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Vol. 1, No. 4 • THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY • Spring 1996



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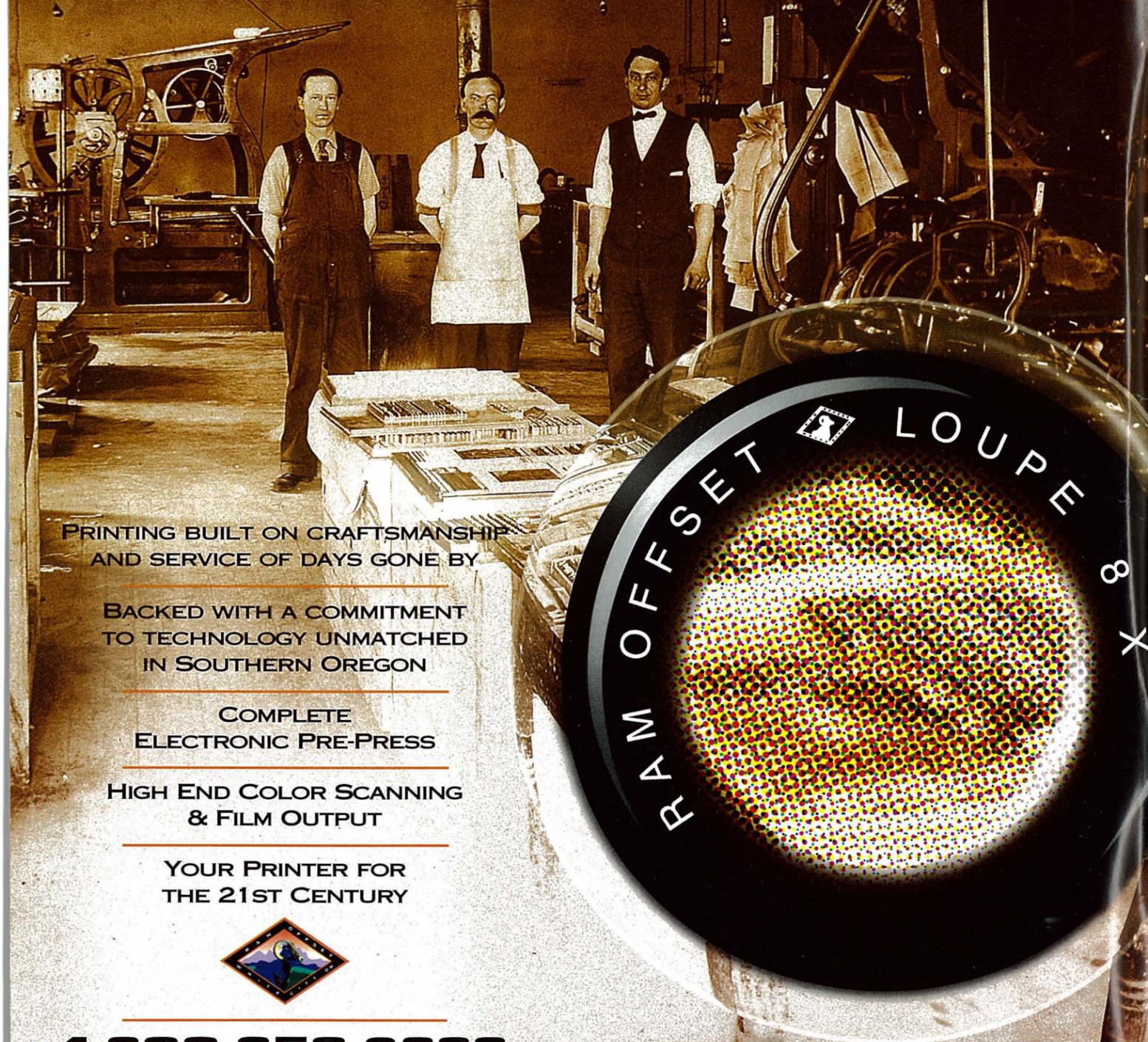
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# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Vol. I, No. 4 • THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY • Spring 1996

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## Honoring the Past The value of history and its preservation

by Marcia W. Somers

**H**istory is the story of individuals and cultures; where they came from, what they did, how they lived. Some stories are told through artifacts: a broken bowl, a butter churn, a basket made of pine needles, or a branding iron, all can tell us about a way of life. Some people felt a need to make a physical record, to be remembered. Those stories are told through journals, letters, ledgers, and books. Some took photographs, or drew pictures. Through these resources the past is pieced together. Fortunately, places like the Southern Oregon Historical Society are committed to preserving this kind of memory.

The value of history is in what it tells us about our own society. It is a wonder to review the challenges and accomplishments of the men and women of past centuries. One can't help but reflect upon one's own life—the choices made, how time is devoted, what we decide to create, and what will be left behind. How will we, as a culture and as individuals, be remembered?

Those who came over the Oregon and Applegate Trails over one hundred years ago had the challenge of building a society. The hardships, mistakes and mishaps were many, as were the rewards. These early pioneers founded businesses, churches, banks and schools. Some made bricks, some made horseshoes. Others packed mules, worked cattle, planted trees, milled flour and timber. They carved fine furniture, they carved local stone, and carved communities out of remote wilderness. Oftentimes an individual served the community in a multitude of ways. Citizens had to be involved, and with each decision and choice a course was charted. Those choices and stories are now part of the past, and the founders of the Southern Oregon Historical Society believed it was important to collect, preserve and interpret those stories.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. As Jackson County has developed and grown, the Southern Oregon Historical Society has kept pace and become an asset, not only to those who live here but to tourists, writers, historians, teachers, businesses, and the media nationwide.

In passing through department stores, coffee houses, law offices, restaurants, and private residences you may have noticed black-and-white photographs depicting a bygone era:

a parade down Main Street in 1910, the old Medford depot, Jacksonville in the 1800s, or a graceful wooden span crossing the Rogue River. Many of these images were provided by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Newspaper reporters and newscasters are frequently in the Research Library looking for answers and searching for photographs. This is the largest research library in the Pacific Northwest and maintains a knowledgeable library staff to assist patrons and members.

In commemorating fifty years of caring for the history of southern Oregon, a special mailing of *Southern Oregon Heritage* has been sent to homes throughout the county, to members and non-members alike. The magazine you hold in your hands is a benefit of membership to the Southern Oregon Historical Society and is available for sale. In it you will find a brief history of the Society describing its diverse functions. In preparation for the grand opening, June 1, of "*Going Places: Travel To and Through The Rogue Valley*," articles covering the history of local transportation are featured, as are many other interesting pieces on historical landmarks and the lives of the people who helped make southern Oregon what it is today.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society houses a diverse collection of regional artifacts, assembles dynamic exhibits, presents educational programs, and hosts over 117,000 visitors a year. It supports an award-winning publications program, a Research Library, and is responsible for the preservation of many historic properties. The Children's Museum, developed in the 1970s, educates and entertains children and families throughout the year. Costumed characters interpret "living history" along the sidewalks of Jacksonville, and bake bread and cookies in the woodstove at Beekman House. The Society is a treasure for all to experience.

This magazine goes out to the community. That's who brought the Southern Oregon Historical Society into being, and it will be community that ensures its continuity. To Society members and supporters we give thanks. We welcome those of you who have never stepped foot on a Society site, or taken in an exhibit, to do so. Explore the past at the Southern Oregon Historical Society. The history of Jackson County can provide a sense of belonging, pride, intrigue...and fun. 

### Southern Oregon Heritage Editorial Guidelines

Feature articles average 2,500 to 3,000 (pre-edited) words. Standard articles range from 1,500 to 2,000 words. Other material, such as poetry, essays, reviews, and short fiction, range from 100 to 1,500 words. Electronic submissions are accepted on either 5-1/2- or 3-1/4-inch disks and should be accompanied by a hard-copy printout. Cite all sources and construct endnotes and outlines using the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The author is responsible for verification of cited facts. A selection of professional, unscreened photographs and/or line art should accompany submissions—black-and-white or color. The Southern Oregon Historical Society reserves the right to use Society images in place of submitted material. All material should be labeled with author's name, mailing address, and telephone number. Manuscripts will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope stamped with sufficient postage.

Authors should provide a brief autobiographical note at the end of manuscripts.

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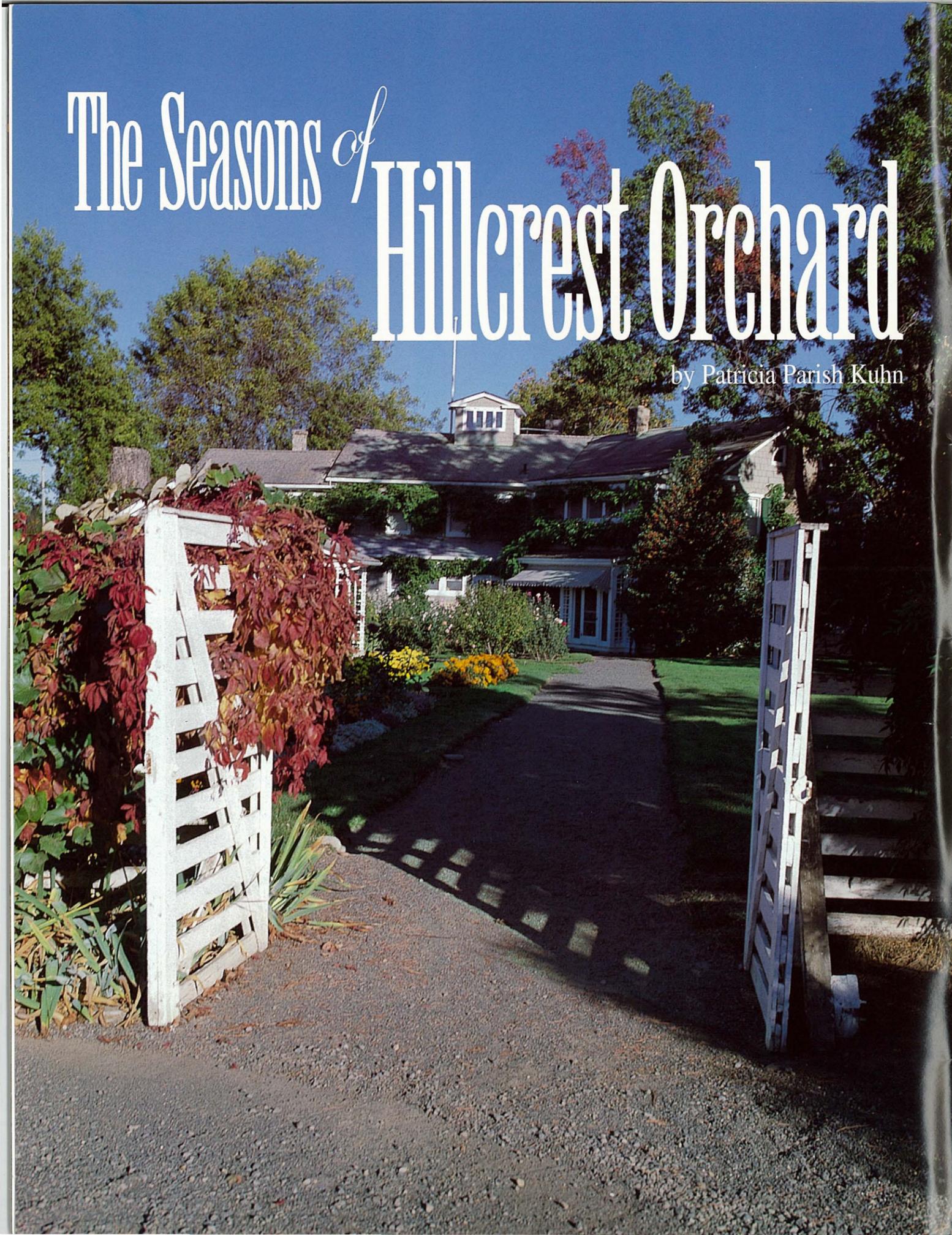
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# The Seasons of Hillcrest Orchard

by Patricia Parish Kuhn



Judson Parsons moves from behind his desk in the small office building set in the midst of an English flower garden at Hillcrest Orchard. The building sits just off Hillcrest Road which takes its name from this historic orchard in East Medford. Sunlight floods the room settling on the vase of roses freshly picked from the meticulously groomed rose garden just outside the door. Aged pear wood neatly stacked in the fireplace stands ready to banish the early morning chill. On the wooden mantel, two antique photographs of children lean against the paneling. Parsons, superintendent of Hillcrest Orchard since 1964 and grandson of founder Reginald H. Parsons, walks over to identify them as an aunt now in her ninth decade and her younger brother, visual symbols of the rootedness and continuity of the Parsons family and their ongoing presence at Hillcrest Orchard for nearly one hundred years.

Here, in the orchard's original office, the past blends simply with the present. A computer and facsimile machine have replaced the early twentieth-century office equipment just as tractors and other machinery replaced Hillcrest's draft horse team after World War II — all necessary improvements to assist in the commercial operation of the Parsons' 250 acre farm.

Outside, a block of century-old Comice pear trees gives up its rose blush fruit to hard-working fingers. The plucking of pears and placing them in boxes this September day is an ongoing ritual dating from the last century. Approaching a new millennium, Hillcrest Orchard sits like a dignified, meticulously groomed dowager holding firm while all about her changes. Unruffled, she straightens her back and prevails — at least for now.

On a late summer afternoon last year, Judson Parsons' mother, Elizabeth (Mrs. George) Parsons, was in residence for the Labor Day weekend. Sheltered by an ancient scarlet oak, the distinctive East Coast Shingle and Colonial Revival-style home hosts the fifth generation of Parsons gathered from throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Labor Day weekend gathering has been their custom for nine decades. Elizabeth Parsons of Seattle, wife of the late George Parsons, sits in a chair near the window by the screened wrap-around porch and looks out to the expansive lawn.

"I first came here in 1931," she remembers; "And everything is just the same as it was then. Mother and Father Parsons [Reginald H. and Maude] bought the orchard in 1908. They lived in a little house just east of the present house," she continues; "When they decided to build this house in 1917, she didn't let anything go to waste. Mother Parsons, she was called Maudie, was very frugal and

Left: A view of Hillcrest House the "grand dowager," from the garden gates.

Above: Hillcrest is one of the last remaining orchards within Medford city limits. The Parsons work at caring for their land in a way that is not hazardous to their neighbors' health. Orchard heaters such as these are rarely used anymore.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LEONARD

a very smart woman. She used all the doors and windows in the old house for this one.

"Her brother was an architect so she knew what to do. He had written a book, *The Evolving House*, about modern houses." She pauses, "I just love it. It's such a lovely old house." She points out that the four bathrooms upstairs, "were unheard of in the early 1900s. We can sleep fourteen people because of big sleeping porches upstairs. Dad (Reginald Parsons) insisted on having sleeping porches. My husband George and I would come in the middle of August and stay until mid-October. But since he died, I come down for the golf tournament and am an honorary member of this club [Rogue Valley Country Club]."

Mrs. Parsons explained that Hillcrest House was intended and designed as a summer house. George's father, Reginald H. Parsons, came down every month from Seattle where he lived. The family had friends and extended family in both Seattle and Boston, "as Mother Maude was a Bemis from Boston. Her friends from Boston would come and stay a month in the summer. Every day at ten o'clock Mother Maude would read stories to all the guests and grandchildren."

A niece appears in the living room to tell Mrs. Parsons they are all leaving for a picnic in the mountains. Small children, the fifth generation of Parsons at Hillcrest, squeal in delight as they run past her chair and out the back door into the rich, unmistakable fragrance of ripening Concord grapes interwoven along the white garden fence. It's harvest time at Hillcrest.

"We become what we have loved," the late May Sarton, a beloved American poet, once wrote. And nowhere is that more evident than in the sparkling eyes and laughter of Elizabeth Parsons as she harvests her own memories of the Parsons family at Hillcrest Orchard. "Dad Parsons got Alfred Carpenter (the late Rogue Valley orchardist and philanthropist) and Leonard Carpenter and Mr. Kendall to move here from the East. They all moved out here because Dad Parsons told them to. [One time] Mr. Alfred Carpenter sat next to me at a dinner and said, 'You know, your father-in-law made me move out here and now I'm not wealthy enough to move back.'" She laughed, indicating it was a joke.

Spacious mowed lawns surround the house bordered by steeplewhite picket fences. Gnarled trunks of century-old lilac bushes frame the screened porch and above, shiny green louvered shutters open out from the signature elliptical windows. Elizabeth Parsons points from the living room out onto the screened porch:

"My mother-in-law banked the screen with flowers for the wedding of her daughter Mary ["Nan" Parsons] to John Day; it was just fabulous—other people from Seattle came down. Mother



The office building looks out upon lush berry vines, a drying rack and the house's cupola.

Maude had to have sterling silver so she went to town and borrowed it. Our cook, Totsie, got her friends to help her cook a banquet. [Afterwards] they accidentally threw out a lot of the sterling silver into the garbage cans. Mother Maude would not rest until she found it all, and had to replace some of it."<sup>1</sup>

Not only has Hillcrest been a summer gathering place for the Parsons family and their guests, but throughout the years it has been open to visitors on designated days, for meetings of boards of directors in the

community, and for charitable events such as the annual Hillcrest Tea. The tea was originally under the direction of the late Nan Parsons Day.

Mrs. Monie Bartels, retired teacher and community leader, recalls, "Brandt [the late Dr. Brandt Bartels] and I came to town in August of 1946. In October, Nan Day said to me, 'I want you to pick three other gals, and we're going to start the Cancer Society.' I didn't know many people here, so I started with the B's of the new doctors in town. There was a big influx then, right after the war. Bartels, Barnes, Buonocore, Burich."

Nan Day had been appointed by Oregon's American Cancer Society to represent southern Oregon. "We went door to door soliciting funds — the four B's and Nan," Mrs. Bartels continued. "Thank goodness the town wasn't as big then or we'd still be at it." Soon they had to include more members. April was Cancer Month so it was then they decided to come up with a Silver Tea at Hillcrest House.

Her face broke into a broad smile, "We had little ladies come and put a quarter into the [donation] dish saying to their friends, 'Now don't you pay. I've paid for all of you.'" She and the committee made the tea and decorated the house with pear and peach blossoms from the orchard and roses from the garden, she reminisced. "We called ourselves 'The Hillcrest Tea Committee,' but in southern Oregon, we were the Cancer Society." All their proceeds went to the American Cancer Society. "We also had a fund to help local cancer patients," she commented. "This went on for years. We kept growing. All the while we took on the responsibility of the educational program along with all the fundraising."

Eventually the state Cancer Society appointed a separate board to take over the educational program and other activities. The Hillcrest Tea Committee had always done themselves. "We always had an event, sometimes two, to raise money for the Cancer Society. We graduated from having teas to table setting events at Hillcrest House where guests would vote on their favorite table.

"We had wine tastings and displays of hobby collections, trying to have something different every year." One of her favorite events was a vintage fashion show spurred by a wonderful discovery in the basement. "Nan and I went into the dark old basement and

sorted through all the trunks filled with beautiful old lace and gowns. It took us hours to go through the treasure trove."

Despite nearly two decades of very successful and well attended Silver Teas, by the early '60s they were out of style, and the Christmas Ball began. "Buy a party at the Christmas Ball and have it at Hillcrest House," became the Hillcrest Committee's new rallying cry and its name changed to Hillcrest Cancer Committee. Today the Hillcrest Ball draws two-to-three hundred people a year, and is now held at local ball-

rooms, or the Rogue Valley Country Club. Parties are still auctioned off at the Hillcrest Ball — buyers and their guests are then feted at the Hillcrest House in style.

After half a century, "Hillcrest Orchard is still the hub of our whole organization," Bartels emphasizes. "The Parsons family has been very supportive of this community."<sup>2</sup> Nan Day died at age seventy-two, well known for her philanthropic work just as her father the late Reginald H. Parsons was for his. From the time of its inception, Nan Day served as President of the Cancer Society in southern Oregon until her death in 1986.

