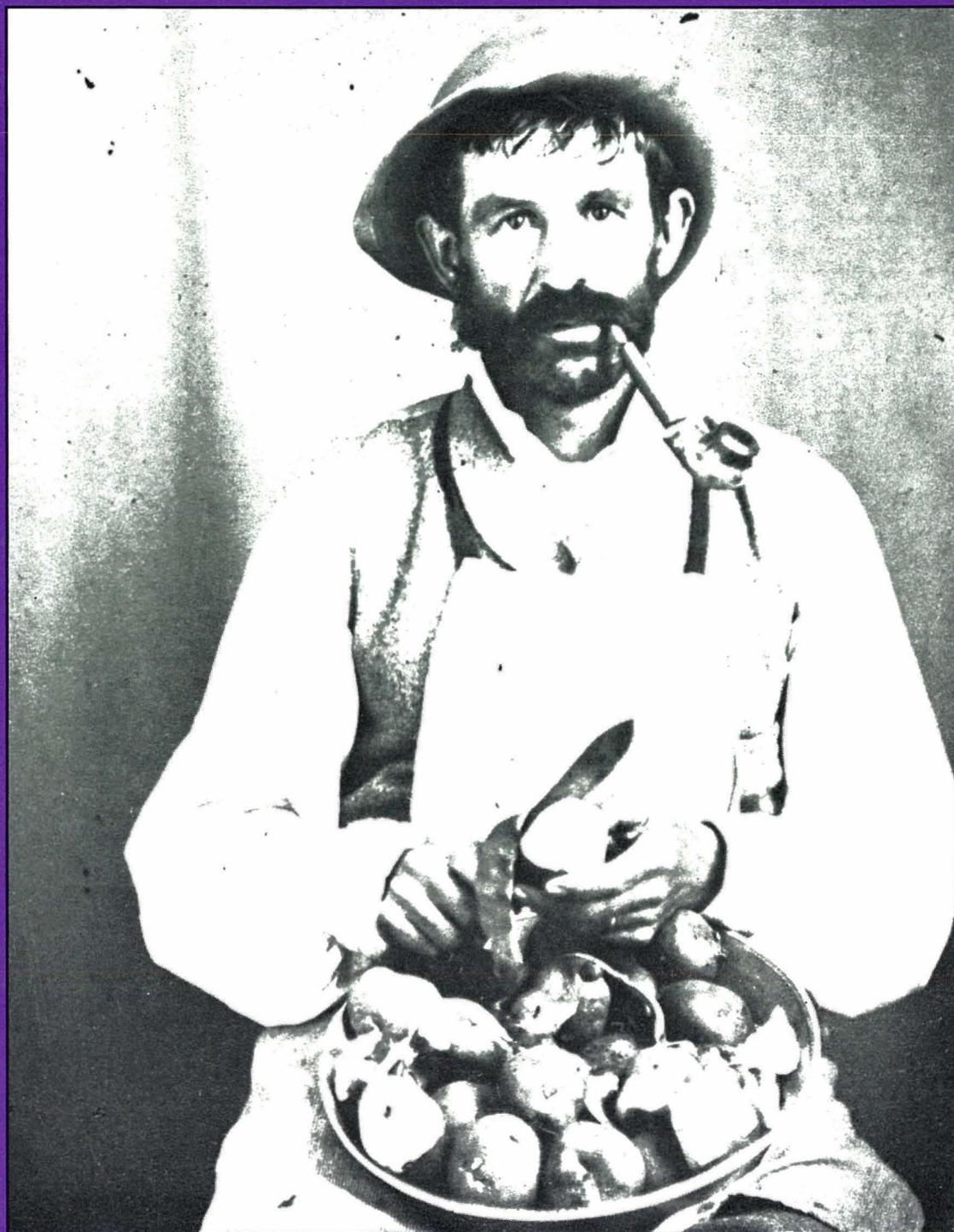


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# TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

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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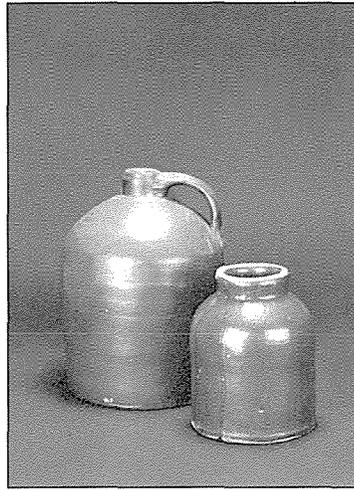
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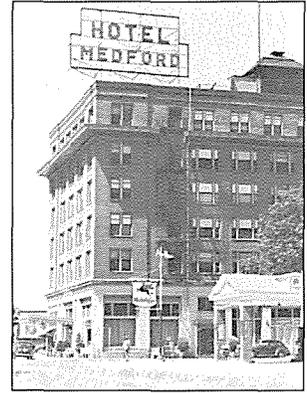
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p. 2



p. 10



p. 18

## 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.

## Departments

22 From the Collections

23 Letters

Calendar of Events (inside back cover)



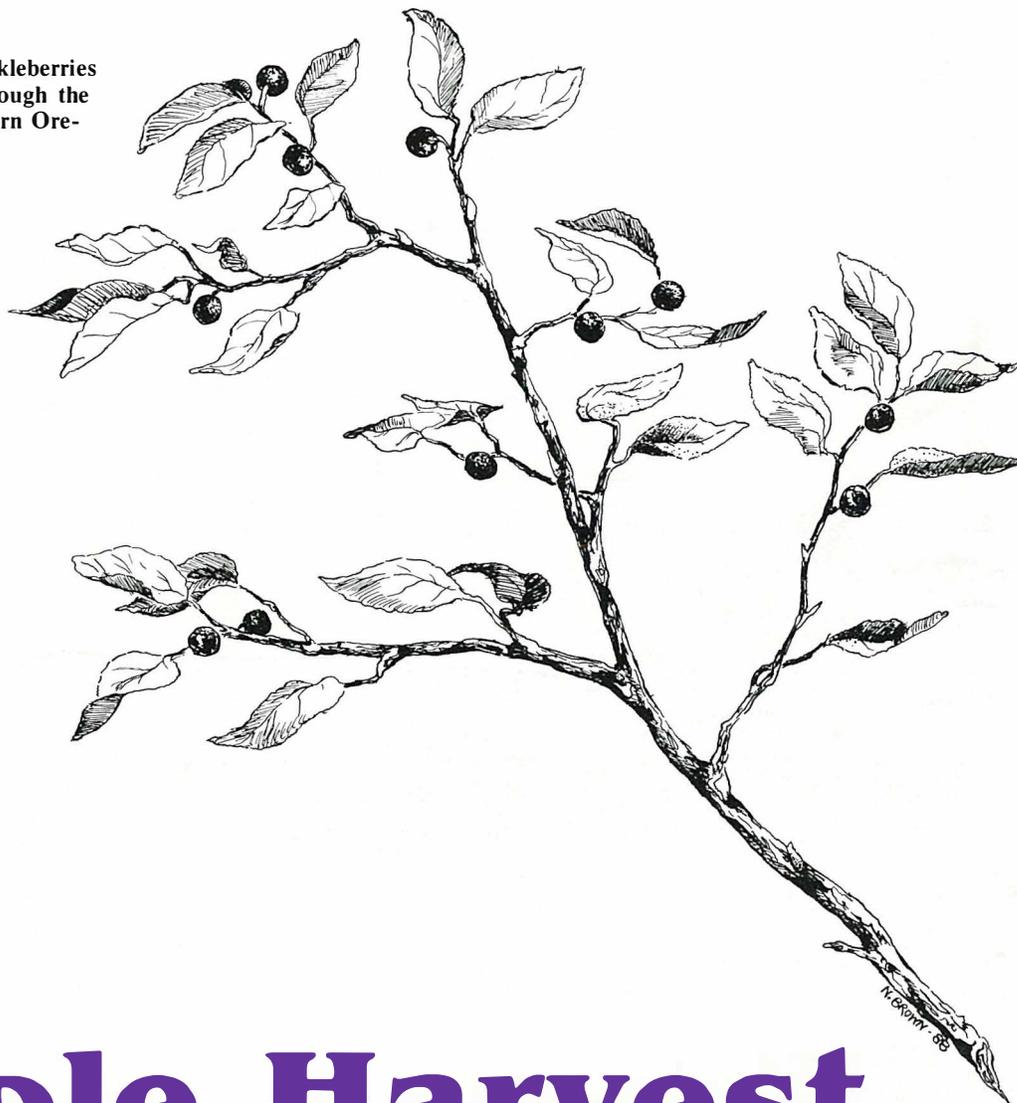
**cover:** Former publisher/editor of the Ashland Daily Tidings not only peeled potatoes but also participated in the settlers' discovery of Crater Lake. SOHS #496.



**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

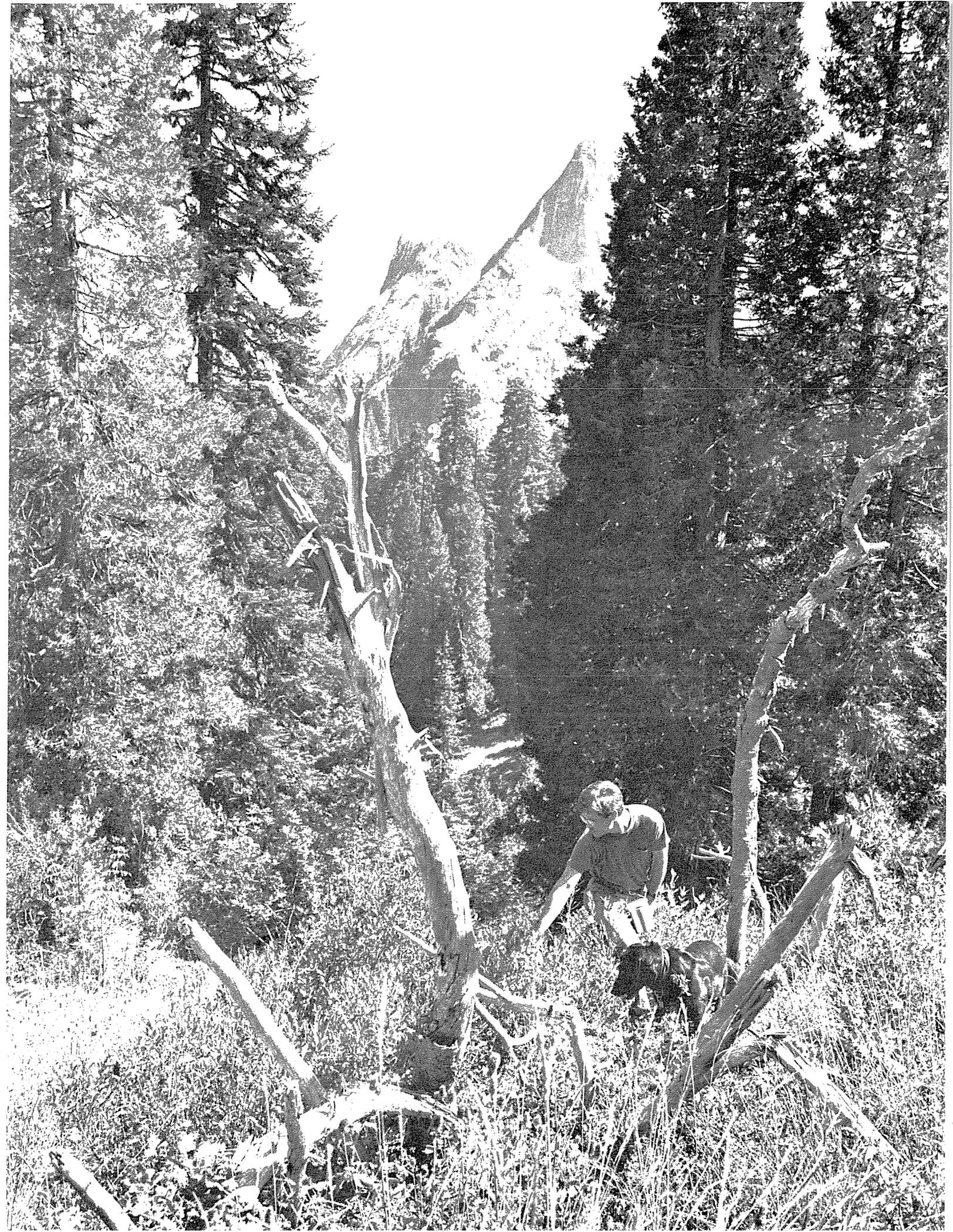
**F**or millennia, huckleberry bushes (*Vaccinium spp.*) have filled in the meadows and burn scars of the high Cascades with their spare branches and mottled green leaves. And except in years with light snowpacks or heavy spring frosts, the huckleberry patches of the upper Rogue drainage have offered 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.

