

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Vol. 3, No. 4 • The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society • 1998



Hailing the Chief in Ashland

RIDING THROUGH ON THE "PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL"

Summer Fun at the Auto Camp

A LOOK AT THE HABITS AND HOBBIES OF CAMPING ENTHUSIASTS

Lizzie's Crazy Quilt

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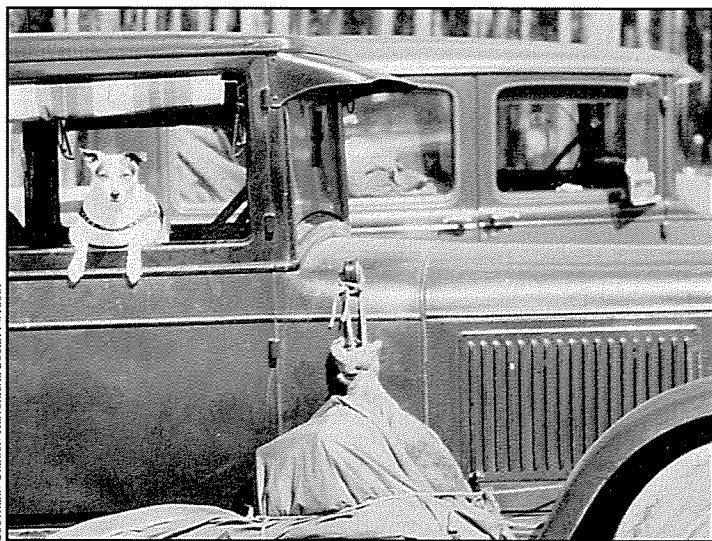
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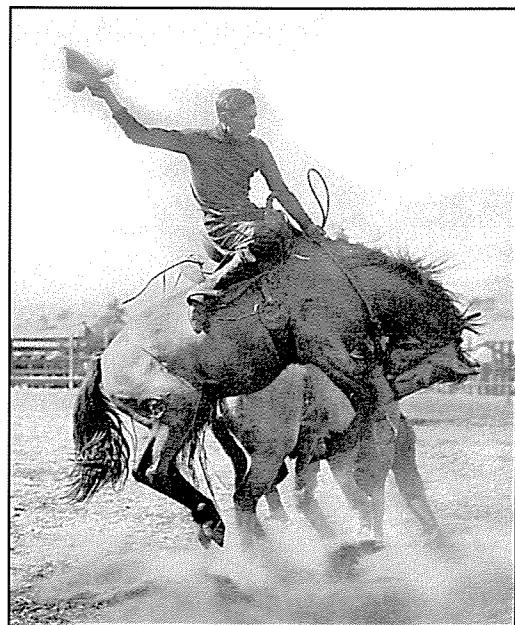
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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16009

Above: see "Save the Auto Camps" on p. 28 for more on camping fun.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16007

Above: Planned to be a reproduction of the Pendleton Roundup, Ashland's Rogue River Roundup was part of the 1916 Fourth of July celebration. See p. 34.

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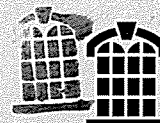
Southern Oregon Heritage is published quarterly by the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Editorial offices are at the Southern Oregon History Center, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501-5926. Back issues of *Southern Oregon Heritage* are available for \$5.95 each.

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Southern Oregon Heritage is produced using QuarkXPress on Macintosh computers and is printed by Ram Offset Lithographers.

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SOUTHERN
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KMED Radio

Music, News, & Soap Operas for

ABOVE: General Electric radio, Southern Oregon Historical Society. ca 1965
RIGHT: Cathedral Philco Radio, model 16B, Southern Oregon Historical Society. ca 1938

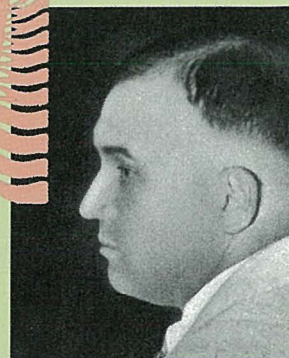


The honey-
velvet tones of
Nat King Cole's
"Stardust" fade
away and a
man's deep
voice takes
over, saying
brightly:
"KMED-Radio,
serving the
Rogue Valley
for seventy-five
years."

By Louise A. Watson

Seventy-five years; three-quarters of a century: wow, that means they got started in the early twenties! Medford, population six thousand, probably didn't realize then that it was an era being called The Jazz Age. "Lucky Lindy" hadn't flown to Paris yet, movies were still silent, and office girls with newly-bobbed hair came to work in front of heavy black typewriters. Warren G. Harding was the country's scandal-plagued president, Prohibition was the law of the land, and an Ohio judge wanted to be the first woman on her state's supreme court.¹

In May of 1922, passenger trains still ran through the middle of Medford, an open-model Chevrolet 490 sold for six hundred sixty-three dollars², and housewives headed to the Groceteria on North Central bought tuna fish for twenty-three cents a can.³ In the May 25 edition of the evening's *Medford Mail Tribune*, citizens interested in catching the latest show at the Rialto Theater, "The Seventh Day," starring heartthrob Richard Barthelmess, might have noticed a small item below the picture stating: "Central Point offers to build radio station."⁴ It said the station was a probability "for the very near future" and, when built, Grants Pass residents could get clear reception on a fifteen to thirty-five dollar crystal set. The station would cost "several hundred dollars" to build.



William Virgin's radio hobby turned into a career and KMED Radio. ca 1900

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16011

Despite the isolation of the Rogue Valley in 1922, radio wasn't an unknown quantity. The first commercial installation in Medford probably took place in October 1911, when the *Medford Mail Tribune* reported the hookup of a "wireless station" on the roof of the Hotel Medford. The apparatus however, was only for transmitting messages in Morse code.⁵ Six months later, radio demonstrated its power when David Sarnoff, future head of Radio Corporation of America (RCA), received a wireless message in New York reporting the sinking of the Titanic.⁶

In 1920, KDKA in Pittsburgh became the first licensed operating station in the country. The following year, several young men, including KMED founder William Virgin, built a five-watt transmitter in an old garage on Ashland Street in Ashland. Virgin's companions eventually gave all the equipment to him because the roof of his father's flour mill in Central Point provided "an excellent place for stringing up the antenna."⁷

Virgin moved ahead quickly with something he first considered a hobby. He applied for, and received, a government license to operate his five-watt transmitting set under the call letter KFAY. The station made its formal entrance on September 23, 1922, at the Jackson County Fairgrounds, now the site of the South Gateway Center. The five-watt signal supported an hour-long live program of dance music by Launpach's Pavilion Orchestra.⁸ At least three nights of music were scheduled for the following week. An official program distributed during the week of the fair listed two radio concerts sandwiched amidst aerial stunts, boxing bouts, and free motion pictures.⁹

People loved radio music. On September 29, the *Medford Mail Tribune* reported



A microphone, a couple of turn tables, and a lamp to work by in the control room of KMED. 1933



Jim Dunlevy was manager of KMED in 1948, and later became mayor of Medford. ca 1942

Handmade crystal set, part of Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection. ca 1950.

Virgin's Radio Service had received a message from a listener in far-flung Saint Michael, Alaska, about the September 27 broadcast: "... Radiophone very loud, also very clear. Loud enough to be heard all over the room."¹⁰ Listeners that night heard such songs as "I Wish I Knew," "Mississippi Moon," "Carolina Rose," "Georgia," and "She Comes From Dixie."

At that time, the airwaves were relatively uncrowded and atmospheric conditions allowed the signal to travel a long way, and radio stations could easily transmit to such distant points as Alaska.¹¹ Stations broadcasting from Los Angeles and San Francisco could be heard on crystal sets in Medford.

Bill Virgin made his mark with this new medium known as radio. To keep operating capital flowing in for his fledgling operation, he began selling advertising around 1923 or 1924. Station historical records show Virgin would make his advertising rounds to Medford businesses during the day, return to the station that evening and broadcast until the money ran out.¹² Local musical groups usually formed the broadcast base.

KFAY formally became KMED in 1926 when Virgin struck a deal with Robert Ruhl, publisher of the *Medford Mail Tribune*, whereupon Ruhl bought a half-interest in the station. The paper would supply news and market reports and KMED would broadcast

them. The station became known as "The Mail Tribune-Virgin Broadcasting Service—the official radio station of the Mail Tribune." The new name and new management bought a new home: KMED moved into Rooms 5 through 11 of the Sparta Building at Riverside and East Main streets. Transmitting towers extended eighty-five feet above the roof.¹³ They now had fifty watts of power.

Virgin, convinced of radio's ability to both entertain and serve, kept experimenting with his new tool. He broadcast the second Dempsey-Tunney fight to fifteen thousand listeners in southern Oregon and Northern California. Early on, he used radio to raise money for a family in southern Oregon who had lost everything in a fire; and the station began its annual broadcast of the World Series in October 1927. The New York Yankees beat the Pittsburgh Pirates in four straight games.¹⁴

Virgin's radio career ended with his death on January 28, 1928. Ruhl had previously pulled out of the KMED operation and Blanche Virgin, Bill's widow, inherited the station. Bill Virgin not only left a pioneer radio legacy in the Rogue Valley but thrust his widow into the position of being the first woman in the country to own and manage a radio station.¹⁵ This was a time when women were usually found in the kitchen, not the boardroom.

One of those who remembers Mrs. Virgin is Ray Johnson, former executive vice president and general manager at KMED. He

began working there in 1948 as a newly-trained professional engineer.

"I was hired by a man named Jimmy Dunlevy [later mayor of Medford] ... he was her manager at that time and he hired me right out of college and I went to work on the 22nd day of April, 1948. I worked for her until she sold to a company called Radio Medford, Inc.

"She didn't talk to me too much about the early days excepting about some of the things KMED Radio originated that were picked up by other radio stations across the United States." One of these, Johnson says, was a program which ran in the mornings called "Friendship Circle," in which little children were reminded of their birthdays and given other personal messages.¹⁶ The show ended in 1955.

KMED history records that the program was broadcast from the mid-1920s through 1961, sponsored by Groceteria owner Bill Gates, a close friend who promised Bill Virgin he would assist Blanche Virgin. The station was four thousand dollars in debt when Mrs. Virgin first took over and Gates' help was vital in getting her through those early management years. Later, Mrs. Virgin was able to turn the station around, even redoing the studio in an exotic Chinese decor to celebrate its financial success.¹⁷

"She [Mrs. Virgin] was quite remote and not really very involved with the individual staff people," Johnson says, adding



In 1933 Mrs. Blanche Virgin purchased a 4.3 acre plot on Ross Lane where this concrete building was constructed.



Radios became important to farmers who relied on the news to inform them of fruit-frost warnings. Detail of Bill Virgin's Radio Shop 1933.

that there were seventeen people when he joined KMED. He does recall Mrs. Virgin talking about coping with the Great Depression: "... she would talk in terms of how, one way or another, they would hold the staff together and, as I recall, she talked ... that, at one point, they all moved into one house on East Main and shared their income. ..."¹⁸ During those dark economic years, KMED salesmen traded advertising time for groceries or gasoline. In 1931, the transmitter, now at 250 watts, was moved to five acres on Rossanley Drive and Ross Lane.¹⁹

Johnson, now seventy-five, credits Mrs. Virgin with beginning the regular broadcast of the fruit-frost warnings which tremendously benefitted the valley's pear industry. "It was all done on KMED Radio at 8:00 P.M. and again at 10:00 P.M., so the people in the pear orchards would know whether or not they were going to have to heat their orchards by smokepots or some other thing" The fruit-frost warning method was picked up by other stations in the country where needed, Johnson says. He also described Mrs. Virgin as a "very quiet lady" who gave a twenty-five dollar check to any staff member who became a parent.²⁰

In 1937, KMED became an affiliate of NBC, now one of the oldest in the country.²¹ These were the "golden days" of commercial radio in America, with programs featuring such comedians as Jack Benny, Bob Hope, and Eddie Cantor, as well as broader news coverage.

Johnson, who also took announcer training, did some of the commercials at KMED. These were live broadcasts with all the potential problems live shows have. One live broadcast was particularly memorable. Johnson's job was to listen to commentator H. V. Kaltenborn and, at a certain cue, do a local commercial for Barker's Men's Store while a national one was running.