Many enjoy memories of afternoons on the Parsons' tennis courts, invitations to press apples in the old cider mill at harvest, and dancing at summer parties on the tennis courts in former decades. One young tennis guest observed the late George Parsons driving his elegant vintage touring automobile through the irrigated orchard only to become mired in the famous clay soil known as "Medford sticky."

In 1897, J. H. Stewart planted the first fruit trees in his orchard on Hillcrest Road.<sup>3</sup> A decade later, Reginald H. Parsons of Seattle, a Northwest financier and philanthropist formed an investment company, Hillcrest Orchard Company, which bought the orchard in 1908 from then owner J.W. Perkins.<sup>4</sup>

In an official letter (circa 1908), from Hillcrest Orchard Company to the Bank of California, Portland, Oregon, the fruit trees, buildings and equipment on the orchard were described, as was the orchard's reputation:

"During the years 1905 and 1906 this orchard held the World's record for the highest price ever paid for a car of pears and in 1907 lost the prize by a few dollars on a car, the top price going to a rival orchard adjoining. The best price received for Hillcrest pears was \$9.60 per box. The fruit from this ranch finds ready market in New York where, because of its superiority, it commands the highest price and is shipped to London and other Continental points." It was also noted that there was phone service at the orchard but no electricity.<sup>5</sup>

According to Judson Parsons, 1912 is thought to be the date that Reginald Parsons became the sole owner of the orchard. From that time on, Parsons, his wife Maude Bemis Parsons,



Century-old pear trees, lilacs and roses are a few of Hillcrest's botanical treasures.

and newly arrived architect Frank C. Clark would design a complex of buildings, unified by Period Colonial-style architecture.

A friendship blossomed between Reginald Parsons and Frank Clark, easily discernible in their frequent correspondence. In one letter dated September 24, 1918, Parsons invited Clark to Seattle to afford him greater opportunities in his profession.

Clark replied, "I would be only to [sic] glad to come to Seattle and take my chances during the war times. I am sure it would be a move in

which I would better myself. The struggle here is not worth the time. The local ideas unfortunately are too narrow. There is not the right spirit here to progress. A few see things as they ought to be, but they cannot accomplish everything single-handed."<sup>6</sup>

In a letter dated December 4, 1918, Reginald Parsons comments on the blueprints Clark had sent to him in Seattle for his approval pertaining to the new recreation house under construction for the entertainment of family, guests and children. Parsons' total participation with Clark in the design of his home and its additions is evident and hands on: [pertaining to the hand ball court] "This looks good," Parsons writes, "but as regards a small balcony to hold two boys when their dad is hitting the ball, I believe that one of them at least will be down in the court with him." This kind of camaraderie and ability to visualize every detail is chronicled in letters in the family files as well as in the memories of the family. "The pool was built indoors to keep leaves from falling in it," Elizabeth Parsons offers. "Dad Parsons, every year, would add something for the children to look forward to."

Understandably, Hillcrest Orchard and Hillcrest House, designed as the Parsons' summer home, would become a showplace in southern Oregon as well as serve as a present day, perfectly intact example of Medford's rich agricultural and historical past. This would be one of the few documented examples of agricultural structures by Frank Clark. He would go on to design many of the valley's grand and distinctive houses and buildings, some two hundred in all, despite his early disillusionment with the Rogue Valley.

In a letter dated February 16, 1926, Parsons wrote to Clark: "You have done so much in the past to make our living at the Orchard comfortable and agreeable. The whole family has so enjoyed the home and recreation house, etc. that I am looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to these additions and improvements, and I hope that they afford considerable benefit and happiness to all who may sojourn in them..."

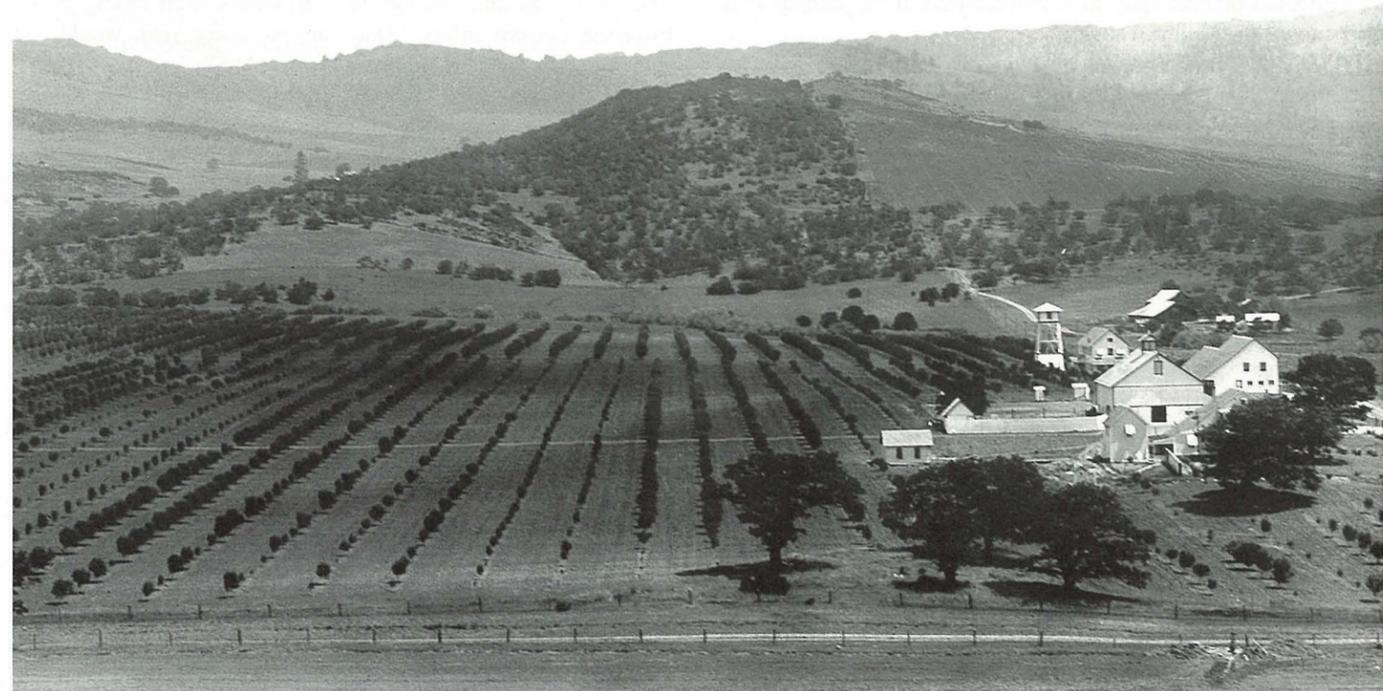
Reginald Parsons was one of the Northwest's most respected businessmen and philanthropists. He gave his time and money to the National Boy Scouts Council, the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls. He donated the Statue of Liberty in Hawthorne Park to the

city of Medford, on behalf of the Boy Scouts. He divided his time between Seattle and Medford: in the former, he was a founding director of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra and directed the Seattle Chamber of Commerce in 1919;<sup>7</sup> in Medford he oversaw orchard operations until his death in 1955, at which time his son, George Parsons assumed management.

In 1964, Reginald Parsons' grandson, Judson Parsons was designated orchard superintendent to guide and work in all phases of orcharding. In addition, he was to oversee the impeccable maintenance and preservation of the complex of farm buildings which includes the main house, barn, cow barn, packing house, office, wagon shed, wash rack, manager's house, firehouse, main garage, "electric" garage (because it housed an electric car owned by Reginald Parsons), doghouse, woodshed, guest house, and recreation house comprised of a room for the indoor swimming pool, a handball court, and a billiard room. Distinctive shuttered elliptical windows on the gable ends of the buildings, and louvered cupolas at roof ridges on the major buildings underscore the consistent attention to detail on every building and serve as an architectural theme that visually binds these buildings to one another. The barn, constructed in 1900, is the oldest standing building in the complex; the architect is unknown.<sup>8</sup>

Just as the gracious summer home opens its doors wide in service to the community, at harvest time pear lovers are invited through the barnyard gate by a simple sign — "Pears for Sale." Adjacent to the century-old barn, the white and green-trimmed storage shed offers up bags and boxes of pears. Just weigh the selection and leave the money in the box. Not surprisingly, at this outpost of a simpler time, the "Honor System" is still in force; the only concession to present times being a padlock on the box. For after all, the *raison d'être* for the myriad activities are the pears,

This early photo of Hillcrest Orchard harkens to a time when Medford was the pear capital of the world.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #12030

acres and acres of them: Comice, D'Anjous, Bosc, and Bartletts.

Judson Parsons, who continues his association with the orchard, is a native of Seattle, Washington, and has spent most of his life in Medford. "Although I was born in Seattle, my earliest memories were of coming down here in the '30s and '40s, Parsons reflects. "I was five years old. There was only one summer we missed and that was during the war." As a young child, he would spend three weeks each summer at Hillcrest. "As I became older, I came down for longer periods and helped in the orchard. My cousin Jack Day (of Medford), and my siblings would also visit. As very young children we would ride bicycles in the orchard and swim in the pool which is still in use," Parsons mused.

"At first, I was more interested in the ranch the family had at Hilt with horses and cattle, but then my interest shifted to the orchard here by the time I started college, and the ranch at Hilt sold in 1954. I moved here after graduation at Washington State University in 1958." It was here at Hillcrest where he would marry Diana Gardener.

In 1968, Parsons stated, they started improving irrigation which is ongoing. The major change has been from surface irrigation to "undertree" and overhead sprinklers with water provided from the Eastside Canal of the Medford Irrigation District. "We started irrigating in the early '20s, known as flood irrigation, and then in 1968 we started major changes," he said. The "overtree" irrigation could be used for both frost control and irrigation, and the undertree sprinklers were found to be more efficient water-wise and labor-wise as flooding caused more erosion.

Many of the original trees planted by Mr. Stewart have been replaced, Parsons explains. "1969 was the first year we started planting higher density. The old standard was to plant seventy trees per acre. In 1969 we started planting 388 trees per acre. Now we're planting at even higher density with more acres of the Bosc variety, Comice, Bartlett, D'Anjou and special pears such

as the Red Bartlett." For orchard heating, Hillcrest started out with return stack heaters and they're still approved. They are clean-burning if properly maintained, Parsons emphasizes.

"We try to be a good neighbor and minimize conflict regarding sprays, heating and other things concerning the orchard," Parsons offers. "Good buffering around all orchards is necessary to reduce conflicts in light of the demand for homes on the city's outskirts," he explains. Conifers, berms, fencing, deciduous trees all help to reduce the impact of noise and drift from orchard operations and are very necessary, he stresses. Parsons is doing everything to ensure that farming continues at Hillcrest Orchard. "We start at 7:30 a.m. in the morning with our spraying because there is less wind. Our irrigation goes on all day and when we irrigate, we irrigate twenty-four hours a day." Most of the orchard now is in permanent cover crop, he says; this is very important to prevent erosion, and it's ideal for pruning in winter—it is much easier to prune in grass than in mud. The orchard engages a crew of ten people year round. A total of twenty-five to thirty people are employed during harvest; typically harvest starts mid-August and continues to early October.<sup>9</sup>

Medford resident, Dr. Porter Lombard, superintendent of the Southern Oregon Experiment Station from 1962 to 1981, has a long association with the orchard. He identifies the soil at Hillcrest as "carney clay." The product, he says, is rated sixteen tons per acre; a productive soil with irrigation.

Formerly, orchards between Hillcrest Orchard and Roxy Ann Peak were dry land orchards and the soil was too shallow without irrigation for pear growth and production, Dr. Lombard mentions. Some of the orchard trees at Hillcrest are one hundred years old; though still productive, they were planted too far apart. Replanting new trees is required in order to fill out the canopy surface. This is currently being remedied by interplanting and replanting blocks. Dr. Lombard emphasizes, "Hillcrest Orchard is one of the remaining large blocks of orchard left in the valley and it is being managed to keep the spray materials contained and from drifting."<sup>10</sup>

Corrine Lombard, a Medford native, listens attentively to her husband, smiles and offers: "I remember when Nan Parsons Day told me that when she was a little girl, the members of the Ku Klux Klan would stop at Hillcrest's old wooden trough to water their horses on their way to Roxy Ann Peak to burn a cross on the hillside where they met. Nan said she knew who the riders were by their horses and would ask them why they were dressed that way."<sup>11</sup> That old wooden trough still stands today, on the strip of grass by the barnyard gate along Hillcrest Road.



Bunkhouse and workers, May 1911. Even the bunkhouse is a testament to the heralded Hillcrest architecture.

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #3597

In 1984, following two years of intensive research by historians Kay Atwood (Ashland) and Gail Evans (Silverton), Hillcrest Orchard was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Hillcrest Orchard is a commercial farm and we're continuing each year to improve productivity, efficiency and maintain quality," Parsons concludes. His wife Diana Gardener adds, "It has been a privilege to live at Hillcrest Orchard for more than thirty years. I have always been proud to be part of a working commercial

farm. The historic links and beauty of the place added to my pleasure. It is my hope the family and the community can work together to ensure that farming continues on the land."<sup>12</sup>

In her fifty year association with this historic landmark, perhaps Monie Bartels best captures what many southern Oregonians feel about Hillcrest Orchard: "It is impossible to put into words what I think Hillcrest Orchard means to the community — an appreciation for the beauty and graciousness of a way of life that is no more: the orchards, house, tennis courts, pool. It's a symbol of beauty and love. One of the last vestiges of an age where generosity and gracious hospitality were a way of life."<sup>12</sup>



*Patricia Parish Kuhn has been a resident of Medford since 1959. She is a free lance writer, photographer and poet. Her work has appeared in regional and national publications.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Elizabeth Parsons (Mrs. George), interview by author, Medford, Oregon, 3 Sept. 1995.
2. Monie Bartels (Mrs. Brandt B.), interview by author, Medford, Oregon, 11 Oct. 1995.
3. Kay Atwood and Gail Evans, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, p. 8, (United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service).
4. Bill of Sale dated June, 1908, Medford, Oregon, J.W. Perkins Hillcrest Orchard letterhead (original in office safe in Seattle).
5. Hillcrest Orchard correspondence to Bank of California, 1908. Original letter on file Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon. (Judson Parsons places the date during or just before harvest in 1908 as the letter was in a file with others written in April 1908).
6. Correspondence between Reginald H. Parsons and Frank C. Clark, original on file Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon.
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## The Restoration of the U.S. Hotel

K. Gabrielle

*The preservation of Jacksonville's historic structures helped rejuvenate more than just buildings. This small community was revitalized by people working together to restore and repair the downtown core.*



The Jacksonville that began with the discovery of gold in the 1850s did not end after the routing of the railroad through Medford in 1884. The heyday of buildings such as the United States Hotel had passed, but downtown Jacksonville began life anew in the 1960s due to restoration projects spurred by the proposal of a highway through the middle of town.<sup>1</sup> The "U.S." Hotel was one such project.

In 1880 Madame Jeanne DeRoboam commissioned her third husband, brick-maker and mason George Holt, to build the U.S. Hotel using clay from nearby Jackson Creek. The new hotel would bring culture and entertainment to the boisterous mining town of Jacksonville.<sup>2</sup> Madame DeRoboam, formerly the proprietor of the Franco-American



Left: Detail from the U.S. Hotel interior before restoration in the 1960s.

Above right: Rumors circulated about Mme. Jeanne DeRoboam Holt, proprietress of the U.S. Hotel, were most likely spurred by her shrewd business skills and eminent success, circa 1880.

Right: Well-suited men gathered for an important event during the hotel's heyday, circa 1883.

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. BANK



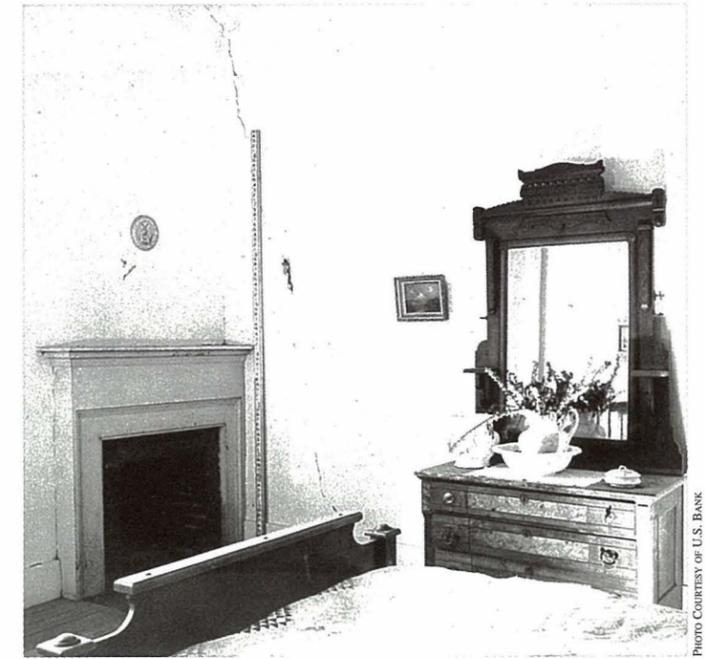
Detail from first floor hotel room. The U.S. National Bank paid ten years rent in advance to assist in the hotel's restoration, circa 1964.

Hotel, set out to create a hotel, modern in every way. The ballroom was equipped with lighting so that grand balls as well as theatrical productions could be held there. An elegant wooden bar flanked the wall in the barroom adjacent to the ballroom, handsomely accommodating thirsty patrons. Downstairs rooms each had their own fireplace. While fine cuisine was served in the dining room of the U.S. Hotel, the doors were opened after meals so the needy could avail themselves of the leftovers.<sup>3</sup>

At the grand balls held upstairs women dressed in rich brocade bouffant gowns and men in black cutaway coats with spats over their shoes, partook of midnight suppers of oyster stew and roast suckling pig while listening to music from a violin section.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Hotel catered not only to wealthy and important visitors such as President Rutherford B. Hayes, who spent one night at the hotel shortly after it opened, but also to the miners whose hard work on the Applegate River drove the economy of early Jacksonville.

Perhaps the combination of Madame DeRoboam's quest for culture and refinement; her rumored noble lineage from Bordeaux, France; her practicality and success in business as well as her appetite for wine and snuff led some townfolk to refer to her as a "madam." Some said the upstairs of her hotel was a brothel, but there seems to be little evidence to support that this was anything more than a rumor created by those who saw her success and flamboyance as inappropriate for a respectable woman of those times.<sup>5</sup>

Two years after Madame DeRoboam's death in 1884, her niece purchased the hotel.<sup>6</sup> The property continued to be run as a hotel until 1915, when its American flag was lowered after seizure of the building by Jackson County for unpaid property taxes.<sup>7</sup> From the 1920s to 1949, the old hotel housed, at different times, a local museum, the Royal Neighbors Lodge, the



This room with a fireplace (same as shown left) was pure luxury in the 1800s. By 1953 the entire structure was considered unsafe.

