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TABLE ROCK

SENTINEL

MARCH
APRIL 1992

STAMPEDING
INTO MEDFORD

**BUFFALO
BILL**

GROWING UP AT
THE

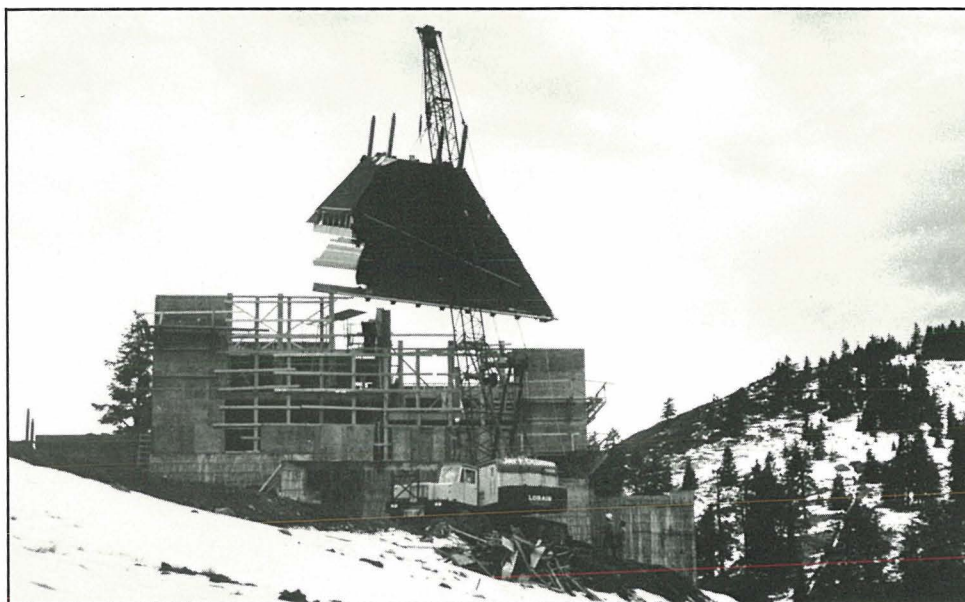
OPP MINE

PETER BRITT'S
**ROOM WITH
A VIEW**
PHOTO STUDIO

The
Magazine
of the
Southern
Oregon
Historical
Society



Twenty-nine Years Ago



A Batzer Construction Company crane hoists a huge roof section to the top of the Mt. Ashland Lodge in the fall of 1963. SOHS #13941

Prior to the 1960s, southern Oregon skiers had two choices: travel to Bend and enjoy a fully equipped ski resort or motor up muddy and perilous Tolman Creek Road to ski on unimproved runs at Mt. Ashland. No chair lifts were available there and a gas-powered rope tow was the only means to pull skiers up the mountain. Such primitive conditions existed until Dan Bulkley, a physical education instructor at Southern Oregon College, along with other local ski enthusiasts formed the non-profit Mount Ashland Corporation with intentions of building a bona-fide ski resort on the mountain.

Bulkley and the corporation sold \$1.2 million in bonds to finance the resort and by November 1963 their dreams were materializing; Batzer Construction Co. of Medford had completed nearly fifty percent of the 11,500 square-foot ski lodge and a second contractor, A. L. Harding, Inc. of Stayton, was progressing on a new eight-mile road linking U.S.99 with the resort. Although the partially completed ski area opened for the 1963-64 season, the resort was more prepared to accommodate skiers by the fall of 1964. At its completion, the new resort offered first-class skiing facilities, featuring four lifts, a spacious lodge, and a service building housing a ski shop, ticket sales office, ski patrol, and maintenance garage.

In the following years, the Mt. Ashland resort suffered a series of financial and weather-related setbacks. On many occasions, lack of snow delayed opening. Heavy debts and high maintenance costs forced the Mount Ashland Corporation to declare bankruptcy in 1973. Determined not to let the resort die, non-profit groups such as the Southern Oregon Ski Association and individuals like Grants Pass businessman Richard Hicks struggled to keep the financially troubled resort open. Devotion for the ski park has never waned, as evidenced by the Mount Ashland Ski Association's recent purchase of the mountain resort following a dramatic and successful fund raising campaign.

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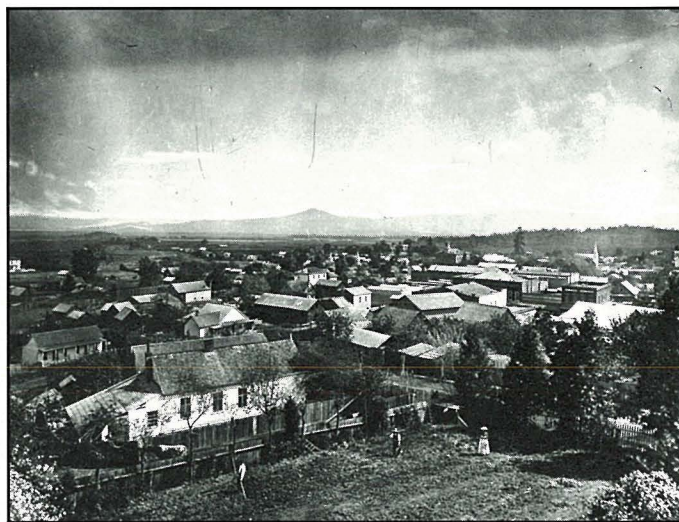
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p. 2



p. 16

Features

2 Buffalo Bill: Stampeding into Southern Oregon

by Steve M. Wyatt

Wild West showman and American hero William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's troupe of rough riders and real Indians took Medford by a storm in 1910. Thousands crowded Phipps' pasture to witness the death-defying reenactments and incredible acts that made the Wild West show an American legend.

12 Growing Up at the Opp Mine by Sue Waldron

Rather than the constant pounding of a twenty-stamp ore mill, the unending racket of a rock crusher or the sporadic thunder of dynamite blasts, Gertrude, Julia, and Jean Opp recall a childhood filled with wildflowers and fantasies in their hillside home at the Opp Mine.

16 A Room with a View: Nineteenth-century Images from Peter Britt's Studio by Natalie Brown

When Switzerland-born artist Peter Britt arrived in then-named Table Rock City in November 1852, he promptly built a log cabin/daguerreotype studio from which to ply his trade on a hill overlooking the town. Britt's sweeping views taken from that site document the first five decades of Jacksonville's history.

Departments

Twenty-nine Years Ago (inside front cover)

27 Book Review: *An Arrow in the Earth*

32 Reflections on the Past

11 From the Collections

31 Then and Now

That's Fairly Interesting (inside back cover)

Front cover: Artist Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899) painted Buffalo Bill in 1889 astride a characteristic white horse. Photo courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming

Back cover: An unidentified Indian performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was pictured on one of a series of postcards promoting the extravaganza. Courtesy Turner House Books and Antiques/Western memorabilia collection



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BUFFALO BILL



THE ROUGH R
REPR

Robt. Lindner
1922. © 1922.

BUFFALO BILL

Stampeding into Southern Oregon

by Steve M. Wyatt

SHARPSHOOTERS, A STAGECOACH STICK-UP, COLORFUL INDIANS AND ROUGH RIDERS TOOK MEDFORD BY STORM IN 1910. FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS MILLIONS HAD BEEN FLOCKING TO the show to witness the death-defying reenactments and incredible acts by world-famous marksmen and equestrians. Half the world including kings and queens had seen the Wild West show as it trekked across the United States, England, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany. At long last it was Medford's turn to witness the one and only original extravaganza.

The first successful Wild West show was orchestrated by William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody in 1882 as part of a Fourth-of-July celebration in Kansas.¹ The overwhelming popularity of the exhibition convinced Cody and his backers that a traveling show would be well received by audiences wherever it went. In September of 1910 Jackson County residents gathered at Phipps' pasture on Roosevelt Avenue in

Wild West showman and American hero Buffalo Bill proudly sits astride his characteristic white horse. A 1910 poster (below) promotes the combined Wild West and Far East shows. Lithograph courtesy Turner House Books and Antiques/Wild West memorabilia collection, poster courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming.



The celebrated showman (*opposite*) stands with a Winchester lever-action rifle. Annie Oakley (*inset*) performed many of her shooting tricks with a Marlin lever-action 22 rifle. SOHS #13890; poster courtesy Liquidators Warehouse.



Buffalo Bill's commanding appearance contributed to his folk hero status.

SOHS #13891

Medford to see the combined exhibitions of Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill. Featured acts varied from Rossi's Musical Elephants to a reenactment of the Battle of Summit Springs.

An ad appearing in the *Medford Mail Tribune* promised that the one-time performance would be "A proudly pre-eminent exhibition, rich in romance, picturesque, patriotic, educating and entertaining." Based on local accounts, the spectacle lived up to its promise and produced memories that endured a lifetime.

Much of the success of Cody's Wild West Show, which endured some thirty years, can be attributed to the fame of Buffalo Bill. Long before assembling his

first Wild West show he had achieved notoriety as an expert buffalo hunter. It was widely written that Cody shot an incredible 4,280 buffalo over an eight-month period while providing meat for Kansas Pacific Railroad building crews. In the army he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts as chief of scouts and guide.

Once his guiding abilities and knowledge of Indian ways were publicized, Cody's exploits became choice material for newspaper reporters and dime novelists. The publication of exaggerated versions of his adventures quickly elevated Cody to the status of a western folk hero.

As a result, Cody became a frequent recipient of invitations from presidents and royalty alike. His fame had even spread to Russia. As a favor to Czar Alexander I of Russia, President U.S. Grant arranged for Cody to lead a hunting trip for his son, Grand Duke Alexis, in 1871. This mother of all hunting parties consisted of 500 people, including General George Custer and General William Tecumseh Sherman. The hunt was a resounding success, and Cody, who was still in the military, was granted a thirty-day leave, \$500, and a railroad pass to the East Coast, where his celebrity status opened many doors for him.

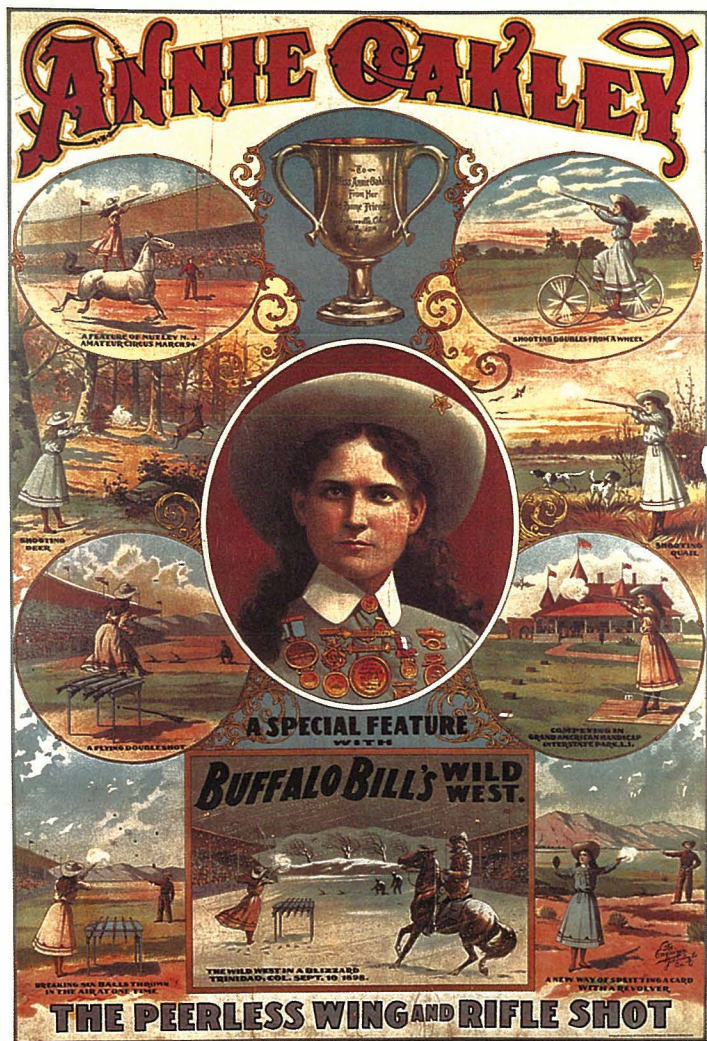
While in New York he met with novelist Edward Judson, whose pen name was Ned Buntline. Buntline had previously interviewed Cody and written several novels featuring the adventures of Buffalo Bill. Buntline arranged for Cody to appear before an audience for the first time in a play he wrote in four hours titled "The Scouts of the Prairie." The play's success was attributed strictly to the curiosity of Easterners for the Wild West. One reviewer described the play as "... a combination of incongruous drama, execrable acting, renowned performers, mixed audience, intolerable stench, scalping, blood and thunder..."² Despite its less than favorable reviews it was a moneymaker that turned people away from packed houses.