"In the last segment, then he [Kaltenborn]

would come in and I was to say, 'And now, ladies and gentlemen, the noted news analyst and world traveler, Mr. H. V. Kaltenborn, Mr. Kaltenborn . . .' So this one time, for some reason or other without knowing it, I said: 'And now, ladies and gentlemen, the noted nose analyst and world traveler . . .' The result was, of course, that Johnson's colleagues all broke up laughing except for one person. "I heard about that from Mrs. Virgin." Although she wasn't a hard taskmaster, "I'm sure she thought it was funny but she didn't let me think it was funny."²²

During the 1940s, in addition to broadcasting war news, KMED aired the many soap operas popping up on the airwaves: "One Man's Family," "Ma Perkins," and "Pepper Young's Family," to name a few. The station also participated in community services to help the war effort on the home front. By 1950, however, Mrs. Virgin, who married a KMED employee named Lyonel E. Randle, sold the station to a Medford businessman's group known as Radio Medford, Inc.²³

Johnson remained with KMED after Mrs. Virgin's departure. He recalled there were no local news organizations other than newspapers. The news copy he did read came from the teletype. But that changed with the disastrous fires hitting southern Oregon and Northern California on Labor Day in 1957. Since people were clamoring for news right away, Johnson and his program director, Norm Oberst, organized a network of amateur radio operators or "hams." That was the beginning of the first local news organization between San Francisco and Portland.²⁴

Later, Johnson, now retired, went on to found what is now KTVL (Channel 10). At first it was known as KMED-TV, signing on in October 1961, as an NBC affiliate.²⁵ The station became KTVL in 1979. The studios occupied the site Mrs. Virgin purchased in the thirties but the transmitter was moved to Blackwell Hill.²⁶

Today, KMED-Radio, now a CBS affiliate at 1440 on the AM dial, has returned to its

programming roots with an all-music format, mixed with news and commentary. Duane Hill, station owner-manager since 1985, said he's proud to be associated with the oldest station in southern Oregon. Some things change and some things stay the same. That five-watt transmitter may now be five thousand watts,²⁷ however, listeners still tune in for what they wanted in 1922, music to make life just a bit easier to face. ■

Louise Watson is a Medford freelance writer and history buff. Her story "Susie Jessel, The Faith Healer of Ashland," published in Heritage, recently took top honors at the 1997-1998 Oregon Press Women Awards. The story went on to Nationals and was awarded third place.

ENDNOTES

1. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 20 July 1922, p. 5, col. 4.
2. *Ibid.* 21 July 1922, p. 3.
3. *Ibid.* 17 March 1922, p. 3.
4. *Ibid.* 25 May 1922, p. 3, cols. 3-4.
5. Chipman, Art, *KMED, The First Half-Century* (Pine Cone Publishers, Medford) p. 3.
6. *Ibid.* p. 33.
7. *Ibid.* pp. 4, 6.
8. *Ibid.* p. 6-7.
9. Advertisement, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 14 Sept 1922.
10. *Ibid.* 29 Sept 1922, p. 1, col. 4.
11. National Register of Historic Places continuation sheet, The Sparta Building, U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS Form 10-900-A, p. 10.
12. Chipman, p. 8-9.
13. National Register of Historic Places continuation sheet, The Sparta Building, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, NPS Form 10-900-A, p. 7-8.
14. Chipman, p. 9-10.
15. *Ibid.* p. 11.
16. Interview with Ray Johnson 3 Dec 1997.
17. Chipman, pp. 12, 18.
18. Interview with Ray Johnson.
19. Chipman, p. 15.
20. Interview with Johnson.
21. Chipman, p. 18.
22. Interview with Ray Johnson.
23. Chipman, p. 27 and Ray Johnson conversation.
24. Interview with Ray Johnson.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Chipman, p. 35.
27. Interview with Duane Hill, 1997.

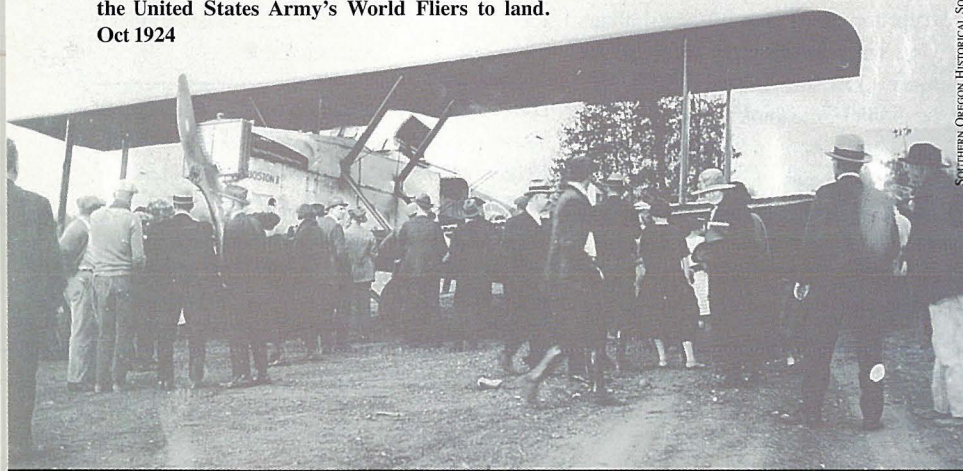
'Round the World to Barber Field

Immediately after the landing of the World Fliers, the crowd swarmed around their planes. Oct 1924



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY # 9201

The Boston II, piloted by Lieutenant Leigh Wade and Lieutenant Henry Ogden, was the second of the United States Army's World Fliers to land. Oct 1924



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY # 15445

The planes stopped for the night in Medford before flying on to San Diego. Detail from photo. Oct 1924



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #9204

by William Alley

In October 20, 1924, the offices of the *Medford Mail Tribune* received a telegram from Eugene stating that the U.S. Army's famed World Fliers would be arriving in Medford later that afternoon. Lacking sufficient time to get this news in this paper on time, Robert Ruhl, editor of the *Medford Mail Tribune*, arranged to have the news announced over KFAY, Virgin Radio Co.'s station in Medford. In addition to broadcasting the news over the airwaves, loudspeakers on Main Street informed those without radios. By the anticipated time of arrival, a large crowd had gathered at Medford's Barber Field, now the site of the South Gateway Shopping Center.

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE



Robert Ruhl arranged to have the arrival of the World Fliers announced over KFAY. Photo ca 1920



The next morning, after warming up their twelve cylinder Liberty engines, the five ships roared off and resumed their trip south. Oct 1924

The United States Army's round-the-world flight team was one of several teams from different countries seeking to be the first to circumnavigate the globe by air. The team, consisting of eight men manning four aircraft built in Santa Monica, California by an unknown aircraft engineer named Donald Douglas, left Seattle on April 6, 1924. They headed up the coast to Alaska, then across the northern Pacific. The first plane to take off was the *Seattle*, piloted by team leader Frederick Martin, with Sergeant Alva Harvey as co-pilot. The *Seattle* was followed by the *New Orleans*, with Lieutenants Erik Nelson and John "Smiling Jack" Harding; the *Chicago*, with Lieutenants Lowell Smith and Leslie Arnold; and the *Boston*, carrying Lieutenant Leigh Wade and Sergeant Henry Ogden.

While crossing the Aleutian Island chain the *Seattle* went down without loss of life—she

was a total loss; the plane and her crew were out of the race. Lieutenant Smith was made team commander, and the remaining three planes continued westward.

After an adventure-filled crossing of Asia and Europe, entailing numerous delays due to inclement weather, structural repairs and several engine changes, the three remaining planes arrived safely in England. However, while crossing the north Atlantic, the *Boston* was forced down. An attempt was made to tow her in for repairs, but she foundered in the heavy seas. Again there was no loss of life. It was left to the remaining pair of planes, the *Chicago* and *New Orleans* to carry on.

The last two ships successfully crossed the North Atlantic, and upon their arrival in Nova Scotia, were met by Wade and Ogden in a new airplane, the *Boston II*. Ogden by this time had been promoted to Lieutenant. It had been decided that the crew of the *Boston*, having come so far, should be

allowed to participate in the welcoming festivities at the nation's capital, so they were provided with the new plane.

The *New Orleans* and the *Chicago* had bested their international rivals for the honor of being the first to successfully circumnavigate the globe. The success of Donald Douglas' airships helped propel his fledgling company to the forefront of the American aviation industry. After crossing the country to their starting point in Seattle, the three planes were en route to San Diego when they stopped for the night in Medford.


The first aircraft was spotted by the crowd at about four o'clock in the afternoon. It passed over the Liberty Building on its approach to Barber Field, and was identified as one of the two supporting escort ships accompanying the World Fliers. One of the passengers of this ship was described by the *Medford Mail Tribune* as "an artistic looking man with a little black mustache who proved to be



By the time the World Fliers arrived, a crowd of approximately five hundred had gathered to meet the planes. Oct 1924



An aerial photograph, ca 1926, showing Jackson County Fairgrounds buildings to the left, and Barber Field runway and hangar to the right.



**The two planes had bested
their international rivals for
the honor of being the first to
successfully circumnavigate
the globe.**



Lowell Thomas, well-known traveler and writer who is accompanying the fliers . . ." Thomas, who had already traveled on the ground the route the fliers had flown, was writing a book about the first around-the-world flight. This plane was followed by Lieutenant B. S. Wright, the team's advance man in the second escort plane, and Sergeant J. Y. Kennedy, the "mechanician."

Not long after the first two planes landed, the crowd, which had swelled to about five hundred people, spotted the World Fliers' aircraft over Table Rock. The three planes circled the field several times in a "triangle formation" before landing. Lieutenant Smith, commander of

the group, and Lieutenant Leslie Arnold, in the Chicago, were the first to land, bumping across the field. They were followed by Wade in the Boston II. The last plane to land was the New Orleans, piloted by Nelson and carrying "Smiling Jack" Harding. This last landing was "smooth as a duck settling on a mill pond."

Immediately upon the last plane's landing the crowd swarmed around the planes. Welcomes were offered as the fliers checked their ships in preparation for the following morning's departure. That evening the fliers attended the opening night of Medford's grand new theater, Hunt's Craterian. After the third

act of the sold-out play, "The Havoc," the three pilots were brought on stage to thunderous applause and introduced to the crowd.

The following morning the World Fliers returned to their ships at Barber Field and went through their pre-flight checks. After warming up their twelve-cylinder Liberty engines the five ships roared off at 10:15 A.M. and resumed their trip south. And, so closed another small chapter in Medford's rich aviation history. **■**

Society historian William Alley, a regular contributor to Heritage, is currently working on a PBS documentary highlighting early Southern Oregon aviation history.

Local Talent in the Rogue Valley



The Community Center is being restored to its 1899 glory by the City of Talent Community Center Restoration Commission with the help of the Talent Historical Society.

by Heidi Nelson

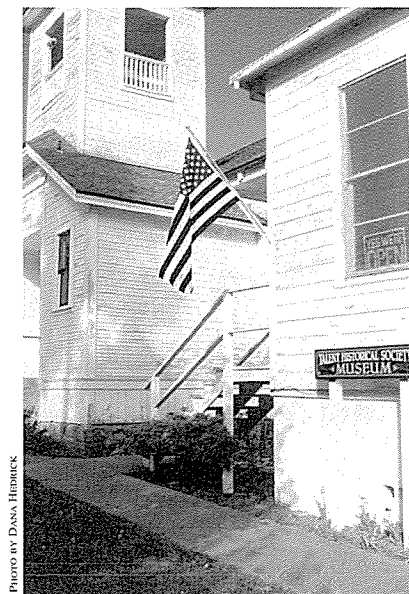
Before Talent had a name, citizens gathered behind the confines of pioneer Jacob Wagner's fort for protection from Indian attacks. His fort "served as a meeting place and center for organizing the community which was growing."¹ In July of 1995, Talent citizens gained a new meeting place where their history can be protected and preserved. That place is the Talent Historical

Society (THS) Museum.

Despite the small size and space the THS Museum occupies, its members and volunteers have big hopes and dreams. Newly-hired Director Holly Hertel says, "I want us to be taken seriously." Hertel feels that the Society should play up its distinct history which may draw tourists who come to the valley for other reasons. She hopes people will

come "to find out how unique this pocket of history is."

The Talent Historical Society is well organized. Much of the information collected over the years has been cataloged on a computer. Numerous newspaper articles and a census of grave-stones from forty-eight local cemeteries can be accessed with a few keystrokes. Rosemary Bevel, Society member and Registrar, proudly states that when



The THS Museum occupies a room attached to the Community Center.



Office Manager Lisa Overton, Director Holly Hertel, and Registrar Rosemary Bevel proudly display the quilt to be exhibited during the *Whole Cloth* Exhibit.

visitors come with a question “quite often we can figure out how to answer it.”

In addition to the research library, the small room beside the Community Center hosts rotating exhibits.

Through September they will join many southern Oregon museums and art galleries in “The Whole Cloth” quilt and fiber arts exhibit by displaying a

quilt made by Mrs. Talent, wife of A. P. Talent, after whom the town was named. Following their “Whole Cloth” display, there will be an exhibit on the history of their Society.

“Early on [A. P. Talent] had sensed the importance of the 19th Century gift to civilization—the railroad.”² It is in his spirit and that of the many other pioneers, that the Talent

Historical Society will preserve its heritage well into the 21st Century. ↑

Assistant Editor Heidi Nelson ends her Heritage internship with graduation from SOU. Many thanks and Bon Voyage!