Jacksonville Garden Club, the public library and was utilized as public meeting space. The local Odd Fellows Lodge held dances in the grand ballroom.<sup>8</sup>

In 1953, the cracked rear wall posed such a major structural problem that the U.S. Hotel faced condemnation. Herbert Mackie, a Medford architect and building inspector, recommended the U.S. Hotel be preserved as a landmark due, in part, to the fine craftsmanship of the building's brickwork facade.<sup>9</sup>

In 1962, a plan to build the Medford/Provolt Highway diagonally across Jacksonville to alleviate the burden of log truck and tourist traffic on the city's narrow streets gained approval by the city council.<sup>10</sup> Due to input from concerned citizens such as historic preservationist Robertson Collins, the city council reconsidered the State Highway Commission's plan and reversed its decision, creating enthusiasm for the historic preservation of Jacksonville. Money for the restoration projects came from many sources including a grant from the Urban Renewal Agency of the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency.<sup>11</sup> The Jacksonville Properties for Historic Preservation organization raised funds to purchase the U.S. Hotel, modernize the electrical and plumbing systems, and repair structural problems. The U.S. National Bank prepaid a decade's worth of rent to help finance the restoration.<sup>12</sup>

The Siskiyou Pioneer Sites Foundation directed the U.S. Hotel restoration project.<sup>13</sup> As Jack Batzer of Medford made structural repairs, Lila Colwell of the Association of Interior Decorators began recreating the 1800s inside. Period furniture and fixtures were obtained locally or reproduced from drawings of furnishings of the 1850s. The heavy oak desks, yew wood captain's chairs, old pull chain toilet, green-shaded lights and replicas of vintage chandeliers create an atmosphere that draws visitors into the charm of Jacksonville as it was a century ago.

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. BANK

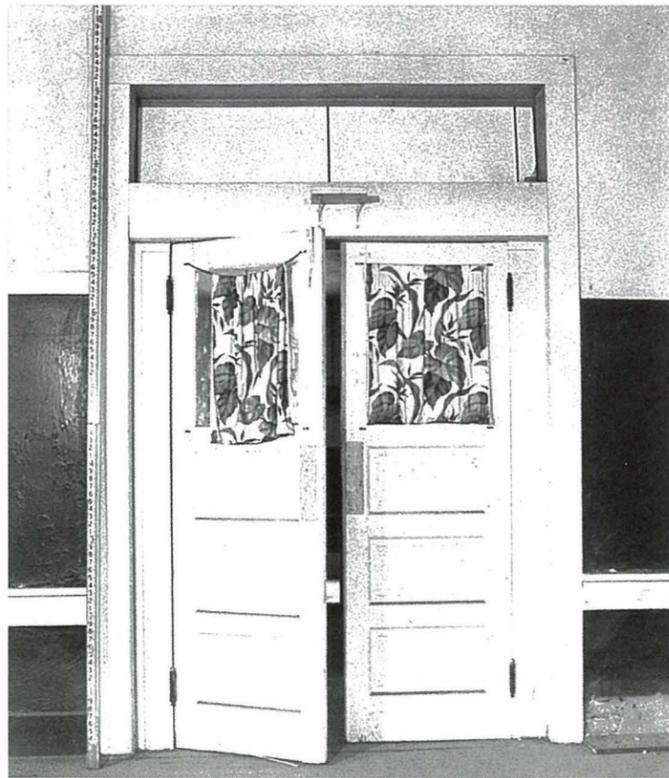


PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. BANK

The most elegant men and women of Jacksonville once swished their satins and tipped their top hats through these ballroom doors, circa 1964.

Today, as visitors to the U.S. Hotel step through the tall heavy entry doors, they are transported back in time to the days when the scarred bannister of the central staircase was scratched by the rings of many hands. The deep-blue carpeted staircase leads up to the restored saloon with an ornate, floral-motif mahogany bar, gilt mirror, brass chandeliers, and piano ready for some rowdy miners' tunes. In the ballroom, gaudy, spoked brass light fixtures coexist with modern track lighting on the curved ceiling. Pale gold brocade drapes surround heavy canvas window shades framing snapshots of modern day Jacksonville streets. The upstairs furnishings are largely due to contributions from the Jacksonville Boosters Club and the Gold Diggers' Guild of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. The Jacksonville Museum Quilters offer quilting instruction throughout the year here.

Within the U.S. National Bank branch, oak floors, oak tellers' counters, and brass chandeliers with ornate globes create an old-time ambience belying the bank's modern functions. A walk around the outside of the building offers further glimpses into nineteenth-century Jacksonville. In 1994, the Third Street viewing room was remodeled. The Society is considering it for future use as an open studio for artisans practicing traditional crafts and trades.

Jackson County holds the title to the U.S. Hotel, and the Southern Oregon Historical Society is responsible for the maintenance and further renovation of the building. Since 1971, restoration of the exterior masonry, repairs to the balcony, installation of a new heating system, and installation of hardwood flooring in the



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. BANK

Upstairs barroom, circa 1964. Today these beautifully restored rooms may be reserved and rented for public and private events and functions.

downstairs barroom have been completed. More recently, the Jacksonville Museum Quilters' room was refinished and repainted in 1993. Continuing maintenance, and installation of interior features such as wallpaper, carpet, and paint, has been performed by Society employees and subcontractors.

Restoration of vintage buildings such as the U.S. Hotel allows a community to continually reinvent itself according to demographic and economic changes while keeping alive a link to the past. By creating an aesthetically pleasing environment that is not like every other mega-mall in America, the economy of a small community can be assisted by tourists and locals interested in taking a peek backward in time while patronizing downtown businesses. Madame DeRoboam, in her black brocade skirt and white dimity blouse, descending the oak staircase of the U.S. Hotel today would be proud to see that her dream of creating culture and refinement in Jacksonville has been fulfilled in a practical way by fostering the success of small businesses.



*K. Gabrielle is a businesswoman and free lance writer living in Ashland.*

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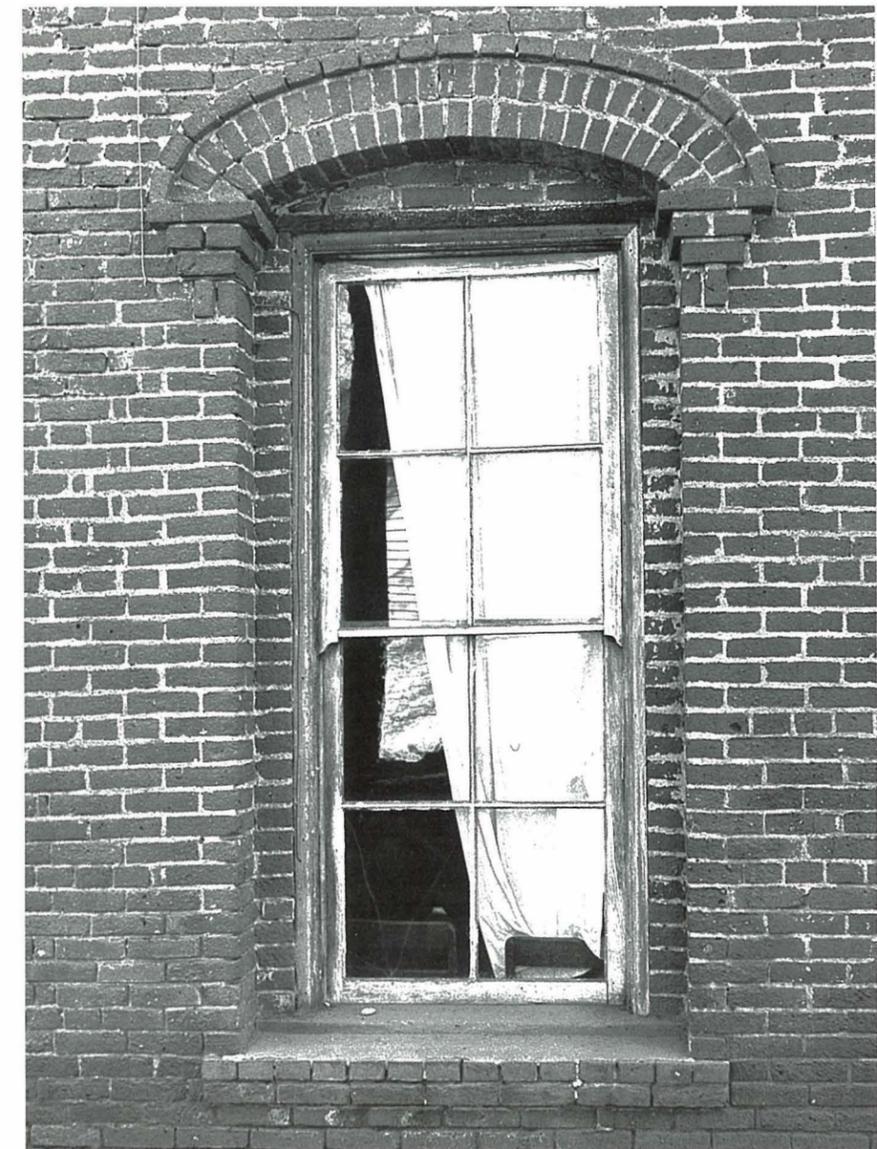


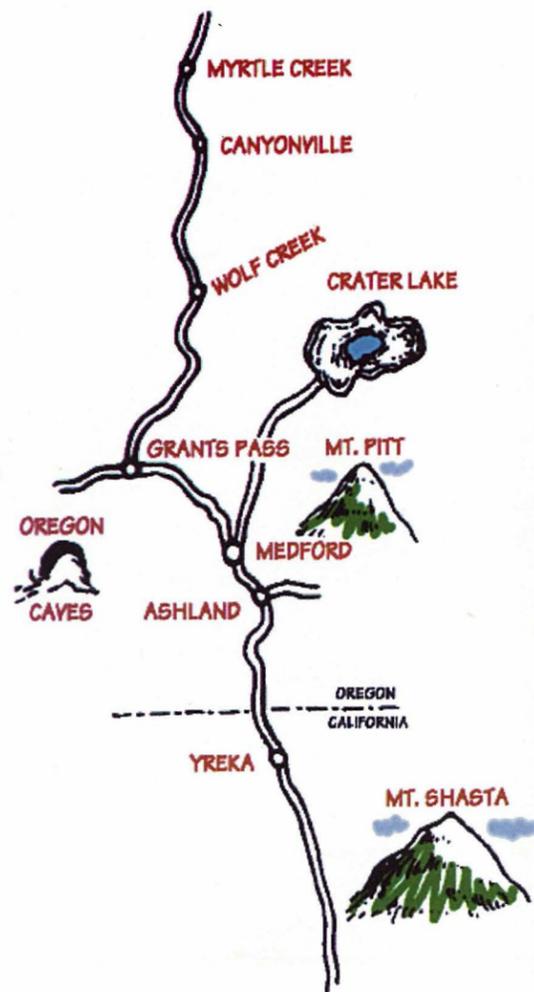
PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. BANK

Left: second story window tells a story of neglect, circa 1964.  
Right: Detail, U.S. Hotel interior, 1964. The historic restoration of the U.S. Hotel was a pivotal move towards the restoration of the entire Jacksonville business district which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966.

# THE Pacific Highway

## When Oregon's Main Street Stretched from California to Washington

by George Kramer



In 1962 Mark Hatfield, the Governor of Oregon, cut a ribbon spanning a smooth concrete roadbed between Grants Pass and Rogue River, officially opening a new nine mile stretch of Interstate 5. Many similar ceremonies were repeated over the next five years and by 1967, Oregon became the first state on the West Coast to complete an Interstate Highway from border to border. Remarkably, fifty years earlier Oregon was the first state west of the Mississippi River to offer a paved route from border to border — the Pacific Highway.

Interstate 5, a massive transportation network of more than 40,000 stoplight-free miles, was a part of the largest federal construction program ever undertaken. In Oregon, "I-5" would link the cities of the western valleys as never before; its construction caused great excitement statewide. Southern Oregonians especially looked forward to the speedy connections to the Willamette Valley and California.

Completed through most of the Rogue Valley by 1964, I-5 supplanted Highway 99, itself the successor to the famed Pacific Highway. Like the earlier route, Highway 99 went through most

of the towns along its path, often following, or even creating, the main business district. I-5, however, was designed as a "limited access highway." It offered an uninterrupted route that skirted cities permitting faster speeds and greater safety. No cross-traffic, no pedestrians, and in theory, no distractions would interrupt the traveler on the Interstate. This was an entirely new approach to travel in America, one that made the road a "corridor" in the true sense of the word, a path between points rather than a journey through an area.

In the 1950s and early 1960s the automobile was only one example of America's love of technology and the construction of

the Interstate became a part of an idealized period in American history. The Interstate extended an omnipotent national image to each American citizen on the Interstate. Our nation was economically robust and seemingly capable of doing almost anything it wanted. Americans could move from place to place in their own cars, on their own schedules, at high speeds, free of distractions or interruptions. The car increasingly became an important element in our sense of self, defining who we were or hoped to be. "Muscle Cars" were the rage at high school. Large gas-guzzling Lincolns and Cadillacs were the mark of someone who had it made. Suburban moms, since everybody now lived in the suburbs, drove wood panel-sided station wagons with names like "Country Squire," as they shuttled the kids to school or went to the new "supermarket" to pick up groceries.

While the automobile changed our lives, the Interstate changed our economy in dramatic fashion. Traditional downtowns were suddenly bypassed and new shopping "malls" were developed to attract regional shoppers. Commercial developments sprouted at "interchanges" where the traveler on the Interstate was allowed to re-enter the older transportation network, dubbed "surface streets." Freeway interchanges became clusters of road-related commerce. National chain

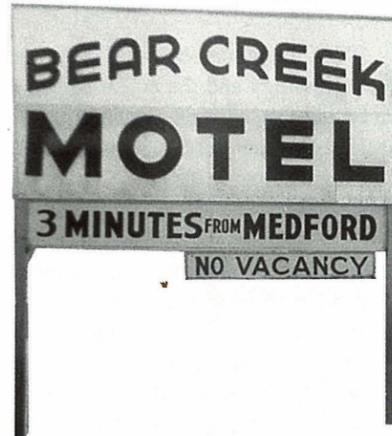
Above: Governor Mark Hatfield cuts the ribbon on a new stretch of I-5, between Grants Pass and Rogue River, 1962. Left: Built in the early 20s the WeAskU Inn along the Rogue River, became a popular getaway for Hollywood celebrities and political figures. Postcard circa late 1920s.



COURTESY OF GEORGE KRAMER

Above and center: Driving all night was never a good idea. Places such as this early Union 76 "auto camp" and the cabins of The Bear Creek Motel (across the highway from the corporation of the same name) cropped up to meet road weary travelers' needs.

Bottom: Mimetic signs, like the Coffee Pot's, ensured immediate product identification by drivers speeding past.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #5074

restaurants, motels and gas stations proved stiff competition for the earlier, often locally-owned companies that lined Highway 99. Still, a few of the earlier businesses survived. They changed their focus, relocated to remain competitive, and somehow managed to hang on. Other companies closed, their

buildings demolished or converted into other uses.

More than thirty years have passed since the construction of I-5 relegated Highway 99 to a "surface street." Nevertheless, many southern Oregon structures, and even a few hardy businesses

remain from the glory days of Highway 99. The rich history of many of these structures has been obscured as businesses changed hands, left town, or failed; they stand as the best remnants of a time when Oregon's 'Main Street' was a highway, bringing a steady stream of travelers through southern Oregon's cities and towns.

- The original roadbed of the Pacific Highway, though an engineering feat in its day, was vastly different from our modern conception of a highway. Only sixteen feet wide, the narrow winding concrete road required constant straightening and realignment as faster and more powerful cars were developed. Today, a few sections of the original Pacific Highway roadbed survive. The best, most intact, examples are the sections that were abandoned in 1938,

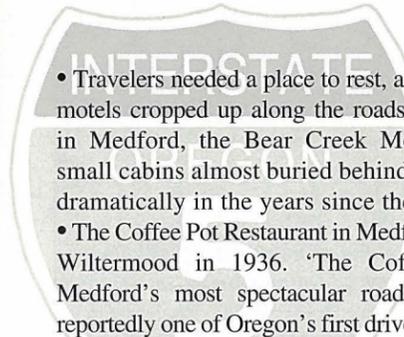
when the route south of Talent was moved away from downtown and shifted to the east. A stretch exists along what is now Eagle Mill Road, and is the only known section of the original concrete roadbed that's still in use in Jackson County as a public road.

- Alfred Smith completed the WeAskU Inn, Rogue River Highway, between the years 1921 and 1922. The lodge and six small cabins were built from logs cut on the site. In 1927, the lodge was purchased by the famed fly fisherman Billy "Rainbow" Gibson and the WeAskU Inn was soon a hugely popular resort hotel. With the highway out the front door, and the Rogue River at its rear, the inn's guests included famous political figures and Hollywood stars such as Carole Lombard, Jackie Cooper, and Gabby Hayes. Clark Gable, whose own cabin was nearby, was treated 'like one of the family' by the Gibsons.<sup>1</sup> The small cabins were razed in the late 1980s, but the impressive main lodge of the WeAskU Inn still survives.

Though no longer on the main highway, the inn is still on the river. The present owners are planning to rebuild the cabins and return the lodge to its former glory.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #6956



- Travelers needed a place to rest, and many car camps and motels cropped up along the roadside. In a little complex in Medford, the Bear Creek Motel still operates six small cabins almost buried behind trees that have grown dramatically in the years since the Interstate opened.

- The Coffee Pot Restaurant in Medford was opened by Carl Wiltermood in 1936. 'The Coffee Pot' was among Medford's most spectacular roadside eateries and was reportedly one of Oregon's first drive-in restaurants. Though shorn of its namesake roof, the Coffee Pot building still stands at 1132 North Riverside, site of the recently defunct Señor Frogs, a tavern known for its topless dancers.

- One thing every traveler needed was fuel and there were dozens of small gas stations built along the highway in southern Oregon. The careful eye can still pick out buildings that once sported a pump or two out front. Some are little more than houses with a canopy attached to the front that offered cover from the weather. Others, located higher in the mountain passes, offered a full range of services from fuel, to food and lodging.
- Upon its completion, Ashland's Lithia Springs Hotel instantly became known as the tallest building between San Francisco and Portland. The Lithia Springs Hotel has dominated Ashland's skyline for more than sixty-five years. Long plagued by financial problems, the first blow came when the Southern Pacific's main railroad line was shifted out of Ashland only two years after the hotel opened. The Lithia Springs was renamed the "Mark Antony"<sup>2</sup> in 1960, and continues to serve Ashland's resurgent tourist industry. As the "Mark Antony Motor Hotel" the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

- Reportedly built during the 1940s, the gigantic "Rogue Equipment Man" advertised an equipment company on Highway 99, north of Medford. Built just off the road, it towered thirty-seven feet over passing traffic and quickly became a local landmark. Larger-than-life signs like this one, grew ever larger as driving speed increased. They fell into disfavor, however, with the anti-billboard campaigns of Lady Bird Johnson. In 1994, with the support of the Burrill Lumber Company, the "Rogue Equipment Man" was relocated to the Jackson County Fairgrounds, where he now overlooks the Interstate from afar.<sup>3</sup>

- Part of the initial construction of the Pacific Highway, begun in 1910, and continuing through the 1920s, involved the construction of hundreds of bridges across Oregon's many creeks and rivers. New concrete spans began replacing old wooden bridges no longer able to carry the weight of increased traffic on the route. Many of these early highway bridges survive. Some, like the Dollarhide Overcrossing, south of Ashland, are recognized as landmarks.<sup>4</sup>

Today, in the environmentally aware 90s, our reliance on the car has become more problematic than in those early, idealistic days of the Pacific Highway, Highway 99 and the Interstate. Driving is now more of a chore than a pleasure. Many fault the huge Interstate program with destroying America's

Above: The discerning eye can still pick out remnants of old service stations. Stations ran the gamut from the elaborate and personal, like Phipps, circa 1930s, to a simple gas pump in someone's drive.

Right: The Lithia Hotel (now the Mark Antony) was built to cater to tourists whom investors hoped would pour into Ashland for its healing "spa" waters.