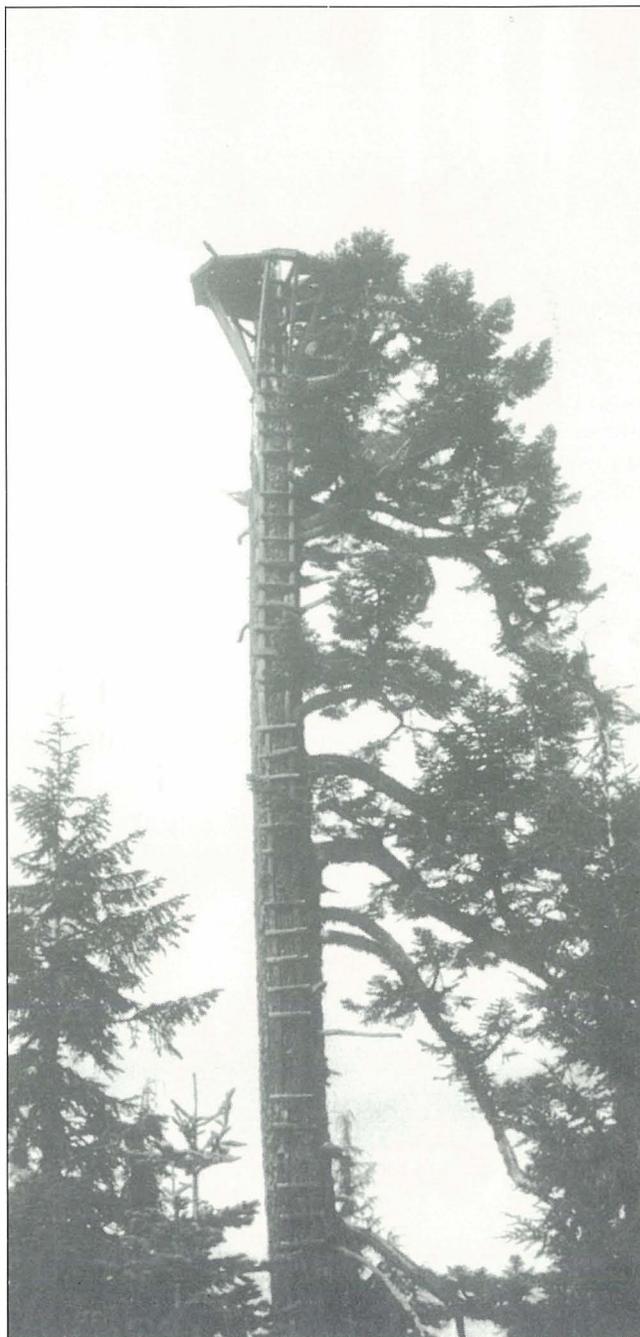
In late summer and autumn, Spier wrote in his study of Klamath culture, *Klamath Ethnography*, many of those living in the Klamath Marsh vicinity moved directly to Huckleberry Mountain. "The huckleberry patch some fifteen miles southwest of Crater Lake (called *iwumkani*, huckleberry place; *iwum*, huckleberry) 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."

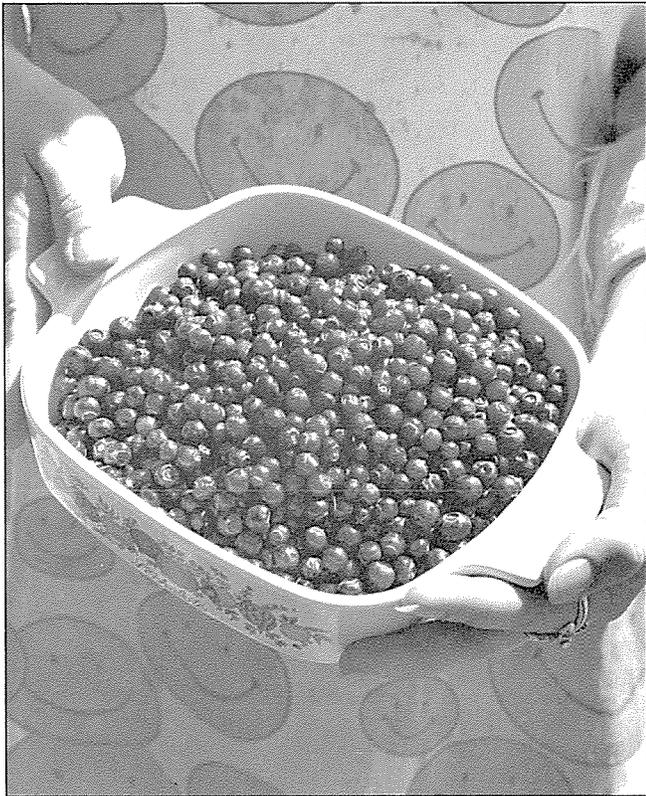
**T**he advent of World War II made a difference in the rhythm of the berry camp. With gas rationing coupons scarce, it was essential to plan for needed provisions to avoid gas-wasting restocking trips. People still went, but they stayed longer.

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>

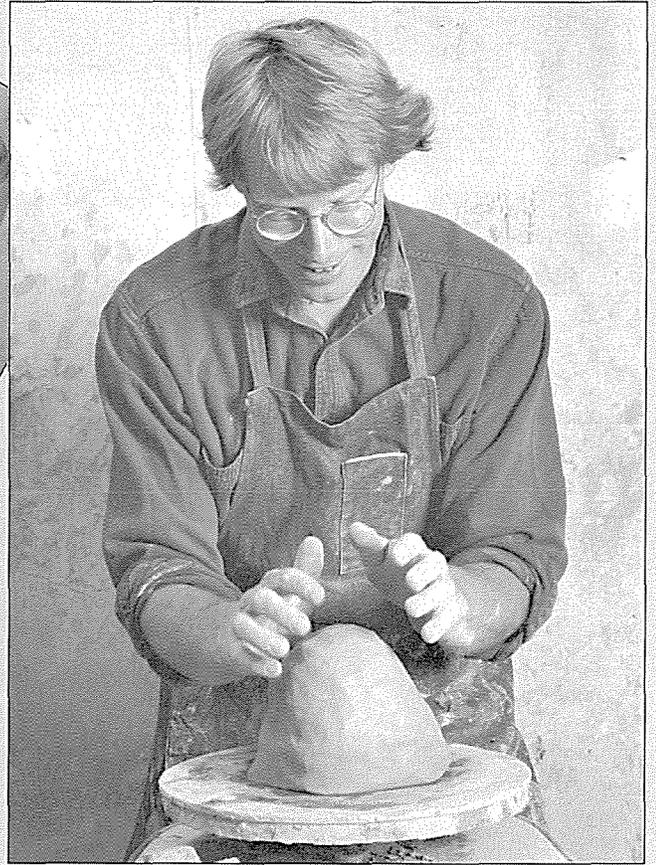
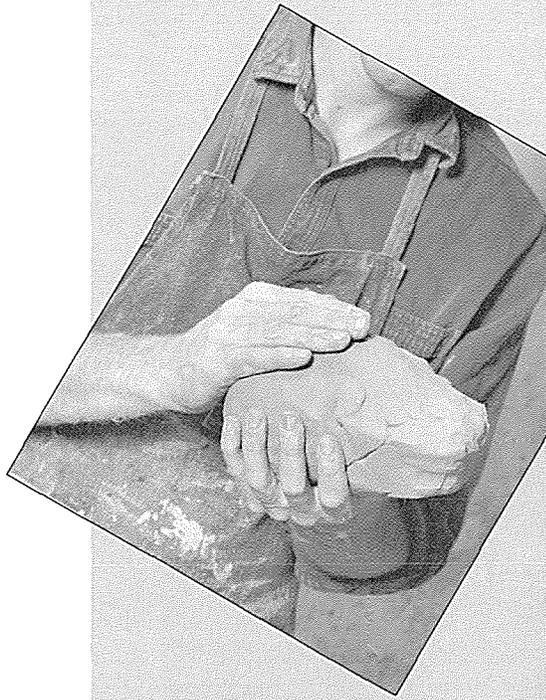
Josiah Hannah was born June 10, 1809, in Kentucky. Early in his life the family moved to the area around Cincinnati, Ohio, where in 1838 Josiah met and married Mary S. Caldwell. It is likely that in 1840 Mary and Josiah and their small son Joseph moved to Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri. Members of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

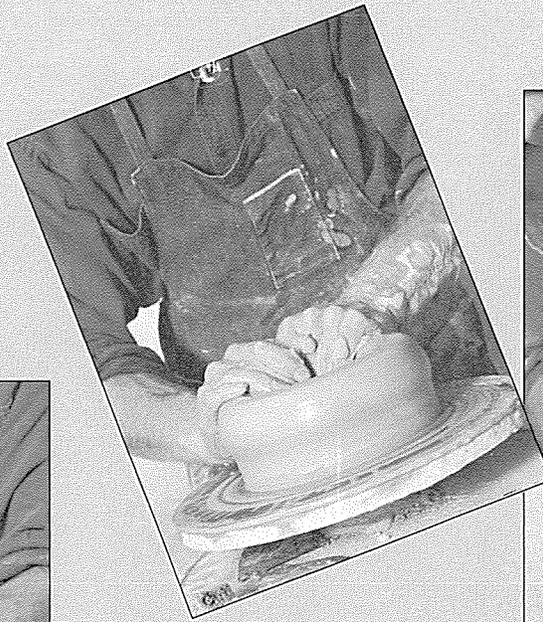
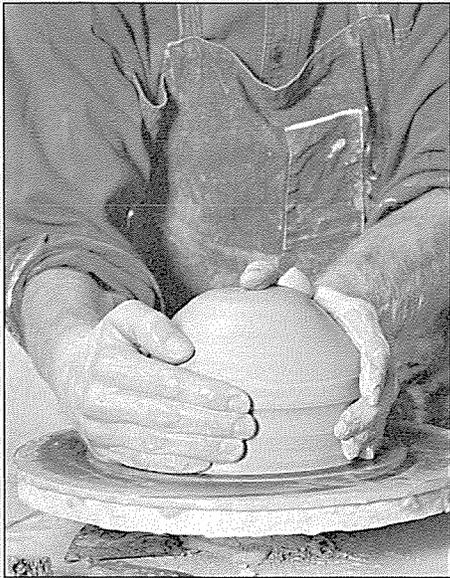
ing distraction of the Civil War and definitely unhappy with the continuing flood of white settlers across their land, the Native Americans struck out at the wagon trains. In August, several of the trains suffered attacks in southern Idaho at a place known as Massacre Rocks.<sup>4</sup>

“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.