ENDNOTES

1. Yvonne Reynolds, *Talent, Worth It's Weight In Gold*, (Lolot Press, Talent, Ore.), 1996
2. Ibid.



This Talent street scene shows the little town's beginnings. Talent, Oregon is the only city in the nation with its name. ca 1910



Hailing The Chief In Ashland

Campaign button for
Woodrow Wilson, Southern
Oregon Historical Society,
ca 1913

by Joe Peterson

They came by stagecoach and railroad, and later by airplane and auto, and with the exception of candidates John F. Kennedy and George Bush, all were sitting presidents. Unlikely as it may seem, no less than seven U.S. presidents have visited Ashland beginning as early as 1880. While the stops have been brief, and in the case of one of William Taft's visits, nocturnal, the then mostly Republican village of Ashland turned out in large numbers for a chance to see a "real, live president." Rutherford B. Hayes (September 27, 1880), Benjamin Harrison (May 4, 1891), Theodore Roosevelt (May 20, 1903), William Howard Taft (October 4, 1909 and October 12, 1911), Woodrow Wilson (September 16, 1919), John F. Kennedy (April 23, 1960), and George Bush (May 13, 1980) all visited Ashland during a hundred year span. Strategically located near the Oregon-California border, Ashland has always been a stop on the road to someplace else. At least that accounts for its initial presidential visits, including the first one in 1880.

Dubbed as a "fraudulent president" by Democrats, President Hayes, three years into his term, was still seen by many as the one who had stolen an election in the national centennial year of 1876. Just a week before his Plaza appearance, Oregon U.S. Senator James Slater spent nearly two hours explaining to an Ashland audience:

The great issue of the present campaign is whether or not the American people will endorse the great fraud which placed the Republican nominee for president in the White House, when everybody knew Samuel J. Tilden was elected president.¹

Despite these nagging questions of legitimacy, Ashland's weekly paper, the *Tidings*, urged its readers to set aside partisanship

and "... honor him as our president, as we would any occupant of the White House who is there by the suffrage of the American people."² Well, not quite. As Senator Slater noted, if the American people's vote had been the deciding factor then New York's Governor Tilden would have been president, for he clearly won the popular vote by a whopping two hundred sixty-five thousand majority. It is the electoral vote, however, that decides a presidential election in this republic and twenty of the three hundred forty-nine votes cast were contested. Ironically, one of Oregon's three electoral votes was among those being challenged.

With the election in question, an electoral commission of eight Republicans and seven Democrats was established by congress to assign the challenged votes. Ultimately voting along strict party lines, all twenty disputed votes were awarded to Hayes giving him a one hundred eighty-five to one hundred eighty-four electoral vote victory. Later, terms of a friendly agreement surfaced whereby Hayes' administration agreed to several Southern concessions, this included the end to military reconstruction if the Republicans could maintain the White House, creating a cloud that hung over the Hayes presidency. It was this stigma that the *Ashland Tidings* urged its readers to set aside when the president and his party visited. Included in the presidential party were two individuals sure to please the Ashland crowd and help them do just that.

The first lady and General William T. Sherman, commander of the U.S. Army, accompanied the president. Nicknamed "Lemonade Lucy" because she refused to serve alcohol in the White House, Lucy

Hayes had a national following among those with prohibition leanings and plenty of local supporters in a town with a reputation for keeping saloons out. After all, the town's motto, "Industry, Education, Temperance—Ashland Honors Those Who Foster These" was clearly stated on the welcoming arch newly erected where the president and Mrs. Hayes would stand.³ Another popular traveling companion of the president was legendary sixty-year-old Civil War General Sherman who arrived at the plaza "riding shotgun" atop one of the stages. While Ashland loyalties varied during the war years, Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) veterans were in abundance for the Monday afternoon festivities.

Speaking from a newly constructed platform near the base of the town's one hundred foot tall, red fir flag pole, both the president and the general spoke briefly to a crowd of nearly two thousand before being presented with a tray of fruit donated by Ashland orchardist Orlando Coolidge. The *Ashland Tidings* gushed about the arrival of a president from three thousand miles away. "Truly, time and distance have been annihilated."⁴

Benjamin Harrison was elected president in November 1888. In 1889 Republicans from all parts of Jackson County flooded the plaza in Ashland to celebrate his victory. Now they would get to see and hear him. Not surprisingly, an estimated crowd of two thousand people eagerly awaited his arrival on a rainy spring evening in 1891. In the passing of a decade the golden spike had been driven, joining the California-Oregon Special, and the mode of transportation changed drastically. Ashlanders would now gather at the railroad depot, several blocks east of the Plaza where they had welcomed President Hayes.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #9954

An enormous arch, tall enough to clear the locomotive, was erected to welcome Theodore Roosevelt in the "Presidential Special." May 1903

Appearing on the rear car platform of his "Presidential Special" train, Harrison gave a brief speech expressing his pleasure at the size of the crowd and thanked the throngs for turning out in such inclement weather to welcome him to Oregon. Pleased he should be. According to reports, the crowd in Ashland was the largest along the route since Redding, California.⁵ Once again, Ashland's gift to the president was locally grown fruit, this time provided by the daughter of an old soldier, William Powell, who served in General Harrison's Civil War division.

From outward appearances the "Presidential Special" looked like any other passenger train that arrived daily in Ashland, yet upon viewing the interior of each car, local news reporters were stunned by its opulence. Contained on board were the following: an electric generator, a barber

shop, a bathroom, oak furnishings, a complete chef's kitchen, sleeping apartments, drawing rooms, art objects, a library containing fiction, history, and travel selections, and steamheaters to regulate room temperatures. Reporting on the visit, the *Ashland Tidings* couldn't resist contrasting the previous presidential visit by stagecoach with ". . . probably the finest train ever seen."⁶ Adding to the finery, Ashland folks made sure the engine selected to take the president's train from Ashland to Portland had been repainted and decorated with flags, bunting, and a wreathed portrait of the president placed under the headlight.

Considering it has happened only three times in American history, there is some irony in the fact that the second president to visit Ashland was also elected with fewer popular votes than his opponent. In the 1888 election, Grover Cleveland outdrew

Harrison by one hundred thousand popular votes. This time, though, no Democratic senator came to Ashland to raise the issue, and no editorial needed to be written urging Ashlanders to be fair. In fact, Ashland voted, overwhelmingly, for Harrison during both of his tries at the presidency. Upon word of Harrison's defeat sixteen months after his visit, Ashland Republicans held a wake complete with a torch-carrying procession marching to funeral music provided by the town band. Grover Cleveland, the Democratic candidate and former president had won the 1892 election despite garnering a measly twenty-nine total votes in Ashland.⁷

Almost twelve years to the day after the Harrison visit, local Republicans had cause once again to welcome their party's standard-bearer and living legend, the not-yet forty-five-year-old, Theodore Roosevelt. As



George Bush, a then Republican presidential hopeful, visited the college campus in May of 1980.

part of his Pacific Coast tour, the former "Rough Rider" himself would stop in Ashland and deliver a speech. Through an article complete with picture, the *Ashland Tidings* made sure everyone was briefed two days in advance of his arrival. Readers were informed upon pronouncing his last name (with three syllables), that he had no gray hair, that pictures don't do him justice, that he enunciates with an accent, and that their visitor will be accompanied by six secret service agents dressed in tall hats and long coats to protect him from the "insane assaults of cranks."⁸

Nothing was to be left to chance and that included an elaborately orchestrated "Welcome to Oregon" reception in Ashland. An enormous arch, tall enough at thirty-four feet to easily clear a locomotive, spanned the main track.

Unfortunately, at some point, the flag and Oregon Grape draped structure fell over, bringing the Oregon mountain lion atop it, and portraits of the president crashing to the ground. In addition to the arch, telegraph poles, water tanks, and depot buildings had all been decked out in red, white, and blue. Souvenir picture-

booklets of Ashland and the surrounding area were prepared to present to the president and his party on behalf of the city while a local drug store, McNair Brothers, offered Roosevelt portraits for twenty-five cents each. A cannon located on Chautauqua Butte (site of the current Elizabethan theatre) was prepared to fire a salute as Roosevelt's train pulled in.⁹

Even the seating (and standing) for onlookers was organized, with some getting a "place of honor" closest to the train platform from which the president would speak. School children, college students, GAR members in uniform, and National Guardsmen all got the best spots. Being able to glimpse the president would not be easy without priority positions in a crowd estimated at six thousand.

No one was disappointed. Roosevelt captivated his huge audience with a prepared speech delivered in his typically animated way. He specifically addressed the Grand Army delegation complementing them for their Civil War courage which held the Union together. Characteristically turning the speech to his own exploits, Roosevelt said that he and his contemporaries also

possessed that American fighting spirit "... but there wasn't enough war to go around."¹⁰ He explained that the Spanish-American War, even though a smaller war, opened the U.S. to the Pacific and gave it a presence in world affairs.

An enthusiastic Roosevelt supporter in the depot crowd displayed a banner, which read "Hurrah for the man who does things," provided a perfect opportunity for Roosevelt to praise Oregon's early founders. Pointing to the banner he said the men who founded Oregon "... were men who did things." Perhaps odd-sounding today, raucous "hurrahing" punctuated each Roosevelt comment. Invoking Abraham Lincoln's name and showering further praise on those who fought for their nation, Roosevelt talked about the need for men to be hardy and rugged rather than gentle and mild.¹¹

And then he was off. As the train slowly pulled out with the president bowing to the Ashland assembly the town band struck up "America," and the crowd sang from the thousands of copies of the words carefully handed out in advance of Roosevelt's arrival. Even with the president well on his way north the celebration was not over yet. At the town opera house that evening, one hundred twenty-five couples attended a special "Presidential Ball" that continued well into the early morning.

Seemingly always in motion and vigorous, Roosevelt's visit to Ashland would be in sharp contrast to the visit made six years later by his hand-picked successor, three hundred plus pound President William Howard Taft. Taft would sleep through the entire morning stop. Even a cheering Ashland crowd could not arouse him. The 6:25 A.M. arrival of the "Presidential Special" bound for California was just too early even for the reporters accompanying him in an adjoining train car. A local reporter, however, was up and irritated. The *Ashland Tidings* headline read, "President sleeps through the Beaver State."¹² While Taft may be the only president to visit Ashland while still asleep, he also is the only one to visit twice.

Just two years following his initial visit, President Taft returned to Ashland at a time somewhat more favorable to speech making, 9:30 P.M. Hoarse from speaking all day, Taft kept his Ashland remarks brief before an enthusiastic crowd of two thousand.

Clad in an overcoat and English style cap, the president thanked the crowd for the cheering reception he received, and

apologized. "Unfortunately I have left most of my voice scattered along the road between here and Salem and consequently have little left with which to address you this evening."¹³ Moments later, as he continued his impromptu speech, he was jolted forward toward the packed crowd by the impact of a new engine being coupled to the train. The rear car where he was standing was thrust into the well-wishers. No one was hurt and the president promptly ended his speech thanking the crowd once again.

While Taft's speech was short, Woodrow Wilson's stop eight years later shrank from a planned major address to a disappointing fifteen-minute appearance at the depot. Wilson defeated previous Ashland visitors, Taft and Roosevelt in 1912, and by 1918 the German Kaiser as well. Just back from Europe and enjoying a wave of popular support, the Democratic president had run into a roadblock in the persona of Republican committee chair Henry Cabot Lodge who initially refused to consider ratification of the Versailles treaty. Wilson announced he would take his case to the people.

As early as August of 1919 Ashland's Commercial Club was bent on getting the president to speak at the Chautauqua auditorium. Club members were certain that four to five thousand would pack the wooden-domed building once it was confirmed Wilson would speak. By September their dreams would be dashed. A fifteen-minute train stop in the middle of the day was as much as could be arranged.



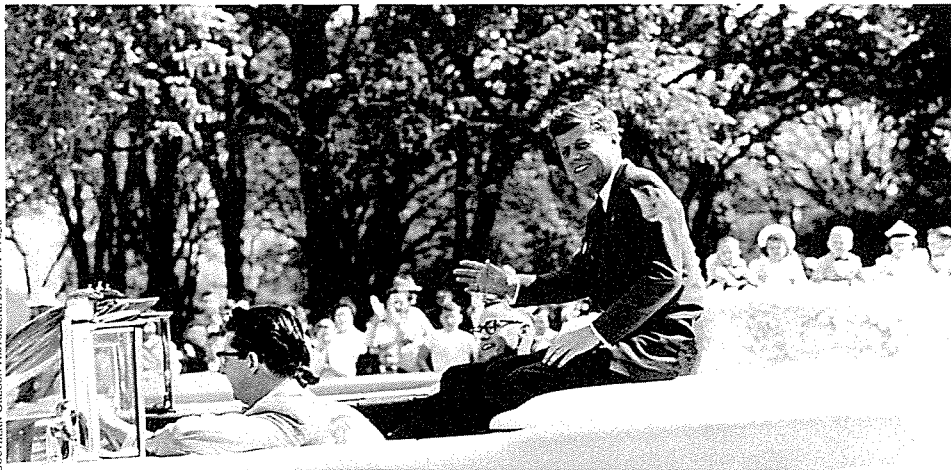
Nevertheless, the town band was mustered, schools were dismissed early so children could see the president, and bouquets of local flowers and baskets of fruit were prepared for presentation to the president and first lady. Both made an appearance on the back of the train car where they chatted one-on-one with members of the crowd. Mrs. Wilson joined her husband after "... insistent demands of the feminine portion of the crowd." Not even Ashland's mayor's urging could get a formal address out of the president. His voice just wouldn't stand the strain, Wilson explained. The headline in the *Ashland Tidings* caught the flavor of

the disappointment. "Well We Saw 'Em Anyhow."¹⁴

It would take a tragic event nine days later for Ashlanders to fully appreciate how worn down the president really was. Wilson collapsed in Colorado and was rushed back to Washington D.C. where he suffered a devastating stroke October 2nd. Despite the positive response of his audiences on this western train tour, no ground swell of public support ever occurred for his beloved "League of Nations."