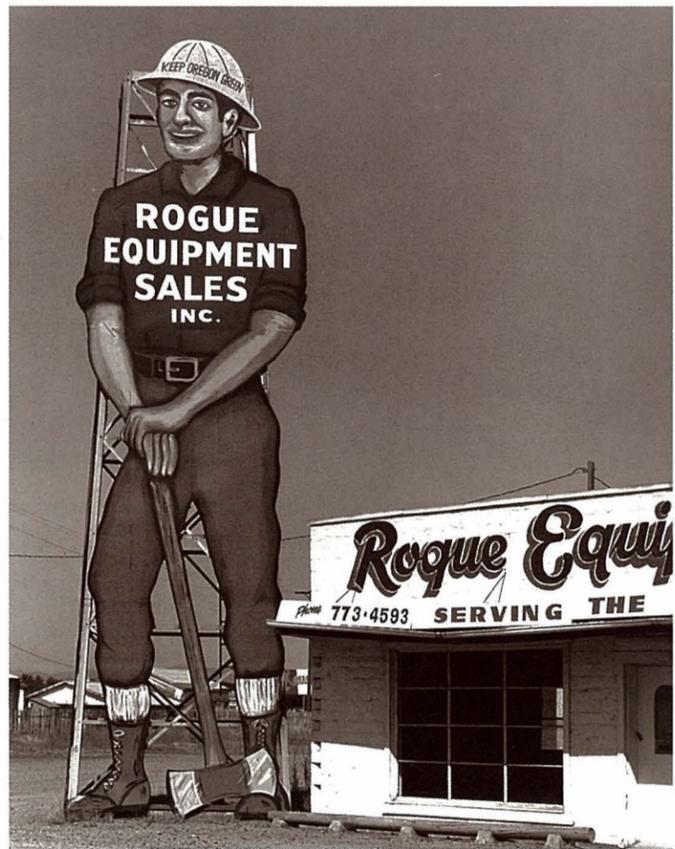


SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #8138

train system and inhibiting the growth of mass transit systems, a solution many urban areas are only now turning toward. Still, as the future of the automobile is debated, as we scrutinize our reliance on imported oil, the threat of ozone depletion, suburban sprawl, gridlock, and all the other societal and environmental ills for which America's love affair with the car is blamed, it is important to recognize and document the role the automobile has played in shaping twentieth-century America. The buildings that lined the



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #5024



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #465

Pacific Highway and Highway 99 are only a small element in the history of this century, but they are among the few tangible reminders of the days when Oregon's Main Street stretched all the way from California to Washington. 

*The first part of "The Pacific Highway in Oregon" appeared in the 1995 Winter/Spring Issue of Southern Oregon Heritage. George Kramer is a historic preservation consultant living in Ashland, Oregon.*

**ENDNOTES**

1. Florence Arman, The WeAsku Inn, Southern Oregon Sunrise, 8 Mar 1978.
2. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 18 Apr. 1960, 1:2. Named following a contest, the winning entry was submitted by three individuals, including Bill Patton, who donated his award to the OSFA building fund.
3. See Paul Fattig, Giant Logger signs erected at Expo, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 5 July 1994, 1:1-3.
4. Many other Pacific Highway bridges remain in southern Oregon, including Grants Pass' Caveman Bridge, and the Rock Point and Gold Hill spans, all designed by noted bridge engineer Conde McCullough. Talent retains a 1915 concrete span across Wagner Creek and another survives over Birdseye Creek on the Rogue River Route.

Left: Signs like "The Rogue Equipment Man," built in the 40s, grew larger as driving speeds increased.

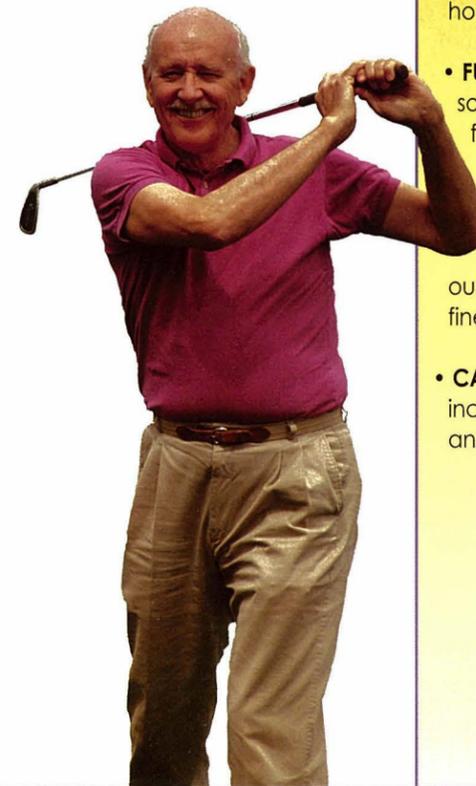
Below: Concrete spans were built to replace wooden bridges along the highway. The North Umpqua "Winchester" Bridge is a particularly graceful example of the bridges designed by Conde McCullough.



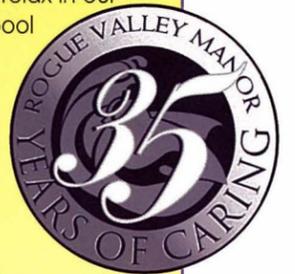
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #15181

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# THE MAKING OF A MUSEUM

# The Hanley Sisters' CONTRIBUTION

By Margaret Watson



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #9739

In November 1982, Miss Mary Hanley, pen poised while the camera flashed, made arrangements to donate the Hanley Farm to the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Continuing her life-long tradition of commitment and devotion to history and the Society, Mary gave the breadth and depth of her pioneer-family's hard work to the Society for "establishing and maintaining a continuing historical farm."<sup>1</sup> It was one of many lasting gifts Mary and her family made to the Historical Society and the people of southern Oregon.

The Hanley farm was one of the early Donation Land Claims situated just north of the town of Jacksonville. Two related families, the Clintons and Weltons, first homesteaded 640 acres and developed the property in the early 1850s. Michael and Martha Hanley, Mary's grandparents, purchased the farm in 1857, and continued to construct barns, gardens, and a large distinctive house. The couple began a legacy of independent, pioneering and historically-minded generations that carved a living out of the southern Oregon landscape.

Michael and Martha had nine children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Alice Hanley (1859-1940), Michael and Martha's eldest surviving daughter (Mary's aunt), was conscious that she had witnessed an incredible and historic era. Born shortly after the gold rush first brought settlers and miners to Jacksonville, Alice lived to see airplanes fly overhead and automobiles cruise the road in front of the circa 1875 farmhouse she inherited from her parents. Alice was an early member and served as an officer of the Society of

Southern Oregon Pioneers. The Pioneers met annually in Jacksonville or Ashland, and had held the hope, since the group's inception in 1877, that their history would be preserved. An expert in local history, Alice helped document pioneer families through reciting the stories she had heard and events she had seen as a child. She helped plant a "museum seed" by personally preserving possessions associated with pioneer families. Alice filled her house with them. Mary Hanley remembered her sister, Florence Claire, and "Aunt Allie" stopping at an old log cabin they came upon while driving in the hills above the Applegate River. They found two men sawing deer bones on an old melodeon. Alice quickly purchased the melodeon from the men and took it home. Despite offers from others, she refused to sell it. She was confident that at some point in the future there would be a museum in southern Oregon. Alice wanted the melodeon to be one of the first things to be displayed.<sup>2</sup>

Her older brother John Hanley died in 1901, followed in death by his wife Mary Love Hanley in 1904. They left three minor girls orphaned. Alice and her brothers and sisters shared the responsibility of raising Florence Claire, Martha and Mary. Claire (preferring to be called by her middle name) made a home with Alice.

Alice independently managed the Hanley farm until her death in 1940. She left the farm to her three nieces. As single women, Claire, Martha and Mary followed in Alice's footsteps and assumed

Upper Left: Mary, Martha, and Claire Hanley, 1918. Mary made the largest single donation to the Southern Oregon Historical Society — The Hanley Farm.

Right: Alice Hanley's dream of a pioneer history museum was realized in 1946. Alice circa 1883. SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #9498



management of the farm, living together in the old farmhouse. Literally surrounded by their aunt Alice's passion for the past, the women continued to spearhead preservation of the belongings and history of local pioneer families. Claire and Mary attended the meeting in 1946 to formally organize the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Prominent in the nearby Jacksonville landscape was the abandoned old Jackson County Courthouse. Efforts had been made to find funding to restore the building. The Society was particularly interested in using the building to house a museum. A brief column appeared in the *Medford Mail Tribune* on March 7, 1948. Elizabeth Edmonson wrote, "Why can't we organize and get a museum and art gallery in honor of the builders of this part of Oregon? Why should our children not be able to see good pictures, antiques, etc., without traveling to Portland, San Francisco, New York or Europe...we sleep on in the peace of oblivion to everything interesting and let our children grow up thinking that there is no scenery, art or personality in this section worth knowing."<sup>3</sup>

A successful campaign to provide funds for restoration was carried through in the 1948 general election. On Tuesday evening, May 10, 1949, at the home of Walter H. Leverette, President, members of the fledgling Southern Oregon Historical Society met to discuss the legal aspects of their institution and hear comments on the value of history as an asset to the community. President Leverette suggested that new officers should be elected for the now permanent organization that would be in charge of the Courthouse museum project. Miss Claire Hanley addressed the group, telling them of the "materials, and sources of materials present within the membership of the Society of Southern Oregon Pioneers." She was elected that evening as the new president of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Mary Hanley supported her sister's nomination, and sister Martha soon followed suit and joined the Society in 1950. Mary became quite active in the internal affairs of the Society. She served as curator of the Jacksonville Museum from 1955 to 1967. Through many devoted hours, Mary documented objects and books donated to the museum, compiling and organizing information from the donors. Administrative responsibilities, as well as parties and receptions, were organized and hosted by the three sisters, many at the farm. The spirit and continuity of the Southern Oregon Historical Society were literally held in the hands of the Hanley sisters.

Claire continued to serve as Society president until her death in 1963. Martha passed away in 1975. Mary survived both of her sisters. Claire and Martha left their inherited portions of the farm to Mary, with implied instructions to make sure that their estates would support, preserve, protect and present history.<sup>4</sup> True to that end, Mary made the single largest donation in the history of the Southern Oregon Historical Society — the Hanley Farm. The legacies of Alice, Claire, Martha and Mary live on through their enduring foundation of time, commitment and personal devotion. And if one ever feels the need to be reassured of their presence, peek in the windows of the Catholic Rectory in Jacksonville. You will see the old melodeon.

*The Hanley Farm is open by appointment. Call 773-6536 or 773-2675 for details.*

## ENDNOTES

1. Last Will and Testament of Mary Hanley.
2. OH195, p 204. see also p 265.
3. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 7 Mar. 1948.
4. Jackson County Probate Records.

Upper Right: Mary Hanley standing before the homestead built around 1875, circa 1981.

Center: The springhouse, used for refrigeration, predates the house.

Below: The 1920s barn is being developed as a learning center.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #10054

# FIFTY YEARS OF CARING THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY THEN NOW

By Paul Richardson



More than fifty years ago, when the Southern Oregon Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution met on February 22, 1945, World War II was still raging in Europe and the Far East. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president of the United States, newly inaugurated

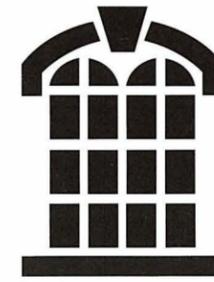
for an unprecedented fourth term. The U.S. military presence in the Rogue Valley had been greatly reduced, but residents still faced the trials of rationing and the knowledge that family and friends in the military were in harm's way. Despite such hardships, for many the future looked bright. When Medford Mayor C.A. Meeker spoke to the patriotic crowd it was of his hope that a historic structure might be found and preserved as a museum for local history. The Southern Oregon Historical Society was about to be launched.

Working with the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Southern Oregon Pioneer Association, the Sons of the American Revolution soon clarified their goal: restore the former Jackson County Courthouse in Jacksonville to serve as a museum for the relics of southern Oregon's pioneer past. The effort was officially launched with a dinner in the old courthouse on June 18, 1945. Governor Earl Snell addressed one hundred guests, including the Jackson County Court (as commissioners were called), who had been served a \$1.50 per plate meal by members of the Jacksonville Grange. When the banquet adjourned, County Judge J.B. Coleman (Chair of the Commissioners) spoke to a "large audience" from the courthouse steps about the project.

The end of World War II, in the months after the meeting in Jacksonville, was a busy time in the Rogue Valley. It was not until February 1946 that formal action was again taken to bring the dream of a museum to pass. On Wednesday February 27, 1946, just over one year



Clockwise from top left:  
1. Mary Hanley signing the deed of gift to Hanley Farm in 1982.  
2. Living history volunteer preparing a meal in the Beekman House kitchen.  
3. Expanding with the times, the Society moved into the History Center in Medford in 1990.



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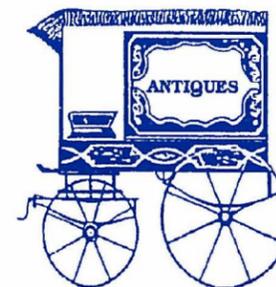
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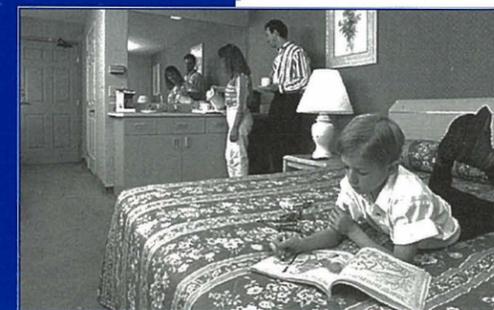
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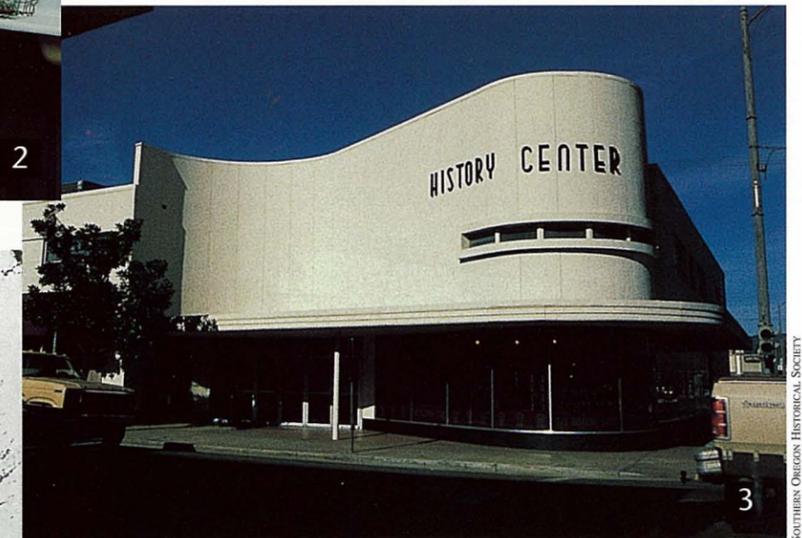
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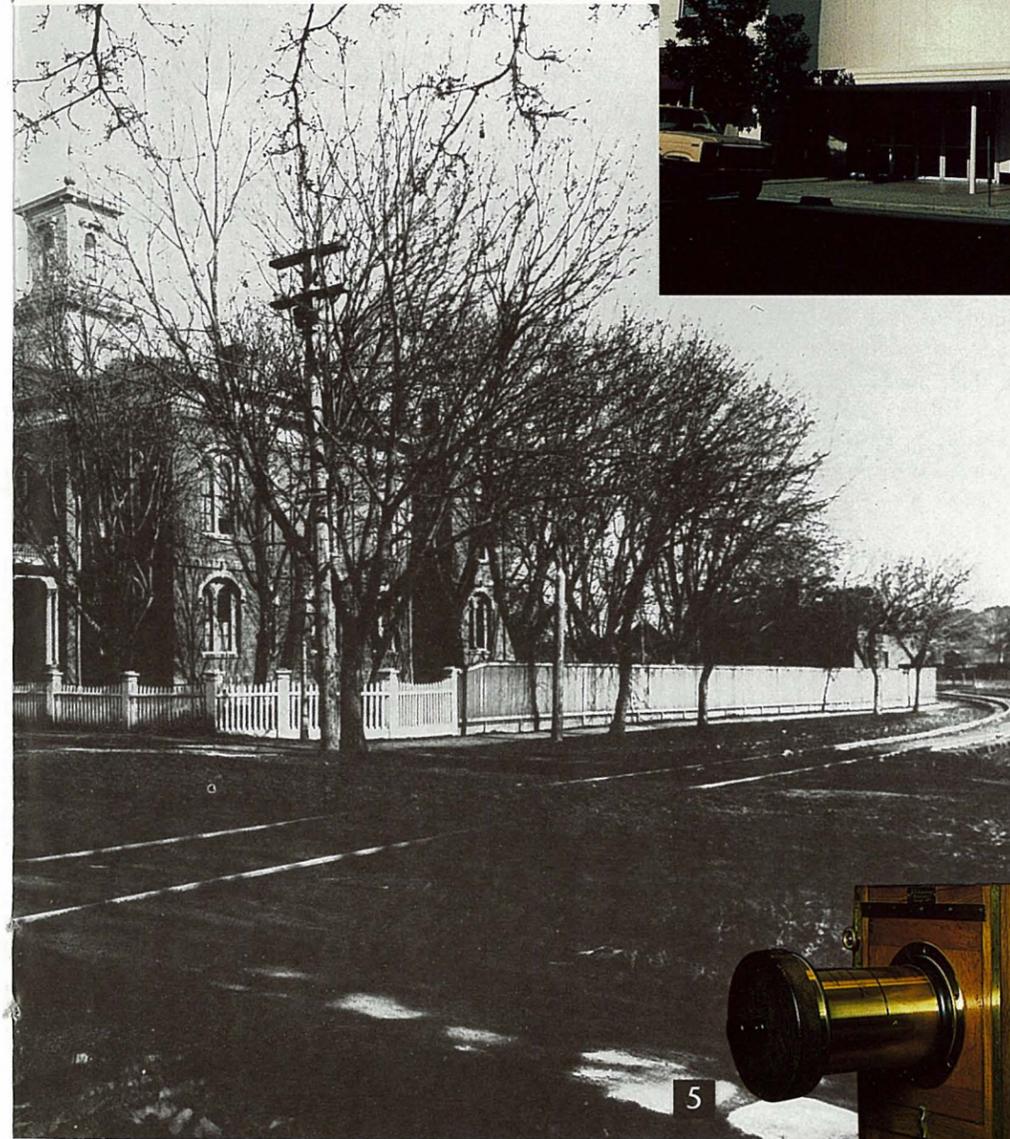
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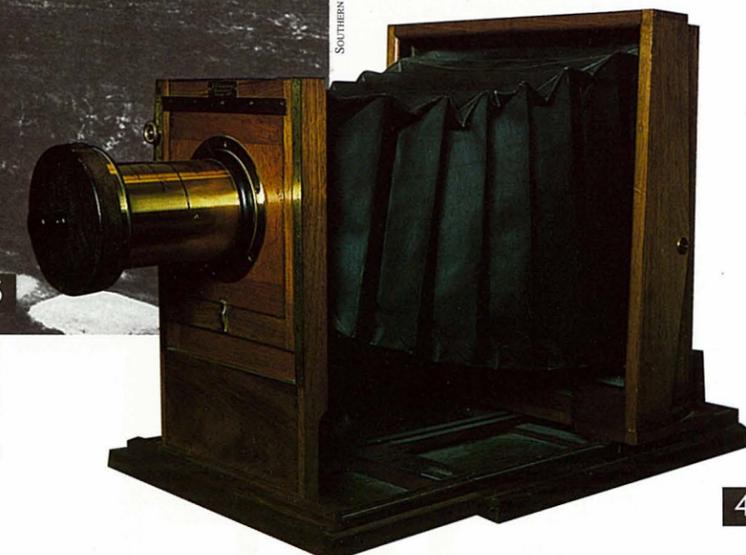
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY - ACCESSION #B923

4. Peter Britt's camera. The man photographed most of the faces and places of 1880s Jacksonville..

5. The former Jackson County Courthouse, circa 1880, is now the Jacksonville Museum.'

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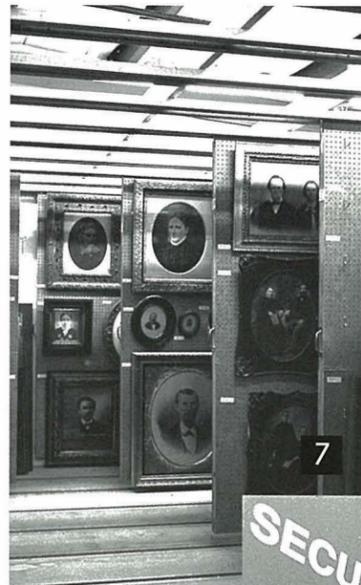


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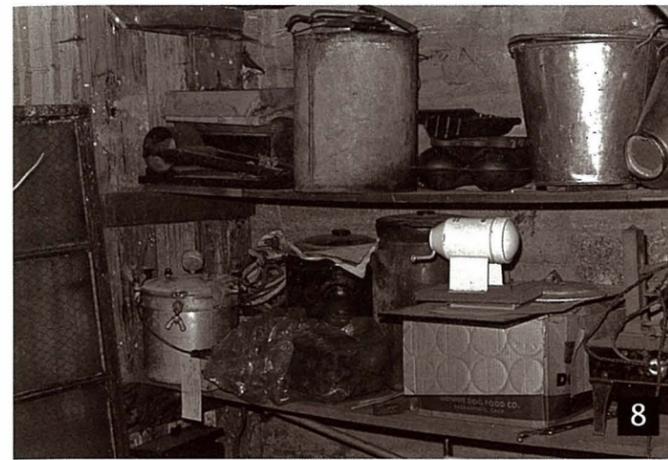


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Clockwise from top left:  
 6. The "toy room" at the Jacksonville Museum demonstrated the grouping of like objects which was common previous to 1960.  
 7. These paintings and portraits are now hung in a pristine, enclosed environment; safe from light, pollution, moisture and heat.  
 8. Storage space was at a premium in the early years, artifacts were stored in every available nook and cranny.  
 9. *The Give It Your Best!* World War II exhibit, focusing on wartime propaganda, shows the simple visual approach many museums have adopted.  
 10. Hats from the Society's collections, are dated (from the left) 1970, 1931, 1875-1890.  
 11. Separate storage for the preservation of collections was acquired in 1990.  
 12. The Britt Room, an exhibit organized by curator Mary Hanley, had the "cabinet of curiosities" look that was popular with smaller museums of the time, circa 1950s.