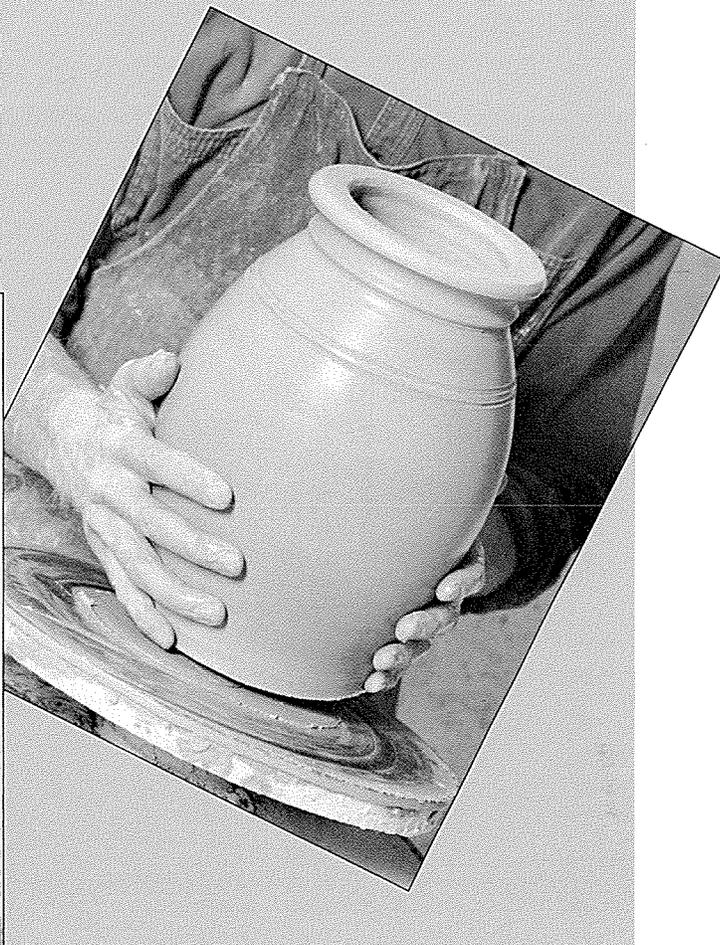
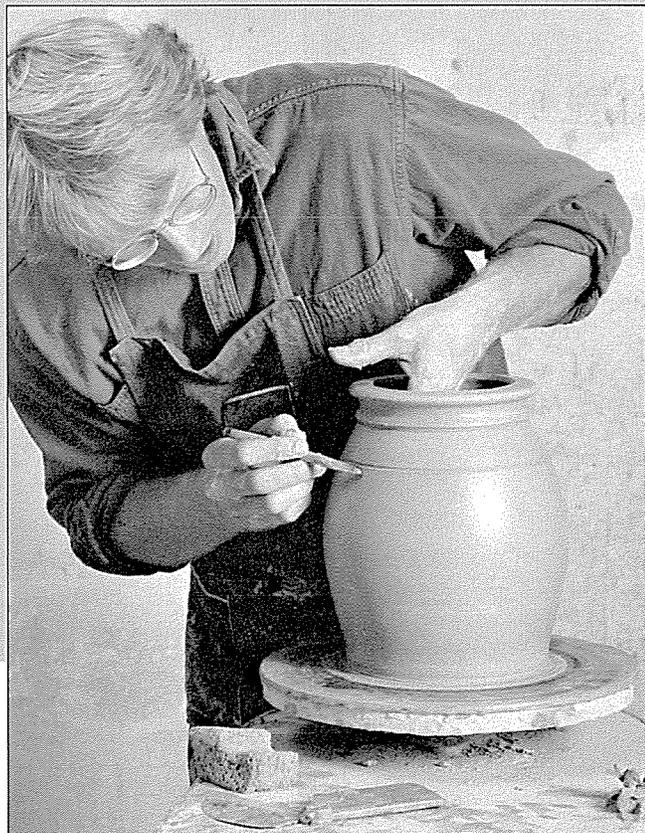
Each firing of the kiln required ten to twenty pounds of salt to glaze the stoneware, and before the arrival of the railroad in the Rogue Valley in 1883, salt was a high priced commodity. Josiah signed the petition to the county in 1872 for a road to the Sizemore Salt Works on West Evans Creek.<sup>9</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

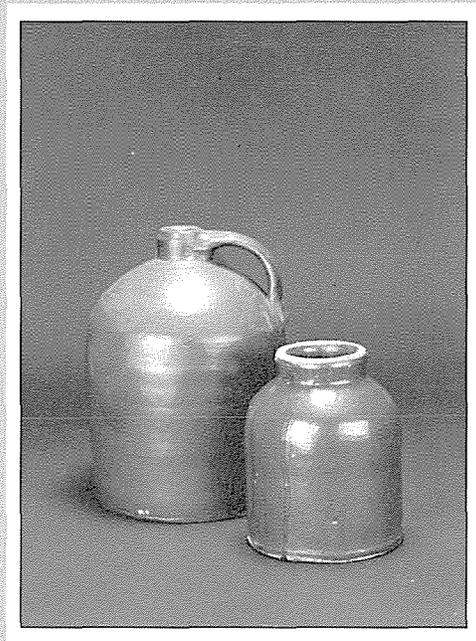
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**Unlike many potters, the Hannahs did not mark their pots.**

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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

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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.
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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.
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13. John and Marguerite Black, *Early Jackson County Roads and River Crossings, Part 1, 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

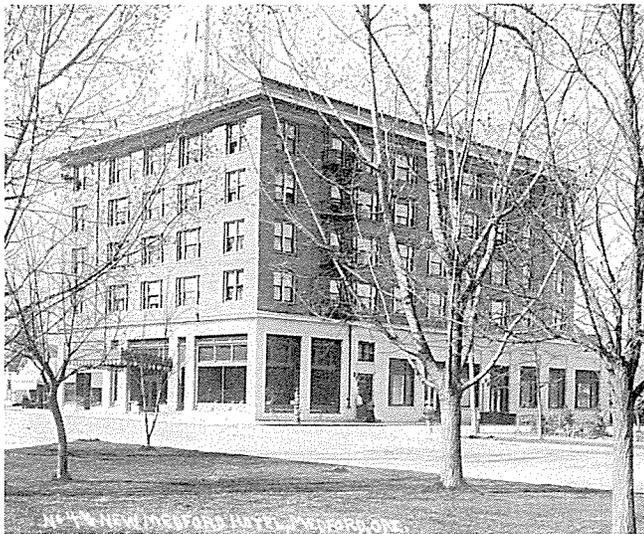
**D**ozens gathered late in the night to watch fire fighters' futile efforts to save the Hotel Medford. The following morning only a few scarred walls stood eerily in the smoky debris, a humbled bastion of a bygone era that once spoke of crystal chandeliers, flowing gowns, top hats and tails.

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.

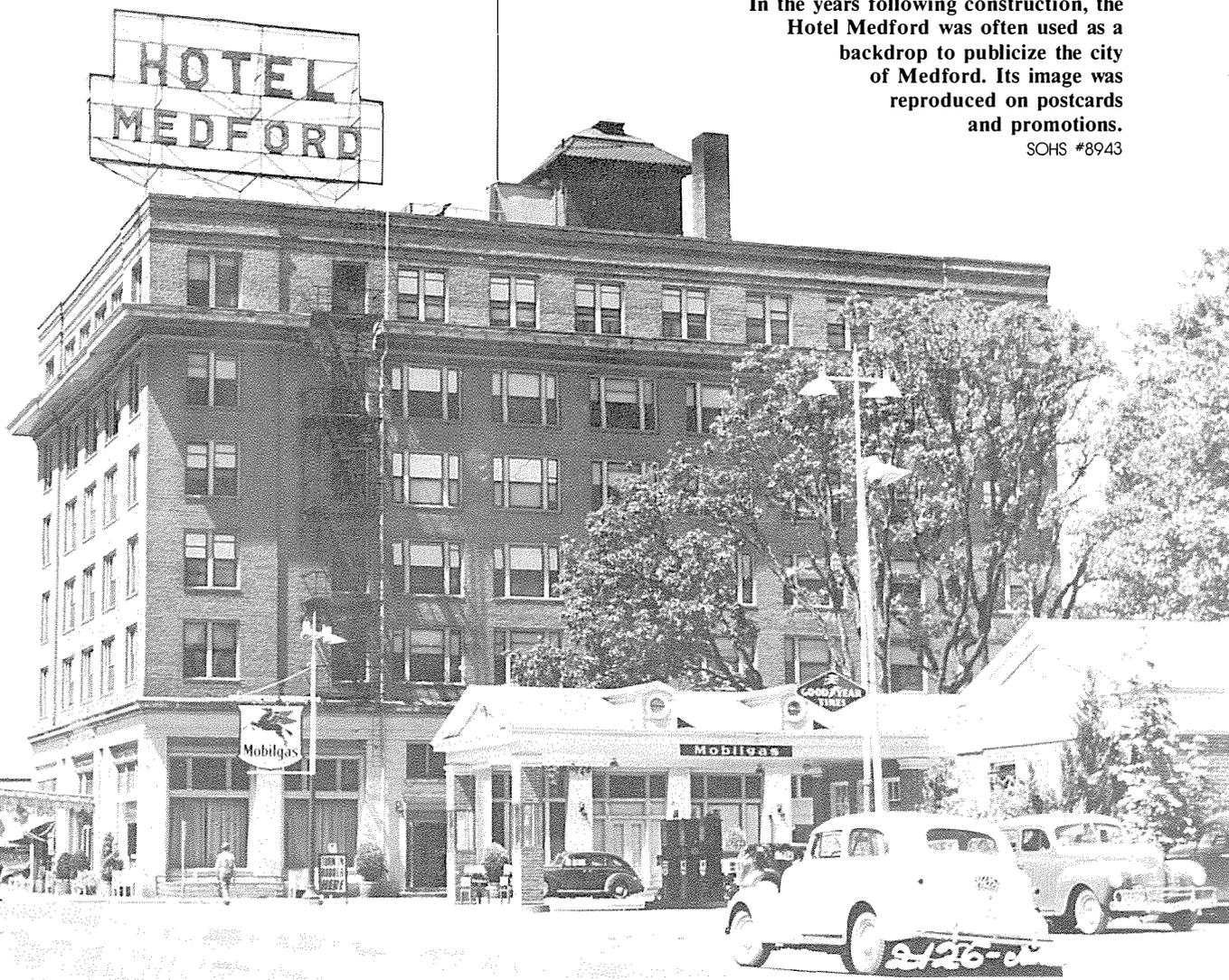
In 1987 the last residents of the Hotel Medford were evicted to make way for complete renovation of the hotel which was to include restoring the lobby to its former elegance. Medford Associates, the present owners, intended to offer housing at the remodeled hotel to low income senior citizens. Much of 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 Birdseye home in the *Table Rock Sentinel* stirred memories of a trip our sixth grade class in Oregon History made to the Birdseye 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 Barber 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.

