

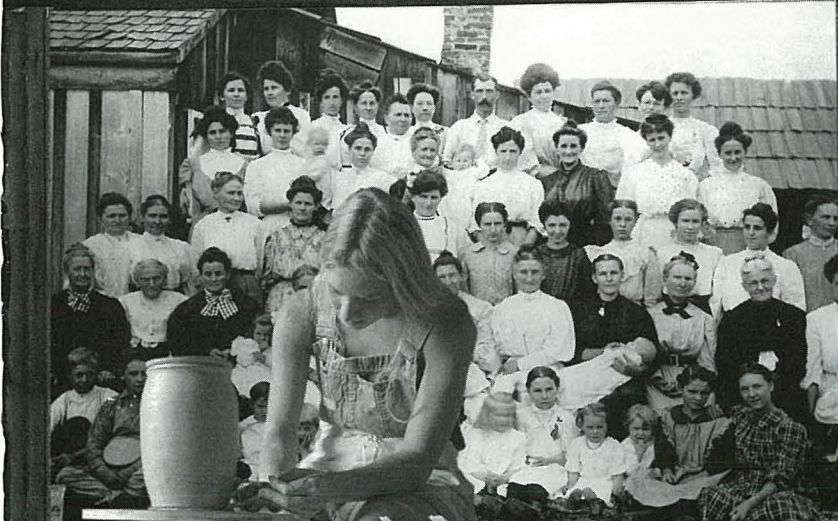
# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Vol. 2, No. 4 • The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society • 1997



MILK ON THE DOORSTEP • ASHLAND'S FAITH HEALER • THE SYMPHONY





# Tradition Today


IN JACKSONVILLE

## THIRD STREET CRAFTS

Quilters from 1907 watch pottery being made in the Hannah tradition at Third Street Crafts. Potters will be demonstrating and members of the Handweavers Guild will be weaving their textile magic at Third Street Crafts, daily, 9:30-5:30.




### MINER BAKER FURNITURE MAKER

Opening June 28 at the Jacksonville Museum, "Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker" explores such trades as logging, mining, gunsmithing, woodworking, and the household on the cusp of the Industrial Revolution. Porter Robinett, an 1890s Eagle Point blacksmith, admires Richard Ward's technology as he constructs bunks in the miner's cabin. Richard will be demonstrating the art of cabinetry in the "town-square." Look for shoemakers, milliners, crafters of violins, and more! 

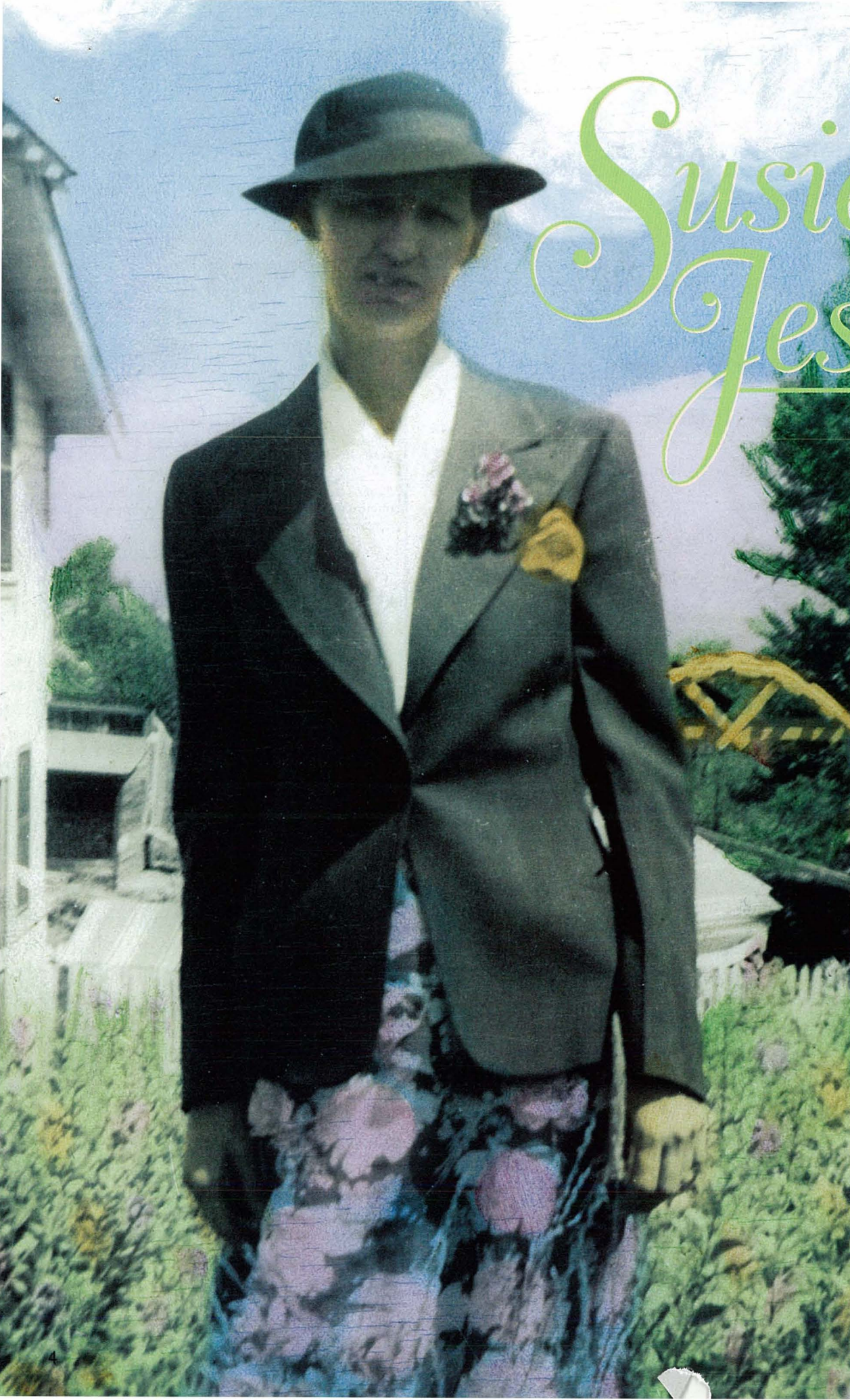


## THE HISTORY STORE

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As we open the doors on the new exhibit, we also unwrap the new Jacksonville History Store at the corner of 3rd and California streets, in the U.S. Hotel. Phoenix merchants of 1910, look on as the assistant manager of the new history store uncrates a spectacular stained glass window created by Andrew Tillinghast. The new store features the works of some of the finest artists and craftspeople in the Northwest. Open daily, 9:30 to 5:30. 





# Susie Jessel,

Susie Jessel's earliest memories were of being carried through the cornfields in the middle of the night to lay her hands on the ailing. Easing others' pain became her life's endeavor. Susie Jane Jessel is pictured here in Ashland in the early 1930s.



# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

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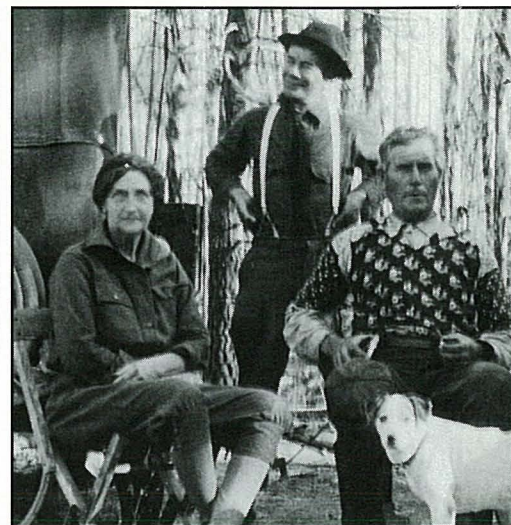
Shady Cove pioneer finds "tone wood" for classical instruments.

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COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE

Above: Rogue Valley Symphony conductor Art Shaw and his father play a duet. The symphony celebrates thirty years of success this season, see p. 26.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #15558

Above: National Parks, automobiles, and better roads made camping a national pastime. See "Snapshots" on p. 40 to find out how this group of Ashlanders, circa 1927, reflects the trends of times past.

Cover: Oil painting by Mary Crittenden from original photo used to promote Klamath Falls Creamery products. Circa 1940. See "Milk on the Doorstep" p.6.

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# The "Faith Healer" of Ashland by Louise A. Watson

**H**er hands were those of a housewife, a mother of six children. Eight fingers and two thumbs did the typical things expected of a 1930s housewife in Ashland: cooked meals, mended socks, washed clothes, dusted furniture, scrubbed floors. They may have been roughened by daily chores, or reddened by exposure to harsh soaps—she wasn't backed up by so-called modern appliances.

Nevertheless, beyond the kitchen at 540 Holly Street, Susie Jane Jessel's hands were a source of comfort and healing to the throngs of people who sought her help over the years when they felt traditional medicine had failed them. Susie brought fame to Ashland and filled its hostelrys well before the Oregon Shakespeare Festival put the small town on the map. At various times, she was known as a "faith healer," "The Miracle Woman," and "The Lady With the Healing Hands." Today, she might be known as a practitioner of alternative medicine.

Susie's story, and her gift of healing, begins not in Ashland, but in the hills and "hollers" of Murphy, North Carolina, where she was born April 22, 1891, the daughter of a Civil War veteran. Her mother, a midwife and hill doctor, noticed a veil or "caul" over Susie's face when she was born; in folk wisdom, that meant the child had a special gift. The new mother had trouble with her breasts, but noticed the pain and accompanying fever disappeared when the infant touched them. As a child, Susie was frequently called upon to heal the sick in rural North Carolina. Medford resident Alma Jefferson, Susie's daughter, said her mother's earliest recollections were of being carried through the cornfields at night to help those in need.

Susie, a Baptist and deeply religious, became a teacher while still in her teens. Life was difficult and work hard to come by in eastern Tennessee, where Susie's family then lived. She subconsciously fought her gift because it set her apart from others her age. But, while studying tailoring in Cleveland, Tennessee, and

assisting girls who were injured on sewing machines, she believed God told her to acknowledge her skill and to use it to help others. Later in life, she recalled a vision she had at that time, of Jesus telling her, "Go and heal the sick. Your hands are sufficient to heal all diseases of mankind."

At twenty-one, Susie married deputy sheriff Robb Kelby; by the time she was twenty-four, she was a widow with a daughter, Etta. But she soon met Charles Jessel, and married him on June 22, 1919. The couple left the South in 1926 with their two daughters Anna and Edna. They eventually settled in Baker, Oregon. Susie once said that as a little girl, she always loved the sound of the word "Oregon," figuring it would be a "heaven on earth," and she was determined to live there.

Susie's healing gift was responsible for bringing her to Ashland. In 1931, when a neighbor in Baker asked her to go to Grants Pass to heal her father, Susie and Charlie decided to take a look at Ashland, a town of 4,500 people. By August 1932, they had packed up and moved there, settling first on Iowa Street, then on a dirt road known as Holly Street, near its intersection with Idaho. Although she kept a cow and raised a large vegetable garden, Susie almost immediately began treating people who followed her from Eastern Oregon. Word of her skills spread among Ashlanders who became her patients as well.

Work was scarce, so Charlie gratefully dug ditches in Lithia Park through a WPA program. As their family and Susie's patients increased, they bought a larger home on Holly for \$500. When they bought the adjoining lot on Idaho St. with an old house in 1938, Charlie remodeled it for two apartments and a "treating room" to accommodate what Susie called the "huge crowds," previously seen in the family's home. The extra space also gave non-ambulatory patients a place near Susie to stay.

Alma, who was also born with the gift of healing, said having large numbers of people seek her mother out for treatments



The Jessels came to Ashland at the height of the Great Depression. Charlie, pictured at left, dug ditches in Lithia Park with a WPA program. Susie soon attracted clients from throughout the nation.

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #12858





SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #12868

Locals still remember the streams of people that flocked to the small treatment room on the corner of Idaho and Holly streets pictured here. The numbers burgeoned after an article on "The Miracle Woman," came out in a 1943 issue of *True Magazine*. Susie sometimes treated up to six hundred people a day.

wasn't unusual to her. "It didn't seem strange because it was something that had always happened," she said. "She worked around the house and I enjoyed the patients . . . It was a world in itself, she worked until 3:00 a.m. and then she went home. Then she would get up, eat breakfast and go over [to the treating room] about 2:00 p.m. She didn't require much sleep. She got her strength from her work."

Although the Jessel children were discouraged from going over to the treating room, Alma remembered there were four little benches on one side of it, upholstered chairs, long benches, and chairs in a row to accommodate those waiting for "our Susie." They read, knitted, or chatted amongst themselves.

And the numbers—estimated sometimes at four to six hundred people a day, or one every five minutes—grew after publication of an eight-page article about Susie by K.R. Ellis "They Call Her The Miracle Woman," in the February 1943 issue of *True Magazine*. Ellis described a woman of about fifty tending to patients simply by placing her hands on their backs, shoulders, or stomachs.

"In the center of the crowded room, tall, slender Mrs. Jessel moved about, administering to first one person, then another. Wearing a green silk dress, with a suspended print apron over it, she worked patiently and tirelessly. Here there was no luxurious reception room, no medical exhibit, no pretense . . . There was something strange but certain in Mrs. Jessel's astounding skill. Many patients felt she possessed X-ray hands . . ."

The simple cobbler apron Susie always wore was probably not much different than one worn by any woman in Florida or Arizona. Susie, however, used

the pockets of her apron to collect whatever small donations patients gave her for her services. She never priced her gift, she said, not wanting to commercialize on what God had given. Of her hands, she said simply, "Some call my hands X-ray hands, because they tell me where the trouble is and the cause, but there is no magic in this."

Susie had already attracted media attention before Ellis wrote his article. It was a story in a San Francisco paper that led nineteen-year old Joyce Robinson Ross, now a Medford resident, to take her mother, Lily, to see Susie in February 1943. Her mother had uterine cancer, a disease talked about in whispers then. At age forty-three, Lily Robinson had been given no more than two months to live. They arrived by bus after what Ross describes as a horrendous trip from the Bay Area.

"We got a cab and told (the taxi driver) we wanted to go to Mrs. Jessel's house, everyone knew where that was," Ross remembered. "The house was full of people, you just accepted the fact you were going to wait. As she worked, she talked to people. When someone left, you went in. It was dark out by the time she saw Mom."

"She walked up and asked a few questions and put her hand on my mother's shoulder. Mrs. Jessel said to me, "your mother has cancer (she didn't know about it ahead of time), she is too far gone, I can't help her, but I can ease her pain. She never touched her where the cancer was but talked to her quietly."

Although Lily Robinson died on May 7 in San Francisco, the trip to visit Susie Jessel had been a bright spot. Joyce Robinson met Eli, her future husband, at the little house while he was waiting for treatment for stomach trouble. They had a happy married life until Eli Ross died in 1989 at the age of ninety.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #12863

Whether a donation was slipped into her apron pocket or not Susie never withheld service. Circa 1940.



At first, Ross and her mother stayed in the Lithia Springs Hotel (today's Mark Antony) and then got a small apartment. Cooking was another matter during the days of World War II rationing. Occasionally, "take-out" food could be arranged by getting a tray fixed at a local restaurant. Ross also remembered a four-or-five-year old girl with leg braces getting treatment for her knees. By the time the Robinsons left, after three months and several visits to the treating room, the little girl was running around freely.

Despite the favorable publicity and the multitudes who came to Holly Street, there were detractors, too. The Jessel family received what were called poison-pen letters in the late '50s and early '60s. The publicity also resulted in a visit from the Internal Revenue Service. Susie, however, kept her equanimity and continued as before.

Susie continued to attract crowds right up until her work ended in 1966. She regularly spurned offers from the wealthy for a luxurious treatment room or a practice in Florida, preferring the simplicity of Ashland. She never opposed it, but recognized that many of her patients had themselves given up on medical science. She didn't require that her patients have faith, but acknowledged that it helped the process.

Susie Jessel died June 18, 1966, nearly two months after her seventy-fifth birthday. An overflow crowd of mourners, many of whom once filled her simple treating room, gathered respectfully to say goodbye. They came, as the minister put it, because she had given them hope.

Susie's work continued after her death through her son Joe, also born with the healing gift. Alma Jefferson picked up where Joe left off when he died in 1975. Like her mother, Alma believes all healing comes from God.