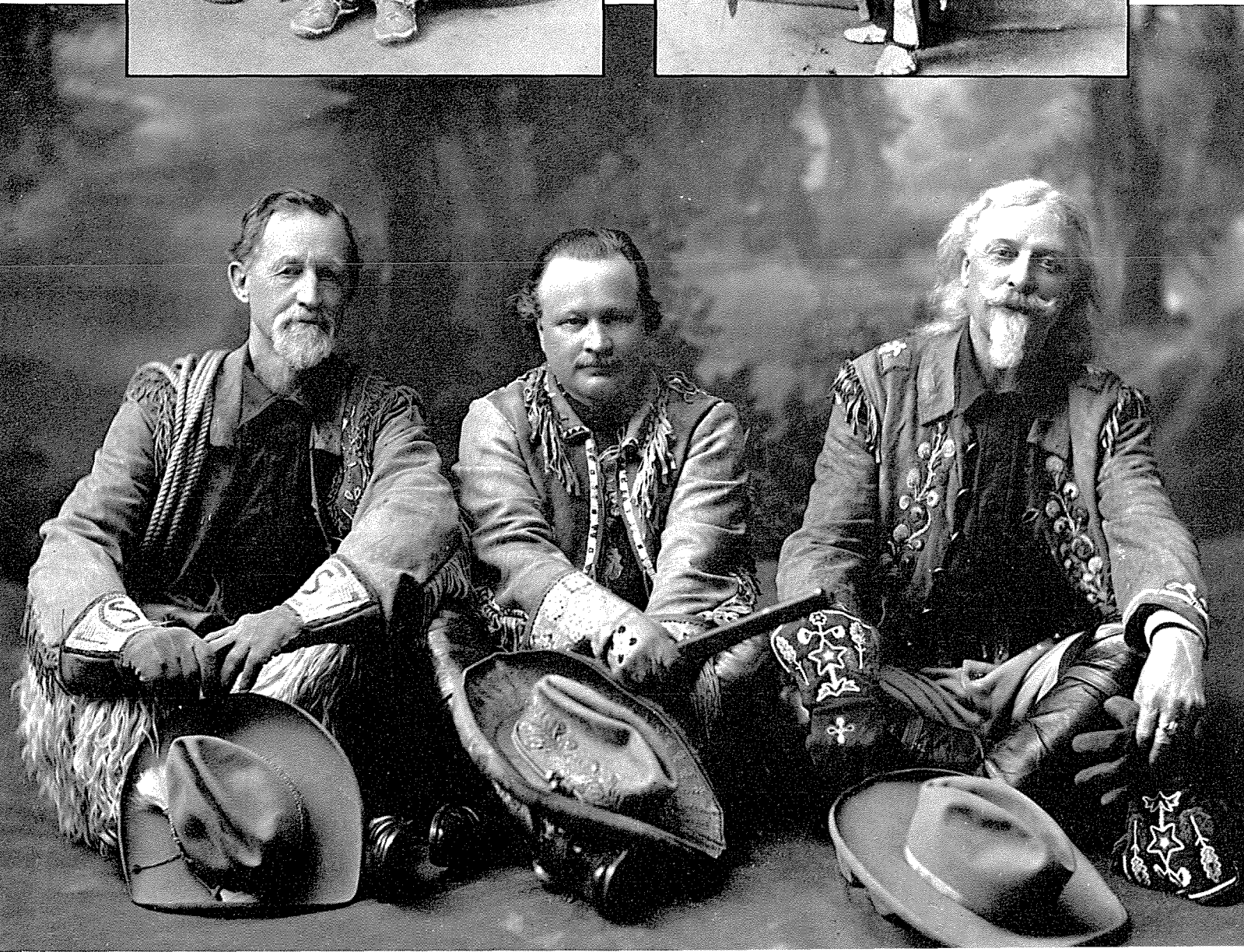
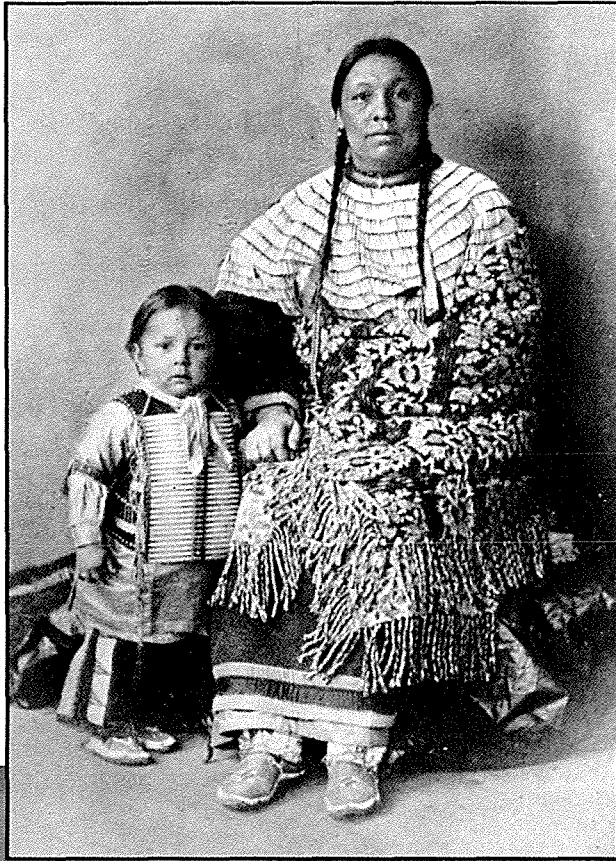
Cody the folk hero was able to capitalize on his tremendous drawing power in the many plays he appeared in. However, Cody the organizer of a traveling Wild West show was not content to rely on his striking appearance and celebrity status alone to capture the public's imagination. His genius was to skillfully combine the drama of the Wild West with the sport of rodeo and the hype and diverse acts of a circus.

Cody the showman insisted on realism in all the acts. The actors were genuine frontiersmen and Indians who had honed their

skills in the West. In what became a standard in his shows, Indians would rob the Deadwood stagecoach, and Cody and his men would save the day. Anything went except killing and scalping. Injuries among the performers were not infrequent.

No matter where Buffalo Bill and his entourage traveled, the red carpet was rolled out. When the show was in Rome in 1890, cast members were invited to the ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of the coronation of Pope Leo XIII. Cody stood in a corridor with his Indians, who were wearing their native dress and full war paint, waiting for the pope to walk by. A witness to the spectacle reported: "Cody, in dress coat with his long hair flowing over his shoulders—perhaps the only man who could ever wear such a combination without being ludicrous—towered a full head above the rest. His Holiness gazed intently at the great hero, and spread his hands in blessing."³ While in Berlin,





Cody's most famous markswoman, "Annie Oakley, the Peerless Lady Wing-Shot," obliged Crown Prince Wilhelm (later Kaiser Wilhelm II) and used him in her act. Prince William placed a cigarette in his lips, and Oakley then stepped back thirty paces and calmly shot the end off the cigarette⁴

To be sure, Buffalo Bill and the cast of his Wild West show lived in the limelight. However, it was not all fun and games for the star of the show. Cody possessed many skills—he was an accomplished guide, scout, hunter, and showman—but managing money was not one of his strong suits. During all of his years with the Wild West show Cody always had a working partner. The expenses of moving the show, caring for the animals and meeting payroll required financial vigilance that Cody lacked. When the show made money Cody quickly squandered his share of the profits or invested in mining, ranching, or irrigation schemes, none of which proved very profitable.

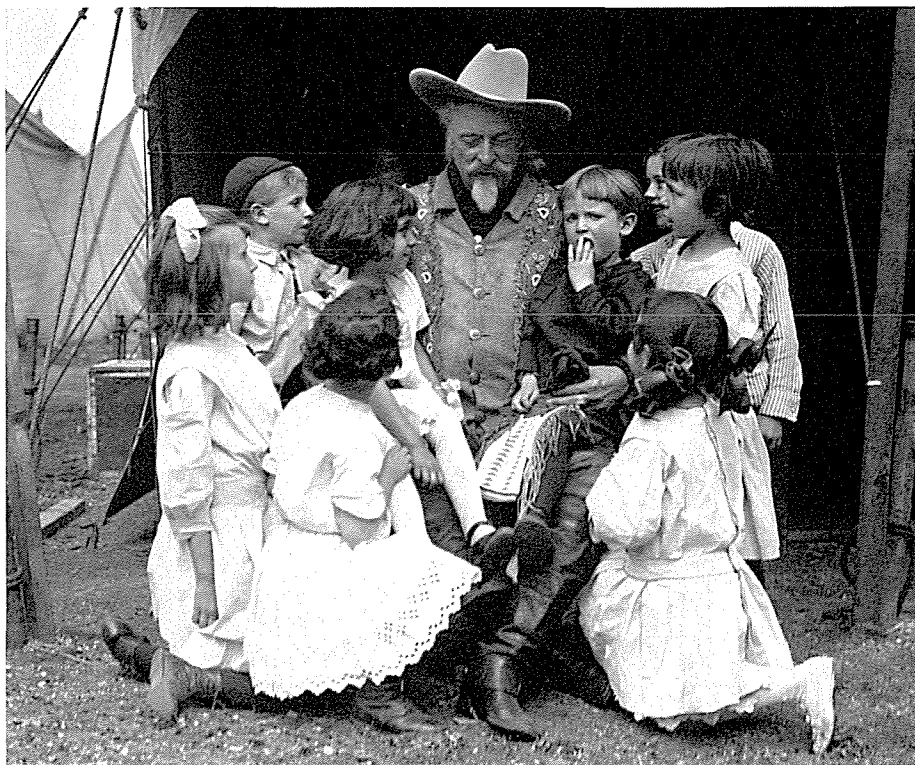
In 1909 Cody found himself deeply in debt and struggling to meet his bills. He formed a partnership with Major Gordon "Pawnee Bill" Lilly. Lilly had been ringmaster for Pawnee Bill's Historic Far West and Great Far East Show since 1904. Cody and Pawnee Bill became equal partners to form a Wild West and Far East show⁵. This is the combination show that stopped in Medford on September 24, 1910.

At an exhibition at Madison Square Garden four months prior to his arrival in Medford, Cody had announced that the upcoming two-year tour was to be his last. At sixty-four, Cody wanted to retire from life on the road and settle down to enjoy the fruits of his labor. As a result of his announcement, the declining attendance that had dogged the show for the last few years was dramatically reversed as audiences flocked to see Buffalo Bill for the last time.

Cody's final tour included the acts that had proven so tremendously popular with audiences over the years. Jackson County residents were treated to a long list that included the Cody standards: "The Battle of Summit Springs," "The Congress of Rough Riders," and "An Attack on an Emigrant Train." It was advertised that "the only and original Buffalo Bill, positively appears and takes part in every performance."⁶

Seven-year-old Ellis Beeson was lucky enough to have been treated to the show by his father. He was still able to call to mind the show with striking detail in an interview

Wild West stars Buffalo Jones, Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill (opposite) pose in show garb in 1909. Other performers included Laura Standing Bear, her son Standing Bear, Jr., and Chief Lone Bear (insets). Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; insets courtesy Turner House Books and Antiques/Wild West memorabilia collection.



in 1977. Beeson said that before the show there was a parade through the streets of Medford. For publicity, Cody's Wild West Show always had a parade. Beeson remembered that it was led by Buffalo Bill himself, driving a team of beautiful black horses and waving to the crowd as he went by. Behind Cody was a wagon pulled by four oxen, "the type that old-timers used to cross the Plains with." Following the wagon were eight cowboys riding abreast, then uniformed cavalymen and Indians riding bareback on Appaloosa horses.

As a boy who undoubtedly spent many hours playing cowboys and Indians, Beeson was impressed with the Indians, who "had their quiver and arrows on their backs, carrying their tomahawks."

Another Cody standard was the cowboy band. Beeson recalled: "One of Buffalo Bill's advertisements for the circus was 'Come and Hear Buffalo Bill's Bugle Blowin' Brass Band.' And here came the band. And he had one, too. Tootin' their horns; of course they had a drummer."

In his mind, Beeson could bring back the layout of the show. It was not unlike a

Buffalo Bill accommodates an admiring flock of children in 1913. Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming.

circus, with rings that were out under the open sky while the audience sat under a large oblong tent. To prevent the show animals from being spooked by automobiles, motorists were asked to park their vehicles far away.

Beeson recalled of the show's opening, "Here comes this buffalo, I suppose he'd done it ten thousand times, and an Indian right after him—ridin' bareback with his arrow drawn back—and he made one circle around the arena and, of course, the Indian never did shoot at the buffalo."

The highlight of the show for Beeson must have been the attack of the emigrant



Buffalo Bill entertains Indian children during the filming of *The Indian Wars* in 1913. Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming.

train. An ox-drawn wagon driven by a pioneer family lumbered into the ring, "and here come the Indians . . . with their tomahawks and everything." Cowboys and cavalrymen attempted to rescue the pioneers from the Indians. This time, the Indians won the battle, running the rescuers and the wagon out of the ring to make room for the next act.

Also featured in the Medford performance was "the Battle of Summit Springs," an act based on an 1869 raid upon a Cheyenne village in which Cody claimed he killed the band's leader, Tall Bull.

The Congress of Rough Riders also made an appearance. When they debuted at the Columbian Exposition in 1893 the act earned rave reviews. The equestrian feats and exotic costumes of cavalrymen from Mexico, Russia, the Middle East, France, Germany, England, and America drew twenty-seven million people to the show over a six-month period. Without doubt the 1910 version of the Congress of Rough

Riders act had been scaled back from the show's peak years.

The show would not have been complete without a trick rider who, Beeson recalled, "had a beautiful dapple grey horse. She crawled underneath the horse's belly and around its neck and everything," he said.

