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Vol. 2, No. 3 • The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society • Winter 1997

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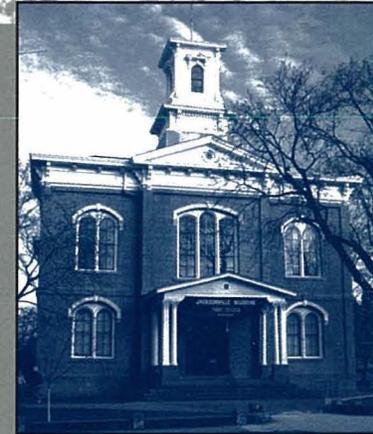
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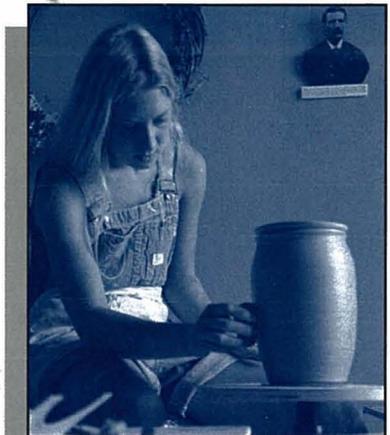
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# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

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## FEATURES

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz: Beekeeping in the Rogue Valley,"  
by Maureen Holen. A look at the characters and  
creatures of this venerable tradition.

4

"Vision Quest: The Cultural Landscape of Bryant Mountain,"  
by Matt Goodwin. The significance of this sacred site  
and its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

10

"A Circle of Friends." The photography of Ashland's  
"progressive" Hargrove sisters offers  
an intimate look at friendship.

13

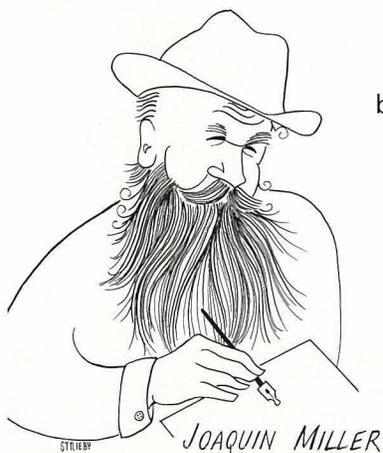
"George A. Hunt, Medford Impresario, and the Craterian  
Theater," by William Alley. The man who brought  
quality entertainment to the Rogue Valley, and  
the building where it happened.

22

"The Language of Oregon,"  
by Josh Paddison. Oregon's literature,  
from Native American oral legends  
to today's contemporary fiction,  
has always been a reflection of  
its community.

32

Illustration of Joaquin Miller, who penned hundreds  
of poems and stories using southern Oregon as a back-  
drop. See "The Language of Oregon," p. 32.



Above: George Hunt and son, underneath the Craterian  
Marquee, circa 1942.

Cover: 1929 advertising curtain from the Craterian The-  
ater, courtesy Craterian Ginger Rogers Productions, Inc.  
See story, p. 22.

Photo by Michael Leonard and Dana Hedrick

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR  
by Marcia W. Somers
- 3 WOMEN'S HISTORY  
Kathryn Stancliffe's Legacy
- 9 EXHIBIT FEATURE  
Gold Hill Historical Society
- 18 OUR COMMUNITY  
Poet Ben Hur Lampman
- 30 OUR OWN VOICES  
The DeAutremont Trial
- 38 FROM THE ARCHIVES  
Mary Truax's Valentines
- 40 THEN AND NOW  
The Prospect Hotel
- 42 COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHT  
Winter's Playthings
- 44 NEWS AND NOTES  
Historical Society Happenings

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Dear Reader,

It was suggested that rather than a formal editorial, ruminating upon some weighty matter, I address you casually myself. I didn't think that was a bad idea. This is my fifth issue as editor of *Southern Oregon Heritage* and there has not really been an opportunity to be properly introduced.

I have always wanted to work in museums, have a love for things historical, and feel tremendously fortunate to have this job. The Society has a hugely talented staff who, although not listed on the masthead, share their expertise with me. My background? I wrote my first song when I was three, and my first story when I was seven—I took it very seriously—my family thought it was hilarious. I have a B.A. in English and spent several years editing and writing for regional periodicals and managing a city visitors' magazine.

I am finally beginning to understand how The Society works, how the magazine works, and who the contributors and readers are. Things, however, could be clearer. If you have stories to tell, stories you'd like to have told, or just general comments about what you'd like to see in this magazine, dash off a postcard, submit a story, drop me a line, or send me email at [sohs@wave.net](mailto:sohs@wave.net). After all, it's your historical society and your magazine, and I'd like you to be pleased as you turn the pages.

Guessing what you'd like has been fun. I get to pore over thousands of wonderful old photographs, search through boxes, journals, scrapbooks and letters, survey maps from the 1800s, and walk, "oohing and ahing," through the collection with the curator, looking over everything from toy sewing machines to tomahawks, trying to figure out what to feature in each issue.

History for me is about understanding people. How did we live? Where? What was worn; what was used; what was believed? It's gossip on a grand scale. It's intriguing, odd, enlightening, entertaining and sometimes surprisingly touching.

My hope is to share the tremendous resources of the Southern Oregon Historical Society with you. Here you will find a respect for the past, a sense of place, the pattern of people's lives and how they formed a culture. I hope we make you marvel, fondly reminisce, and think a time or two. I look forward to every issue, and hope you do too. It's been a pleasure. 📌

I look forward to hearing from you,

Marcia Ward Somers  
Editor

### *Southern Oregon Heritage* Editorial Guidelines

Feature articles average 3,000 to 4,000 (pre-edited) words. Standard articles range from 1,500 to 2,000 words. Other materials range from 100 to 1,500 words. Electronic submissions are accepted on 3-1/4-inch disks and should be accompanied by a hard-copy printout. Cite all sources and construct endnotes and cutlines 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

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# Kathryn Stancliffe: Mayor, Mentor, Matriarch

by Maureen Holen

I was seventeen years old in the summer of 1986, and looking forward to my senior year of high school. Twelfth grade promised college applications, proms, parties, and, most importantly, graduation. But from June through August, my life was devoted to something else completely. That summer I had been hired for my first real job. I was to work for the Southern Oregon Historical Society's living history museum, the Beekman House. I would be guiding in-character tours as one of Miss Carrie Beekman's piano students. Little did I know that I was headed for much more than just the typical summer job. During those short months I learned more, and met more wonderful people, than I ever could have imagined. One of those people was Kathryn Stancliffe.

Kathryn started at the Beekman House that same summer, portraying the matriarch, Mrs. Julia Beekman. I soon learned that, in addition to the Southern Oregon Historical Society Board, she devoted her time to an amazing array of organizations, causes, and could only give Beekman House one day a week. Despite the fact that Kathryn must have been in her late seventies by then, she seemed to be incredibly energetic and youthful. I remember her bursting through the kitchen door, often a couple of minutes late and a little out of breath, but full of conversation and enthusiasm. When Kathryn arrived, everyone knew it.

Although I was only a teenager, Kathryn always listened to what I had to say and seemed to take a genuine interest in my opinions. She never discounted me and always treated me with respect. At the time, I didn't realize that Kathryn had spent most of her life (over forty years) as a teacher, working with young people of all ages at schools throughout the Rogue Valley. Nor did I realize that she had long championed the efforts of young women. I chuckled recently when I read that in the 1930s, while teaching at Antioch School, she was one of the first teachers to allow girls to play softball during recess. I also learned that Phoenix High School's award for outstanding female athlete is called "The Stancliffe"—a truly fitting honor.

Kathryn had a positive disposition and a great sense of humor. When I learned that not even a year had passed since the death of her husband, I was even more impressed by her cheer. Bert, her husband, died in 1985 at the age of 101. He often credited his longevity to having a young wife. But Bert's life must have been rich in more than years, for all of us at Beekman House soon came to know of Kathryn's deep love. She spoke every week of their adventures together. They had done so many exciting and romantic things. The stories of their life were enthralling. Few times in my life have I met newlyweds who speak of each other with the same care and devotion I heard in Kathryn's voice when she spoke of Bert.

No one was ever more impressed than she was by the snacks I made on the wood stove at tea time—scones, bread pudding, and cookies. Every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. the staff would gather around the parlor table for tea to share stories and good food. Everyone loved it—especially Kathryn.

Kathryn had plans to start her own museum in Phoenix; she was proud of the town's history and was always busy working on the

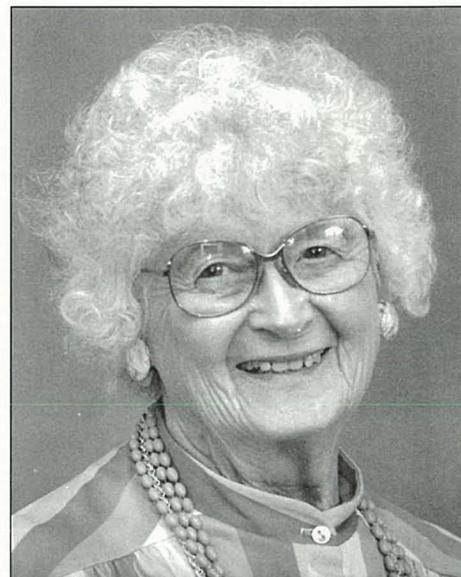
project. My biggest regret is that I never visited her home in Phoenix. She invited me several times to have tea and to see her antiques and memorabilia. It never crossed my mind that someday it would be too late to take her up on her generous offer.

I didn't learn that Kathryn had passed away until December of 1996. I had left the Rogue Valley for a number of years, only returning for holidays and vacations. I was off pursuing my education and career, something Kathryn had always encouraged. My mother recalls that once Kathryn said to her, "That girl is going to do just fine—she won't depend on any man to make it." (In spite of her romantic nature, Kathryn was always a practical woman!)

Although I hadn't spoken to her in years, I decided to attempt contacting Kathryn to interview her for a piece I was writing about the old Medford Ice Arena. I was sure she would have skated there, and would have some wonderful stories to tell. I was shocked to learn instead, that she passed away on August 11, 1996.

In doing research for this article, I learned even more amazing things about Kathryn. Not only did she serve as the first woman mayor of Phoenix, but she held numerous other political positions: Republican party member for twenty-five years, Senator Hatfield's liaison for the town of Phoenix, and school board and city budget committee member. She had even attended the 1952 convention where Eisenhower was nominated to run for president.

I didn't know Kathryn Stancliffe as well, or as long, as many people in southern Oregon. She was nearly fifty years my senior when we met, yet I considered her both a friend and a mentor. During the time we both worked at Beekman House, Kathryn made an impression on me that has never diminished. I'm sure I am not alone in knowing that Kathryn Stancliffe touched many lives and will not soon be forgotten. 🏠



Kathryn Stancliffe's commitment to community and zest for life endeared her to many.

Southern Oregon Historical Society

## ENDNOTES

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# B B E E K E E P I N G

by Maureen Holen

“You know it’s the same as they say about old soldiers—old beekeepers don’t die, they just fade away.” So says Morris Curtis, one of the Rogue Valley’s most successful commercial beekeepers. Beekeeping technology hasn’t changed much since Reverend L.L. Langstroth of Pennsylvania invented the moveable frame hive in 1851. In the last fifty years, however, the focus of commercial beekeeping has changed dramatically.

Often referred to as “The Father of Modern Beekeeping,” Langstroth’s invention of the moveable frame hive brought beekeeping into the realm of full-fledged commercial industry.

Beekeepers, for the first time, had the opportunity to maintain hives, monitor each cell, and keep hives close to flowering plants throughout the year. Honey could now be extracted in far greater amounts, without killing the bees.

The round hive of the bee was replaced by the wooden, box-shaped hive still in use today. Typical hives contain four boxes stacked vertically.

Each box contains ten frames that pull upward out of the top, making it easy for the beekeeper to inspect the frame. The bottom two boxes are called “brood boxes.” This is where the queen bee lays her eggs, or “brood.” The top two boxes are called “supers,” and are strictly for the production of honey. A metal grate separates the two regions. One of the only advances in the last 146 years has been to replace the metal strands within each frame with strands made of beeswax. It was believed this would



In 1851, Reverend L.L. Langstroth of Pennsylvania invented the moveable frame hive. These hives, belonging to Morris Curtis, a commercial beekeeper in Eagle Point, vary little from the one invented by Langstroth 146 years ago.

Dana Heitck

# IN THE ROGUE VALLEY

encourage bees to begin building their cells and honeycomb sooner. Morris Curtis owner of the Wild Bee Honey Farm in Eagle Point, says such hives, still used today, can house up to 80,000 bees in the height of summer.

Bees had been shipped across the Atlantic from Europe in the 1700s—the honeybee was introduced to the American West in the 1850s. Hundreds of swarms were brought to California on steamers (and wagons) from the Eastern states.<sup>1</sup> Although many bees died in transport, enough survived that by 1859 there were approximately 3,200 swarms in California.<sup>2</sup>

*Hutching's California* magazine reported in the late 1850s, on the early and successful importing of bees to the West Coast: "J. Gridley, who brought four swarms across the plains from Michigan, lashed to the back part of his wagon; he arrived at Sacramento on the third of August last, and seemed much surprised on learning the extent of their cultivation in this state."<sup>3</sup> Native Americans, upon first glimpse of this new insect, called it "the white man's fly."<sup>4</sup>

Once swarms were established in California, beekeepers began hauling hives north; some settled in the Rogue Valley. Beekeeper John Campbell, a beekeeper out near the old Fort Lane site, claims bees were transported up and down the coast by horse and cart. Teams would travel at night, stopping to allow the bees to collect nectar during the day. Bees emerge from the hives at first light; stopping at dawn was necessary to keep them from stinging the horses.

The most notable early beekeeper in the area was photographer Peter Britt. In fact, by 1890, Britt had thirty-five hives and sold his jars of honey to general stores throughout southern Oregon.<sup>5</sup> Britt was as well known for his beekeeping and botanical hobbies at the turn-of-the century, as Delmar Smith was for his beekeeping and rock collecting in the 1900s.

Smith began his long career in beekeeping at the age of eleven. He remembered that "there were only five or six beekeepers then with about 500 hives or more when I started beekeeping in 1922."<sup>6</sup> (There have rarely been more than five or six commercial beekeepers at any one time working in the region.)

Delmar Smith learned the bee trade from several locals, including Percy Loflin who owned more than a hundred bee colonies. During his teens Smith extracted honey for Loflin. Jim Stewart of "Stewart Avenue" was another old-time beekeeper Smith remembered.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his career, Smith sold bees and equipment out of his home next to the Crater Rock Museum, founded by he and his wife Frieda in 1954. Almost everyone involved in beekeeping in the Valley has something that once belonged to Smith.

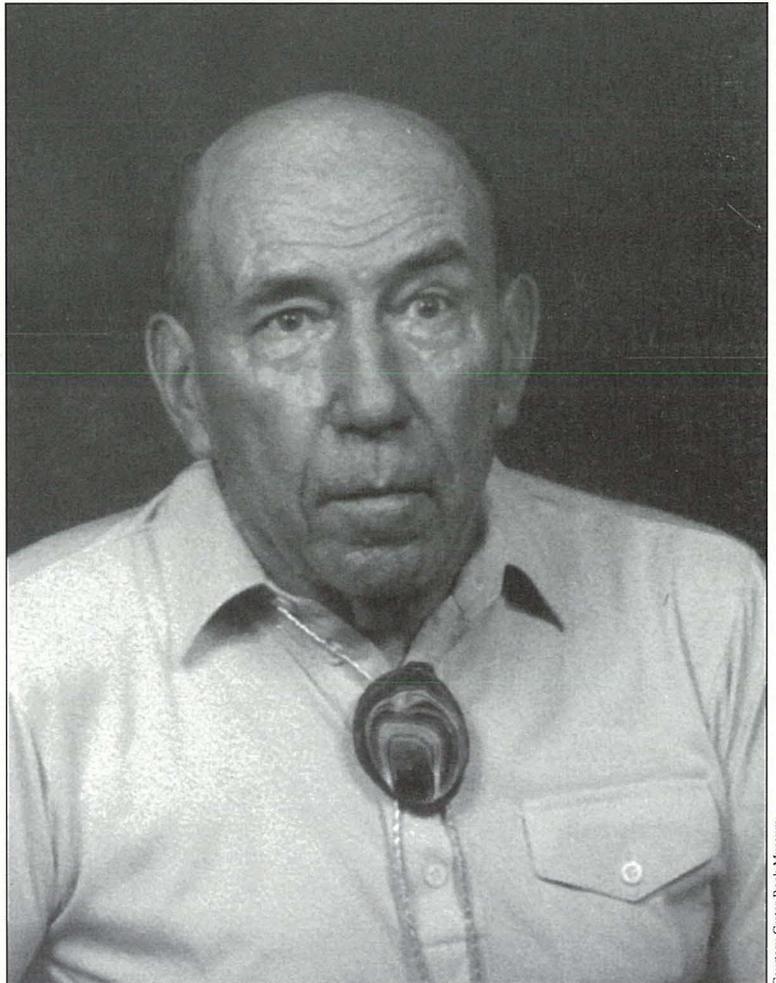
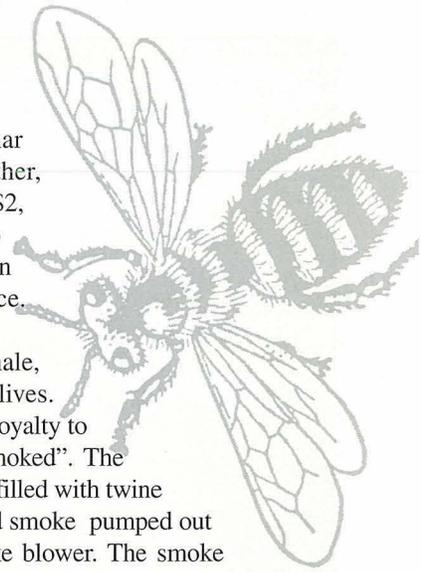
Morris Curtis remembers Delmar trying to sell him bees in the early 1960s, when Curtis was just learning the trade. Curtis agreed to buy the bees if Smith would work with him during the summer, and share the tricks of the trade. Delmar Smith taught Morris Curtis well, he has

become one of the best sources of information on beekeeping in southern Oregon.

In the 1960s, when Delmar and Morris were working together, one could purchase a queen for \$2, or beekeepers could attempt to hatch their own. Breeding queen bees is an art and a careful science. Today a queen bee sells for \$11.

The worker bees, all female, protect the queen with their lives. Because of the worker bee's fierce loyalty to the queen, they are sometimes "smoked". The beekeeper carries a pitcher-like can filled with twine or burlap. The smoker is ignited and smoke pumped out by squeezing a small accordion-like blower. The smoke calms the bees and dulls their senses.

Breeding queens, rotating hives with the seasons, smoking angry workers, and extracting honey are some of the skills required in beekeeping. Delmar Smith, Morris Curtis, and others have devoted time to sharing their knowledge with beginners. Both



Courtesy Crater Rock Museum

**Delmar Smith began working with bees in 1922, at the age of eleven. He became an expert and mentored many. He was also well known for establishing the Crater Rock Museum in Central Point. He got in the habit of picking up rocks in the bee yard and it became a consuming hobby.**



Morris Curtis of Wild Bee Honey Farm in Eagle Point, “smokes” worker bees who are fiercely protective of their queen. Beekeepers routinely check the frames to make sure the queen bee hasn’t found her way into one of the “supers”, where she will lay eggs in the honey cells.

were involved with groups like 4-H and Future Farmers of America. They enjoyed teaching young people how to work with bees. Delmar even installed observation hives in the Crater Rock Museum in Central Point. Morris Curtis, now in possession of them, hopes to set up the observation hives at his farm.

Curtis was also primarily responsible for the establishment of the Southern Oregon Bee Association. Organizations for beekeepers, however, had been attempted before. The *Medford Mail Tribune* of March 31, 1927, had this announcement:

“Bee Keepers [sic] to Meet Saturday . . . For the purpose of arranging the appointment of a bee inspector and forming a beekeepers’ association, all southern Oregon apiarists are urged to be present at a meeting to be held next Saturday afternoon at 2:30 at the Medford public library building. The meeting is also expected to bring about ways and means of providing for any problems beekeepers may have in regard to beekeeping. Due to the fact that a considerable amount of honey is produced in the valley, a large attendance is expected.”

The nature of beekeeping has changed, “a considerable amount of honey” is no longer produced in the Rogue Valley. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a moveable frame hive left in the same spot for a year would produce 200 to 250 pounds of honey, says John Campbell. Today, the same hive produces twenty pounds a year. The meadows and fields, orchards, trees, necessary blackberry bushes and star thistles, from which bees gather nectar, have been replaced by blacktop, covered by shopping malls, and sprayed with pesticide. The product is no longer honey – It’s pollination.

The six or so commercial beekeepers in the Rogue Valley today

Dana Hedrick

“The beekeeper has to make his money in only about four months out of the year—the rest of the year you have to live off what you saved, or off the bank,” says Morris Curtis.

cart their bees down to California to pollinate almond orchards in the winter, and bring them back to pollinate Oregon pears in the spring. In the summer, bees gravitate to alfalfa and star thistle. Campbell leases hives at \$34 each per season. The honey produced in summer is the only honey that is marketable. “The beekeeper has to make his money in only about four months out of the year—the rest of the year you have to live off what you saved, or off the bank,” says Morris Curtis.



Moveable frame hives belonging to Peter Britt. The photographer, botanist, orchardist had thirty-five hives by 1890 and was selling his honey to general stores throughout Oregon.

Southern Oregon Historical Society #14801

Locally, orchardists have been working with commercial beekeepers since the orchard boom of the 1920s. Loys Hawkins, pest control advisor for Bear Creek Orchards, (once Harry and David) says Bear Creek has always had small experimental blocks where bees were brought in to pollinate, but it is not a widespread practice. Workers in Bear Creek orchards have seen, as Hawkins puts it, “the bee line working the trees,” on a knoll above Carpenter Hill Road. Some call this the “Circle Dance” where bees are actually signalling to each other the whereabouts of nectar.

Laura Naumes of Earnest Orchards, was born into the business in the late 1950s. Her family has always relied upon commercial beekeepers to handle the pollination of their orchards. “Everybody in the valley uses bees for pollination, I can’t think of anyone who doesn’t,”<sup>8</sup> she says.