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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #1283

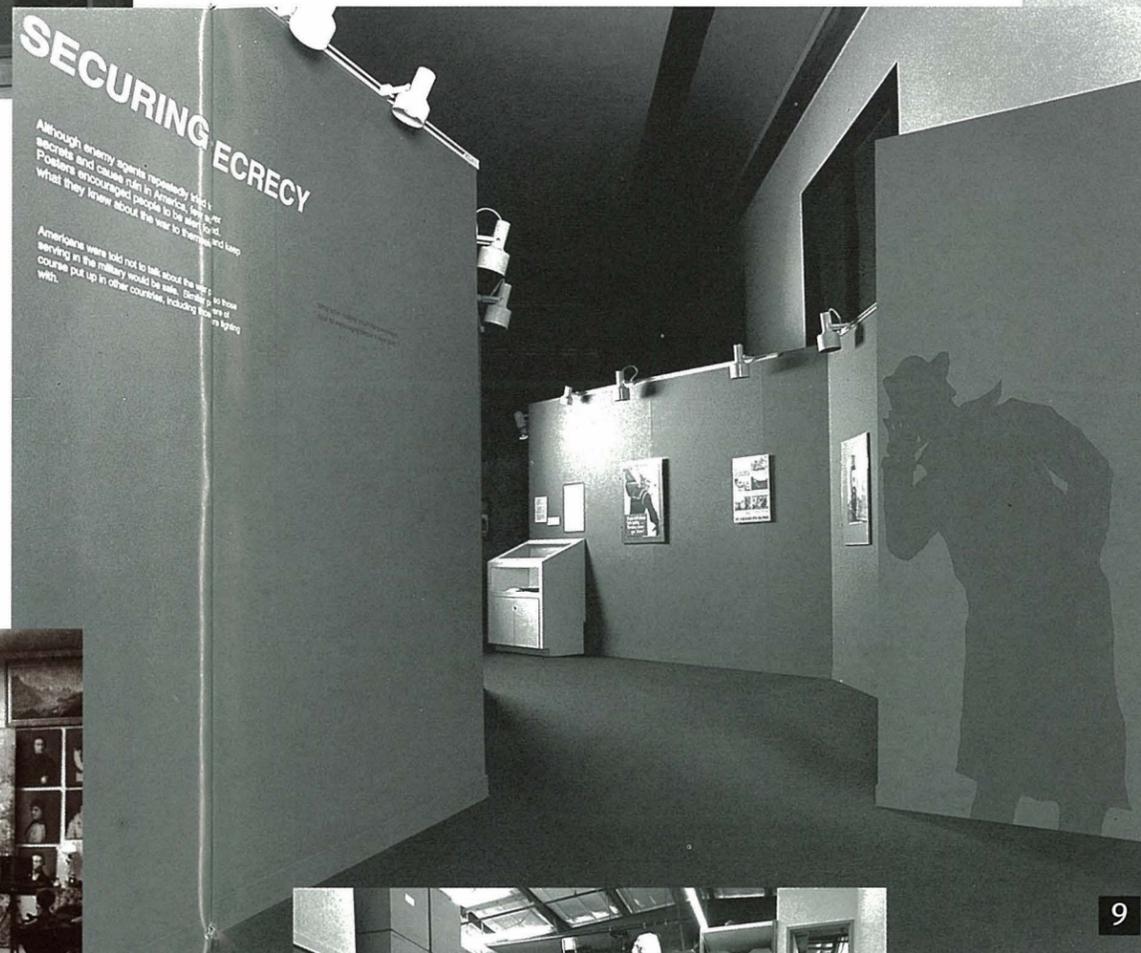


PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEONARD AND MATT STRUBBY



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #10273



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #13398



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ACCESSION #984.77.1; #78.68.4; #56.29

after the idea was proposed by Mayor Meeker, the Southern Oregon Historical Society was founded in the mayor's office in Medford. The Society's first board included: C.A. Meeker, president; Mrs. G.Q. D'Albini, vice-president; Ralph Billings, treasurer; and Lester Harris, secretary and historian. Other board members were Frank Hull, Sr., Claire Hanley, and Amos Voorhies. Assisted by Lancaster Pollard, head of the Oregon Historical Society, the board and membership of the new organization began laying their plans for restoration and remodeling.

The years following did not always bring the progress Southern Oregon Historical Society members had hoped for. While Jackson County officialdom (the building's owner up to the present time) thought the idea of converting the old courthouse in Jacksonville into a museum a good one, they had no funds for such a project. First estimates for the work of restoring the building placed the cost at anywhere from \$75,000 to \$90,000, considerably more than the Southern Oregon Historical Society had expected. In order to fund the project, the Society would need the support of the community in the form of a tax base. To gain permission for such a tax, the state legislature would be required to pass an enabling law. The dream of a museum would not be easy to achieve.

In 1947, the Oregon State Legislature passed the law needed to allow the Southern Oregon Historical Society to petition the voters of Jackson County for a tax to establish a county historical fund. Brought before the voters November 2, 1948, the measure was passed. A major step was taken toward the goal of a county historical museum.

The following years were filled with more work as the Southern Oregon Historical Society continued to develop. Articles of Incorporation were filed in 1949. Procedures were established with Jackson County to disburse the county historical fund. Restoration of the

## COLLECTIONS

As historic artifacts from Jackson County and the surrounding region were gathered in Jacksonville, the Society worked to document and preserve each item it received. At first, this meant a simple form acknowledging donations and a brief description for the Society's files. Objects were stored on display where visitors could view them. As the collection rapidly grew, documentation methods struggled to keep pace. With dozens of quilts on hand, more than a simple description was required. Similarly, alternatives to placing everything on exhibit were needed, both to protect the artifacts from wear and tear, and to consolidate space. At first, this simply meant putting things on shelves in whatever closets were available. By the mid-1970s, however, an evaluation of the Society's storage found it woefully inadequate, even with expansion into additional buildings around Jacksonville. In 1990 separate storage was acquired and modified to preserve the collections. Although space is still at a premium, artifacts are now stored with great care in a regulated and accessible manner.

Subsequently, the Society, with its growing staff, library and collections department, relocated its headquarters to the former J.C. Penney Building in Medford in 1990.

## EXHIBITS

One of the first goals of the Southern Oregon Historical Society was displaying "articles of historic value," and for many years, such was the sole purpose of exhibits. Categorical grouping of objects (with some identifications) resulted in exhibits such as the silver, Indian, rock, gun, and toy rooms where like objects were displayed together en masse. Although such traditional exhibits are pleasing to many, they provide few opportunities to educate visitors about the history behind the artifacts. In more recent years, education has become the primary purpose of Society exhibits. Greater emphasis is placed on an exhibit's subject as artifacts and text support and describe a given theme.

The completion of the new exhibit at the History Center, *Going Places: Travel to and Through the Rogue River Valley 1826-1996*, marks another step forward. An interactive environment helps create and enhance the experience of those who visit the latest Southern Oregon Historical Society exhibit.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #0750



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**PROGRAMS**

Just as exhibits at the Southern Oregon Historical Society have undergone improvements over the years, so have the operating principles of the institution. Originally conceived to create a museum, the Society has diversified to include educational events as part of its activities. The "Jacksonville Museum Performers" was one of the first programs created. In the early 1980s they brought regional history alive through fictional accounts of historic events. The Society's nationally recognized "Living History" program followed soon afterwards. In 1984, trained costumed interpreters began guiding people

back to a day in 1911 at the Beekman House and Bank. Opened to the public in 1979, the Children's Museum provides a "hands on" encounter with history for children of all ages. An outgrowth of programs at the museum, the Children's Heritage Fair each year reaches every fourth grader in Jackson County (and many from the surrounding region). Operating a printing press, panning for "gold," and churning butter are only a few of the ways students learn first hand about life in years gone by.

historic Jackson County courthouse commenced with roof repairs, reglazing broken windows, and evicting the bats and pigeons who had come to call the old building home.

Long before the museum-to-be had been completed (in fact, even before work began), the fledgling Society received offers of pioneer artifacts to place on exhibit. Fletcher Linn, the son of cabinet maker David Linn, expressed the hope that the family Bible, a journal, and some furniture in the possession of the Oregon Historical Society might be acquired for the new museum. The last suggestion emphasizes what a close relationship existed between the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the Oregon Historical Society. Some looked upon the Southern Oregon Historical Society as a branch office of its cousin to the north. Although close cooperation has marked the association between the two institutions, founders of the Southern Oregon Historical Society early determined that they would independently work to preserve the region's history.

After membership drives, searches for bargains on display cases, and the gathering of artifacts for exhibit, the big day finally arrived. Opened for 107 visitors July 10, the Society officially dedicated the Jacksonville Museum at 2:00 p.m. Saturday August 5, 1950, to the strains of God Bless America. After hosting 8,000 visitors during its first (official) two days in operation, the Jacksonville Museum saw an average of more than one hundred people per day that first summer. The Southern Oregon Historical Society was off to a good start.

Southern Oregon is blessed with a particularly rich heritage, which has at times been both a boon and a challenge for the region's historical society. Artifacts started to arrive at the museum in droves and the once nearly vacant building quickly began to fill. The small staff was soon busy with the need to greet visitors,



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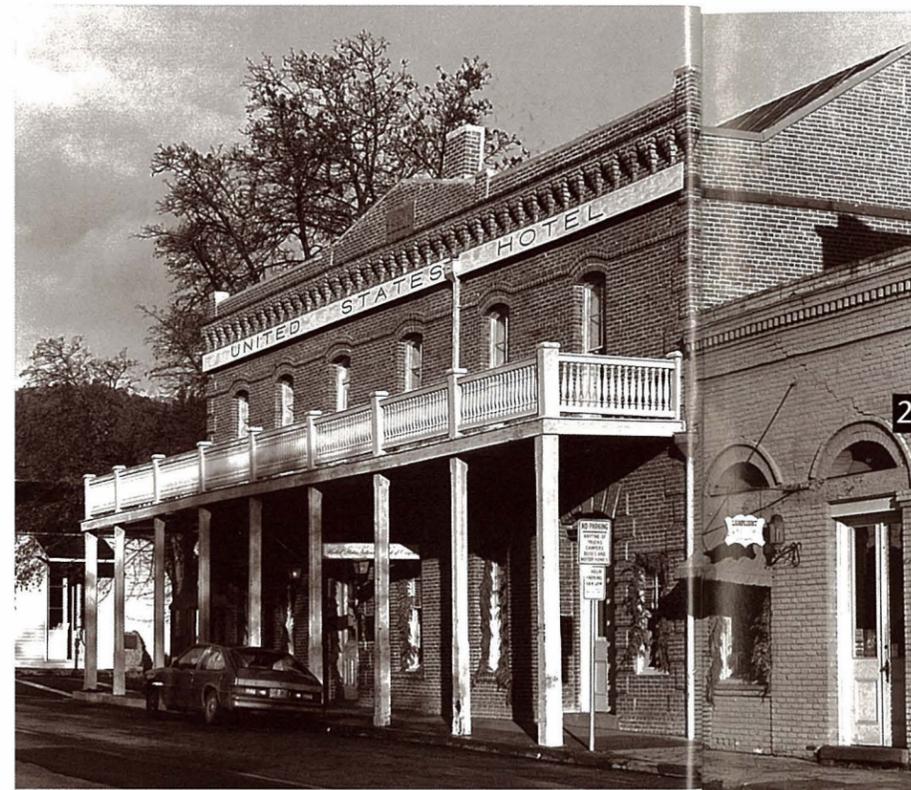
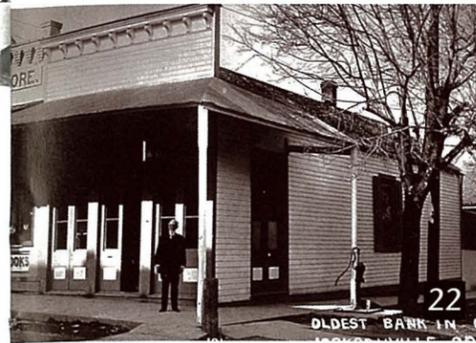
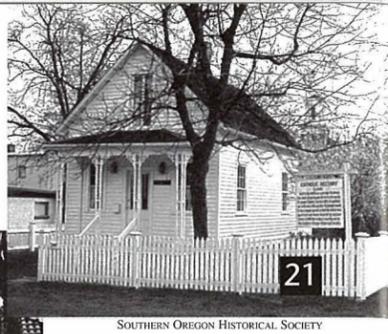
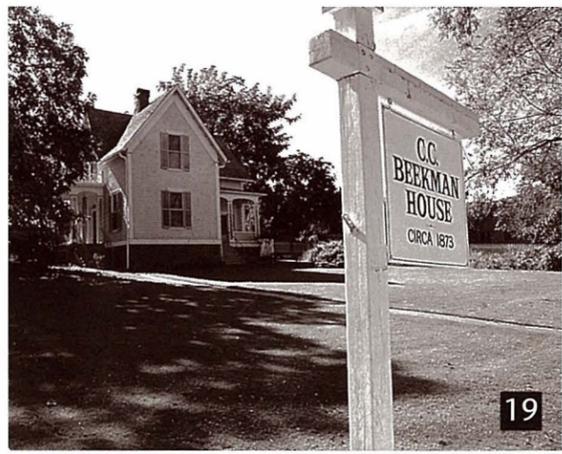
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Clockwise from top left:  
 13. The Research Library is the largest of its kind in the Pacific Northwest.  
 14. Marjorie Edens conducting an oral history interview with Mary Hanley. Twenty sessions were taped during 1983 and 1984. Oral histories are transcribed and kept on file in the Research Library.  
 15. In this Head Start program at the Children's Museum in the 1970s, a child wears an authentic American Indian hat; reproductions are now used instead.  
 16. The Gold Diggers' Guild has long been a fund raiser

for the Children's Museum. Here Ruth Richter models a 1910 Long Coat and 1927 beaded evening dress for the 1977 Gold Diggers' Fashion Show.  
 17. The Jacksonville Museum Performers brought regional history to life through fictional accounts of historic events. Marjorie Avery, Cathy Thayer and Ilma McKern in an unknown production, circa 1980s.  
 18. History stores in the History Center and at the Jacksonville Museum carry wonderful reproductions and crafts as well as local history books.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #5059



prepare exhibits, answer inquiries about local history, establish procedures, account for its expenditures and activities, maintain the building, and document the growing collection. In addition, after the Oregon Historical Society worked with the Southern Oregon Historical Society to preserve the Beekman Bank, the cause of historic preservation (the restoration of historic buildings) in Jacksonville came to be considered a special responsibility of the Society. The challenges of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's first decades did much to shape its present role and are worth examining better to understand how much progress has been made in the past fifty years.

The world has changed a great deal since Franklin Roosevelt was president and the Southern Oregon Historical Society was founded. The needs of society at large have changed and this institution has grown and changed to meet those needs. Gathered in the Medford mayor's office in 1946, who could have foreseen that the idea to create a museum for southern Oregon's pioneer relics would bear such fruit? As the Southern Oregon Historical Society begins its sixth decade and prepares for the new millennium, it will continue to be a window on the past, defining the present, and shaping the future of southern Oregon.



Clockwise from top left:  
 19. The Beekman House, home of pioneer banker C.C. Beekman and family, is owned by the county and maintained and utilized for living history programs by the Society.

20. The Children's Museum is filled with wonderful interactive exhibits. It was once the Jacksonville Jail, circa 1926.

21. The Catholic Rectory on Fourth Street, in Jacksonville was restored by the Society in 1975.

22. The Beekman Bank, on California Street in Jacksonville, was established in 1863 and was the second in Oregon. It was also the second restoration project taken on by the Society.

23. Brass Flugelhorn used by Peter Applegate, trail blazer Lindsay Applegate's nephew.

24. Committed and service-oriented staff, November 1995. We bid a fond farewell to director of ten years Sam Wegner. Second row, far right.

25. The renovation of the U.S. Hotel, preserved and maintained by the Society, helped revive Jacksonville.

26. This beautiful panoramic view of the Hanley Farm was done by L.A. Gregory of Medford, circa 1912-1913. The Hanley farm is the largest bequest the Society has ever received.

## BUILDINGS

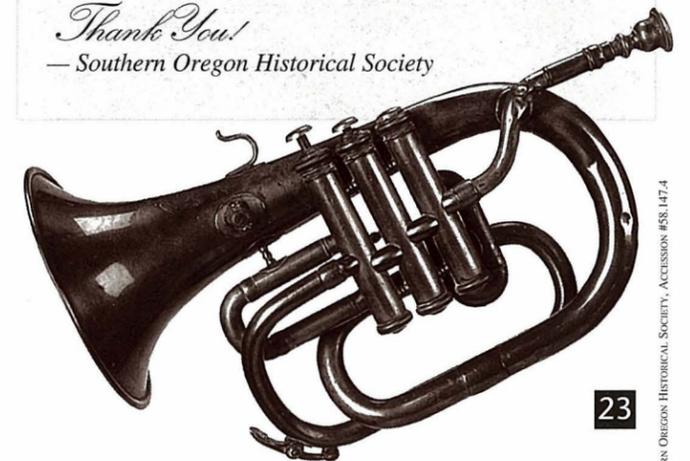
Although the Southern Oregon Historical Society's first project, to create a museum from the historic Jackson County Courthouse, was an effort to save and restore a historic building, nothing suggests those who founded the Society expected it would play as great a role in preserving Jackson County's architectural heritage as it has. The presence of the newly organized Southern Oregon Historical Society encouraged the Oregon Historical Society to take efforts to restore Jacksonville's Beekman Bank in 1949. Over the succeeding decades, such sites as the Beekman Bank, the Beekman House, Catholic Rectory, and U.S. Hotel have become the property of Jackson County, restored and operated for public use by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Other projects have included the Swedenburg House on the campus of Southern Oregon State College and property actually owned by the Society: the Hanley Farm and the History Center (formerly the J.C. Penney Building) in downtown Medford. All told, the Southern Oregon Historical Society is responsible today for twenty seven historically significant buildings in Jackson County.