Added especially for the farewell tour was the tremendously popular football on horseback. Those who saw the spectacle described a game of cowboys versus Indians. It was played with a ball about four feet in diameter. The horses would rear and strike the ball over the goal line before the defenders could turn it back. After the first game the riders would dismount, allowing the horses to play by themselves. One cowboy with the show described the roughness of football on horseback as ". . . little less than murder."

For the concluding act Buffalo Bill pulled into the arena in his carriage, where he threw golf ball-sized targets one at a time in the air as his lady trick shooter (not Annie Oakley) shot every one of them. "I guess she must have broke 40 or 50 of 'em," Beeson recalled.⁷

For five-year-old Ralph Peyton the chance to go to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show promised to be the thrill of a lifetime. Ralph's father Reuben Peyton, for whom Peyton Bridge over Lost Creek Lake and the former Peyton Post Office are named, knew Pawnee Bill before moving to Jackson County in 1887. Together the two were partners in the cattle business and ran stock in the Indian territory around Wellington, Kansas. Later Peyton and Pawnee Bill joined the Bigelow Wild West Show as fancy rifle shots and rope artists. When the combined shows of Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill came to town, the Reuben Peyton family was provided with free tickets. Surprisingly, the show is not what made the greatest impression on little Ralph Peyton; maybe he was just too short to see over the crowd. The greatest thrill, a treasured memory of childhood, came when he sat on Buffalo Bill's lap and spoke with the hero. What Cody said to young Peyton no one knows. The excitement of being that close to a legend was probably all the youngster could take.⁸

Before Buffalo Bill left town a reporter from the *Medford Mail Tribune* caught up with the "Old Indian Scout" and asked him if he had tired of show business. Cody responded: "No, I never get tired of excitement, but I want to have a chance to enjoy my farms in Cody, Wyoming, in the Great Horn Valley. I have some beautiful farms in Wyoming which I have never seen during

"Heap sure. Him ride ahead. Other Injun 'way be- hind him. Heap quick. Cutthroats pass um Pa-e-has-ka."
 "Liven!" spoke up Nahkee.
 Far to the westward, faint but unmistakable, came the flapping of a pony's hoofs.
 The scout leaped from the saddle and coiled reins.
 "Come on, Pawnee," he called.
 Bring your rope. Nahkee, I'm out of sight. Don't let Pa-Savvy!"

"What?"
 Buffalo Bill slid over the edge among the bowlders. The lotto- clear of the stones, and he was by the Sioux chief. With keen selected a point of vantage for Bill.

"Down here, Pawnee," said the hind a bowlder.
 This bowlder was flanked by another, hide the party from the view of any pass from the west.

"What's the program?" inquired Pawnee when a crisis was at hand.
 "We've captured Talk-a-heap, and no to lay Yellow Horse by the heels. By perhaps save Miss Holcomb. In any event proper thing for us to do now that this is the case."

"Correct. Why the ropes?"
 "I want you to throw the chief's pony, nee, and I'll take care of the chief."
 "How about the three behind?"
 "We'll have to leave them for the Crows to he's coming!"

Around the flanking bowlder, Buffalo Bill ment caught a glimpse of Yellow Horse. He bristled, his face, streaked with yellow war paint, particularly hideous. He carried a lance, a feathers fluttering from just below the head of Yellow Horse was a weird figure as he came along the pass. His savage expression was th no doubt, of his thoughts. Pa-ha-ha had ran cave and released one of the prisoners. Very li was hurrying off to make sure that the other two oners were not released.

"Ready?" whispered the scout.
 "Ready," whole family, nearness," chuckled the man, likewise known to those best acquainted with as the rope around. "Consider that Sioux cayuse throw. The coiled rope was in Pawnee Bill's left hand, the nose in his right. He was spreading the noose a li wider and shuffling the loose, free coils back and forth his fingers. Meanwhile, his hawklike glance never for a instant left the approaching chief.

"I can't do my work until you do yours," whispered the scout.
 "Before you can count twenty, nearness, my work will be done."

At the proper moment, timing himself by the plumbety- plumb of the unwhipped horse, the tip of the reins lifted himself suddenly. A whirl of the noose, and it shot out- ward, wriggling like a hempen serpent along the ground. Yellow Horse saw his peril, but too late. The noose snared the cayuse by the right forward hoof. Jumping to the top of the bowlder, Pawnee Bill planted himself firmly.

An instant more and the slack was taken up. Paw- nee Bill, although badly jolted, held to his place, and the Sioux cayuse fell, scrambling.

Yellow Horse had had time to gather himself for the shock. As the pony fell he shot clear of the animal's back and alighted on his feet on the ground.

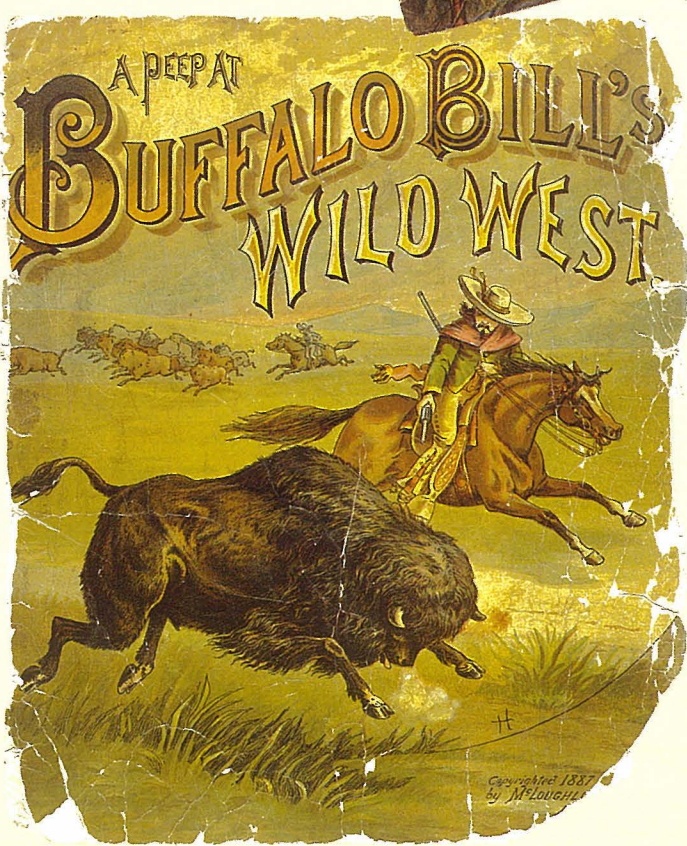
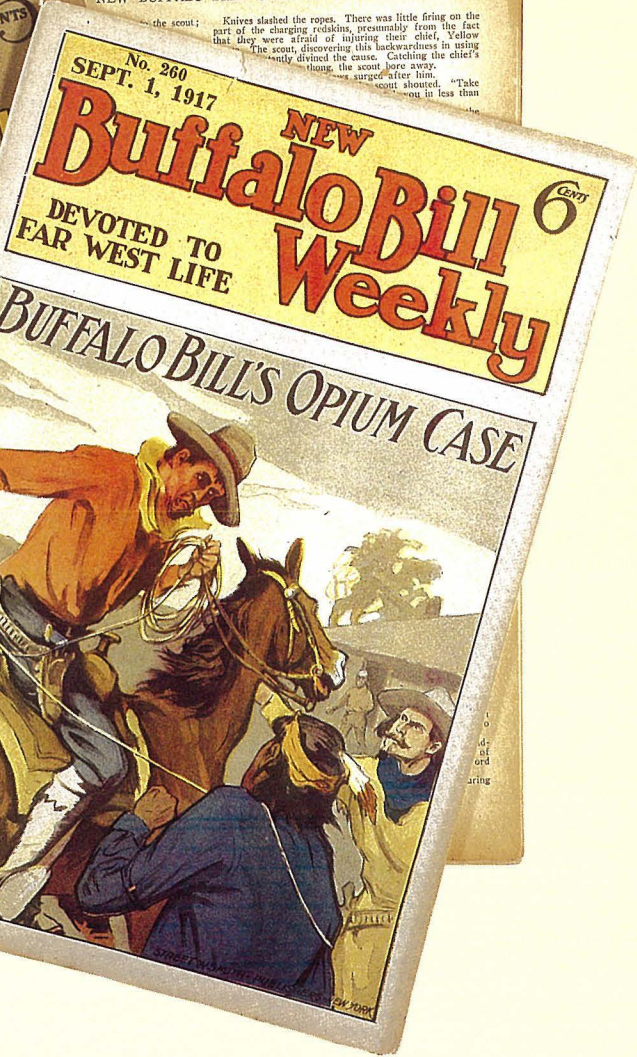
The scout was around the bowlder and upon him. With a fierce whoop, Yellow Horse, who still retained hold of his lance, aimed a vicious blow with it at the scout.

Pawnee Bill gave a yell as he lay back on the rope. At the same moment Buffalo Bill caught the lance and wrested it out of the chief's hand.

NEW Buffalo Bill Weekly

DEVOTED TO FAR WEST LIFE

BUFFALO BILL'S WAIF of the PLAINS



The Buffalo Bill legend spawned a weekly magazine, a nineteenth-century illustrated book of children's poetry, and countless postcards. Courtesy Turner House Books and Antiques/Wild West memorabilia collection.

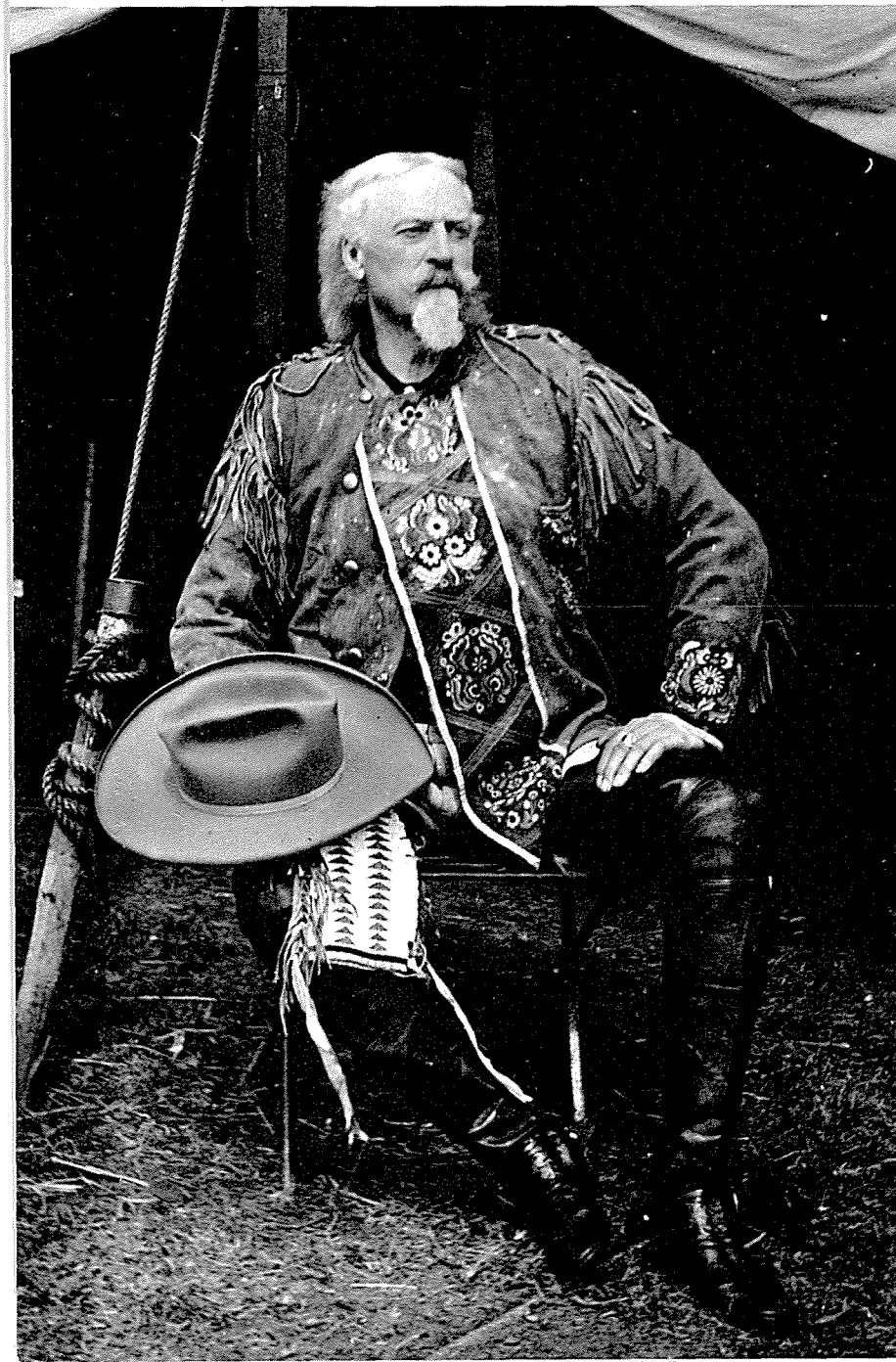
the green season, as I have always been away with my show.”⁹

The end of the 1910 season, the first year of Cody's two-year farewell tour, came two months later. The tour grossed more than \$1 million, and the profits were \$400,000. At the end of the second year of the farewell tour the partners netted \$200,000. This was not enough to meet Cody's obligations.