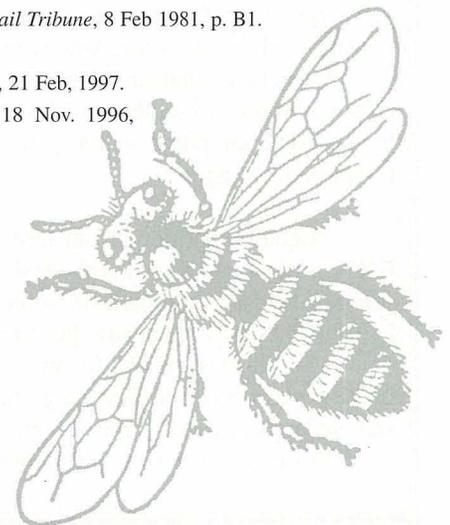
Successful beekeeping requires not only an understanding of the technical aspects, but an understanding and respect for the bees themselves. Most will tell you that these insects can sense fear or lack of confidence. Many believe that the keeper must also accept his lack of control over the bee. As Delmar Smith often said to his students, “Don’t try to make a bee do what you want it to do; help it to do what it wants to do.”<sup>9</sup>

When speaking with most beekeepers, both commercial producers and hobbyists alike, a genuine love of the craft surfaces. Those who have achieved a measure of success, share what some might call an obsession. Curtis gave a good description of this: “A lot of times people asked me when I got started in keeping bees. I say—oh, I caught the disease in the early 1960s. It’s just like that, a disease. You can’t get rid of it—it stays with you.”<sup>10</sup> ♣

*Maureen Holen volunteered her time and talents to work on the Winter issue of Heritage. She has a Masters from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and is pursuing a career in events management.*

#### ENDNOTES

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2. *Olmstead, R. R. Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity from Hutching’s California Magazine 1856-1861*. Berkeley, California: Howell-North, 1962.
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9. Interview with Morris Curtis, 18 Nov. 1996, Eagle Point, Oregon.
10. *Ibid.*



# Honey Remedies

## You Shouldn't Try at Home

There are few ailments that someone, at some time, did not believe could be cured by honey. You may think of it merely as a substitute for sugar in your pumpkin pie recipe, but many diverse cultures around the world have attributed incredible healing properties to honey.

Some medical book descriptions of honey's curative properties make it sound like a magical panacea. "Honey rids a wound of its stench, prevents people from going blind when smeared on the eyeball, heals sores in the mouth, causes urination, eases the bowels, soothes cough, heals poisoned bites and the bites of mad dogs," declared a 17th century Russian medical manual. "It has a good effect on deep wounds and is a remedy for the lungs and the inner joints."<sup>1</sup>



Honey was believed to cure ulcers, the bites of mad dogs, and could clear the brain of "harmful rheums."

for those living outside major cities like New York or Boston. Refined sugar was also difficult to work with because it came in solid cones or blocks that required pulverizing before it could be used for cooking. Honey was also preferred for its greater preservative qualities.<sup>2</sup> Given the lack of refrigeration, this was extremely beneficial for the North American settlers.

Of course, pioneers also used honey for curative purposes, most commonly to soothe sore throats and to treat wounds. Listed below are a sampling of honey treatments that have been used throughout the ages:

"Equal quantities of mustard seed, pyrethrum and ginger, finely ground and mixed with fresh honey and used as a mouthwash or held in the mouth for some time, will clear the brain of harmful rheums which cause headaches."

"Carbuncles and painful abscesses are treated with poultices made of wormwood leaves and garlic ground with a few grains of salt, string beans, vinegar, and honey."

"In cases of gastric and duodenal ulcers, honey should be

taken an hour and a half or two hours before a meal, or three hours after. Excellent results are obtained when honey is taken in a glassful of warm boiled water."<sup>3</sup>

"The major remedy (for practically everything) is honey and apple cider vinegar mixed in a glass of water."<sup>4</sup>

"People suffering from gravel in the kidneys are advised to take a tablespoon of olive oil, honey, and lemon juice three times a day. . . ."

"A gruel of grated onion and apple with honey taken daily is good for a weak bladder."

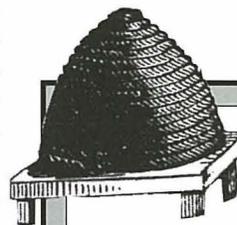
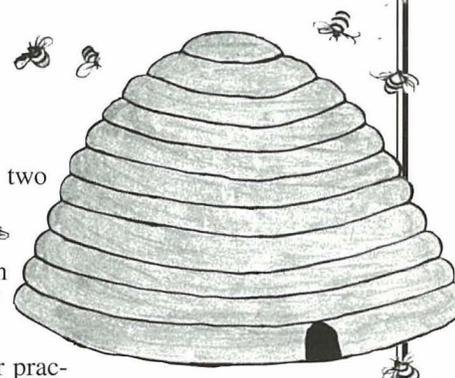
"Honey mixed with curd, porridge, boiled buckwheat or barley, apples, etc., is not only good for the sick but also for the healthy."<sup>5</sup>

"A brew of mustard seeds, honey and lily flowers is an extremely good means of getting rid of freckles and softening the skin."

Although we haven't found a doctor who will vouch for these cures, sometimes old wives' tales prove the old wives right. ■

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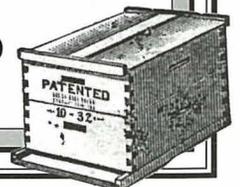


## Honey Recipe

**"For Sugar Curing  
100 Pounds of Meat:"**

"Eight pounds of salt, 1 quart of honey, 2 ounces of saltpeter, and 3 gallons of water. Mix, and boil until dissolved, then pour it hot on the meat."

— *York's Honey Calendar*, 1900



# The Gold Hill Historical Society: The Clock Stops Here

by Marcia Somers

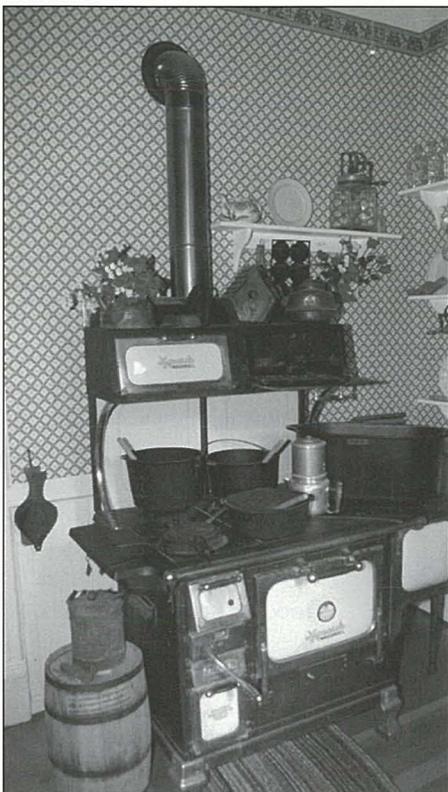
The tiny town of Gold Hill, population 1,000, may have sprung up around the Gold Rush, but there is no rushing now. This is a quiet town; in fact a sign at the city limit pronounces, "All Unnecessary Noise Prohibited." At 10:00 a.m. on a winter Tuesday there is little traffic, and finding the Gold Hill Historical Society is easy. A sign, well-placed at the roadside, points you down a few blocks to the clapboard house at 504 1st Street.

The museum is a work in progress. Ten years in the making, the Gold Hill Historical Society started with membership dues of two dollars and a mission to maintain the Rock Point Cemetery. After years of rummage and bake sales, applying for grants and non-profit status, the Gold Hill Historical Society was able to purchase its permanent home in August 1993.

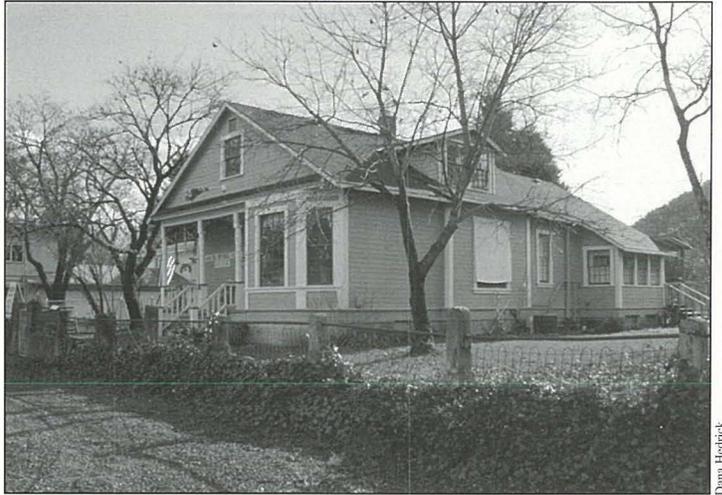
Since that purchase, volunteers have been sprucing, pruning, stripping, varnishing, wallpapering, and polishing, and have created a pristine environment to display, care for, and preserve the history of the Gold Hill community.

As members of a fledgling organization, the folks at Gold Hill have their work cut out for them, but that doesn't mean they're too busy to make visitors feel welcome. Chairs creak as Joyce Wayland, curator and director for the past two-and-a-half years, and Winona Nichols, a dedicated volunteer, respond to questions and tell stories about the local residents. Winona, who is responsible for the blacking and polish on the cast-iron stove in the kitchen, tells of an uncle who was a self-proclaimed keeper of the peace and gambler whose

hands were never far from his holsters. Her family heirlooms and mementos are proudly displayed in the parlor. Hand-tinted portraits of her grandparents hang in nice wooden frames, along with the original copy of their marriage certificate, and her grandfather's honorable discharge from the army. Small porcelain dolls she dug up in a backyard are on display in a case along with cranberry glass her parents probably won at a fair. "My kids don't care about this stuff," Winona said. Donating her treasures to the Gold Hill Historical Society ensures that her family's history will not be forgotten.



The Monarch stove is the stout heart of Gold Hill's turn-of-the-century kitchen.



In 1993 the Gold Hill Historical Society moved into its permanent home at 504 1st Street. The museum is wheelchair accessible and is open Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m to 4 p.m.

The front parlor at the Gold Hill museum is filled with personal collections of volunteers and local residents. Cases hold an assortment of items such as jewelry, button hooks, and leather baby shoes. A mannequin in a flapper gown from the 1920s is posed before the front window. The walls are hung with black-and-white photos of early buildings, and the people and places of significance to Gold Hill.

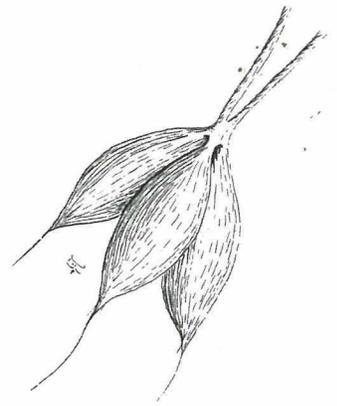
A small room is in transition; there is some debate as to whether it will be interpreted as a child's room or, as volunteer Ted Wharton would like, a gold mining exhibit. Ted has been a volunteer these last ten years. He has the most complete knowledge of both the collections and archives, and is in the process of photographing the entire collection for the society's records. Ted is also working on getting an engine running for the stamp mill set out in the yard. The railroad calendar he produced using Gold Hill's photo collection can be purchased in the gift area, which also features some of Winona's crewel-work fridge magnets and Kleenex cozies.

The volunteer staff worked hard on interpreting the kitchen. It has chair railing, white-washed shelves stocked with Ball jars for canning, a grape press, an old mixer and a meat grinder from the early part of the 20th century. The black stove majestically dominates, its chrome details winking even on the grayest of days. It is a pleasant place where you can imagine hands dusted in flour pulling pies from the stove to cool on the windowsill.

The hectic pace of modern life is left on the front stoop of the Gold Hill Historical Society. Once inside, the world slows down and one is caught up in the photos, memorabilia, and furnishings of the people and places of Gold Hill's past. Ask Joyce, Ted, or any of the other amiable volunteers a question about how things used to be. You may find your afternoon has pleasantly slipped away, and you won't even mind.

[The Gold Hill Historical Society is in need of volunteers. If you would like to help, call Joyce Wayland at 855-1182.] 📌

# Vision Quest



by Matt Goodwin

## The Cultural Landscape of Bryant Mountain

**W**oven into the landscape, lichen-covered and weather-worn, an exposed layer of Pleistocene basalt grudgingly reveals valuable clues to the spiritual life of the ancient inhabitants of southern Oregon. A series of rock mounds winds across the ancient scab rock, flat like a serpent some fifty feet long and thirty feet wide. At first glance the field of basalt stone is unremarkable, nothing more than a result of the natural geologic and climactic processes that have molded the landscape of the Great Basin for thousands of years. But upon closer inspection, a careful pattern of arranged rock piles reveals itself as the material remains of an arduous and deeply spiritual quest that continues to this day.

Part of the Modoc's vision quest ritual included the stacking of basalt stones, one on top of the other, or in patterns such as serpents or circles. An Ipos root is illustrated above.

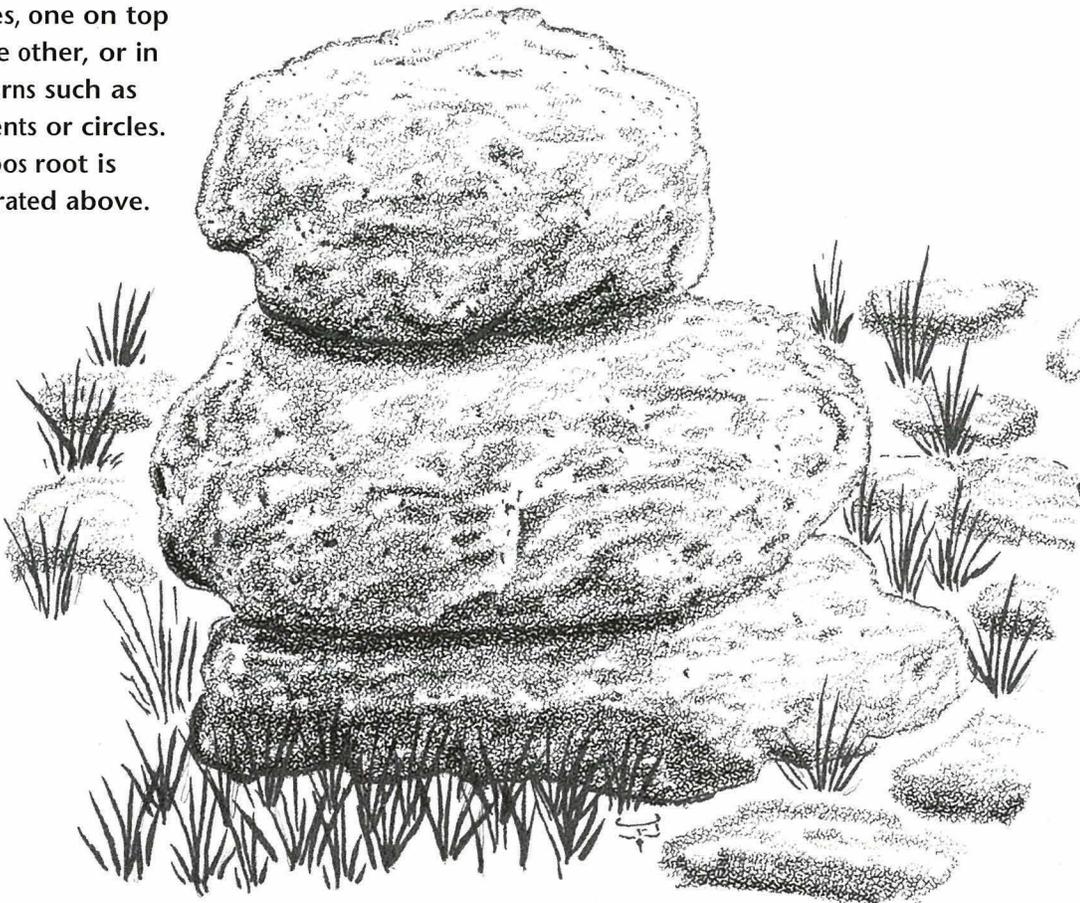
Bryant Mountain, in south-central Oregon, is one of the places where these spiritual quests took place. The area recently received a 1996 National Register of Historic Places nomination sponsored by the United States Department of the Interior—Bureau of Land Management (B.L.M.), the Southern Oregon Historical Society, and Southern Oregon State College. A tract of B.L.M. land on Bryant Mountain, containing a dense cluster of archaeological sites, was chosen for nomination as a cultural landscape.

The complex of sites located within the Bryant Mountain cultural landscape represents several important facets of the daily life of the band of Modoc Indians who used the area. It is believed that the Modoc band known as the Kokiwas was the primary group inhabiting Bryant Mountain. The name Kokiwas literally means “people of the far out country,”

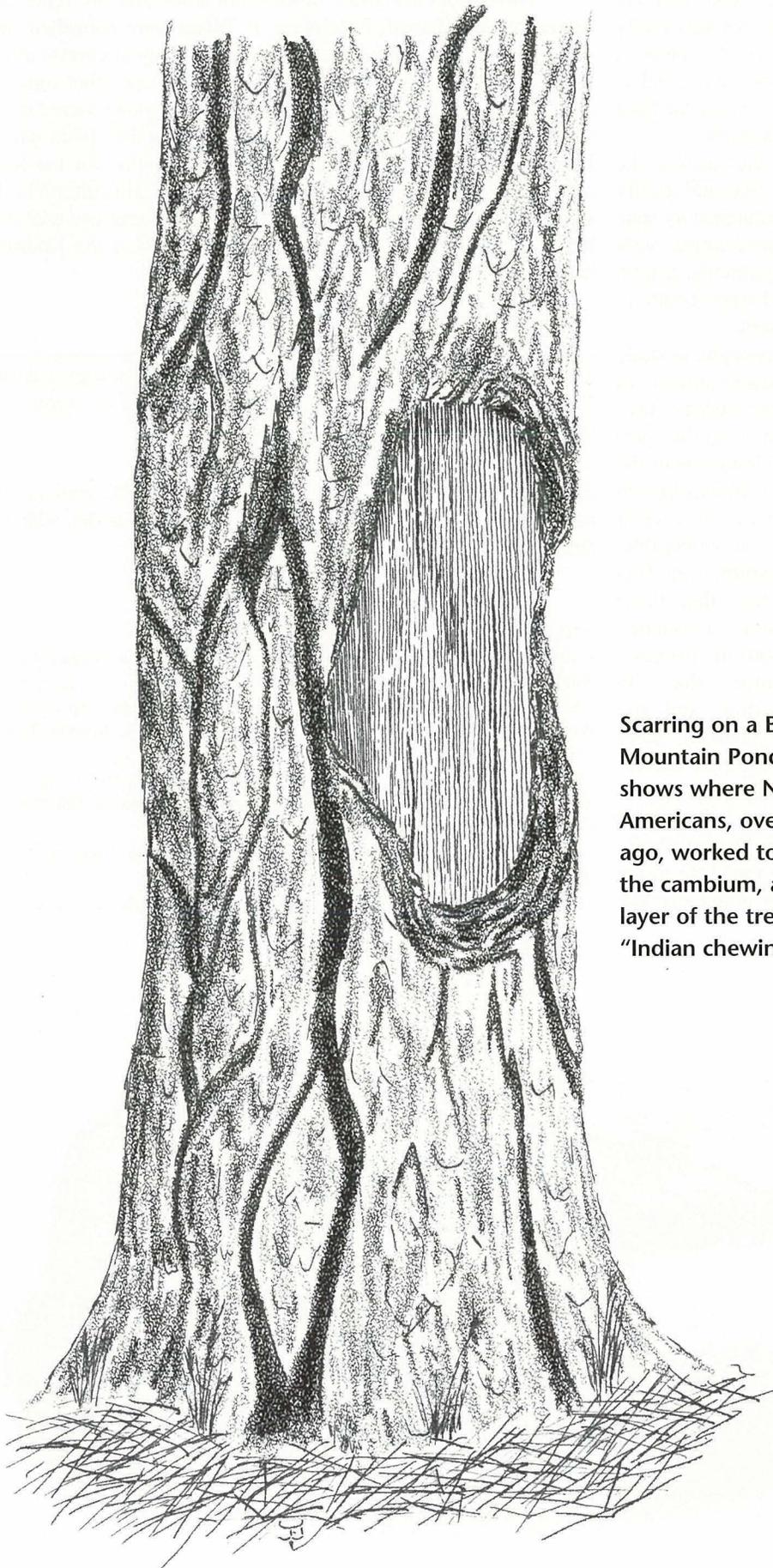
because they lived in a remote region of Modoc territory, separated from the more concentrated populations found near Tule Lake in Northern California.

During the harsh fall and winter months, the Kokiwas lived in permanent settlements that dotted the banks of the Lost River, stretching from the Olene Gap to the Langell Valley. In the spring and summer months they moved to camps in the mountainous areas of that region, where game was plentiful and mountain springs flowed freely into lush, wet meadows.

One of the primary food resources of the Modoc was the Ipos root, found in abundance in the meadows between the forested mountain ridges and the basaltic scab rock flats on Bryant Mountain. Here, nestled among massive boulders,



Illustrations by James Johnson



**Scarring on a Bryant Mountain Ponderosa Pine shows where Native Americans, over 140 years ago, worked to expose the cambium, an inner layer of the tree known as "Indian chewing gum."**

juniper trees, and mountain mahogany lie the remains of a prehistoric Ipos-root processing camp. Dozens of small grinding mortars dot the bedrock and boulders. These mortars were used for centuries to grind the root into thick paste.

Directly below the root-processing camp, on a forested ridge, the ground is speckled with thumbnail-sized obsidian flakes, and discarded obsidian tools and projectile points. At this site the Modoc manufactured scrapers, projectile points, drills, and other stone tools out of larger obsidian cores that were gathered from lava flows in the nearby Medicine Lake highlands. Typological dating techniques, used to analyze some of the older projectile points, found that they dated back 3,500 to 5,000 years. This data indicates the site was used by several generations of Modoc as a food processing and stone tool manufacturing site.

