls, irrigation pipe and other utilitarian pieces used in the nineteenth century will be shown as well as a model kiln and food tools used from 1870 through 1900. The exhibit will also feature displays concerning food preparation and preservation. As part of the opening day's activities at the museum you will find demonstrations of food preparation and preservation as well as traditional potting techniques.

Other events christening the new exhibit include a member's reception at the museum Friday, October 7 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A home tour of Jacksonville, sponsored by the Jacksonville Boosters on October 7 and 8 offers glimpses of unique Jacksonville residences including the Beekman House. A fee is charged for the home tour, though admission to Beekman House is free. In conjunction with the home tour, a country fair at the U. S. Hotel offers the opportunity to purchase handmade crafts.

Also October 8, Beekman House will host the annual Harvest Festival, an afternoon of traditional craft demonstrations and activities. Last year visitors to the Harvest Festival discovered a blacksmith, basket maker, spinning and weaving demonstrations and instruction on soap making as well as living history characters.

Since last summer, a regional search for Hannah wares has identified about thirty pots in the Society's and private collections. Jim Robinson and Nancy Ingram, both members of *Clayfolk*, a local organization of potters, have been actively involved in identifying and organizing the Hannah pots. If you think you may have a Hannah pot and need more information or assistance in identification contact Jim Robinson at 535-4282, Nancy Ingram at 535-1416 or Jime Matoush, the Society's coordinator of exhibits, at 899-1847.

Plan to visit Jacksonville the weekend of October 7 and 8 to enjoy a variety of activities and events and celebrate the opening of *HANNAH: Pioneer Potters on the Rogue*.



# Hotel Medford

## Echoes of Grandeur

by Michael E. Oliver

**D**ozens gathered late in the night to watch fire fighters' futile efforts to save the Hotel Medford. The following morning only a few scarred walls stood eerily in the smoky debris, a humbled bastion of a bygone era that once spoke of crystal chandeliers, flowing gowns, top hats and tails.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Hotel Medford was hailed in 1912 as one of the most modern and finely equipped hotels on the Pacific coast by the *Centennial History of Oregon*. "The building is one of the most elegantly appointed on the Pacific coast," the Centennial stated, "And many years ahead of the little city in which it is situated. Its cuisine is unexcelled either in Portland or San Francisco and there are seldom any

vacant rooms in the house. Forty (an almost unheard of number) of the rooms which it contains are equipped with private baths and the remainder all have hot and cold running water.”

There is little doubt that prior to its demise the Hotel Medford’s appearance and reputation had deteriorated to the extent that only a major renovation (report has it that repairs would exceed even the \$2.5 million allotted for the facelift) could save the hotel’s appearance.

In 1910 stockholders of the newly formed Medford Hotel Company (the company name may have contributed to the later adoption of the incorrect Medford Hotel name) met and elected a board of directors including Dr. E. B. Pickel, Bert Anderson, J. W. Wright, A. Coleman, E. C. Ireland, W. F. Rau and Emil Mohr. Ireland, Rau and Mohr were directly responsible for the subsequent operation of the immediately successful hotel.



The Farmers and Fruitgrowers Bank was chosen as their depository. The assembled stockholders decided on the name Hotel Medford to promote the city as well as the hotel.

The second major order of business was to decide on Frank C. Clark as the architect. Mr. Clark worked closely with New York architect Frank Forster, who moved to the Rogue Valley area to oversee part of the construction. Throughout the building of the Hotel Medford, both architects adhered to their original design plan, which was to ensure that every care would be given “to light and ventilation and that no feature was left unprovided that would add to the hotel in the way of convenience and refinement.”

Convenience and refinement, as proposed by the architects to the Thompson-Sterett Construction Company, included, but was not limited to, a plaster beamed ceiling with classic cornices of Ionic design, a palm court adjacent to the “men’s lounge,” a marble fireplace, columns surrounding the palm court and a seventeen-foot-high pediment (a triangular gable commonly used in

Greco-Roman architecture). A roof garden was to be included in the original construction and was more than likely built, though no available records confirm or deny the existence of such a garden.