With a great deal of reluctance he agreed to a second farewell tour with Pawnee Bill. This tour was even less profitable than the previous one. In 1913 Pawnee Bill petitioned for bankruptcy, and the show's assets ended up on the auction block.

It was then Cody's intention to head back to his beloved Wyoming ranch, but offers to appear in vaudeville came pouring in. Cody turned them all down, accepting

W. F. Cody, ca. 1912. Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming.



instead an opportunity to head the Col. W. F. Cody "Buffalo Bill" Historical Picture Company. Cody knew that motion pictures had been cutting into the attendance at his shows, and this was an opportunity to capitalize on this new and promising entertainment medium. Production began on a series of films that were to document three great Indian battles of the West: the Battle of Summit Springs, Custer's Last Stand and Wounded Knee. Once again the profits proved disappointing.

Although Buffalo Bill remained in the public eye after his intended retirement, Cody and his show never returned to Jackson County. In 1917, seven years after his visit to Medford, the epitome of the Wild West, Buffalo Bill Cody, died in Denver, Colorado. His funeral was a reflection of his extraordinary life. It was estimated that 25,000 admirers attended Cody's funeral. The seven-mile procession contained 3,000 automobiles and moved no faster than a slow walk. A *Denver Post* reporter wrote, "It was the most impressive notable funeral ever witnessed in America. No president could have been more honored by the presence of thousands."¹⁰ His burial site was blasted out of a solid granite mountaintop, Lookout Mountain, overlooking Denver.

Cody's folk hero status has lived on and grown to become a part of our culture that is continually repeated and reinterpreted in books and movies. For Ralph Peyton, Ellis Beeson, and the rest of the crowd that gathered at Phipps' pasture to see Buffalo Bill and his spectacular Wild West show, it was an experience never to be forgotten.



ENDNOTES

1. Don Russell, *The Wild West* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1970), 1.
2. Nellie Snyder Yost, *Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Fame and Fortunes* (Chicago: Swallow Press Inc., 1979), 70.
3. *Ibid.*, 224.
4. "Annie Oakley," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1980: 7-456. Annie Oakley had left Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show before it came to Medford. In 1901 the show was involved in a train wreck. Annie Oakley was seriously injured; despite recovering she did not return to Cody's show.
5. Russell, *The Wild West*, 75.
6. *Medford Mail Tribune*, advertisement, Sept. 15, 1910.
7. Interview with Ellis Briner Beeson, Southern Oregon Historical Society Library, Oral History #46, 7-10.
8. *Medford Mail Tribune*, Aug. 21, 1968.
9. *Medford Mail Tribune*, Sept. 29, 1910.
10. Yost, *Buffalo Bill*, 407.

Always drawn to a good spectacle, Collections Manager Steve "The Big Gun" Wyatt became fascinated with Buffalo Bill after discovering an advertisement for the Wild West show in a 1910 newspaper.

From the Collection

by Steve M. Wyatt

The resounding crack of a rifle, the tinkle of glass balls shattering in mid-air, and the excited “oohs” and “aahs” of a rapt audience after each shot hits the mark are all associated with Reuben Peyton’s buckskin suit. Before moving from the Midwest to southern Oregon in 1887, Peyton was a trick shot and fancy roper in Wild West shows. His interest in trick shooting and roping began when he became acquainted with Major Gordon Lilly, later known as “Pawnee Bill.” Soon Peyton joined Lilly in showing off his skills on the Wild West circuit. But unlike Peyton, Lilly remained in show business and went on to become partners with Buffalo Bill Cody.

On a flyer from what must have been one of trick-shot Peyton’s last shows, he shares billing with Pawnee Indian dancers, contortionists, musicians, and a variety of skits and plays. The finale, “The Bodiless Corpse, or a Scene in a Medical College,” must have been a crowd pleaser. Not long after this show in 1887, Peyton left Kansas for Oregon. The buckskin suit was given to him as a parting gift. Peyton settled in the Laurelhurst area, where he and his wife Ora and their ten children were well known. Peyton Bridge, near the Lost Creek Reservoir, is named for the old showman and pioneer.

When a Peyton family member donated the beaded buckskin suit to the Southern Oregon Historical Society, it was explained that the coat was made by the Pawnees, the pants by the Cheyennes, and the hat by the Sioux. The deep yellow color of the buckskin was obtained by using mulberry bark during the tanning process. To make the leather soft and pliable, women of the tribes chewed the buckskin.

Owing to limited exhibit space the majority of the objects in the



Society’s collection are not often seen by visitors. *From the Collection* is our attempt to provide an informative glimpse of the scope of the Southern Oregon Historical Society’s collection.





Growing Up at the Opp Mine

by Sue Waldron



One of the richest gold strikes in the history of southern Oregon quartz mining was made at the Opp mine.

It is hard to imagine a wonderful childhood surrounded by the constant pounding of a twenty-stamp ore mill, the unending racket of a rock crusher and the sporadic thunder of dynamite blasts. But Gertrude, Julia and Jean Opp wouldn't have had their childhood any other way. They remember the freedom, great stories, good food, and wildflowers.

The girls' father, John Wesley Opp, believed that if he worked hard, followed his dreams, and trusted his fellow man he would have a wonderful life. He put his beliefs into practice on a hillside northwest of Jacksonville.

Gertrude and Julia Opp (opposite) fondly recall a magical childhood filled with wildflowers and fantasy amidst the rock-crushing machinery at the Opp Mine (below). SOHS #13753, 13775, photo by Natalie Brown, inset courtesy Donn Todt

Little is known of John Opp's early life. He was born in Friendship, Indiana, on October 2, 1861. But he was operating a gold mine near Dillon in southwest Montana by the time he was thirty-eight years old. About this time, a lovely auburn-haired nurse named Rose Ries visited her sister in Montana. As fate would have it, John and Rose met and fell in love.

Rose had a nursing job in Portland at the time, so John sold his mine in Montana and headed for Oregon.

The couple planned eventually to try their luck in the gold fields of Alaska. But while waiting for a ship north, John took a train ride to the Rogue Valley, where he fell in love with the "complete change in scenery—beautiful trees, warm sunshine, delicious fresh fruit"¹ and he decided he couldn't leave such a wonderland." He sent for Rose, and they were married in Jacksonville at the

home of the Catholic priest, Father J. S. LaCroix, on May 19, 1900.²

John and Rose Opp began their married life in a rented room in the Kubli house in Jacksonville. John opened an account at the Beekman Bank and started looking for a piece of mining property.

As it happened, C. C. Beekman and his partner J. R. Huffer had a gold mine up Shively Gulch on Jackson Creek. The mine had been discovered in the 1860s by a Mr. Holman, who dug a ninety-foot tunnel. When the mine stopped paying well, Holman abandoned it.

Beekman and Huffer took over the mine and operated it off and on for several years. They had just completed a run through the stamp mill that was quite satisfactory, but both men were getting up in years and decided they wanted to get out of the gold mining business.

John wanted in. He paid \$1,500 for twenty acres in Section 36, Township 37 south, Range 3 west.³ Four hundred dollars added another thirteen acres in January 1901.⁴ This became the foundation of John Opp's dream.





John and Rose Opp. SOHS #13739, 13726

On March 11, 1901, Mary Gertrude Opp was born to John and Rose. Shortly after Gertrude's birth the Opps moved to the house next to the Jacksonville Courthouse on Fifth Street. There, on October 20, 1901, a second daughter, Julia Elizabeth, was born.

Raising two daughters left Rose with little time to practice nursing. She had graduated in 1897 with the third class to complete nurse's training at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland. But Rose used all her nursing skills in 1903 when her sister Lottie came to visit. The short

several cabins scattered over the hillside.

For the next couple of years the mine produced fairly well. John filed articles of incorporation for the Opp Mining Company on December 8, 1904, taking as partners John F. Reedy and T. Perry Frederic. The *Mineral Resources of Oregon* report for 1904 described the workings at the mine:

The property, with only a little more than 1,800 feet of development work, has produced more than \$1,000. . . . The vein runs from eight to twelve feet wide and is of low grade ore, save in a pay shoot that was encountered eighty feet from the

Another cross-cut of 180 feet taps the vein at a still greater depth of 180 feet and by means of drifts run in both directions here makes an excellent showing. In fact, the work discloses the best shoot of ore yet developed on the property. It lies in the south drift and is 100 feet in length. The streak is five feet wide and assays \$9.50. The north drift shows a larger vein for a distance of 180 feet. For this entire distance the ore is uniformly low grade, averaging about \$3 per ton.⁶

One of the richest gold strikes in the history of southern Oregon quartz mining was made May 20, 1905, at the Opp mine. The vein of gold was astounding. Twenty sacks of ore worth more than \$7,000 were taken out the first day. A second strike of five ore sacks was made a week later. A third and later strike, 40 bags of ore, was made June 2. The three strikes were valued at \$19,500.

That summer Jackson County officials began collecting items for the county's display at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland. John offered a gold pan filled with nuggets from the recent strike.

The two older girls slept summer and winter in a tent. "Mother believed in cold showers," Gertrude recalled.

stay lengthened when Lottie became ill with "brain fever." Despite Rose's efforts Lottie died June 2 at the age of twenty-two.⁵ A short time later John moved his family to the mine, setting up housekeeping in the largest of

tunnel mouth and which for twenty-five feet milled \$7 in free gold and \$4 in sulphurets. A cross-cut of 120 feet in length taps the vein at a point seventy feet lower and an up-raise is made clear to the surface. Another drift south 120 feet and still another north eighty feet disclose a shoot of ore 160 feet in length.

Tragedy struck at the mine January 18, 1906, when three men were killed in a tunnel explosion. The day shift, consisting of William Broad, Bert Coffman and Fred Johnson, completed drilling eighteen holes. Johnson had just brought in a load of powder to fill the holes for blasting. No one knew what caused the unstable powder to explode, but all three men were killed instantly. Broad, fifty, a resident of Jackson County for nearly a decade and well known as an experienced and competent miner, left a wife and eight children. Coffman, twenty-six, had grown up among the mines of southern Oregon, and left a wife and child. Johnson was working his first shift at the Opp mine, having just transferred from the Greenback mine in Josephine County. At the time the accident was considered "the most serious in the history of quartz mining in this county."

In March 1906 John completed negotiations with Charles R. Ray of the Blackwell district near Gold Hill for the lease of the Braden mine. The lease included the Red Lead mining claim and the Gold Key, Norman and Dardanelle quartz mining claims. John agreed to install a new ten-stamp mill, compressor, two Johnson concentrating tables and a rock crusher. He would also run two shifts at the mine and pay Ray twenty-five

There were rumors around town
that his miners came home
with lunch pails full of nuggets.

percent of the gross.⁸ John went to San Francisco in April to purchase the needed equipment.

The Braden mine was discovered about 1883 by B. A. Knott of Gold Hill. After several transfers the mine was purchased by Dr. James Braden, who sold it to C. R. Ray in 1900. The six tunnels at the Braden mine had a "total length of more than 3,000 feet. Most of the production of the mine was from two shoots nearly 600 feet apart on the lowest drift of the mine. The assay value of the ore was \$8

to \$10 a ton. In 1907 the mine produced more than \$30,000."

The girls and their mother, who was expecting once again, traveled

—continued, page 21

The Opp stamp mill, where tons of ore was crushed and processed.
SOHS #13774.