In another area of Bryant Mountain a 200-year-old Ponderosa Pine rises above the forest floor, bearing a scar three feet long and a foot wide. According to a

B.L.M. archaeologist, the scar was made about 140 years ago when Native Americans peeled away the rough outer layers of bark exposing the tender inner layer known as cambium. This sweet, chewy fiber was used as a food resource by the Modoc and is often referred to as "Indian chewing gum." The relative date of 140 years ago indicates use of

the area after the Modoc had come into contact with white settlers entering the region.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bryant Mountain is the evidence pointing to its spiritual importance to the Modoc. For centuries Native Americans have sought spiritual guidance by engaging in a ritual practice commonly referred to as the vision quest. For many native cultures across North America, the vision quest is considered a rite of passage, the final step a young man takes toward adulthood. The quest typically involved a short period of ritual fasting and steam bathing in a traditional sweat lodge, followed by a long, solitary journey into the wilderness. The regional manifestations of this process vary, but in most cases the participant then engaged in some form of

strenuous physical activity designed to illicit a hallucinatory dream-state from which a spirit guide could emerge.

The southern Oregon Modoc's version of the vision quest was commonly called a "Crisis Quest," because it was not necessarily undertaken as a rite of passage, but rather as a means of resolving a crisis in the life of an individual. The death of a spouse or relative, the birth or death of a child, or a serious illness are events that led a person to seek spiritual guidance through the Crisis Quest.

At Bryant Mountain, the Modoc piled and stacked the abundant basalt stones; after days of fasting, this rigorous activity further weakened the mind and body creating a hallucinatory state from which the Modoc believed they could achieve contact with the spirit world. Often the rocks were piled in a particular pattern such as a circle, a triangle, or the aforementioned serpent pattern; however, just as often there is no discernible pattern.

Only in the last decade have archaeologists begun to study and classify the material remains of the vision quest process. In the eyes of archaeologists these sites are unique because they represent one of the only sources of information about the "pre-historic" religious, spiritual, and cosmological ideologies of the native peoples of our region. In contrast to an archaeological site that is buried in the ground, these remnants of an ancient spiritual quest found on the earth's surface are vulnerable, exposed to both natural elements and human exploitation. It is

particularly important that these fragile sites remain untouched by the documentation process. Archaeologists hope that by analyzing the positions and site locations of these features, more can be learned about these ancient and enduring spiritual quests.

The wide range of cultural remains found at the Bryant Mountain site – from the mundane to the spiritual – leave no doubt that the

area truly represents what is now being called a "cultural landscape".

Throughout the course of the nomination process, representatives of the Klamath Federation of Tribes were consulted and asked to provide what information they could about current tribal use of the Bryant Mountain area. The tribe indicated that some of its religious practitioners frequented the area to gather sacred medicinal plants and to guide participants through the vision quest. Dino Herrera, the cultural site protection specialist for the Klamath Tribes, said that the proposed Bryant Mountain cultural landscape "has and continues to be an important cultural use area and historical marker in the long and unique history of the Klamath tribes." 🏠

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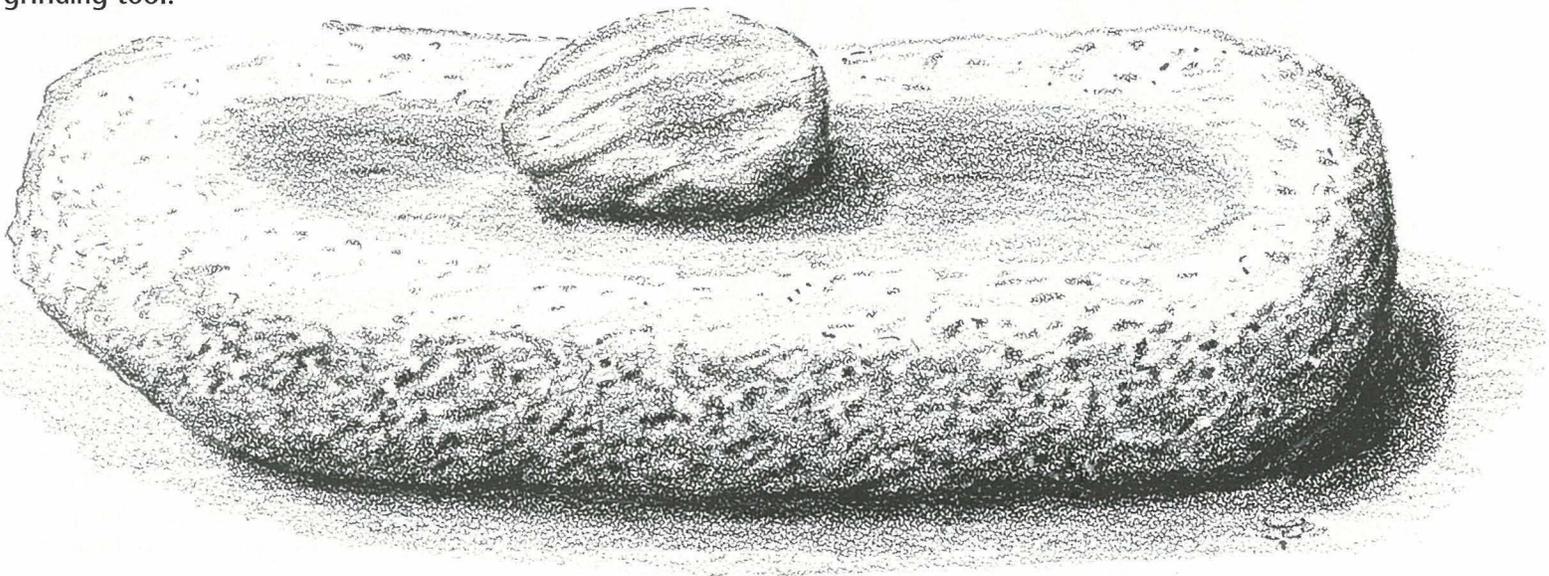
*Matt Goodwin is a freelance writer and anthropology student living in Ashland. He will attend graduate school at University of Oregon next year.*

*James Johnson is an anthropology student at S.O.S.C. and a technical illustrator. James has worked for The Society as Ben with the Beekman House living history program.*

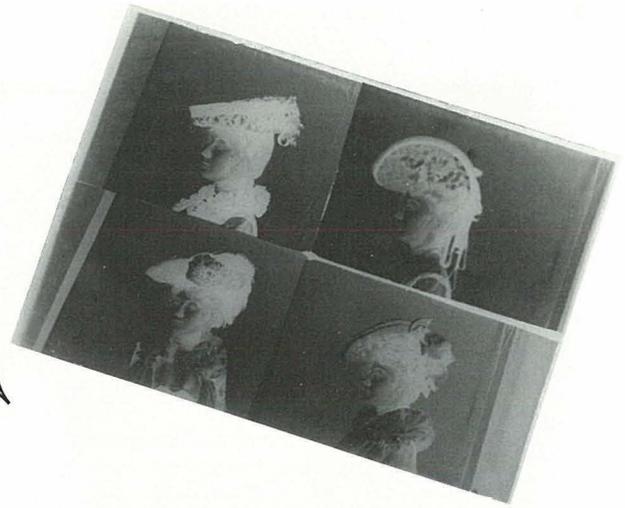
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**Boulders and bedrock at the Bryant Mountain site reveal dozens of small mortars worn into the stone used to grind the lpos root into a thick paste. Directly below the lpos root processing camp, projectile points have been found dating back 3,500 to 5,000 years. Pictured here is a basalt mano and metate used as a grinding tool.**



# Circle of Friends



*Select photos from the work of Anna and Ida Hargrove*

Ida and Anna Hargrove were two “progressive” sisters who set up a millinery shop in Ashland during the beginning of the 20th century. Single women were increasingly taking jobs as seamstresses, teachers, governesses, or nurses. The Hargrove sisters’ fashionable shop served the notables of Ashland with unusual success. The profits from the business were used to build one of the “finest cottages” in Ashland, and to pursue the hobby of photography.

It was perfectly fine for a woman to do a little needlepoint, dabble in watercolors, or be clever with a pencil sketch, but seriously pursuing a hobby like photography was simply not considered proper or feminine. The Hargrove sisters did not seem to care, and industriously set up their tripod anywhere they chose.

As the 19th Century came to a close, more and more women were attempting to enrich their lives by taking classes, both in educational settings, or in the home of experts. It is unclear who taught the Hargroves the techniques of glass plate negative photography. Next door to the millinery, was a photo studio boasting the “biggest skylight in southern Oregon, perhaps they picked up some technique there.

In a ten year span, Ida and Anna produced more than 250 glass plate negatives depicting Ashland, and its people and places at the turn of the century.

The images in this essay were culled from a selection recently conserved and printed by the Southern Oregon Historical Society through funds raised by Kay and Al Alsing of Ashland, and more than forty other contributors. These photos stand

apart from the more formal photos of the time in their candid intimacy. A sense of the ease and play that exists amongst female friends has been captured here. A circle of friends was essential to a woman’s well-being in restricted Victorian society. It was a place where a woman could be herself, let down her hair, and be creative and playful in ways that were not acceptable in society at large. 📷



Southern Oregon Historical Society # 5464

*Advances in technology opened up the world of photography to amateurs. Many of the sisters’ photos are focused around the millinery shop and the women who worked there. Here the women exhibit a playfulness and spirit heretofore not found in formal photography. Anna Hargrove at center to the left of divider. [If you are able to identify any of the people in the following photos, please call the Society’s Research Library, at (541) 773-6556.]*



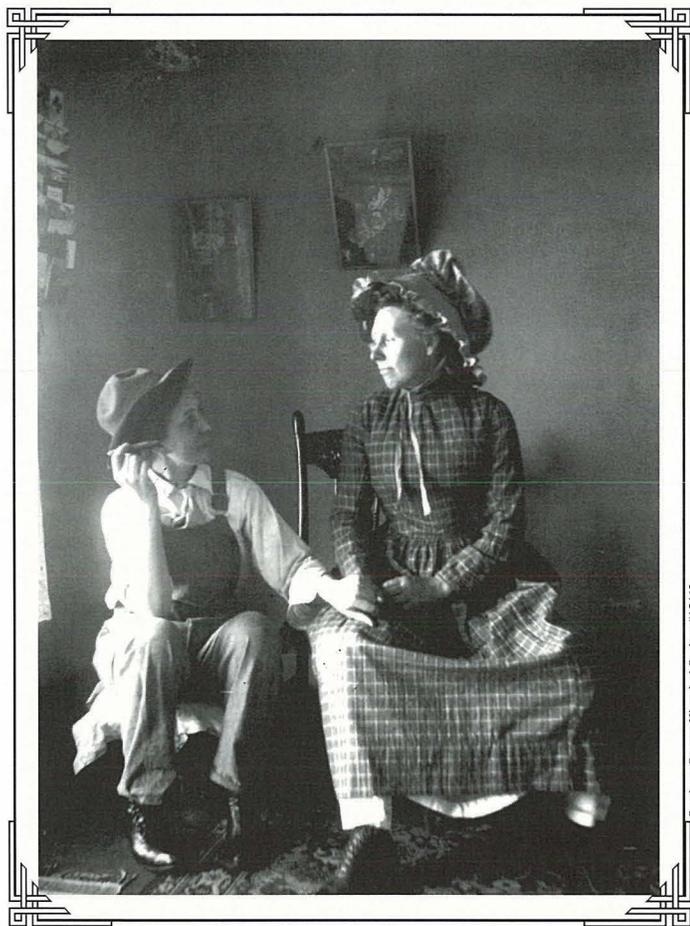
Southern Oregon Historical Society #15465

*Left: Ida Hargrove was a business owner and photographer; she strove for elegance and charm in both. A corner of the well-appointed millinery shop appears in the background. Ida married a well-to-do man (once an Ashland mayor), at the late age of 46. It appears that wifely duties took the place of photography, for no further photos can be documented past the date of her marriage in 1915.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15461

*Unlike the earlier wet-collodion process, dry plates allowed the photographer to take more photos in less time, and even move the camera between shots, allowing for more candid photography. This is one in a more relaxed and humorous series taken on a day the ladies decided to ham it up in costume.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15462

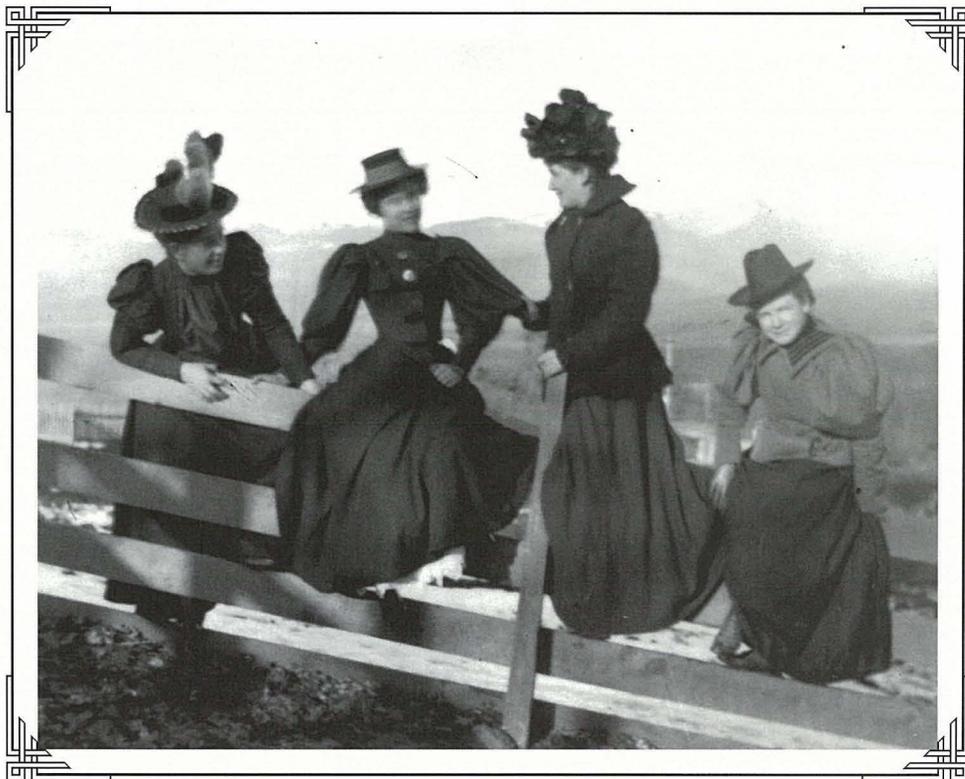
*Above: The pioneer couple in a pensive moment, cigar and all. Comical attire can't hide the friendship that shines through smiling eyes and a firmly-held hand clasp.*



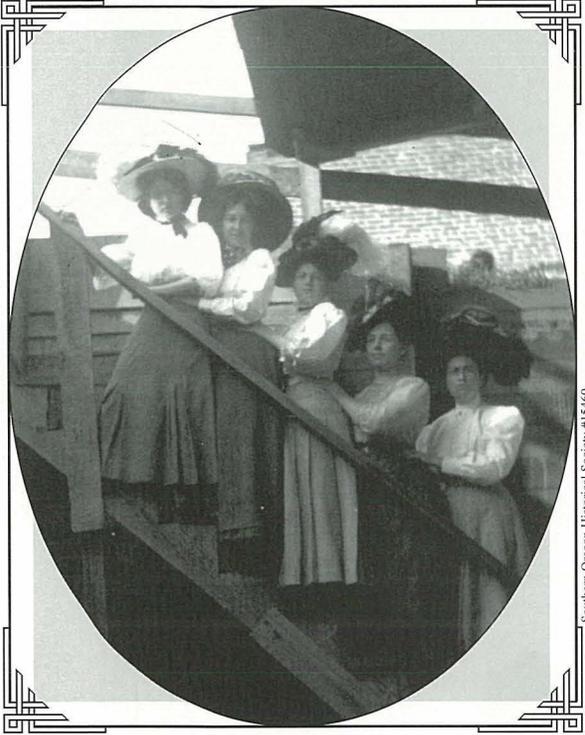
Southern Oregon Historical Society #2317

*Anna, called "progressive" by the Asbland Daily Tidings, became proprietress of the hat shop, and sole owner of the fine house, once Ida married. Anna never married, but was committed to the Asbland community, her friends, and her business.*

*Right: Dressed in heavy, dark wool, the women were properly outfitted for their day in the hills. Before 1890, dresses had long trains making movement out-of-doors difficult. The ladies were enjoying themselves, and their new freedom, despite what looks to us like cumbersome attire. Circa, 1898.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15466



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15460



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15459

*The photos above, and at left, show women in close physical contact with each other, laughing, smiling, proud, leaning back on each other, arms around shoulders. The Gibson Girl style line-up at left, on the back steps of the millinery, shows the women with their hands on each other's hips. In the photo below, taken on the grounds of the Britt home, the men and women are almost equally distant from each other. One woman is placed behind the bushes! When photographing men and women together, the sisters generally positioned men and women thus. The photo accentuates the difference in comportment when in mixed company.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15463



*Glass plate negatives.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society # 15167

*Ida (right) flaunting the latest fashions: expensive marabou feathers around her neck, ostrich feather in her upswept hat, and puffed sleeves, so large they often needed cushions for support. The women to her left are sporting new fur collars. Fur, previous to the Russian Tsar's visit to Paris in 1900, had only been worn by men, and only on the inside of their coats. Circa 1900.*



Southern Oregon Historical Society #2259

*Above: A carefully composed, intimate photo—rare at a time when serious art for women was not encouraged. Aware of European fashions and trends, the sisters may have been influenced by Edgar Degas, whose controversial paintings of “common” women at the bath were hung at both the 1890 and 1900 Paris Exhibitions.*

# Ben Hur Lampman's Poetry of Fishing

by Josh Paddison

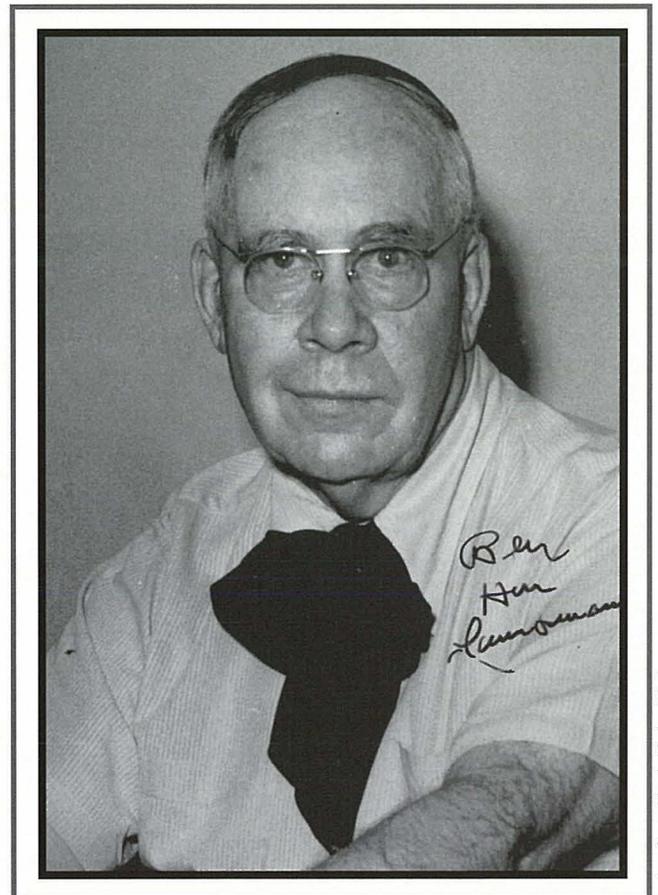
“For time beyond reckoning men have fished such pools as this, and though they have taken many fishes, and mourned the loss of not a few, deep down within them—deeper far than any loitering of waters, where Schooner Creek dreams of the sea—they understand that it is but clouds they catch, and the conversations of birds, and the fragrance of fern, and something else that eludes definition. The pursued. The pursuing. That which is taken and yet lost.”

— Ben Hur Lampman, “Up Schooner Creek”<sup>1</sup>

The day was finally here. It was hot but no one minded; they just went for a dip in the nearby Rogue River to cool down. The aroma of barbecued salmon hung in the air as nearly all of Gold Hill’s six-hundred residents turned up at the park on this Saturday afternoon. The morning’s parade was over, the champions of the baseball games, races, and tobacco-spitting contests all crowned. All that was left was the guest of honor’s speech. The date was June 21, 1947, and everybody within hollering distance knew today was Ben Hur Lampman Day.

Then the speeches began, each as complimentary and affectionate as the last. Palmer Hoyt, publisher of the *Denver Post*, was the principal speaker, but many others got a chance to give tribute, including Oregon governor Earl Snell, Gold Hill mayor Ralph E. Bell, *Oregonian* general manager M. J. Frey, ex-Governor Oswald West, and several of Lampman’s peers from the worlds of journalism and poetry.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Ben Hur Lampman stood to make some comments and read a few of his poems. A balding, bespectacled man a month shy of his sixtieth birthday, Lampman wore an expensive



Ben Hur Lampman, Oregon’s Poet Laureate from 1951 to 1954, was a Gold Hill resident for several years. He was an avid fisherman who spoke and wrote often of his favorite holes on the Rogue River.

Southern Oregon Historical Society MS-13

suit complete with his trademark artist's cravat around his neck. He spoke fondly of the Rogue River and his days long ago in Gold Hill.

"Sometimes I wonder if leaving Gold Hill wasn't a mistake," he told the crowd. "There is no more beautiful place in all the world than this section of the Rogue River, and a fellow could always go out and catch a fish."<sup>3</sup>

Catching fish became a priority for Ben Hur Lampman at age five, when he first learned to tie a fly and choose a lure. He was born in Barron, Wisconsin and grew to appreciate the patient sport of fishing at an early age. His father was a printer and newspaperman; at his knee, Ben also learned the beauty of a well-turned phrase and the power of a particularly vivid descriptive sentence.<sup>4</sup>



Ben Hur Lampman, left, relaxes with Fletcher Bower and others at Bowers Pharmacy in Gold Hill, circa 1916. Although he only stayed in southern Oregon for four years, the poet (and his attire) no doubt left a lasting impression with the townspeople.

In 1891, the Lampman family moved to Neche, North Dakota where Ben's father founded a new community newspaper. With this example in mind, at age nineteen, Ben and a friend dropped out of high school and started their own newspaper, the *Michigan, North Dakota Arena*.<sup>5</sup> It was here that

Lampman developed his imagistic writing style filled with poetic touches and understated humor.