## PEOPLE

Mention the Southern Oregon Historical Society to someone and they'll probably think of the Jacksonville Museum, Southern Oregon Heritage, books published by the Society, its vast collection of historic photographs, or a favorite artifact. They'll remember time spent in the Society's Research Library reading the transcript of an oral history interview with someone recalling events of many years ago. Perhaps a favorite program or exhibit will spring to mind. While all of these things are important parts of what the Southern Oregon Historical Society does, it should not be forgotten that the Society is and has been composed of people. Blessed in its early years with such hard working history enthusiasts as Venita Daly, the Hanley sisters, and C.A. Meeker, today the Southern Oregon Historical Society's board, volunteers, staff, Gold Diggers' Guild, Foundation, Jacksonville Museum Quilters, members, Jackson County taxpayers, and visitors continue to be the most important element of what the Society is. Without people, there can be no such thing as history.

*Thank You!*

— Southern Oregon Historical Society



## The Woodville Museum An Act of Small Town Spirit

By Molly Walker Kerr

The Woodville Museum in Rogue River appears to be a typical museum where local artifacts and heirlooms hang on walls or repose behind glass. Those who visit the museum know it is anything but typical.

But then, Rogue River is not an average town. After all, it is the home of the annual Rooster Crow and its zany parade. Most of the old-timers are somehow related and everyone seems to know each other. Residents often have more fun than the rest of the Rogue Valley put together, and it shows in their whimsical museum.

Nothing seems to stay put for long, and visitors never know quite what to expect when they enter the front door. The fun-loving volunteers delight in changing the exhibits and providing seasonal surprises for visitors. It's not unusual to catch a glimpse of the Easter Bunny or Santa, or to discover sticky spider webs complete with plastic black widows hung from the rafters.

The house itself is one of the most beautiful in Rogue River, with its peaked cupola, wrap-around porch and gardens.

Charles Hatch, the local blacksmith, built it for his family in the early 1900s. Long-time residents recall when Hatch closed up shop, wiped sweat from his face and trudged up the street to work on the house in the twilight hours after a long work day.

Hatch and his wife, Elizabeth, were married in Woodville (now named Rogue River) in March of 1894. The Hatches raised four active sons in the house: Arlie, Linden, Stuart, and Gordon, as well as two grandsons, Kenneth and Dale. The walls and floors were constantly tested; but the house withstood it all. According to Gordon Hatch, the only surviving son, "the house looks the same on the outside as it did back then. Only the inside has changed. Some of the partitions are gone." Most of

Charles Hatch, one of Woodville's founding fathers, built the family home in the evenings after closing his smithy.



With boyhood swagger, Arlie, Linden, and Stuart Hatch pose (from the left) with friends on the Hatch House porch. Date Unknown.

the trees his parents planted still shade the house. The huge redwood in the backyard grew from a redwood burl his mother got over on the coast.

Gordon built a gas station on the corner of Depot and Main in Rogue River. He and his wife Wilda live only a couple of blocks from his boyhood home. Gordon Hatch recalls his father as "a gentle man, patient, kind and helpful. He never spoke ill of anyone. He was always a pillar of the community and tried to better the town in general. He was chairman of the school board and served as mayor. He was a very fine blacksmith. We were raised as a Christian family."

Dale Hatch's wife, Alice Hatch, a museum volunteer, recalls her mother-in-law as, "a kind woman who loved her church and garden. She loved music, entertaining guests, and family picnics in her backyard."

For awhile the school district used the building to house their school band; lively Sousa marches bounced off the walls. Later it was transformed into administrative offices. Jangling phones and typewriter bells resounded until the school district leased it to the Rogue River Press in 1982 as office space.

The future of the Hatch house was uncertain when the school district decided they no longer needed it. There was talk of selling it — or moving it, when the energetic and optimistic Colista Moore came along. A history buff and believer in magic, she enlisted a group of residents to help her with her cause; they formed The Woodville Museum Inc. and began plans to turn the house into a museum. Their goal was to make the house into an educational resource for the community by filling it with regional artifacts.

After months of refurbishing, pruning, planting, fundraising and unraveling the usual red tape, the exhausted volunteers sent out



The wedding of Charles and Elizabeth Hatch was a gala event, even the train stopped. Everyone aboard attended the reception. Wedding picture, 1894.

beaded dresses. Anything from hilarious exhibits of long underwear and old washing powders, to dainty white christening outfits can be seen in the changing display cases. A Victorian hair-weaving in a hand-tooled leather frame dominates one wall; a picture of Rena Randall Whipple and her daughter Alice in delicate white dresses, hangs from another. Rena was post-mistress from 1909 until she died in 1921. A tobacco cutter, tin matchbox and coupons from Charles Hatch's hardware store, located in the front of his blacksmith shop, were donated by Gordon and Wilda Hatch.

On the wall of old pictures, five women dressed in fashionable black outfits are all pushing baby carriages. Museum volunteer, Avis Van Hoy said, "During the museum opening, a woman looked at that picture and started screaming. She was one of the babies in the picture. Visitors never know what they will find in a museum."

One of the oldest artifacts is an 1860 wooden mule train saddle, a reminder of the Gold Rush days and the miners who lived in the area. Some of them probably cooled their heels overnight in the old jail on Pine Street down by the railroad tracks.

The jail, built in 1911, deteriorated over the years; was finally dismantled, and the bricks were stored. In 1990, Medford's Navy Reserve Seabees and

Due to Colista Moore and the efforts of Woodville Museum Inc., the turn-of-the-century Hatch House is now a proud and quixotic local history museum, March 1990.

a plea for artifacts to fill their splendid new museum. They were swamped with donated and loaned items; most from regional pioneer families. These artifacts are still on exhibit today.

The Woodville Museum vibrates with laughter and noise as excited volunteers unpack the latest donations and devise clever ways to display them. They dress the mannequins in stylish flapper dresses, long-sleeved bathing suits, or

the Pergin family masons rebuilt it brick by brick on the museum grounds. The jail was dedicated in May of 1992, the fifth anniversary of the Woodville Museum. "It was a strange sight seeing a line of people actually wanting to get into jail," Avis said.

The bandstand sits where the pigpen and barn used to be, amidst roses donated by Jackson and Perkins. It is a replica of the one that stood at the intersection of Depot and Main streets until the 1950s. Bud Van Hoy and a team of volunteers spent countless hours building it; the bandstand was Bud's final museum donation. He died shortly after it was completed in 1988.

The volunteers have become a close-knit group over the years and delight in thinking up new ideas and crazy costumes for events, especially the annual Rooster Crow where their outlandish floats win prizes year after year. "We see things with a different attitude," claims Colista Moore wearing her trademark wide-brimmed black hat with the jaunty white plume. She says, "When I retire this hat goes with me." Hopefully, that won't be for a very long time.

Visitors are welcome at the museum from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday in summer, June through August; and Tuesday through Saturday in winter, September through May. Donations are welcome. For more information call (541) 582-3088. The museum is located on the corner of Oak and First streets in Rogue River.

Molly Walker Kerr is a free lance writer living in Medford. She is a member of the Gold Diggers' Guild and is working on her first book.

### ENDNOTES

Interview with Gordon Hatch, Dale Hatch, and Alice Hatch, 30 Oct. 1995.

Interview with Colista Moore, Avis Van Hoy, and Kathryn Blakely Anderson, 22 Oct. 1995.



## Driven to The Vortex

by William Alley, C.A.

Following the mass production of automobiles came the wholesale paving of highways across the United States. As this web of paved highways and roads spread out across the continent there arose a number of new industries and business opportunities to cater to the newly motorized citizen. In addition to the service station, the diner, the auto camp and motel, this period also saw the rise of the "tourist trap."



Signs like the above lured Americans, fascinated with traveling the new highways, into what was coined "a tourist trap."  
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEGATIVE #15065.

Located about four miles off the Pacific Highway just north of the town of Gold Hill sits one of southern Oregon's earliest "tourist traps." Known over the years as Oregon's "Crazy House," "Bug House," or "Nut House," it is most commonly known as "The House of Mystery at the Oregon Vortex."

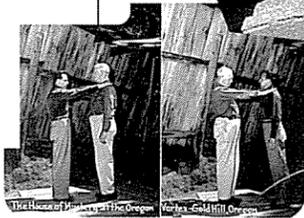
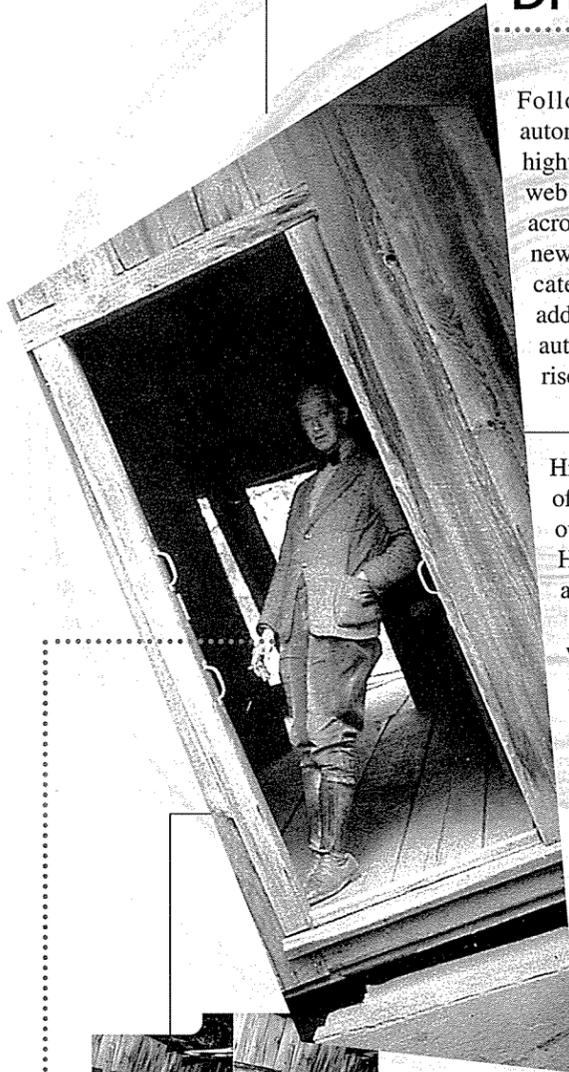
The Oregon Vortex and the House of Mystery were opened in the early 1930s by John Litster, a Scottish mining engineer who had owned the property since 1914. Litster claimed that the Vortex was an anti-gravitational, electromagnetic field encompassed in a sphere 165 feet across, with half of the sphere above ground and the other half below. Visitors were told that the local Indians had traditionally shunned the location as a forbidden place, and that wagon teams and pack animals hauling supplies to the local mines would refuse to enter the Vortex. Centered in the Vortex was the House of Mystery. The house was originally the assay office for the Grey Eagle Mine. Built circa 1904, the building originally stood approximately forty feet above its present location, but was washed down in a flood in 1914.

Throughout the years of the Great Depression the House of Mystery and the surrounding Vortex proved to be a popular tourist destination. Being only four miles up Sardine Creek from the Pacific Highway, the Vortex was a convenient stop for travellers on the highway as well as a pleasant day excursion for residents of Medford, Ashland and other southern Oregon communities. To ensure the flow of visitors, Litster and his wife Mildred saw to it that each car in their parking lot received an Oregon Vortex/House of Mystery bumper sticker while the owner was experiencing the phenomenon.

While Litster employed his knowledge of engineering and physics to explain the phenomena visitors experienced, others made the attempt to debunk his theories and offer more mundane explanations. The first to make an effort to explain the Vortex as something less than Litster had claimed was Earl Nixon, former Director of the Oregon State Department of Geology and Mineral Industry. He examined the site in 1938. His conclusion was that the phenomenon of the Oregon Vortex was merely an optical illusion. "The Vortex," he wrote, "is a place without optical uniformity. . . This lack of planes of reference are [sic] most confusing to the human mind."

Whether one believes the Vortex is electromagnetic in nature, or merely a well-executed hoax employing the power of suggestion and optical illusion, the Oregon Vortex and the House of Mystery entertain and mystify thousands of visitors each year.

John Litster owned and operated the attraction until his death in 1959. Even now, over thirty-five years after Litster's death, tourists and locals alike make the trek up Sardine Creek to share in an experience that is little changed from the day the attraction opened.



All of the above are postcards from the "House of Mystery at the Oregon Vortex—Gold Hill, Oregon." The site was developed in 1930 by John Litster, a Scottish mining engineer.  
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
#15052, #15054 & 15055.

# Heritage

Since the early years of this century, thousands of families here in the Rogue Valley have placed their trust in us. We've served them from our historic building downtown and now from our new facility in Siskiyou Memorial Park.

We are proud to be a part of the heritage of this community and remain committed to mindfully serving the generations to come.



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# of POTATOES & TRAFFIC SIGNALS

By Louise A. Watson

**A** bowl of potatoes and a paring knife are very simple items, found in most kitchens. One remarkable woman, however, descendant of southern Oregon pioneers, used potatoes and a knife more than sixty years ago to build a business and a traffic system.

Vetabelle Phillips Carter was born October 17, 1889, in Seattle, Washington, to Walter and Lena Anderson Phillips. Her maternal grandparents were E.K. and Elizabeth Anderson, Ashland and Talent pioneers. E.K. Anderson came to California from Illinois in 1849 to seek gold. He settled in the Rogue Valley in 1852 and played a major role in the development of Ashland. He was one of the largest pioneer land holders and owned much of the valley near what is now called Talent. Vetabelle's uncle, Walter A. Phillips, died in World War I; his name is on the Ashland High School football field.<sup>1</sup>

Vetabelle spent her childhood at the large family home on East Main Street in Ashland, and on the Anderson ranch in Talent, collecting eggs or helping her grandfather pan for gold. People with such well-known southern Oregon names as Beekman, Billings, Tolman, and McCall were either relatives or friends of the family.<sup>2</sup>

An Ashland High School graduate, Vetabelle studied teaching at the University of Washington in Seattle. She gave up serious plans to be a dancer or an actress when her family expressed its disapproval. After college, Vetabelle taught children at a Neah Bay Indian reservation in northern Washington. "I guess she would have been considered a little bit women's lib," Vetabelle's daughter Paulena Carter said, "because she also invited some of the Indian children into the schoolroom. And this was not highly thought of at the place. She was supposed to be teaching only the...white

children, not the Indians...But she did teach the Indians too and eventually, I understand, that they sort of let her go because she was a little out-of-line, I guess."<sup>3</sup>

During the "Roaring Twenties," women in the United States were undergoing their biggest societal change. Having won the right to vote in 1920 via the nineteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution,<sup>4</sup> women were beginning to make their mark in this country. They wore cloche hats, silk stockings and shorter skirts than their sisters from the first decades of the twentieth century and, more importantly, were learning to drive.<sup>5</sup> More than twenty million automobiles were registered in the U.S. in the latter half of the decade. More cars brought more traffic problems.<sup>6</sup>

Fred Mortimer Carter, Vetabelle's husband, was an engineer from Boston. The couple spent their first years together moving around the Pacific Northwest as Fred's career dictated. The Carters eventually moved to San Francisco in the 1920s,<sup>7</sup> where his work designing roads and bridges was in demand.<sup>8</sup>

Vetabelle did not drive, but was shocked by the climbing statistics on traffic deaths in San Francisco. There were 105 fatalities in 1925 alone.<sup>9</sup> These alarming statistics and the following prod from Thomas Edison: "There never has been a woman electrical inventor!"<sup>10</sup> set Vetabelle's mental wheels in motion.

At the Carter's Mason Street address in San Francisco, the young woman set to work. Outside Vetabelle's 1920s kitchen window early Fords, Cadillacs and Lincolns were rumbling along. Inside, a ceramic bowl holding a pile of potatoes sat at her elbow. Head bent in concentration, the attractive, dark-haired

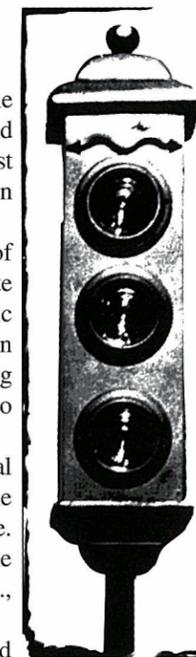
woman worked determinedly with a potato in one hand, a simple paring knife in the other. Over and over again, she carved shapes until she found just what she wanted. Vetabelle was seeking a solution to San Francisco's increase in traffic accidents.<sup>11</sup>

Vetabelle had probably never heard of recycling in the 1920s, yet she became quite accomplished at it — her less than perfect traffic light models were transformed into many an evening meal. She cast her more promising potatoes into clay, cardboard, and finally metal to create brand-new traffic signs and signals.<sup>12</sup>

She visualized an illuminated traffic signal that would be useful day or night, and recognizable to drivers who were color-blind and/or illiterate. She described her process in a 1928 article for the old *Sunday Eagle Magazine* of Brooklyn, N.Y., titled "Girl Creates Traffic System."

My first achievement was an illuminated 'through street sign,' bearing on its face the words 'Stop, through street,' the lettering of opalescent glass, and lighted from behind by a flashing bulb, which enabled it to function equally well by day and

Opposite Left: In 1928 Vetabelle Phillips Carter, descendant of Ashland and Talent pioneers, received acclaim as "the only woman who makes auto signals." Lower Left: Vetabelle in her wedding gown, July 8, 1913. Lower right: Fred Carter and his wife Vetabelle worked together; she designed the signals and turned the manufacturing and marketing of them over to him.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #7025



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #7022



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #7047

night; on the reverse side appears [sic] the names of the intersecting streets. Thus a motorist approaching an arterial street at an intersection, is confronted by the warning at his right, while on the corner diagonally from him the reverse side of the sign gives the name of the main artery and the intersecting street.<sup>13</sup>

According to the *Sunday Eagle* article, the California State Automobile Association was so impressed it placed five hundred signs on San Francisco streets. Records of the association say that traffic signals began showing up in San Francisco in 1926. A semaphore type of signal had been installed at the intersection of Third and Market streets in 1915.

Vetabelle's traffic signals put her name "in the front ranks of inventive genius," the *Sunday Eagle* article said, making her the first woman to create traffic devices. Although she researched the electrical concepts necessary for the signals, she turned over the manufacturing and marketing of them to her husband Fred Carter, deeming that a "man's job."<sup>14</sup> Because of his work with the traffic signal concept his wife created, Fred Carter became California State Traffic Engineer in 1932, two years after the birth of their daughter Paulena. It was a job he held until his death in 1954.

The city of San Francisco did not miss an opportunity to honor Vetabelle. The *San Francisco Examiner* mentions her name prominently in a March 16, 1928, front page story describing a "Woman's Day" event from the day before. The news story called women 'helpers of men,' a reflection of the attitudes of the day. Vetabelle was described as a 'maker of traffic signals,' but another story on the same page about traffic ordinances did not mention her.<sup>15</sup> In its May 18, 1927, edition, *The Post-Enquirer*, based in Oakland, called her 'the only woman who makes auto signals.'<sup>16</sup> Not too surprisingly for that time, people were astonished to encounter a woman when they attended her lectures on the subject.<sup>17</sup>

Paulena Carter a famed concert pianist, now of Rogue River, offered some insights about her mother who died in Ashland in 1978. "I remember her as being very sweet and very, very gentle," Ms. Carter said.<sup>18</sup> People might have called Vetabelle a feminist, if such a word existed then, however, her mother "...never would have been a flag-waving one, she would have been one that worked very quietly, very determined..."<sup>19</sup>

Paulena confirmed that her mother was tremendously disturbed after seeing several accidents in San Francisco and that this, more than anything, motivated her inventiveness. Vetabelle's original concept had three different shapes — a red triangle at the top for STOP, a yellow square in the middle for WARNING, and a green circle at the bottom for GO. The sign was probably about 8 to 8½ feet tall. Unfortunately for the Carters, the shaped traffic signal was unsuccessful. Paulena Carter said, "The one that really went was the red stop sign, it was everywhere in Ashland and back East."<sup>20</sup> All of the signs and signals were patented.