TOP OF PAGE: The campaign button for Theodore Roosevelt showing his "Rough Rider" uniform, is part of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection. ABOVE: This medal was issued to commemorate Theodore Roosevelt's two terms in office and is part of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection.



John F. Kennedy's run in the Oregon primary was a significant part of his campaign. He was the Grand Marshal for the April 1960 Pear Blossom parade in Medford.

Oddly, after seeing five sitting presidents in a forty year span, Ashlanders would have to wait forty more years to see another. Both a sudden death and a new train route would conspire to deprive Ashland of a presidential visit until 1960.

Wilson's successor in office, Warren Harding, was scheduled to speak at the railroad depot on Saturday, July 28th, 1923, but became seriously ill as he traveled south through Washington state. By the time his "Presidential Special" reached Oregon all presidential speeches were cancelled as his train sped towards San Francisco. He died there just five days after his aborted Ashland talk.

Climbing the steep Siskiyou mountain grade had always been an arduous task that required a new or extra engine. By 1927 the Southern Pacific Railroad provided relief in the form of a new route which drastically cut passenger train traffic through Ashland. This small town that had seen so many presidents was no longer on the way to someplace else.

In the 1950s, trains gave way to airplanes as the favored presidential form of travel, making towns without airports increasingly more remote venues. However, in the politically charged sixties and seventies there was one site equally desirable as an airport tarmac for presidential speech making and that was a college campus. Ashland was back in the presidential visit business. While Southern Oregon College (now Southern Oregon University) would provide the setting, it was to be "candidates" for president, who came to Ashland now, not sitting presidents.

The first of these came in the spring of 1960, when John F. Kennedy made an April visit to Southern Oregon College.

Precipitating the Ashland speech was a tight race with Oregon's favorite son, Wayne Morse. Kennedy needed a win in the Oregon primary to keep his unstoppable image intact, for his nomination was far from a sure thing in the spring of 1960. In addition to the Morse threat, Lyndon Johnson and former President Harry Truman's personal choice, Stuart Symington, also hoped to derail Kennedy.

Kennedy, himself, saw the Oregon primary as possibly "the most significant in the country," despite the fact that only seventeen delegates were at stake.¹⁵ The Massachusetts senator was concerned about his ability to beat Morse in his home state. Morse appeared to be positioning himself as a power broker at a deadlocked Democratic convention, predicting he would have one hundred plus delegates committed to him and a chance at the vice-presidency.

On a rainy Friday in May, JFK's fears would prove unfounded for he had won yet another decisive victory over the entire field. Morse promptly dropped out of the race. Ashland's vote paralleled statewide returns, with Morse a distant second to Kennedy. Six months after the Oregon victory John Kennedy would be elected president.

George Bush is the only other presidential hopeful to visit Ashland's college campus before being elected president. An overflow crowd at Stevenson Union greeted the future president in May of 1980. He did not, however, win the nomination and presidency until 1988. Aiming his remarks at then sitting president Carter, candidate Bush admitted in his Ashland speech "I've got a tough row to

hoe."¹⁶ He was correct—Ronald Reagan, who spoke at the airport in Medford a few days later, was the Republican, and nation's, choice in 1980.

Those early *Ashland Tidings* reporters who marveled at the idea of several U.S. presidents visiting a town three thousand miles from Washington, D.C. were rightfully impressed. From stagecoach to train to airplane, and from Plaza mill sites to railroad division yards to Southern Oregon University's evolution as Ashland's largest employer, presidential visits have mirrored both the transportation and economic development of much of the nation in general and Ashland, Oregon in particular. ■

Joe Peterson's "Old Ashland Walking Tours" depart at 10 A.M. from the Plaza Info booth, Mon. - Sat., through September. Fee is five dollars.

ENDNOTES

1. *Ashland Tidings*, 24 Sept 1880.
2. *Ashland Tidings*, 24 Sept 1880.
3. Marjorie O'Harra, *Ashland, The First 130 Years*, (SOHS, Jacksonville 1986) p. 25.
4. *Ashland Tidings*, 24 Sept 1880.
5. *Ashland Tidings*, 4 May 1891.
6. *Ashland Tidings*, 1 May 1891.
7. *Ashland Tidings*, 18 Nov 1892.
8. *Ashland Tidings*, 18 May 1903.
9. *Ashland Tidings*, 18 May 1903.
10. *Ashland Tidings*, 21 May 1903.
11. *Ashland Tidings*, 21 May 1903.
12. *Ashland Tidings*, 4 Oct 1909.
13. *Ashland Tidings*, 16 Oct 1911.
14. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 16 Sept 1919.
15. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 22 Apr 1960.
16. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 14 May 1980.

Have You Read a Good Book Lately?



Ruch And the Upper Applegate Valley (An Oregon Documentary)

by John and Marguerite Black

A nostalgic look at life in the almost hidden Upper Applegate Valley in southwestern Oregon containing descriptions, maps, and eighty-one photographs of once-thriving villages (now ghost towns of the gold mining era) and present-day homes and farms. Easy-to-read documentary-style book. Includes index.

Paperback, 238 pages, \$12.95

The Table Rocks of Jackson County: Islands in the Sky

by Chris Reyes

Accessible islands of plant and animal communities in the midst of a desert—and in the midst of civilization, the Table Rocks are a part of southern Oregon's cultural history. This handbook and guide describes the rocks' cultural history, geology, fauna and flora, human impact, and preservation activities through photographs, color plates for floral identification, illustrations (including bird, amphibian and reptile identification guides), and maps. A useful take-a-long for interpretive hikes throughout the Rogue Valley. Includes index.

Paperback, 143 pages, \$12.95

The Oregon & Applegate Trail Diary of Welborn Beeson in 1853 with Introduction and Contemporary Comments

by Bert Webber

Welborn Beeson began his diary in 1851 on his 16th birthday, two years before he and his family left Illinois bound for the Oregon Country. His entries detail the months of preparation and the 2000-mile, six month overland journey following the Oregon Trail to Soda Springs, Idaho, and then the Applegate Trail to Oregon—sense the excitement and wonder of a teenage farm boy and glimpse the settling of a new land. Photographs and maps enrich the journal. Includes index.

Paperback, 80 pages, \$7.50

... If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon

by Ellen Levine
illustrated by Elroy Freeman

This Scholastic book invites children to imagine what it would have been like to be a pioneer and travel west in a covered wagon to Oregon in the 1840s. Why would some people want to travel to Oregon? Would you ride in the wagon for the whole trip? How would you cross rivers when there were no bridges? Without road signs, how would you know where you were? What would you eat? Is there anything left of the old Oregon Trail? Color illustrations depict life on the trail and bring the text to life.

Paperback, 80 pages, \$4.95

Six Years With a Government Mule

by Gordon Jesse Walker

This autobiography captures the romance and excitement of a lost art. For six years, beginning in 1953, Gordon Jesse Walker worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the Butte Falls Ranger District, Rogue River National Forest, in southwestern Oregon, as a modern-day mule skinner. Walker recounts the thrills, spills, and challenges of chasing smoke to locate fires, while supplying fire lookouts and forest crews.

Paperback, 209 pages, \$14.95

The Jacksonville Story

by Richard H. Engeman

Founded in the midst of the gold rush fever of the 1850s, the small town of Jacksonville, at the edge of the foothills of southern Oregon's Siskiyou Mountains, later became a prosperous center of local government, agriculture and commerce. Today it looks much as though it were still in the gold mining days. The book's text and photos illuminate Jacksonville's cultural history from the time of the Takelmas, Gold Rush, Indian Wars and depression to the present.

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Tunnel 13: The Story of the DeAutremont Brothers And The West's Last Great Train Holdup

by Art Chipman

In October, 1923, the last, great train holdup in the West took place high on the Siskiyou Mountains in southern Oregon. "Three young DeAutremont brothers tried to rob the Southern Pacific's 'Gold Express' and in the process killed four trainmen. After almost four years and a massive, world-wide search, the criminals were found." This is the true story of that crime and the aftermath of one bloody day of senseless violence which ruined the lives of three young men and shattered lives of innumerable innocent people. Includes photographs and index.

Hardcover, 159 pages, \$2.00

Land In Common An Illustrated History of Jackson County, Oregon

Edited by Joy B. Dunn

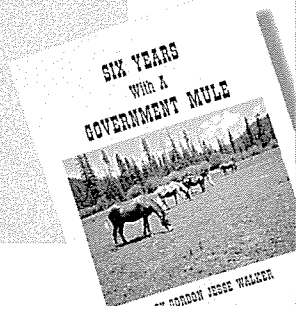
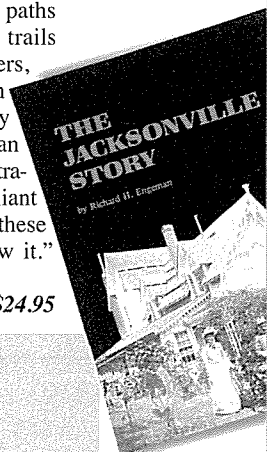
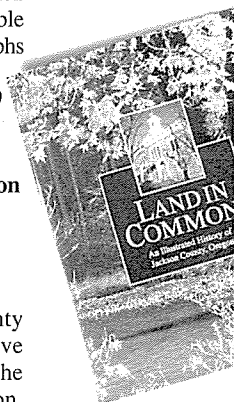
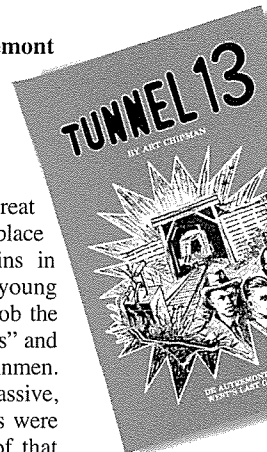
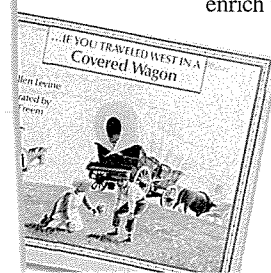
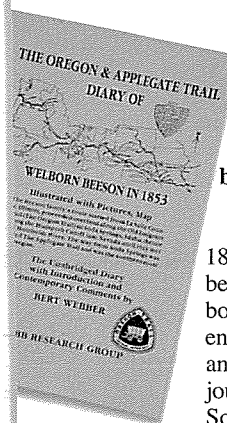
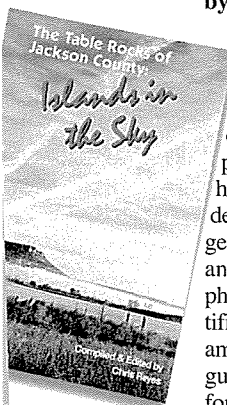
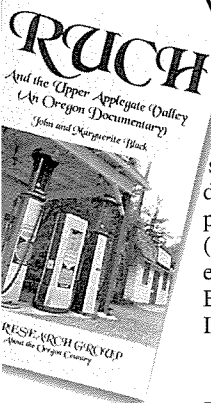
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Hardcover, 178 pages, \$24.95

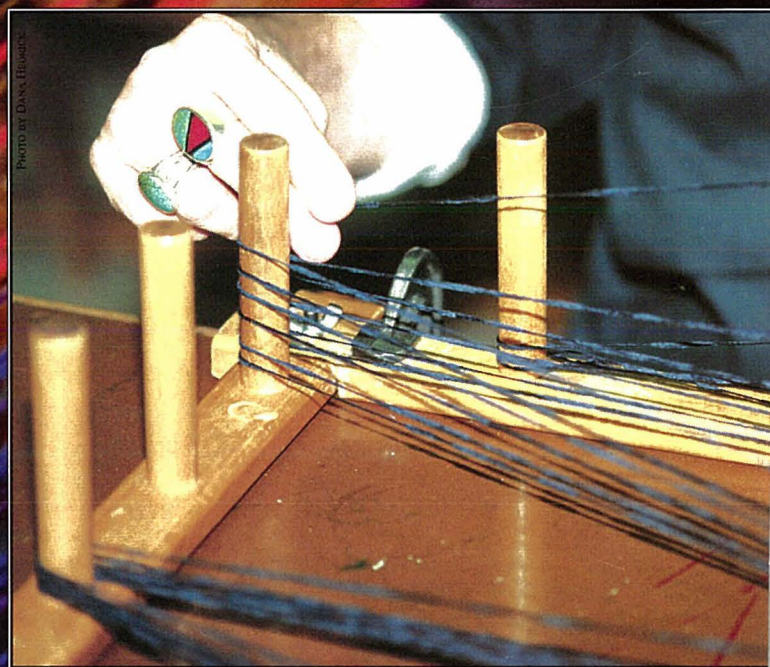
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Show and Share



**A History of the Rogue
Valley Handweavers Guild**

by Janette Merriman

Harness, heddles, treadles and tabby—all terms that weave together a group of people in the Rogue Valley. One spring evening in 1952 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Graff in Medford, several people got together to form a weaver's guild. In May of that year, more than twenty weaving enthusiasts paid dues and chartered the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. The Guild's minutes highlight this first meeting, "Refreshments were served and the evening ended with a general discussion of weaving and the large display of handwoven articles which had been brought by members."