In his twenties, Lampman married a young high school teacher from New York named Lena Sheldon and together they started a family. They had four children, but one son died during infancy. Perhaps this loss spurred Ben and Lena to leave the Midwest and move to Oregon in 1912.<sup>6</sup>

Lampman got a job editing the *Gold Hill News*, a small newspaper with five hundred subscribers and an irregular printing schedule. Readers often had to wait a

few days for their paper while Lampman finished fishing a newly discovered stretch of the Rogue, or convinced the printer to float him that issue's printing cost until advertisers' money came in. Lampman's column, "Overdrafts, Secured and Unsecured," was immediately popular and won him a job as the Gold Hill correspondent for the *Medford Mail Tribune*.<sup>7</sup>

Lampman only stayed four years in Gold Hill before being lured to Portland by a job in the news department of the *Oregonian*. This quickly led to a promotion to the editorial page, where Lampman's editorials appeared daily for nearly thirty-five years. His gentle tone and

“T here is a thirst for rivers that is like to the hunger for the sea—and the hunger is not physical. . . . For rivers are life itself. They are the full and vital veins of a planet that otherwise would be waste and desolate. But rivers are as much for the thirst of the spirit as for the thirst of the sod.”

– Ben Hur Lampman  
“On Revisiting a Very Friendly River”

Southern Oregon Historical Society #5242

descriptive passages proved fabulously popular with readers and critics alike.<sup>8</sup>

Over the years, Lampman proved himself as prolific as he was popular, turning out hundreds of essays, editorials, stories and poems. His works appeared in the *New York Times*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Nature*, *Sunset*, and *Reader's Digest*. His poems and essays have been collected in no less than ten anthologies, including the O. Henry memorial volumes. He received an honorary Master of Arts from the University of Oregon in 1943, and an honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Portland in 1947.

Lampman's rich, lyrical language and obvious love for the people and places of the Pacific Northwest brought his writing regional and national recognition. "How wonderful it is to find in his editorials this human spirit that doesn't scold . . . but freshly, cheerfully, with nostalgia, points to the richness around us . . . that touches the culture present in all readers," said Alfred Powers, Oregon Higher Education's dean of creative writing.<sup>9</sup> In 1951, Lampman was named Oregon's Poet Laureate, the highest honor the state can bestow on a poet.<sup>10</sup>

Fishing was a theme that surfaced again and again in Lampman's writing. He glorified the skilled patience of the fisherman and the unbridled joy of the sport. "When a fisherman meets a fisherman those two are aware of an abiding brotherhood, of a pleasant mystery shared with one another . . ." he wrote. "They are learned in a knowledge that comes, gradually and pervasively, of intimacy with field and river, and morning mists and the cow-bell hush of a soft evening. And they hail one another as comrades

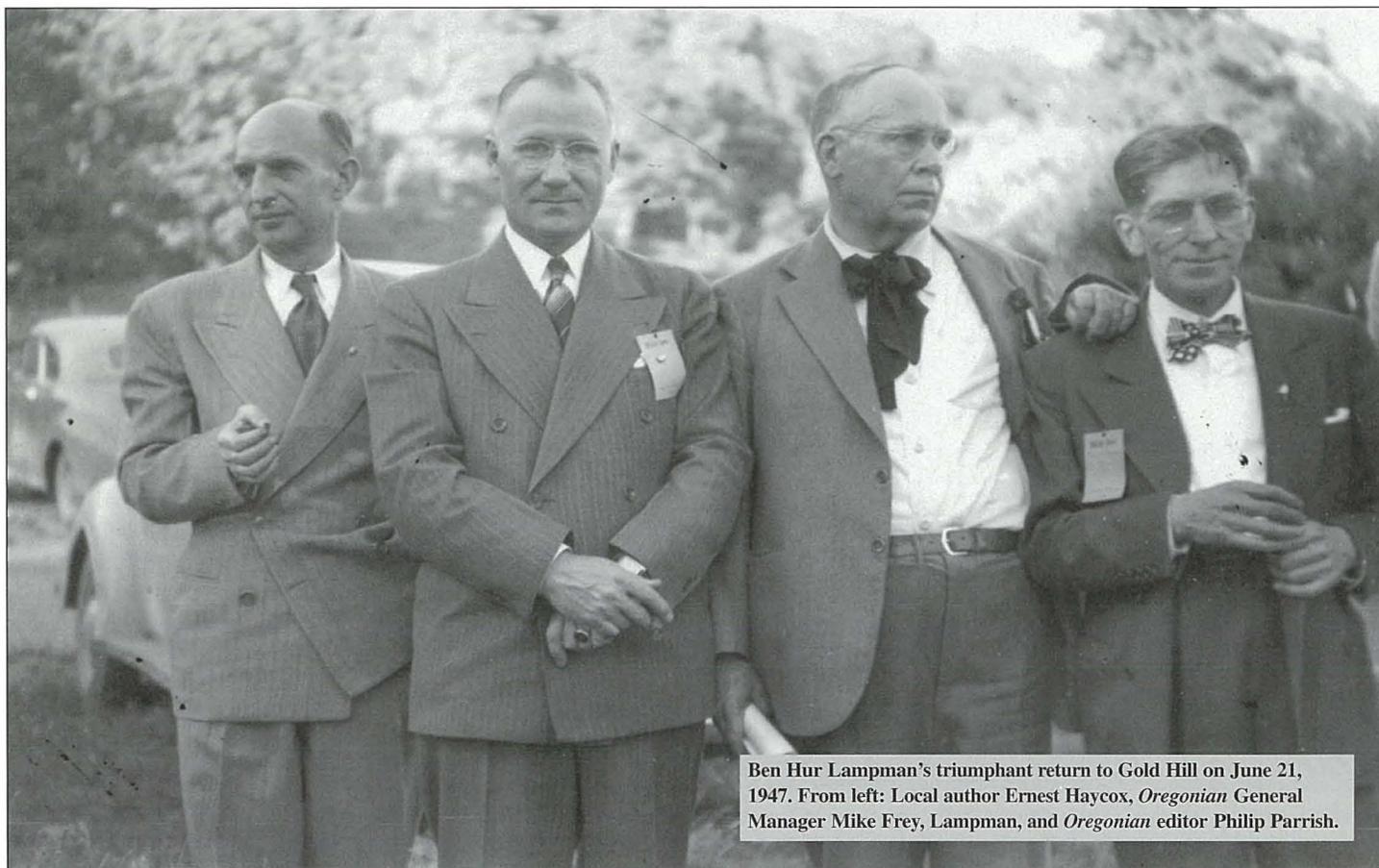
should, and even their silences are vocal and instructive."<sup>11</sup>

He died January 24, 1954, after two years of cerebral hemorrhages finally put an end to his daily editorials.<sup>12</sup> It was the only lengthy period of time since moving to Oregon that he did not spend either writing or fishing.

But seven years earlier, surrounded by friends, peers, and acquaintances, Lampman was back in Gold Hill for Ben Hur Lampman Day. After his speech, the closing ceremony included the official naming of Ben Hur Lampman Park, a stretch of grass and trees appropriately located on the bank of his beloved Rogue River. 📌

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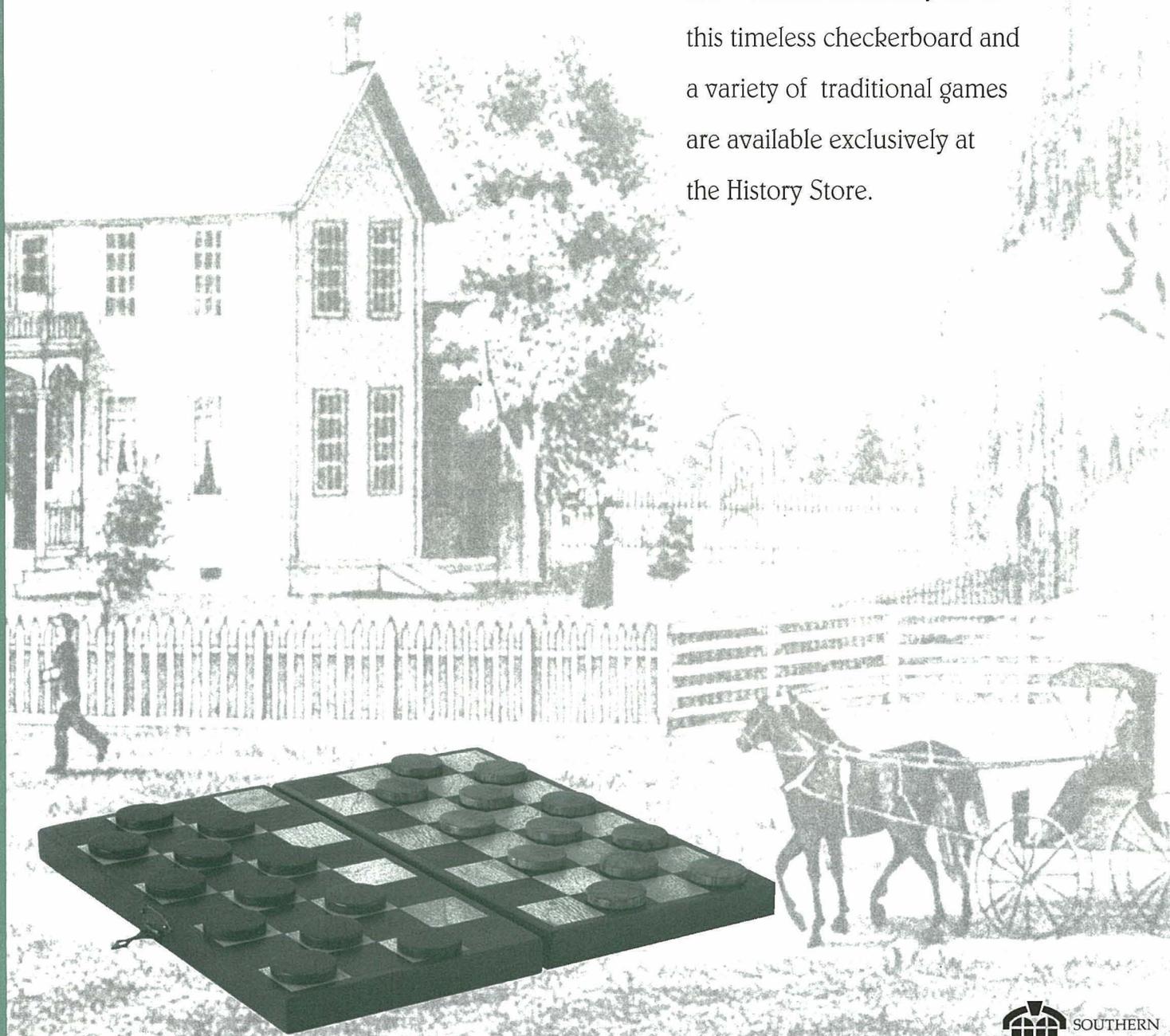
Ben Hur Lampman's triumphant return to Gold Hill on June 21, 1947. From left: Local author Ernest Haycox, *Oregonian* General Manager Mike Frey, Lampman, and *Oregonian* editor Philip Parrish.

Southern Oregon Historical Society MS-13

# *Timeless Traditions...*

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# GEORGE A. HUNT, MEDFORD IMPRESARIO,

AND  
THE

# CRATERIAN THEATER

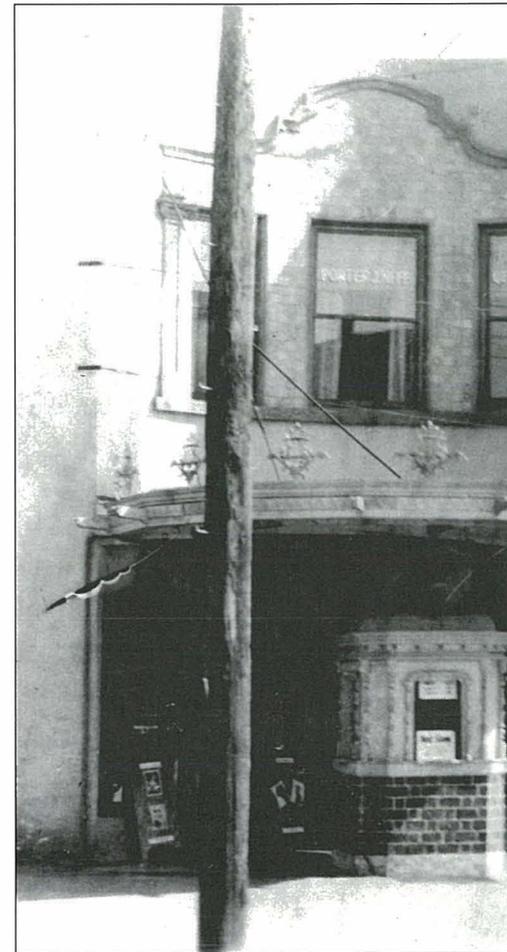
by William Alley

**M**edford's Craterian theater will soon begin its latest incarnation as the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater. Perhaps now would be a good time to go back and take a look at this local landmark in its earlier days as one of the premiere entertainment facilities in the state of Oregon. The story of the Craterian, however, is more than just the chronicle of a single building; it is also the tale of one man's efforts to bring quality entertainment to the people of the Rogue Valley.

George A. Hunt came to Medford in 1910 to manage the new Natatorium. In 1919 he formed the George A Hunt Theater Company to manage the little Liberty theater. By the end of the year Hunt had acquired control of the Rialto and Page theaters. He immediately began to remodel the Page and upgrade its obsolete motion picture equipment.

All were in agreement that the Hunt organization had spared no expense to create, in the Page, a theater of which all southern Oregon could be proud. Its loss to fire in the closing days of 1923, therefore, dealt a serious blow to the community. Almost immediately there was talk of either rebuilding the Page, or building a new theater to take its place. *Medford Mail Tribune* editor Robert Ruhl, in a January 11 editorial, echoed the sentiments that "Medford must have a good theater. If it can't be built in one way, it can be built in some other. The idea of abandoning the idea entirely is unthinkable."

Ultimately, the decision was made to abandon the Page in favor of an entirely new structure, on the corner of Central Avenue and 8th Street. Local attorney Porter J. Neff and businessman J. C. Cooley financed the construction of a new building. Designed by Frank Clark, this new building would house the new theater along with Central Avenue storefronts, and

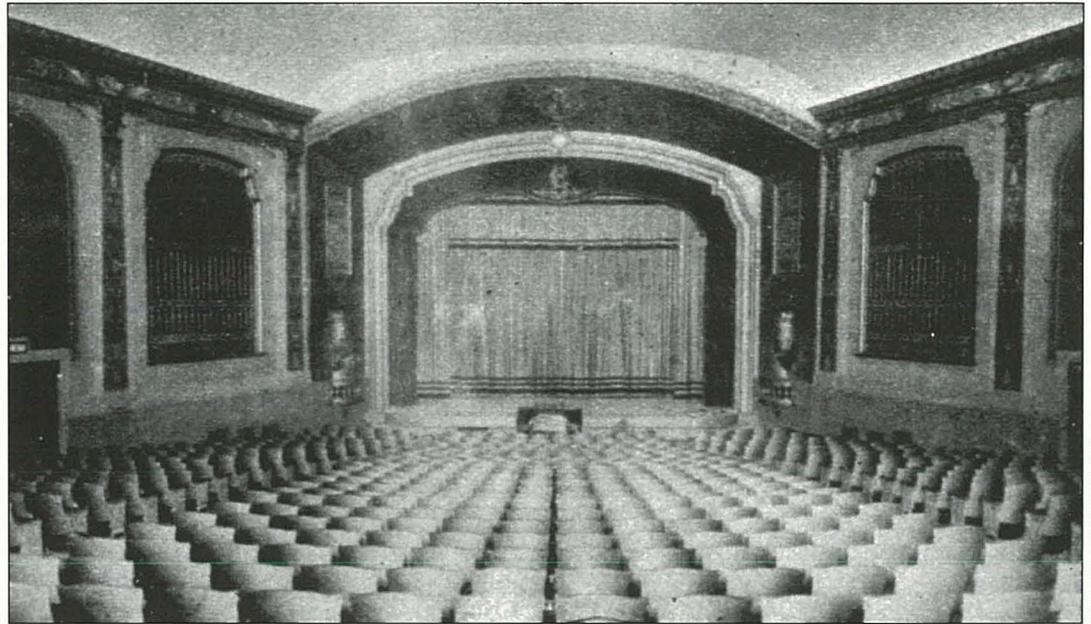


Detail of Southern Oregon Historical Society #4242

offices on the second story. The theater space was leased to the George A. Hunt Theater Company.

Clark's design called for a facade of plain stucco in the Spanish Colonial style. Construction began on March 31, 1924, and Hunt had a large billboard erected along the front of the newly excavated site. "A new theater for the George A. Hunt Company, Inc.," the billboard read. "It isn't going to cost a million dollars. It isn't going to be as large as the New York Hippodrome. It isn't going to be as elaborate as the new Chicago theater. It isn't going to be heralded to the skies before it is finished." It was, however, going to generate a great deal of interest.

In addition to Clark's design, the interior decoration was provided by B. F. Shearer Company of Seattle. As construction



View of the auditorium at Hunt's Craterian in 1925, showing the giant Wurlitzer console in the pit in front of the stage. Equipped with an elevator platform, the organ console could be raised to the level of the stage.

Jackson County News 1 JAN 1926

progressed on the new building, George and Enid Hunt, sensing the marketing potential in determining a new name for the theater, hit upon the idea of seeking the public's participation in the selection process. In the May 10, 1924, issue of the *Mail Tribune* a small advertisement appeared soliciting suggestions for a name for the new theater. A cash prize of twenty-five dollars was offered for the winning moniker. Two weeks later, Hunt and his associates had selected the winning name out of a field of over fifteen hundred entries. Mrs. W. P. Brooks suggested that the common theater name Criterion be altered to Craterian because of Medford's close association with nearby Crater Lake. That name was then coupled with the theater's promoter to become "Hunt's Craterian." Mrs. Brooks later admitted that her husband had assisted in thinking up the winning entry; out of the prize money he would receive a good ten-cent cigar. The new name was an instant hit.

An indication that construction was entering its final phase was the delivery and installation of the Craterian's new electric sign. At twenty-nine feet in height, the top of the pylon-style sign featured the name "Hunt's" in ten-inch letters and "Craterian" spelled out vertically below it. Across the bottom was a section with removable letters for advertising the theater's current attraction. The perimeter of the sign and "Craterian" were highlighted with electric lights, regulated by a high-powered flasher for evening illumination. When asked about the cost of the new sign, Hunt responded, "Too much, too much!"

As construction neared completion, it was announced that the opening date for the new theater would be October 20, 1924. On October 1, installation



Hunt's Craterian in the mid-1920s. The law offices of Porter J. Neff are visible above the box office.

Southern Oregon Historical Society #8935

of the newly arrived seats began. The blue leather seat cushions with black backs had been designed to complement the blue-and-grey color scheme chosen for the Craterian's interior design.

The opening performance of the play *The Havoc*, starring Elliott Dexter, a popular star of both stage and screen, was booked. Advance sales indicated that the event would be a sell-out.

On opening day all was ready at the new Hunt's Craterian. Interest in the theater was widespread, and the local papers provided their readers with detailed accounts on the building and its interior appointments. The new Craterian had a seating capacity of 1187 people, in a town whose 1920 population was a mere 6000

inhabitants. In addition to the seating on the main floor and loge, Hunt's Craterian also incorporated two new innovations in theater design utilized in the larger cities. The first was a private viewing room containing "comfortable wicker chairs, two beautiful parlor lamps, smoking sets and other conveniences. The room will be available at all times for private parties for any performance, and is the only one in which smoking will be permitted." The second innovation incorporated into the Craterian's design was the "crying room." The crying room was a soundproof, glass-enclosed viewing room where mothers with infants and young children could



Courtesy Medford Mail Tribune

Detail of Betty Brown from a Medford Mail Tribune ad. Betty's talent at the Wurlitzer keyboard was a draw in itself.

enjoy the performances without disturbing the other patrons.

Guests attending the opening purchased their tickets at a free-standing ticket booth under the marquee. After crossing the tile entryway and lobby, the main foyer draped in blue with gold trim awaited. Niches in the walls filled with vases of fresh cut flowers added to the elegance of the surroundings.

Opening night was an unqualified success. Prior to the play, the audience was treated to a performance by Grace "Betty" Brown on the new Wurlitzer organ. All were duly impressed as the giant organ, with the young Betty at the keyboard, slowly rose from the pit to the stage level on an elevator platform, reportedly the first in any theater west of Chicago. Additional music was provided by Wilson Waite's Craterian Orchestra.

An additional, unannounced highlight followed. George Hunt took the stage and introduced to the audience Lieutenants Lowell Smith, Leigh Wade, and Eric Nelson. These three young men were part of the United States Army's around-the-world flight team, whose progress the nation had closely followed in their newspapers the previous summer. Hunt's wife Enid, the secretary-treasurer and advertising manager for the Hunt Theater Company, resisted all attempts to be coaxed on stage and remained in her seat, allowing her husband to receive all the accolades.

Following the success of the opening "legitimate" (live theater) play, Hunt planned a motion picture premiere, when all of the Craterian's new movie-house capabilities would be highlighted. In order to provide the latest in motion picture technology, the Craterian was equipped with a pair of Simplex model 1925 projectors, reportedly the first

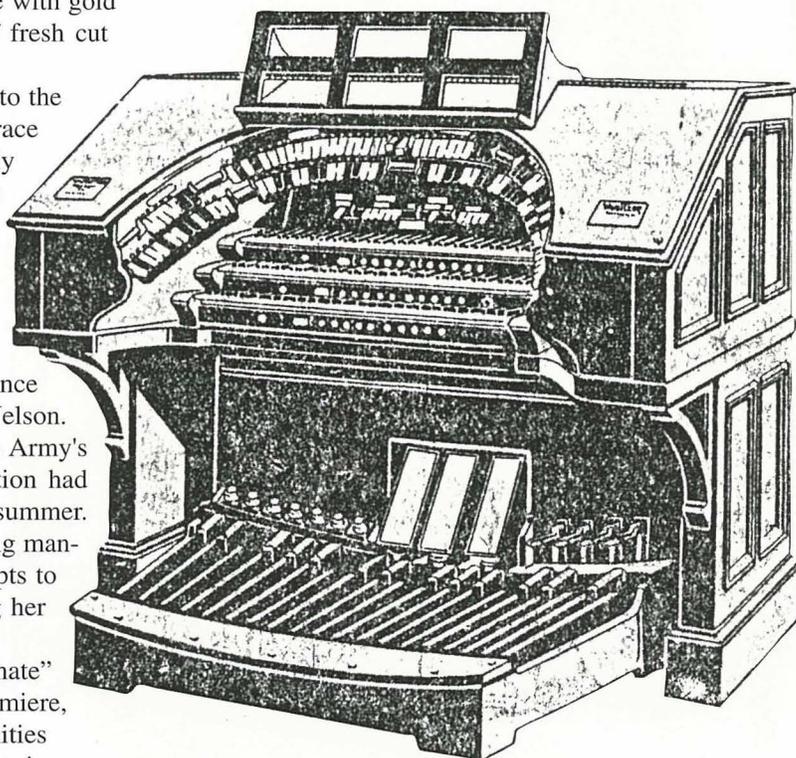
delivered to a West Coast theater. These new projectors were equipped with the latest fireproofing design to prevent the ignition of the volatile nitrate film stock used at that time.