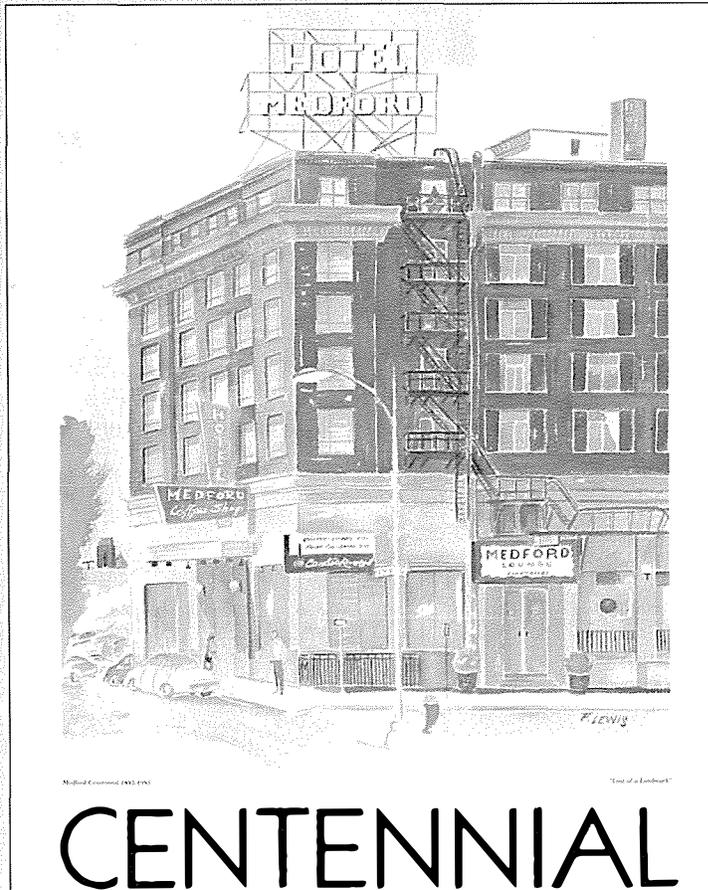
Our Sundays were free to do what we wished. No breakfast on Sunday; but a heavy dinner at noon and a light pickup supper was served. Our group usually spent it in the Golden Gate Park where they had concerts, or wandered through the Japanese Gardens.

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:

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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.

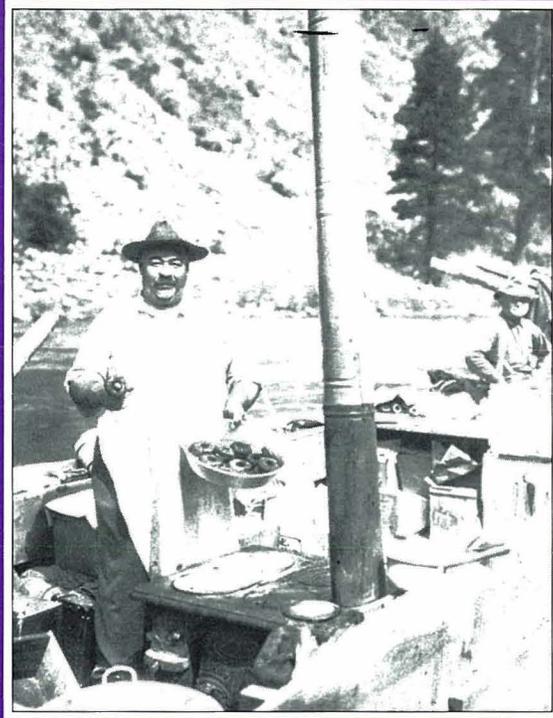
**Children's Museum**, P.O. Box 480, 206 North 5th Street, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Open Tues.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**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.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society

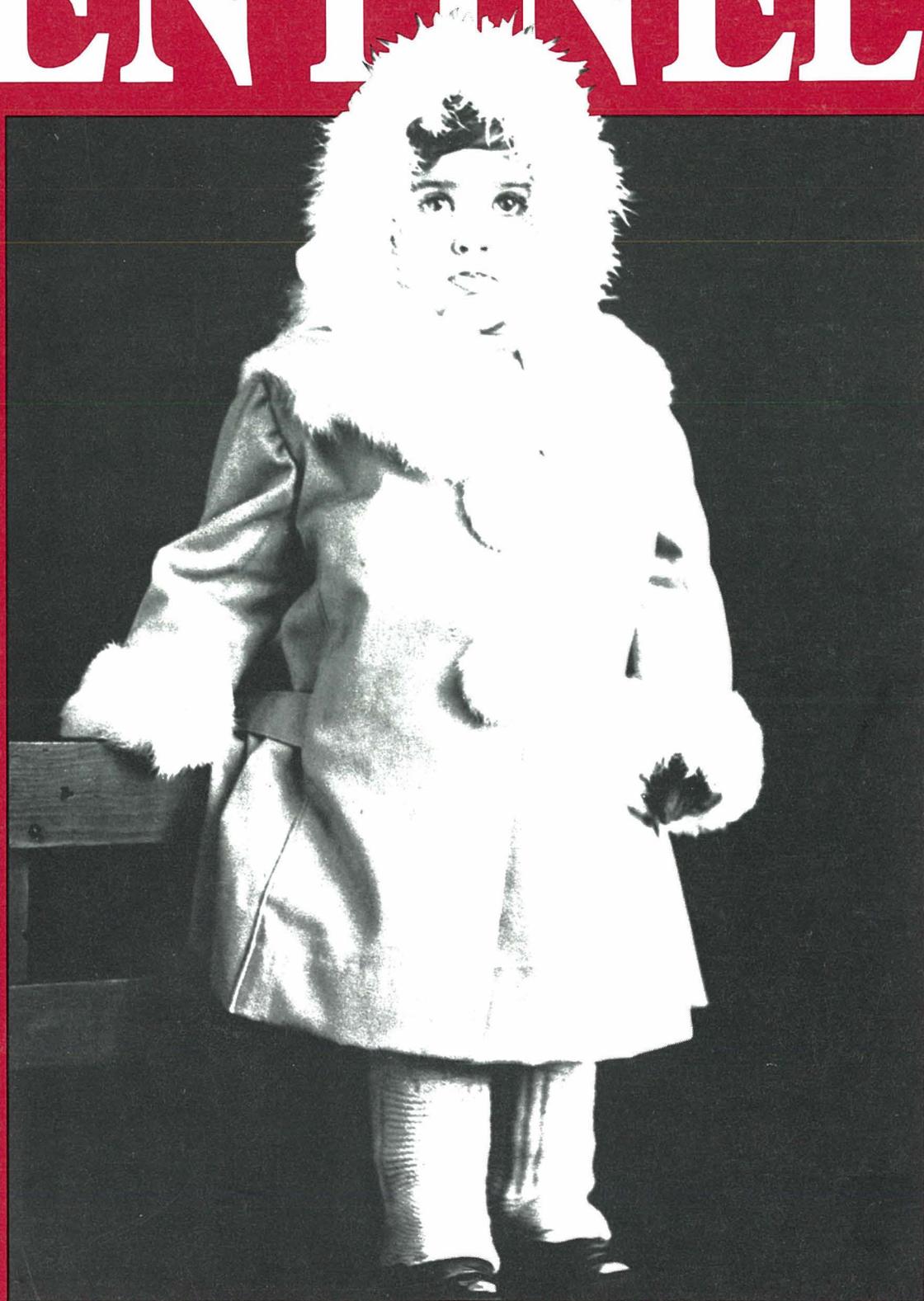
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# SENTINEL

NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER 1988



The  
Magazine  
of the  
Southern  
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# Commentary

History came full circle in October when the Governor's Conference on Historic Preservation was held again in the Rogue Valley. The first statewide conference on historic preservation was held in 1976 in Jacksonville with the Southern Oregon Historical Society as host. This year the Society was local co-sponsor along with the Historic Preservation League of Oregon (HPLO) of the 12th annual meeting.

The Society is proud to have been a part of both conferences. But, more importantly, this conference was a perfect opportunity to showcase history and historic preservation activities in Southern Oregon in general and Jackson County in particular.

Preservationists and historians from all over Oregon had an opportunity to attend three "tracks" or groupings of sessions: 1) Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in Oregon; 2) Historic Preservation and the Building Code; and 3) The Transition Era 1895-1920: Social History & Current Rehabilitation Techniques. The three-day conference culminated with a visit to the Society's Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History.

Jackson County and Southern Oregon can be justifiably proud of efforts to preserve, promote and interpret the region's history and the cultural resources that remain. The Society is indeed honored to be part of the opportunity to show this region's commitment to its heritage as a significant factor in the social and economic quality of life we all enjoy today.

This year has been significant in other ways. March witnessed the opening of "Making Tracks: The Impact of Railroading in the Rogue Valley"—the first major new exhibit in more than a decade for the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History. Another change in the region's major museum took place in October. With a special membership preview night, the Society opened the new first-floor exhibit, "HANNAH: Pioneer Potters on the Rogue." This exhibit is unique for two reasons. First, it features a special look at a chapter in the region's history—the ceramics industry on the Rogue River. Second, the Society has produced a new, companion publication featuring the Hannah family as well as superb illustrations of the Hannah ware on display in the exhibit.

The gallery guide/exhibit catalog is available in the Society's gift shop at a substantial discount to members.



Samuel J. Wegner  
Executive Director



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p. 2



p. 15



p. 20

## Features

### 2 Seven Months on the Oregon Trail: The Diary of Mary Louisa Black *with an introduction by Marguerite Black*

Mary Louisa's rich account of an arduous journey from Missouri to Oregon reveals the trials and rewards her family faced during their 1865 migration.

### 15 Students + Past = Future *by Dawna Curler*

The students of Washington School embark on an exploration of their school's history, and in the process learn about themselves and their community.

### 20 "Dancing All Night" . . . and Other Tales of Christmas *by DeeAnne Mansveld*

The holidays are upon us, and local residents recall their more memorable Christmas experiences.

## Departments

19 Book Review

24 From the Collections

Calendar of Events (inside back cover)



**cover:** An unidentified youngster is pensively prepared for the winter season. SOHS #9854



**back cover:** Resembling angels, Snow Autenruth, Mamie Linn, Anna Orth, and Emma Judge posed for a photograph in 1891. SOHS #12162



# Seven Months on the Oregon Trail

## The Diary of Mary Louisa Black

Introduction by Margarite Black

*The day-to-day life of a family on the way to Oregon in a wagon train in 1865 is vividly depicted in a small diary kept by Mary Louisa Black. She wrote in a small leather-bound notebook in which she had been keeping farm accounts, recipes and other notes. She was the wife of John Maupin Black and they lived on a farm near the town of Mexico in Audrain County, Missouri.*

*When the Civil War brought troubled times to Missouri, many families sold out and "went west." One of these was Mary Louisa Black's uncle, Josiah Hannah. He had emigrated to Jackson County, Oregon with his family in*

1862, and settled on the Upper Rogue River. He sent word to the Blacks, offering to help them obtain land, and build a home nearby if they would come to Oregon.

They accepted the offer, sold their farm and possessions and prepared to make the journey. They had three small children, Sally age 5, Myrilla (called "Tilla") age 3, and baby Clifton six months old.

On the way to join the main wagon train, tragedy struck them. Little Sally was stricken with food poisoning and died suddenly on May 1, 1865. This is not mentioned in the diary. Five days later they left Shelbina, Missouri headed for St. Joseph and Council Bluffs.