As functionally efficient as it was glamorous, the Hotel Medford incorporated many “high tech” innovations including long distance telephone service, high-speed electric elevators, cold storage in the kitchen and a modern system of vacuum cleaning. Even the baggage was effi-



The palm court (*opposite page*) in the lobby of the new Hotel Medford (*left*) was one of the hotel’s prime attractions. Over the years celebrities such as Senator John F. Kennedy (*above*), Richard M. Nixon, Loretta Young and Vincent Price were guests at the hotel.

SOHS #10898, 1478, 7856.

ciently lowered to a basement storage area via an elevator at the Ivy Street entrance. Originally touted as a six-story edifice, the hotel topped out at only five stories. However, five floors were enough to give the building distinction as the tallest building in the Rogue Valley, and the sixth floor was added in the late 1920s.

From its opening September 19, 1911, when an orchestra helped usher in the beginning of the Hotel Medford’s seventy-seven-year rise and fall, the hotel’s business fortunes were to be subject to the economic whims of the Rogue Valley and the nation.

The first economic wave arrived in the form of the orchardists, who had come to the valley seeking to make or add to their fortunes by growing pears, apples and some peaches. Perhaps the most easily recognized names among that group were Harry and David Rosenberg Holmes. Others included Mrs. Soosmith, the Carltons and Dr. Salade and his wife. They would “winter” at the hotel, turning it into a center for the social activities of that energetic group. Dorthea Hill Witter Huberty, whose first husband Charles Witter was involved with the Owen-Oregon



**On August 8, fire claimed the Hotel Medford.** Photo by Steve Johnson/Medford Mail Tribune.

Lumber Company, remembers: "It was a very nice hotel, it really was, and we enjoyed it. My mother and father moved back into the hotel two or three different times to not have to keep up the house, and it was more comfortable. It was a nice hotel in those days."

The dining room generated another layer of business activity. Staffed mainly by Japanese cooks, the food was excellent and unique and helped create more business for

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### **Things were so tight that the hotel was heated by a sawdust burner.**

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the hotel itself. Edna Mohr-Stoehr recalled in a taped interview: "In the olden days the dining room was beautiful. It was all with crystal chandeliers, you know, and everything was on lovely white tablecloths and excellent service. People would come from far and wide to eat there. We had very good food and it was a marvelous stopping place between San Francisco and Portland. That dining room was pretty famous all over."

Like a tide, however, fortunes of the Hotel Medford would ebb and flow, rise and subsequently fall. A combination of factors brought about the first major downturn. Depression affected the Hotel Medford as it affected

every business throughout the nation. On a more personal level, Emil Mohr, one of the hotel's founders and operators, died. With little experience to guide them, his two daughters took over operation of the hotel. They hired a professional to manage and literally run the hotel. The new manager fired the Japanese cooks, in spite of the fact that many had put in more than twenty years at the hotel and that their expertise so directly affected the success of the hotel. The cooks were immediately hired by the Holland Hotel and, without their culinary magic, much of the hotel's magic also disappeared.

In 1933, Medford had a population of 8,000. The sixth floor had been added to the Hotel Medford, which could now boast 120 rooms, but on any given night the Mohr children were lucky to have twenty-five rooms filled. Though Prohibition had been repealed and the Hotel Medford was the first hotel in the state of Oregon to reinstitute its bar, business was not promising and some lean years ensued. The tide was out.

This changed with the entry of the United States into World War II. The tide came back in as Camp White was constructed in an area north of Medford that eventually became White City. This meant an initial influx of construction workers and engineers, followed by more than 30,000 troops stationed at the newly erected military base. The 91st Division was first to assemble and arrive on the scene, followed by the 96th. Even more importantly, wives followed many of the soldiers and they needed a place to stay.