The first photoplay to show at Hunt's Craterian was *In Hollywood*, a comedy that had just played in Portland. The feature was preceded with a short called *The Chase*, a Pathe newsreel, and a Felix the Cat cartoon. Betty Brown provided the musical accompaniment on the Wurlitzer.

With a successful opening behind him, Hunt carried on with his established routine. Films were booked throughout the week, and Wednesday night featured a vaudeville bill, supplied by the Orpheum's Western Vaudeville Association circuit. When possible, legitimate theatrical acts were booked, usually for a single night. Medford's location halfway between San Francisco and Portland proved advantageous for such bookings. It was not uncommon for an act enroute between those two cities to stop off in Medford to play a one night-stand.

During this early period there was one vaudeville act that would have an impact nearly seventy years later. A fifteen-year-old girl, who had recently won the honors as Texas Charleston Champion, was the lead act on the Wednesday night vaudeville bill on April 21, 1926. Her name was Ginger Rogers. "Miss Rogers," the *Mail Tribune* wrote, "is a winsome little miss with captivating mannerisms and a pair of feet that make the most intricate dances seem easy."

In 1928, Hunt made some major upgrades in the Craterian's equipment. Sound was making its entrance into motion pictures and Hunt wanted the Craterian equipped with the latest in sound technology. \$20,000 was invested to install sound equipment. Since two different patented recording systems, Vitaphone and Movietone, were being used in the early days of talking pictures,



Courtesy Medford Mail Tribune

An impromptu parade followed Hunt's gigantic new Wurlitzer into town. Installed in Hunt's Craterian, the Wurlitzer was the quintessence of drama and glamour, especially during the era of silent movies.

**“The audience was obviously enraptured when it actually heard the first sound of a human voice in the show, and there was considerable craning of necks [sic] among the spectator-auditors as they endeavored to make sure they were not being tricked by some ‘real’ actors planted somewhere on the stage.”**

Hunt had to install equipment for both systems in his theater. When the installation was completed, the Hunts launched a major advertising campaign promoting the coming of talking pictures. The *Mail Tribune* carried a full two-page spread advertising the new technology in a special section that also included two pages of congratulatory advertisements from local merchants.

The first talking motion picture booked to play the newly wired Hunt's Craterian was the highly acclaimed 1927 hit *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson. In order to accommodate all who wanted to see the show, it was booked for a six-day engagement with four showings per day, beginning on May 25, 1928. Accustomed as we are today to high fidelity and digitized stereo sound at the movies, it is difficult to imagine the sense of wonder audiences of 1928 must have experienced at hearing their favorite screen stars speak for the first time. “Although warned through newspapers and advanced publicity of the nature of Vitaphone,” the review in the *Mail Tribune* reported the following day, “the

audience was obviously enraptured when it actually heard the first sound of a human voice in the show, and there was considerable craning of necks [sic] among the spectator-auditors as they endeavored to make sure they were not being tricked by some ‘real’ actors planted somewhere on the stage.”

The introduction of talking pictures did not, at first, have an impact on the regular vaudeville performances at the Craterian, although by 1929 they had been moved from Wednesday to Sunday nights. There was also still the occasional legitimate booking. Hunt's Craterian also provided a stage for local entertainment. Community events and dance school recitals were not an uncommon occurrence at the Craterian, and the hall was regularly used by the high school for its commencements.

But as sound movies became more of the norm, the end drew near for vaudeville. The Association Vaudeville circuit was replaced in 1929 by Fanchon and Marco productions. In order to attract a waning audience, their productions and promotions tended to be a bit more risqué and featured more girls. With waning ticket sales for the vaudeville acts, Hunt indulged in some creative marketing. George Johnson recalled how he and some of his pilot friends had been hired by Hunt to drop flyers for the Fanchon and Marco show from their airplane. In return they were provided with free passes for the shows.

George and Enid Hunt rarely missed an opportunity to promote their theaters. In 1929 Hunt received a telegram from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. “Can you secure for us about three dozen wooly caterpillars, needed urgently for picture. Reply collect.” Hunt immediately contacted county fruit inspector Elmer Oatman and, of course, the local newspapers. The required larvae were then rounded up and shipped to Hollywood.

When a new air conditioning system was installed in June of 1929, Hunt's Craterian advertisements proclaimed, “We manufacture our own climate. Every breath of air you breathe in this theater is washed and chilled in Medford's Million Dollar Water.” By mid-July, Hunt's Craterian



Vaudeville attempted to compete with talking pictures, by adding more “girls” to the show.



Southern Oregon Historical Society #4267

Projection booth at the Craterian, probably in the 1980s shortly before the theater closed.

was advertising itself as “the coolest spot in town.” Replacing the old ventilating system with a new air conditioner was not the only change Hunt made in 1929. The old advertising curtain that was installed in 1924 was replaced with a new one in September. Without any advance fanfare or publicity, audiences were treated to a new advertising curtain that would drop down over the screen between attractions. This curtain portrayed scenes of Medford as it was expected to appear in the future year of 1957. Buildings featured on the curtain displayed signs naming area businesses that had paid for advertisements.

Hunt made another addition to the crown jewel of his theater chain at about this same time. A new sign appeared that spanned Central Avenue, reading “Hunt’s Craterian.” It was a replacement for the original pylon sign that went up when the theater opened in 1924.

Fall of 1929 saw another unannounced change in the Hunt



Effective January 24, 1932, admission at the Fox Craterian would be lowered to thirty cents in the evening and twenty cents for matinees for all seats. No longer would there be separate charges for the different sections of the theater, such as the loge seats. Admission for children would be a dime for all performances. The Holly, the Craterian’s major competitor in Medford, at first refused to go along with any reduction in admission prices, but eventually it was forced to meet Fox’s prices.

The Craterian continued to serve as more than just a movie theater. As the region’s premiere entertainment center (the Holly notwithstanding), community events and graduations continued to be held there. Sebastian Apollo had inherited the mantle as featured solo organist from Betty Brown, and held concerts before feature shows, as well as programs for broadcast on local radio stations.

In February, 1933, Fox’s new manager for the Craterian, James Carey, announced another drop in ticket prices. Tickets for matinees would cost fifteen cents and evening showings would cost twenty-five cents for all seats. Children’s admission remained



The Craterian sign once spanned Central Avenue. This photo was taken in 1950, after Hunt’s name had been removed.

Theater Company. On September 20, the *Mail Tribune* reported that Hunt had sold his interest in his theater chain to the Fox West Coast Theater Company. Jules Reisman, resident manager for West Coast, assured patrons that there would be “no radical change from the policy set by Mr. Hunt.” One change was made, however: an end to the weekly vaudeville programs. Across the nation the vaudeville circuit had fallen victim to changing tastes, radio, and talking pictures. Medford was no exception.

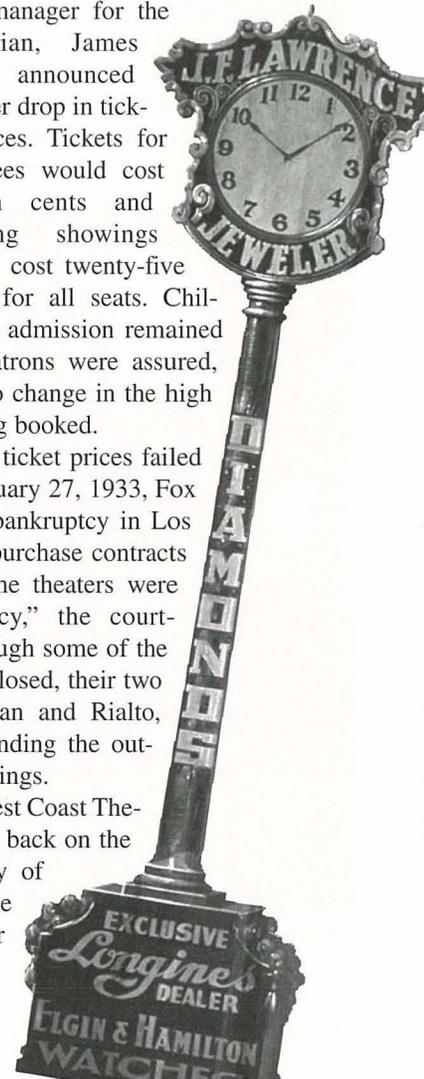
Motion picture theaters were not immune to the adverse economic climate ushered in with the Great Depression. As attendance declined, theater managers struggled to lure in customers. At the Craterian, now known as the “Fox Craterian,” numerous promotions were held to attract customers. Local managers for the Fox chain, however, lacked the flair for promotion that the Hunt organization had possessed; in comparison, their advertising now seems flat and lifeless.

Promotions alone, however, were not enough to turn the tide of the Depression. In January 1932 Jack Retlaw, new manager of the Fox theaters, announced a new policy on admission prices.

“kids a dime all the time.” Patrons were assured, however, that there would be no change in the high quality of first run features being booked.

Fox’s actions in lowering ticket prices failed to increase attendance. On February 27, 1933, Fox West Coast Theaters filed for bankruptcy in Los Angeles. “High rentals, costly purchase contracts and low admission prices in the theaters were responsible for the insolvency,” the court-appointed receiver stated. Although some of the theaters in the Fox chain were closed, their two Medford locations, the Craterian and Rialto, remained open for business pending the outcome of the bankruptcy proceedings.

After selling out to Fox West Coast Theaters in 1929, George Hunt was back on the scene in 1933. The bankruptcy of Fox West Coast Theaters led the federal bankruptcy court to order





Detail of Southern Oregon Historical Society #15449

the cancellation of their leases, with all their theaters turned over to their previous operators. Hunt was back. "We will continue to operate the theaters much as they have been operated," Hunt said in an interview, "and will show only the best pictures available. No drastic changes will be made, at least for the present."

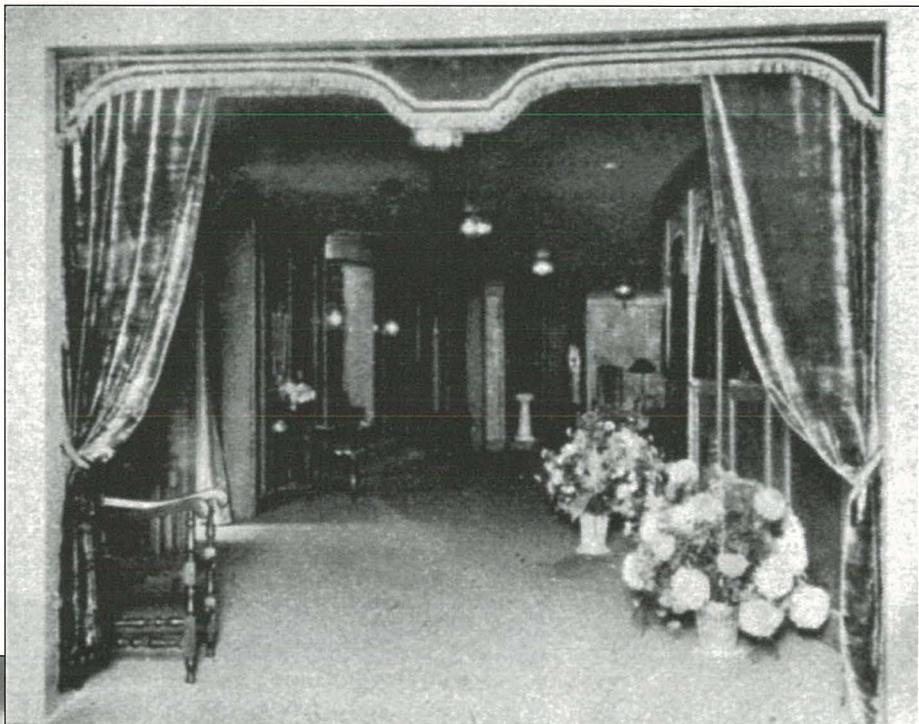
News that Hunt had reacquired the Craterian and Rialto theaters, and that he was returning to Medford to live, was well received in the Rogue Valley. The friends he had made and the goodwill he had generated during his previous residence here were rekindled. To demonstrate their support and express their best wishes to the builder of the Craterian, a number of local business people banded together and took out a full-page ad in the *Mail Tribune*. "Welcome Home, George!" the headline read. "A Great Showman! An Outstanding Citizen! A Great Fellow!"

In the fall of 1936 the Craterian was closed for an extensive remodeling, updating and expanding the redecorating job undertaken by Fox in 1931. The B. F. Shearer Company, which had been in charge of the original decorating of Hunt's Craterian back

in 1924, was brought in again in 1936 and completely redecorated the theater. So extensive was the remodeling that Shearer took out an ad stating, "The only thing left of the old Craterian Theater is the name 'Craterian' and the spirit and organization of George A. Hunt."

A newer, simpler decor, more in keeping with contemporary tastes, was installed, along with an entirely new lighting system. The grand scale of the remodel also provided much needed employment to local business concerns. The Giant Wurlitzer was not overlooked during the remodeling. It was completely refurbished and tuned.

Booked for the grand opening of the "New Craterian" was the motion picture *After the Thin Man*, starring William Powell



Jackson County News 1 JAN 1926



Southern Oregon Historical Society #4247

Above: The Craterian lobby as it appeared in 1925, showing the original design of the B. F. Shearer Co. Left: The lobby as it appeared after several remodelings, circa 1948.

and Myrna Loy. Again Hunt pulled out all the stops in promoting his theater. A special eight-page section, including six pages of congratulatory advertisements and press releases, appeared in the *Mail Tribune*. There was even a half page of reprints of congratulatory telegrams Hunt had received from such luminaries as William Powell, Myrna Loy, Deanna Durbin, and executives from Warner Bros., 20th Century Fox, Universal, and Republic film studios.

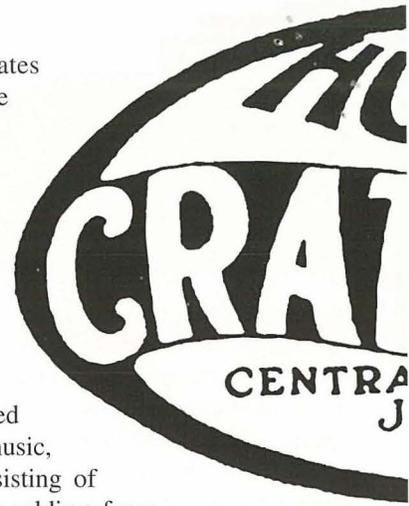
Long lines formed at the box office for the opening of the "New Craterian" on December 27, 1936. "A fresh new and most attractive foyer" greeted the patrons who, the *Mail Tribune* reminded its readers, came to

see a movie, “not to see statuary, gold fish bowls or have some ultra-modernistic filigree hit them in the eye.” Tastes had changed considerably in the twelve years since

Hunt’s Craterian opened with its alcoves, wall niches, gold trim, and other 1920s decorative features. Hunt managed his New Craterian much as he had when it was known as Hunt’s Craterian. In addition to the regular movie fare, Hunt continued to use his theaters to promote community events. Charles K. Cox, Salvation Army Adjutant in southern Oregon, hit upon the idea of using the Boy Scout camp at Lake of the Woods for a week long summer camp for underprivileged children. After discussing the project with Hunt, the latter decided that his theater chain would

After the United States entered the war in 1941, the theater served as a venue for war bond drives. One such drive was the Fourth War Loan Bond Premiere held in 1944. Arrangements had been made to secure an advance copy of the Cary Grant movie *Destination Tokyo* for a one night showing. Also booked was “90 minutes of laughs, music, and Camp White fun,” consisting of music and acts performed by soldiers from the nearby army training facility. Admission to this screen premiere and stage show was limited to purchasers of “Series E” bonds. Management’s pledge to sell at least one bond for every seat sold was met and exceeded.

Tragedy struck the Hunt family and the George A. Hunt Theater Company in 1943. On August 31, George Hunt and a young man named Lowell Fleser collided at the intersection of McAndrews and Summit Avenue in Medford. The fifty-eight-year-old Hunt was killed instantly. Fleser was not seriously injured. An editorial by Robert Ruhl echoed the sentiments of the entire community when he expressed how “STUNNED” all were on learning of Hunt’s death. “Not only was George Hunt a sort of ‘institution’ in Medford . . . but it is literally true no resident of the city through the many years he lived here, had more loyal and more varied friends,” Ruhl eulogized. “Young and old, rich and poor, the wise and those not so wise—all it seemed—knew George Hunt and

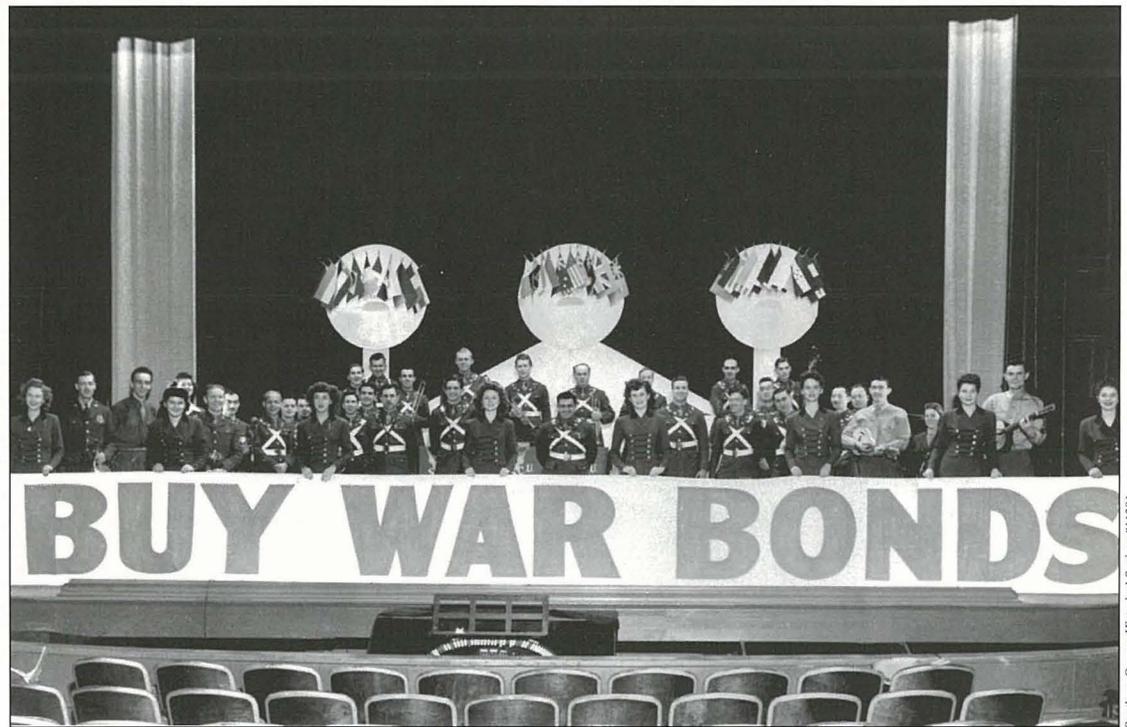


This 1924 Medford Mail Tribune ad for the movie “Peter Pan” highlighted Betty Brown’s original musical score.

Courtesy Medford Mail Tribune

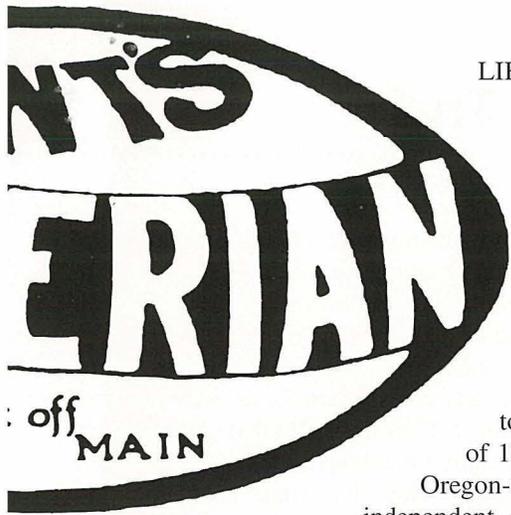
underwrite the camp on an annual basis. In 1941, the first year of the event, fifty-seven children attended the camp. At the conclusion of the week-long camp, the Craterian lobby displayed some of the craft projects the children made as well as photographs of the children at play.

As the war in Europe raged, and tensions with Japan stretched to the breaking point, Hunt’s theaters played a role in the nation’s preparedness drive. In July of 1941 Hunt held a special show for local children; the price of admission a piece of scrap aluminum. At ten o’clock the morning of the show a line of children two blocks long wound its way from the Craterian’s ticket booth. “While they were waiting for the doors to open,” the *Mail Tribune* reported, “the youngsters created quite a din by beating on their aluminum dish pans and this in itself attracted much attention to Jackson county’s [sic] drive for scrap aluminum for defense needs.”



Craterian usherettes hold up a sign at the Fourth War Bond premiere in February, 1944. They are backed by the Camp White Band.

Southern Oregon Historical Society #11381



LIKED him.”

After Hunt's death his holdings in the Craterian and his other theaters were sold to Walter Leverette and the Leverette Interstate Theaters, owners of the Craterian's prime competitor, the Holly, and six other theaters. Leverette held on to the Craterian until the end of 1946, when he sold out to the Oregon-California Theaters, Inc., an

independent chain of theaters owned by Robert L. Lippert.