Although her family discouraged her from pursuing her original career dreams, they approved wholeheartedly of Vetabelle's traffic signal system.<sup>21</sup> Always very mathematical, Vetabelle also devised many educational games for children



Fred Carter (right) received a traffic engineering award from Governor Earl Warren in 1950. Vetabelle, like the women of her times, was considered a "helper of men," and in her husband's case, she certainly was.

involving multiplication and division. She also assisted injured World War I soldiers, working with those who had prosthesis problems.<sup>22</sup>

Vetabelle's work with traffic signals tapered off and eventually stopped during her daughter's childhood. She passed her love for music along to Paulena, teaching her daughter to play the piano. As the child's strong musical talent emerged, Vetabelle devoted herself to Paulena's piano studies and appearances on the concert stage nationwide.<sup>23</sup>

Ms. Carter said her mother was a very private person. She shied away from discussing her accomplishments for posterity. "Mother didn't want to divulge any information about anything. She was very private. Toward the end of her life, I tried to get her to talk on tape and she wouldn't do it..."<sup>24</sup>

Among family mementos, Paulena Carter has a picture depicting a red octagonal stop sign at the Ashland Plaza, possibly installed sometime in the late 1920s. Notes describing the sign say it had the word 'STOP' in the middle on one side. Above and below that word was the name "Pacific Highway." The reverse side carried the name of the highway and directional arrows. A light illuminated the sign through glass. It held a brass plate etched with the legend: "Phillips Carter Traffic Sign Company."<sup>25</sup>

Vetabelle Phillips Carter saw a problem and despite social convention and bias, she sat down with her potato and paring knife and did something about it. Descended from southern Oregon pioneers, she managed to do some pioneering of her own — and that's not small potatoes.

*Louise A. Watson is a free lance writer and an avid history student. She lives in Medford, and is a former newspaper reporter.*

## Medford Approved First 'Blinker' in 1935

With the arrival of Model Ts, Cadillacs, Stutz Bearcats, Pierce-Arrows, Lincolns and Packards on the American scene, it was becoming obvious the country needed a way to avoid traffic mishaps. After all, out of 22,000,000 vehicles registered nationwide in 1927, 23,000 persons died in traffic accidents.

Others were marketing traffic signals at the time Vetabelle and Fred Carter were, and many had gone before them. It is not clear who first invented or implemented traffic control devices. An electric traffic signal with red and green lights appeared in Cleveland, Ohio, at the intersection of Euclid and 105th streets on August 5, 1914. Detroit's circa 1913 system was one of manually-operated semaphores.<sup>1</sup>

The Medford City Council was concerned about traffic as well. The Jackson County census for automobiles at the start of 1928 listed 8,500 cars county-wide. A major thoroughfare through Medford, named county seat in 1927, was the Pacific Highway (now Riverside Avenue). After all, that street had been touted as the Gateway to Crater Lake since William Hodson first drove his car there in 1908.<sup>2</sup>

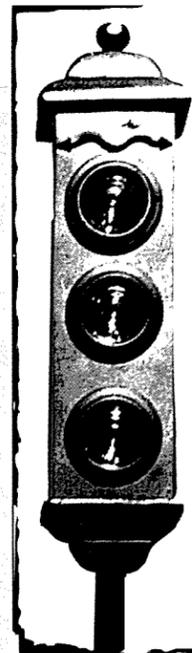
The Medford City Council took official action August 6,

1935, and decided "that an electric blinker be installed at the intersection of East Main Street and the Pacific Highway, at a probable cost of \$100.00."<sup>3</sup> The next month, in the meeting of September 17, 1935, the council spent \$104.20 for "traffic signs," purchased from the K.E. Erickson Co. Inc.<sup>4</sup>

Apparently, however, the council had already been looking at how the increased number of cars affected movement on city streets and made provision for that in 1929. In the official council minutes for July 16, a motion was passed "that one permanent and one traffic officer be added to the police force."<sup>5</sup>

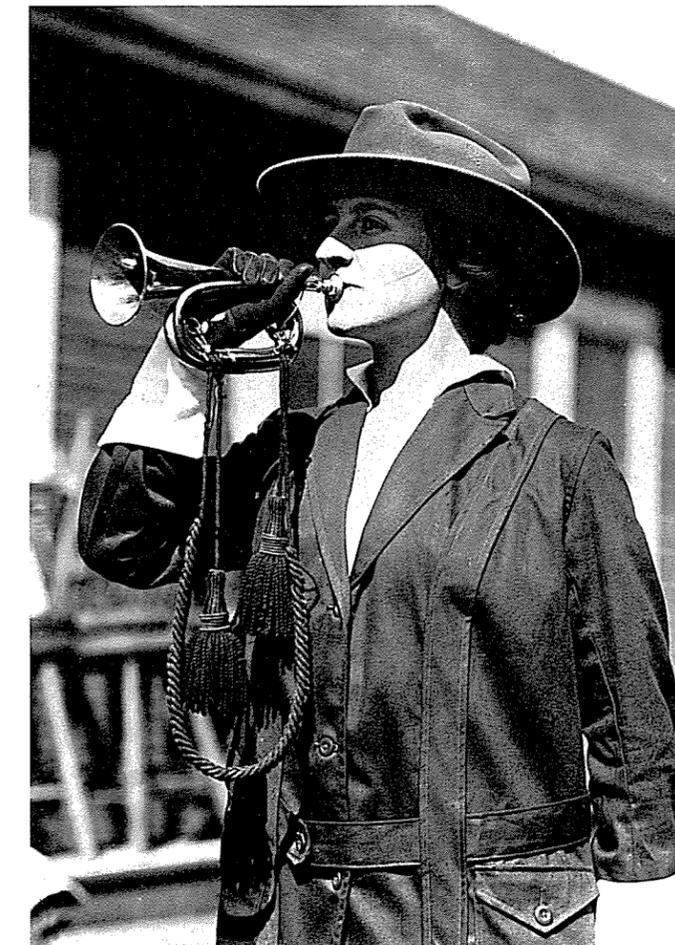
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Vetabelle Philips Carter in 1918, when she worked with Veterans' Rehabilitation after World War I.



# Cattle and Community: RANCHING IN THE APPLEGATE

by Natalie Brown and J.B. Roberts

**H**arley Hall and his wife Vernie spent nearly thirty years extracting a living from their steep, brushy ranch above Squaw Lakes in the Siskiyou. A combination of cattle, pigs, and logging—and anything else that came to hand—enabled them to live in almost nineteenth-century isolation. An old World War II Sno-Cat was the only link to civilization in the winter months if someone was too sick to get well on their own. A few years ago, health problems forced their move down to a small place on the Little Applegate River.

Left: Cattle being fed after summer grass is gone.  
Below: Applegate cowboys circa 1900, roping and branding.



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEGATIVE #6356



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

Above: These mailboxes are a visual sign of the growing desirability of country life.  
Below: The old barn and a new house on the remnants of the Circle G Ranch.

They continued to raise hogs in the mountains (in competition with bears and cougars), but leased the ranch to a neighbor for summer grazing. Twice a year, cowhands would head up the mountain to help move the cattle. When the grass came up and the spring doctoring, branding, dehorning, ear-tagging, and castration were done, stock trailers stuffed with soon-to-be-released cows and spring calves would weave up gravel switch-back roads. In the fall, a few brush-tough neighbors with dogs and mountain-wise horses would return to collect the herd. Often the cattle would be “sulled up” in deep draws and near-impenetrable brush; dogs were needed to sniff them out and get the herd moving. Then, the cowboys would carefully bunch their charges—making sure that the calves and their mamas would “mother up”—and push them into portable corrals. Sometimes a cow took flight, spurring man and horse down the side of the mountain—jumping deadfalls, punching through thorny brush, and sliding down a scree—heading the cow back into the herd before the revolution spread.

The neighbor who leased Harley’s place has sold his herd now. Cattle prices and scarcity of winter grazing are convincing a lot of ranchers that there are slower ways of losing money than the cattle business. Big, battered hats and dusty chaps are thinning out in the local cafes. Harley and Vernie now keep only a few steer for meat and pocket change in the backlot of their place on the Little Applegate. They will tell you: “times are changing.”

Down the road, Ben Fowler settles on the comfortable sofa in his living room stuffed with trophies collected from a decade of success at cutting horse competitions. The awards are now mostly scrapbook items and the trophy buckles merely hold up his pants; Ben is back with beef after the bottom fell out of the horse market. His cows, however, offer little reassurance for the future. To avoid investing in the amount of acreage necessary to keep a sufficient herd on the home ranch, Ben and his wife Connie rely on leased pastures and hayfields scattered throughout the county. A “pick-up truck rancher,” Ben puts 30,000 miles per year on his GMC as he drives from pasture to pasture to hay, irrigate, fix fences, and move his cows onto fresh grass. During spring and fall, ranch-skilled neighbors help each other with the castrating, branding, dehorning, vaccinating, and trailering to

market. It’s a lot of work for little payback; cattle prices have dropped from nearly eighty cents per pound in 1992 to sixty cents per pound for prime beef this year. Ben looks out from his wide, wood porch and surveys a well-tended field, “time sure changes things.”

Cattle ranching in Jackson County is changing at an unprecedented pace. A century-and-a-half earlier, cattle profitably provided food for an exploding population as the mining boom hit southern Oregon. Remote valleys like the Applegate—with its thin foothill soil, broken topography, and sparse rainfall—were quite suitable for stock raising. Turn-of-the-century operations raised beef on hundreds of acres of river-bottom pasture, while other homesteaders ran range herds in the vast unsettled Siskiyou wilderness. But modern economics, tied with a trend of folks moving from urban to suburban or rural settings, have rendered the Applegate Valley less remote and more desirable to commuters and retirees. Today, skyrocketing land values, plummeting agricultural profits, changing dietary trends, and limited grazing on private and public lands have forced most properties from traditional ranches to a mix of country estates, trim homes, and retirement havens on small plots. The few working ranches survive as a testament to a local heritage in transition.

True, traditional southern Oregon ranches could never match the classic cattle operations comprising tens of thousands of acres in the central and eastern portions of the state. The definitive guide to the development of the cattle business in the Oregon Territory, *On the Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country* (1968), makes no mention of Jackson County.<sup>1</sup> Tucker’s excellent *History of Jackson County, Oregon* (1931), covers Jackson

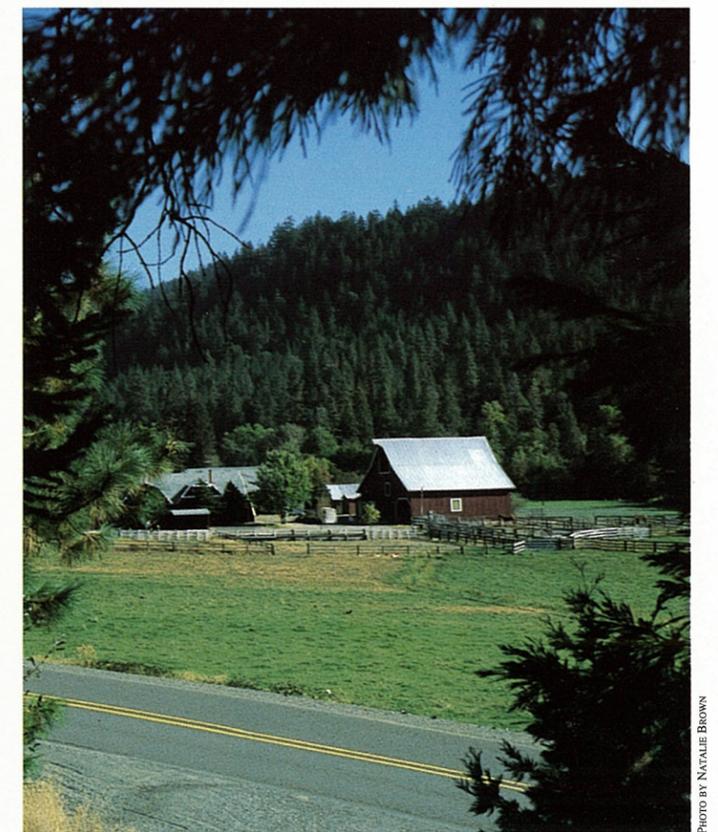


PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

miners and the communities that grew with nineteenth-century mining camps. And when the mines declined, cattle raising provided an income for those living in sparsely populated foothill valleys where marginal terrain and distance from trade centers made growing crops or business opportunities impractical.

Cattle first entered the southern Oregon economy in 1837 when would-be whiskey distiller Ewing Young drove a herd over the Siskiyou after being convinced by Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, that growing communities were more in need of ready food supplies than ready liquor.<sup>3</sup> Poor roads made importing farm products impractical; cattle were self-propelled and portable, and supplied food for local operations at the Sterling and Buncom mining districts, as well as other boom sites in the West. The *Oregon Sentinel* documented accounts of the importance of cattle to the growing "Oregon Country" economy, including numerous drives in 1867, ranging from two hundred to seven hundred head bound for San Francisco and the silver mines in Nevada, and a few years later: "...drovers report Umpqua Valley as being rapidly drained of cattle, and the price raising...never been so great a demand for cattle...fully 10,000 head of cattle have passed Rogue River on their way south since spring...the whole number driven from Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties will not be less than 15,000 head, which at twenty dollars a head—a low estimate—would make the handsome sum of \$300,000...our farmers will at

Above: Billy Joe Hunter feeding the herd at his Bishop Creek corrals. Below: Applegate cowboy moving Ben Fowler's cows to fresh pasture.

County from the Mesozoic era to 1931 without a nod to the rancher.<sup>2</sup> Stock raising, however, has always played a key role in human settlement, and Jackson County is no exception. A movable, renewable, year-round food resource, local beef fed the

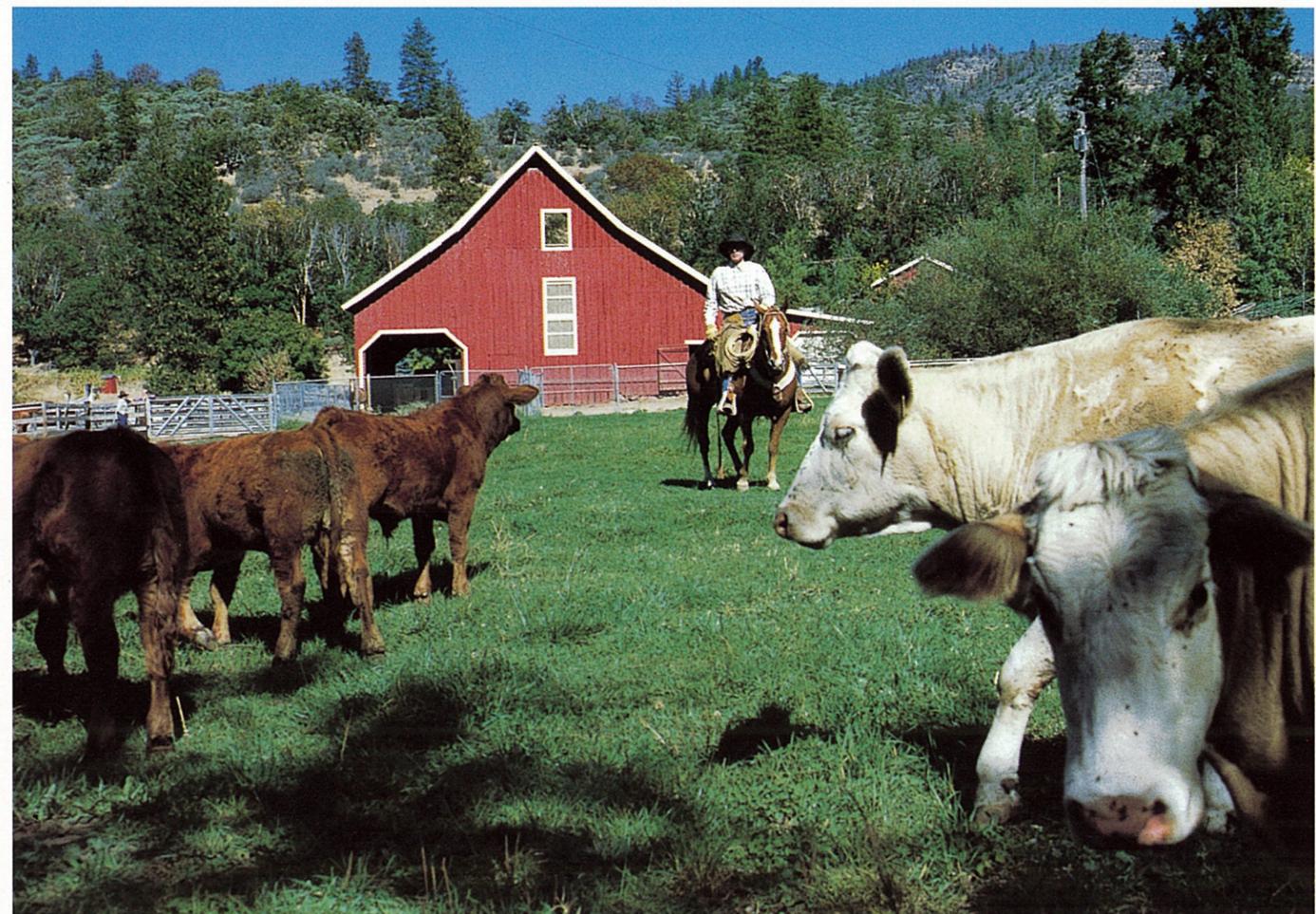


PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

once perceive the importance of this level of industry."<sup>4</sup>

From the mid-1800s until well into the next century, Applegate Valley entrepreneurs acquired large tracts of land, primarily to capitalize in 1879, on cattle profits. Sam and Riley Phillips filed homestead claims on what would later become the area's largest ranch, the Circle G.<sup>5</sup> The brothers raised beef and reared families on the ranch along the Little Applegate River, near present-day Buncom. In 1907, Arthur "Arth" Kleinhammer purchased the old Phillips place, eventually acquiring almost five hundred acres that extended for nearly three miles along both sides of the river.

The ranch consisted of a main house, located near where Ben Fowler now lives, with haybarns, pastures, and outbuildings scattered at several locations. Considered one of Jackson County's cattle barons, Arth ran nearly five hundred head, which were managed as dictated by grass and weather. During the hot, dry summer months, cow/calf pairs would be turned out to roam the moist mountain ranges. Before the killing frost, all hands helped to round up the animals and separate steer headed for market from breeding stock that would winter over in the valley pastures. Nature dictated ranch cycles, which in turn dictated the community's social as well as economic well-being. Long-time residents fondly recall the celebrations and gatherings surrounding spring and fall cattle work. In the early 1920s, however, the Jacksonville Bank failed and, like others in the area, the Kleinhammers suffered. The family eventually lost the ranch and moved into town. Renamed the Circle G in 1942, the ranch was bought and sold numerous times, eventually being subdivided into smaller hobby ranches and home lots. Once the model of a

Above: Ben Fowler in a rare moment of relaxation. He puts 30,000 miles a year on his GMC, the price of being a "pick-up truck rancher."

Right: Big houses are replacing big barns in the Little Applegate area.

self-sustaining, local cattle operation, many ranches comprising the former Circle G are now supported by owners with urban investments and non-local businesses.