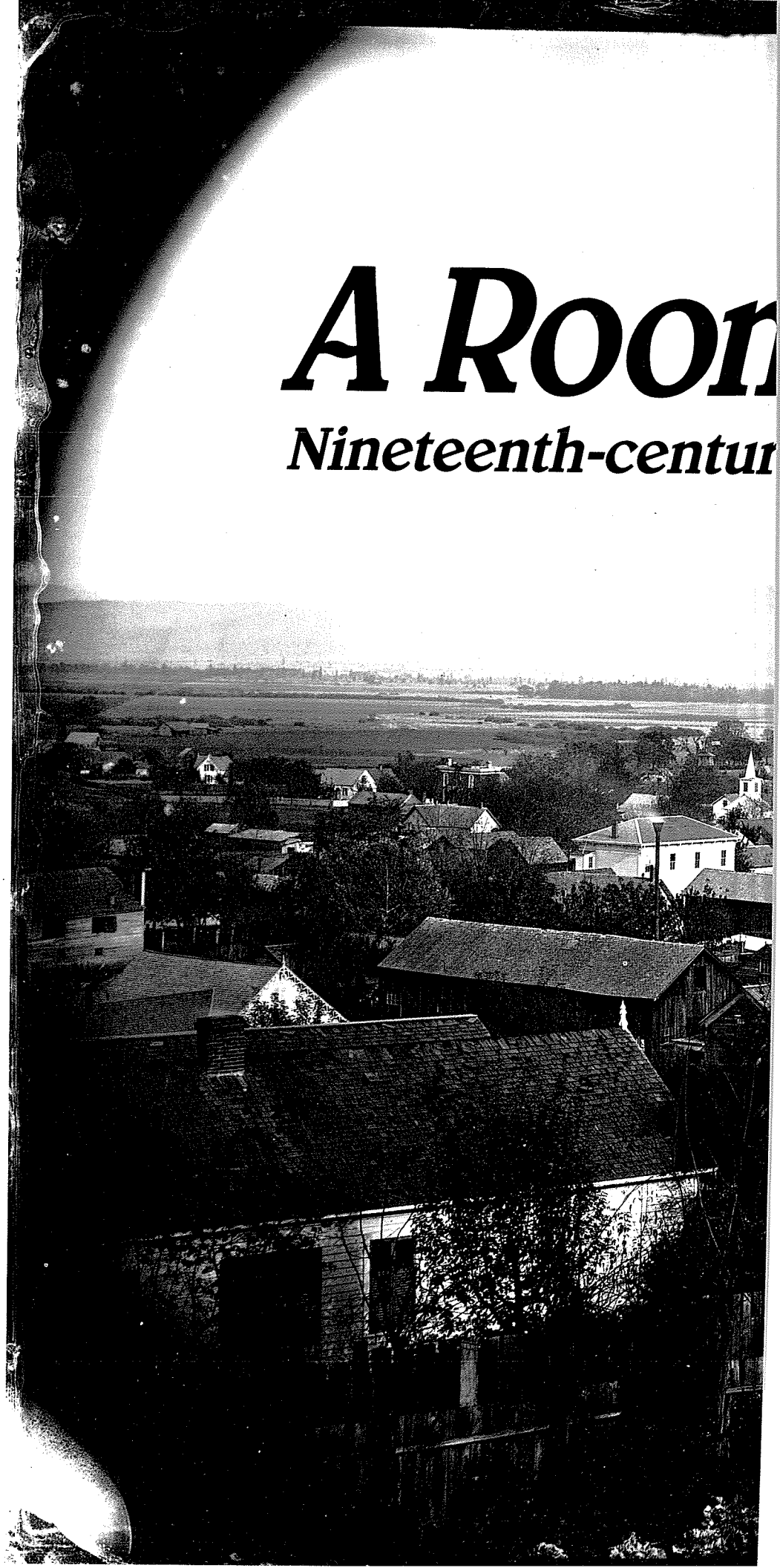
When Switzerland-born artist Peter Britt arrived in then-named Table Rock City in November 1852, he found a budding community burgeoning with hopeful miners and merchants lured by the recent gold rush. Recognizing an opportunity, the thirty-three-year-old painter-turned photographer promptly constructed a crude log cabin and daguerreotype studio on a hill overlooking the town from which to ply his picture trade.

Successful in ventures as diverse as mining and mule packing, Britt later built an elaborate Victorian dwelling and extensive photography studio on the site. The location couldn't have been more ideal. Situated atop a small hill, the skylit studio received unobstructed light critical for nineteenth-century portraiture. Only a short stroll from town center, the studio counted as patrons both poised city dwellers and determined miners anxious to send pictures home to far-away families. In addition, from his second-story balcony, Britt commanded a view of Jacksonville so breathtaking that he photographically captured the setting again and again for five decades.

Britt's crisp glass plate negatives detail the growth of Jacksonville from scattered wooden shacks to a permanent brick commercial center. Selected images reveal the town in flood in the 1860s and under snow two decades later. The partially completed courthouse stands draped in scaffolding in 1884. Shirt-sleeved neighbors are recorded hoeing cabbages one season, corn the next. Under Britt's photographic gaze, the landmarks as well as often-overlooked ordinary activities become immortalized—documents of an era and testaments to the lifeways of previous generations.

A Room

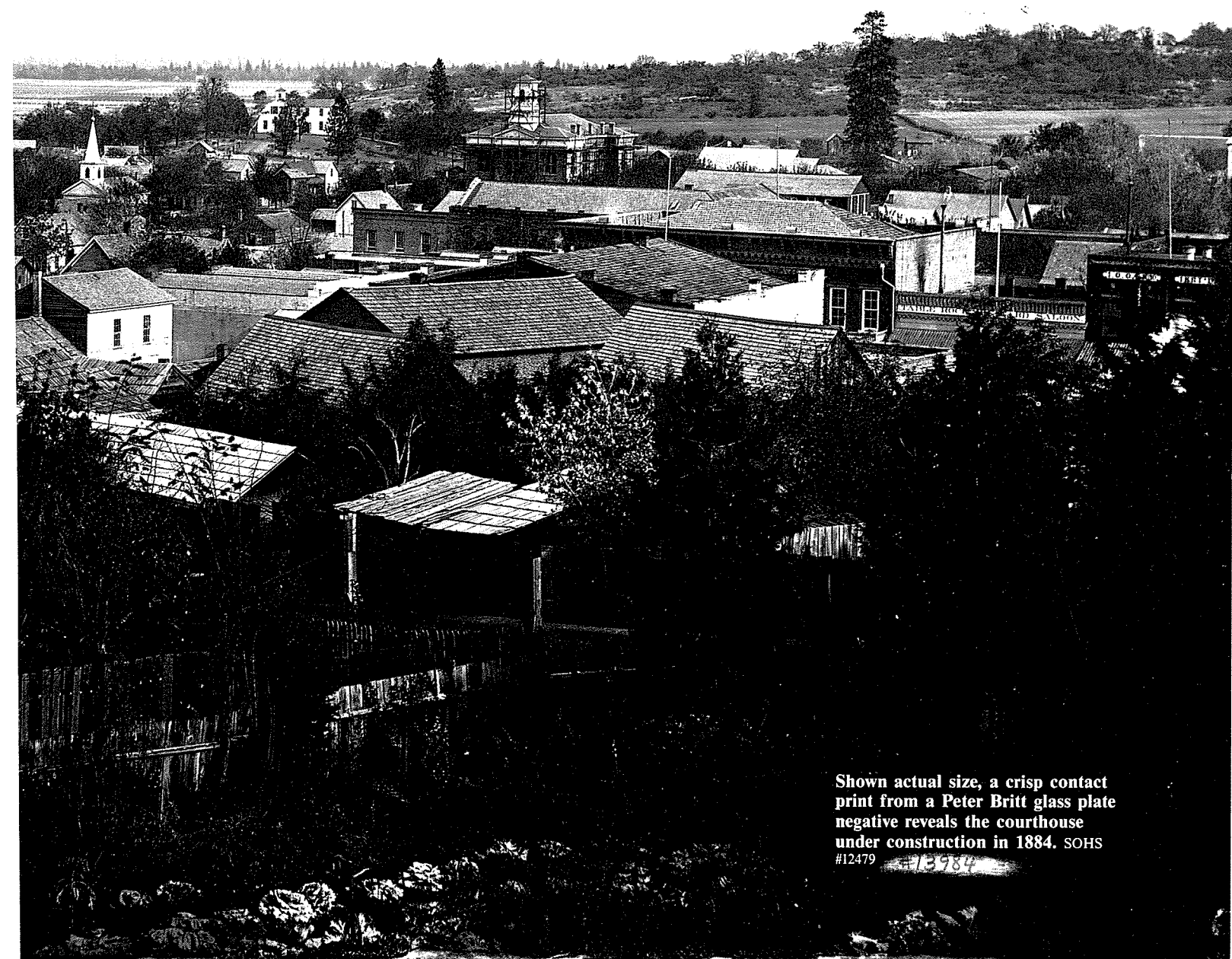
Nineteenth-century



1 with a View

Images from Peter Britt's Studio

by Natalie Brown



Shown actual size, a crisp contact print from a Peter Britt glass plate negative reveals the courthouse under construction in 1884. SOHS

#12479

13984

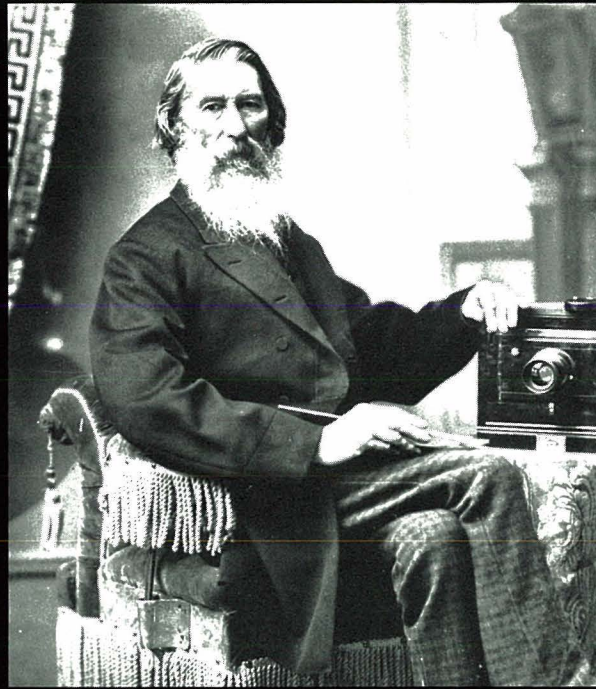


Jacksonville faces severe flooding in Britt's 1860s ambrotype (*opposite*), an early photographic process where a faint glass negative image reverses to a positive when backed with black. A stereo view ca. 1888 shows the town blanketed in snow (*opposite, below*). SOHS #730, 13982



In 1858, Jacksonville's downtown was composed of mostly wood-framed buildings (*right*), which succumbed to a series of fires in the 1870s and '80s. A dairy cow occupies the neighboring alley in this later view (*below*) taken from Britt's balcony. SOHS #738, 2734





An elderly Peter Britt posed with brush and camera, ca. 1900. Formally trained as a painter in Europe, he approached photography as an art, demonstrating a keen eye when composing his shots. Britt's cleverly designed, skylit studio (below) can be seen in this view from the back of the photographer's house. SOHS #258, 13981

A longtime admirer of Peter Britt's work, Natalie Brown has printed hundreds of the nineteenth-century photographer's glass plate negatives. She is the Society's coordinator of photography and publications.



*Growing Up at the Opp Mine, continued
from page 15*

between the Braden mine and Portland until Rose's due date drew near. Jean Wesley Opp, named for her father, was born in Portland on March 18, 1907. The family then settled down in a cedar board-and-batten house with a long front porch outside Jacksonville. Years later Jean's son

John described the house he visited as a child:

I remember the pale yellow kitchen with the single faucet above the sink, the wood stove, the water tumblers, and in one of those tumblers different wildflowers: bird bills, lamb tongues, Indian paintbrush, cat's ears, etc. . . . the old refrigerator, the table by the window that overlooked the garden and the valley, the old light switches that you had to turn. . . . On the porch, the table legs standing in cans with ant killer in them . . . the nasturtiums, red, yellow, orange, and a very dark maroon red. . . .

The dining room dominated by the heavy squarish oak table, the green glass lampshade hanging above it . . . the cream-colored cupboard under the window that housed the blue



willow and the silverware and cutlery. . . . Between the window and the door going out to the front porch was a Dorland Robinson painting of a girl and a horse. . . . On the wall above the table hung the Dorland Robinson picture of dahlias.¹⁰

The two older girls, Gertrude and Julia, slept summer and winter in a tent set up outside their parents' bedroom window. "Mother believed in cold showers," Gertrude recalls.

Lacking a bathroom in their home, the girls would leave buckets of water on the porch at bedtime. When their father called them in the morning they would "run out here, drop our nighties off and throw this bucket of water over ourselves and grab the towel that we took to bed with us . . . break the ice on the bucket of water, oh, lots of times. That's why we're such tough old ladies—we were brought up tough."¹¹

Rose had very strong feelings about cleanliness. She boiled almost everything and insisted that each day the girls wear a freshly ironed blue gingham apron.

Rose insisted on freshly ironed white linen tablecloths and napkins for each meal. Gertrude and Julia were expected to set the table properly with each piece of silver in the correct place. A large bouquet of nasturtiums, from the flower boxes on the porch, often graced the center of the table.

Julia, John, Gertrude, Jean and Rose Opp at their home at the Opp Mine. Western dogwood (above) and numerous wildflowers graced the hillside.
SOHS #13773, photo courtesy Donn Todt



The Opps lived for a time on Fifth Street in Jacksonville, in the house now known as the Turner House.
SOHS #13732.



Rose prepared nutritional meals, serving many fruits and vegetables either from the pantry she kept stocked with preserved food or fresh from the garden. In addition to setting the table, Gertrude collected vegetables from the garden, gathered eggs, churned butter, and ground coffee beans for fresh coffee at each meal.

Besides keeping goats and a milk cow, John supervised the garden in front of the house. He set aside a section for each of the girls to have her own plot. One year he convinced them that if they planted rock salt they could grow their own salt. That section of the garden didn't prove too productive that year. One year Rose ordered strawberry plants that grew so well they took over almost the whole garden.

Chores done, the girls roamed the hillside. There was always something new to explore. The rocks at the spring were fun to play on, and the lone pine on the way to Kanaka Flats was a destination. The Indian camp, which never showed much evidence of Indians, took hours to explore. One day while "playing bear," Julia fell into one of the numerous diggings that pockmarked the hillside and cut her knee on a broken fruit jar in the bottom of the hole. "Mother never got perturbed a bit over anything like that," she recalled, "She put my foot up on another chair, just simply got a bottle of alcohol and poured it in. She bandaged me. I got to stay in the house in the daytime and lie on the sofa for a few days. Except I couldn't stand it. So Mother, the inventor, went out on the porch, got an umbrella, took all the cloth and ribs off, and that made the best little thing—see I couldn't pick this foot up, see there were so many nerves cut. I hooked it under my foot, under the instep . . . and I hobbled all over the hill."¹²

At least once each year Gertrude and Julia assigned themselves the

very important job of inspecting the mine. Notebooks in hand, they would accompany their father all over the mine property, visiting every tunnel. Only making their reports to each other, they checked the mine out thoroughly, nonetheless.