One of the last visible vestiges of the Hunt era at the Craterian came down in 1952. The landmark Craterian sign (Hunt's name had been removed by this time) that had spanned Central Avenue since the late 1920s, was removed early on the morning of July 29, 1952.

Again in 1955 new advances in motion picture technology led to remodeling and updating of the Craterian. While working on the sound system as part of making the theater ready to show Cinemascope pictures, all of the old drops that had been stored up in the loft were ordered removed for disposal. Among those drops was the old advertising curtain Hunt had installed back in 1929. When Bob Corbin, manager at that time, saw the old curtain coming down, he immediately recognized its value and saved it from the landfill. When the Craterian reopened for its first Cinemascope feature, *Vera Cruz*, starring Gary Cooper, the curtain was prominently displayed.

Another remnant of the Hunt era was lost in February 1963. For a number of years the giant Wurlitzer organ that had come to Medford with such fanfare almost forty years earlier had sat neglected and unused. It was purchased by Robert J. Burke of Portland, who had the instrument completely renovated and installed in his home.

The 1980s saw the spread of multi-screen theaters, and many of the old movie houses were unable to compete financially. The Craterian was no exception. In 1985 the building was donated to the Rogue Valley Art Association.

Today it is again undergoing a major remodeling, some would say a re-building, into a new performing arts center. Renamed the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater, it is scheduled to open in the spring of 1997. Just as B.F. Shearer had noted sixty years earlier, however, in spite of all the changes the name Craterian remains. Perhaps a bit of the spirit of George A. Hunt remains as well. 📌

*William Alley is a Certified Archivist/Historian at the Southern Oregon Historical Society. His article on the Yakutat Bay Earthquakes of 1899 will appear in the Spring 1997 issue of Columbia, the Magazine of Northwest History.*

#### ENDNOTES

*All sources are from Jackson County News, Medford Mail Tribune, Medford Sun and Oregon Journal articles. This article was adapted from William Alley's original 8000-word manuscript, with 55 footnotes, on Hunt and the Craterian Theater. It is available for review in the Historical Society's Research Library.*



George A. Hunt hamming it up with his son in front of the Craterian in 1942. From 1924 to 1943 Hunt dominated the local theater industry. His charisma, generosity, and ingenious marketing ideas made him somewhat of a local legend.

Courtesy Hunt Family Collection

## Mary Kelly Remembers the DeAutremont Trial

It was a crime that shook the West Coast harder than any earthquake: three local DeAutremont brothers stood accused of hijacking a Southern Pacific mail train as it passed through Tunnel 13 south of Ashland, brutally killing the four train attendants. It was the last “great” train robbery on the West Coast; ironically, the train contained no money. It took four years to locate Ray and Roy in Ohio, Hugh in the Philippines, and bring them back to Jacksonville for trial in 1927.

*Medford Mail Tribune* reporter Mary Greiner Kelly was the only female covering the highly publicized DeAutremont trial.



Mary Kelly, left, a long-time reporter for the *Mail Tribune* and *Washington Post*, met Eleanor Roosevelt at the Medford Airport on April 23, 1956. Kelly was the only female journalist who covered the famous DeAutremont trial of 1927.

Over the course of several interviews, she came to know the brothers quite well, especially young Hugh. After they were sentenced to life imprisonment, Mary Kelly spent three decades working to get Hugh paroled. Finally, in 1959, at age 55, he was.

This is her 1987 account, from SOHS oral history #148, of the trial and her friendship with Hugh DeAutremont.



“I think I knew more about the DeAutremont case than probably anybody because I spent hours and hours interviewing Hugh. Then when they captured the two older brothers back east, I spent a lot of time with them.

The crime itself happened in 1923. The three boys were poor, their mother and father were divorced, the father married

another woman . . . . The boys came up here to see their father and to get work. They didn’t have any place to stay because he was married to this woman with her family, they were just out on their own. Well, they were kind of desperate.

One of them was reading too much Jesse James, so he thought, ‘Here we are, nobody cares a darn for us, why don’t we just rob a bank or something?’ They discarded that idea. Ray was kind of the leader of it, he started watching the train go through the Siskiyou tunnel. He thought, ‘Boy, that would be ideal . . . . They’re probably carrying a lot of money and we could get some quick money and save ourselves a lot of heartache.’ So they tried to do that, attempted, they escaped from there. Ray and Roy beat it off and disappeared.

Hugh was youngest and he was kind of left alone. He did kind of escape from the hands of the law, too, and he got way back to Chicago, hitchhiking, riding underneath the train. Then he saw a recruiting office and he thought, ‘Well, that’s a good idea, I’ll just enlist as a soldier.’ He did and he landed over in the Philippines. And he was over there for two years and really had an excellent record. He was tops. He had befriended one of the fellows who was being released from the Army who didn’t have any coat to wear, so Hugh loaned him his overcoat. And he never did get it back. The guy saw his pictures in post offices and turned him in, got the reward. Hugh, you know, took a funny view of that. He wasn’t mad at the man. He thought, “Well, maybe that’s what anybody would do.”

You know, thought they were doing some good turning a criminal in and so forth. So, anyway, that guy seeing his picture in the post office is what led the

officers to where he was and they took him in. And he was brought here; he looked like a pathetic little thing, he was so tiny, kind of slender and young looking. Just looked like a kid even at that time.

The trial was in 1927. I felt kind of proud of myself—I was the only girl covering the trial. There were all these veteran reporters older than me, you know, from Portland—all the papers were represented—papers from California had reporters sent up here. It was a big deal. I remember one reporter wrote a story about Hugh (he was so slight and so young looking even then, he was only eighteen when the thing happened) that [suggested] he was kind of under the domination of his older brothers who had a Jesse James complex.

Hugh had these great big blue eyes, and he always looked

so intently at the jury. He just studied that jury, those jurors' faces, like crazy. I wondered how much he thought he could accomplish with that scrutiny he had. There was an awful lot of

sympathy for Hugh because he was so young. He still looked like a kid when he was being tried. A lot of people were just saying, out at the recess time, 'I just hope they let him off, he's just a kid. And his brothers aren't here and he's having to take the rap all alone.'

Hugh would sit there; he would kind of sometimes slump down in his chair in the courtroom. And a lot of times he would have his hands like this, you know, like a church steeple. And then he would open it up, and you could just hear him saying to himself, 'There's the church and there's the steeple, open the door and out come the people.'

The first trial was a mistrial because a juror died. And they were all the time looking for the twins. They finally caught them before that second trial was finished. And, as I say, at that time there was a lot of sympathy for [Hugh], he could very well have been acquitted. But . . . when they got those older brothers, while nothing was said in the courtroom, everybody seemed to know it. And you could just see the sympathy fall from the faces of those jurors, there was a different atmosphere all together. I could see Hugh feel . . . he kind of slumped a little, like, 'This does it.' So they gave them life imprisonment.

I visited Hugh down in . . . He was let out finally, paroled. He was at the Veterans Hospital [with cancer], he knew he was going to die, he looked so close to death it was pathetic. I had a rosary along. I took my rosary out and said, 'This is for you, Hugh.' The tears started coming down his face. His mother really was a devout Catholic, and it was kind of sad to see his thin hands, you know, he was going from bead to bead. And I just left it with him. He died shortly after. I told the chaplain, who was a Catholic priest at the time, that I gave the rosary to Hugh and that if he saw fit to just leave it with him when he was buried." 🕯

# \$14,400 REWARD

## FOUR MEN MURDERED

### Holdup Southern Pacific Company Train 13, Siskiyou, Oregon, October 11th, 1923

Reward of \$2,500.00 will be paid by the Southern Pacific Company, and \$300.00 by the American Railway Express Company, and not to exceed \$2,000.00 by the United States for information leading to the arrest and conviction of each person implicated in the holdup.








Below are photographs and descriptions of three brothers who are under indictment in Jackson County, Oregon, for murder in this case, and also under indictment in the United States Court for the District of Oregon, for robbery of the United States Mails (Violation Section 197, Penal Code). These men should be arrested on sight and held incommunicado

Specimen of Handwriting

*Roy Harris R. A. Burton*

**ROY A. A. DeAUTREMONT**

No. 1. Roy A. A. DeAutremont, alias R. A. Harris, alias R. A. Burton. Age 23 years in 1923. Weight 135-140 pounds. Height 5 feet 6 inches. Complexion, medium light. Hair, medium light brown. Eyes, light brown, rather small and appear somewhat granulated and squinty. Wears nose eyeglasses to read with. Face broad, short cut neck. Long turned up nose and prominent nostrils. Face smooth. No marks. Head, round. Wears No. 6 shoe. First upper right molar tooth has amalgam filling, as has both first right and left lower molars.

Specimen of Handwriting

*R. C. Burton Wm. Elliott*

**RAY CHARLES DeAUTREMONT**

No. 2. Ray Charles DeAutremont, alias R. C. Burton, alias Wm. Elliott. Age 23 years in 1923. Height 5 feet 6 inches. Weight 135-140 pounds. Complexion, medium light. Hair, medium light brown. Broad face. Prominent nostrils. Short cut neck. Face smooth. Eyes, light brown and small. Wears glasses when reading. Eye tooth right side gold crown. Wears 6 1/2 shoe. Big toe nail on left foot turns up. Cut scar at tip of left forefinger inner. Cut scar at back of second joint right middle finger. Round out scar back of head. Print classifications:

21	3 MM	14
22	0 11	14

Sentenced one year Monroe, Wash., reformatory, November 17, 1919. I. W. W. Organizer.

Specimen of Handwriting

*E. E. James Hugh D'Kay*

**HUGH DeAUTREMONT**

No. 3. Hugh DeAutremont, alias E. E. James, alias Hugh DeKay. Age 19 in 1923, looks older. Height 5 feet 7 inches. Weight 135 pounds. Complexion, fair. Eyes, blue. Nose slightly pug. Hair, medium light, slightly sandy and curly, bleached by sun. Smooth shaven. Wore short tan rain coat. Also had mackinaw, but don't know color. Amalgam fillings in lower right and left molar teeth, and same in first right upper molar.

Roy and Ray are twin brothers. It is most difficult for those not well acquainted with them to tell them apart. The distinguishing features are that Ray probably weighs three or four pounds more and is a trifle taller than Roy. Ray is also slightly stooped over. Ray is more given to talk and pleasantries than Roy, who is inclined to be quiet and unassuming. They have both learned the barber trade. All three men are loggers, working as choker setters, hook tenders or whipsaw

punks. They have spoken of taking a long sea voyage. A lookout should be kept for them attempting to ship at seaports. They speak a little Spanish and may attempt to cross the Mexican border. They formerly lived at Lakewood, New Mexico. Photographs of Roy and Hugh were taken about 1922. The one of Ray in prison uniform was taken in 1920.

Wire information, charges collect, to D. O'Connell, Chief Special Agent, Southern Pacific Company, San Francisco, California; C. E. Terrill, Sheriff Jackson County, Jacksonville, Oregon; or C. Riddiford, Post Office Inspector in Charge, Spokane, Washington.

POSTMASTERS: PLEASE POST THESE CIRCULARS IN LOBBY AND DISTRIBUTE TO RURAL AND S. ROUTE CARRIERS. Also furnish all peace officers who are not supplied.

D. O'CONNELL,  
Southern Pacific Company, 65 Market St.,  
Chief Special Agent,  
San Francisco, California.

C. RIDDIFORD,  
Post Office Inspector in Charge,  
Spokane, Washington.

Case No. 57,883-D.  
Fourth Issue of This Circular.  
June 1, 1924.

Heat P.O.—6-2-24—100M

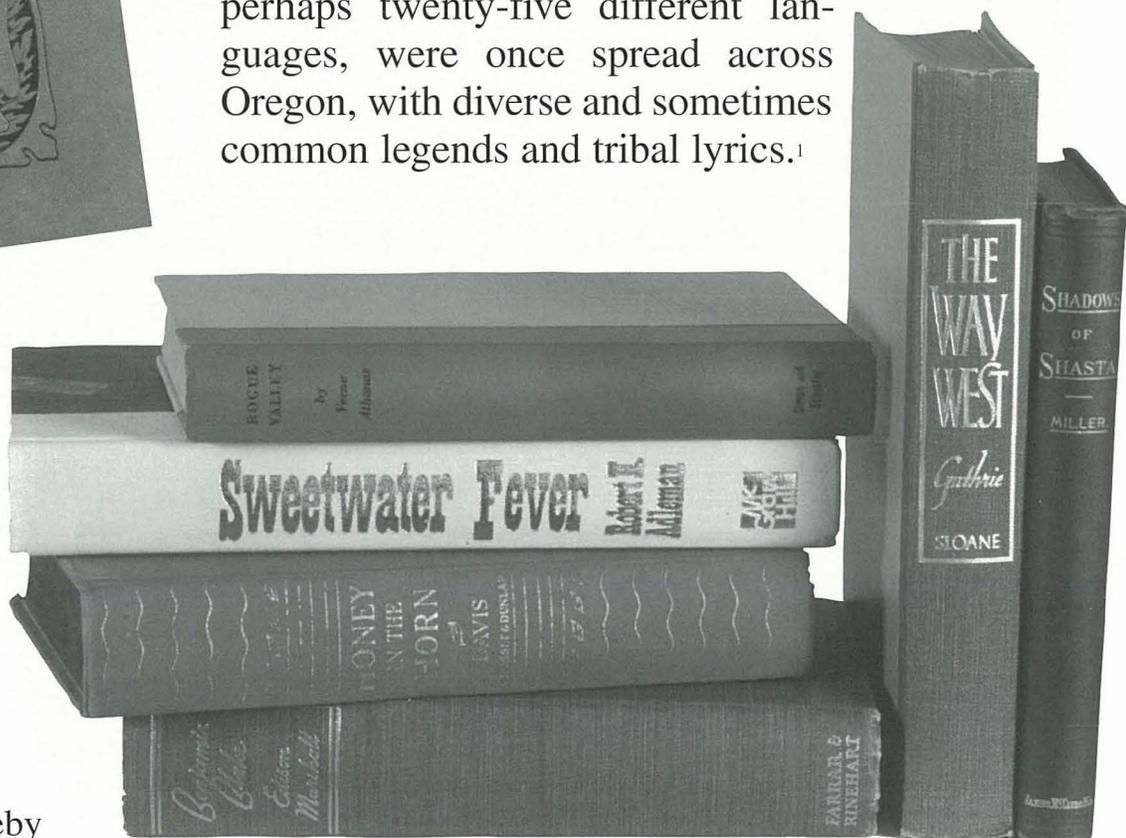
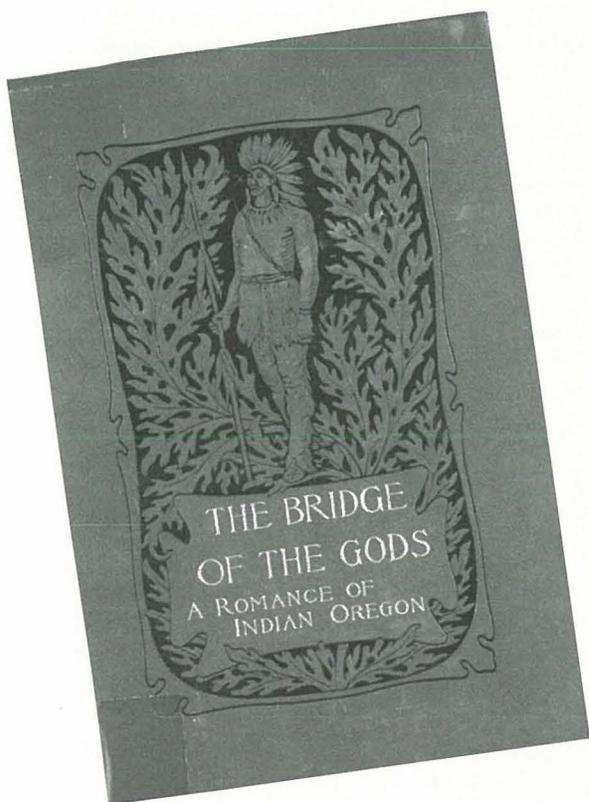
Before Roy and Ray DeAutremont were apprehended, young Hugh stood trial alone. Jurors and media alike couldn't help feeling sorry for the soft-spoken young man, pictured here on this original wanted poster, dated June 1, 1924.

# The Language of Oregon

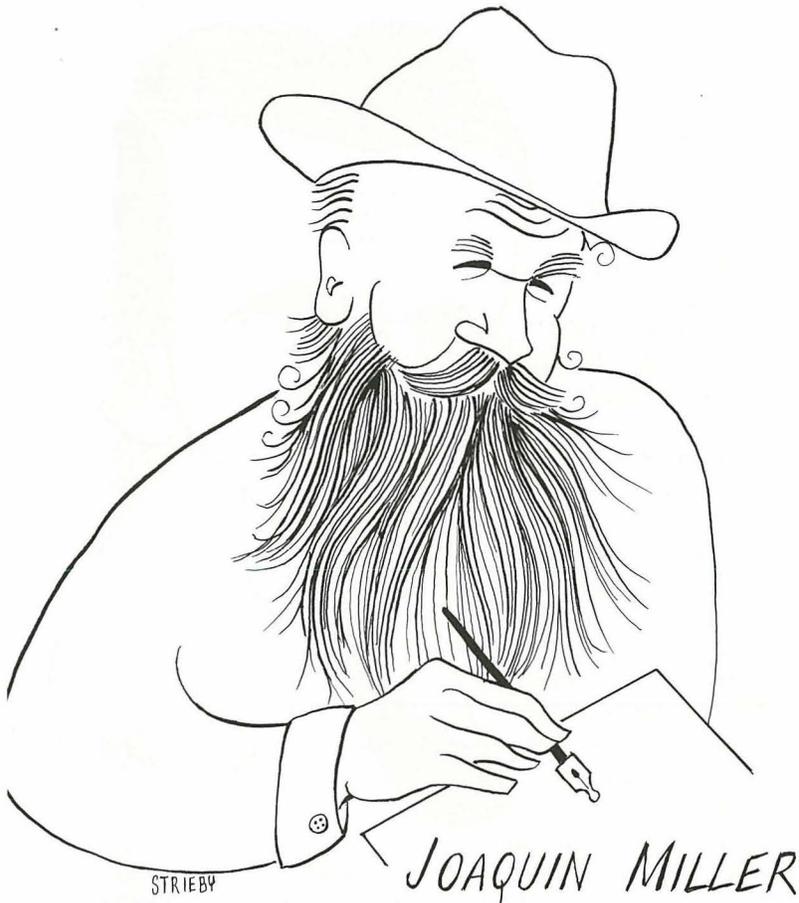
Oregon's literature, from Native American oral legends to today's contemporary fiction, has always reflected its community.

by Josh Paddison

The first storytelling in Oregon came not with the white settlers who traversed the Oregon Trail 150 years ago, but from the original native inhabitants who had lived in the area for centuries. More than forty Indian tribes, speaking perhaps twenty-five different languages, were once spread across Oregon, with diverse and sometimes common legends and tribal lyrics.<sup>1</sup>



Illustrations by Matt Strieby



(used to sift acorn meal). It is a song praising both self-reliance and harmony with nature.

“If a great wind comes, why then  
 ‘Go past us! Your hornwood stick,  
 ‘Go past us with it!  
 ‘Go past the mountain with your sifting-pan!  
 ‘Go past Wilamxa with your hornwood stick!  
 ‘Do not come here with it,  
 ‘Do not come here.  
 ‘Perhaps with their feet your children  
 ‘Touch the bones of the dead—  
 that is what was done to it.’  
 ‘A friend of my mother’s had told her,  
 “When a great wind comes,  
 ‘Do that to it.’”<sup>4</sup>

The first literature of the white settlers came in the form of pioneer diaries. Often filled with meticulous detail, these diaries chronicled the struggles of a people far from home but clinging to a vestige of hope for a happy future in an unfriendly wilderness. Most diarists wrote not with literary aspirations but for a variety of personal reasons: to remember daily routines, for self-expression, to relieve loneliness, and to tame fear and depression by putting their experiences into words.<sup>5</sup>

Some diaries, by the brevity of their entries, indicate a hard life that allowed little time for introspection. Ellen Hemenway Humphrey, for example, arrived in Oregon by wagon train in 1853. Her terse but consistent diary is typical of many hard-working settlers who farmed in rural Oregon. Her diary entries, like farm chores, are simple and routine.

“Wednesday, July 15 [1868]. Washed. Pa turned the sheep out.  
 Friday, July 17. Knit a footmat.  
 Sunday, July 19. Read Life of Christ and got to the 425th page.  
 Monday, July 20. Made a rug.”<sup>6</sup>

In the second half of the 19th century, the character of Oregon’s white population began to change dramatically. As the fur traders, military units, and daring entrepreneurs were joined by farmers and their families, the literature of Oregon changed as well.<sup>7</sup> Although most Oregon writers led lives that were hardly “literary,” they did increasingly turn to the written word as a means of self-expression, entertainment, and creativity.<sup>8</sup>

The authors of this era simply transplanted eastern American literary conventions into a new setting. The settlers were not yet comfortable in this new wilderness and so naturally turned to familiar genres and practices.<sup>9</sup> This imitative stage was also marked by cheerful optimism, flowery prose, and rampant romanticism.<sup>10</sup>

Poetry was no exception. Oregon newspapers began printing more and more poetry not only to fill space, but as evidence of their serious literary intentions.<sup>11</sup> For example, this excerpt from “To the Emigrants of 1846” appeared in an Oregon City weekly newspaper and displays the laudatory nature of much of the writing in this period.

**B**ecause these tales were spoken rather than written, most of the oral literature of Oregon’s Native Americans has been lost forever. What remains suggests they employed a rich, imaginative world view that stressed humankind’s coexistence with the natural beauty of the land. Besides explaining the origins of natural landmarks and the world itself, Native Americans’ storytelling combined religious beliefs and generations-old wisdom as a means of passing along moral lessons and reinforcing their communities’ mores.

For example, one of the most widely known Oregon Indian legends, “The Bridge of the Gods,” tells of a supposed natural bridge that once spanned the Columbia River, where the man-made Bridge of the Gods stands today. Because humans were greedy and warlike, the bridge was destroyed and the river allowed to separate them. In addition to explaining the existence of local natural features such as the Cascade River, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Hood, this tale also presents a clear moral lesson.<sup>2</sup>

With the help of 19th and 20th century cultural anthropologists, the tribal lyrics of at least eleven different Oregon Indian groups have been carefully transcribed and translated.<sup>3</sup> Most of the songs are very short because, like Christian hymns, the texts are rich with unspoken symbolism and allusions to other religious stories.