During the ten years between 1940 and 1950 Medford's

population grew by a remarkable 62 percent. Although this growth meant the faltering hotel was once again alive with a new sense of direction, everything was not, as they said back then, "copacetic." Any type of necessary supply was difficult, if not impossible, to find due to rationing. During the war, prices were frozen and a room at the Hotel Medford rented at \$3.00 for a single and \$3.50 for a double. Things were so tight that the hotel was heated by a sawdust burner. Needless to say, the Mohr sisters were not getting rich, but at least the doors remained wide open.

Even after the war, business remained brisk with the returning troops and the euphoric mood of the victorious nation. The future appeared promising and some remodeling was accomplished. But a new threat suddenly appeared on the horizon, one that may have provided the final, telling blow to the Hotel Medford and others like it including the Holland, Nash and Moore hotels: motels. It seemed that a much more mobile and impatient post-war nation had neither the time nor the inclination to stop and stay at hotels. Once again, the economic tide began a slow ebb and the Hotel Medford began what was to be its final, irreversible decline.

As the situation deteriorated, both the reputation and appearance of the hotel suffered. Ironically, the Hotel Medford faced near closure in 1978 over fire code com-

pliance problems in the form of a sprinkler system, long promised but slow in coming. The doors remained open, but the quality of life at the hotel as well as the clientele it attracted, reached a point of painful contrast with the once proud edifice billed as "one of the most elegantly appointed structures on the coast." Bare light bulbs and cracked globes replaced the crystal chandeliers. Plastic flowers sat where potted palms once stood. Leather upholstered furniture and mahogany tables bore the look of plastic, vinyl and press board finishes.

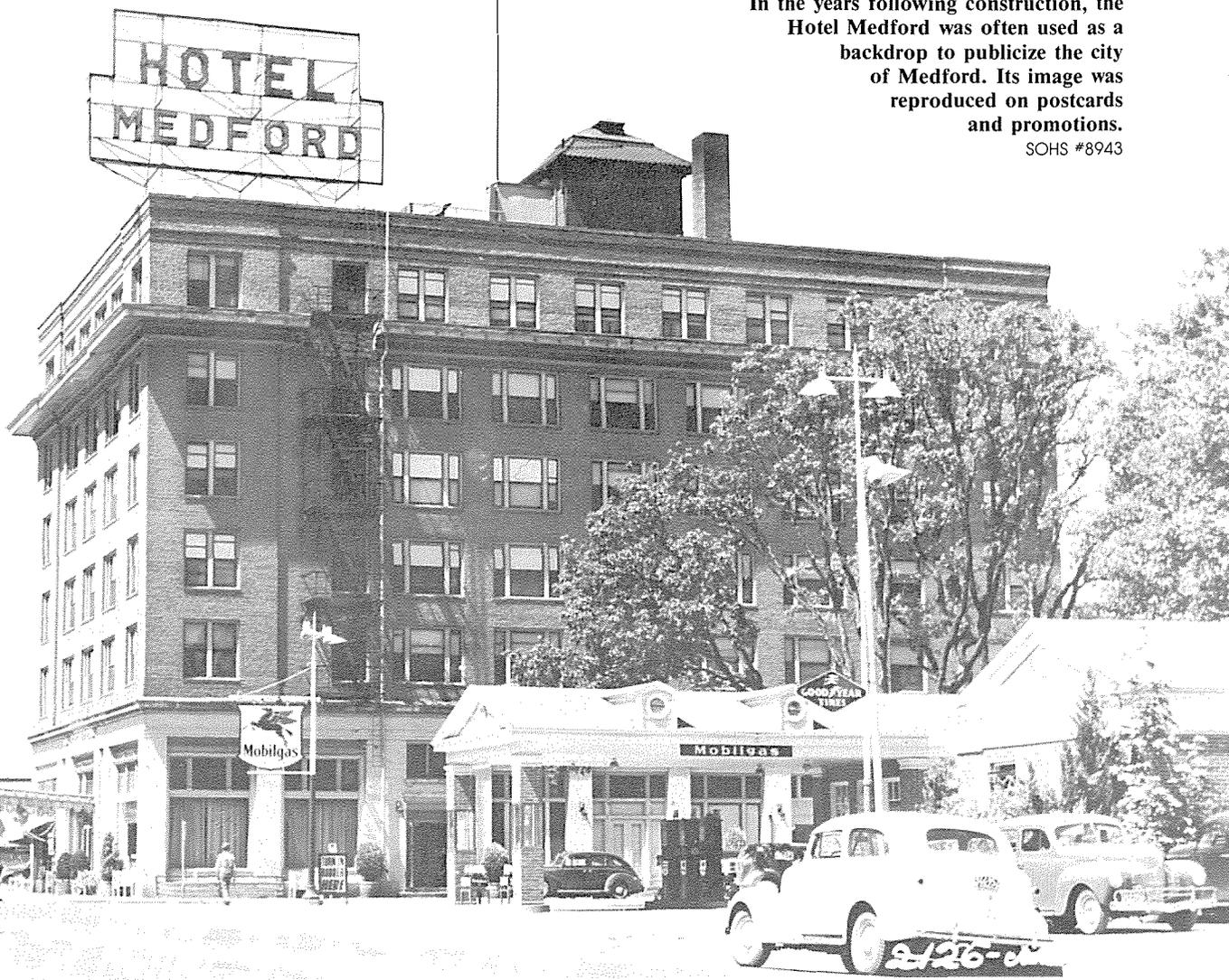
In 1987 the last residents of the Hotel Medford were evicted to make way for complete renovation of the hotel which was to include restoring the lobby to its former elegance. Medford Associates, the present owners, intended to offer housing at the remodeled hotel to low income senior citizens. Much of the facelift work on the structure was nearing completion in August of 1988.