Living so far from town, Rose worried about her girls' education. She taught them what she could, but wanted to give them more opportunities to learn. Rose was thrilled to discover that Mae, the wife of the mine assayer Harrison Crouch, had been a teacher. The couple lived at the mine, so Rose made arrangements for Gertrude to have lessons from Mae. During the summer, Emma Reed, who taught school in town but lived near the mine on Jackson Creek Road, agreed to give the girls more lessons.

Rose was determined that her daughters should have a good education. When she heard about a fine teacher from Nebraska, she engaged her for a year. The Opps fixed up one of the cabins on the property. Julia remembered that a classroom was "curtained off from her bedroom. They built a wardrobe for her, so she could hang her clothes. Must have given her a piece of furniture too, to put in

there. She had a table. One of our Medford friends was on the school board, so he got Mother two little desks, regular school desks. Of course, we thought that was fun for a while. We sat at these little desks and learned to read and write."¹³

Julia and Gertrude didn't have access to a library, so John built bookshelves in the living room. Each girl had her own shelf where she kept books like *Great Americans for Little Americans*; *The Roosevelt Bears*; *Their Travels and Adventures*; *The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew*; *Anne of Green Gables*; *the Secret Garden*; and Louisa Mae Alcott's *Flower Fables*. All of the books were read over and over again. The *Flower Fables* book with stories of fairies was one of Jean's favorites. In fact, she came to believe in fairies. She would build nests in secret places around the hillside. Being older, Gertrude and Julia didn't believe in fairies, but they encouraged Jean's belief and would leave "offerings" in the fairy nests for Jean to find.

When Gertrude and Julia were ready for the sixth and fifth grades, Rose decided it was time for them to attend regular school. Convinced that Medford's schools would be better, Rose rented a house in town. Gertrude remem-

“We hated Medford. So come spring we decided we didn’t want to go to school anymore. Mother agreed. She wasn’t sure we were getting much of an education.”

bers her first day vividly: “I remember a fire drill. I’d never heard of such a thing and thought the bells meant it was time to go home, put on my hat and coat—and the boys started hooting and laughing—you can imagine how embarrassed I was. I can still remember it.”¹⁴

Things didn’t get a lot better. Near Christmas there was a scarlet fever scare, and the schools closed for a month. The Opps went back to the mine. Julia remembered: “We hated Medford. So come spring we decided we didn’t want

to go to school anymore. I think Mother agreed. She wasn’t sure we were getting much of an education.”¹⁵ That summer Julia’s teacher, Miss Achen, came up to the mine to teach Gertrude and Julia.

The next year, 1913, Rose rented a house in Jacksonville, and the three girls attended Jacksonville Elementary School. Julia remembered the outdoor plumbing and how the boys would throw clods of dirt at the building when they saw a girl go in. Good things did happen at the Jacksonville school,

however. That was the year Gertrude and Julia met Lillian Pierce.

Lillian’s family came to the Rogue Valley in 1905, and she graduated from Medford High School in 1911. In 1913 Lillian returned to the valley from Berkeley and began teaching botany to Jacksonville’s seventh- and eighth-graders. Lillian’s interest in plants began in her mother’s nursery and greenhouse on East Main and continued all her life. In Jacksonville she met the Opp sisters, who always brought wildflower bouquets to their teachers. Lillian spent two summers living at the mine, teaching the three girls about the multitude of wildflowers that grew on their hillside. Sand daisies, bird bills and lady slippers were carefully examined. During her summers at the Opp mine, Lillian noted the small red lily that

Gertrude, wearing a white dress with a dark sweater, and the class at the Jacksonville School, ca. 1914. SOHS #13737.





Colorful spring lilies, including *Fritillaria* (top), *Brodiaea* (center), and *Erythronium* (bottom), sparked Gertrude's lifelong interest in wildflowers.
Photos courtesy Donn Todt.

Extensive study of the red lily many years later led to the flower's official name, *Fritillaria gentneri*, in recognition of Lillian Pierce Gentner's discovery.

grew in profusion. Unable to identify the red flower, she thought it might be a new species of *Fritillaria*. Extensive study of the plant many years later led to the flower's official name, *Fritillaria gentneri*, in recognition of Lillian Pierce Gentner's discovery.

When Gertrude completed the eighth grade in 1914, she had to take an examination before entering high school. At the Jacksonville Courthouse, where the test was administered, Gertrude met Dorothy Miller, who would become a lifelong friend. That summer the girls spent hours together. Dorothy was taking ballet lessons, so Gertrude convinced her mother that she and Julia should take lessons also. Julia wanted to be with the other girls but hated the lessons, so she often volunteered to pump the pedals of the player piano so she wouldn't have to dance. Dedicated to their art and their flowing cheesecloth costumes, Dorothy and Gertrude practiced indoors and out. They danced and acted out elaborate stories, sometimes portraying "Day" and "Night" or a chilling drama that called for someone to be stabbed!

Isolated as they were at the mine, over the years the family still became friends with many of Jacksonville's early settlers. Once a year Rose took the girls to call on the old families. They visited with Izzy McCully and Stella Levi, Mondie Helms, Mollie Britt and Dr. James Robinson. There were many outings with Emil and Mollie Britt and Dr. Robinson and his family. When gifted painter Dorland Robinson wanted to go out sketching she often asked Gertrude to go along.

John went into town almost every day to check his mail and

pick up groceries at Ulrich's or meat at Dunnington's Meat Market. Gertrude and Julia walked to the Wendt dairy for milk and cream when their cow was dry and sometimes stopped at the confectionery store in town for an ice cream cone. Sundays Gertrude was taken into town for dinner with Mondie Helms, who served an elegant meal and gave Gertrude a chance to practice her company manners. Julia and Gertrude both spent the night with Mondie when they saw their first motion picture. John Renault set up and ran the comedy in the building on the corner of California and Oregon streets. A large crowd endured chairs with braided rawhide seats for the pleasure of seeing motion pictures.

The Opp mine property was made up of many smaller claims, each of which had a small log cabin. One of the cabins included a small apple orchard and Sweetwater grapes. Another had a flower garden that had flags (iris) and a lilac tree. The girls identified the cabins by the name of the last person to live in it. There was the McWilliams cabin, Benson's, Spray's, Old Man Grant's and Aunt Annie's, all built many years before. Several of the cabins were used by bachelor miners working for John. One of the larger cabins, known as the "boarding house" (even though no one slept there) was used to serve meals to the mine employees. Mrs. Lee Benson, the wife of one of the miners, prepared the meals at the "boarding house." The Bensons had a daughter, one of the Opp girls' first playmates.

For a time the Brown family lived up at the mine. That was

exciting since there were six Brown children. Gertrude paired up with Georgia (or Toots as they called her), Julia with Daisy and Jean with Annie. Mrs. Brown had been raised by Indians and knew a lot about wild animals. On a visit to the Browns late one afternoon the kids decided they would use Mrs. Brown's knowledge and call coyotes. Julia told the story:

I was wearing a white dress, and they had me climb a tree, because they were sure if the coyote saw that white dress they wouldn't come. They sat down in a circle way down below me [and howled]. All of a sudden, I saw a black streak coming from the woods down to where we were. I guess the others saw it too, and they yelled "Wolves!" So they all streaked for home, and I had to get down out of that tree, where I was. I caught up with them. We don't know yet what that animal was, but we thought we could hear it running along in the brush above the road.¹⁶

During this time operations at the mine fluctuated, and John had given up his lease at the Braden mine. In 1909 his wealthy brother Fred came for a visit and refinanced John's dream operations not once, but several times over the next few years. It was said of John that he put the "Opp" in optimism. He trusted everyone and shared all he owned. There were rumors around town that his miners came home with lunch pails filled with nuggets, but John never checked.

In 1918 Gertrude graduated from Medford High School. Rose had been reading about the new, progressive Reed College in Portland and decided that was where her daughters would continue their education. Rose moved with the three girls to a small house in Portland and resumed her nursing career. Gertrude won a scholarship from the American Association of University Women and entered Reed. Julia started her senior year at Lincoln High School, and Jean attended elementary school.

For the next five years Gertrude, then Julia, attended classes at Reed, graduating in 1922 and 1923 respectively. During summer breaks the girls went to Jacksonville to cook for John and keep him company. Rose worked as a private

nurse from 1918 until 1923. She was able to occasionally visit John between patients, and John made the trip up to Portland every now and then.

In 1922 William Barnum, owner of the Rogue River Valley Railroad that ran between Medford and Jacksonville, decided to close down the track extension that ran toward the logging camps near Ruch.

Julia, Rose, Gertrude, John, and Jean Opp pose for an Easter portrait in 1947. Photo courtesy John Crocker



Hoping to retain use of the tracks near his mine, John offered to buy the railroad. For a small down payment and a huge mortgage John took charge of the faltering transit system. He set up an office in the Medford station on the corner of Main and Fir streets. By May 1922 he had installed 400 new ties in the badly deteriorated roadbed and was hauling carloads of mine tailings to supply road builders in Medford. Despite his best efforts, however, John could not make the railroad a paying proposition, and the trains stopped running before the end of the year.

The mine continued to run sporadically, an occasional pocket of

paying ore raising hopes of a golden future. Rose moved back to the mine when Jean refused to go to college. Life settled into a quiet pattern. Gertrude married Forrest Foster and had two children, Robert and Rosalind. After teaching for a couple of years Julia married Clifford Johnson. Jean married Clarence Crocker and had one son, John Wesley. Jean passed away in 1990.

John died July 14, 1955, and Rose passed away the following September 11. The house and mine on the side of the hill were sold. But Gertrude, Julia, and Jean still remembered that hillside as the site of their "wonderful childhood. . . .

We made our own games, our own stories—we were totally independent.”¹⁷

For Gertrude’s birthday in 1981 Jean wrote this poem about the place they spent their precious early years.

*There’s no fragrance like the lamb
tongues upon our craggy hill,
Nor sound so sweet and tinkly as
water by the mill!*

*Treasure the memories of waxy
butter cups, glistening in the sun,
And bird bills, their many shades of
green to crimson run!*

*The spot where rare lady slippers
always could be found
And where the tasty mushrooms first
peeked through the ground.*

*Remember the hikes and picnics
such as no one else ever had?
Oh we were the happy larks, and
knew nothing of being sad.*

*Home made bread and butter
found where fairies dwelt
Even as I among the flowers
and mosses knelt!*

*Water cress in the stream, wild
celery on the hill
To taunt our hearty appetites, and
make us hungrier still!*

*Fern frawns [fronds] nodding in
mosses sprinkled with beads of dew,
Ruffled daffodils casting their
green to yellow hew.*

*Frogs in chorus singing; soft
babbling in creek below,
Made wondrous music with which
to sleep—and grow!*

*Meadow larks in the valley;
echoes in the rills;
Snow on distant mountains—
sunshine in our hills!*

*A fragrant hedge you’ll remember;
snow drops here, blue-white violets
there,
Even pink ones, and quince to fill
the pungent air!*

*Filled with nostalgia, I dedicate this
poem
To the house upon the hill—
the place we all call home!*¹⁸



ENDNOTES

1. Gertrude Nutting, undated handwritten notes in Southern Oregon Historical Society collection.
2. *Democratic Times*, May 19, 1900.
3. *Jackson County Deeds*, Book 41, 334, 335.
4. *Jackson County Deeds*, Book 41, 398.
5. *Democratic Times*, June 3, 1903.
6. *Jacksonville Nugget*, April 7–20, 1978.
7. *Medford Mail*, January 19, 1906.
8. *Jackson County Deeds*, Book 55, 64.
9. A. N. Winchell, “Petrology and Mineral Resources of Jackson and Josephine Counties, Oregon,” *The Mineral Resources of Oregon* (August 1914): 172.



10. John Crocker, handwritten letter to his mother, December 24, 1973.

11. Gertrude Nutting, SOHS Oral History 518, untranscribed, November 23–24, December 14, 1991.

12. Julia Johnson, SOHS Oral History 438, July–November 1987, 1.

13. *Ibid.*, 1.

14. Gertrude Nutting, SOHS Oral History 518, notes.

15. Julia Johnson, SOHS Oral History 438, 1.

16. *Ibid.*, 1.

17. Gertrude Nutting, SOHS Oral History 518, notes.

18. Jean Crocker, unpublished poem.

Rose Opp’s washing machine became somewhat of a legend when it won a contest for the oldest working washing machine in the state. SOHS #13741.

Researcher and writer Sue Waldron lives in Medford and is a frequent contributor to the Table Rock Sentinel.

Book Review

An Arrow in the Earth General Joel Palmer and the Indians of Oregon

by Terence O'Donnell

Oregon Historical Society Press,
1991, Portland

Review by Bill Powell

North America's Indians rarely were treated with respect or understanding by Europeans, no matter whether they dug quahogs in the bays of what became New England, followed the migrations of the Great Plains' vast buffalo herds or harvested acorns and salmon in the Northwest.

Native Americans' treatment in Oregon was no different, even when men of compassion, if imperfect men, had charge of Indian affairs.

For a precious few years during the most critical period in Indian-white relations in the Oregon country, Joel Palmer, late of Yamhill County, had charge of their interests as Oregon's superintendent of Indian affairs.