Maybe the sign which hung for years in the treating room best describes Susie Jessel's outlook and source of strength, "With God, all things are possible." 🏠

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*Louise Watson is a freelance writer and editor. Her article on Vetabelle Phillips Carter appeared in the Vol. 1 No. 4 issue of Southern Oregon Heritage.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. *Healing Hands, The Story of Susie Jessel*, as told to her daughter, Mary Jessel Sanderson, (Ashland, Oregon: The Print Shop, possibly 1970), pp: 5, 8, 71, 74, 77.
2. Alma Jessel Jefferson, personal interview, August 28, 1996, Medford, Oregon.
3. Oregon Blue Book, 1961-62, compiled and published by Howell Appling Jr., Secretary of State, p. 326.
4. Ibid, *Healing Hands, The Story of Susie Jessel*, pp. 41-43.
5. Editors, Time-Life Books, *This Fabulous Century, Sixty Years of American Life, 1930-1940*, Vol. IV, (New York: Time-Life Books, 1969), p. 24.
6. Ibid, *Healing Hands, The Story of Susie Jessel*, pp. 43-44.
7. Alma Jessel Jefferson, personal interview, August 28, 1996, Medford, Oregon.
8. K.R. Ellis, "They Call Her The Miracle Worker," *True Magazine*, February 1943, pp. 21-22.
9. Ibid, *Healing Hands, The Story of Susie Jessel*, p. 66.
10. Joyce Robinson Ross, personal interview, September 27, 1996, Medford, Oregon.
11. Ibid, *Healing Hands, The Story of Susie Jessel*, p. 63.
12. Ibid, p. 66.
13. Ibid, p. 71. 14. Alma Jessel Jefferson, personal interview, August 28, 1996, Medford, Oregon.

## FAITH HEALING:

The definition of "faith healing" is as close as your nearest encyclopedia, CD-ROM, or Internet site. Whether it works and has a place in today's high-tech medical world is another subject altogether. One viewpoint says tricksters are all too frequently found masquerading as healers.

Faith healing "is the cure or relief of physical or mental ills by prayer or religious rituals that may either supplement or replace medical treatment."

In Greek and Roman times, temples were erected to Asclepius, the god of medicine. Early Christians followed Christ's example by praying for the healing of the sick. Today, shrines such as Lourdes annually attract those seeking a cure, just as crowds of the hopeful sought out Susie Jessel in the 1930s and 1940s.

During the Great Depression, long lines of the jobless formed throughout the Rogue Valley and across the country. Whether or not hard economic times led these people to seek the services of a faith healer is unknown, but faith healing in the twentieth century got both good and bad publicity through the career of Pentecostal evangelist/healer Aimee Semple McPherson during the 1920s and 1930s.

"Faith healers are a part of history," says Ohio writer Ted Schwarz, and they won't go away tomorrow. Schwarz says legitimate faith healers "expect success yet recognize that they have no idea what healing may take or when it may occur." Like Susie, Schwarz believes that the only true healing comes from God. He also advocates judging an alleged healer on his or her own merits to more easily deter fraud.

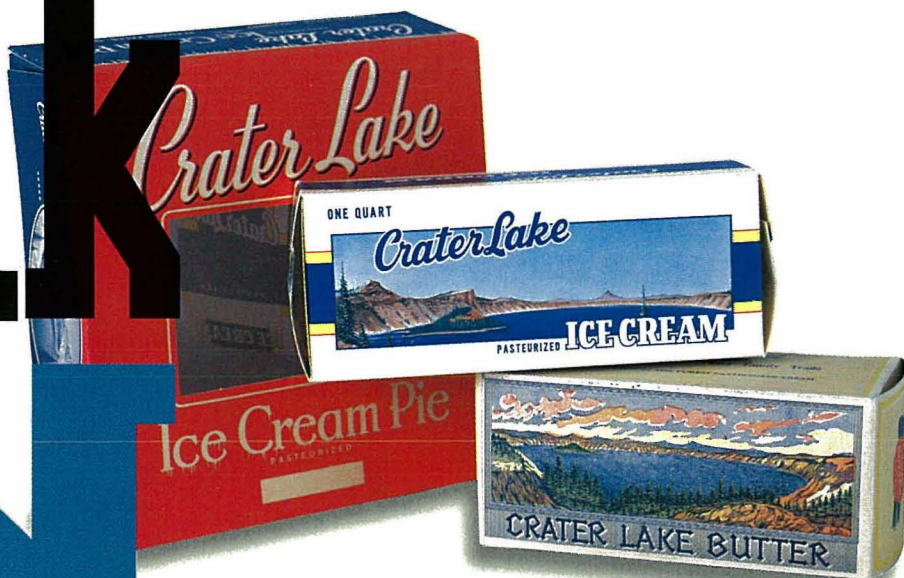
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- New Webster's Universal Encyclopedia, (New York: Bonanza Books, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 346.  
 Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc., 1992.  
 Schwarz, Ted, *Faith or Fraud?: Healing in the Name of God*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 187.



# milk ON THE doorstep

by Doug Foster



A collection of Klamath Falls Creamery packages, including an ice cream pie box from the 1930s. Creamery workers made these pies by hand, using a pastry bag to decorate the pie tops with a different flavor and color of ice cream.

“Mr. Milkman, Will you please go inside and put my milk in ice box, the boys are sleeping and I have gone fishing. Thanks so much. Mrs. Mork.”

This hand-written note dates from an earlier time when milk was delivered to people's doorsteps. This and other old notes to milkmen were found in a dusty drawer of a forgotten desk when the Klamath Falls Creamery closed a few years ago. How old are the notes? At least twenty years old, since the Creamery stopped home delivery in the late 1970s; more likely, they're forty to fifty years old.<sup>2</sup>





Deliverymen and their trucks line up in front of Klamath Falls Creamery in the early 1950s. These company-owned trucks had hand-painted murals of Crater Lake on the side. "Crater Lake Dairy Products" was the Creamery's brand name. The smaller trucks with easy-open doors were for home delivery; the larger trucks were used for wholesale deliveries to stores.

Three other old notes read:

"Milkman, Will you Please Knock on the door, our Alarm Clock is Broken. Thank you."

"Please put milk in bucket of cold water in shade. I'll be gone all day. Thanks."

"Shorty, would you set the milk in the house please. The coffee is plugged in and lit and the cup's in the cupboard. Help yourself. See that Pee Wee stays in. Dave and Thelma."

Jerry Krieger who delivered milk for the Creamery from the 1950s to the 1970s, said that some customers left their front doors unlocked and others told him where they'd hidden their front door key—so he could put their milk in the refrigerator. Jerry, known to his customers as "Jerry the Milkman," started making his deliveries at four a.m. For early deliveries, before people got up, he'd usually leave milk on the front step. But if he delivered after parents had gone to work and children to school, he'd usually put their milk in the refrigerator so it wouldn't sit outside all day.

Carl Baker, also a milkman for the Creamery for twenty years, said that customers often left him notes to put milk in the refrigerator. "Of course, they were people I'd known for years, just like a friend. Used to be you didn't have to worry about people coming into your house and stealing things."<sup>3</sup>

Both Jerry and Carl used to wear uniforms: white pants, white caps and white shirts with the Creamery brand name, sewn in blue thread on the back. Most of their delivery vans had murals of Crater Lake painted on the side. Until the early 1950s, when the Creamery switched to cardboard cartons, milk was delivered in unlabeled glass bottles. A popular song from the fifties was "Milkman, keep those bottles quiet." Although glass milk bottles at the grocery store had a ten-cent deposit, home delivery bottles didn't, since milkmen would pick up empty bottles at your doorstep.

"Delivering was enjoyable," Carl said, "because you'd meet a lot of good people. I had some people I could spend half an hour talking to. I'd think it was just five minutes till I looked at my watch....then I'd have to start running back and forth to houses to get the milk delivered on time." Carl had one customer who called his boss and complained because he didn't stop and visit. "I did visit with her most of the time but sometimes I just got in a hurry, put the milk down and left. The boss called me in and told me to stop and visit."





A "jobber" and his delivery truck in the 1930s. Jobbers were independent contractors who bought milk from the Creamery and resold it to their own customers, delivering it to their doorsteps. They removed their truck's front doors in the summertime to make it easier to jump in and out.

Some customers left treats for Jerry the Milkman such as four or five homemade cookies wrapped in waxed-paper. Another milkman friend of Jerry's could always get a summertime beer from one customer's refrigerator, as long as he left fifty cents on the kitchen counter. Every Christmas, Jerry got presents of about \$200 cash. "It's what made Christmas for my family quite a few years. If people liked you they'd treat you good."

Milkmen, in turn, took care of their customers. One of Jerry's customers could never remember things: Jerry would take quick inventories of her fridge, restock regular items, search through house and car for her misplaced purse, and then pay the bill. Once, after he'd delivered and taken payment, she asked, "Do we need any milk today?"

Delivering milk was hard, physically demanding work. Until the Creamery bought refrigerated delivery trucks in the early 1960s, milkmen had to unload everything they didn't deliver that day, stack it in a cool room in the creamery, then place their names on top of those goods. The next morning they had to reload their trucks by hand. Ice cream was stacked in an insulated box with dry ice packed on top. "When you loaded your truck in summer," Carl said, "you'd cover the milk with broken up ice, and in the winter you'd get ten gallon cans of hot water to keep the milk from freezing."

Customarily, delivering milk was a man's job. All the

heavy lifting and carrying they had to do, Jerry said, might explain why more women didn't deliver milk. Some dairies began employing women for home milk delivery during World War II.<sup>4</sup>

Harsh winters in Klamath Falls posed an added challenge. "In the winter," Carl said, "I'd get up at 3:00 a.m. and the first thing I'd do was look outside and see if it was snowing. If it was snowing I'd have to go down early, jack up the truck and put the chains on. "I had steep hills to go up."

Having grown up in Klamath Falls, I (the author) well remember how cold winters there could be. One of my boyhood chores was to bring in the milk. Our milkman always delivered early, while it was still dark.

On winter mornings, opening the front door to get the milk let in a blast of frigid air. Back then, before the days of homogenized milk, the coldest mornings occasionally brought a treat: cream would begin to freeze, then expand and rise in glass milk bottles. Sometimes I found a two-to-three inch column of icy cream protruding from a bottle's glass rim with the cardboard milk cap perched on top like a beanie. My brother and I used spoons to eat it like unsweetened ice cream.

In interviewing Carl Baker for this story I discovered that for ten years he delivered our milk. As a boy I didn't know him as Carl Baker; to me he was "our milkman." I didn't recognize Carl at first during our interview. But when he showed me a picture from the 1950s I recognized him immediately: he had more hair then, wore his white dairy uniform and stood by his white delivery van which had a smiling cow's face painted on the back.

**If it was snowing  
I'd have to go  
down early, jack  
up the truck and  
put the chains  
on. "I had steep  
hills to go up."**





Our milkman inspired my brother, Will, to write his first poem in grade school:

Every morning just at four  
I hear footsteps at my door,  
As the milkman brings to us  
Milk aplenty from his bus.  
When my milk this day I drink,  
Of the milkman I will think.

I told Carl about the poem written in his honor; in return, Carl told me a little more about himself. As a young man he liked to ride motorcycles; so when he first went to work as a milkman he wore his motorcycle cap—a military-style, billed-cap with “Harley Davidson” stitched on the front—until the Creamery

ordered him to wear a standard issue white hat. He used to tie an old cow bell to his delivery van’s rear view mirror so he could ring the bell as he pulled up to a house. Deliveries to our house, though, came too early for bell ringing.

With two routes, and an average of two hundred deliveries per route, a milkman had to remember what four hundred customers wanted. Jerry said that about 99% of deliveries were standing orders; e.g., one customer might want two quarts of milk three times a week, week-in-and-week-out. Jerry knew all his customers’ standing orders without checking his books. “Extra” orders—like ice cream, or butter, or extra milk—presented a different problem.

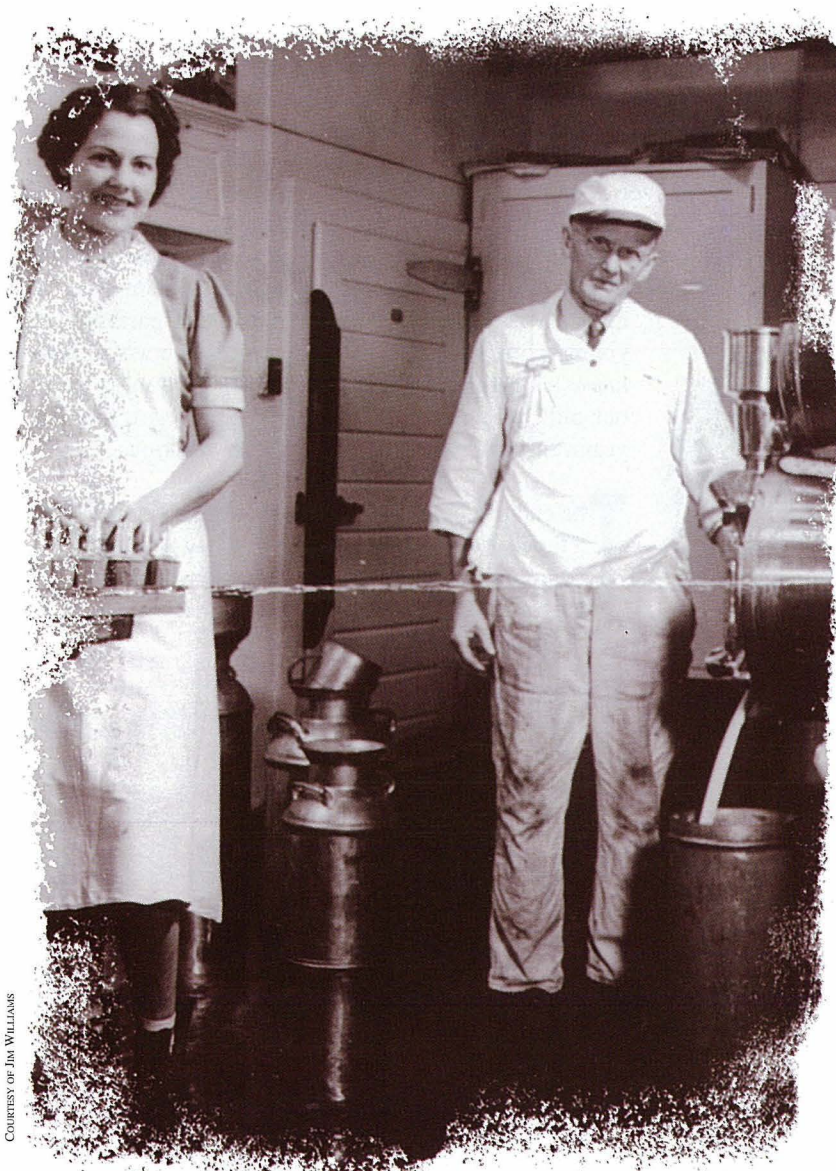
The Creamery developed a “flag” for customers to put on their doorsteps to let the milkman know which extra products were wanted. One popular flag was called the “extra-order man:” a five-

inch tall cardboard replica of a milkman with various colored tabs riveted to its back. If a customer raised the yellow tab it meant they wanted a pound of butter.

One day Carl took his youngest son along on deliveries. Spotting an extra-order flag out on a front door, he told his boy that the people in that house wanted cottage cheese and a dozen eggs extra. When his son asked how he knew what they wanted, Carl replied, “Can’t you read?” “The writing was so tiny,” Carl explained, “nobody could read it from the street, but I could tell just what they wanted by the pink and blue colors.” Most milkmen knew by heart what each tab color meant. But one milkman Jerry knew carried a telescope in front of his truck to read the writing on the tabs. (Perhaps he was colorblind.)

For Carl, the best part of being a milkman, was getting off work early enough to go fishing, and the worst part was soliciting new customers. The Creamery expected a milkman to drum up ten new accounts each month. If he finished his route in less than eight hours, Carl was supposed to solicit new accounts. So he watched for new “move-ins.” Carl said, “If you saw a moving van, you’d stop right there and go up and knock on the door, and say who you are, and that you’re selling milk. That’s how you’d pick up most of your customers.”

Milkmen were also expected to collect money for deliveries, and to cut off delivery for customers who didn’t pay. Jerry remembered one customer who took “three, three, four” (three quarts of milk on Tuesday and Thursday, and four quarts on Saturday) who stopped paying for her milk. After he cut off milk delivery, he went to her house regularly to collect, so he could resume delivery. One day he went to collect and the customer opened her door, called her kids out to the doorstep and told them “a story about how mean I was for not delivering her milk.” If customers did skip out on their milk bills, the Creamery eventually turned the bills over to a collection agency; and if bills proved uncollectible, the money came from the Creamery’s pocket.



Making ice cream at Klamath Falls Creamery before WWII. Former general manager, Earl Kent, draws liquid ice cream into a three gallon metal container for hardening. The woman was making chocolate-covered ice cream bars.



The Creamery began hiring milkmen in the early 1950s. Before home milk delivery was done by “jobbers” — independent contractors who bought milk from the Creamery and resold it to their own customers. Jobbers owned their own trucks, kept their own books, and collected their own bills. Unpaid milk bills came out of their own pockets. Some jobbers bought and resold Crater Lake Dairy products under their own labels. Loren and Joe Meeker, using plain glass bottles with a labeled cardboard cap on top, resold Creamery milk under the Meeker Dairy and Lost River Dairy labels.

**J**obbers, of necessity, engaged in fierce competition. Some would do anything to give the competition a bad name, like saying their competitor’s milk was dirty. When the Meeker brothers delivered milk at apartments, they sometimes picked up a competitor’s milk bottle, popped the cap and plopped in a little vinegar or buttermilk to curdle the milk. A few days later they would stop, knock on the door and graciously offer to deliver their own fresh milk.<sup>5</sup>

At small stores where shelf space was allocated, jobbers

**Jerry was afraid of dogs when he started delivering, until an old hand told him: “If a dog chases you, you chase ’em back.”**

put the milk down and the dog was on me like a flash and bit me on the back of my ankle. When her dog barked the lady looked down and said, ‘He won’t bite.’”