On August 8, 1988, the building erupted in flames, a tough warrior that had held its own for many years. Tuesday morning, little remained of the Hotel Medford but a smoldering brick facade and memories of its proud past.

*Michael E. Oliver is a freelance writer and artist as well as the Ashland correspondent for the Central Valley Times.*

**In the years following construction, the Hotel Medford was often used as a backdrop to publicize the city of Medford. Its image was reproduced on postcards and promotions.**

SOHS #8943



## From the Collections . . . Maybe



**A piece of tin hangs over the intact Hotel Medford sign and the remaining terra cotta lion the morning after the fire which destroyed the hotel. Photo by Natalie Brown.**

Most of the time, historical societies and museums rely on individuals who graciously donate materials to their artifact collections. These collections grow, in large part, because people recognize the importance of preserving the past through the preservation of objects.

Occasionally, however, curators find themselves acquiring artifacts through more unusual circumstances. This was recently the case when the Medford Hotel was destroyed by fire. The tragedy of August 8, 1988, brought an awareness to save a piece of this historic building before it was reduced entirely to rubble.

The process began the day following the fire. A phone call to the Society alerted Curator of Collections Marc Pence to the fact that one of the two terra cotta lion heads, which once flanked the Main Street entrance to the hotel, was still intact. That object, along with the "Hotel Medford" sign above the door was virtually all that remained.

Efforts to secure these items for the Society's collections began immediately as demolition was certain to begin soon. Initial contact with those in charge of the hotel project indicated that acquisition was a good pos-

sibility, so staff arranged for the necessary equipment and expertise to remove the objects from the building. While waiting for official approval from the owners, however, tragedy struck again. Workers began demolishing the structure sooner than expected, and the surviving lion's head was destroyed in the process.

The stone "Hotel Medford" sign was carefully removed from the building and set aside for "some history group," as relayed to Mr. Pence by one of the workers. Hopefully, that means the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Word from the owners is expected shortly, but at the time of this writing (August 26), Society staff wait.

It may appear from this episode that curators are in the salvaging business. This is sometimes true. Unfortunate tragedies do provide opportunities to expand collections for the interpretation of history. Adding the Hotel Medford sign—the last remnant of the century-old landmark—to the Society's collections will help preserve a piece of Southern Oregon history for generations to come.