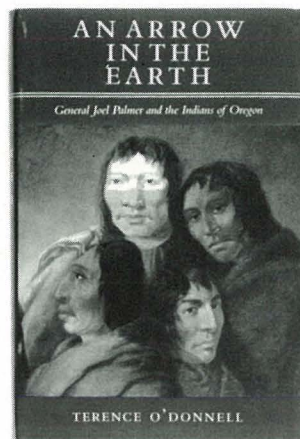
That Palmer, a former Indiana legislator, emigrant train captain and proven leader, devoted not so much to loving Indians as to a stubborn sense of fairness, could ultimately do very little to preserve the tribes or their cultures was a personal tragedy, but one that pales compared with what the Indians lost.

In his biography of Palmer, Terence O'Donnell, a Portland writer and former Oregon Historical Society staffer, has given us a slice of Oregon history that is as coarse and nourishing as the bread that came out of the pioneers' ovens—and as flavorful.

Other historians have detailed the isolated episodes, the individual flare-ups between white and Indian that led to bloody warfare in early Oregon. Students of

the Rogue Indian Wars, for example, will be familiar with the raids, outrages and battles that dotted the local map from the Table Rocks to Port Orford during the middle 1850s. But the earlier Cayuse War growing out of the Whitman Massacre on the Columbia Plateau and the Yakima War that followed also were parts of a puzzle of Indian-white relations that Palmer had to deal with in an integrated way.

O'Donnell skillfully stitches these conflicts into a much broader tapestry that takes into account the tangled regional politics of the pre-statehood period, the fickle moods of public opinion shaped by a viciously partisan press and the daunting difficulties of communication, transportation



and supply that could make a bureaucrat's life impossible in pioneer Oregon.

O'Donnell has a keen eye for telling detail. The portrait he paints of the state's rambunctious and trying early days freshens our regard for the trials that tested capable men.

For example, one of Palmer's greatest challenges was to secure title to Indian lands throughout Oregon—lands that in many cases already had been settled by whites under the ambiguities of the Donation Land Law of 1850. Palmer might have preferred to see the Indians retain title to their lands if the issue of their very survival wasn't far more pressing. Rather than see the Indians cheated and murdered by the unscrupulous and the fearful

among the pioneer communities, however, the pragmatic Palmer understood that the most practical way of keeping the tribes alive was to make treaties, buy their lands and move them to the relative safety of reservations as quickly as possible.

Considering that communication to his superiors in Washington, D.C. might take months; that fragile treaties negotiated under the threat of imminent war might be rejected by a fractious Congress far removed from the scene; and that the payments and supplies necessary to the Indians' survival on their new reservations might never come, or be siphoned off by parasites in the bureaucratic pipeline, all made it miraculous that Palmer accomplished anything.

And he did accomplish much. It was Palmer who extinguished most of the legal land disputes that would have made continued, genocidal warfare inevitable. It was Palmer who helped create the reservations at Grande Ronde and Siletz. It was Palmer who insisted that white misbehavior—not Indian "savagery"—was most frequently to blame for the failed relationship between the two cultures at a time when even the *Oregonian* was calling for the Indians' extermination.

Yes, Palmer sent the Rogues and other tribes to the oblivion of disease, poverty and discouragement on underdeveloped reservations far from their traditional homes. Yes, Palmer helped convert vast stretches of Indian lands to white ownership. Yes, Palmer was a politician who could pull the strings that would net him a bureaucrat's enviable salary at a time when many Oregonians were patching their clothes and padding their wheat supplies with floor sweepings just to eat.

But O'Donnell commendably avoids the temptation to judge the past based on the morality of the present, re-creating instead a context of the times that invites the reader to ask honestly: Who might have done it any better under the circumstances?



Bill Powell is a copy editor at the Grants Pass Daily Courier.

County Byways

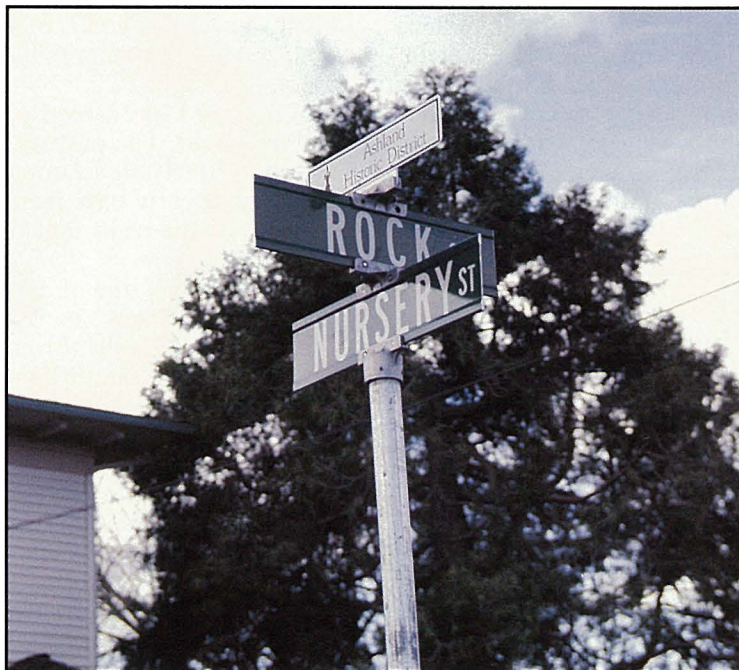
by Sus Waldron



ASHLAND'S COOLIDGE ADDITION

Founded in 1852, the town of Ashland grew up around the area now known as the Plaza. As the population expanded, land was added to the town to accommodate more homes. In 1887 Orlando and Mary Jane Coolidge deeded almost seventeen acres on North Main Street to the city of Ashland. The addition was platted into forty-seven house lots, with one large area set aside for the Roman Catholic Church. The boundary streets for the Coolidge addition were: Woolen (now Scenic), Wimer and North Main. Six new streets were added: Woodson (now Greenbrier), Maple, Rock, Elbow (now part of Woolen Way), Coolidge and Nursery.

Orlando Coolidge was born in September 1825 in Oxford, Maine. At the age of ten he moved with his family to Winnebago County, Illinois. There he learned the cooperage trade from his father. He joined the rush to California in 1850 and mined



in the Yreka area until gold was discovered in Jacksonville. Then he came to southern Oregon. Coolidge traveled back to Illinois in 1852, but returned to the gold fields in 1854. Deciding at the age of thirty-two that it was time to settle down, Coolidge in 1857 traveled once again to Illinois and married Mary Jane Foss.

Back in Oregon, Coolidge bought 160 acres from William H. Dingman on the road between Jacksonville and Ashland. In 1862, his wife came west to join her husband via the Panama Route, arriving in San Francisco then proceeding by stage to southern Oregon.

Coolidge mined for gold each spring, but spent the rest of the year cultivating and expanding the fruit nursery on his property. Years later he enjoyed relating the tale of "... how much it cost per pound to transport the walnut, maple and other trees across the Plains."¹ He purchased property on North Main Street in Ashland in 1866. When he learned of his wife's pregnancy in October 1868, he purchased additional property. Coolidge and his wife moved into town before daughter Minnie was born in May 1869. Devoting himself exclusively to the nursery business, Coolidge soon had thirty-five acres on the northwest side of town planted with "the most extensive variety of fruit and nut trees . . . , as well as a complete assortment

The Coolidge addition is included in Ashland's Historic District (left). Rock Street (below) may have been named for the Rock River that passes near Orlando Coolidge's boyhood home in Illinois. Photos by Robin Speake



Orlando Coolidge. SOHS #6758

of small fruits, ornamental trees and flowers."²

The Coolidge house built on the high west bank of North Main Street was surrounded by a wide yard and bordered by a wealth of fruit and nut trees and a profusion of flowers. Local newspapers described the grounds as "a flowery bower of enchantment, a thing of refined beauty and art, glorious in its array of color and variety of flowers and dispensing perfumes which are a delight to the visitor."³

Coolidge had five other houses built as rentals on his property on Bush Street.

Coolidge died May 26, 1896, after an illness of several weeks. Mary Jane Coolidge continued to live in Ashland tending the garden around the house. When she died on August 21, 1905, the minister "cast flowers into the grave instead of earth as he read from the ritual 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.'"⁴

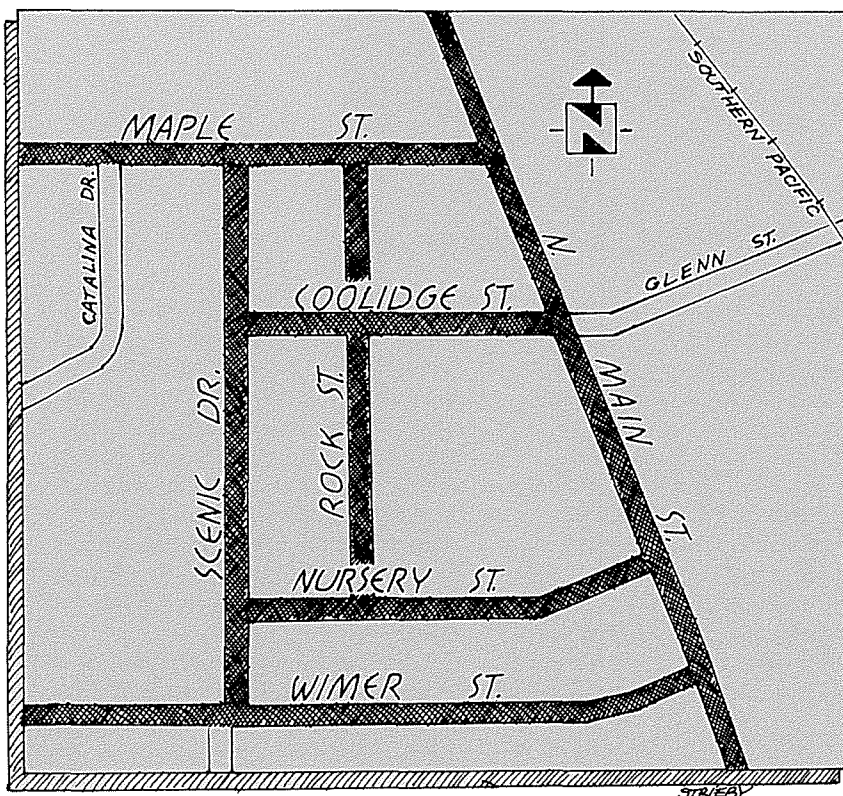
Coolidge and Nursery streets are only two blocks long but they remind us of one of the valley's early settlers—a man who, perhaps, planted the seeds of the extensive fruit industry that supports many of us today.



ENDNOTES

1. *Ashland Tidings*, August 24, 1905.
2. *Portrait and Biographical Record of Western Oregon* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1904), 847.
3. *Ashland Tidings*, August 24, 1905.
4. *Ibid.*

Columnist and historic researcher Sue Waldron finds stories and memories along the highways and byways of Jackson County.



Life in the Past Lane

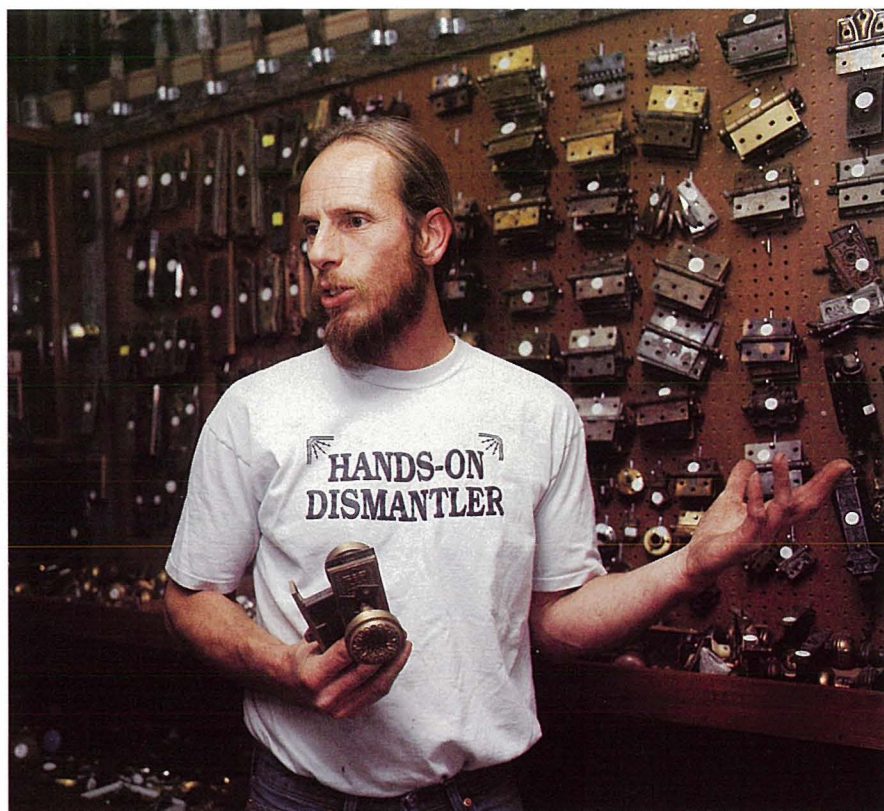
by Brad Linder

The last option for a historic building is the wrecking ball or bulldozer. Hopefully all efforts to save the structure in its original location have been made and the possibility of moving the building has been fully explored before the decision to destroy is pursued. An alternative to a midnight demolition is the careful recycling of the various components of a structure: siding, doors, windows, hardware, mechanical systems, structural lumber—everything but the memories. As in organ donation, many parts of a house can be matched up to recipients and “live on” in different homes for generations to come.