There were one hundred and nine wagons in the train, captained by James T. Kirk. They had two teams of horses and two wagons. A young man headed for the gold fields of California drove one wagon and when he left them, Mary Louisa drove it the rest of the way.

There is a gap in the diary between Sept. 29 and Oct. 22 when they were headed south from the Willamette Valley. Both Mary Louisa and John were sick and not able to travel any further. It has been handed down in the family that word was sent to the Hannahs, and Josiah and his son set out with team and wagon to rescue them.

As far as is known, no further diary was kept after they arrived at Uncle Josiah Hannah's in late December. They moved into their own cabin in January 1866. The next winter, 1867, the baby Clifton died of diptheria, and was buried at the edge of a field below the house. In 1869, a son Lee was born, and in 1879 a daughter Martha. These two, with Tilla, grew up, married and lived well into their 70s. The girls had no children.

These excerpts are presented with Mary Louisa Black's original spelling and grammar.

### June 20, 1865<sup>1</sup>

We camped last night near a spring but not much grass. We traveled about 8 miles before breakfast, came to grass & water and some wood by carrying some distance.

### June 21

Crossed the Platt by fording at Fremonts Orchard.

### June 22

Traveled most of the time today through grass knee high.

### June 23

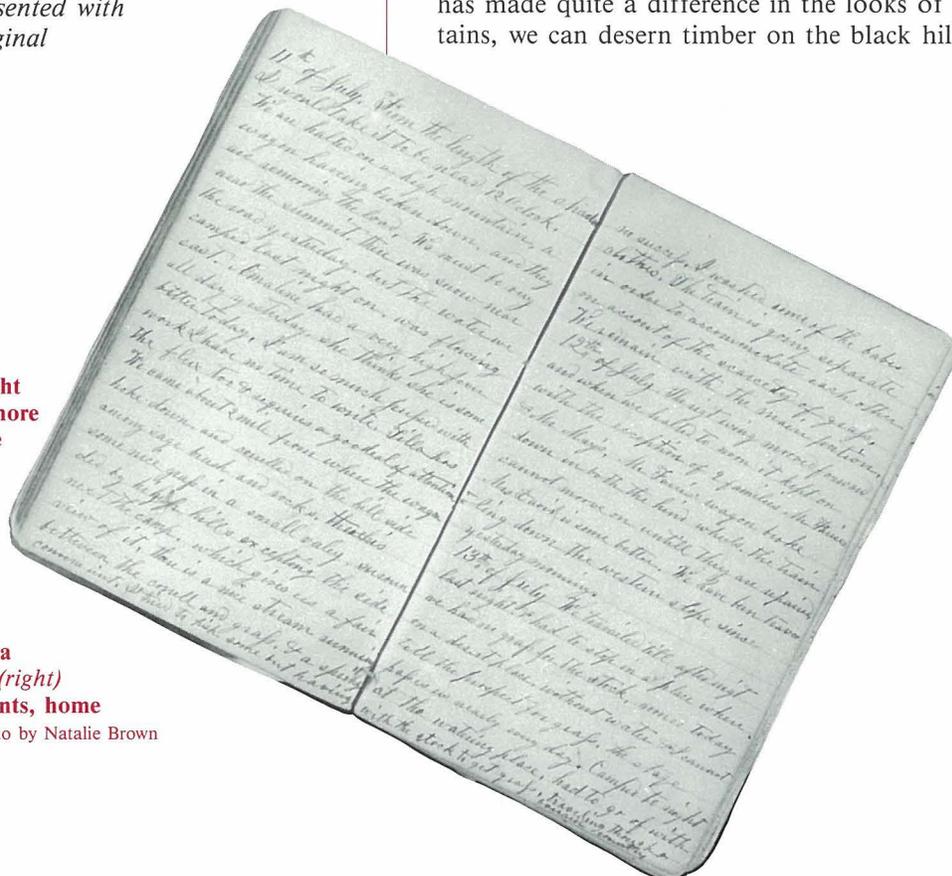
Last night the cattle were stamping from 10 o'clock till day. We encamped together—Saw some wigwams. Kirk circled to fight.<sup>2</sup>

### June 24

We passed the ferry this morning, they were crossing 2 wagons at a time and charging \$7 for a four-horse team & besides having to work the roaps themselves. Numbers were going above to ford. Nooned on the Cashlapoo (Calche La p'oudre) in a nice shady place near a ranch, the cows mowed their grass for them. John browned coffee.<sup>3</sup> Correlled separate, no stampeed. Plenty of prairie dogs along road.

### June 25

Sunday morning we camped last night near the Cashlapoo. About ½ mile from the main company. I hear some talk of staying here till noon, & have preaching. The grass is short. They said yesterday where we stopped to noon that there was a ranch about every 4 mile most of them deserted. We have plenty of wood so fare on this stream Willow & Cottonwood. The ranches occupy the best grass. I hear the order to gear up. One weeks time has made quite a difference in the looks of the mountains, we can desern timber on the black hills<sup>4</sup>



Although the pictured freight team (opposite) is from a more recent era, the vast distance and challenges of extreme weather and geography would have been similar to those encountered by the Black expedition. SOHS #3461 Mary Louisa Black recorded the adventure's trials and rewards in a small, leather-bound diary (right) containing also farm accounts, home remedies and scripture. Photo by Natalie Brown

### June 26

The Arapahoos, about 20 came into camp yesterday evening, exhibiting all the characteristics of natives excepting they had long hair filled with ornaments, that is 3 of the number. I suppose 2 to be chiefs & one of their squaws.

Nooned 26th at the foot of the Black Hills. We passed Kirks train stoped to rest & water. They have passed us about half an halted. They are passing on I think from their whooping they are crossing the Cashlapoo which seams to merge from the Black Hills to the left. Evening camp. We traveled up the canyann till camping time. Passed a sawmill and several nice cabins. I saw 3 hens quietly picking in front of one of the cabins, first I have seen since we left Salt creek. The canyon is about ¼ of a mile wide, the grass is grazed almost too close. I climbed one of the second rate hills & had a fine view of the camp and the vally we are going up, but could see nothing of Kirks encampment.

### June 27

Morning I rested well last night. They are in a rush to get started. No alarms during the night.

We nooned near the top of the hills. Some of the teams belonging to Coopers train stampeed, running against the hindmost wagon of our train, smashing one wheel. They took back a wheel and brought up the wagon & divided the load. We came up some very steep long rocky hills. Day fell on a large rock three times.

### June 28

About 10 o'clock A.M. Every one is busy. John is having his horses shod, while a great many are helping to repair the broken wagon. I was quite sick this morning with diareah.<sup>5</sup> I took a full dose of Laudanum this morning and some quinine about 8 & I feel some better & have just finished cutting out a pair of drawers for myself. The women have finished their washing. We camped near the junction of the Two-- mountain roads. Dodson was about 2 mile ahead when we camped. We passed the place Kirk camped about 11 A.M.

The left wing leads this afternoon. A horseman came forward just now to halt the train, another stampee. Some of the mule teamsters would not lock coming down a long hill they ran by some ox teams causing them to stampee, thats the first report. Wat mounted the black mule and has accompanied the man to the rear, a cold mountain wind is facing us.

The stampee commenced before they came to the hill & they ran down running agint the hind wheel of a hack occupying a place near the front of the right wing. I was occasioned by a matress falling from the hind hounds of a wagon. It was an abandoned one laying by the road-side and the man picked it up.

### June 29

We camped in the mountains again. I am still sick this morning, had a rundown just at daylight, some mint, resembling Pepermint & tasted like penoroyl, John gathered the first evening we encamped in the mountains, was a great relief to my stomach. The hills on this side are grey colored rocks with pines scattered over them, the

stage passed this mo. [morning] Nooned on the road side, made a fire under a large pine to boil some tea. Soon after we halted, a soldier came riding up for the Dr. of our train to go back to the next station, to take an arrow out of a mans back. He lives at the station and has been hunting for them for a number of years. It was done rite in the rear of our train by some Arappahoos who shook hands with him, pretending friendly, and when he turned to leave they they shot him. The arrow passed through his lung—the Dr. says, the same that visited our camp Sunday eve are the authors of the mischief, near as we can learn. The hunter knew them.

### June 30

Noon. We have traveled over a tolerable level road today. Stoped about 10 o'clock on account of finding good grass & water. Silas Davis lost an ox last night, he has never been well since we crossed the Patt.<sup>6</sup>

Evening encampment. We have just crossed the Laramere [Laramie] river on a bridge, for 50 cts a wagon. Not much grass in sight. The mosquitoes are so bad on the stock, our horses took the river just below the camp, the young sorrel could not swim, but they all got across and clambered up an almost perpendicular bank on the other side. Mr. Helbys mule, tied head & food attempted to follow, and was drowned.

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**It was done rite in the rear of our train by some Arappahoos who shook hands with him, pretending friendly, and when he turned to leave they they shot him.**

---

### July 1

I was very sick all day, at the stomach, took a dose of Calomel & Laundanum at noon. John is sick too.

### July 2

I feel nearly clear of sick stomach this morning & my bowels are more quiet than they have been. I ate some brown rice boiled for my supper & rested tolerable well during the night. I have used Paregoric & Tannin freely ( some spirit to strengththen my stomach. Calomel was the first thing that settled my stomach. We have been travailing over some of the roughest rockeyest road I ever saw.

We nooned near a ranch, which had been vammoosed this morning, for we met them. They reportred 100 Indians seen in this vicinity & that they had killed 2 emigrants.

There was a large bank of snow in a ravine to the left of the road in sight of our noon camp nearly all of the train got some. Duit Davis gave us some & Wat bought some to the wagon.

We are encamped tonight, on a nice mountain stream at a respectful distance from Kirk, Cooper & Dodson. Indians is the chat. John has gone to the other camp—Tolerable grass.

#### July 3

Noon Kirks train corelled together once more. Just passed the remains of a burned ranch, lately done, passed a calf laying near the road with the legs cut off, showing

---

### **Mrs. McClure gave birth two twins, one lived until 12 o'clock, the other but a few minutes.**

---

the Indians had taken a hasty feed from it. The stage<sup>7</sup> corelled with us. It is about 25 mile to Ft. Halack. It is near the place we are corelled that a large train has had a fight lately with Indians. A shield with a fresh scalp tied to it was found near the place, and a chiefs head dress and some of the trinkets they wear round their neck. Some of Coppers train found them. The shield consist of raw hide taken from the face of a buffalo streched over a hoop about the size of the top of a large woden bucket. There is considerable excitment in camp, we met 2 stages with heavy guard this morning moving every thing from the stations.