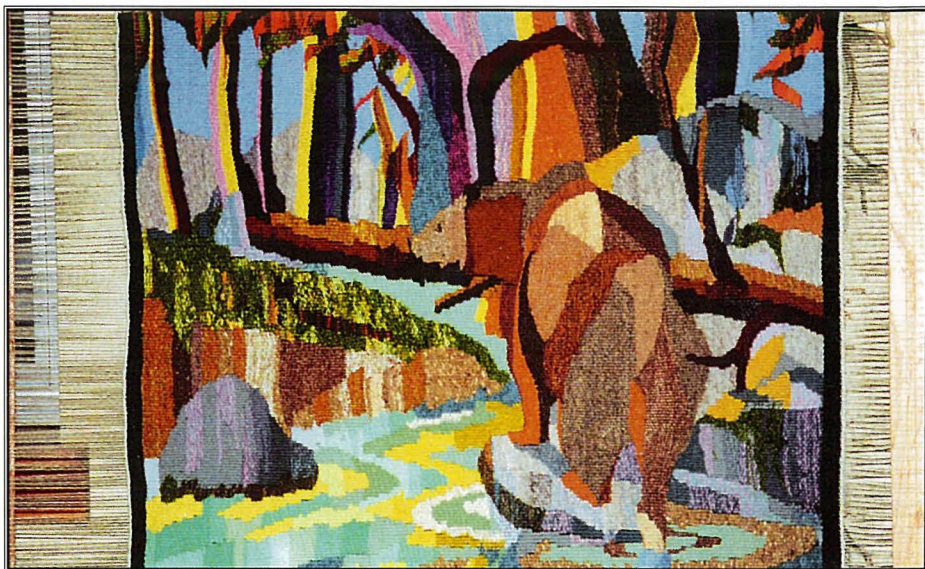
Programs for the meetings were put together by the members. On May 19, 1953, "Mr. Bradfish told about the elaborate task of weaving the velvet for the coronation ceremony for the new queen of England. Mrs. Bradfish gave an interesting talk on the silk from which the robes are made and the silk worm industry in general."

Yearbooks with intricately woven covers outlining the programs for the year, and listing hostesses and member phone numbers were passed out annually to the membership. Meetings also provided time to carefully examine a collection of small swatches, referred to as *traveling exhibits*, produced by guilds from all over the United States. One exhibit, *Contemporary Handweaving for the Home*, from Memphis, Tennessee included slides of rooms utilizing articles made from the same cloth as the swatches sent with the exhibit.

According to the September 15, 1964 minutes, "Emma Watkins [president], said the Guild was just entering its teenage years, and she hoped this would be an interesting and worthwhile year. She hoped we might resolve to have a traveling exhibit on the road before the year ended." The first traveling exhibit of the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild had finished a three year tour in the Fall of 1962.

The seventies and eighties were periods of considerable growth for the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. The first meeting of 1975 began with a standing-room only crowd at the home of a Medford member. The

minutes read, "The increasing interest in weaving and spinning is showing in the number of new people who are joining us." An escalation of Guild activities, exhibits and demonstrations throughout Jackson and Josephine Counties spurred attention. Events included the resurgence of the Annual Fall Show and Sale following a twenty year absence. Exhibits with demonstrations in the U.S. Hotel Ballroom in Jacksonville were co-sponsored by the Southern Oregon Historical Society for four consecutive years. One year there were over twelve hundred visitors in five days. Non-weavers, dazzled by weaving, could rent looms and take beginning classes from the Guild. Capturing new local attention in the craft, international teachers presented workshops, lectures, and fashion shows on weaving, spinning, and knitting. The membership ballooned to ninety-one in 1978, and the group was meeting on Tuesdays in the morning at the Gold Hill Library, a



"Autumn Seen" by Richard Kidder, shows how the bear would see nature.

central location for members coming from Ashland, Medford, Gold Hill, Cave Junction, and Grants Pass. The new interest in weaving initiated a second guild with meetings on Saturday afternoons at the Rogue Valley Manor, Saturday Guild.

The Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild continues a long association with the Southern Oregon Historical Society. In 1992 the Guild was asked by the Society to participate in an exhibit honoring spinning and weaving over one hundred fifty years. Ruth Farwell volunteered to direct the project and enthusiastically set out to "show the public what the crafts of weaving and spinning involve and that neither is in danger of becoming a dying or lost art." In seven months two thousand sixty-eight hours were logged by the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild, including several valley guilds who demonstrated the art of rag rug weaving and spinning at the History Center in downtown Medford.

In the summer of 1997, the Society again asked the Guild to demonstrate traditional weaving and spinning in a Jacksonville studio space. The Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild is happy to have found a home in the Third Street Crafts and Trades Studio. If weaving captivates your interest, come see the new studio. Take a weaving class. Frequent the Annual Fall Show and Sale. Visit a Guild meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, September through May above the studio at the U.S. Hotel Ballroom in Jacksonville at 10:00 A.M., or attend one of the other guild's meetings in the Rogue Valley.

At the meetings you can see the tradition established over forty-six years ago, a "show-and-share" for the members to discuss success and failure of items they've completed in the last month. The following featured members are a few of the people who have helped make The Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild what it is today.

The rhythmic sounds of the loom treadles clanging, reeds beating, whorling shaft of a spinning wheel, and the silence of the tapestry weaver would lure people off the streets to discover the ways of the weaver.



PHOTO BY DANA HEHRICK

Richard Kidder, "Weaving is who I am"

Richard weaves a rug on his Gilmore loom at the Veterans Affairs Domiciliary in White City. 1998

Beginning to weave in 1988 at the Veterans Affairs Domiciliary in White City to improve hand and eye coordination, Richard now teaches weaving at the Occupational Therapy division there. One summer day soon after learning the basics in weaving, Richard observed a weaver at the Jackson County Fair, and asked her question after question about weaving. She introduced him to the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild and Saturday Guild. Through the Guild, Richard is able to network with other weavers. During the summer of 1997, when not working at the Domiciliary, Richard could be found at the Third Street Crafts and Trades Space in Jacksonville, demonstrating to the many visitors who come to watch artisans working their craft. The rhythmic sounds of the loom treadles clanging, reeds beating, the whorling shaft of a spinning wheel, and the silence of the tapestry weaver lure people off the streets to discover the ways of the weaver. The craft, with few changes over the years, has a fresh look in the finished product because of new fibers, yarns and dyes. Richard uses traditional materials and weaves in his rugs and runners to create design in vivid modern colors with a striking effect. His items are available for purchase at The History Store in the Rogue Valley Mall, and in the Jacksonville U.S. Hotel.

Junia Graff, 1st President of the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild

Junia Graff has been a weaver since 1942, when she took an American Red Cross weaving class to prepare people for work in a Veteran's therapy program. Ten years later, inviting some people over to her Medford home one evening to socialize, talk about weaving and share information, the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild was born. Junia remembers many of the couples that came that night did not weave; they just had an interest in the craft and she became their teacher. Junia's tireless enthusiasm for weaving, and a spirit that loves challenge, steered her to pursue a Certificate of Excellence in Handweaving in 1976. The new program offered through the Handweavers Guild of America required her to work eight to ten hours a day for a year at her loom making samples and projects to submit to national judges for evaluation. Junia's eyes gleam as she reminisces about the busloads of boys and girls who watched intently over her shoulder during weaving demonstrations in *Contemporary Heirlooms*. An exhibit by the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild, sponsored by the Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1978, at the U.S. Hotel Ballroom in Jacksonville. Junia, an active member of the Guild, continues to weave and teach weaving fifty-five years after that first weaving class.



COURTESY OF JUNIA GRAFF

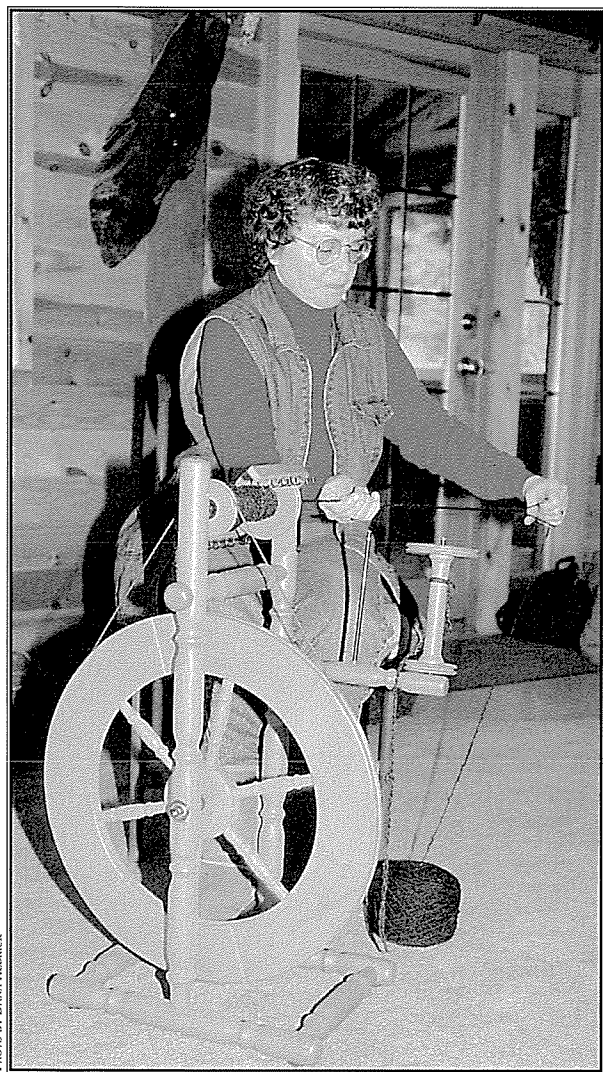
Junia Graff kneels beside a Pioneer table loom that is used to make samples. 1973

Carolyn Wedberg, Blue Top Farm

Carolyn calls from her porch, “sheep, sheep, sheep” and up the hill from the pasture come the twelve two hundred-pound ewes with their new born lambs prancing behind. The sheep are sheered about every ten months. Carolyn washes the fleece, picks it and sends it to be carded.

The long, full fibers of the Romney Sheep fleece are sought by spinners and weavers in the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. The coarse wool with some shimmer, is ideal for outdoor use and withstands heavy wear and tear.

Carolyn spins the lamb’s natural fleece and weaves it into rugs, highlighting the natural gray, charcoal and very black colors of the wool by the pattern she chooses. Carolyn is a fiber enthusiast and is involved in Far Out Fibers, a third Rogue Valley guild, learning to create more items from the natural wool to support her beautiful sheep.



Carolyn plies together her handspun yarn. 1998

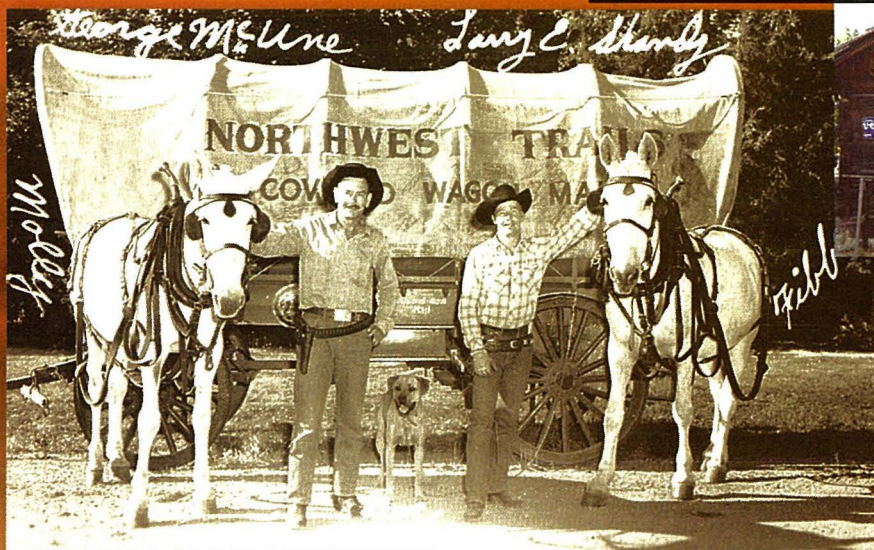


PHOTO BY DANA HERRICK

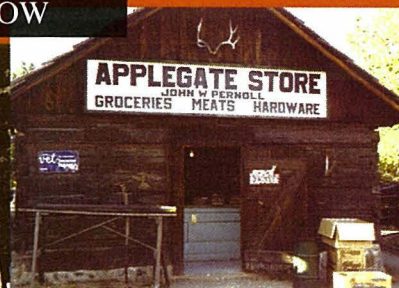
Carolyn holds her Romney lamb, one of “her little guys” at her Blue Top Farm. 1998

Janette Merriman has been an on-and-off weaver since her first class in high school from Sue Ogle Densmore in 1974. Recently she was inspired to ply the craft again, joining the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. The group’s enthusiasm and “Show and Share” time during the monthly meeting keeps her motivated. She presently owns her own business, JC Merriman Museum Services, where she assists people in preserving family heirlooms and helps organizations care for their history.

Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild meets the second Tuesday of the month, Sept-May at 10:00AM in the U.S. Hotel Ballroom, Jacksonville. Saturday Guild meets the second Saturday of the month, Sept.-June at 1:00PM in the Rogue Valley Manor, Medford. Far Out Fibers, meets the fourth Tuesday of every month, except December, at the Community Education Building, Room 1, Grants Pass. Visitors are welcome and refreshments are served; contact Barbara Kuhn—479-8737 for more information.



Shortly after a covered wagon trip to celebrate Oregon's Centennial, George began to build Pioneer Village. Molly and Fibber were the mules he took on the trip in 1960.



Once a part of Pioneer Village the historic Applegate store is now the headquarters for the Applegate Valley Historical Society



All that remains of Pioneer Village is a pile of rubble, soon to be cleared away. No one knows who the next owner will be or what will be built on the land Pioneer Village once stood on.

Pioneer Village Fades Back Into the Past

By Cynthia Gilstrap

Like a dust devil on the coattail winds of George McUne, Pioneer Village came to Jacksonville. And like a dust devil on the coattail winds of George McUne, it dissipated after his death.

George McUne and his wife Esther Ann moved to Medford in 1943, at which time George was a millwright who did truck repair, and owned a welding business.

McUne became interested in collecting the remnants of the western migration in 1959, shortly after participating in the centennial celebration covered wagon ride from Independence, Missouri to Independence, Oregon.¹ The following year he built his own wagon and traveled the entire summer alone through Washington, the landscape of his childhood, gathering artifacts and stories along the way.²

In 1961 he constructed a replica of a Wells Fargo Wagon in which he gave tours throughout Jacksonville. That same year he bought a large parcel of land on the outskirts of Jacksonville. It was there that his collection and love of pioneer history came together into what was to become Pioneer Village. His collections of buildings and objects grew: McUne's son, Ron

said, "He could never own just one of a thing. He owned close to one hundred horse-drawn plows." Soon McUne needed a ticket booth. The grand opening of Pioneer Village was held in June of 1962.

Pioneer Village, a family effort, was a place of learning and entertainment. McUne, his family, and his partner Dick Carter presented Pioneer Village and the artifacts in the way they might have been presented in the pioneer days.

With rope tricks, camp-outs, and "how to's," like building wagon wheels, Pioneer Village gave patrons a taste of history. "George was really good with kids," said Gary Matheny, a forty-eight year-old brick layer who worked as Jacksonville fire chief while Pioneer Village was open. Matheny remembers going "about 720 times."

George McUne continued to develop Pioneer Village until he was admitted to the hospital just before his death on August 6, 1979. When the creator of Pioneer Village died, he seemed to take the spirit of his creation with him. Ron McUne struggled to keep Pioneer Village afloat, but in the early 1980s pressures of declining attendance, costs of upkeep, and overall demands proved too much, and Pioneer

Village was put up for a public auction that drew attendance nationwide. "When he [George McUne] died, there was one significant person out of the picture," said Ron McUne. "It was a different era when he started."

George McUne dreamed of presenting a town to remind people of the significance of early western history. He succeeded. We tip our cowboy hats to the last sunset Pioneer Village ever saw, and to its history now in collections and museums. 🏠

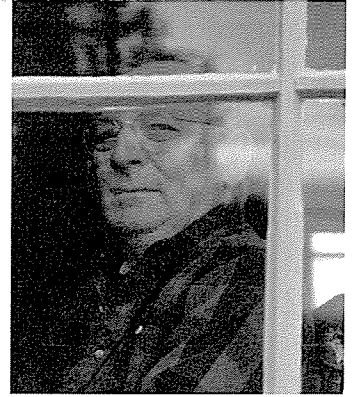
Editorial Assistant Cynthia Gilstrap interned for Heritage this spring, and graduated in June with a degree in Journalism.

ENDNOTES

1. Merrill, Karen. "Bidding for Applegate Store ends happily." *Medford Mail Tribune*. 16 Oct 1985.
2. Merrill, Karen. "Pioneer Village prepares for sale." *Medford Mail Tribune*. 9 Oct 1985, pp. 3A.

One of McUne's buildings, the Pernoll General Store, now serves as headquarters for the Applegate Valley Historical Society located on Highway 238.

M edford's Model Home



Newton Wonacott moved the house to Bellinger Lane after purchase.

By Seraph Cortez

The 1930s were turbulent years in the United States. Americans everywhere searched for ways to survive the Great Depression, including the people in the small community of Medford. The National Housing Act, passed in 1934 through Roosevelt's New Deal, encouraged investments in construction and increased the demand for manufacturing in the housing industry. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was set up to insure construction loans to middle-income families. The FHA helped modernize construction techniques and stimulated jobs for a third of the unemployed, who formerly worked in the building trades.



The present house is located on Bellinger Lane. In this photo you can see the new window that was added by its current owner.

The posh interior of the First National Bank, ca 1935

IN MEDFORD'S
Model Home
See the Beautiful New
Westinghouse
Range
The Last Word in Electric Cooking

Modern Floor Lamps
We have

THE HOOVER Vacuum Cleaner
Your Opportunity to see the latest, most complete home cleaning equipment made today.

FIRST NATIONAL
Commercial—Savings—S
Federal—State—Count
Capital, Surplus and
\$201.00

SINCE 1905

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #1431

Raffles were a popular fund raiser during the twenties and thirties. In 1920 the Chamber of Commerce merged with the Medford Commercial Club and raffled off a new Ford to cover the club's past debts. On April 7, 1936 the city of Medford deeded a lot on the corner of West Main and Peach streets to Ben. E. Harder, president of both the Chamber of Commerce and the First National Bank of Medford. At the time, the lot was in what was considered one of Medford's "fine" residential districts. Seizing an opportunity, the Medford Chamber of Commerce took advantage of the National Housing Act and immediately began building a "model home," to raffle off that summer. The purpose was twofold: to raise money and provide jobs. Raffling off a house turned out to be both lucrative and exciting for the small town of eleven thousand.

The house was built to the size and style of the "new modern American family," according to the *Medford Mail Tribune*. E. J. Whiteside & Sons was the general contractor on the job site, and other local tradesmen were brought in to finish the wiring, plumbing, cabinetry and other specialties. They had three months to complete construction, as an open house was scheduled for June 20, 1936. Although the second story wasn't done in time, (and was

never finished) the house and property were valued at seventy-five hundred dollars.

Ads for the raffle generated excitement as far south as Yreka. With great fanfare tickets went on sale at the open house, "three chances for a dollar." They were sold in four blocks of seventy-five hundred. After a block was sold, twenty-five tickets were drawn and the names were posted. After eight months the required thirty thousand tickets were sold (all four blocks), and one hundred names were placed in the final drawing. Mr. Dorance E. Hayes, an employee of Medford's Bohemian Club was the selected winner. He and his wife moved into the house on March 29, 1937.

Three years later, April 1940, Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Adair bought the house from Mr. Hayes for thirty-eight hundred dollars. Mr. Adair was the manager, treasurer, and secretary of the MM Department Store in Medford. The house remained in the family for the next twenty-eight years. In 1968, the lot on the corner of West Main and Peach streets, with two adjoining lots, was bought by Repco, Inc. and converted to a single commercial property.

Newton Wonacott, returning home from collecting firewood one day in 1968, stopped by the property, never intending to make a purchase, and asked

the price of the house on the corner. The house was thirteen hundred dollars. Mr. Wonacott and a friend removed the roof, split the house, and raised it above ground level. Westbrook Co., for an additional one thousand dollars moved it to Bellinger Lane. The two houses next to the model home never sold and were demolished.

Medford's Model Home is still recognizable from the exterior. Wonacott never put in a basement, and the larger front window, put in while transforming the attic to an apartment, came from an old school house he had worked on. The inside of the house has barely changed. The cabinetry in the kitchen is the same and the original brick fireplace is still in beautiful condition.

The fact that the house is still standing seems a lucky twist of fate. In 1936 this house brought hope and employment to the people of southern Oregon and revenue to the city. The now busy intersection of West Main and Peach streets is home to Mercy Flights. ■

Seraph Cortez graduated with a B.A. in history from S.O.U. this summer. She interned for Heritage Magazine as a Contributing Editor.

The original fireplace is still in excellent condition.

ABOVE: Advertisement from the June 6, 1936 edition of the *Medford Mail Tribune*.
BELOW: Medford street scene of the 1930s, looking west on Main Street.

Model Home Opening Ceremonies Slated By Chamber for June 26

The Weather

Forecast: Cloudy tonight and tomorrow; moderate temperature.
TEMPERATURE
Fahrenheit, yesterday, 76
Fahrenheit, today, 49

MEDFORD



TRIBUNE

Nothing Gained

There's nothing gained by waiting. If it's for sale, or trade, want to buy, rent or exchange, place an ad. in the Classified Columns of this newspaper. Results will please you.

Forty-first Year

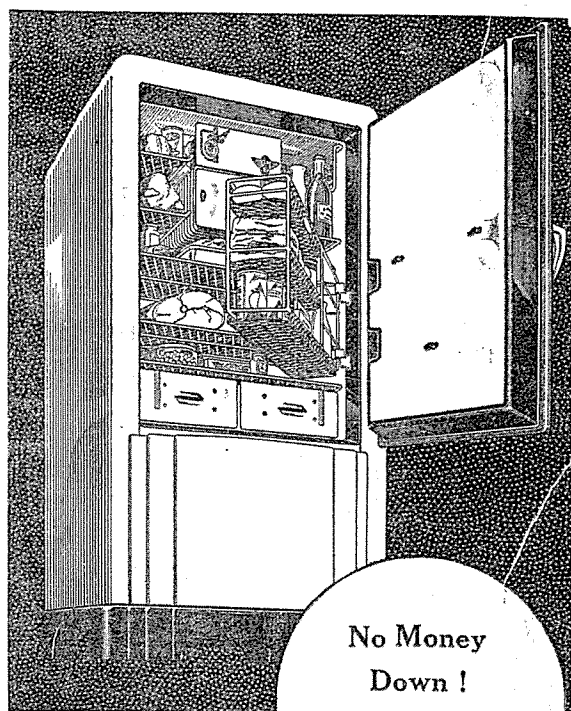
Full Associated Press.

MEDFORD, OREGON, TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 1936.

Full United Press.

No. 62.

See the Stewart - Warner Electric Refrigerator in the MODEL HOME



Amazing new feature saves work... saves money... and actually increases FRONT SHELF SPACE over 30%

No Money
Down!
3 Years
to Pay

Stewart-Warner Exclusive Features Save Work — Time — Money...

SAV-A-STEP... an entirely new feature that gives as much "get-at-able" space as refrigerators of a whole size larger... makes 1 step do the work of 6! It's the SLID-A-TRAY... an extra hand to help you! Rearranging food in a refrigerator used to be a task that required many trips to and from the kitchen table.

PALMER

MUSIC & ELECTRIC STORE

Main and Bartlett

Phone 788

B. E. HARDER, THE PERFECT CANDIDATE

A lack of evidence about B. E. Harder's early life leaves us only with his notorious presence in Medford politics and society in the 1930s. After retiring as president of the posh First National Bank in 1935, he remained with the bank as senior advisor. Aileen Johnson worked for Harder at First National Bank while in high school, but had to leave because her age violated child labor laws. After graduation she went back to work at the bank and soon became Mr. Harder's secretary. When asked what he was like she described him as "very prominent in Medford. A very egotistical man. Did a lot of swearing. Did a lot of smoking; all the time you were taking dictation, you'd be sitting in clouds of cigar smoke."

Ben Harder was the perfect candidate to head up the model home project in Medford. As president of a large bank he handled several property transactions and was the executor of many estates. In planning the model home fundraiser, Harder probably had no trouble convincing his friend Mayor George W. Porter to deed a small parcel of property to the Chamber of Commerce in Harder's, and his wife Elizabeth's names.

Harder turned the key of the house in a highly promoted event, on Saturday June 20, 1936. He told the women present that "the work had been done entirely by men and he hoped that the housewives would not be too critical of the interior layout."

The model home was valued at seventy-five hundred dollars and thirty thousand tickets were sold at a dollar apiece. There is no record of what happened to the money collected, and the Medford Chamber of Commerce does not even have the event listed with their other 1936 activities.

Because the house was deeded to Harder he was the one who signed it over to the winners, Mr. and Mrs. Dorance E. Hayes, on March 29, 1937. An interesting and unexplained note is that when the Hayes' sold the house in 1940, the owners paid the cost of thirty-eight hundred dollars and sixty-seven cents to B. E. Harder, not to Mr. and Mrs. Hayes.