# Letters

## Birdseye Revisited

The fine article about the Birdsey home in the *Table Rock Sentinel* stirred memories of a trip our sixth grade class in Oregon History made to the Birdsey home (I believe the year was 1929).

The occasion was to dedicate a plaque which was set in stone in the front yard. The inscription on the plaque gave the date the house was built, and other pertinent factors.

There was a large crowd with several notables present, including Judge William Colvig, who gave an address.

I don't know if the plaque is still there, not having been by there in many years, but it is certainly nice to know that the home has been restored and preserved for posterity.

Lewis W. Nutter  
Portland, Oregon

## Telegraph Girls

I have never seen anything in the "Railroad Days History" mentioning World War I in 1917. Young men were being conscripted and taken from jobs as telegraph and station agents.

The Southern Pacific officials came to Ashland and selected about a dozen of us high school girls seventeen, eighteen or nineteen years old and asked us to go to San Francisco and take up telegraphy and station agents instruction to relieve the young men so they could go to war. Of course we were thrilled; none of us had ever been out of Ashland before. I remember there was Teresa Reinhart, Mary Norton, Gladys Norton, one of the Bar-bar girls and myself. We were to receive \$30.00 a month and out of that amount we were to pay our board and room. Of course we got passes on the railroad.

We were to stay at the "Mary Elizabeth" on Bush Street, a lovely place just for working girls and women. We paid \$20 each, with three to a room and breakfast and dinner

included. Out of the \$10 left us we were to pay our car fare and lunches, and believe it or not we managed. We walked from Bush Street to Third and Townsend where the school was held, we snuck toast from our breakfast table, and sometimes our parents sent a box of cookies.



Photo courtesy Dorothy Specht

Gladys Norton and Dorothy Trefren show their support for WWI conscripts in Ashland, 1917.

The Mary Elizabeth was well supervised; we could have boyfriends visit us as there was what we called the "Beau Parlor," a large room with little cubicles built on two sides, maybe about a dozen, with a tiny curtain half across each opening (never to be fully drawn) and two straight backed chairs. A very lovely lady would sit out in the middle of its big room, with her knitting or sewing and glance around now and then to be sure everything was on the up and up. I can't remember anyone ever resenting this supervision. We laughed a lot in those days, and our friends were as young as we were being young sailors and soldiers. No one could stay after ten o'clock and if we had permission to go to a show or dance, we had to be home by eleven.

We were allowed to bring a telegraph instrument home and our evenings were spent in sending and receiving, or reading aloud. I never learned to crochet, but had to learn in self-defense, as I had to read for

hours while the rest made so many lovely things.

Our school was run by a middle-aged gentlemen who had only one leg and he demanded perfection in our book work, bookkeeping and signal learning. He would spend hours sending. Of course we had learned the morse code and could send easily, but to receive was something else to distinguish between dots and dashes. At four o'clock, school was out and we would set tense until we heard our teacher send the evening letter of ".- /-./." We all knew those two letters "G" and "N" which meant "good night."

Third and Townsend is down by the wharfs, and when the weather was nice we used to take our make-shift lunches and watch the big boats come and go. The tall ships were still sailing and were so beautiful with their masts and sails.