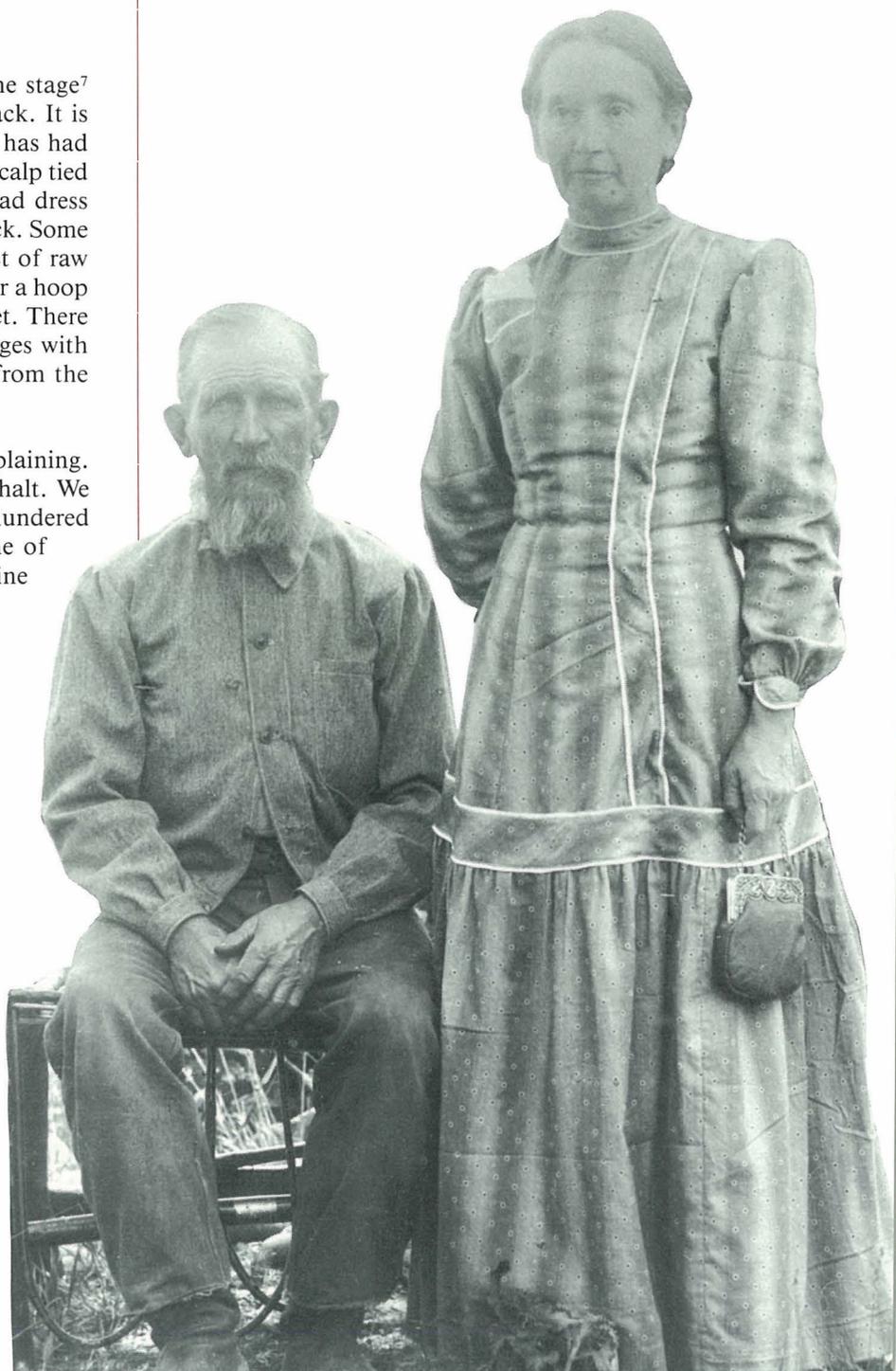
#### July 4

No alarms during the night. John is still complaining. All hands endeavoring to get an early start. A halt. We passed the remains of a wagon that had been plundered and burned, part of one wheel was left & some of the cooking vessels And a good many small pine boxes, comeing on a short distance was some clotes and feathers scattered over the ground appeantly the contense of a feather bed. We have been halting for about an hour. We are in the rear of all the trains, and those that have come back say there is a very bad hill to go down—We are over the bad place—

#### July 5

We camped last night within 3 mile of Hallack, where we are now halted in the place, aranging as I thought to

pay tole. But I think I was mistaken, all the ranches are deserted excepting those at the tole bridges, where they always keep a guard to collect. Sure enough we had to pay 50 cts for crossing 3 little pole bridges.<sup>8</sup> The travelers give the soldiers here a bad name, a great many of them have Indian wives. The stage that corelled with us night before last, lost their team last night. The station near which we have camped say the Indians tried to run off their stock today, they think they are in a large body in the mountains near here. It is the opinion of som that they are trying to move south. It is reported at the Ft. that the Indians killed one of the Sheren boys & scalped him, he is burried at the Ft. Those that sent in the P.O. say there was an ox team load of eastern mail at Hallack.



**Myrtilla Black crossed the plains as a child with parents Mary Louisa and John Black. In 1909 she married Chris Bergman, pictured at right in what may be their wedding photograph.**

Photo courtesy of Marguerite Black

After candle light. Today has been a busy day. Mrs. McClure gave birth two twins, one lived until 12 o'clock, the other but a few minutes. They were buried at the ranch.

#### July 6

We came to the ferry across North Platt over a very rough mountain road. Had to go out 4 mile to get grass for the cattle.

#### July 8

I washed this fore noon. Kirks train ferryyed this fore noon we will endeavor to cross this evening. The boys left us the 6th. Silas and family occupy their place. We have had a busy day. The right wing of our corell is nearly over. The soldiers at this place showed us about 30 steel pointed arrows that had been shot at them yesterday, while guarding ther horses to graze. One did serious damage to one of their horse. They hardly think he will recover.

About 4 o'clock P.M. All the wagons are across but 4. They crossed 2 wagons at a time & swam the cattle & horses. John has come, reports all right. We will travel to grass tonight.

#### July 9

P.M. We are encamped in a barrain mountain country,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to grass, no water fit to drink. a great deal of dissatisfaction through camp. some want to go on.

#### July 10

Nooned near a ranch plenty of wood and water but short grass.

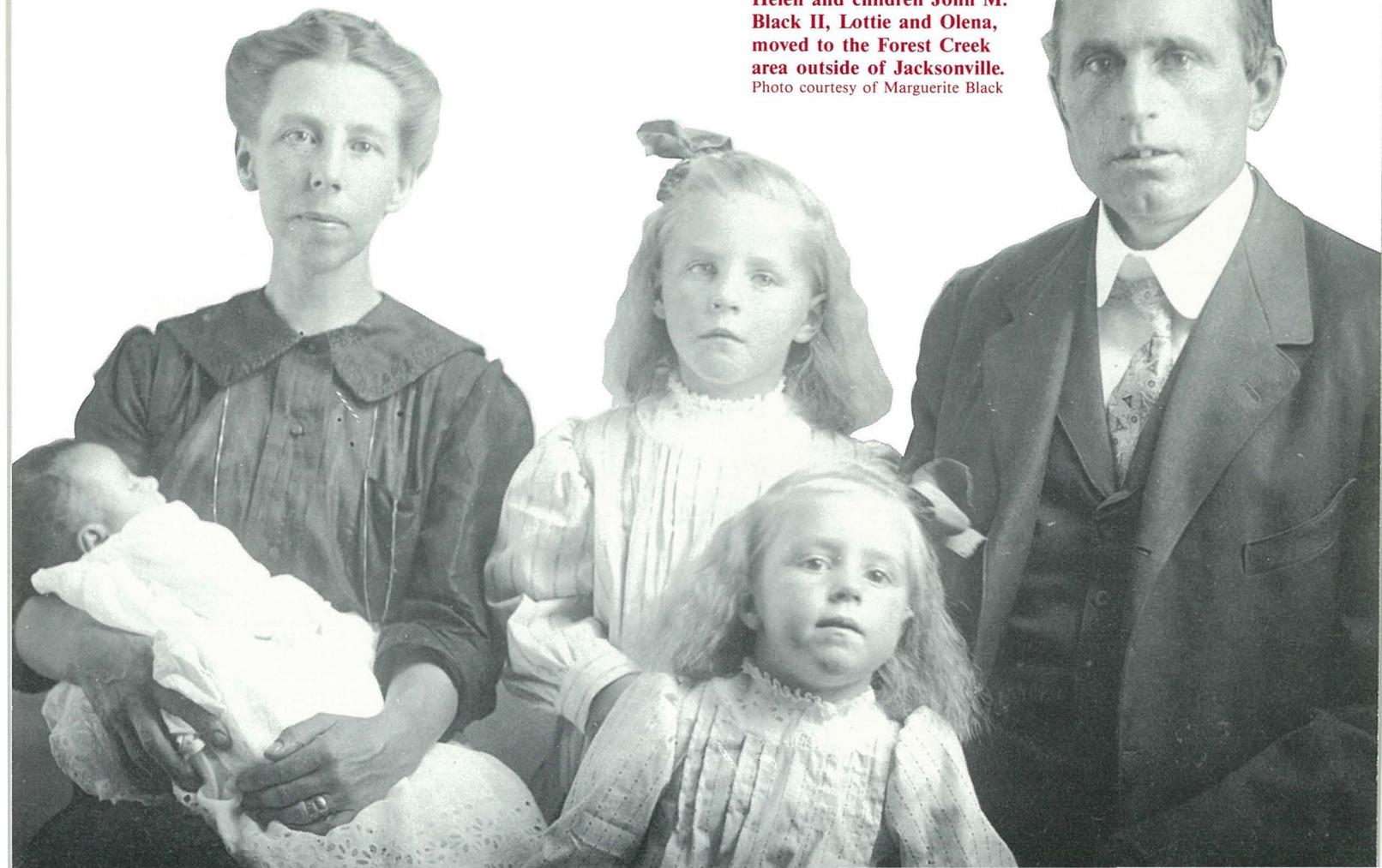
#### July 11

From the length of the shadows I would take it to be near 12 oclock. We are halted on a high mountain. a wagon having broken down and they are removing the load. We must be very near the summit. There was snow near the road yesterday. But the water we camped last night on, was flowing east. Emaline had a very high fever all day yesterday, she thinks she is some better today. I am so much pressed with work I have no time to write. Tilla has the flux too & requires a goodeal of attention. We came about 2 mile from where the wagon broke down and correlled on the hill side among sage brush and rocks. There is some nice grass in a small vally surrounded by high hills excepting the side next the camp, which gives us a fair view of it. There is a nice stream running between the correl and grass & a spring convenient. I tried to fish some but having no success. I washed some of the babes clothes. The train is going seperate in order to accomadate each other on account of the scarcety of grass. We remain with the main portion.

#### July 12

The right wing moved forward and when we halted to noon it kep on with the exception of 2 familes, Mr. Farises & Mr. May's, Mr. Farises wagon broke down in both the hind wheels. The train cannot move until they are repaired. Mrs. Davis is some better.

**Mary Louisa's son Lee Black, pictured in 1911 with wife Helen and children John M. Black II, Lottie and Olena, moved to the Forest Creek area outside of Jacksonville.**  
Photo courtesy of Marguerite Black



#### July 14

Our road today has been very rough & dusty, no grass near.<sup>9</sup> Got some by going about a mile & a half from the road. But we hauled water for cooking, no wood but sage brush, but that is as good as chips. We had some rain at noon which made our travail this evening more pleasant.

#### July 15<sup>10</sup>

Today our road has not been quite so hilly and the day has been cloudy occasionally thundering. The earth & streams show there has been rain quite recently. The hill have assumed a striped appearance. Some say we are now within 100 miles of Bridger. The train keeps grass hunters ahead. Which they have succeeded in finding so far within 2 miles from the road. We camp near the road and detail hands to take the stock & keep them all night.

#### July 16

Sunday. I rose this morning with the sun as John went out last night with the horses. I gathered sage brush & made out my yeast biscuit & put them on to cook & Emaline finished the balance. It is now ready. Silas is on the sick list this morning.

#### July 17

We are geared up ready to start. Went about 4 mile to grass and not very good at that. Encamped near a branch, tolerable good water. We are now traveling down Bitter Creek.<sup>11</sup> We moved on till about 11 o'clock. We came near the creek & camped near Rock Station. The houses have been built of rock for some time. I am not well at all, I think it is the water that physics me.