Discount grocery stores and rising gas prices took big bites out of the Creamery’s profits from home milk delivery. At one time there was no premium for home delivered milk: it was priced the same as milk sold at markets. The Creamery’s practice was to sell milk to grocery stores at a flat wholesale price; this allowed stores to sell the milk retail at the same price as home-delivered milk and still make a profit. But the first large warehouse store in Klamath Falls demanded a big discount from the Creamery in return for stocking only Crater Lake Dairy Products. This let the warehouse store undersell home-delivered milk. Over time, more and more price-conscious customers turned to the warehouse store for milk and abandoned home delivery. At the same time, rising gas prices made dwindling home deliveries more expensive for the Creamery.

In the late 1970s, the Klamath Falls Creamery ended home deliveries. In the early 1990s, after more than eighty years of operation, the Creamery went out of business. Jerry and Carl are both retired; Jerry raises horses and Carl raises organic vegetables. A few years ago, when Jerry used his jumper cables to help a young couple start their car in a parking lot, the young woman said, “Thanks Jerry.” When asked how she knew his name, the woman replied, “You used to deliver our milk when I was a little girl.” After more than twenty years, she still remembered “Jerry the Milkman.”

**T**he end of home milk delivery marked the end of an era, a time when we trusted more and had a greater sense of community. Most people today wouldn’t consider leaving their doors unlocked so deliverymen could enter



liked to arrive early and fill the competition’s shelf space with their own milk. At small stores no one noticed if a milkman picked up or delivered extra milk; so, a jobber Jerry knew once picked up a gallon of the competition’s milk, carried it around in his truck for a week — then put it back on the shelf after the milk had turned sour.

One problem every milkman had to face was the family dog. Jerry was afraid of dogs when he started delivering, until an old hand told him: “If a dog chases you, you chase ’em back.” Carl said, “Dogs won’t cause a problem unless they have somebody to protect.” One house where he delivered milk had a little dog that always lay curled on the front porch. When he walked up and put the milk down the dog wouldn’t even move. “Then one day,” Carl said, “the lady came out about the time I

MILKMAN  
will you please  
Knock on the door  
our Alarm Clock  
is Broken.  
  
Thank you



their empty homes. Most people today wouldn't leave a written invitation on their front door like this old note: "Milk Man Bill, Upon delivery of milk open one bottle by removing cap and pour from bottle spout 1/2 cup of milk on top of meal (marked "dog food"). Stir thoroughly for fifteen (15) seconds making gooey mess. Upon completion set bowl on back porch at same time calling 'Here Piggy, Here Piggy, Piggy.' Thank you. Coffee on stove. Lord Helps them that helps themselves.

Earl.

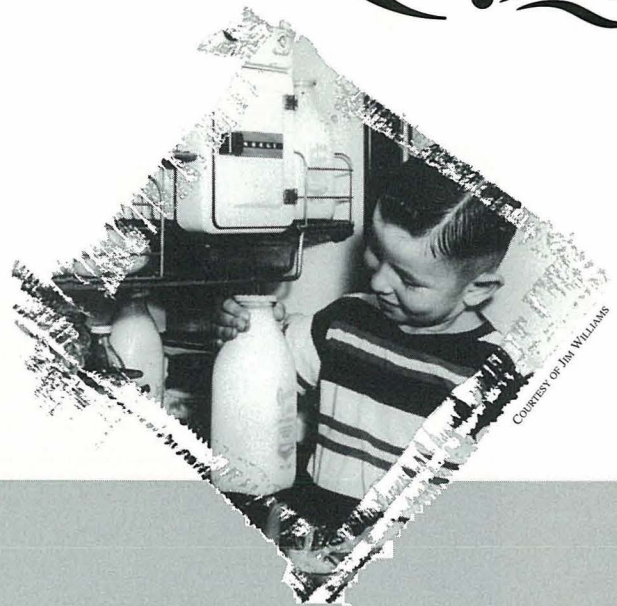
PS We was outa milk.

PPS Don't snitch the bacon." 🐷

*Doug Foster is a freelance writer and historian living in Ashland, Oregon. His article, Endangered Sucker Fish: The Klamath Tribes Struggle to Save a Native Fishery, appeared in the summer issue of Southern Oregon Heritage, 1996.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. All notes to milkmen quoted in this article were made available by Jim Williams, former plant superintendent and assistant manager for the Klamath Falls Creamery.
2. Interview with Jim Williams in Macdoel, California, on October 10, 1996.
3. Except as otherwise noted, All material in this article was based on interviews with Carl Baker and Jerry Krieger in Klamath Falls, Oregon, on November 6, 1996.
4. "Milk Route Maids Upset Tradition in Milk Industry," *The Milk Dealer — for the Bottled Milk Industry*, (January, 1943) Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 25.
5. Williams interview.



This picture appears on the face of a postcard used as a Creamery promotion. Note the tiny freezer compartment on this old Norge refrigerator.

**he End**



# The Applegate Valley Historical Society Puts Down Roots

by K. Gabrielle

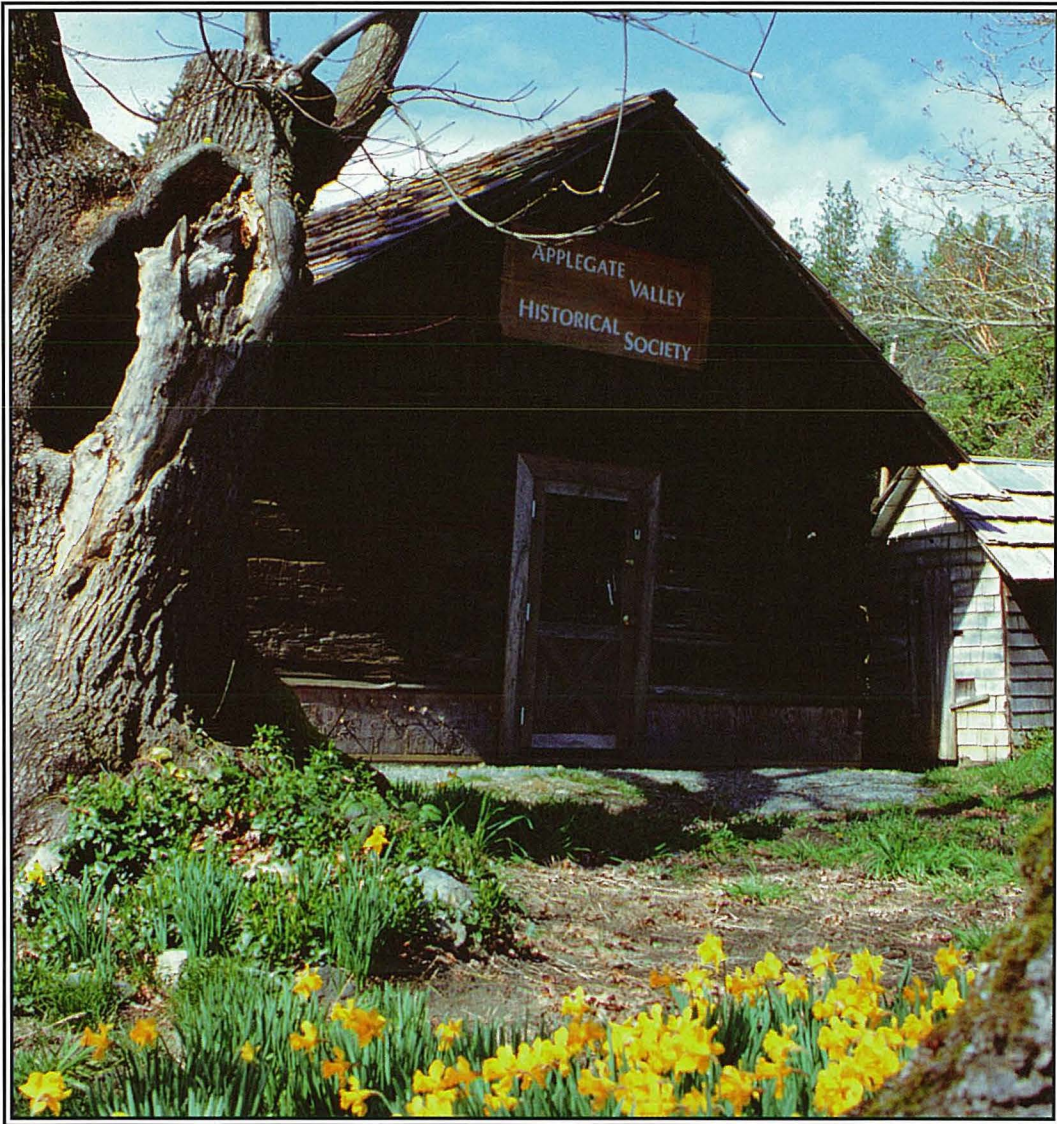


PHOTO: DANA HEDRICK

Located on North Applegate Road in the 1860s, the Pernoll General Store is one of the oldest log buildings still standing in the Valley. The Applegate Valley Historical Society brought the store back home to serve as its new museum. With determination, commitment, and celebration the Applegate Valley Historical Society Museum opened in May.

Behind every project that enhances the public good is an individual with vision; someone who can see beyond hat-high blackberries to grand old maple trees with trunks as thick as barrels; beyond brambles and debris to a landscape of blooming roses; and most importantly for the subject at hand, someone who can see beyond the difficulties of creating a museum for the Applegate Valley Historical Society. Myrtle Krouse, a resident of the Applegate Valley for seventy-one years, is such an individual.

In the mid-1980s, Myrtle began eyeing a small plot of land on Highway 238 across from the present-day Applegate Store. She

thought it might be a good location for an expanded community library. Although that project fell through, Myrtle was not finished. She began pioneering the idea of a museum for the Applegate Valley Historical Society. Roar and Mary Kjaer donated the property, and John Pernoll, a descendent of the Pernoll family who operated Applegate's first store, donated a ten-foot strip of land for visitor access to the museum from the less-busy North Applegate Road.

Mary Sampson and Myrtle Krouse first met when Mary was a nine-year old in a 4H group Myrtle instructed. Mary, caught up in Myrtle's enthusiasm, soon joined in the effort to obtain the old



Pernoll store as a permanent home for the Applegate Valley Historical Society.

When artifacts from Pioneer Village were auctioned off by the McUne family in the 1980s, the old general store was put on the block. Don Rowlett of the Box R Ranch in the Greensprings area out-bid The Southern Oregon Historical Society for the structure, one of the earliest log buildings in Jackson County. When Rowlett discovered who he had been bidding against, he very generously donated the Pernoll Store to The Society.

In 1989, Mary, Myrtle, John Pernoll, and several others asked for the building. The Society agreed to give them the store, if the Applegate Valley Historical Society would move the building from its Jacksonville location.

The people of the Applegate Valley came together to prepare the donated property for their new museum. The Applegate Lions turned out in force for a clean up day, bringing a "Cat" and a dump truck to remove the years of accumulated brush and rubble. Two truckloads were removed from an old well that once provided water for a small house no longer standing.

After the cleanup, more work on the site was needed to prepare it for the arrival of the 120-year old structure. Truman Elmore dug a foundation and Danny Boone, assisted by Mike Freeburg, finished a cement slab that Lininger Trumix had poured. Again the Applegate Lions, including Gene "Tuffy" Decker, came to the small society's aid. Two days were spent jacking up and preparing the structure for its journey home to Applegate. Russell Elmore braced the inside of the building to keep the walls up and Ben Watts hauled the old store up on a flatbed truck. The caravan of vehicles left Jacksonville at daylight one summer morning and, even with numerous roadside stops to allow traffic to pass, arrived at the site of the new museum by 8:00 a.m.

Over the store's long life, some of its rough-hewn timbers had decayed. Months passed in a fruitless search to find old timbers of the size used when the building was first constructed. Finally, Spalding and Son in Grants Pass milled logs for timbers large enough to match the existing ones. Truman Elmore re-roofed the building with shakes

in the original style. Ron Young of Grants Pass donated his time to install electrical outlets and lights. Using lettering designed by Myrtle's granddaughter in Texas, Jack Decker routed their sign. He also built a door to match the weathered log sides.

Numerous other people helped with the project. Dick Troon prepared necessary paperwork. Marguerite Black served as secretary. Sue Kupillas and the late Ann Basker, county commissioners of Jackson and Josephine counties, respectively, assisted in understanding and complying with government rules and regulations.

Due to limited storage space, the society will not cultivate its own collection. Displays will be on loan from private collectors, exhibited for three to four months, then returned to their owners or passed on to relatives. The first show will consist of a selection of Myrtle's quilts and wood carvings.

Myrtle Krouse has a picture of her sister-in-law as a young girl in front of the store fifty years ago. Looking into the landscape of that faded black-and-white photo, it's easy to imagine a time when sacks of flour, bins of square nails, and yards of cal-

ico lined the shelves. The citizens of the Applegate in 1860 would probably enjoy the fact that their simple store is now a museum space dedicated to them and all who followed.

The sense of community in the Applegate Valley helped people work together to achieve their common goal. The creation of this rural museum honors and recalls the history of those who settled in this green valley nestled in the Siskiyou mountains. The vision of Myrtle Krouse, Mary Sampson, and other Applegate Valley Historical Society members allows what some considered a no-man's land along Highway 238 to become an important part of the Applegate community's history and future.

The Applegate Valley Historical Society is open on weekends from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The museum is located on Highway 238 at North Applegate Road in Applegate, Oregon. 🏠

*K. Gabrielle is a freelance writer living in Ashland. Her article on historic cemeteries appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of Heritage.*



Right to Left: Mary Sampson, Steve Decker, Myrtle Krouse, and Barbara Niedermeyer. Myrtle Krouse was able to rally the Applegate community into supporting the Applegate Valley Historical Society's dream of a permanent home, proof that we can all impact the future of our towns.

PHOTO: DANA HEDRICK



# "Little Veit" and the Big Brewery

By Stephanie Keenan

For thirty-five years, "Little Veit" Schutz ran the biggest brewery in Jacksonville. In the mid-1800s, Schutz left his native Germany and made his way to the Rogue Valley. He opened a dry goods store in Jacksonville in 1852. But a shopkeeper's life was too tame for this man who "possessed many of the characteristics of a bantam rooster."<sup>1</sup> In less than a year, Schutz, along with Peter Britt and two others, started a mule-packing business, bringing goods from Crescent City to southern Oregon.

Trekking the trail with heavily laden mules was a risky endeavor. Conflicts with Native Americans arose, and the mule-packers soon joined with a second outfit, started by Jacksonville resident Kaspar Kubli, to take advantage of what safety there was to be had in numbers. Despite their increased numbers, the caravan was attacked. Several mules were downed, and the rider of the lead jenny mule was "pierced through the heart" by an arrow.<sup>2</sup>

Straight off, Schutz wanted to chase the attackers into the countryside and fight, but he eventually acceded to the counsel of his more temperate associates. Later, though, "Little Veit" got his chance for more adventure. A local man, Alexander Williamson, was killed in town, and the murderer escaped. Schutz and Kubli gave chase. Their quarry was considered desperate and dangerous, just the sort of spice Schutz relished. The two captured and returned him to Jacksonville to face the frontier justice of the day.

At length, Schutz quit the trail for a spot on West California Street just below the Britt gardens and opened a brewery that became a community gathering spot for the next thirty-five years.

**Below:** The Veit Schutz brewery, 1917, stood for almost 100 years on West California Street, until it was torn down in 1958. The Britt house is visible on the hilltop.

**Inset:** Today, not a trace is left.



*"Little Veit" Schutz, circa 1850s, was said to possess many of the characteristics of a bantam rooster. Veit operated a popular watering hole in Jacksonville.*

PHOTO: SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #1691

In addition to the water-powered brewing operation, it had a bar and fancy dance hall which, according to contemporary local historian Fletcher Linn, wasn't frequented by the "better class of young people."<sup>3</sup> Maybe so, but as *The Table Rock Sentinel* noted nearly a century later, even the "better class" liked to get off a few shots every once-in-a-while. An afternoon in the Brewery was potentially as exciting as a day on the old mule trail.

The City Brewery, as it was sometimes called, was built by Schutz himself of red brick and blue stone, with a yellow wooden frame all around the exterior. Besides providing the yeast for Jacksonville's breads and rolls, the Brewery held twice-weekly athletic club workouts in the open-air dance hall upstairs. The twenty-four uniformed club members would exercise with parallel bars, medicine balls, indian clubs, and more while decked out in their white duck uniforms, gray hats and colorful red kerchiefs. The upstairs gym/ballroom, its dances, and the tavern conviviality were part of the local German-Swiss culture's contributions to Jacksonville.