The Rogue River Valley’s Takelma Indians, in one of their songs, sang of what to do “When It Storms in Winter.” They attributed human characteristics to the wind, including the use of a hornwood stick (used to dig for camas roots) and a sifting-pan

“Welcome! ye freeborn yeoman of the soil,  
 Right welcome are you to our new home;  
 You’ve reached the goal, and need no longer roam.  
 O’er dreary waters, and sterile sands,  
 O’er mountain crag, through torrents mad’ning roar  
 You’ve toiled undaunted in courageous bands,  
 To seek a home, on this far distant shore.  
 Here waits ye then, ye tillers of the land,  
 The verdant prairie and prolific field,  
 Rich forest dells, where giant cedars stand,  
 Shading fresh treasures yet to be revealed. . . .”<sup>12</sup>

Following the well-worn tradition of East Coast romantic poets, Oregon writers of this era often chose to write about the natural world around them, and their descriptions were typically full of breathless hyperbole and generic stock phrases.<sup>13</sup> Joaquin Miller (1837-1919), a poet, surveyor, teacher, lawyer, newspaper editor, and dramatist, authored several autobiographies of dubious authenticity. Although he was as famous for his exaggerated reputation as a rough-and-tumble frontiersman as he was for his literary achievements, his grandiose poetry and prose illustrates the typical melodrama of this era’s writing.

“Lonely as God, and white as a winter moon, Mount Shasta starts up sudden and solitary from the heart of the great black forests of northern California.  
 “You would hardly call Mount Shasta a part of the Sierras; you would say rather that it is the great white tower of some ancient and eternal wall, with here and there the white walls overthrown.  
 “It has no rival! There is not even a snow-crowned subject in sight of its dominion. A shining pyramid in mail of everlasting frosts and ice, the sailor sometimes, in a day of singular clearness, catches glimpses of it from the sea a hundred miles away to the west; and it may be seen from the dome of the capital 300 miles distant. The immigrant coming from the east beholds the snowy, solitary pillar from afar out on the arid sage-brush plains, and lifts his hands in silence as in answer to a sign.”<sup>14</sup>

Other prominent Oregon authors of this imitative era included Frederick H. Balch, Ella Higginson, John Minto, Alfred Powers, Samuel L. Simpson and Frances Fuller Victor.

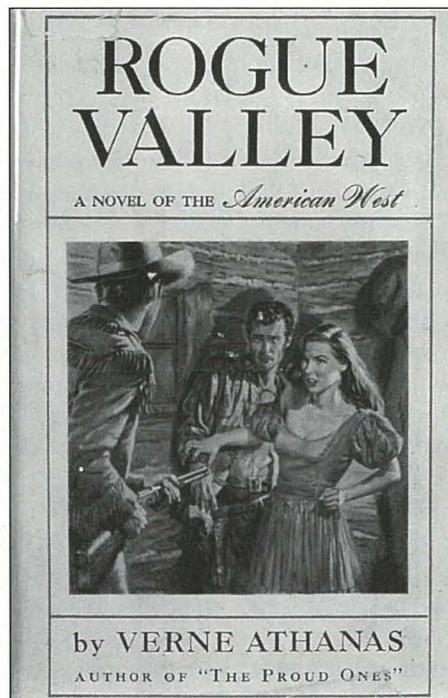
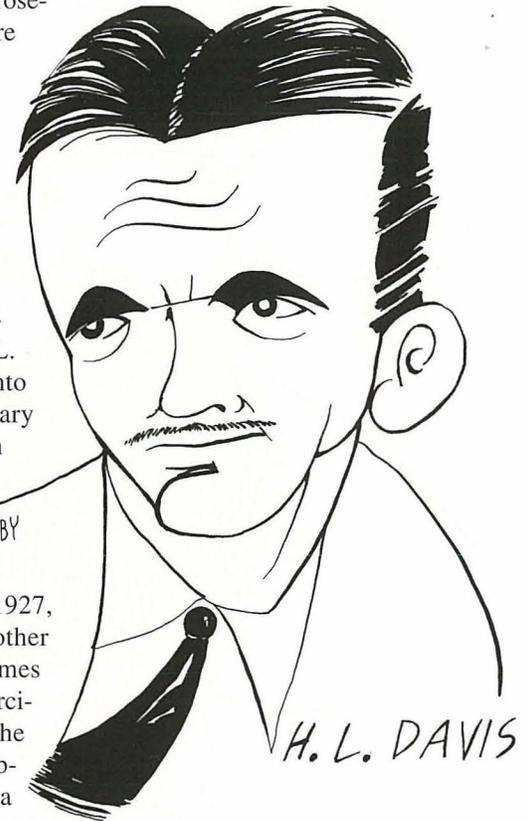
A dramatic change in the Oregon literary scene came in the 1920s and 30s, triggered by two sources: The aggressive literary criticism of H. L. Davis and the emergence of the “Oregon Renaissance” poets of the Willamette Valley. In the place of the 19th century imitative style came a bold emphasis on the real, the modern, and

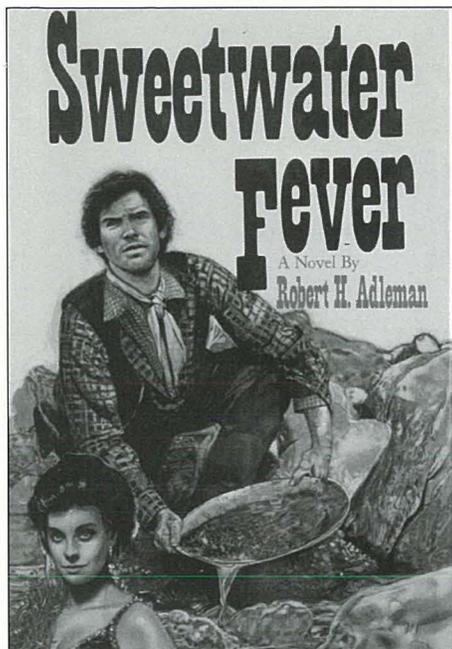
the visceral. The rose-colored glasses were off; Oregon, in all its facets, was now on display. The state that emerged was diverse, sometimes cruel, but always vividly authentic.

Born in 1894 in Yoncalla, H. L. Davis exploded onto the Oregon literary scene in 1919 when he won the nationally prestigious Levinson Prize for poetry.<sup>15</sup> In 1927, along with another young writer, James Stevens, Davis mercilessly attacked the Oregon literary establishment in a widely distributed pamphlet, deriding popular writers as “posers, parasites, and pismires” and asking, “Is there something about the climate, or soils, which inspires people to write tripe?”<sup>16</sup> This attack, in combination with Davis’ own realistic, innovative poetry and stories, triggered a movement toward increased verisimilitude and new attempts at a distinct regional voice.<sup>17</sup>

These new writers, particularly H. L. Davis, began to recognize Oregon not as a single, homogenous entity but as a collection of diverse, sometimes competing, communities.<sup>18</sup> Davis in fact won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1935 novel *The Honey in the Horn*, in which two young protagonists, Clay and Luce, travel extensively through Oregon, visiting nearly every region and subculture. “In this book Mr. Davis does for the hitherto unchronicled areas of Oregon what Mark Twain did for the Mississippi country. . . .” gushed the publishers in a press release. “He brings to life the hardships of the coast settlers, the adventures of the wagon trains, the nomadic lives of the Indians and the hop-pickers, the narrow stability and routine of the farmer.”<sup>19</sup> Most importantly, Davis explored these communities with a conscious lack of overwrought clichés or gushing praise.

Meanwhile, a separate but similar movement was occurring in the world of poetry in the Willamette Valley. For the first time in Oregon’s history, poets began thinking of themselves as part of a profession, and that meant meeting together, organizing literary





journals, and establishing new standards of quality.<sup>20</sup> Most of these poets had been born west of the Mississippi and attempted to describe the Oregon experience on its own terms, disregarding stale traditional customs.

One poet who fit into this new emphasis on realism was Paul E. Tracy, a plumber-turned-poet who wrote of eastern Oregon in a complimentary but not romanticized manner. Note his deliberate

lack of sentimentality in this excerpt from this 1930 poem:

“You, reader by the electric light, think of the horses,  
Momentarily untroubled by gnats, dozing in  
Eastern Oregon.  
Some sleep on their feet. Others are listening . . .  
watching.  
Some lift scraggy manes and watch a shadowy coyote.  
They are an unlovely lot who greet the sun in  
gray wastes.  
They are survivors of Conquistadore herds;  
Poor relations to the Clydesdale-Percheron  
aristocracy—  
An untamed, unroached, tick-ridden herd.  
At night they nod under the nearby stars, subject  
to similar cosmic draught and silences.”<sup>21</sup>  
— “Horsemeat”

Other poets and writers who helped usher in this new period included Mary Barnard, Howard McKinley Corning, Ernest Haycox, Jeanne McGahey, and Albert Richard Wetjen.

Just as post-modernism expanded on modernism, so has a new generation of Oregon writers built upon the breakthroughs of those brave storytellers of the 1920s and '30s. More than ever before, the writers who have emerged in the second half of the 20th century have been determined to carve out new niches for their own individual tastes and styles. This diversity has allowed groups that previously were silent find a resounding voice, and ideas that before were hushed are now trumpeted.

In the 1960s, Ken Kesey, a graduate of the University of Oregon and long-time Pleasant Hill resident, put into words the frustrations of a counterculture that was growing increasingly skeptical of the sanctity of traditional American institutions. Best known for his novels *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Kesey often utilized a stream-of-consciousness technique that made his sentences seem more like thoughts. Although he often used Oregon as a backdrop for his

fiction, his themes of individuality and defiance are universal. Consider this excerpt from his 1957 short story “The First Sunday of September,” written in his college years:

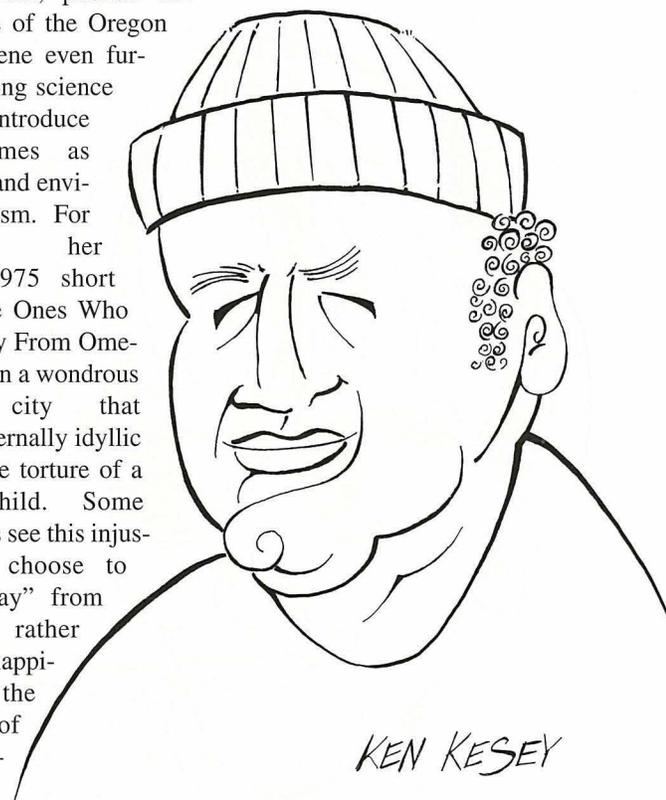
“September already, and by the fish-house or in the church the fishermen heard the September sea, heard it rolling a mile out, could hear the dreary clangdang of the pitching bell buoy a mile out to sea saying, ‘fall’s comiing, comaaang, comiing. . . .’ Fall, and then the hardtime, blowtime, raining, Oregon seacoast winter. Salmon would soon be pigeon-holing rivers and streams all along the west coast, the same rivers and streams they had traced out four years before. After four years of mystery, the salmon were back: twenty pounds of fresh red meat. For three months the fishermen had followed the run from Port Orford to Astoria and back, and in a few more weeks the run would be gone. The fish would re-enter the rivers and fight back up over the rocks and rapids to that certain sandy shallow where they would deposit their milt and eggs, and then thrash out their lives in the place they had started, up the Long Tom or the Willamette or the Columbia, scarred and hooknosed and looking as angrily at their death as they had at their fate in the sea.”<sup>22</sup>

Ursula K. Le Guin, a Portland resident, pushed the boundaries of the Oregon literary scene even further by using science fiction to introduce such themes as feminism and environmentalism. For example, her famous 1975 short story “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” is set in a wondrous fantasy city that remains eternally idyllic through the torture of a single child. Some inhabitants see this injustice and choose to “walk away” from paradise rather than live happily at the expense of an innocent.

“Omelas,” incidentally, is “SALEM O[regon]” backwards, Le Guin said.<sup>23</sup>

Other contemporary Oregon writers who have used fiction to address their own unique perspectives include Jean Auel, Richard Bach, Raymond Carver, Beverly Cleary, Percival Everett, Barry Lopez, Bernard Malamud, Kate Wilhelm, and Shannon Applegate.

Southern Oregon especially has seen a healthy community of creative writers move in and set up shop. Every genre is well represented: children’s (Irene Brady, Kathleen Bullock, P. K.

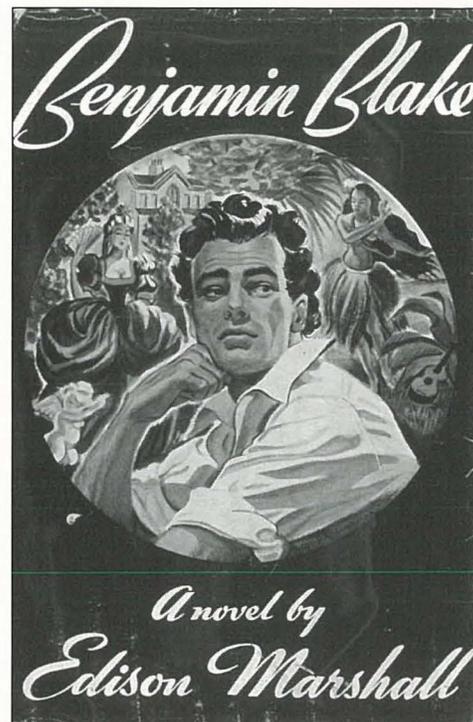


Hallinan, and David Zazlow); historical romance (Stephanie Bartlett, Lana McGraw Boldt, Marteen Dee Graham, and Vella Munn); science fiction (Reginald Bretnor, Margaret Davis, Ken Goddard, Dean Ing, and Con Sellers); mystery (Stephen Greenleaf and Elizabeth Quinn); and poetry (Sharon Dubiago, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Ben Hur Lampman). These are just a few of the more than fifty writers of fiction who have chosen southern Oregon as their home.

Across the state, today's authors are so diverse that it is no longer easy to categorize the Oregon literary scene. Each writer creates his or her own style, structure, and focus; each attempts to mirror and challenge the attitudes of his or her community. Their writing is local in the best sense of the word: specific in setting but universal in theme. They represent the latest link in a rich literary chain that dates back to an era when oral storytelling and tribal lyrics were the only literature that existed. Spoken or written, the language of Oregon has always been the surest reflection of the fluctuating sensibilities of Oregonians. As we have changed, so has our literature, making an old book not just an avenue for escape but a genuine look into our past. ■

Josh Paddison, an editorial assistant for Southern Oregon Heritage, researched and wrote the local component of the Language of the Land exhibit on display at the History Center until April 13.

Thanks to Matt Strieby, Exhibit Designer II, for taking time away from The Society's exhibit department to do the illustrations of authors.



Books pictured in this article come from The Society collections, and feature southern Oregon, or were written by local authors.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Love, Glen A. *The World Begins Here: An Anthology of Oregon Short Fiction*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1993) p. 3.
2. Judson, Katharine Berry. "The Bridge of the Gods." *The World Begins Here*, p. 14-15.
3. Wendt, Ingrid. *From Here We Speak: An Anthology of Oregon Poetry*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1993) p. 3.
4. Hymes, Dell, trans. "When It Storms in Winter." *From Here We Speak*, p. 17.
5. Applegate, Shannon. *Talking on Paper: An Anthology of Oregon Letters and Diaries*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1993) pp. xx-xxi.
6. *Talking on Paper*, p. 63.
7. Atwood, Kay. "Claiming the Land." *Land in Common: An Illustrated History of Jackson County, Oregon* (Medford, Oregon: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1993) p. 17.
8. *From Here We Speak*, p. 4.
9. *The World Begins Here*, p. xviii.
10. *From Here We Speak*, p. 4.
11. *From Here We Speak*, p. 4.
12. Anonymous. "To the Oregon Emigrants of 1846." *From Here We Speak*, p. 34-35.
13. Love, Glen A. "Oregon on the Literary Map: Regional Literacy and the Great Tradition." *Oregon English Journal*. Spring, (1991) p. 6.
14. Miller, Joaquin. *Unwritten History: Life Among the Modocs*. (Eugene, OR: Orion Press, 1972) pp. 1-2. Original publication date: 1873.
15. *From Here We Speak*, p. 106.
16. Love, Glen A., *Oregon English Journal*, p. 3.
17. *The World Begins Here*, p. xviii.
18. *The World Begins Here*, p. xix.
19. Davis, H. L. *The Honey in the Horn*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935) publisher's insert.
20. *From Here We Speak*, p. 5.
21. Tracy, Paul E. "Horsemeat." *The History of Oregon Literature*, (Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 1935) p. 667.
22. Kesey, Ken. "The First Sunday of September." *The World Begins Here*, p. 167.
23. Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas." *The Wind's Twelve Quarters*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) p. 276.



# Oregon's Famous Literary Visitors

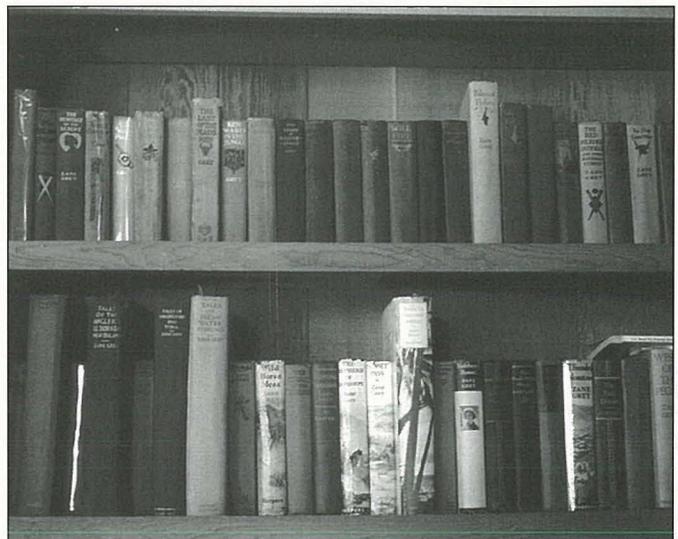
In the last 150 years, many famous authors from across the country have spent time in and written about Oregon.

- Washington Irving (1783-1859), famous for such short stories as "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," lived in Astoria in the 1840s. His 1850 novel *Astoria* described the dangers and natural splendor experienced by the early pioneers who trekked into the Oregon Territory.<sup>1</sup>

- Besides penning humorous tales and uttering a seemingly endless stream of great quotes, in the second half of his life Mark Twain (1835-1910) was a highly sought speaker on the lecture circuit. On August 9, 1895, Twain spent the night in Portland during a lecture tour and the next morning allowed a journalist from a local paper to ride with him in a carriage on his way to the railway station. The result, of course, was another great quote. "Portland seems to be a pretty nice town, and this is a pretty nice, smooth street," said Twain. "Now, Portland ought to lay itself out a little and macadamize all its streets just like this. Then it ought to own all the bicycles and rent 'em out and so pay for the streets. Pretty good scheme, eh? I suppose people would complain about the monopoly, but then we have the monopolies always with us."<sup>2</sup>



In the 1920s, Grey made frequent fishing trips to his cabin at Winkle Bar in southern Oregon and wrote lovingly about the Rogue River, which he considered "the most beautiful stream in Oregon."



Some of the many books authored by Zane Grey.

- Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), author of *The Jungle Book*, also visited Portland a few years earlier in the summer of 1889, where he applied unsuccessfully for a job at the *Oregonian*. Kipling, however, stayed long enough to enjoy a fishing trip to the Clackamas River, where he landed a twelve-pound salmon.<sup>3</sup> His adventure in Oregon eventually ended up in his travelogue *From Sea to Sea*.

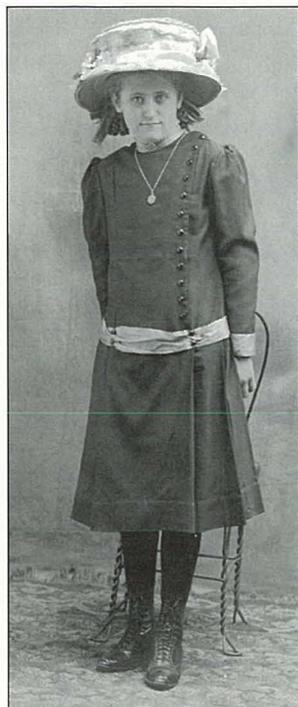
- Between 1908 and 1961, western writer Zane Grey published no less than eighty-nine novels and countless magazine stories and articles. The Rogue was the setting for such Grey books as *Tales of Fresh-water Fishing* and *Rogue River Feud*.

- The Russian poet and novelist Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) visited and even lived for a short time on Meade Street in Ashland during the summer of 1953. While there, Nabokov wrote a chunk of his infamous novel *Lolita* and at least two poems: "The Ballad of Longwood Glen" and, appropriately, "Lines Written in Oregon."<sup>4</sup> — J.P.

## ENDNOTES

1. Irving, Washington. *Astoria*, (Portland, OR: Binsford & Mort, 1950.)
2. Twain, Mark, "I Liked That Glimpse." *The History of Oregon Literature*. (Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 1935.) p. 762.
3. *The History of Oregon Literature*, p. 758-759.
4. Korblic, Mary, "Romancing the Rogue," *Table Rock Sentinel*. Nov/Dec, 1992, p. 3.
5. Boyd, Brian, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.) pp. 224-225.