#### July 18

They took the stock out to hunt grass but failed to get any for the cattle, which they brought back and coralled. John & Silas found grass for the horses, but it was very hard to get at, the most of the horsemen came with the cattle, made me feel quite uneasy, Tilla felled with the ear ache nearly all night, which was vry cold and windy and drizzling.

#### July 21

I have been too sick to write any for 2 days. I have the flux now, but I don't feel as badly as when I was first taken. We hve been travailing through a rough barrain country, can get cedar and pine wood to burn, no good water yet, but we will soon get to snow water. Where we are encamped there is a range of level topped hills off to the left along Bitter Creek, to the right is a rocky range with some scatering dwarf cedars and pines & some tolerable grass.

Last night we have to feed our horses grain we had been saving for an emergency, they coralled the cattle and we had to tie some of the horses to our wagon, and they tore the curtain badly and kept me awake nearly all night.

#### July 22

We are at Green River, we have got dinner and drove down to the landing and watering the horses. We will soon commence crossing, the right wing leads today, and our wagon is 4th.

It is about 3 o'clock P.M. Nearly all the train is across, have crossed since 12 o'clock, 1 wagon at a time. There

is a train on this side and it does appear that they must be making wages today, \$1.50 pr wagon with 4 head of stock. A large freight train crossed this A.M. Reeds wagons of Mexico are with them & one of the Gilberts of Long-branch, We have coralled facing a strong cool wind. I am some better today, but was very sick last night. Green river will do to drink, John reports another train coming in sight on the other side, he is hitching up.

#### July 23

Sunday. They found good grazing for the horses but most too short for cattle, about 1½ miles from camp. I

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**We passed the remains of a wagon  
that had been plundered and burned,  
part of one wheel was left & some of  
the cooking vessels.**

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got out yesterday evening and helped about supper, still had flux at night and up once through the night, took a dose of salts this morning & some Jamaca ginger which I think has been of benifit, or getting to better water.

I cooked some peaches & fried some pies for John to take out with him. We have stayed all day at this place. They had to go down some steep places to get to grass, and some very narrow mountain road. Just room for the horses to go single file, we are drinking Green river water, which looks green—.

#### July 24

Noon, we have passed the station which was said to be 14 miles from where we camped yesterday. We are near the creek, I wish we could get out of the mountains, I would judge from my feelings it is about 1 o'clock. I feel little able to cook. Geared up and made a short drive, came to good grass, about ¼ from the road, we are coralled once more in a grassy place, plenty of mountain currants. I have never used them.

#### July 25

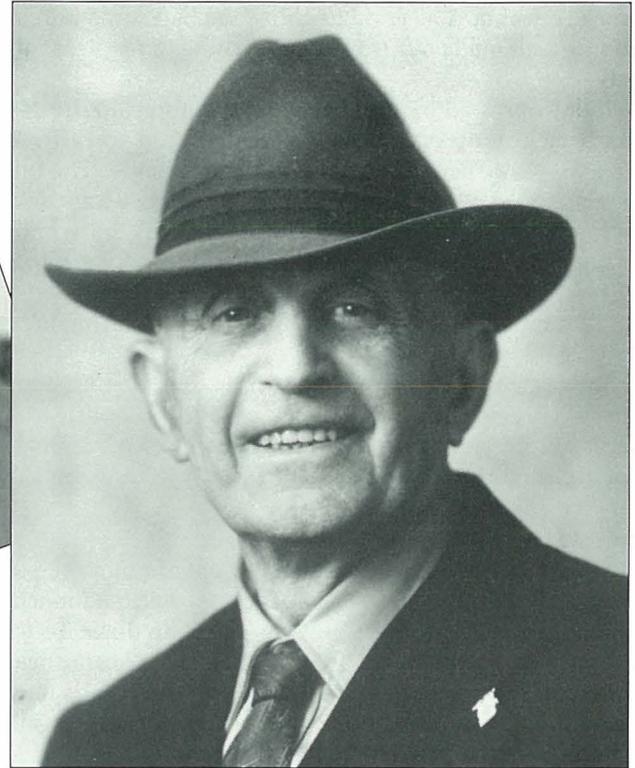
Encamped for the night on Black's fork of the Green river, about 30 mile from Bridger, the road we have been traveling has lead us across Hams fork 3 times, we hav come in sight of the snow mountain again, but our road today has been very good, we nooned on Hams fork just at the ford on good grass. I am getting able to do a good part of the cooking. John & Silas killed 1 rabbit & 3 sage chicken, they ate well.

#### July 26

We found out this morning that we had left the Bridger road last evening so Uncle Billy Davis deside he would leave the train before he would miss going by Salt Lake which he did & Silas still remains with us, much against his mothers wish. We are traveling the direct Oregon rout.



**Mary Louisa Black gave birth to two children after settling in Shady Cove. Martha (left) and Lee Black were photographed in the 1940s. Photos courtesy of Marguerite Black.**



**July 27**

This morning John had to get breakfast. Emaline is still sick & I had a return of flux last evening. Took a dose of salts and intend to diet from this time out. I have been eating fresh meat, we had good grass & water by traveling till sun down, camped again on Black's fork. Nooned near Blacks fork. Silas has gone to the hills for cedar to cook with, which is near a mile distant to the left, some talk of sending to the Ft. for letters. The Leut. & John Faris geared the buggy and started for the Ft. They all washed this afternoon. I was not able.

**July 29**

We have just crossed a very bad ford on a small creek, a tributary of the Green river & while halting for the rest of the train to get over (as our wing leads today). Two Indians came riding down the hill to the right. There must be more of them from the amount of dust we saw in that direction this morning, we just decided it to be another train, but expect it was a gang of Indians. The two are painted red.

**July 30**

We are geared up ready to start, but have had to detain on account of the cattle having strayed up the branch. Sold our old feather bed for a sack of flower. Nooned near a spring plenty of grass. Silas's babe is rite sick I have all the cooking to do & glad that I am able to cook too. This afternoon our road resembled a walk through a flower garden.

**July 31**

Old Mr. Evens a consumptive, going to the mountains for his health, died last night and was buried about 9 o'clock this morning, we will stay here till we eat dinner. The babe is not much better.

**August 1**

We halted all day yesterday on account of old Mrs. Turpin being too sick to be moved, we are travailing in Wasach or Bear mountains over a very rough hilly road. I am writing during a halt in the train caused in the rear, as we are forward this morning and Mrs. Turpin is near the rear of the other wing, I fear she is worse, is the cause of the stop.

**August 2**

Last night ice froze 1/8 of an inch in thickness. The Snake Indians came in to barter fish & antelope hides for bread, coffee.

**August 3**

Mrs. Turpin is very feeble. We are halting till noon on her account. I see they fixing the carriage. I expect we will move out after dinner. John bought a Elk hide off an Indian for a small camp kettle.

After 12 o'clock. I have just woke from a short nap after dinner. John made a hair line yesterday and caught some fine fish, the largest was about 15 inch long speckled and had very small scales and the meat had a yellowish red cast.

#### August 4

We are geared up ready to start, the left wing leads today in order to get Mrs. Turpin out of the dust. We paid \$2 tole today came a new road down the river bottom, came to a vilage, got some onions lettice & butter, we are near the line between Idaho & Utah, irigated from the mountains off to the right, they are Mormons.

#### August 6

Sunday morning I feel quite well this morning with the exception of a soariness in my face caused by some decayed teeth I have. John got breakfast this morning as I cannot stand the cold mountain air before sun up, the nights are pinching cold. Nooning at Soda springs. I have to brown coffee so I must get at it. I have browned and ground my coffee. The Indians were around begging and picking up the scraps, we have detained too long at this place. We came a few mile and encamped near the river as they say here we have a long drive before we get to water again. The next water we strike is of the Columbia.

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### Last night we had to feed our horses grain we had been saving for an emergency.

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#### August 7

Nooning on a nice stream in a valey in the mountains, so the statement about the waters of the Columbia was not so.

#### August 8

Morning. We came to this place in good time last evening, a regular camping place, a stream with willow and grass. Lewis buried an infant here yesterday, still born. They moved out this morning while we were at breakfast. There is several sick in our train. I saw the full moon rise from behind the mountain last evening.

#### August 9

Noon after dinner, being the first leasure I have had when the wagon was still, we have come over a rough road today, in one place just room for the road between high mountains, some think we have come over the summit. This has been the dustys road we have had, this evening, not much grass neither.

#### August 11

All of them raised their wagon beds but us,<sup>12</sup> we raised our load, we have to ford a stream and it is full. We travailed till after night. We passed good camping places but too early to camp.

#### August 12

We are laying by to-day in consequence of our tiresome travail yestarday. I sided up my wagon, swaped a large tin of peaches for as many beans and cooked half of them for dinner, and washed some in the evening.

#### August 13

Sunday Mrs. Turpin complained terably last night. I sat up from 10 till about 1 o'clock but she got no ease. We are detaining again on her account. There is several sick in the train. We are using spring water. John killed 4 chick, I cooked them for dinner gave 2 to the sick. It is about ½ mile to the river, which is suposed to be the head waters of the Columbia.

#### August 14

We passed the falls that have been in hearing of our camp for 2 days, soon this morning, some thought is fall near 40 feet, all the streams have falls, we nooned near another cascade in the river, but quite small. I could not see the principle one till after we passed by, it looked like snow, it was so white. We travailed till night before we came to the river bottom. There is the only place where there is any grass, it was very near easten out here. The road has lain over steep mountains mostly all evening.

#### August 16

Started by day light with out breakfast. Travailed till after 10 before we came to water. I was rite sick during the night with diareah, it looked I would give quite out before I could get something to eat. The sun shone so hot. Our road has been very steep and rocky, and very dusty almost insufferable. We nooned about 3 hours in order to give the cattle time to graze.

#### August 17

I have had the diahrea for two days. This morning is the first time I have felt able to write since I wrote the last. I feel clear of misery, but am very weak. We are encamped near the river.

#### August 19

We encamp within a few mile of a ranch on a place that has lately been mown. It rained last night and the sun is shining as bright as I have always been used to seeing it do after a storm, and I hear some tiny notes of birds among the willows on the branch. It lightnined and thundered about like it does in Missouri.

#### August 20

Started early came to a ranch about 10 and stoped long enough to water the teams. They say 17 miles to grass. We came to the ferry about noon, got our dinner and was soon crossing the Snake River in a row boat. We had to come down a very steep side mountain road. The wagon I was in came very near running off, I had to get out and walk about a quarter down hill, we had good grass for the stock.

#### August 21

The right wing came over last evening. The Wind was against the progress of the boat. This morning is still and they are making rapid progress. The wagons & horses are over and they are swimming the cattle. There is a river coming out of the right bank, forming several falls before it reaches the bottom. It makes quite a noise. The bluffs are almost perpendicular, there hight is beyond my estimation, 10 o'clock A.M. The order is to get dinner and start. A few cattle are on the other side. They could not swim the river. They are going to bring them on the boat.

The cattle crowded up on the boat and sunk it, and came near drowning some of the men. They had their boots and clothing on.

**August 22**

The train is trying to get in motion, her moving now resembles a stern wheel boat at a low stage of the Mo. R. going up stream—

Noon camp. The hill we had to come up to get out of the river bottom was about the worst we have had. The bottom was sandy. The middle portion side mountain, and the top pure rocks in steps about 2 foot high and on a turn—watered at a spring and had a little grass too. The road is deep sand heavy pulling. Travailed till about 10 o'clock before we came to water. They say there is grass near but it is too dark to hunt it so the horses are tied to the wagon. Morning light did not find much grass for the stock. The word is another long drive to supplies of grass and water.