THEN





Mining and breweries both were going strong in those days, and Schutz's place flourished. It was not just his business but his home as well, and being a generous, fun loving host, or "whole soul man,"<sup>4</sup> as his friends put it, Schutz himself was no doubt another factor in the Brewery's success. There was even a little poem of nostalgic admiration written by Col. Robert Miller, a Jacksonville attorney, that ran in part:

"Oh! Dear Walter, I like to recall  
The pleasure we had at the Veit Schutz ball  
... The fun that we had I'll n'er forget  
Nor will I ever those days regret ..."<sup>5</sup>

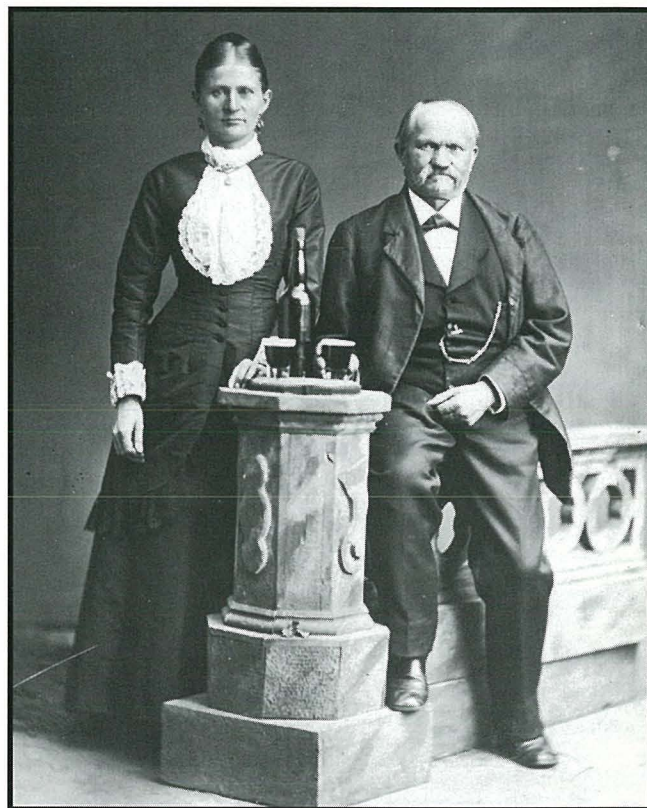
Popular and well-established, Schutz was ready for his next adventure: In the local paper he announced himself "on the marry."<sup>6</sup> Women were in short supply, and an ad was a good way to find a bride. He described both himself and the woman he hoped to meet as neither old nor young, nor handsome nor yet very ugly. The lady, in addition, would need "not to be a scold, but to have fair spunk."<sup>7</sup> 1866 found Schutz at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, walking the aisle with Josephine Rollman. They had four children together, but after fifteen years "their marriage not proving a happy union," they divorced.<sup>8</sup>

Schutz again went on the marry, and within two years he found Johanna ("Hannah") Lubeke sufficiently spunky to tie the knot. They chose the unlikely hour of 8 p.m. on a Tuesday in July to "steal a march on the boys," said *The Sentinel*,<sup>9</sup> getting their license, and marrying quietly immediately after. The ceremony was performed in the judge's home with one or two invited guests. Still, the couple didn't elude all fanfare, for "somehow" an uncommon number of regulars dropped by the Brewery that evening for a pint, and Veit was made to tell his news. Whereupon all present celebrated in style, with a brass band playing, and beer and wine all around.

*Sentinel* reporters revealed just how spirited Johanna Schutz was when, two years into their marriage, they wrote about "a row . . . at the City Brewery the participants being Mrs. Veit Schutz on one side and Veit Schutz, J. N. Jones, and August Bohn on the other, the weapons used being glasses and bottles of beer. Mrs. Schutz came out victorious . . ."<sup>10</sup> Well, nearly so: Hannah was fined \$5 plus court costs—a total of \$16.75—for the bump she raised on Jones' head.

Veit found himself in the papers twice more, in likewise less-than-flattering terms. The judge found him guilty of selling liquor without a license just one year after the brewery battle, and two years after that, guilty of selling beer to minors. His popularity held, however; "Little Veit" was generally considered an honest fellow, a feisty yet solid citizen who gave much enjoyment to Jacksonville. His saloon did a lively business until he died at home in the spring of 1892. Though his exact birthdate was never known, his friends guessed Schutz to be about seventy when he passed on.

After his death the Brewery closed. It sat empty for the next sixty-six years, except for a brief stint as a classroom in 1907 while a new schoolhouse was under construction. Finally, in



Schutz liked spunky women. He got one with second wife Hannah, pictured here with their glasses of Schutz brew. She once had to pay a \$5 fine for hitting a certain Mr. Jones over the head with a bottle during a brawl at the Schutz brewery. Circa 1883.

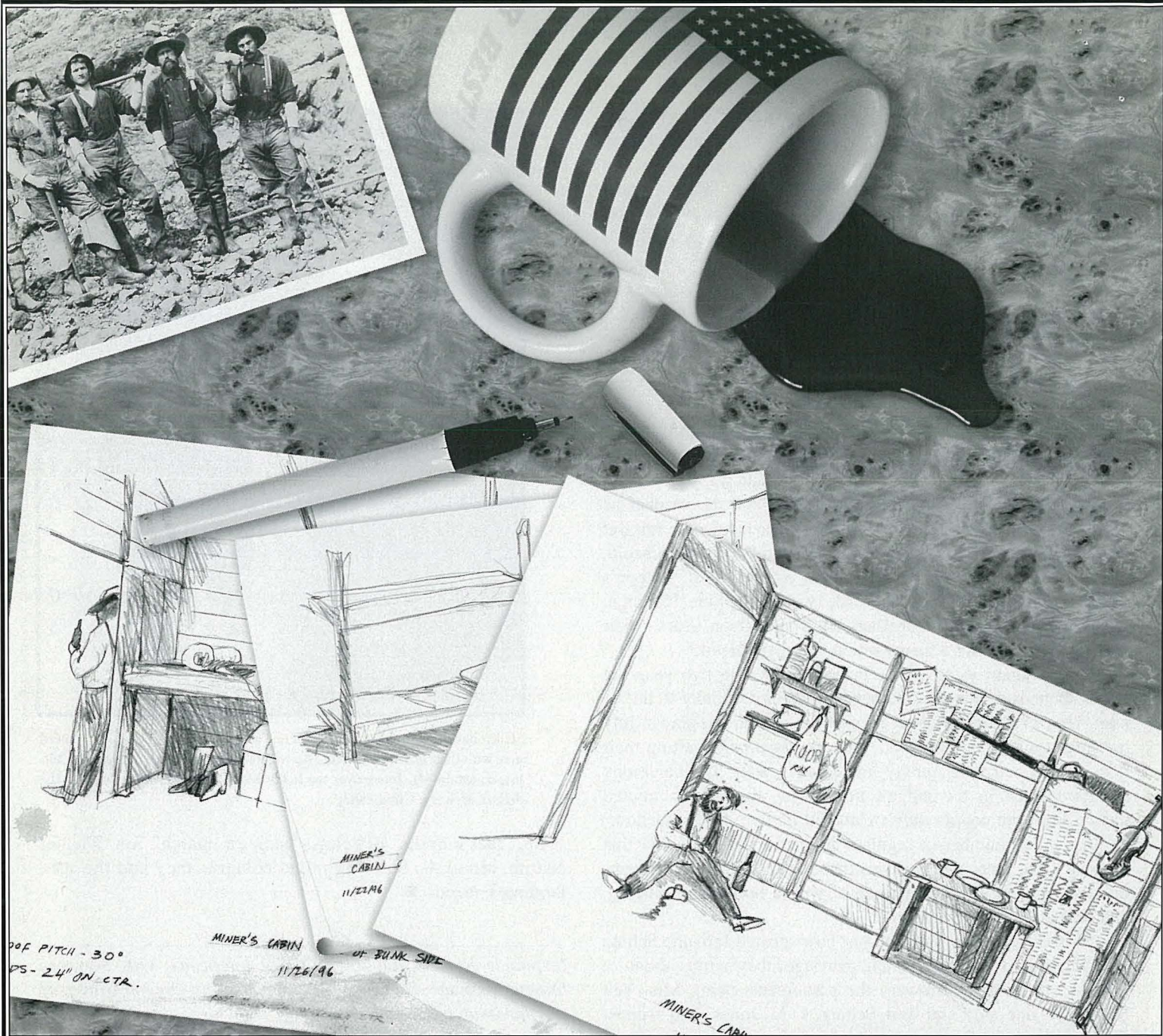
1958, Jacksonville officials "stole a march" on Mother Nature: afraid the building might collapse, they had the aged landmark razed. 🏠

*Stephanie Keenan did an Editorial Internship with Southern Oregon Heritage. She graduated from Southern Oregon University this June with a B.A. in journalism.*

## ENDNOTES

1. Southern Oregon Historical Society Research Library: vertical file.
2. Ibid.
3. Linn, Fletcher. "Fletcher Linn Memories. Book 4." SOHS Research Library.
4. Southern Oregon Historical Society research library: vertical file
5. Ibid.
6. *Oregon Intelligencer*. Mar 1864.
7. Ibid.
8. *Rogue Valley Sentinel*. June 1883.
9. *Rogue Valley Sentinel*. June 1885.
10. *Rogue Valley Sentinel*. 1886.



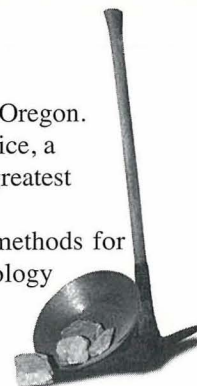


## Anticipating MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

By Tami Koenig

They came for the gold, those solitary miners, staking their claims with high hopes of striking it rich in southern Oregon. They lived rough and without comfort. Businesses soon cropped up to meet the miners' needs: an assayer's office, a blacksmith shop, the mercantile. Settlers also began to arrive, intent on farming. Their crops met one of the miners' greatest needs — food. By 1860, Jacksonville, the center of the region's gold phenomenon, was a bustling community.

The Industrial Revolution had been insinuating itself into the fiber of the nation since 1776. Mechanized methods for manufacturing were being utilized nationwide by the 1860s, even in the far reaches of Oregon. Industrial technology gradually began to change the way Americans lived and worked.



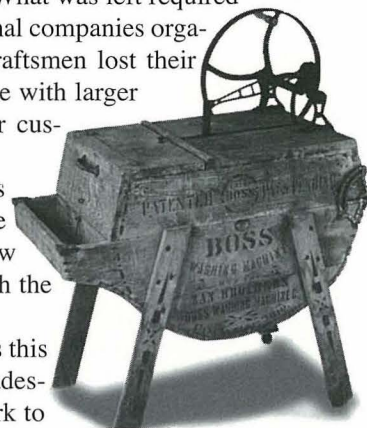




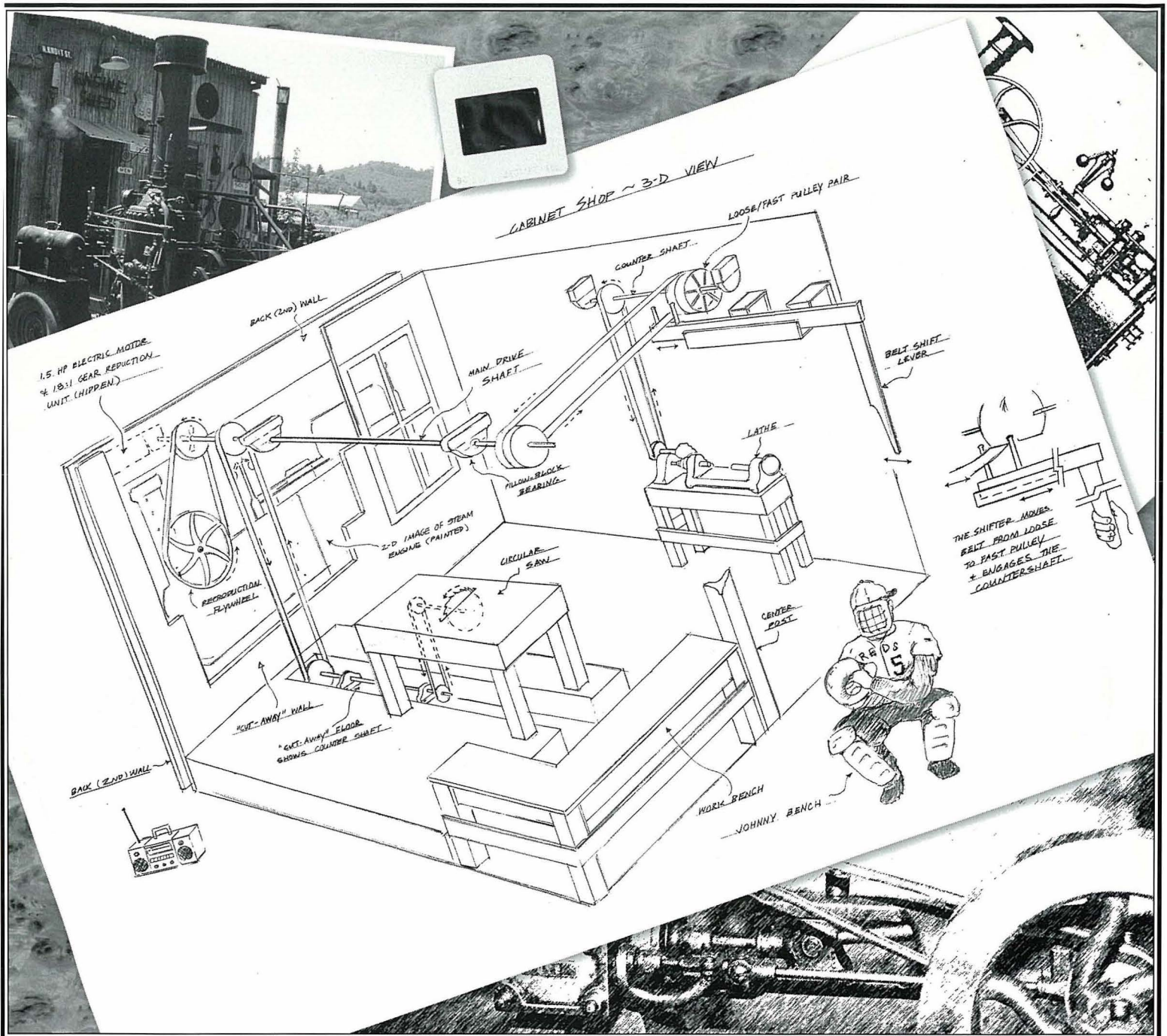
The Industrial Revolution hit Jackson County as the easy gold of the gold rush was dwindling. What was left required more than a pick and shovel to extract. Mining evolved from a solitary endeavor to a group effort; formal companies organized and invested in expensive modern machinery. Local trades were also affected. Individual craftsmen lost their importance as mass-produced items became available. Gunsmiths and blacksmiths, unable to compete with larger industrialized factories, went from being tradesmen who fabricated hand-crafted products for their customers, to repairmen and retailers who sold mass-produced items from their shops.

A few tools changed the way people worked. Some tools helped create new jobs, while others replaced human power with machine power and destroyed livelihoods in the process. The steam engine transformed the timber industry. The arrival of the railroad introduced the region to new markets for imports and exports. From a community centered around gold, Jacksonville changed with the times to become a center of local government, agriculture and commerce.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society's new exhibit, *Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker*, explores this changing community. It highlights the effects of the fading mining industry on local industry and tradespeople, as well as the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. It took time and teamwork to create an exhibit of this depth and magnitude. Designers and artists began creating a layout of the exhibit once the project was approved. An historian led the research process, organizing a team of twenty volunteers to sift through papers, documents, photos,



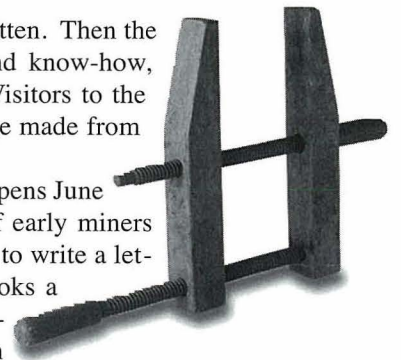




and oral histories. Their goal was to connect tools and artifacts in The Society's collections to the locals who once used them in their trades. The curator of collections pulled hundreds of related artifacts for inclusion in the exhibit, while the Research Library staff rounded up relevant photos and documents.

As concepts and research came together, narrative text and exhibit labels were painstakingly written. Then the "properties" folks began to build the three-dimensional environment. With imagination and know-how, *Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker* was built largely from materials recycled from previous exhibits. Visitors to the exhibit will notice this innovative work especially in the faux-brick storefront and blacksmith's forge made from recycled pressboard.

*Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker* is housed on the second floor of the Jacksonville Museum and opens June 28, 1997. Admission is free to Jackson County residents. Visitors will be introduced to the life of early miners through their tools and living quarters, and can even try out the hard bunks or sit at the rickety table to write a letter. The rough cabin emphasizes the discomfort of life in the gold fields, while a window overlooks a tableau of the newer technologies, such as hydraulic and lode mining, that replaced early mining techniques. You can even try your hand at gold panning, and then head to the assay office, where you can trade your gold for coin.