B. E. Harder is listed as a resident of Medford until 1939, but then either moved or passed away. Although little is known about him, his strong influence created Medford's only model home.

ENDNOTES

Medford Mail Tribune, 1936-37

Ashland Daily Tidings, 16 Jun 1936

SOHS Oral History- 176

Jackson County Court House Records

Oregon Polk's Directory, 1939

Medford Mail Tribune 1936 copies

courtesy of Medford Mail Tribune

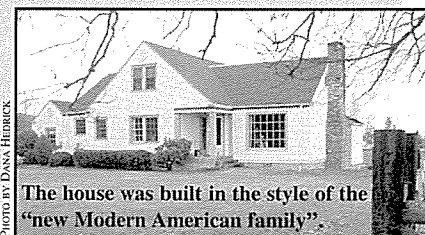


PHOTO BY DANA HUBBICK

The house was built in the style of the "new Modern American family".

Medford Mail Tribune advertisement, June 19, 1936

SAVE THE Auto Camps!

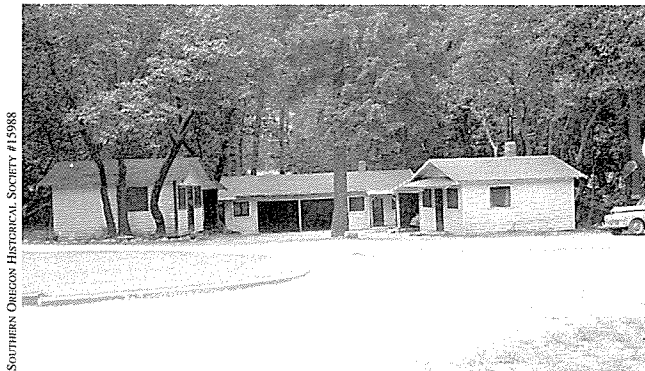


Left to right: Minnie Lane, Mr. and Mrs. Pernell Whitmore, Jessie Stone and Clarence Lane at Diamond Lake. Their two pets are Patsy Ruth Lane and Skippy Stone. July 1931

Some automobile owners viewed themselves as pioneers and reveled in their ability to camp on the outskirts of towns or anywhere along a road.



This "Flight" gasoline pump is part of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection and is on display in the History Center.



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15988

Lithia Park Auto Court ca 1940



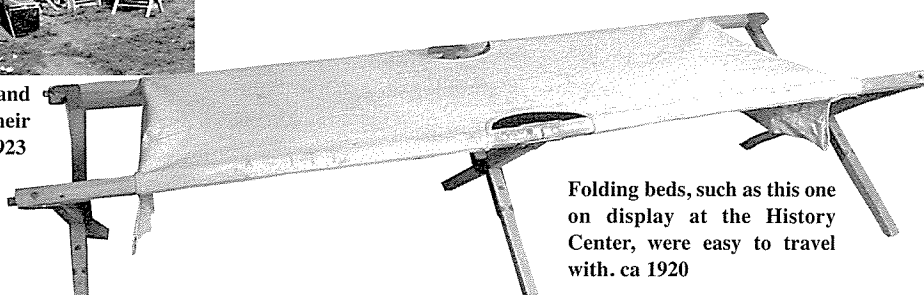
Southern Oregon Historical Society #8940

Although the private camps had started renting tent space, their proprietors soon realized that cabins with a few amenities attracted customers. Merrick's Auto Camp in Medford, ca 1930



Southern Oregon Historical Society #15983

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Lane and Hazel Emery relax with their auto tent at Mt. Rainier, ca 1923



by Stephen Mark

In the mid-1800s, roads and water routes were the two ways of transporting goods and travelers during the Euro-American settlement of the Pacific Northwest. Hotels, in the modern sense of the word, developed as the accompaniment to the convenient transportation systems represented by the railroads. As the number of cars increased in the Pacific Northwest after 1905, so, too, did the need for accommodations for auto enthusiasts. The first half of this century saw the rise and fall of auto camps. Today, lacking protection from the National Register of Historic Places, these historic sites are rapidly disappearing.

The auto camping fad peaked between 1915 and 1922. Spurred, in part, by the fear of breaking down on poor roads, possibly miles from any town with a hotel, travelers began outfitting their vehicles with camping equipment. Some automobile owners viewed themselves as pioneers and reveled in their ability to camp on the outskirts of towns, or anywhere along the road. Camping was also inexpensive, and many vacation destinations offered no other type of accommodation.

The early auto campers often avoided hotels, even though most could easily afford the

rates. By camping, the auto "gypsy" did not have to make reservations, or eat at the times set by the hotel dining rooms. He did not have to tip, nor explain his sometimes disheveled appearance after a day on the road to a clerk in a hotel lobby. In camping there was room for a tourist's family, easy access to his vehicle (most hotels did not have their own parking until after World War II), informality, and fresh air.¹

Even before the Pacific Highway opened in 1913 as a route connecting cities located in the region's western interior valleys, auto camping had been done on a short-term basis in many towns. Campers in Ashland were allowed to occupy the city park for a couple of weeks each summer for the Chautauqua festivities. By 1910, auto campers were the natural successors to the earlier attendees brought to town by wagon.²

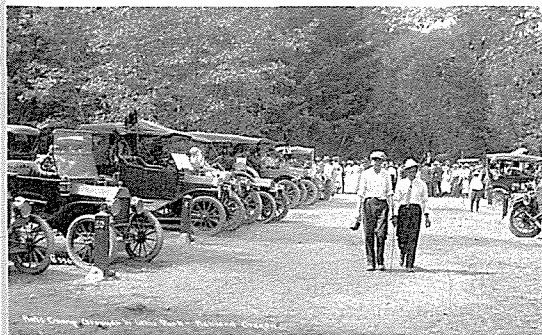
Problems associated with unrestricted camping justified the establishment and subsidization of free municipal auto camps. The first official municipal camp in the United States appeared in Douglas, Arizona, in 1913.³ Within two years, several cities in the Pacific Northwest wanted to cash in on the number of affluent auto tourists passing through their communities. Boosters looked

to the town's park board to situate an auto camp in a centrally located city park. They reasoned that this would attract tourists to downtown stores and allow the town to advertise itself as one which embraced progress.⁴

Grants Pass and Ashland preceded larger cities in the region by opening municipal auto camps in 1915. Grants Pass was first to open its auto camp. The city made use of Riverside Park, an area opened in 1910, to provide public access to the Rogue River. A park fund was initiated in 1914 so that an automobile entrance and an adjoining campground could be constructed. The latter was built in 1915:

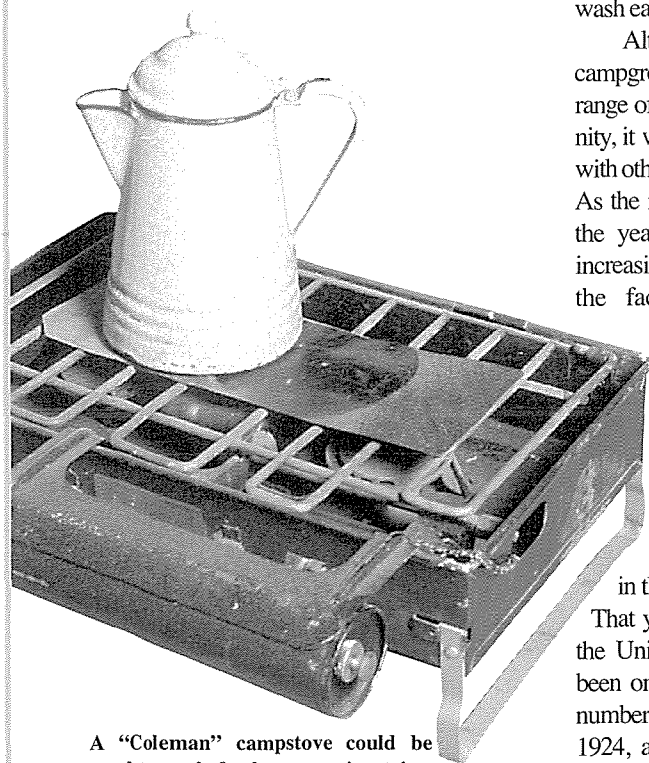
... on the river bank east of the park and all camp conveniences were provided to make the stop of this class of tourists in Grants Pass as pleasant as possible. The town, already a popular stopping place for train passengers and auto tourists who stayed in hotels, needed the campgrounds to provide for those who carried camping equipment and did not stay in the hotels.⁵

Ashland began construction of Lithia Park in 1909, situating it adjacent to Chautauqua



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #15085

Lithia Park's grounds were well used if the cars lined up here are any indication. Lithia Park auto camp grounds in Ashland, July 1931



A "Coleman" campstove could be used to cook food on camping trips. Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection, ca 1925

Park. The local boosters lost no time in trying to capitalize upon auto tourists traveling to the Panama Pacific Exposition held in San Francisco during 1915. They opened a ninety-two acre auto camp on July 22, 1915.⁶ Originally, there was no charge nor limit to the length of stay.

By 1916 Ashland had expended \$175,000 on Lithia Park, much of which went to developing the auto camp. Tourists were attracted by amenities like mineral water, a community house with gas stoves for cooking, a nearby grocery store, electric lights with individual switches (so that campers could sleep in the dark), and even a laundry wagon that picked up wash each morning and returned it the next day.⁷

Although the argument for free municipal campgrounds was that they simply filled out the range of accommodation available in a community, it was not long before the urge to compete with other towns led to expensive improvements. As the number of automobiles grew rapidly in the years following World War I there was increasing pressure to levy a charge for use of the facilities in municipal campgrounds.

Disgruntled hotel keepers and entrepreneurs who wanted to open private camps viewed the free municipal camps as unfair competition and pressed the park boards to eliminate them.

Both Grants Pass and Ashland instituted a charge of fifty cents per night in their municipal camps beginning in 1923.

That year 15.2 million cars were registered in the United States, whereas in 1912 there had been only one million registered vehicles. The number of cars increased to nineteen million in 1924, a year when it was estimated that five million vehicles and fifteen million Americans would occupy campgrounds across the U.S.⁸

Although tent sales peaked between 1923 and 1924, many auto campers wanted to bring less camping equipment with them. Private camps attracted their share of the auto camping public because municipal camps were often crowded in the summer and had established limits on how long a tourist could stay. Although the private camps had started by renting tent space, their proprietors soon realized that cabins with a few amenities attracted customers. Cabins appeared in the Grants Pass and Ashland municipal camps by 1925, but by this time these operations had to compete with a number of private camps which sprouted along the newly numbered and paved highways.

The Redwood Highway connected Grants Pass with Crescent City in 1926, and a new route to Crater Lake from Medford was completed in

1927. These new roads and an improved Pacific Highway between Drain and Wolf Creek (which had been described in 1917 by *Sunset Magazine* as rough at all times and impassable in wet weather) allowed entrepreneurs to build camps with cabins at strategic points to lure the long-distance tourist. Since a cabin could be built for two hundred dollars or less, an owner's investment could be paid off in a season or two.⁹

Whether the commercial camps were located in the vicinity of a town or on the highway many miles from a business district, the cabins tended to be arranged in a row parallel or perpendicular to the highway.¹⁰ One of the few differences between city and rural commercial camps was that the latter more often included a gas station and/or store as part of the operation. During this period, "kitchenettes" were often provided in the cabin, but showers and toilets could be found in a central bathhouse.¹¹

The first U.S. Forest Service campground was established in 1915 (along Eagle Creek in the Columbia River Gorge) and their number nationwide grew to fifteen hundred by 1923.¹² These campgrounds soon became an important component to outdoor recreation in the Pacific Northwest because over one-third of the region was national forest. Forest Service camp sites consisted of parking space for a car, a level area for tents, and a picnic table. The campground's community pump provided drinking water, and one or two pit toilets served as sanitation. Like the early municipal camps, there was no charge for use of the facilities.

By 1935, auto camping widened to include what were originally called "trailer houses." Trailers allowed the motorist to literally carry a dwelling to a camp site. Their appearance generally coincided with the development of cottage courts and motor inns, so that the modern range of accommodation for travelers was clearly discernible in 1940.

Availability of funds and labor for campground development through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program coincided with the trailer's increasing popularity. Some camp sites were modified to accommodate this new type of auto camping despite a protest from one prominent campground designer stating that trailers were detrimental to "the camp spirit," as contrasted with city, and town life.¹³

Nevertheless, a number of parking spurs to accommodate trailers were eventually placed in many of the region's Forest Service campgrounds. Few of the conversions were as dramatic as the metamorphosis of the Sucker Creek Forest Camp, located near Milepost 12 of the Oregon Caves Highway. A nearby CCC camp began



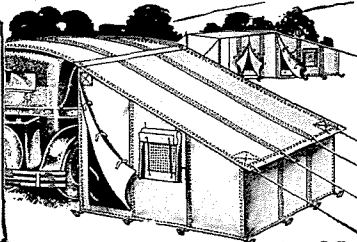
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #15084

Left to right: Minnie Lane, Mr. and Mrs. Pernell Whitmore, Jessie Stone holding "Skippy" and Clarence Lane holding "Patsy" all camping at Diamond Lake. July 1931

Water-Proofed Khaki~Sewed-In Floor

\$16⁸⁵ 7 by 7 Feet

Features
Superior quality
Rain-Shed tent cloth.
Front wall and floor
cloth sewed in.
Two screened win-
dows with Ward's ex-
clusive gutters.
Door in front and
side.
Sewed-in galvanized
iron rings and spliced-
on manila guy ropes.