Peter and Karen Salant own a part of the legendary Circle G. Raised in rural settings in Washington and California, the couple invested fruits of their San Diego, California, business success in their southern Oregon ranch, where they spend extended weekends and vacations. A full-time caretaker and his family handle operations in their absence. For Peter and Karen, the ranch is an expression of their lifestyle and values. With outside financial resources, they are purchasing a herd of carefully selected Angus heifers, and plan to implement a breeding program with the goal of raising improved market animals. The barns, buildings, and grazing lands are maintained balancing a respect for ranching traditions with environmental impact and the history of the site. They hope their ranch will provide alternative values for their young daughter, who spends much of her time in the city.

Across the valley near the community of Ruch, another family faces the future of agricultural subsistence in Jackson County. Billy Joe and Joanne Hunter—together with sons Tim and Dan and their wives Janet and Laura—exercise exceptional initiative to support three families with an integrated ranching operation.

Near a converted sawmill, the Hunters built a feedlot facility with corrals, stalls, scales, and squeeze chutes to work cattle. There, they raise feeder calves for resale and replacement heifers for local dairy operations. Under Woodrat Mountain on Bishop Creek, they run a Western-style rope-and-throw facility. Between the two sites, the Hunters raise a mix of cattle, hay, and corn, and vary their emphasis with price cycles in each of the commodities. When hay and grain prices are good, the Hunters cut back on their cattle operation. When feed prices are down, the hay and corn (as well as silage obtained from orchard waste) are converted to cattle feed for the increased number of stock. Even savvy management and a flexible operation leave holes in the family's budget. Extra cash comes in the form of horseshoeing or small-scale milling of logs. In hard years, Joanne and her daughters-in-

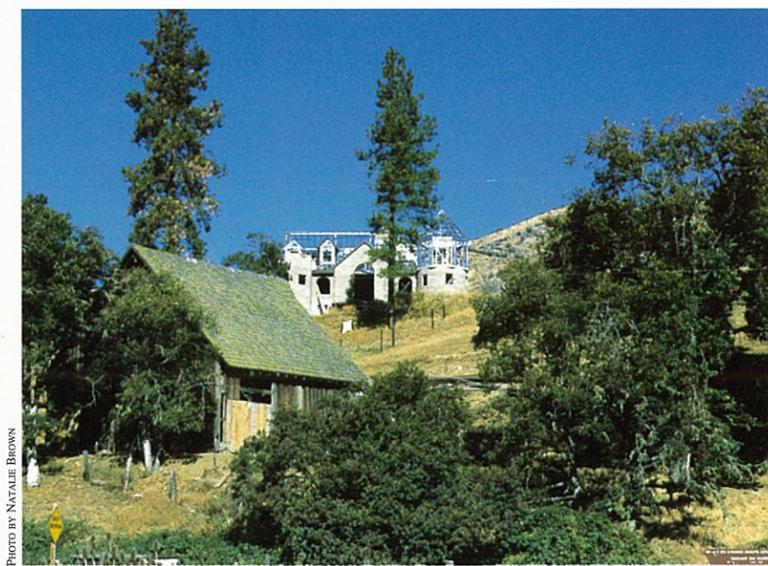


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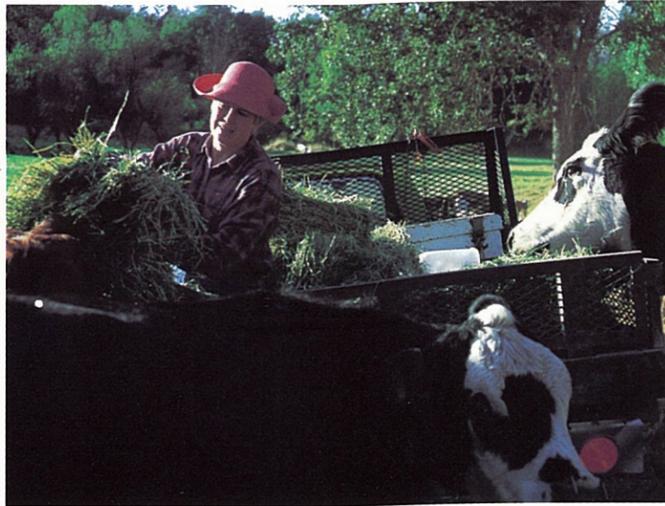


PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

majority of the Applegate Valley population. Though the cattle business has declined to an insignificant percentage of the county economy, ranching spearheaded settlement and formed the values of rural communities. Ranchers add more than local color; they are a visible symbol of rural traditions that draw non-agriculturalists to the county. For many, there is a nostalgia for life akin to that of self-reliant forebears. Ora Phillips, grandson of homesteader Sam Phillips, commented wistfully about the Circle G: "It sure is a beautiful spread. Sure wish my grandfather was around so I could kick him in the ass for selling the place."

*Natalie Brown is the art director for Stereophile magazine in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and photographs ranch life throughout the West. J.B. Roberts, former rocket scientist, now raises beef and shoes horses at his Eagle Canyon Ranch near Buncom, where he serves on the Buncom Historical Society board of directors.*

**ENDNOTES**

1. J.O. Oliphant, *On the Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968).
2. W.P. Tucker, *History of Jackson County, Oregon* (Seattle, University of Washington, 1931).
3. *Oregon Almanac Book of Facts*, 1961-2 (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1961), p. 240.
4. *Oregon Sentinel*, 18 May 1867, 22 May 1869.
5. Connie Fowler and J.B. Roberts, *Buncom: Crossroads Station, An Oregon Ghost Town's Gift from the Past* (Jacksonville: Buncom Historical Society, 1995), p. 59.

law have brought in extra money waitressing or working at local orchard packing plants. They are persevering in their efforts, but pressures of change in Jackson County make it problematic as to whether their children will make a living from this land.

Despite their differences, the Salants, Hunters, Halls, and Fowlers are visible reminders of a heritage otherwise lost to the teachers and investors, artists and retirees who now make up a

Above: This hungry herd comes running to the sound of the chuck wagon, Carolyn Roberts' truck.

Below: Harley Hall worked his ranch above Squaw Lakes in the Siskiyou for thirty years. He now has a small place on the Little Applegate River.



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

The Way Things Were

by Janette Merriman



9

Many remember the days when a trip to the Southern Oregon Historical Society was like a visit to grandmother's attic. Family heirlooms, silver, china, sideboards and buckboards were all there, floor to ceiling. There are those who remember coming to visit the Britt Gallery, the parlor with its elegant Steinway, and the huge cameras used by Peter Britt. Many believe a museum is its collections, and to honor our beginnings we present a few artifacts from the early collections of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's Jacksonville Museum.

As soon as the former Jackson County Courthouse opened as a museum in 1950, the Southern Oregon Historical Society began receiving items for public exhibition from the Native Daughters of Jacksonville. Artifacts that graced the first exhibits included this cut glass wine bottle,<sup>1</sup> given in 1860 to the first stage driver on the Oregon California Stage Line, by Madam DeRoboam Holt, owner of the U. S. Hotel in Jacksonville.

Beginning in 1880, Judge Heiro K. Hanna presided as circuit court judge for over twenty-five years in Jackson County. He handed down his judgments from this leather chair, which was exhibited in the original courtroom — the main room on the second floor of the Jacksonville Museum.<sup>2</sup>



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1. #910
2. #59.4.2
3. #724
4. #284
5. #59.109.2
6. #66.79.10
7. #3172
8. #3189
9. #79.3.79



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Miss Mary Hanley served as the Society's curator for many years, and helped to collect the pioneer relics of the community. Her own roots go back to 1857, when her family first came to this valley. This Hanley shovel crossed the plains three times.<sup>3</sup> Other pioneer artifacts gathered include this Monkey Wrench quilt,<sup>4</sup> butter mold<sup>5</sup> and paddle.<sup>6</sup>

Trundle beds, cradles, dolls and a rocking horse were some of the delightful furnishings of the museum's "children's room." This doll buggy was a standard favorite for many years.<sup>7</sup> Medford firemen received the buggy during a 1951 Christmas toy drive. The discerning firemen donated the buggy to the Society. Matie Vroman Huenergardt received the buggy as a Christmas gift from her mother in approximately 1895.

Due to the delicate nature of old fabric the clothing in the Society's collections is exhibited on a rotating basis. This vivid blue cotton brocade dress was worn by Amelia Evaline Grimes Daniels on her wedding day in November 1871.<sup>8</sup> It was worn for another twenty-five years as her best dress.

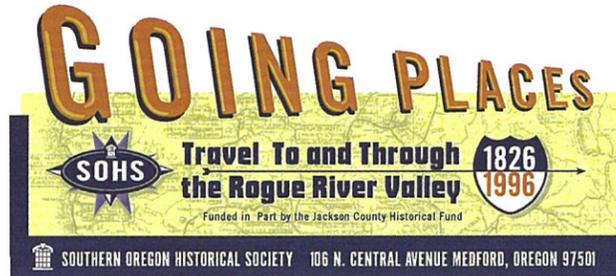
Although exhibits and the nature of collections have changed since the Southern Oregon Historical Society was founded fifty years ago, the Society continues to collect material related to the scope and diversity of human experience in Jackson County and the southern Oregon region. An example is this recent donation — a bottle of Lithia Water from Pompadour Springs, Ashland, Oregon.<sup>9</sup> The label reads, "Souvenir of Ashland, Home of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon College, Mount Ashland, Lithia Park, ideal climate, friendly people, mountain lakes."



1

2

# Blazing New Trails: The Grand Opening of Going Places and More



## MERCHANTS TO THE VALLEY FIRST OF A SERIES IN ASHLAND

The Southern Oregon Historical Society is mounting an exhibit scheduled to open at the Mark Antony Hotel March 8. "Merchants" highlights the economic development of Ashland via photographic images of tourism and industry. This is the first of a series to be featured in downtown Ashland.

## LOOKING BACK AT THE HEART OF TOWN

*Oregon Main Street* is a series of then-and-now photographs, dating back to the 1800s, and illustrates the evolution of what was once the heart of all American towns — Main Street. The exhibit consists of thirty-three framed pieces that focus on the changing urban landscape of Oregon's downtowns. The exhibit is made possible by the Livable Oregon's Downtown Development Association and the Oregon Historical Society. March 15 through June 15, at the Society's History Center at 106 N. Central Avenue.

## GENERATIONS ON THE FAMILY FARM

The exhibit *On The Land: Three Centuries of American Farmlife*, features the stories of the five oldest farms in the country and the families who have worked

them. The Southern Oregon Historical Society will be interpreting the Bybee, Birdseye, and Hanley farms. The Society is pleased to be working with the FFA and 4-H clubs to create their own exhibit relating to farming through the generations. The FFA and 4-H exhibit will be shown as part of *On The Land*. The exhibit will be open May 8 through August 18, at the Jacksonville Museum.

## GOING PLACES OPENS WITH GRAND EXCITEMENT

The grand opening of *Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley* will be celebrated June 1, at the History Center in downtown Medford. *Going Places* was designed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Applegate Trail. Experience covered wagons, a railroad tunnel complete with the wail of a train, walking through an old western town, and a drive-in theater.

Spanning the history of migration and transportation through southern Oregon, the exhibit follows the trail over the Siskiyou made by the Indians and takes you to the present day thoroughfare known as "I-5." Not to be missed, this will be a delight for all ages. An opening for members will be held May 31.

## APPLEGATE TRAIL UPDATE

The Southern Oregon Historical Society has been working with the Applegate Trail Coalition since 1993 to create the 150th anniversary celebration for the famed route, as well as attempting to develop its potential for tourism. Keep watch for related events and information at many interpretive sites including Tub[b] Springs on the Greensprings Road, and Valley of the Rogue State Park off I-5.

## TRAIL TALES AT THE HISTORY STORE

Those interested in finding out more about the Applegate Trail will find several selections at the History Store. Try *Applegate Trail: Impressions and Experiences of Emigrants and Other Travelers*, by Stephen Dow Beckham, *The Oregon Trail & Applegate Trail, Diary of Welborn Beeson in 1853*, or *On To Oregon*, a special compilation produced by the Society.

## HALF OF GLENN SIMPSON GLASS PLATES TO BE PRINTED

Thanks to generous donations by individuals and institutions half of the the money has been raised to print the Glenn Simpson glass plate negative collection, and half of the collection is being printed! The plates depict life in Ashland at the turn of the century.

To make a donation towards the remaining printing costs and preservation of the Glenn Simpson glass plates, contact: Curator of Collections Janette Merriman at (541) 773-6536 or make checks payable to SOHS-Simpson Fund. 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501-5926.



## MUSEUMS, SITES, AND EXHIBITS

### • Southern Oregon History Center

106 N. Central Ave., Medford  
*Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley* opens June 1. Community Collects gallery: *Star Trek, Trail to the Stars* closes April 26. Gallery and office hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The gallery is also open on Saturday from noon to 5:00 P.M.

### • Research Library

106 N. Central Ave., Medford  
Open Tuesday through Saturday, 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. The library will be closed April 16-20.

### • The History Store, Medford

The History Center, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford  
Open Monday through Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; Saturday, noon to 5:00 P.M.

### • The History Store, Jacksonville

Behind the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History, 206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville  
Open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 5:00 P.M.

### • Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History

206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville  
Ongoing: *Politics of Culture*, exploring the issues surrounding the collection of American Indian artifacts. *On The Land: Three Centuries of American Farmlife*, May 8 - Aug. 18. Hours: Sunday and Tuesday, noon to 5:00 P.M.; Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; closed Monday.

### • Children's Museum

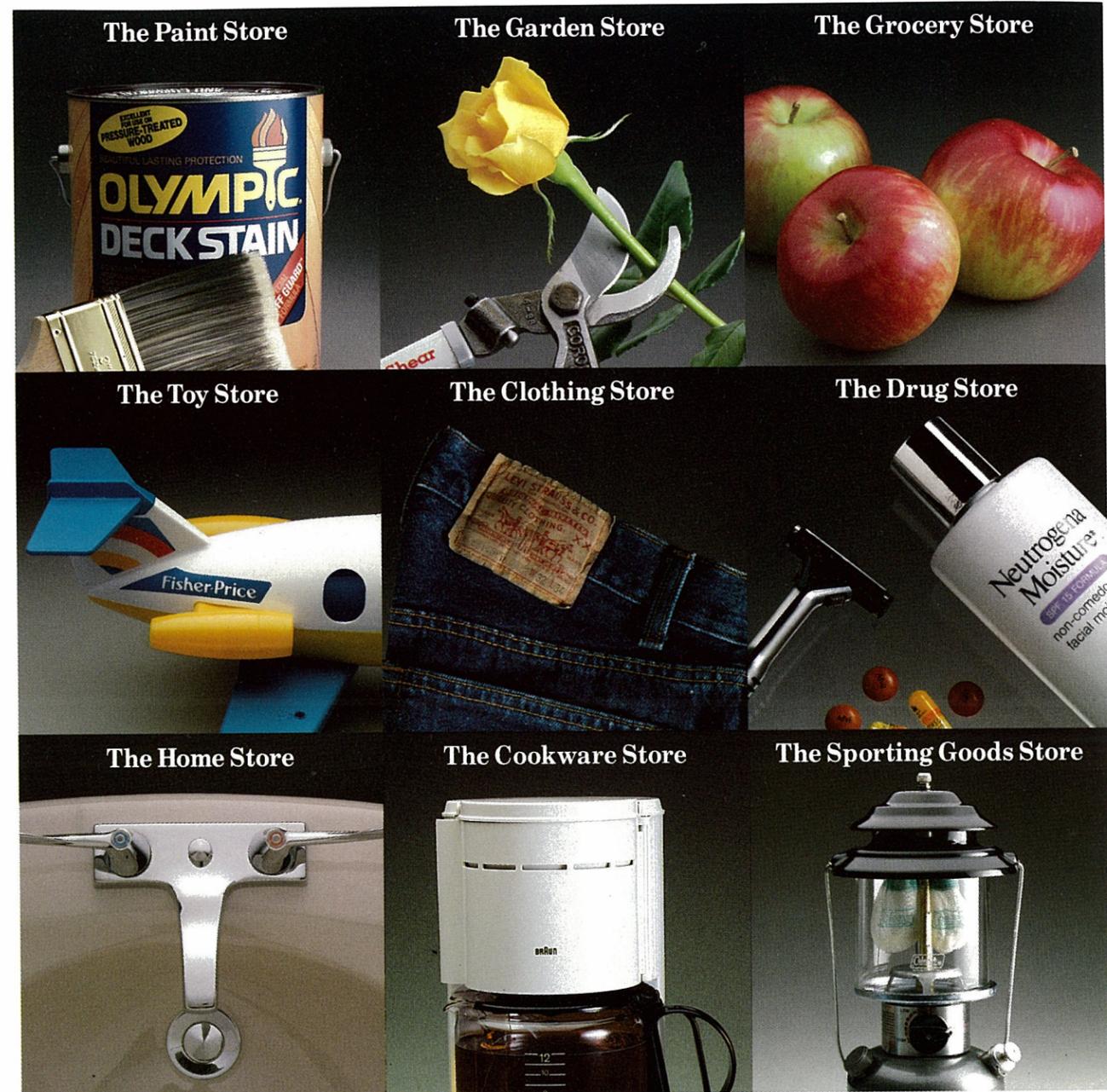
206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville  
Children's Museum, 206 N. Fifth St., Jacksonville. Hands-on history is fun for the entire family. Visit the new general store, and turn-of-the-century laundry and bank. The annual spring *Heritage Fair*, for fourth graders throughout the county, celebrated its eleventh year and inaugurated a special public *Heritage Fair* day on March 23. Hours: Sunday and Tuesday, noon to 5:00 P.M.; Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; closed Monday.

### • C.C. Beekman House

California and Laurelwood streets, Jacksonville.  
Original Victorian era furnishings and living history interpreters brighten up Beekman House. The Beekman House will be open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. seven days a week as of May 25.

### • C.C. Beekman Bank

California and 3rd streets, Jacksonville.  
The interior of this turn-of-the-century bank and Wells Fargo office can be seen from viewing porches throughout the year.



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Fifty years ago the citizens of Jackson County gathered to create the Southern Oregon Historical Society assuring a legacy of remembrances for future generations. Today we remain dedicated to valuing our past as we define the present to shape the future. We invite you to be part of this legacy which will take the Society into the next fifty years and beyond.

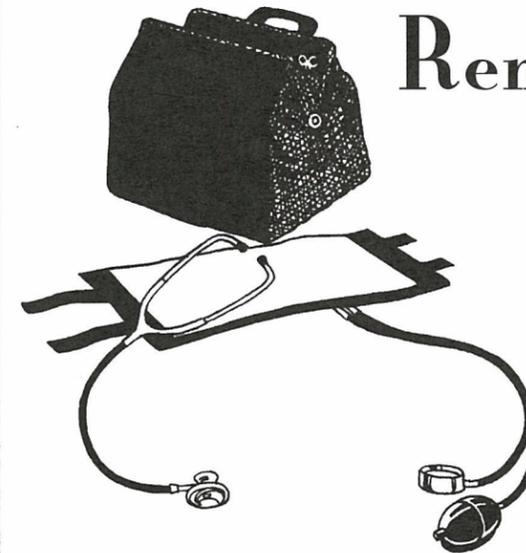
By naming the Southern Oregon Historical Society in your will, you can ensure that future generations will have access to our past through the educational activities, exhibits and programs that you currently enjoy.

To include the Southern Oregon Historical Society in your will, consult your attorney or personal advisor. The description of our organization is The Southern Oregon Historical Society, Inc., which is an Oregon non-profit tax-exempt corporation located in Jackson County, Oregon.

If you would like information on making a bequest please contact Development Director, Jerry Price.

**Southern Oregon Historical Society**  
 106 N. Central, Medford, OR 97501, 541-773-6536

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