A blacksmith shop, a cabinet shop, and a typical sales room circle a stage area where artisans, using historic methods and/or



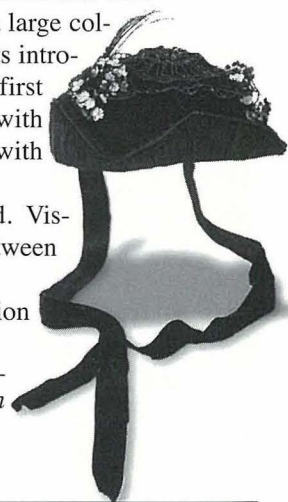


materials, will demonstrate their skills. An 1890s kitchen displays the cooking and household appliances of the era that were meant to lessen a woman's workload. Around the corner is a gunsmiths filled with metalworking tools and a large collection of guns. Overhead, an authentic water flume rests atop its sturdy trestle. Here, exhibit text and artifacts introduce the changes in agriculture, water rights, and water power. The Ashland Woolen Mill, one of the area's first factories, is represented with woolen goods produced during the 1880s. Next door, a millinery shop filled with hats, ribbons, and colorful trimmings hints at the abundance of goods that became available to consumers with the arrival of the railroad.

Newly introduced tools and technologies affected the way wood was harvested and the way it was used. Visitors will see the changes in construction techniques and building materials, as well as the contrast between the early logging tools and tools powered by steam engine.

*Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker* invites visitors to experience the changes brought about by mechanization and to look at tools of the trade with a new perspective. ■

*Tami Koenig is a freelance writer, exhibit developer, and multimedia producer living in Medford. Her story on the Prospect Hotel recently appeared in Heritage magazine, Vol.2 No.3.*





# Novelaire Memories

## The 1950s Barbershop Quartet that sang its way from Medford to Hollywood

by Gary Crocker

*Editor's Note: The following is a transcript of Glen Crocker's memoirs taken directly from interviews conducted by his nephew Gary Crocker. Glen toured with a barbershop quartet called "The Novelaires," in the 1950s. Medford's Novelaires hammed it up and sang their hearts out when radio was the chosen form of communication, and the television age was dawning.*

In 1949, I was singing in a trio with Bruce Y'Blood and Don Cleek. Don played the ukulele and sang baritone; Bruce sang lead and I sang tenor. We had a few songs worked up and were singing for fun. My brother, Mel, was singing with Don Keener in a barbershop quartet called "The Pear City Four" . . . Mel heard our trio sing and invited us to entertain the Medford barbershop chorus. We had fun and were well received. When Bruce and Don Cleek had to leave for college, Mel said, "Why don't you join the barbershop society?" (SPEBSQUA—The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America).

I thought it would be a lot of fun—singing with Mel. As kids we had harmonized together with the family, but we had never really done anything in an organized group. After I had gone to a couple of the rehearsals I joined the society. When we had coffee after the chorus rehearsal, we would get together and harmonize in groups. Mel and I knew a couple of old songs and we were blending in harmony. Don Keener joined in and we had a trio. Then we realized that we needed a bass. After a couple more meetings, Charlie Carroll joined in and we had our quartet. Charlie didn't sing many lyrics. He hummed, mumbled, and was always there with that deep bass voice.

Mel and Don dropped the “Pear City Four” and we formed a new quartet . . . I was driving along in my Union Oil truck, and Mel was in his General Petroleum truck, when we both thought of the name “Novelaires.” We were miles apart but had the same thought at the same time! When I got home I called Mel. I said, “Mel, I thought of a good name for the quartet.” He said, “The Novelaires?” I said, “Yeah!!!” Talk about people thinking on the same channel! Unbelievable! [The name “Novelaires” was officially registered with SPEBSQSA on November 2, 1951.]

After we picked out the name, we rehearsed four or five songs for the Crescent City Jamboree. The Novelaire's were the only Medford quartet invited to this barbershop jamboree. It was their charter night and first show. I had an old black '47 Chrysler

four-door sedan that looked like a limousine. We all got in that thing and took off for Crescent City. We were really nervous as it would be the first time we would sing in public. Everybody liked us and we had a wonderful time.

That same year we were invited to go to Klamath Falls. We were allowed only two songs. It was time to sing and we sang our songs, got polite applause and that was it . . . We determined that by the next jamboree (if we got an invitation) we would have something better.

... We had a good barbershop sound, but we wanted something more. We decided that we would do novelty stuff and live up to the name of our group. So we worked up versions of "Cool Water" and "Cigareets and Whuskey" and they were well received around the valley.

We received our invitation to go back to Klamath Falls and this time we were ready for them. The place was jammed. They had fourteen quartets and they said to all of us, "Look, two songs. We've got all these paid quartets coming on last, and they will probably do more than two songs. So two songs are all you're allowed, or we won't ever get out of here."

The weakest quartets went on first, as we had learned the year before. This time they put us on second. We sang "Carolina in the Morning," a barbershop song. Clap, clap, clap—polite applause like the year before. Then I said, "OK. Now let's do it!" We hit them with "Cool Water." I had sucked on a green Clorette and my tongue was green as a gourd. I started choking, and every time I'd say "wahter" I'd run out my tongue and gag. The spotlight hit my

tongue and set them off. They started giggling. Then they started laughing. By the time we really got into it, making faces and stomping our feet, they were dying laughing.

I had never seen anybody get so tickled. I'd heard of people falling out of their seats into the aisle, but I had never seen it happen until that night. A big guy down in the middle of the audience fell out of his chair and into the aisle. He was beet red and slapping his legs. We couldn't even hear ourselves sing. I didn't know

“A BIG GUY  
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AUDIENCE FELL  
OUT OF HIS  
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HE WAS BEET  
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SLAPPING  
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WE COULDN'T  
EVEN HEAR  
OURSELVES  
SING.”





In 1952 "The Novelaires" became the first musical entertainment to broadcast from the local television station located atop Blackwell Hill in Medford. Eventually they did a weekly show sponsored by the Union Oil Co. Left to right: Glenn Crocker, Mel Crocker, Don Keener, and Charlie Carroll.





COURTESY GARY CROCKER

The Novelaire Quartet took their show on the road and headed down to Long Beach where they became the "Douglas Quartet." Here Glen, Mel, Bud Brittsan, Roger Jones and Dean Pratt perform at the Tahitian Village restaurant.

what we were doing that was so funny! We were looking at one another. We couldn't figure it out. Everything we did made them laugh. Charlie was full of it. I guess I was, too. Don was taking his serious routine to perfection—never cracked a smile and never even moved. Of course Mel looked like he was dying. He'd get that long, drawn out face and hunch up his shoulders. He had both hands on the mike. I guess the combination of it was funny. The audience was in hysterics. We ran off after doing the two numbers and they would not stop applauding. They were yelling for more. We knew we were going to get an encore. They wouldn't let us go. When we ran off the stage, the next quartet said, "We've got to follow that?" We were ecstatic. . . The M.C. finally waved us back on stage and said, "Well, come on."

In the meantime we put on old hats, threw our coats off our shoulders and buttoned them in the wrong place. We staggered back out on the stage and did "Cigareets and Whuskey." The audience went totally berserk. We got about three words out of our mouths and that was all I heard through the whole song. I was stomping and raising my hand. I couldn't tell you what verse we were on. It didn't make any difference. I think we could have sung "Manure, Manure, Manure," and they would have laughed, because we had them with anything we did. They were just dying laughing. We did three other songs before they let us go. We just ran out of material that was worth listening to.

During intermission the quartets go out into the audience.

People were crowding around us wanting our autographs on the program. The guys from the paid quartets came over, shook our hands, and said, "My gosh, you stopped the show! We didn't even get started and you stopped the show!" I thought, "Oh, this is seventh heaven." That was probably the best received show we did as that group. It was our "hey day" right there. If anything could get you stage struck, that was it.

The write-up the next day in the *Medford Mail Tribune* said:

Despite the fact that some of the best quartets in the Pacific Northwest were present, Medford's own Novelaire (Mel and Glenn Crocker, Don Keener and Charlie Carroll) took a back seat to no one. The four, who have been singing together for several years, are of near-professional caliber—maybe better than professional, for it's obvious that they get a tremendous kick out of their singing and clowning.

Their two show-stopping numbers were those which they gave at the recent Kiwanis Kapers, "Cigareets, Whuskey and Wild, Wild Women," and "Cool Water." These are two of the funniest



song-acts this reviewer has ever seen—calculatedly casual, with a combination of melody and raucousness, and with enough frenetic interplay to make watching them—and listening—a delight.

From then on we got invitations all up and down the coast, including Long Beach, California, and Bellingham, Washington. We went to Bellingham [November 24, 1951] for a contest and placed second. In the “after glow sing,” we knocked them dead. It was a good time and well worth the trip.

★★★

I think it was in 1952 that our quartet became the first live television entertainment in the Rogue Valley. We had to go up to Blackwell Hill to do it because they didn’t have the studio downtown. Later we did a weekly TV program sponsored by Union Oil Company.

Blackwell Hill is very steep and when snow is on the ground it is very hard to get to the top. I remember one night we had started up for our broadcast and it was snowing. We didn’t get far before the wheels started spinning and we stopped moving. What now? No chains and fifteen minutes before show time.

Charlie had a bad heart so we told him to steer the car while we pushed. We were dressed for the TV program, topcoats and all. We’d move up a quarter of a mile and slide back half a mile. We couldn’t get up that hill! The tires were spinning, we were pushing, and time was ticking away. When we finally got up to the lot they threw open the door of the studio and hit us with bright lights and cameras as it was time to go on. We ran in, taking off our coats and singing our theme song. We were all out of breath as we ran in. I guess the people who saw that show got a real hoot out of it. As soon as we got through the theme song, Mel said something about pushing the car up the hill because of the snow. Then we went right into our routine.

Occasionally Don Keener would be called out of town and Marvin LeMasters would substitute. One night we were singing

and at one point we all threw out our arms. When Marvin threw out his arms, his jacket opened and revealed a pint of whiskey. We got a few letters about that, needless to say. I think our next song was “Sweet Adeline!”

Marvin LeMasters lived in Yreka. He asked us to come over and sing for the Odd Fellows. So Mel, Charlie and I took Mel’s little gray, two-door Ford. We were all sitting in the front seat. On Riverside, coming out of Medford headed south, it becomes a one-way street with Riverside going north and Central going south. There is a turn where they join into the main road. We were in a hurry because we were late and had only an hour to get over the mountains to Yreka. When Mel turned, the door flew open and Charlie started to fly out. I grabbed Charlie by the belt and then I started to go out with him. Then Mel got hold of my belt. He pulled! I pulled! We all got back in and Charlie slammed the door! Mel just kept driving. I’ll bet we went three miles before anybody said a word, just dead silence. Then we all went, “Whew!” Thank God for belts!

. . . . We’d sing anywhere in those years. We sang all over the Valley. We were always singing for something: Kiwanis, Jacksonville Jubilee, Camp White Hospital, or in a coffee shop, it didn’t matter.

★★★

Phil Butler from Geller Productions in Hollywood, was hired each year by the Kiwanis Clubs in Medford and Ashland to direct their annual show called the Kiwanis Kapers. We auditioned for him and he liked us. I think he thought we were nutty! He couldn’t wait to get us into some part of his show. From then on we were really good

friends and he made sure we were in every show thereafter.

Carol Maddox (a local Medford girl) and I sang the lead in a production called, “Gee! Washington.” Later in Act II, our quartet would sing specialty numbers. The show performed in Medford on March 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of 1952, followed by two days in Ashland. I think every business in Medford and Ashland were [sic] sponsors, a great job by Medford and Ashland Kiwanis Clubs. The “Novelaires” were made lifetime honorary members of Kiwanis as a thank you. We were very pleased.



Glenn Crocker, Mel Crocker, and Charlie Carrol singing “Cigareets, Whuskey, and Wild Wild Women,” a comedic tune that had a 1951 Klamath Falls audience slapping their knees and rolling in the aisles. That night the musical career of the Novelaires was launched.

COURTESY GARY CROCKER





Glenn, Mel, Don Keener, and Joe Lane (seated), after winning "Rocket to Stardom" in 1956. As their reputation grew The Novelaires appeared on television, radio shows, did back-up on albums, cut two of their own, and performed regularly at the Isabel Buckley School in Hollywood, entertaining the children of celebrities such as Peggy Lee and Donald O'Connor.

★★★

I remember one time we received a request to be on a show in Grants Pass to entertain for some kind of charity function. We said, "Sure." We went over and Mel Blanc was the M.C. He did all of his Bugs Bunny routines and was wonderful. Backstage, when other acts were on, we got to talk with him.

That night we stayed in a hotel in Grants Pass. The next morning we were having breakfast when a man came up to us. He had a big diamond stickpin in his tie and he said, "I was there last night. I was just going through Grants Pass." He said, "I own hotels in Alaska. I was wondering just what it would take to hire you guys to come to Alaska to work in my hotels as entertainers." So we said, "Well, five hundred a month each and all expenses." That was a lot of money in those days. He thought about it and said, "All right. That sounds good. Can I meet you tomorrow here at the hotel with the contract?"

We went home to Medford and came back the next day, which was a Sunday morning. We were there at the time we were supposed to be, but the man never showed up. It was just some guy that had to feel like he was important. That was kind of a disappointment as we were ready to "chuck it all" and go to Alaska.

Don Keener moved to Long Beach, California. Mel and I continued to sing with Charlie as a trio all over southern Oregon.

We got letters from

COURTESY GARY CROCKER



Don Keener all the time wanting us to come down to Long Beach. We were saving money and planning to go when Charlie died from a heart attack. That was a blow. That just did it. We wrote and told Don that Charlie had died and that we were finished, since there were just two of us now.

★ ★ ★

One of the employees at our service station [in 1955] was named Earl Rohlf. He was a really nice kid and he sang baritone. We taught him a couple of songs and started harmonizing just for fun around the service station. That was when we received an invitation to sing in the parade of quartets at Crescent City. We called them back and told the organizer that Charlie had died and that we couldn't do it. There were just two of us since Don had moved away. He said, "I don't care if it's just one of you. Come anyway. We've got to have you, because you were with us on our charter night. At least show up." Our debut had been on their charter . . . We said, "Well, we'll see if we can put together a couple of songs and bring with us a kid that knows two or three songs."

. . . . At Crescent City, the front page of the newspaper said, "The Novelaires will be here." That night the M.C. made the announcement that Charlie had died and that Don had moved away. He told them that we'd picked up this guy named Earl Rohlf and the three of us were going to do a couple of numbers. When we walked out on the stage, they all stood up, just cheering and clapping like crazy, out of respect, I guess, for Charlie. That made it hard! Talk about being choked up and trying to sing! Then we started to sing and got loosened up. Before long we were wound up. Poor Rohlf! He had to fake it . . . Mel and I were rattling through songs, and all he [Rohlf] could do was mumble and hum. But they just loved it. They thought it was great. But I think it was just out of respect for us and Charlie.

... The next morning at breakfast [March 19, 1955] we had to sing again. It was quite an experience. They gave us these little plaques with a bear, that says Crescent City Chapter with three names and then a blank line for Charlie.

★ ★ ★

We decided we couldn't make it in Medford and so we sold out, loaded up lock, stock and barrel and took off for California in the fall of 1955.

We hired in at Douglas as entertainers. We never went through the regular channels. We went through the foreman that had to do with entertainment. We met him through Don Keener who had convinced us to come to California. The foreman told us, "You'll entertain. We will fly you to the Douglas plants all over

the country. You will be the Douglas quartet."

That night at a banquet we sat with the manager of the Long Beach Douglas plant. We were introduced as the Novelaire's Douglas Quartet. We sang and they thought we were great. As we sang they filmed our performance. When we weren't singing we worked in the company; Mel was in electronics and I was in hydraulics. We did very little work because they were always calling us to the front office and they would send us somewhere to entertain. It was a tough job but someone had to do it!

During that time we also sang at Isabel Buckley Schools in Hollywood for the children of celebrities, such as Peggy Lee, Donald O'Conner, Betty Garrett, Rex Allen and many others. Eleanor Powell was Mistress of Ceremonies. What a kick!

Shortly thereafter, Douglas had a massive lay-off that included all of us. Once more we were shot down in our singing enterprise. Don decided he was going to move back to Medford and left the group. Mel also moved back to Medford. After two years he returned and the two of us started a sales business.

... When the quartet organized again it was with Roger Jones, Bud Britton, Mel Crocker and me. Dean Pratt, also a Medfordite, joined our group as a guitarist and singer. We were still called the "Novelaires." We eventually did the records, "Drums in My Heart" and "Bowie Knife" on CRC records. We did background work on Lark Label, Challenge and other labels. We also sang in nightclubs, on TV and did special events. It would take volumes to tell about all the great times we had.

A lot of people were in the “Novelaires” at one time or another. The original group was Mel and Glenn Crocker, Don Keener and Charlie Carroll: then: Roger Jones, Bud Brittson, Dean Pratt, Earl Rohlf, Marvin LeMasters: all of us were from Medford.

We never made a lot of money but what a time we had! We met a lot of great people, and for me, it was a wonderful experience and a fist full of fond memories.

Charlie Carroll—Died 1955

Mel Crocker—Died 1989

Glenn Crocker—Desert Hot Springs,  
California

Don Keener—Medford, Oregon

Bud Brittson—Eugene, Oregon

Roger Jones—Medford, Oregon

Dean Pratt—Grants Pass, Oregon

Earl Rohlf—Address unknown

Marvin LeMasters—Address unknown 

“WHEN WE  
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THE COMPANY;  
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SOMEONE HAD  
TO DO IT!”