## Valentines for Mary Truax



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MS-712

Mary Truax in 1912 or 1913. Her parents ran the Gold Hill Cafe where she worked on weekends.

The valentines featured here came into fashion in 1880, with the advent of color printing in the United States. Cheaper technology and changing tastes brought about their demise by the beginning of the First World War in 1914. Mary Truax, born in 1898, would have received them sometime prior to 1914.

Mary Truax was ten when she came to Gold Hill with her parents, Wesley and Cora Truax, in 1909. Originally from Michigan, they migrated to the west and began homesteading acreage in Eagle Point while Wesley tried to make his fortune in gold mining. Six months in a tent was enough for Cora. They packed up the wagon, took the rutted road to Gold Hill, and Cora began cooking at the Gold Hill Cafe. Her husband was soon waiting on tables, and young Mary worked after school and weekends, serving luncheon and thirty-five cent suppers of roast beef, potatoes, vegetables, pie and coffee.

The Truax family soon owned the Gold Hill Cafe, offering reasonable meals seven days a week. Cora must have been well-respected, because in 1913 she was elected to the Gold Hill City Council. She became the first female elected official in Jackson County. (Seeing as women were not even allowed to vote in Oregon until 1912, this was some feat.) They had a comfortable house on 6th Street, and Wesley was considered a venturesome businessman. Mary did well in school.

It is difficult to know whether an admirer or a family member sent these valentines to Mary. She may have exchanged them with her friends for placement in scrapbooks or as keepsakes. Saving, trading, and showing off the colorful cards, die-cut scraps

and chromolithographs (double-sided, brightly colored cut outs: flowers, birds, cherubs, etc.) was a favorite pastime among women and girls.

From Mary Truax's oral history on file at the Gold Hill Historical Society, details of the small mining town of Gold Hill, come to life. Play was not always a priority for the children of Gold Hill, Mary recalled. Some might run to the depot to watch the train from Roseburg stop on its way to Ashland while Mary watched the comings and goings from the cafe window. After school most children had chores. Mary's parents had "quite a few chickens on a lot out there back of where the Hanby school is now." Mary used to ride her bike up after school to feed them and gather the eggs. There were walks on the hill-sides, bonfires, and toasted marshmallows. Johnny Reed's Bonbon shop sold cigars and had billiard tables, but there was also a room exclusively for ice cream. Teenagers gathered for dance parties at each other's houses, or went to Kelsey and Johnny Reed's Wego Theatre. There was nowhere really to go. There were a few saloons, Bill's butcher shop, the bakery, the Gold Hill Hotel, Hudson's rooming house, and Lance's Grocery Store. Sometimes a group would go down to the Carter Opera House above the store in Woodville [Rogue River] to see a high school play.

School took place in a room behind the Gold Hill Hotel. After graduation Mary went straight to the University of Oregon to study journalism. Interrupted by financial need and World War I, she went to work for the Military Intelligence Department in Washington D.C. Later, she returned home to finish her degree, and then worked in the county clerk's office for twelve years. The Great Depression changed the direction of Mary's and her husband Ray Hendricks' life. After losing jobs they started a nursery on Table Rock Road which they operated for thirty-five years.

Mary never grew out of the turn-of-the-century habit of wanting to share her collection of cards with friends. She donated her valentines and many other items to local historical societies. To find out more about the life of Mary Truax and the early days of Gold Hill, read her oral history on file at the Gold Hill Historical Society. —MS



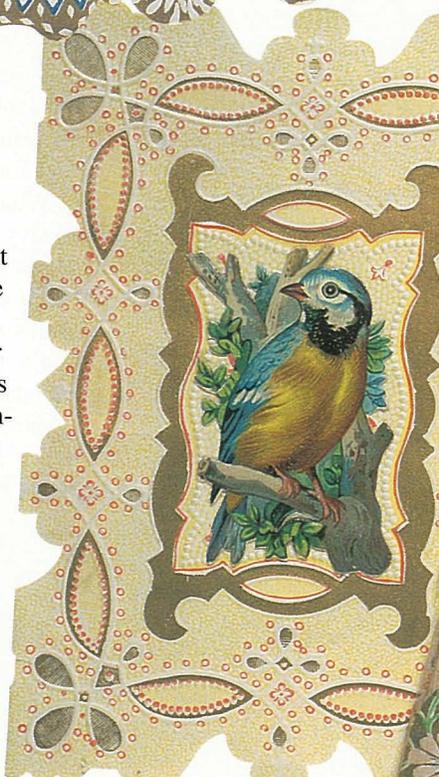
Residence Street in Gold Hill, 1910.  
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #11684



The three cards pictured here are from the “Belle Époque” of the valentine, the period from 1890 to 1910. The card at left has at least six separate pieces, and uses some of the brilliant color made available in the 1880s: note the clear yellow and shiny enamel blue. The middle section, with the circular images of a warm home and a couple canoeing on a lake, lifts away from the base, as does the foil-trimmed top piece. This is typical of the German “mechanical card.” The “novelty card”, center, has a chromolithograph blue bird pasted by hand as its focus. The card is embossed, colorated, and features die-cut scraps and lacy edges, showing off much of the new technology of the time. The bottom card has seven layers. It includes gold paper, paper fringe, foil trim, chromolithograph roses, and a message-bearing youth in the middle. The cards at top and bottom can be pulled away from their base for a three dimensional effect. ■

Valentines were not produced in the United States until the 1840s when Esther Howland of Massachusetts received an elaborate valentine from a friend in Great Britain. So enamored was she of the card, that she convinced her father, a stationer, to import the necessary foils, lace papers, and chromolithograph insets so that she could create her own. Her first fifteen prototypes brought in orders of up to \$5000. She began an assembly line at home, comprised of woman friends from Bryn Mawr. She soon began producing her own line of cards. She continued for forty years with great success. Esther’s valentines and those of the others who soon followed, such as Louis Prang of Boston, were sold for as much as ten dollars apiece.

With the advent of color printing in the United States in 1880, and mass production of novelty cards in the 1890s, sending valentines became more widespread. It was not however, until the printing of penny post-cards in 1900 that Valentine’s Day became an American tradition.



#### ENDNOTES

- Lucy W. McCulloch, *Paper Americana, A Collector’s Guide* (A.S. Barnes and Co, Inc. 1980) pp 50-56.
- Gail Stanislow, “Valentine’s Day Cards,” (Winterthur Library Publications, Winter 1996.)
- Dorothy H. Jenkins, “Antiques: Roses are Red, Violets are Blue,” *Woman’s Day*, (February 1969.)
- *The Official Guide to Paper Collectibles* (The House of Collectibles, Inc. Orlando Fla 1984).



# A Welcome Respite: The Prospect Hotel

by Tami Koenig

One of the earliest and most important transport routes in southern Oregon was the old Fort Road linking Jacksonville to Fort Klamath. The road, established in 1865, wound from the flatlands of the Rogue River Valley into the dense forests of sugar pines and Douglas firs of the Cascade mountains. Initially intended for the movement of troops, the road also benefited the area's settlers, who traveled the road for business and supplies.

In the 1880s an early homesteader family, the A.H. Boothbys, lived along the Fort Road in the newly named town of Prospect. Their home became a natural stop-over for travelers making the ninety-five mile journey over the Oregon Cascades. Guests often overflowed the house and had to sleep in the barn. Eventually the Boothbys decided to open a proper hotel on their land nearer to Mill Creek. They built a large, gabled building with sugar pine timbers on a foundation of lava rock. By 1893, a black sign reading "Boothby House" welcomed visitors to Prospect's first hotel.

The hotel became popular with valley residents and tourists heading to Crater Lake. The lake was gaining an international reputation, and travelers from around the globe trekked to see its natural wonder. In August of 1911, the novelist Jack London and his wife visited Crater Lake for the first time. He told a journalist, "Crater Lake is the greatest asset of



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #0271

The Prospect Hotel, originally the Boothby home, has always been a stopping place for travelers making their way to and from Crater Lake. Circa 1908.

southern Oregon. It is worth traveling hundreds, yea, thousands of miles to see."<sup>1</sup> After traveling along the Fort Road and spending the night at Boothby House, he wrote to fellow writer Sinclair Lewis, "We have been out two months and a half now on a driving trip, with four saddle horses hitched up to a light city trap. . . . And you can't tell me anything about mountain roads."<sup>2</sup>

Jim and Mary Grieve bought the hotel in 1912 and changed the name to The Prospect Hotel. It quickly became known as one of the best resort hotels in the Pacific Northwest. Travel along the route became easier with the advent of the automobile and completion of the new Medford-Crater Lake Highway (now Highway 62). What was once a three-day trip by heavy wagon could now be made in a few hours by car. In September, 1912, a convoy of thirty-three automobiles carrying seventy of the world's foremost geographers and scientists stopped at the hotel on an excursion to Crater Lake.

The hotel's guest register from that day reveals signatures from nearly every major European city, including Munich, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Geneva, Florence, Paris, London and Vienna.

Along with an international clientele, several famous personalities and politicians found their way to the Prospect Hotel during the Grieves' ownership. Heston, the Grieves' son, remembers meeting the famous orator William Jennings Bryan and posing for photos in front of the hotel. He had this to say about



DANA HERBICK

The Prospect Hotel has been restored after many years and many owners. Travelers may once again have good food and a good night's rest at this famed hotel.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #1025

The Medford Mail Tribune described Jim Grieve (right) as “strikingly portly,” and the personification of “It” in his 1927 role as “Mr. Mountain Tavern Keeper:” a film being made by Pinto Colvig and his Southern California moving picture company: Grieve turned the Prospect Hotel into one of the finest resort hotels in the Pacific Northwest.

President Herbert Hoover: “He and his FBI guard came into the soda fountain. And they ordered milkshakes, served them, and someone recognized them. . . . And they just all jumped up and left, didn’t even drink their milkshakes.”<sup>3</sup>

Though automobile travel was becoming more common, the journey along the Medford-Crater Lake Highway was still a major undertaking. According to Paul Rynning, who worked on road improvements between Medford and Prospect in 1919, the road beyond Prospect wasn’t oiled until after 1925 and “the dust was hub-deep and in some places so thick you could hardly breathe.”<sup>4</sup> Although travelers could make it to Crater Lake in half a day, they rarely thought of returning home that same day. The hotel prospered with the increased tourism, and the Grieves added a fountain, an aviary and a trout pond alongside the hotel, as well as several wooden tent-like cabins behind it.

The Prospect Hotel enjoyed its greatest success during the 1920s and 1930s. It was crowded with guests from near and far. Residents of Ashland and Medford often retreated to the mountain hotel on weekends as a respite from the summer heat in the valley below. Guests enjoyed picking huckleberries, fishing the local streams, and visiting nearby sites like the natural bridge and the mammoth sugar pine. But most of all, guests enjoyed the meals prepared and served by Mary Grieve. “You ought to have seen the tables they served. It was something marvelous. They had lovely cream and fine beef, roast and pork. It was put on a family-style

table,” remembers a long-time Prospect resident.<sup>5</sup> Lunch began at noon and the food kept coming until every guest had their fill.

After Jim Grieve’s death in 1932, Mary stopped serving her famous family-style meals. With the help of Dewey Hill, a long-time friend, she continued to run the hotel until she died in 1952. But the hotel’s prime was past. Travelers along the paved and improved highway, now called Highway 62, expected modern conveniences, and the journey to Crater Lake had become an easy day-trip from Medford.

Today the Prospect Hotel enjoys a renewed popularity with visitors to the Pacific Northwest. Its rooms are named after some of the famous personalities who were once guests. Dinner is served, once again, in the dining room. Refurbished with care and attention to authenticity, at the core of the building, is the simple gabled frame structure that Mr. Boothby built in 1892.

[For more on travel adventure in the Rogue Valley, visit “Going Places To and Through the Rogue Valley, 1826-1996,” an ongoing exhibit at the History Center in downtown Medford.] ♣

*Tami Koenig is a freelance writer, exhibit developer, and multimedia producer living in Medford.*

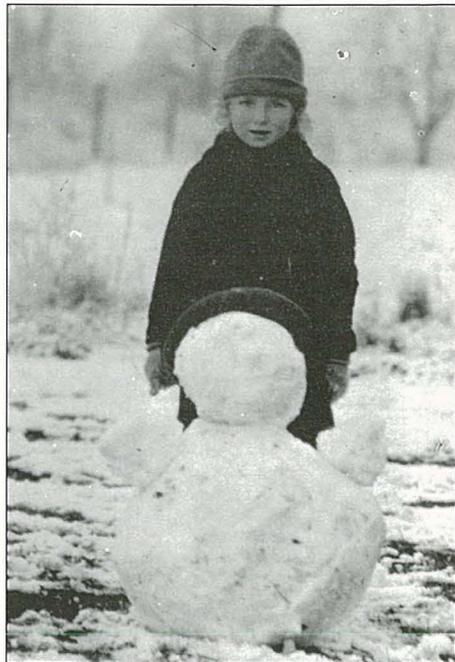
ENDNOTES

1. SOHS Crater Lake vertical file, newspaper clipping, August 1911.
2. *Letters of Jack London, V,II*, p. 1022.
3. Grieve, James Heston. SOHS oral history #70, p. 70-74.
4. *Medford Mail Tribune*, undated clipping.
5. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 19 July 1979.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #290

William Jennings Bryan, famous orator and leading spokesman for the Democratic Party, stopped off on his way to Crater Lake in 1915. He is pictured here with young Heston Grieve.



Emily Scherer playing in a rare snowfall, 1920s.  
DETAIL FROM ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH.

# Winter's Playthings

- 1. The Trail Breaker, reminiscent of the more familiar Flexible Flyer, was manufactured around 1960.
- 2. Steel skates such as these owned by Rocky Raymond, manufactured by Union Hardware Co, were attached to the bottom of one's shoes. They were sold for \$2 in a 1924 catalog.
- 3. The Rogue Snowmen Ski Club, organized in 1932, hauled their portable generator to tow members up Garfield Peak (Crater Lake), Siskiyou Summit, Tomahawk, and Mt. Bachelor. These wooden skis and bamboo poles, used in the 1930s, were donated by Irene

- Clark a member of the Snowmen.
- 4. These men's ice skates (leather soccer shoes attached to league hockey blades) were used by Frank Bash in 1916 to skate on the frozen Columbia River. Bash, who passed away in 1996, was a seventy year resident of Medford, a founder of the Britt festival, a member of the schoolboard for nineteen years, and a retired Vice President of P.P.&L. He received a Distinguished Civilian Service medal in 1978.
- 5. This bright red dress was worn by one of Sarah Weeks' ten children during the years 1895 to 1915. Children's dresses were worn by

- both boys and girls. In the mid-19th century woolen dresses in bright red, yellow, or plaid, decorated with braid or wool embroidery trim, were common outdoor wear. A "Burnoose," a matching lined cape with hood, tied with a ribbon around the neck, was worn for warmth over the dress.
- 6. Cheerful handmade gloves from the 1940s reveal a sense of play emerging in children's "play clothes." This trend began to effect the world of fashion in general: this was especially true of adult fashions which began to mirror the slim silhouettes and jazzy knits of the ski slopes. 📌

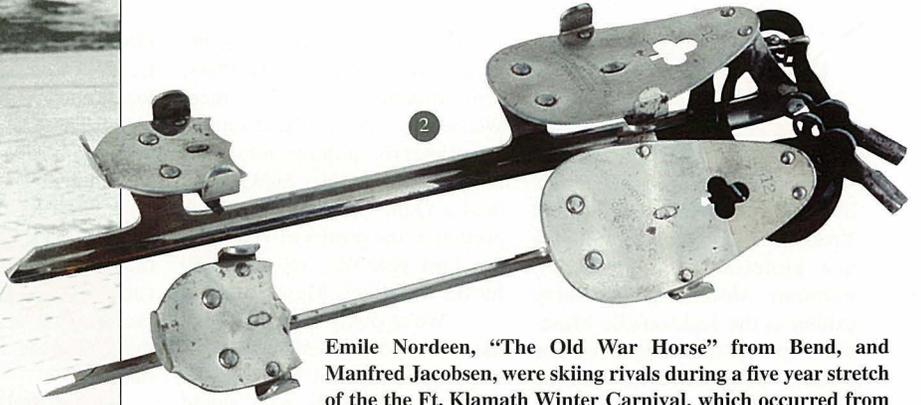


The Scherer children are seated upon a sled similar to the Trail Breaker shown above. Lower Table Rock is visible in the background, as is a packing house in one of the orchards owned by the family. Note the wooden sled behind the children. Mid -1920s.

COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHT



Women, early 1960s, skating on a frozen pond.



Emile Nordeen, "The Old War Horse" from Bend, and Manfred Jacobsen, were skiing rivals during a five year stretch of the Ft. Klamath Winter Carnival, which occurred from 1927 to 1938. Their race was a 42-miler to Crater Lake, and drew crowds of over 4000 to the tiny town of Ft. Klamath. Nordeen (below) took first place in the cross-country race (for the second time) in 1931. His prize, the trophy called "The Klamath," was 36 inches tall and cost \$250.



Spectators at Klamath Winter Carnival on motorized sled, circa 1927.

# Tours, Teas, and Figure Eights

## MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER TOURS

The gold in Jackson County was bound to dry up eventually. When it did, hundreds of miners living between Jacksonville and Yreka had to relocate or find a new profession. "*Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker*," an upcoming exhibit at the Jacksonville Museum, explores the trades men and women adopted after mining faded away.

Although the official opening of "*Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker*" isn't until June, special tours are available for those interested in watching the behind-the-scenes construction of this large exhibit. These tours are a great opportunity to see the hard work and problem-solving that go into making an exhibit of this magnitude. The tours are at the Jacksonville Museum on March 13 at 10:30 a.m., April 10 at 5:30 p.m. and TBA in May. Free admission to Jackson County residents. Bring your questions and your curiosity.

## \*\*\* WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Gold Diggers' Guild and the Jacksonville Museum Quilters are two auxiliary women's groups whose fundraising has been integral to the Historical Society's success during the last two decades.

The Gold Diggers' Guild, founded in 1977, is a group of forty-three volunteers dedicated to raising funds for the Historical Society. Through such activities as vintage fashion shows, tea parties, commemorative tray sales, auctions, rummage sales, and catered dinners, the Guild raised \$5000 for the Jacksonville Children's Museum in 1996. The money will help finance an upcoming model railroad project.

"We're interested in the history of southern Oregon and think it's important to preserve what we have for future generations," says Guild President Heather McIntyre.

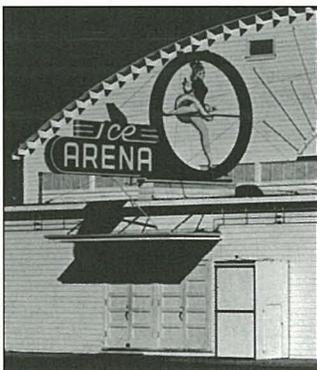
The twenty members of the Jacksonville Museum Quilters, also founded in 1977, meet Wednesdays and Thursdays in the U.S. Hotel for quilting and socializing. Every summer the Quilters hold a Quilt Show and donate a portion of the profits to The Society. Last year they raised \$2000 for the Children's Museum.

"We're partly a social group, like the old-fashioned sewing circle," says president Mary Eagle. "We teach anybody who would like to learn quilting or new techniques. We love people to drop by."

Call 773-6536 for more information on the Gold Diggers' Guild or the Jacksonville Museum Quilters.

## \*\*\* ICE RINK CREATES SENSE OF COMMUNITY

It's been fifty years since the Rogue Valley last had an ice rink. When the Medford Ice Arena opened Saturday, Nov. 8, 1941, at 619 West Grape Street in Medford, it was immediately popular with Rogue Valley residents. It



Medford's Ice Arena two weeks after opening in 1941.

was reasonable family entertainment; evening skating cost twenty cents for children and forty-four cents for adults.

The Ice Arena's advertising slogan was "It's Never Too Late to Learn to Skate," and in fact the Arena put much effort into wooing beginning skaters. It boasted an indoor skate shop that sold not only skates but gloves, socks, hats, and "skating costumes."

Group skating lessons at one dollar per hour were offered, and local hockey teams were organized. The Arena also hosted special events such as a New Year's Masquerade Ball and floor shows like the Roguette Accordion Revue which featured five accordion bands in full costume. (We can see part owner George Hunt's promotional style at work! See the *Craterian* article p. 22 for more.)

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in September of 1941 and subsequent West Coast blackouts, the Medford Ice Arena was quick to utilize the country's mounting patriotism in an advertising campaign: "A word of friendly advice: There is NO BLACKOUT of RELAXATION! The President has requested the people NOT to become hysterical; instead to remain calm and sensible. We agree that there IS a definite national emergency and the nation should recognize this fact. No precaution for civilian defense should be overlooked. But, let us not completely disrupt our normal living—let us keep physically and mentally fit to meet any and all emergencies. There is no finer way to relax and remain calm than to enjoy the grand sport of skating at the Medford Ice Arena!"

November of 1996 saw the opening of Lithia Park's new Darex Family Ice Rink. It was as well received as the Ice Arena in 1941. This wonderful outdoor rink is a place that brings community together in a positive way. Congratulations.

## \*\*\* YOU CAN HELP

We are looking for information on the Women's Mounted Posse of Medford. If you are familiar with this group, its members, and activities, please contact the editor at 773-6536.

Do you have photos of the Red Top School? Librarian, Carol Harbison-Samuels, would like to take a peek. Call her at 773-6536.



## MUSEUMS, SITES, AND EXHIBITS

### • Southern Oregon History Center

106 N. Central Ave., Medford  
*Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley*, now showing. *Language of the Land* will be on display through April 13. 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 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. Come in for a shopping extravaganza.

### • 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. *All Dressed Up*, through March, 1997. Hours: Sunday, noon to 5:00 P.M.; Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; closed Monday and Tuesday.

### • Children's Museum

206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville  
Hands-on history is fun for the entire family. Visit the new general store, and turn-of-the-century laundry and bank. Hours: Sunday, noon to 5:00 P.M.; Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; closed Monday and Tuesday.

### • C.C. Beekman House

California and Laurelwood streets, Jacksonville. Original Victorian era furnishings and living history brighten up the Beekman House. The Beekman House opens May 24.

### • 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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Southern Oregon Historical Society, Scherer children, 1920s #13295

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

For information on how to become a member of the *Heritage Circle* please contact Development Director, Jerry Price, (541) 773-6536.



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