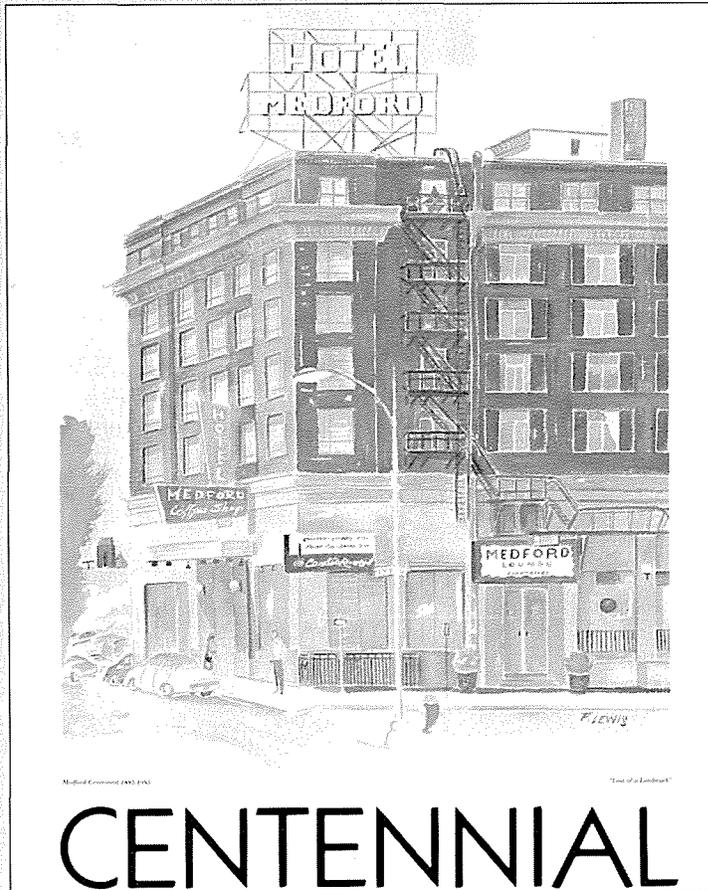
Our Sundays were free to do what we wished. No breakfast on Sunday; but a heavy dinner at noon and a light pickup supper was served. Our group usually spent it in the Golden Gate Park where they had concerts, or wandered through the Japanese Gardens.

We must not have been in San Francisco long, maybe seven or eight months, before the war was over. One of my friends, Mary Norton, was sent to Winnemucca and is still there having retired after working for the railroad those many years. We who were not ready to go out on the road were sent home as the young men were given back their jobs.

We girls came back to Ashland and for some reason never went back to finish our senior year. I was lamenting to Gladys Applegate about our not finishing high school a few years back and she laughed and said, "Well, let's face it Dorothy, we were just a couple of high school drop outs."

I have a picture of the conscripts who were exercised in Ashland up and down Fourth Street and insisted on Gladys and myself standing amidst them. We were working at my father's drug store at the time.

Dorothy Specht  
Ashland, Oregon



## Hotel Medford Centennial Poster Sale

Signed and numbered copies of this watercolor poster of the Hotel Medford by Florence Lewis are now available in the Society gift shop for \$16.95.

As part of our new membership campaign, a free copy of the mounted poster will be given to anyone who brings in five new members in any category (except the Jr. Historian category).

These signed, numbered and mounted posters are not available by mail and only a limited number are for sale. You may reserve one by calling the gift shop in the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History at 899-1847.

Hotel Medford by Florence Lewis

**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.

- |   |  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Jr. Historian (15 & under)                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250-499 Siskiyou Club           |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30-49 Active   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 & above President's Club  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50-99 Patron's Club  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100-499 Business Contributor    |
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8-9

# Calendar of Events

**Through 1990 Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley** is the Society's newest exhibit at the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History traces the coming and going of the railroad, how it changed people's lives and the valley economy, its local role in the nation's battles overseas, and the introduction of the railroad worker as an important part of the valley's communities. Admission is free.

**Through March 1989 Home Entertainment: 1852-1988** is an exhibit that looks at the variety of pastime activities that families and individuals have pursued during their leisure hours at home. Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum. Free.

**September 21 Pioneer Preschoolers** will introduce youngsters, ages 3-5, to the daily activities of Southern Oregon's early settlers. Participants will discover how pioneers washed their clothes and churned cream into butter. Then they'll take a break from "work" to explore the toys and games that pioneer children also enjoyed. Pre-registration is required by 5 p.m., September 20, and limited to 20 for each session. Call (503) 899-1847, ext. 227. Times: 10-11 a.m. and 2-3 p.m. at the Children's Museum. Free.