*Gary Crocker, of Huntington Beach, California, is Glenn Crocker's nephew, and is writing a family history.*



# Pass the Baton!

*Conductors of the  
Rogue Valley Symphony  
orchestrate thirty years  
of success.*

*by Molly Walker Kerr*

Inside the music hall, the air vibrates with anticipation. Voices murmur, programs rustle; the audience hurries to find seats. On stage the cacophony of tuning instruments promises magic. Suddenly the lights dim. There's a hush, then a burst of applause as the conductor makes his way to the podium, executes an elegant bow, plants his feet, and raises his baton. The audience holds its breath; instruments are poised, ready. Finally the baton lowers and the music begins. Radiant sound pushes against the walls—slowly building, lifting, and carrying the audience away.

For the past thirty seasons the Rogue Valley Symphony has grown in stature to become a major regional symphony orchestra, exceeding the expectations of the artists and visionaries who, thirty years ago, embarked upon a dream.

It all began in 1965 when Frederik Palmer, a new assistant music professor at Southern Oregon State College in Ashland, attended a meeting of the newly formed Oregon Arts Commission. Palmer, unhappy with the small struggling orchestra he'd inherited with his job, longed to work with professional musicians. During the meeting MarAbel Frohnmayer stood and exclaimed, "This is all so exciting! I think we should have our own symphony."<sup>1</sup> Palmer waited until the next day, and then called MarAbel. With the help of Lynn Sjolund, choir director at Medford Senior High School, the three approached the music community for support through phone calls, brochures, and letters.

The response was tremendous. After auditions they had fifty-five qualified musicians to play in the new Rogue Valley Symphony, with John Drysdale, orchestra director of the Medford schools, as concertmaster. Delighted to play in a professional orchestra, musicians came from as far away as Sunny Valley, Butte Falls, and Yreka—even in the winter fog—to attend weekly rehearsals



Founder, Frederik Palmer (left) and members of the new board of directors, Emory Smith, president, Gene Piazza, and MarAbel Frohnmayer discuss the newly-formed symphony with Dunbar Carpenter.

COURTESY OF ROGUE VALLEY SYMPHONY



at Southern Oregon State College.

Elmo Stevenson, president of the college, agreed to provide the conductor, rehearsal hall, sheet music on loan, and graduation credits to students in the orchestra. With the college's solid support and a favorable response from the community, the new symphony orchestra formed a non-profit corporation with twelve board members representing Ashland, Medford, and Grants Pass, and enough patrons, subscribers, and sponsors to provide the \$4,500 needed for the first season.

The premiere concerts played to packed audiences and rave reviews. Skeptics were surprised by the performance quality as they approached an evening of "amateur" music. "From the arrival on stage of the orchestra members—dark suited men, women in black short dresses, and Conductor Frederik Palmer in tails—to the final colorful bars of Tchaikovsky's 'Capriccio Italien' the audience [sic] attention was captured...there seems a happy future ahead for the newly formed orchestra,"<sup>2</sup> raved the *Ashland Daily Tidings*.

Palmer, the symphony's conductor for the first six seasons, holds a PhD in musical arts from the University of Iowa. "Dr. Palmer is well-known as both a fine violinist and conductor with a scholarly approach to music, lightened with a sense of humor," claimed the *Medford Mail Tribune*.<sup>3</sup> That mischievous sense of humor carried the orchestra through the times, in later years, when he was called back to the podium to replace a vacating conductor.

During the first six seasons, building audience support was Palmer's goal. "I had to skirt a pretty fine line in music selection that would be popular with audiences and be what the musicians could perform. Most hadn't played since college. Things that were cliff hangers then could just be tossed off by today's orchestra."<sup>4</sup> Palmer thought big. During the first season, he tackled Mendelssohn's oratorio, "Elijah," involving two hundred musicians, the orchestra, and two

choirs. Guest artists such as Academy Award-winning composer/conductor Carmen Dragon, and renowned pianist Paulena Carter (descendant of Rogue Valley pioneers) were a few of the notables Palmer brought to Rogue Valley audiences throughout the years.

In February of 1972, a new music building was completed at Southern Oregon State College, offering the symphony a permanent home complete with office space, a rehearsal room, practice rooms, and an elegant recital hall. Excited audiences gathered to hear the first concert—the magnificent Brahms "Requiem" performed with the college concert choir.

After conducting the first six seasons, Palmer decided to return to his first love: playing solo violin. When questioned about his decision to leave the symphony, he simply pointed to a "Peanuts" cartoon on his office wall showing Linus at his toy piano. The caption read, "The joy is in the playing."<sup>5</sup>

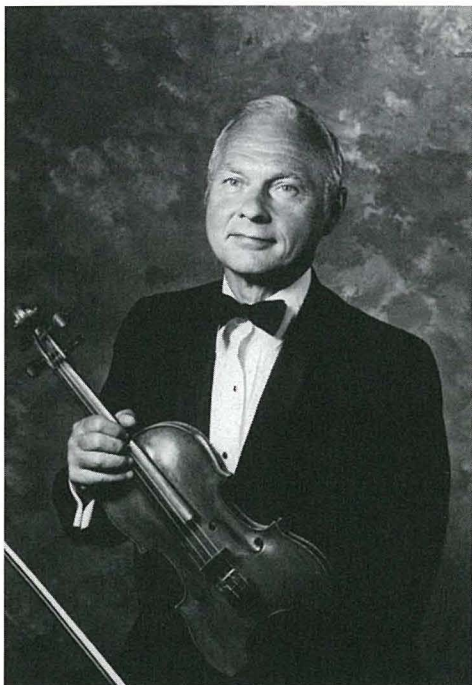
Palmer passed the baton to M. Max McKee in 1973, an enthusiastic



Fifty-five musicians were chosen from the first auditions for the new symphony. Here, his wish came true, Fred Palmer conducts rehearsal of the newly formed symphony.

COURTESY OF FRED PALMER





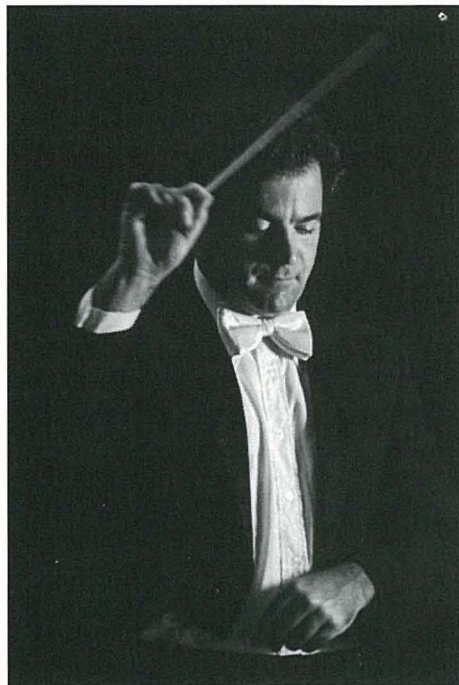
COURTESY OF FRED PALMER

Founder, Fred Palmer set down his baton in 1973 to pursue his first love, solo violin, after conducting the first six seasons of the Rogue Valley Symphony.



COURTESY OF ROGER DICKEY

In 1975, Roger Dickey, principal clarinetist for seven seasons, was selected to conduct the Rogue Valley Symphony. Dickey, a graduate of Eastman School of Music, was the first clarinetist to solo with the symphony. He also founded the Rogue Chamber Players.



COURTESY OF YAIR STRAUSS

In 1980 the symphony hired its first full-time conductor, Yair Strauss. In addition to his experience conducting symphonic, ballet, and choral music, he orchestrated several productions involving the Rogue Valley Chorale and the Rogue Opera.



COURTESY OF ROGUE VALLEY SYMPHONY

In 1972 Southern Oregon State College completed its new music building, providing a permanent home for the Rogue Valley Symphony and its offices. Here Palmer conducts the symphony in the Brahms "Requiem" with the college chorus, in its first concert on the stage of the new recital hall. William Bushnell, chairman of the Music Department, stands center. Fred Palmer conducts.



assistant music professor at SOSC. Easing the transition, Palmer performed Saint-Saens' "Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso" as guest soloist in McKee's first concert.

McKee, an experienced conductor with three music degrees from Washington State University, conducted the symphony for only two seasons, but during that time he launched two major projects: the Young Artist Competition, still a favorite today, offers winners a monetary award and a chance to perform as soloist with the symphony; and the popular Kinderkonzerts for school children. Wildly successful, the first Kinderkonzert featured Angus Bowmer, founder of the Shakespeare Festival, narrating "Peter and the Wolf" in his booming, eloquent voice. Bowmer returned the following year to narrate "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

After McKee's resignation, the board searched for a new conductor. Roger Dickey, principal clarinetist for seven seasons, was chosen to begin the 1975-76 season. Dickey studied music at Eastman School of Music, served as principal clarinetist in several symphonies, played in the Peter Britt Gardens Music and Arts Festival Orchestra, and founded the Rogue Chamber Players. He brought new energy, humor, and many renowned soloists to the symphony.

Once, at the first Red Rose Symphony Ball in 1978, Dickey conducted the full symphony pops concert with a banana, then allowed auction winner Barbara Johnson, wife of Representative Eldon Johnson, to conduct. Another winner, Dick McLoughlin of Jackson County Savings & Loan, was allowed to play the tympani (for the first time in his life) while holding a rose between his teeth.

Founder Frederik Palmer, missing the excitement of symphony life, returned when Dickey asked him to be concertmaster for the 1978-79 season. It was a fortunate move, because in the spring of 1979 Dickey resigned and Palmer was needed to finish out the season as interim conductor.

In the fall of 1980, Yair Strauss was hired as the symphony's first full-time conductor. Strauss, a U.S. citizen born in Tel Aviv, brought passion to the job, firing up the musicians and jumping right into the fund raising with a slew of new ideas. An accomplished conductor, Strauss had previously conducted the Salem Symphony and the Oakland Symphony Ballet, and held a degree in orchestral conducting from the Indiana School of Music. According to the soft-spoken Strauss, "The sonorities and intonations in music make conducting a little like mixing colors. I like to create a pleasing sound."<sup>6</sup>

As the symphony continued to grow, the board of directors opened an office in the music building and hired Phebe Ann Kimball, the symphony's principal flautist, as part-time general manager. Kimball applied her vigor and organizational skills to many things, including the ticket-sales operation.

Board members, Corinne Stubson (whose husband was then concertmaster) and Molly Kerr, a violinist in the symphony, co-founded the Rogue Valley Symphony Guild in 1980 to assist with fund raising. Today the Guild has over one

*Once, at the*

*first Red Rose*

*Symphony Ball*

*in 1978, Dickey*

*conducted the*

*full symphony*

*pops concert*

*with a banana.*



hundred members. The group hosts elegant teas and glittering holiday galas to help support the symphony.

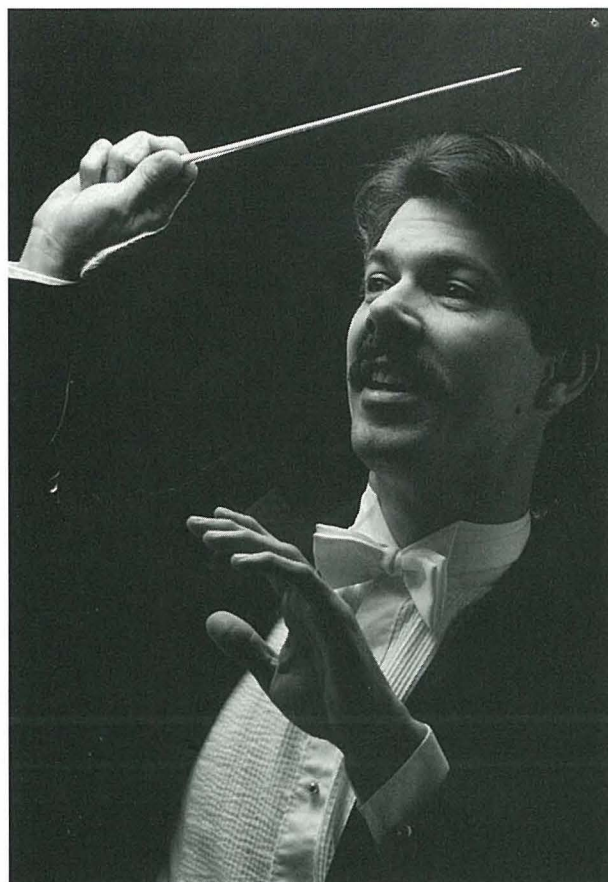
Twenty Grants Pass music lovers, chaired by Barbara Knox, formed "Friends of the Symphony" in 1985, tripling the number of Grants Pass season-ticket subscribers in just one year, ensuring continued concerts in Grants Pass. The enthusiastic group, much larger now, still works hard raising funds for the symphony.

After the formation of these two support groups, the future of the symphony seemed set. Attendance was up and ticket sales were soaring. Suddenly, in February 1986, Strauss resigned. The remaining season loomed with no conductor. Palmer was unavailable to conduct due to a death in the family. The board scurried and came up with Eric Black, a young conductor from Washington, D.C., to conduct the next concert. The renowned conductor Mehli Mehta, father of the New York Philharmonic's Zubin Mehta, finished out the remaining season with panache.

In the fall Frederik Palmer conducted the twentieth anniversary concert featuring pianist Paulena Carter. He also helped with the search for a permanent conductor. This time the search was nationwide. From a startling 120 applicants, the list was pared to four. After auditions throughout the season, Arthur Shaw emerged the favorite. Having conducted the Adrian Michigan Symphony, Shaw holds three music degrees, including a Master's in conducting from Wichita State University. He has studied under famous conductors such as Herbert Blomstedt of the San Francisco Symphony and Jon Robertson of the Kristiansand Symphony in Norway.

Shaw has taken the symphony to even greater heights, luring new musicians to the valley, and challenging the orchestra with more difficult music. He continually strives for the best possible sound;<sup>7</sup> today, the symphony plays to packed houses.

Shaw is now celebrating his tenth year with the Rogue Valley Symphony. A shining star, the maestro is beloved and respected by both musicians and the community. He has made symphonic music accessible, sometimes speaking from the podium, joking, explaining the music, and generally putting people at ease. The annual Holiday Candlelight Baroque Concerts he initiated take place in the hushed silence of darkened churches, with only the soft glow of flickering candles to light the music. He established the Chamber Players string quintet, which performs weekly in classrooms throughout the school year, as well as



Arthur Shaw celebrates his tenth anniversary with the symphony. Shaw has three degrees and studied under such notables as Herbert Blomstedt. His knowledge of music and casual approach have made symphony music more accessible to his audiences.

COURTESY CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE





COURTESY CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE

Art Shaw, Rogue Valley Symphony conductor, plays a duet with his father, Clarence Shaw. Clarence played in the symphony and was a member of the Chamber Players.

the delightful Saturday morning Target Discovery Concerts for children and their families—reaching thousands. “With a little luck and a lot of hard work the symphony could be on the verge of greatness,” Shaw says.<sup>8</sup>

“Our goal for the symphony is to build on the success of the past,” says William Mansfield, board president, and “to develop an orchestra of increasingly higher quality—to surpass past achievements.” With the efforts of pioneers such as Frederik Palmer and the response of an enthusiastic community, a strong foundation has been created for the Rogue Valley Symphony. As Shakespeare so aptly put it, “If music be the food of love. . . play on.” 🏠

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*Molly Walker Kerr played violin in the Rogue Valley Symphony for ten years, served on the board of directors three terms, and co-founded the Rogue Valley Symphony Guild. She and her husband Larry chaired the first two symphony balls. To her, writing is like music. A frequent Southern Oregon Heritage contributor, she just completed her first novel.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Personal interview with RVS founder, Frederik Palmer, 18 Feb 1997.
2. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 18 Nov 1967.
3. *Mail Tribune*, 9 Nov 1980.
4. *Ibid.*, 1.
5. *KSOR Guide*, 1980.
6. Mary Ann Campbell, *Mail Tribune* Weekly Shopper Supplement, 17-24 Sept 1980.
7. Anne Thomas, *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 1987.
8. Personal interview with Arthur Shaw, 12 Mar 1997.







# LIFE AMONGST THE TREES

**TOM TEPPER OF SHADY COVE CARVES HIS LIFE FROM LOCAL SPRUCE AND MAPLE**

**BY NANCY J. BRINGHURST**

If you should happen to stop at the Dairy Queen in White City, Oregon, you just might find yourself sitting next to “Old Man.” You’ll recognize him—he’ll be wearing his customary blue jeans hiked up over his spikey frame by suspenders, a long-sleeved shirt, and a faded cap pulled over his closely cropped white hair. The identification will be complete when you see him enjoying his once-a-week indulgence: a banana split Blizzard. His wife/best friend/business partner/chauffeur, Elva, will be sitting across from him.

You might even guess that this man, bent like a Doug Fir sapling heavy with snow, had once been a real buckaroo—chasing wild horses, herding cattle, and riding rodeos in his youth—you’d be right.

On the radio recently, Yehudi Menuhin played a violin with one of his young protégés, Old Man knew that among the many instruments Menuhin plays, some are made from his wood.