Restorers across the country scour warehouses and catalogs looking for just the right door knobs or cabinets to match missing features in a structure. One place they might try is Morrow's on Jacksonville Highway near Medford. Joel Morrow has been in this location for the last two years displaying and selling a wide variety of recycled building parts and materials. His business card states that he is a “Hands-on-Dismantler, Recycling Barns, Cabins and Castles in the Rogue Valley.”

Joel's dismantling-recycling roots go back fifteen years to Salem, where he operated a similar business with a number of partners. Friends eventually convinced him to move to southern Oregon where he began dismantling a Victorian structure in Ashland that was slated for demolition.

Morrow currently recycles four to eight houses a year—working in the mornings and all day on Mondays and then keeps his shop open in the afternoons and on Satur-



Joel Morrow (above) dismantles houses slated for demolition and recycles such parts as hinges, doors, and bathroom sinks (below).

Photo by Natalie Brown

days. With an hour commute to his home near Cave Junction he finds himself working a lot of twelve-hour days—a task that he claims to enjoy.

His favorite part of the job is discovering “treasures” left sitting in attic eaves or dropped down privy pits—objects he proudly displays (and rarely sells) in his office area. He recently unearthed an early handgun in an old wishing well along with a lot of marbles, tin cans, and approximately 200 bottles.

On a recent visit to his establishment, grateful customers were

proudly loading up doors, windows, flooring, and the proverbial kitchen sink. Morrow claims that business is good and even seasonal fluctuations have leveled out this past year. I have purchased several items for the home I live in, finding interior doors and windows that perfectly match the missing ones that were replaced in thoughtless remodeling projects of the past.

Morrow humbly compares his work to recycling plastic milk jugs, but I found the man and his business to be both noble and extremely useful.



Then & Now

— by Natalie Brown

FISHER BROTHERS STORE

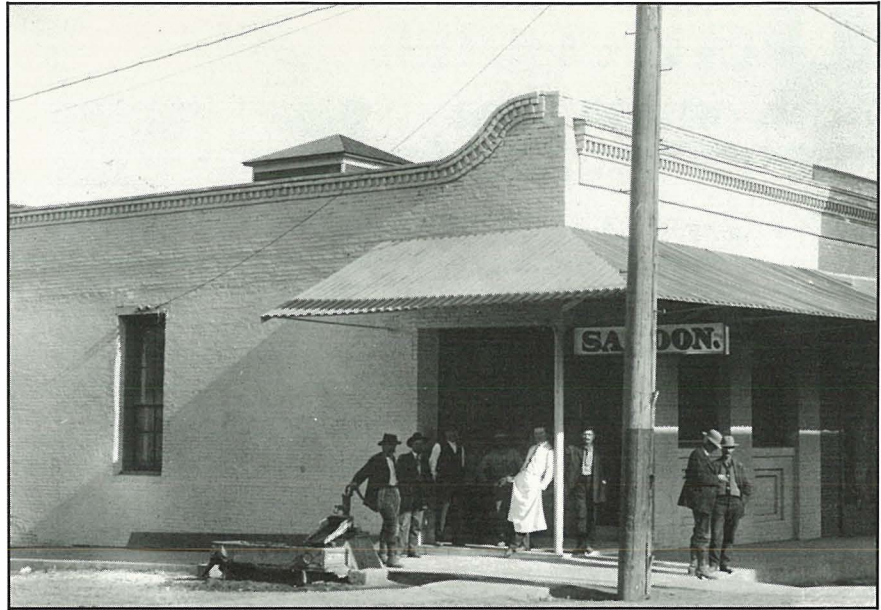
Soon after lucky packers Jim Cluggage and Jim Poole discovered gold at Rich Gulch in January 1852, droves of miners descended upon the tiny settlement of Table Rock City to seek their fortunes in the metallic earth of the Rogue Valley. Along with the miners came merchants anxious to trade goods for gold.

According to historian A.G. Walling, David M. Kenney and a Mr. Appler opened one of the town's first mercantile establishments as early as February 1852 on the corner of Oregon and California streets. Kenney divided the property in 1856, selling the east lot to James Burpee and David Linn (which became Linn's carpentry shop and by 1864 housed the Bella Union Saloon) and stocking boots, hardware, liquor, cigars, tin ware, and powder in the corner store.

Despite taking on a partner, Kenney failed to meet his financial obligations. A. Fisher and Brothers purchased the establishment from the sheriff in 1862 for \$4,000.

Jewish merchants Abraham and Newman Fisher had sold clothing from a store located across California Street. Upon taking over the Kenney store, the Fishers moved their stock to the prime corner location.

Although business appeared profitable, the Fishers faced considerable setbacks from fires. In 1868



Patrons pose in the marble-tiled entry of the Marble Corner Saloon, operated by Samuel E. "Ed" Dunnington, standing third from the left. Lacking an awning today, the building houses Scheffel's Toys. SOHS #13980, photo by Matt Strieby

a fire in their cellar spread through the flooring and damaged the store contents. Six years later, in April 1874, a conflagration consumed many of the downtown's wood buildings and completely destroyed the brick corner store. Despite suffering a loss of \$28,000, the Fishers rebuilt the structure by that fall. It is this 1874 building, with only a few modifications, which still stands today.

The Fisher Brothers store weathered the disastrous fire of 1888, which wiped out Jacksonville's Chinatown, Linn's factory and lumberyard, and numerous other businesses. The losses and failing economy prompted many businessmen to move to prosperous Medford or other towns served by the railroad. The Fishers stayed in

Jacksonville until 1891, when they disposed of their assets and moved away.

Later in the 1890s the building became the Marble Corner Saloon, presumably named for the marble factory located across Oregon Street. Featuring a marble-tiled entry, the saloon served city patrons until well into the next century.

The brick structure housed a radio repair service and several pharmacies until Jim and Judy Scheffel opened Scheffel's Antiques and Toys in 1971. Around six years ago the couple specialized in unusual toys, featuring books, trains, dolls, and amusements from around the world.



Reflections on the Past

by Dr. Joseph Cox

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES?

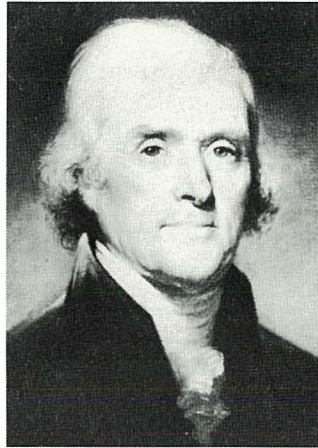
It's that time again—the quadrennial frenzy resulting in the choice of a president of the United States. The press, meanwhile, will produce the customary lamentations and excoriation of the electorate, the candidates, and the process. In the end, we will mercifully inaugurate the next president.

There are some very genuine concerns. Witness all the fuss over negative advertising, election by sound bite, and the avoidance of real issues. In this light, it might be fun to look back over 200 years and examine how the qualifications have changed.

One of the battles historians constantly wage is against the problem of “presentism,” the perception that our generation is the first to experience whatever problem we happened to be troubled about at the moment. Negative campaigning has existed from the first days of the republic. What's different is that modern media technology has transformed it from back-room, off-color jokes into living-room, prime-time communication.

Thomas Jefferson endured the back-alley conversation about his relationship with slave Sally Hemmings, and Andrew Jackson and his wife were terribly hurt by revelations that they “lived in sin” because of a complication with her divorce of her first husband. Who can ever forget the matter of Grover Cleveland and the illegitimate child charge: “Ma Ma, where's my Pa? . . . Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha?” The truth is that the penny press of the nineteenth century always outsold the *New York Times*.

We have trivialized democracy's drama into sound bites and visceral snips rather than intellectual components. The same firms now sell candidates to us the same



Thomas Jefferson

way they sell breakfast foods, BMWs, and beer. The tragedy is that the more our electoral process becomes trivialized, the more citizen participation declines. Compare the seventy-five to eighty percent voter participation in the nineteenth century to elections since 1960.

The Constitution actually says very little about the election of presidents. Article II specifies that to become president, you must be at least thirty-five, a citizen, and a resident for at least fourteen years. The Twelfth Amendment straightened out how our votes would be counted.

The Twenty-second Amendment, a posthumous slap at Franklin Delano Roosevelt, decreed that two terms was enough.

What has really mattered, however, has been not the official qualifications to be president, but rather the unofficial requirements. Let's look at some of the evolutionary “requirements.”

- 1789–1828: There has to be a tie to the founders. The candidate had to be an “uncommon man,” well educated, etc.

- 1828: Andrew Jackson certainly broke the “have to be Eastern, well-educated requirement.” Candidates from this point on would have to prove they were “common men.”

- 1840: William Henry Harrison managed to overcome the fact that his family was Virginian and

wealthy. In this first modern campaign he was touted as having been born in the proverbial log cabin (not true) and enjoyed sipping hard cider (which he hated), while rocking on the cabin porch.

- 1789–1860: Prior to the Civil War, a president had to be from the South or had to accept slavery as at least “a necessary evil.” Lincoln ended this requirement.

- 1860–1912 and 1920–1932: A candidate had to be pro-business rather than pro-labor or agriculture, the exceptions being Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson. They were both flukes. McKinley was not supposed to be assassinated, and Wilson only won because Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft split the more numerous Republican vote.

- 1789–1960: The candidate had to be Protestant. Virulent anti-Catholicism was a major element in Al Smith's defeat in 1928.

Since 1945, one had to profess a hardline anti-communist stance. To be a Vietnam veteran may be a near negative, suggesting that the nation has not yet made its peace with that war.

It has been an asset not to be a Washington insider. Lyndon B. Johnson was an exception, but he did not get there the first time by election.

Each generation has rewritten the real qualifications to be president in terms of its own aspirations, fears, and hopes for the future. Ours is no different.

We are still wrestling with how to change the process for the better, so that we might move away from the search for the perfect media candidate and away from our fixation on the brutal microscope applied to their personal lives to the same tough-minded examination of their public policy principles. We must hope that our best and brightest might someday once again choose public service as an honorable career, indeed, as perhaps the most noble of democracy's professional callings.

Dr. Joseph W. Cox is a historian and president of Southern Oregon State College.

ODDS AND ENDS OF HISTORY

That's fairly interesting...

Compiled by Samuel J. Wegner



Roxy Ann Peak overlooks Medford. SOHS #947

Roxy Ann Peak in Jackson County was once named Skinner Butte. But in 1854 it was renamed Roxy Ann in honor of Roxana Baker who had settled nearby.¹

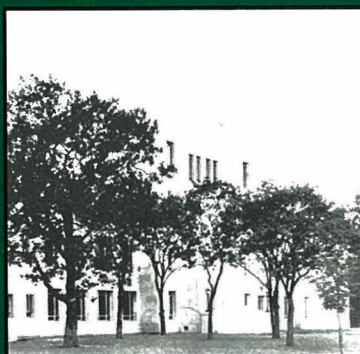
"Jackson County contains a population of about ten thousand. It is estimated that one-fourth of this number have arrived here within the last two years . . . A current is now setting in from California, which bids fair to become a flood-tide as soon as the railroad shall be completed to that state."²

—*Ashland Tidings*, 1885

August 5, 1861: Congress enacts the first federal income tax in American history. It exempted most wage earners because it imposed a 3% tax only on annual incomes over \$800.³

July 1, 1862: Congress passes the Internal Revenue Act of 1862. It not only taxes virtually everything but also creates the Bureau of Internal Revenue (now called the Internal Revenue Service) to collect it.⁴

From 1776 to 1778, the first official name of the United States was "*the United States of North America*."⁵



Jackson County Courthouse, Medford. SOHS #8694

In 1926 Jackson County was one of several counties to share \$1 million refund from the federal government on taxes owing from Oregon and California Railroad land grants. Jackson County invested its share in the construction of a new courthouse building in Medford, which was completed in 1932.⁶

In the years prior to the Civil War the residents of Jacksonville were advocating the establishment of an institution of higher learning to be called Western University.⁷

The Table Rock Peace Treaty signed September 10, 1855, established the boundaries of the land in southern Oregon to be reserved for Native Americans. The principal geographic points of this reservation were Pilot Rock on the southeast, Snowy Butte (Mount McLoughlin) on the northeast, a point at the intersection of the Oregon Road and Jump-Off-Joe Creek on the northwest, and the mouth of the Applegate River on the southwest. In a supplementary treaty that day all of this land was ceded to the federal government for \$60,000.⁸



ENDNOTES

1. MacArthur, Lewis. *Oregon Geographic Names*, 5th edition (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1982), 637.
2. "The Rogue River Valley and Southern Oregon" (Ashland, Oregon: Ashland Tidings Newspaper and Job Printing Office, 1885).
3. McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 443.
4. *Ibid.*, 447-448.
5. Flexner, Stuart Berg. *I Hear America Talking: An Illustrated History of American Words and Phrases* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 7.
6. *Oregon: End of the Trail*. Revised Edition (Portland: Binfort & Mort, 1951), 189.
7. *History of Southern Oregon, Comprising Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Curry and Cross Counties, Compiled from the Most Authentic Sources* (Portland, Oregon: A. G. Walling, 1884), 345.
8. *Ibid.*, 224.



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