**August 23**

We stoped at noon long enough to rest the stock & let them pick from the scanty fare afforded. We came to grass & water, nice place to camp. Dean is stopping a short distance above & Eaton went up there to rest his sick family. His oldest child is not expected to live. Himself and wife both sick—

**August 24**

Considerable trouble with the stock, they scattered considerable. Old Sorel went to the other correll. Puss lost herself in the willows.

McMurrain McClure & us came on about 5 mile to the next station in the night.

**August 26**

Came to water at about 5 mile. We watered the teams and drove till noon. Had some dry bunch grass 10 miles to good grass & water twelve o'clock is excessively hot. Evenings & mornings cool. We drove till after night last night.

We came to good grass and water. Several acres of slew grass. Looked nice but the stock would not eat it. There is plenty of rye. Old sorrel is very poor in flesh and spirits.

**August 27**

We got up early this morn got to a ranch where there is indifferent water & some grass. We fed the last shelled oats to old Sorrel. A heavy rain fell last night and it was very hot. I did not rest well. We camped tonight rite close to a small stream coming down from the mount north of us. Tolerable grass, Lewis & Cravan camped near.

**August 27**

We watered the teams at a ranch said to be 10 miles from where we camped last night. Whites came on in the night, camped just behind us. I am trying to write home, but I have so little time, I make slow progress. I have bread cooked for dinner. I will employ all the leasure that gives me. We are encamped in a place that has been mowen long enough for the grass to start, which makes it good grazing.

**August 28**

Started early this morning after having good grass & spring water, but the long drives are bringing down our stock. Nooning after a five mile drive, at a place where they had raised some vegetables by irrigation. I bought 2 lbs of potatoes for 30 cts and cooked them for dinner. They were small & I think had been dug for some time.

**Chris and Myrtilla Black Bergman (below) built a solid home on the original Black homestead where they cared for Mary Louisa until her death in 1911. The dwelling burned around 1939.** Photo courtesy of Marguerite Black



They looked wilted, some of them. Got good grazing by going 1 mile up the mountains.

#### **August 30**

Wed. Came over some very rocky dusty hilly roads stopped and hired pasture at 25 cts pr. head within short distance of Boise City. Sold the shot gun for 1¼ oz. of gold dust valued at \$20. sold Old Sorrel for \$25.

#### **August 31**

We passed through Boise yesterday, considerable place, bought sack of oats there. Then met a man hauling in a load and traded the elk hid for another sack, \$11. Came about 5 mile. fed on oats. Camped at a ranch. We came on with some mule teams from Mo. going to Oregon. McClure wanted to fall in with White again. McMurray is not going as far as we are. I am writing during a halt to fill water kegs.

#### **September 1**

We camped last night where we stoped at noon. The wind blew so hard we could not go on. Today is cold. We have come down a very steep hill. the most of the road has been hilly, very hilly. The Mc. come on in the evening very houghy about our going ahead. We are traveling down Paity River [*Payette*], nooned on a branch, grass looked green and nice but was salty. Durham is the name of the old gentleman we are traveling with, sone in law, Brown & family, 2 married sons and families & Mrs. Bell his sons wifes mother. Moving, going to Oregon, very clever folks. Just about camping time a heavy storm set in and we were compelled to halt, and it soon commenced pouring down the hail in balls a size larger than buck shot, the horses showed every sign of their intentions to beat a hasty retreat and the men had to unharness during the thickest of the shower.

#### **September 2**

This morning is cold and drizzling rain. We made a poor nooning, came on to the Paity and crossed it. Then drove till late and camped in the Snake bottom & crazed the stock on an island in the river.

#### **September 3**

We had a good road this fore noon encamped on a small stream called Weazen [*Weiser*], drove constant this afternoon, reached the camping place about sundown, ranches all along.

#### **September 4**

There is a large pack train encamped at this place. About 10 o'clock. We have crossed the Snake again & waiting for the balance of the wagons to come over. They make quick trips and drive two wagons with 4 horses on at a time. We brought all over at one load, except our led mare, Puss. Tilla is very sick with diahrea & the road today has been rough. We are now in Oregon.

We encamped on Burnt river, passed some packers that had lost some of their stock. Old Mr. Durham is very uneasy. John went out with the stock to stay all night.

#### **September 5**

Tilla was very sick in the night, I gave her a dose of worm medicine when it operated she vomited and was very sick.

#### **September 6**

Late in the evening. We halted today on account of Dr. Durhams little sons being very sick. I have been washing all day. I never saw nicer water for the purpose, the bed of the creek are composed of large rock which stand up out of the water and one can walk in on them and dip up the water without roiling it. John started early this morning to make brakes to both his wagons, he has finished the one on this wagon.

#### **September 7, 8**

Today and yesterday have both been cold. We halted today about 3 o'clock on account of the cold wind, it is as cold weather as we have the first of Nov in Mo. it rained last night and we have come facing a cold west wind today & yesterday.

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### **The cattle crowded up on the boat and sunk it, and came near drowning some of the men.**

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#### **September 9**

So cold this morning I can hardly write, heavy frost and ice. We meet large pack trains. Met 11 yesterday. We are in Powder river valey, camped in hearing of a quartz mill.

#### **September 10**

We passed by Ringo yesterday evening came 8 mile to this camp. It is raining this morning. We are in the valey skirted by snow crested pine covered mountains. We are nooning on the summit of the Blue mounts. We have been coming up all the fore noon. The horses are very tired, drizzling all the time too, we travailed till late through a cold rain, stopped close to a deserted store house I cooked supper in it. Tilla is very sick.

#### **September 12**

They are stopping to trade for some beef. The roads have been fine since we left the Daily ranch at the foot of the Mt. some men at the Quartz mill gave John a find hound that some emigrants had left at the house just before we came to this. A fox hunter had a mate for him and offered John a sock of flour, 50 lbs. for him, worth here \$6.50 John sold it to Mr. Durham for \$5.00 intends taking it in horse feed, it looks almost like a miracle.

#### **September 13, 14, 15**

Morning we laid bye here yesterday at the junction of Daily and Grand Ronde Road, on account of Liza Durhams being too sick to travail. Jackson, Ringo, and some of our friends of Kirks Train, we had not seen since we left, are camped with us. Thompson passed by yesterday morning. The name of the creek is Birch Creek.<sup>13</sup> Tilla has been very sick for several days, which has gave me such a press of work, I have not had time to write.

In the back of the diary, Mary Louisa kept a letter from an anonymous doctor prescribing treatments for common illnesses along the trail.



Dear Friend,

I give you below a bit of medicines for your trip across the plains. Such as are in powder form you must get the druggist to give you a sample of the dose to enable you to administer it.

- Laudanum ..... 4 ounces (dose: 25 drops)
- Turpentine ..... 16 ounces (dose: ½ teaspoonful)
- Castor Oil ..... 1 bottle ½ pint (dose: 1½ tablespoonful)
- McLeans Pills ..... 3 boxes
- Calomel ..... ½ drachm
- Blue Moss ..... ½ drachm
- Quinine ..... 4 drachms
- Sugar of Lead ..... 4 drachms
- Coal Oil ..... 1 pint
- Eye Water ..... Made of 2 grains of Sulpt of Zinc  
(sulphate) to one ounce water.  
Get two ounces made up.
- Parigoric ..... 8 ounces and mix one ounce  
of Tannin with it—for bowel complaint  
of children—dose your oldest child  
½ teaspoon—for the infant give  
to ten drops—for Tillie ¼ teaspoonful.
- Ipecac ..... 2 drachms (dose: 20 grains,  
5 grains every 15 minutes)
- Epsom Salt ..... ¼ pound (dose: heaping tablespoonful)
- Mustard Seed ..... ½ pint or 1 box ground mustard
- Blisters Plaster ..... 2 ounces
- Blue Stone ..... 2 drachms
- Hartshorn ..... ½ ounce
- One thumb lancet .....
- One tooth forcips for the company .....

You are likely to take no other diseases on the route besides common Diarrhoea, Dysentery, and Mountain Fever.

For Diarrhoea give the paregoric and tannin—for an adult, 1 tablespoon is a dose. Or take a dose of tannin with 25 drops of Laudanum and repeat every 3, 4, or 6 hours. Sometimes a dose of Blue mOss at first is best, then begin on the other.

If you take dysentery or flux (all the same) be sure and not keep the bowels locked up over 12 hours at a time. You must begin on Salts—full dose, after they act two or three times (which you will know by a change in the stools to a more natural character) then quiet the bowels with a full dose of Laudanum and repeat it in six hours. Then at the same time, on the next day that you gave the Salts, you give another dose and give Salts every day at the same time of day, repeat dose in six hours if the first does not act—then follow it with Laudanum as before. Nearly all of the deaths from flux are from keeping the bowels too much closed.

Mountain Fever—This is the easist thing treated in the world. You first give a very active purgative, nearly a double dose of McLean's Pills or Blue Moss and Calomel combined, then 40 drops of Laudanum, and sponge the body often with tepid water—repeat the Laudanum from 25 to 40 drops so as to keep the patient under the influence of it 48 hours. Then if there be any fevel left, repeat the purgative (a common dose now) followed by the Laudanum.

Colic—give a double dose of Castor oil with ½ teaspoonful of turpentine—repeat every three hours. As soon as it acts your colic is gone.

Cholera Morbus—give oil and Laudanum with mustard over the whole bowels.

### September 16

During a halt at a ranch, I avail myself of an opportunity to write. It looks more like living than anything I have seen, plenty of grain stacks, pigs in a pen, near where we are stopped, and fatning hogs and hens singing around and plenty of little chicks, all black with white toping. We have had some steep hill to climb this morning. Emaline is complaining.

### September 17

Sunday morning. We are going to make a short drive this fornoon & rest the balance of the day at a large spring, those say, that are acquainted with the road.

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**A heavy storm set in and we were  
compelled to halt, and it soon  
commenced pouring down the hail in  
balls a size larger than buck shot.**

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### September 18

Monday noon. I finished a letter home yesterday which occupied all the leisure I could get. WE came to the spring about 1 o'clock & stayed till this morning. John was quite sick when we stopped. Took opium & slept all evening. Emaline and 2 of her children on the sick list. I have my hands full, with sickness and stubbornness, I am almost at a loss to know what to do. But resolved to do my duty.

### September 19

This morning Silas says Bell is sick. I doctor myself and children & feel concerned about Bell, but he has neither asked for medicine nor my advise. I could not have ever known it if not for my own observations. There is a good physician in the train, that is enough—we are encamped close to a willow branch I do not know the name, Graham is just below us, Ringo above, to judge from the down hill we came in on.

### September 20, 21

We are stopped to noon, Silas called the doctor this morning for Bell & said he must stop at the John Day River till he could come up to see her, so we came on as our team is weak and needs to be on grass. The mules and roan can stand it better than our other poor mares, since we left them, it has been up hill all the way. They will be apt to be late getting in. The doctor has an ox team. They passed just as we were getting ready to bring in the horses.

### September 22

We took the Mt. road this morning. 2 of Mr. Durhams sons and families, the Ford and Graham of our train went to the landing to ship. Cooper, Ringo, old Mr. Durhams family, Brown, Rosenberger & our selves are encamped convenient to the first water we came to. That is about ten miles that we came today. Emaline is very complain-