The first time Tom Tepper—called “Old Man” by his sons—heard Menuhin play was in Ashland, Oregon. Tom was in his early twenties and so poor he didn’t have a quarter for admittance, so he just stood outside and listened to the young violinist. Had someone told Tom then that he would one day provide the resonant wood for instruments world-renowned musicians such as Menuhin play, he’d surely have dismissed the idea as fanciful, if not downright crazy. Indeed, Tom passed through many years—and many careers—before that became a reality.

In 1924, young Edward Thomas Tepper and his father left their home in New Jersey and headed west to homestead in Sheridan, Oregon. Tom was thirteen. Somewhere east of Three Sisters, Oregon, his father realized that at the rate they were going, they’d never meet the deadline to sign for the homestead. He drew a map for his son, hopped a train, and left Tom with the horses and supplies to find his own way to their new home. Tom’s life has been an adventure ever since.

He had always dreamed of living out West, where there were mountains and forests and freedom. He’d loved solitude and challenge for as long as he could remember.

After his buckarooing days Tom turned to silver working, earning more money making bridle bits and jewelry than he had rodeo-ing. Then, just for fun, he learned to fly, eventually becoming an instructor for the Army Air Corps. When the war was over, Tom flew for the agriculture industry seeding California rice fields. He also spent time as a commercial fisherman before finally settling in Shady Cove.

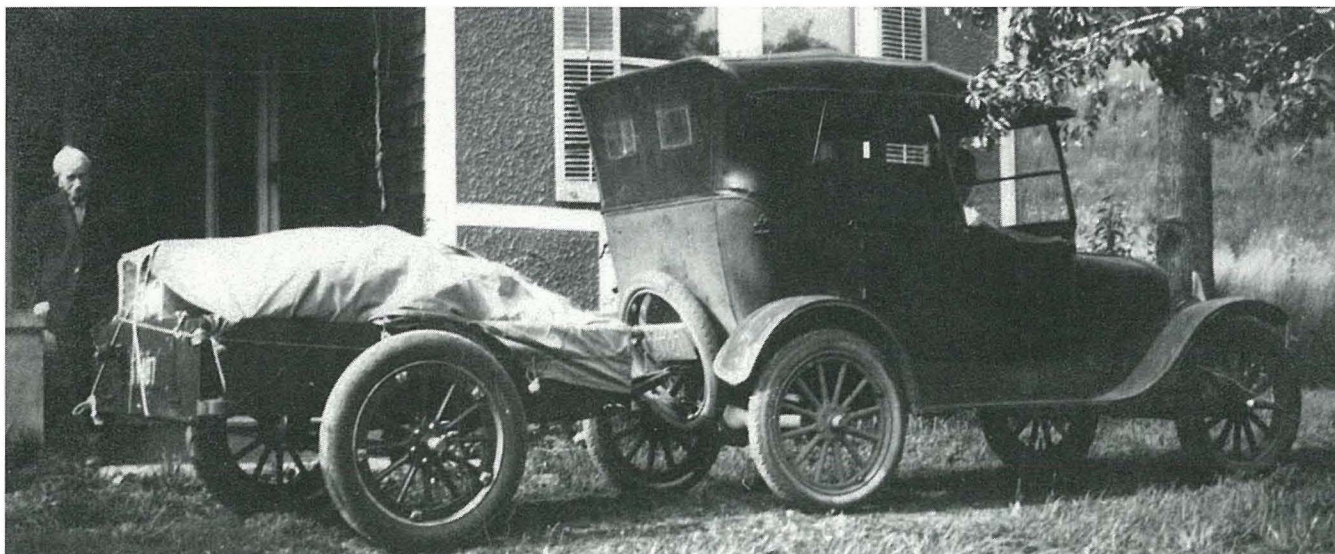
While in Tulare, California, for the Air Corps, he met Elva, “the single most important person in my life,” he says. “I couldn’t have done near the things I’ve done without her by my side, and where on earth could I have found a better mother to our three boys?”

It was the tree-seed business Tom and Elva began that eventually led to seeking out violin wood. He read an article in the local paper saying the Bureau of Land

**Left Center:** Tepper is an expert at finding “tone wood” amongst the spruce and maple trees he loves. His wood is prized by the makers of fine classical instruments. One instrument made of Tepper tone wood is in a museum in Beijing.

**Left Background:** Tepper’s collection of “tone wood” is stored as carefully as fine wine.





COURTESY OF TOM TEPPER

In 1924 Tepper and his father left New Jersey to homestead in Sheridan, Oregon. The journey was taking too long and Tepper Sr. was afraid they wouldn't make the necessary deadline so, he hopped a train to Sheridan and drew a map for his son to find his own way. Tom's been finding his own way ever since.

Management (BLM) needed pine and fir cones for their reforestation projects; he said to Elva, "this could change our lives."

Tom learned the tree-seed business the way he learned everything else: through curiosity, desire, and determination. He learned things step-by-step until he was satisfied he'd found the best possible way to do them. He designed and constructed his own buildings and equipment, making improvements as he felt the need. When something stumped him, Tom would seek solitude in the woods and "think upon it" until he had a solution. "Elva often was able to see things I hadn't, and she handled all our money and book-keeping. Still does. I've no mind for math," Tom admits.

The tree-seed business ended for the Teppers when the BLM and the Forest Service stopped seeding by helicopter. Tom still holds the record for seed germination. Seeds from cones he found and dried are now growing trees in many parts of the world.

"Tom is a walking encyclopedia," said Gordon Jesse Walker, a mule skinner and lecturer who passed away in 1996. "I've heard him give talks on cones and tree-seed collecting to folks with PhDs at the Society of American Foresters' meetings. He certainly had their

attention. At the end they had so many questions they wouldn't let him go."

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HUMANS,  
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TONE WOOD.

”

All the years spent trekking through the woods prepared Tom well for finding "tone wood," the special wood for making world-class instruments. He might not have gotten into it had not a friend, a violin maker, asked for his help in finding local spruce and maple wood. It soon occurred to Tom that he might get paid well for this job, so he read everything he could on the subject.

"I knew where to look for the tone wood, but I didn't know enough about picking the good trees and sawing them into the very exacting specifications needed for stringed instruments. And since the wood from a good tree is so valuable, I didn't want to waste any of it," Tom says. "Good [instrument] makers insist on absolute accuracy (plus or minus five degrees), which is very close tolerance, and proper sawing or splitting the slices out for the backs or tops is the most critical step of all in this business."

Through perseverance Tom found a unique answer to his own questions. "Hours of peace and quiet in the forest is to me the perfect schoolroom," he says.

"I'm not going to reveal any trade secrets, though. My son John runs the business now; no need to help



out competitors.”

At first the Teppers packed all the wood out of the forest on their backs, but Tom soon found an easier way. He designed a light-but-strong travois with a motorcycle wheel under the center with handles on each end. It took two people to operate, but on a smooth trail they could carry 125 pounds per trip.

Tom says, “What we call our music wood—the maples and spruces—are greatly influenced by the site they grow in. Most people will vote for the trees that have grown up in good soil with an adequate water supply and enough sunlight for good transpiration. This makes sense, but it ain’t necessarily so. Humans, animals, and even trees, are the hardiest if they have learned to cope with hardship. This is apparent in some of the qualities in the tone wood.

“After we’ve cut out a back or top and air-dried it, we’ll hold it gently in exactly the right place with thumb and forefinger, and tap with the knuckles of the other hand. If it’s good, it will resonate. It’s easy to demonstrate but hard to describe. Instead of just a thump, the sound will be prolonged, like a thum-m-mp. You can hear a good one ten feet away. Finding the

right tree is not easy. For every good tree I’ve taken, I’ve looked at and sampled a thousand others. This means crawling through some gosh-awful thickets of brush, and up and down very steep ground. John and I call it our factory, and we love it. The air is always fresh and [without] exhaust fumes or the sounds and smells of real factories.”

Tom’s big break came when his violin-maker friend showed samples of Tom’s wood at European instrument-making schools. Before long an American student studying in Germany, David Wiebe, asked Tom for a couple of pieces of spruce top-wood. Wiebe was so impressed with it that, once he’d completed his training and returned to Nebraska, he visited Tepper to select more wood. Later, Wiebe won an international competition with a viola made from Tepper’s tone wood. Violist Donald McInnes bought the award-winning instrument from Wiebe, and later used it to play a world-premiere viola concerto in New York with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic. It was through McInnes that Yehudi Menuhin heard of Tepper’s tone wood; Menuhin has since commissioned several pieces from Wiebe.



COURTESY OF TOM TEPPER

Tom Tepper of Shady Cove was once an Oregon “buckaroo,” chasing wild horses, herding cattle and riding in rodeos, circa 1919. He never dreamt his world would be linked with the likes of Yehudi Menuhin and other world-renowned musicians.



Not only did Wiebe use Tepper's tone wood for Menuhin's violin, he's used it to make instruments for a long list of other renown cello and viola soloists. There's even a Wiebe/Tepper instrument in a museum in Beijing, China.

David Wiebe is now just one of many instrument makers who buy their wood from the Teppers; orders come in from around the world. For Wiebe, Tom "... embodies the pursuit of knowledge."

Claude Kenneson remembers fondly the days he spent with the Teppers when he and Wiebe visited to select the wood for Kenneson's new cello. "My three days in Shady Cove were unforgettable. I realized immediately that Tepper was an exceptional man. I particularly remember sitting with him in the the woods, as he spoke about the trees he so loved and respected . . . and explained some of his observations that had led men like Wiebe to admire him: 'See how that old maple bends in the wind—up eighty feet or so? That elasticity at the point of its flexing promises something great for a new violin. . . . Wood from that section will vibrate like a Stradivarius violin.'

For the Teppers, the highlight of Kenneson's visit was listening to him practice in their home each afternoon. They decided to surprise him with a special gift: prime spruce and maple that had grown to maturity just a few miles from their home.

"This marvelous wood," says Kenneson, "had formed a part of Elva's special collection, and had been in keeping for years and was pursued by many cello makers because of its natural perfection. For a musician, such memories never fade. Even now as I handle the magnificent Wiebe cello of 1978, I remember my first memorable glance [at] its wood when it was handed to me for my pleasure in Shady Cove at the Tepper's home in 1977."

Tom has been content to let his son handle things since he retired. "I stay out of the business now that John has taken over, except to help him fell a tree. These big hardwoods are difficult to lay down just where you want them, so it's helpful to have someone

to drive in the wedges at exactly the right second."

Tom may have retired from the tone wood business, but to call him "retired" is like calling the desert wet. He's up early to have his two slices of bread with peanut butter and honey, his cup of tea, and a bowl of Elva's home-canned pears or peaches. Right after breakfast he walks up the mountain or works in his small workshop, where he carves wood and makes staffs and tools, all with a hand as steady as in his youth. At noon he comes in for lunch—a carbon copy of breakfast—then it's back to his workshop till dinner at five. Until recently, he spent part of each day hiking up the mountain behind the house, but at eighty-six he's starting to slow down.

Elva and Tom used to sleep outside until he hit his early eighties. "I would go in when there was a lightning storm," says Elva, "but Tom stayed outside no matter what." Their bed was just like any other—except it had a canopy made of four poles and a tarp. It faced the Rogue River, and in the early evening deer would come and eat out of Elva's hands.

Tom has lived most of his life outside among the trees and that's where he intends to stay. "I've always wanted to be buried among the trees where few people will be passing by. I want the same solitude in my death that I've enjoyed so much alive. The best use for my body when I no longer need it will be to improve the soil where a tree can use some substance from the part of me I'll be leaving behind. I did some research and found that in our county, I can legally be buried on my own property. With Elva's help, all the arrangements have been made.

"I've led the life I wanted to live and I'm grateful. I give thanks each day for the gift of being able to live in nature, and for eyes to appreciate and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us." ■

*Nancy J. Bringhurst writes poetry and children's books and recently completed a biography of Tom Tepper. She and her husband live part-time on Mt. Ashland, as well as in Pennsylvania and Arizona.*

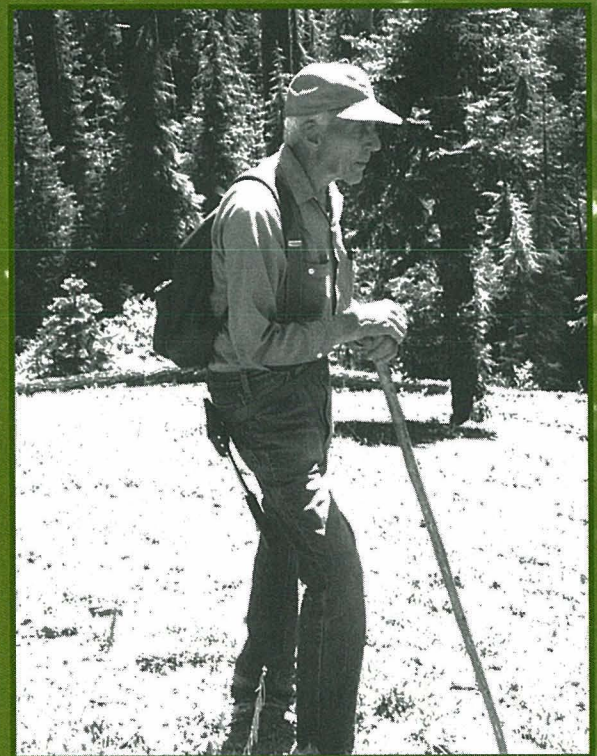
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SEE HOW THAT  
OLD MAPLE BENDS  
IN THE WIND—UP  
EIGHTY FEET OR SO?  
THAT ELASTICITY  
AT THE POINT OF ITS  
FLEXING PROMISES  
SOMETHING GREAT FOR  
A NEW VIOLIN. . . .  
WOOD FROM THAT  
SECTION WILL  
VIBRATE LIKE  
A STRADIVARIUS  
VIOLIN.

”

Right: Tepper loves solitude and gives thanks each day for being able to work in nature.





COURTESY OF NANCY BINGGARD



# Hot on the Trail

By Jacque Sundstrand, Library/Archives Coordinator



## Society Librarians hunt missing date of early Jackson County Precinct Map

Dates are of great importance when doing historical research. The Historical Society's librarians attempt to provide accurate information to the users of the Research Library. Finding an undated map while cataloging The Society's map collection posed a challenge. The large map (roughly forty-two inches high and thirty inches wide) titled "Official Map of Jackson County, Oregon," was drawn by Joseph Koch and published by Grant Rawlings. These facts proved to be valuable pieces of the puzzle. Because the map included an index of voting precinct names, color-coded to each precinct in the county, it appeared that the map was used to indicate . . . that's right, voting precincts. The map also showed county roads, streams, rivers, and railroad routes, as well as the names of parcel holders within each parcel's outline . . . more grist for the mystery/history mill.

Since cataloging an undated map is possible, but certainly of less value to our users, it was compared to the 1910 "Official Map of the County of Jackson, Oregon." This map, drawn by D. C. Carlton and published by the Jackson County Abstract Company, was officially adopted during the July 1910 term by the Jackson County Court. These two maps bear a striking resemblance to each other. It was thought the mystery map might even have been based on the 1910 "Official" map. Examining both, differences were found in some of the landowner's names; thus, the map in question was from another time.

Following up on all leads, like the good sleuths Society librarians and historians are, a number of sources such as census records, local histories, and newspaper indexes were researched to verify and date the landowner names, as well as those of

Rawlings and draughtsman Koch. If they had shut the book on the case right there, the librarians would have made a best guess that the map was drawn about 1900.