**September 24 We Knead Bread** will be a children's workshop to introduce boys and girls, ages 8-12, to the American tradition of bread baking. Participants will investigate methods

of wheat harvesting and milling, and try their hand at mixing, kneading, rising, and shaping their own loaf to bake at home. A visit to the C. C. Beekman House to explore a turn-of-the-century kitchen and have a taste of homemade bread (fresh from the woodstove oven!) is included in the day's activities. Pre-registration is required by 5 p.m. September 16, and limited to 15. Call (503) 899-1847, ext. 227, for additional details. From 1-4 p.m. at the Children's Museum. Fee: \$2.50 for Society members, \$3.50 for non-members.

**September 27 The Southern Oregon Historical Society Board of Trustees** will hold its monthly meeting at Little Butte Intermediate School, 12 N. Shasta, Eagle Point, at 7:30 p.m. Members and the general public are invited.



**October 8 Harvest Festival** celebrates the annual harvest with old-time music and traditional craft demonstrations! The "Beekman family" will be at home baking and serving fresh bread with homemade apple butter, and greeting visitors. From 12-4 p.m. at the historic C. C. Beekman House, 470 California St., Jacksonville. Free.

**New Exhibit Opening: "HANNAH: Pioneer Potters on the Rogue"** will feature the wares and techniques of the 19th-century pottery (once located near present-day Shady Cove) and focus on pioneer methods of food preservation and preparation. Afternoon activities will highlight the potter's craft. Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History. Free.

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

**Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History**, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Tues.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Research Library** in the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Tues.-Fri., 1-5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

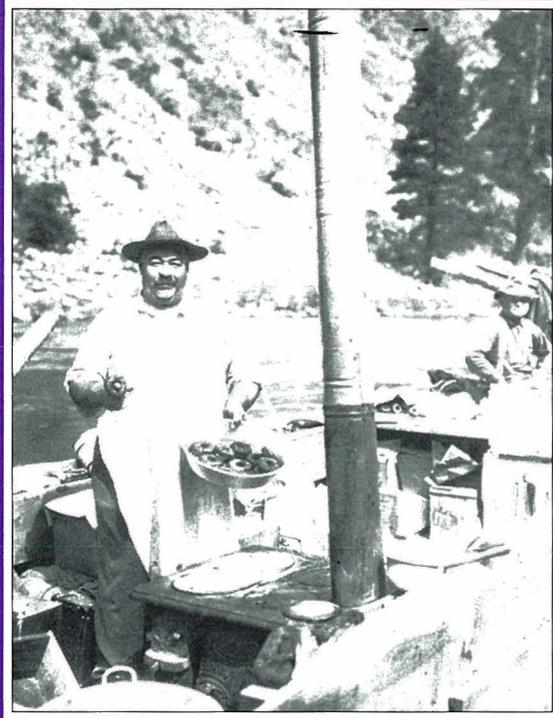
**Children's Museum**, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Tues.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Chappell-Swedenburg House Museum**, 990 Siskiyou Boulevard, Ashland, OR 97520. Open Tues.-Sat., 1-5 p.m.

**Administration Offices**, Armstrong House, 375 East California Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**October 15** Children, ages 5-12, are invited to join Bob Bovee and Gail Heil, folk musicians from St. Paul, Minnesota, for **Railroad Ties**, a concert featuring old-time railroad tunes and tales. Opportunities to sing-along and listen to a variety of traditional instruments will encourage youngsters to explore this exciting period of our past! Two o'clock at Railroad Park off Table Rock Road in Medford. Admission: \$1.00 for Jr. Historians and members of the Society, \$2.00 for non-members. After the concert, the Southern Oregon Live Steamers will show the youngsters some of the railroad equipment in the park.

**Railroad Rhythms:** Join us for a look at the traditional music of the railroad era as Bob Bovee and Gail Heil (see listing above) continue their presentation for adults and families! In conjunction with the exhibit "Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley," this concert will be held at 8:00 p.m. at the U.S. Hotel in Jacksonville. Admission for Society members: \$4.00 for adults, \$1.50 for children under 12; non-members: \$5.50 for adults, \$2.50 for children under 12.



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