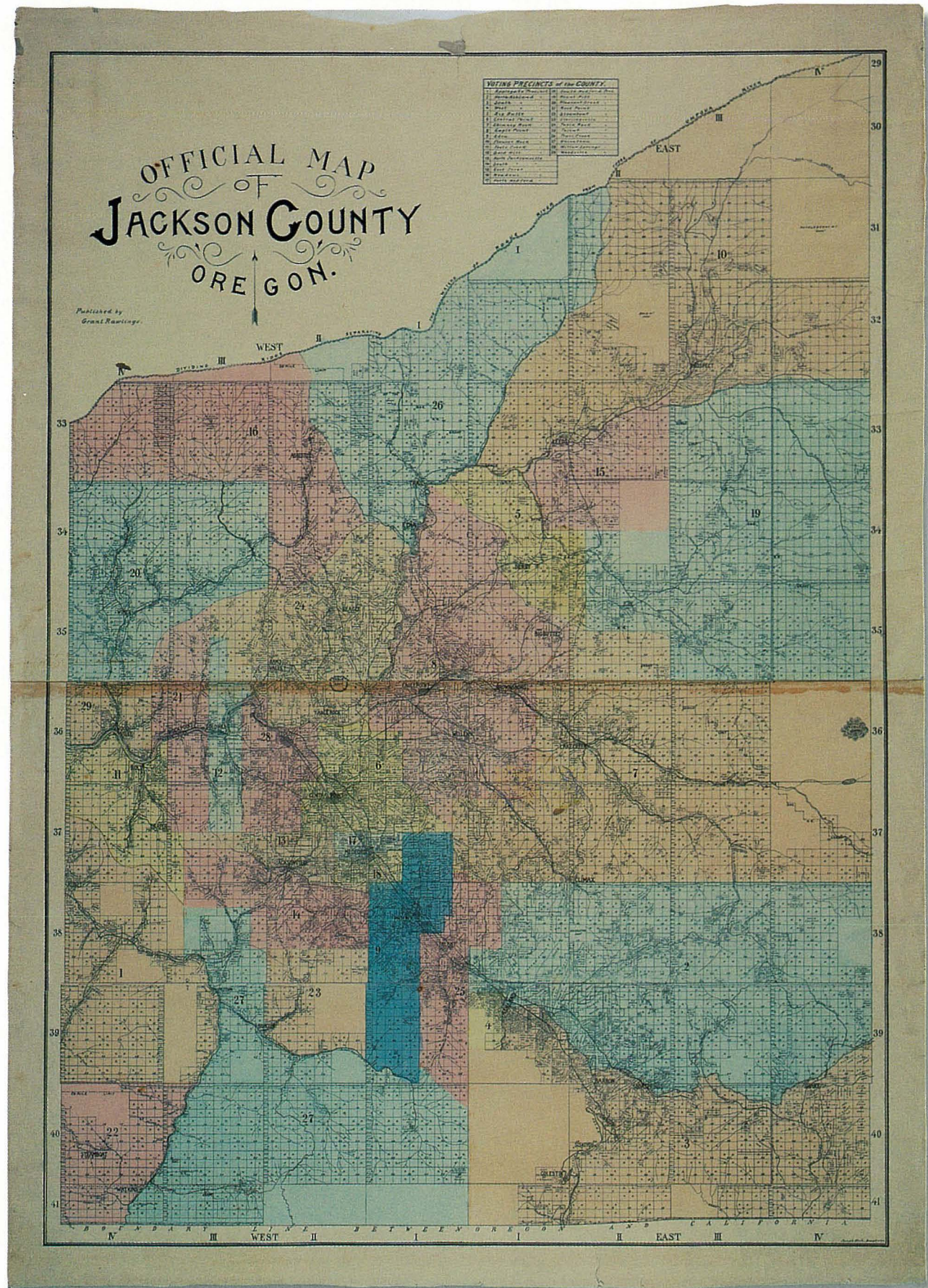
Society librarians, however, always get their date. Other repositories that might have owned the mystery map were consulted. Calls were made to the Oregon Historical Society, the State Archives, and the University of Oregon. No luck. County Archivist and map-lover Rich Thelin, however, surprised (and thrilled) the librarians by finding an entry in the County Commissioner's Journal that referenced final payment for a map made to Joseph Koch in June 1896. Thelin was also able to verify that Grant Rawlings was County Recorder in 1894 and 1895. Society librarians, given Thelin's information, now feel fairly at ease in removing their white gloves and placing the date of the map's creation at 1895.

Why, you might ask, would the Southern Oregon Historical Society—and not the County Archives—have this map? Thelin says that many public archives during the 1950s were encouraged to give items to local historical societies, where they would continue to be accessible to users. As with many historical items, the map is now more valued for the names it contains than for its primary purpose of identifying voting precincts. 📌

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*Jacque Sundstrand is the Library/Archives Coordinator in the Research Library at the History Center. She holds two master degrees, one in Library Science and one in History, and is a certified archivist.*







SNAPSHOTS



# A Day By The River,

Southern Oregonians Took To The





In the mid-1800s the grand landscapes of the West became a source of national pride for Americans. People began to follow the poets and philosophers into the great outdoors as a means of escape from everyday life. The National Parks Service also began in the late 1800s. With automobiles, good publicity, and free auto camps, annual park visitations rose to 487,368 by 1917. The nation was on a roll, literally, and Oregonians followed suit.

Above: In the early 1900s people came to Chautauqua in Ashland, camping for weeks to attend lectures and see entertainment. Vacationers, arriving by train, would take drays, complete with woodstoves such as the one pictured here circa 1900, to Chautauqua Park (where Shakespeare is today). Their tents probably came from the Sears catalogue, cost \$5, and weighed forty pounds each. The women were roughing it in narrow-sleeved "waists" and long skirts, free from bustle and crinoline. Still in the Victorian era, division of labor persisted: women attended to home and hearth—preparing meals, and sweeping a dirt floor. Men in open-necked shirts tipped moonshine in front of "Camp Silent."

Left: These well-heeled folks are decked out for motoring, circa 1908-1911. The women's "Scarf-Veils," three yards long and a yard wide, were absolutely necessary for keeping the large hats on while "touring." The woman on the right, sipping from the porcelain tea cup, is outfitted in a black surah silk top coat, the height of summer fashion. The men wear unlined suits of sack cloth, specifically tailored for recreation. The auto cushions were similar to tufted carriage benches.

Below: Crater Lake, photographed by Peter Britt in 1874, became a National Park in 1902. L.L. Bean put out his first catalogue in 1911, and by 1915 wooden wheeled cars trundled along the Pacific Highway. "Car Camping" had become as American as apple pie, especially in the West. This 1927 photograph shows a group of veteran campers. The folding chairs, camp cots, tin wear, and clothing would be the equivalent of today's finest from McKenzie Outfitters. Women's garb was replaced by a "mannish blouse," knee breeches, and snake boots. This attire would have scandalized the nation just twenty years earlier. The Jack Russell Terrier, "Patsy Ruth" belonged to "Mr. Ashland," Clarence Lane.

*Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley, 1826-1996*, at the History Center, displays artifacts, maps, and photos that explore these themes at greater depths. ☺

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #15559



# A Week In The Hills

## Outdoors In Style



# Southern Oregon

*Married in blue, love ever true,  
Married in white, you've chosen alright,  
Married in red, you'll wish yourself dead,  
Married in black, you'll wish yourself back,  
Married in gray, you'll go far away,  
Married in brown, you'll live out of town,  
Married in green, ashamed to be seen,  
Married in pink, your fortune will sink,  
Married in pearl, you'll live in a whirl,  
Married in yellow, jealous of your fellow.*

*-old Victorian verse*

# Brides

by  
Mary Ames Sheret, Curator of Collections

On August 18, 1883, Effie Bybee, the local sheriff's daughter, married Charles Prim in the Jacksonville Presbyterian Church. Her dress was of fashionable brocade satin and silk, trimmed with cording and lace. Over one hundred guests attended the affair where "wine flowed like water" and the supper table "fairly groaned underneath its load of delicacies."



Not all brides wore white in the Victorian era. On May 28, 1881, Otilia Dunn wore a light grey silk dress trimmed in lace for her wedding to the Rev. S.S. Caldwell at her home in Ashland. Her mother, Mary Hill Dunn, made the dress.



In October 1885, Maude Mary Hall, in a stylish white organdy gown trimmed with satin bows and lace, married Jasper C. Pendleton. The dress is lined with cotton in a shade of blue, a symbol of purity, faithfulness, and true love. Maude also wore long white leather gloves and a wreath of orange blossoms, symbolizing good fortune and fertility.





**W**eddings consist of traditions and superstitions, including the color of the bridal gown. By the 1860s, etiquette manuals and fashion editors advised wearing only white, but not all brides agreed. Some women continued to wear their best outfit, whether it was red, brown, black, purple or blue.

Visit *Southern Oregon Brides* at the Jacksonville Museum through December 1997, for an in-depth look at bridal fashions from the Society's collections.

Opposite page: Mary Hall Flint on her wedding day, November 14, 1936. Her dress is on display at the Jacksonville Museum.



Florence Maude Weeks married Dr. Henry Percival Hargrave in Phoenix on April 29, 1899. She looked "charming and pretty" in a two-piece brocade satin gown trimmed with chiffon. It was made in the current fashion by her aunt, Gertrude Weeks.



Etha Williams made her dress from silk and lace net for her wedding to Dr. Fred G. Thayer on September 7, 1907. On her gown, Etha included flower designs symbolizing love, unity or innocence.



For her wedding to William Donker in February 1941, Helene Salade, granddaughter of Dr. Louis Salade, wore a glistening satin gown with a four foot train.





## GRAND OPENINGS

June 28, don't miss the grand opening of *Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker* at the Jacksonville Museum. Explore the trades and technology of the early southern Oregon settlers. See wheels, pulleys, planers, a blacksmith's forge, a miner's cabin, Victorian home, and a milliner's shop, all within a town-like atmosphere. Watch cobblers, violin makers, and woodworkers demonstrate their skills in "town square." Years of preparation and research, imaginative design work, and over 226 artifacts combine to make *Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker* a memorable experience. Join us in celebrating the opening of this landmark exhibit.

June 28 is also the official unveiling of the Jacksonville History Store. Here you will find the works of some of the finest artists and craftspeople from throughout the Northwest. The new store is located on the first floor of the U.S. Hotel on the corner of California and Third streets. After a trip to the Jacksonville Museum, shop for stained glass, pottery, woodwork, fine art and books in this gallery-like setting. The new store is connected to studio spaces where visitors can watch artisans creating their work. Come watch demonstrators reproduce Hannah pottery, or watch members of the Handweavers Guild create magical textiles. Store hours: 9:30-5:30 p.m., daily.

WEDDING DRESSES  
AND PHOTOS

*Southern Oregon Brides*, now on display at the Jacksonville Museum, exhibits gowns that span one hundred years of bridal fashion. These dresses, chosen from The Society's collection, were worn by local women. Brief histories about these women and details of their weddings are included in this stylish exhibit.

*Views Along the Trail* features regional landscapes as they may have appeared to Mountain Man James Clyman in the 1800s. Photographer Rich Bergman followed in Clyman's footsteps and, through a unique photo process, brings us images of unspoiled territory, rivers, mountains, and glades that could be mistaken for photos from another era. Bergman's photos will be on display at the History Center, July-November.



## WITH GRATITUDE

With the help of Southern Oregon University, the publications department has set up a

dynamic internship program. Interns Stephanie Keenan, technical editor; Cabot Carlston, photo journalist; Bill Mathiesson, journalist; and Bill Daggett, computer artist, have all been contributing to the quality of our publications, exhibits, and marketing materials. In turn, these students are gaining professional experience and exposure to the inner workings of museums, publications, and historical societies. Editorial Volunteer Lou Lyman came to us via Southern as well. A big thank-you to the people at Southern! These students are full of fresh perspective, professionalism, enthusiasm, and dedication. Congratulations. (Twelve-year old dynamo, Maggie James is also volunteering for Photographer Dana Hedrick.)

Thanks to cover artist, Mary Crittenden of Yreka for recreating a promotional photo from the Klamath Falls Creamery for *Heritage*. Mary draws most of her inspiration from historical photographs taken before 1910. Original paintings are available for sale, as well as prints and greeting cards. To contact Ms. Crittenden call (916) 842-6068

The Society's future rests increasingly in the hands of the community. Funds from *Heritage* subscriptions aid in supporting The Society's mission. Share your *Heritage* with friends—encourage them to subscribe or to become members. Thank you for your support of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

*To augment the "Southern Oregon Brides" exhibit, here is a little turn-of-the-century advice.*

## "The Secret of a Happy Marriage"

Woman is an instrument given to man for his happiness and his delight. If the instrument gets neglected, out of tune and broken, man should blame himself alone. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the instrument is right enough; it only wants to be in good and careful keeping. In matrimony, to retain happiness and make it last to the end, it is not a question for a woman to remain beautiful, it is a question for her to remain interesting. Not the slightest detail should be beneath her notice in order to keep alive the attention of her husband."

- McCall's Magazine, April 1903



SOUTHERN  
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SOCIETY

MUSEUMS, SITES, AND  
EXHIBITS• Southern Oregon History  
Center

106 N. Central Ave., Medford

*Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley. 1826-1996* – ongoing; *Views Along the Trail*, July-November; Community Collects. Gallery and office hours: Monday through Friday, 9-5 PM. The gallery is also open Saturday, 12-5 PM.

## • Research Library

The History Center, Medford

Over 750,000 historic images and negatives, 800 manuscripts, and wide selection of books and pamphlets covering topics of local history. Open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 1-5 PM.

• The History Store,  
Medford

Toys and gifts reminiscent of another era. Open Monday through Friday, 9-5 PM; Saturday, 12-5 PM.

## • Jacksonville History Store

Corner of California and Third streets, Jacksonville

The works of regional artist and artisans presented for sale in this gallery-like setting. Daily, 9:30-5:30 PM.

## • Third Street Crafts

Third Street, Jacksonville

Traditional crafts demonstrated in studio settings. Daily, 9:30-5:30 PM.

• Jacksonville Museum of  
Southern Oregon History

206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville

*Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker; Southern Oregon Brides; Politics of Culture* and more. Open 10-5 PM daily through Sept. 1.

## • Children's Museum

206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville

Hands-on history for the entire family. Open 10-5 PM daily through Sept. 1.

## • C.C. Beekman House

California and Laurelwood streets, Jacksonville  
Victorian household interpreted by living history characters Mr. and Mrs. Beekman, daughter Lydia, piano students, kitchen staff and more. Open daily from 1-5 PM through Sept. 1.

## • C.C. Beekman Bank

California and 3rd streets, Jacksonville  
See the interior of this turn-of-the-century bank and Wells Fargo Office from viewing porches year-round.

## • SOHS Online

Visit our new website at [www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org)

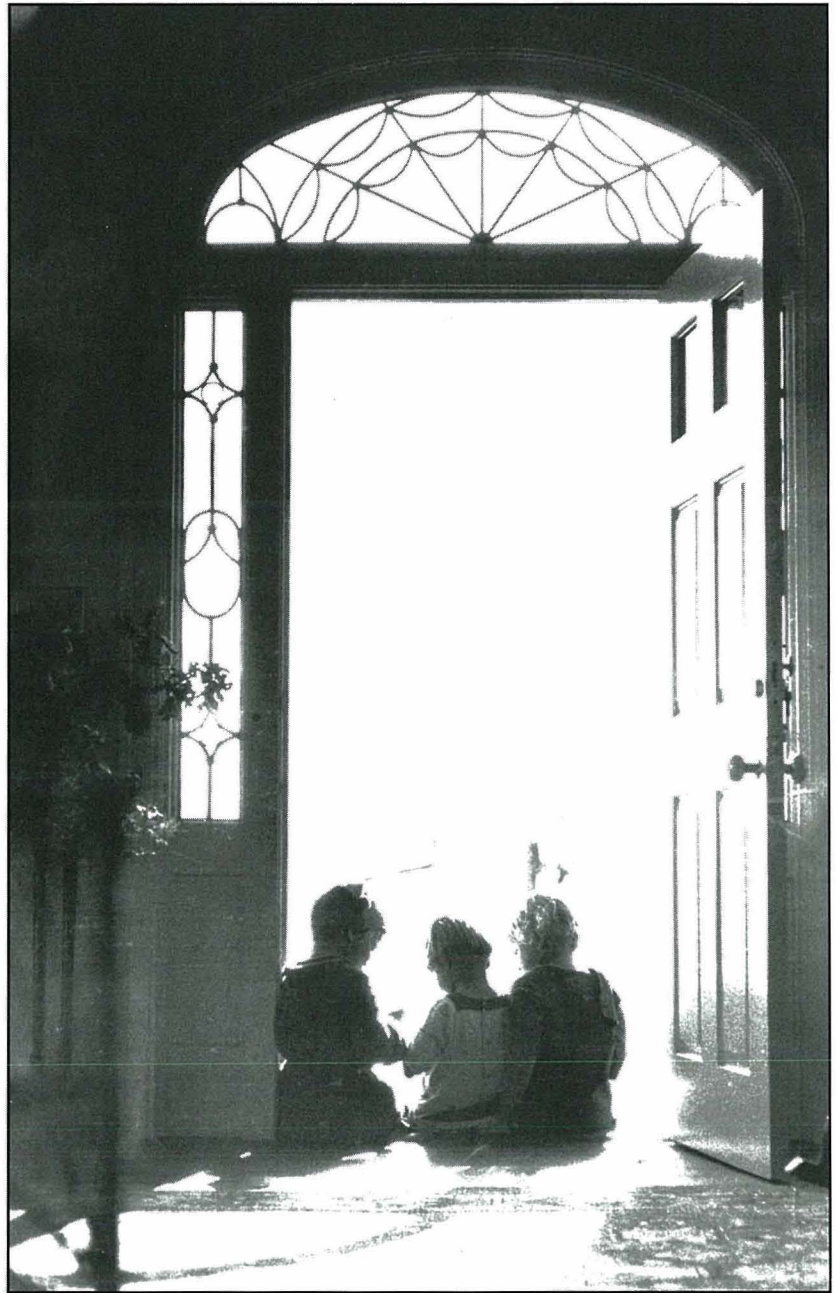


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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #13295

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, 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.



SOUTHERN  
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# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

*Find a good seat...  
Raise the curtain...*



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your past!*

CREATED BY BILL DAGGETT, SOU INTERN

This 27 1/2 by 40 foot curtain, advertising Medford businesses, hung in Hunt's Craterian Theater in 1929. The curtain, which lit up from behind, was featured in *Southern Oregon Heritage*, Vol. 2 No. 3. *Heritage* magazine provides an intimate look at the timeless faces, places, events, and treasures of our region. Each issue of *Heritage* is a museum, a library, a scrapbook, your grandmother's attic, and historical travel guide. Each issue of *Heritage* is an anticipated surprise.

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