Usual \$25.00 Value at \$16⁸⁵

Camping enthusiasts could find auto tents, like this one, in their Montgomery Ward catalog, 1929



Some automobile owners viewed themselves as pioneers and reveled in their ability to camp on the outskirts of towns or anywhere along a road, ca 1927



Lithia Park attracted tourists with amenities like mineral water, a community house with gas stoves, a nearby grocery store, and even a laundry wagon, ca 1916



People flocked to the auto campground for the dedication of Lithia Park in Ashland, July 1916

work in late 1934 to make the campground suitable for trailers because of the gradient of the road beyond that point. It was renamed "Grayback Campground," and the CCC began to construct new camp sites which had larger vehicle parking space. Other projects there included a massive landscaping program to remove traces of the old campground; new fireplaces; and construction of a community building like those in the municipal auto camps.

Commercial use of the word "camp" declined in the late 1930s, especially when the proprietor's aim was to cater to business travelers. Older cabin camps were increasingly left to the working class or itinerants, except in resort areas. Their image slid further after a well-publicized magazine article in 1940 labeled the majority of auto camps as havens for fugitives, prostitutes, and drug addicts.¹⁴

Auto camps are still well represented along highways throughout the Pacific Northwest. A few of them have been documented in county surveys of properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but they continue to disappear due to deterioration and changing uses. Many of the losses can be attributed to the failure of property owners and county officials to recognize auto camps as potentially significant historic resources.

Three surveys conducted since 1976 identified eleven camps located in the two southwest Oregon counties as possibly significant historic properties. Five of these are located in Jackson County with the remainder in Josephine County. In contrast to the inns and hotels which preceded them, there has been comparatively little effort expended to preserve significant examples of this

type of travelers' accommodation. The lack of appreciation for how the automobile forever changed the region's transportation infrastructure during the quarter century before 1940 is one reason. Another difficulty is an inability to identify auto camps and how they evolved from the first free municipal campgrounds in 1915, to the motor hotels (or "motel") by the end of World War I. The remaining auto camps in local areas will have little chance to avoid eventual obliteration if their importance remains unknown and nothing is done to put them into context with the regional pattern of development.

Some auto camps in southwest Oregon might qualify for listing on the National Register because they meet Criterion A. This is where property is associated with processes that have been significant parts of "broad patterns" of national, state, or local history. They might also qualify under Criterion C, where a property is a good example of a particular kind of architectural style, or if it represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (such as a group of cabins that form a district). A camp must also meet a seven-way test for integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The tests for integrity are intended to disqualify those properties compromised by unsympathetic alterations.

The National Register is virtually the only means of preserving significant examples of auto camps in southwest Oregon. The Union Creek Resort is the only auto camp in Jackson County already listed on the National Register at this writing. No auto camps have been listed in Josephine County. ■



Tents were rolled up and placed below the door to keep more room inside the cars for camping equipment, clothes, people and pets. July 1930

Steven Mark is a historian who lives in Fort Klamath.

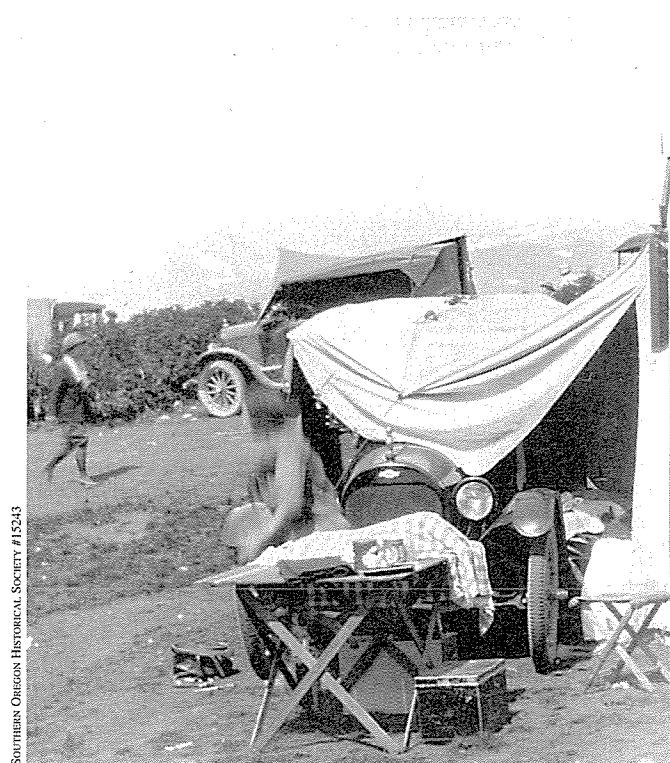
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2. Ashland Parks file, SOHS Medford.
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4. Warren James Belasco, p. 77.
5. *Grants Pass Courier*, 16 May 1915.
6. "A Bit of Old Ashland," papers and interviews by eighth graders of Ashland Junior High School, 1978, compiled by Marjorie Lininger, p. 5.
7. Warren James Belasco, p. 78.
8. Earl Chapman May, "The Argonauts of the Automobile," *Saturday Evening Post* 197:6, 9 Aug 1924, p. 89.
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14. J. Edgar Hoover, "Camps of Crime," *American Magazine* 129:2 Feb 1940, pp. 14-15, 130-132.

VISIT GOING PLACES

Many of the items and photographs that accompany this article, as well as many many more, can be viewed at the *Going Places* exhibit on display at the History Center, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford.

The exhibit spans the history of migration and transportation through southern Oregon, and follows the trail over the Siskiyou made by the Indians and takes you to the present day thoroughfare known as "I-5." It is a delight for all ages, open Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00, and Saturday from 1:00 to 5:00.



Camping was inexpensive and many vacation destinations offered no other type of accommodation. ca 1927



Steel-framed driving goggles with screen guards such as these were needed when motoring in an open-top car. Southern Oregon Historical Society. ca 1927

This Goodrich Road Map of Oregon from 1919 is part of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's collection.



This brake juice belonged to Dr. Phipps of Medford. Southern Oregon Historical Society.

The above window decal advertised the Lithia waters of Ashland, and is part of the *Going Places* display at the History Center in Medford.

“The streets and parks
seethed with people until
late at night and the
carnival spirit was rife”

07/04/33

Ashland's Grand

FERGUSON'S
BARGAIN Store
EATS EATS No Books

07/04/16

Pop, bang, ooh! Whirr, zip, ahh! Ka-Boom! These are the signature sounds of celebrating our nation's day of independence. Through the years, Ashland has been host to many memorable Fourth of July celebrations.

The 1916 gala found Ashland decorated with "patriotic bunting on telephone poles and stretched red, white and blue ribbons across the street intersections in downtown . . . and along the Plaza."¹

The combination of Independence Day, the Rogue River Roundup, and the Lithia Park dedication drew in a crowd of sixty thousand. "The streets and parks seethed with people until late at night and the carnival spirit was rife. Through it all, roundup, parades, dances, carnival, the crowd was orderly and there were no arrests, no crimes, no fires. That the vast crowds left some money in Ashland goes without saying and Ashland has no apologies to offer for taking it."²

carnival outfit—the escape artist who mystified—and many, many more."⁶ However things were a little less noisy that year. A city ordinance prohibited the sale or use of firecrackers or other explosives that might cause fires.

Ashland's 1998 Fourth of July celebration is gearing up to be another series of great events with a parade theme of "Music! Music! Music!" Following the parade there will be a food, game, and craft fair in Lithia Park and the afternoon is packed with musical entertainment at the Bandshell.



07/04/33

Fourth

A twenty-one-bomb sunrise salute kicked off the 1930 celebration. "Fired from Carter Heights, the noise makers were distinctly [sic] heard in the early morning and wakened the soundest sleepers from the deepest slumbers."³ Organizers had planned such a full day of events that it was impossible to attend them all. "Weather ideal, place ideal, hospitality ideal—and with a reputation of past Fourth celebrations which went down into history as genuine successes—Ashland today, is welcoming what, from morning attendance, promises to be the largest Fourth crowd in the history of the town."⁴

"Come to Ashland!" invited a 1942 advertisement in the *Ashland Daily Tidings*.⁵ Ashland's reputation for its Fourth of July celebrations continuously drew in visitors. Steffen's Superior Show carnival in Lithia Park brought big business that year. Their attractions included "the littlest baby in the world—the fire eater—and the midget horse—Shetland ponies which are just about the nicest ponies you ever saw in a

During this year's celebration, take a walk through Ashland's rich history by picking up a copy of the new Walking Tour Brochure. It is available at the Ashland Chamber of Commerce located at 110 East Main Street, and at the Southern Oregon Historical Society booth in Lithia Park.

"Let Ashland's home folks join heartily in the celebration as hosts to our Independence Day visitors!"⁷

ENDNOTES

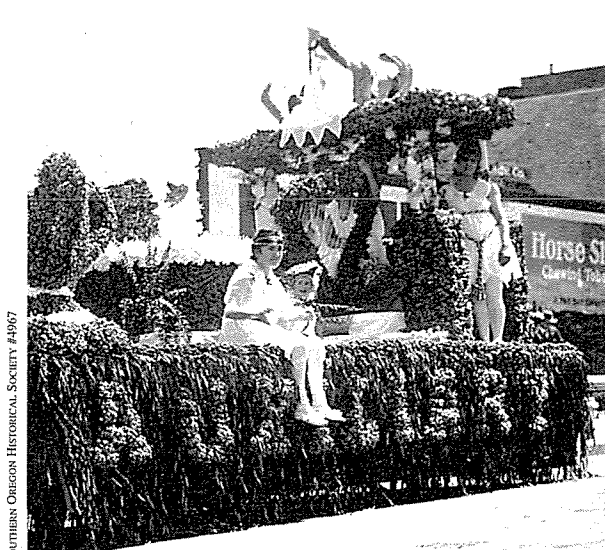
1. "The Greatest Fourth of All," *Table Rock Sentinel*, May 1987; pp. 12-24
2. *Ashland Daily Record* as quoted in the *Table Rock Sentinel*, May 1987
3. "Ashland Greet 4th Dawn With Sunrise Salute," *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 4 July 1930
4. Ibid.
5. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, July 1942
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

Heidi Nelson is an SOU graduate and interned for *Heritage* magazine as a contributing writer and Assistant Editor.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16007

07/04/16



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #4967



Lizzie's Crazy Quilt

In addition to the W.R.C., Lizzie McCall belonged to the Order of the Eastern Star. She was elected first grand matron of the Grand Chapter of Oregon in 1889, at the age of 53. Lizzie is shown wearing their symbol.

by Mary Ames B. Sheret,
Curator of
Collections/Exhibits

The National Women's Relief Corps (W.R.C.) is the oldest women's patriotic organization in the country. In 1883 it was voted the official auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union Civil War veterans. Ladies in Medford and Ashland formed local chapters of the W.R.C. in 1892. The Burnside

Corp., No. 24, in Ashland, appointed Mary Elizabeth McCall their first president.

Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) was born in Indiana in 1863. Her father, George Anderson, moved the family to Iowa in 1850 where they homesteaded until George's death in 1852. Two years later his widow, Hannah, along with Lizzie and a brother crossed the plains to Oregon. They chose southern Oregon because George's brothers, James and E. K. Anderson, lived near Ashland.

Lizzie graduated from Umpqua Academy in 1856 and began teaching in Ashland. In 1858 she married a Methodist

minister, Rev. George H. Brown. He was not a healthy man and died in California in 1866. Lizzie then opened a millinery shop in Ashland.

Ten years later, at the age of forty, Lizzie married widower General John Marshall McCall. Before his marriage to Lizzie, McCall had followed the Gold Rush to California, moved to Oregon and became part owner of the Ashland Flour Mills. He subsequently served in the Union Army. Upon his return to Oregon, he established the Ashland Woolen Mills and McCall Mercantile Store on the Ashland Plaza, became a Brigadier General



Quilt makers often embellished their work with fancy stitches.



Hand-painted designs add an artistic flair to quilts



Creative quilters applied photographs to their blocks.



The center block of Lizzie's quilt is a banner of dark blue satin decorated with a handpainted water scene.

in the Oregon State Militia, a state legislator, and Ashland's mayor. Lizzie became a stepmother to John's three children. The family built a large Victorian home on Oak Street in Ashland where they entertained dignitaries and friends alike.

The Women's Relief Corps held social events throughout the year. Meetings included speeches, refreshments, and musical entertainment. President Lizzie McCall prepared a special treat for the "Crazy Social" fundraiser held on April 23, 1892. She made a "lovely portierre of crazy patchwork," to be awarded to the person who guessed the number of fabric pieces in the quilt. It cost ten cents a guess.

In the center of the quilt is a banner of dark blue satin decorated with a handpainted water scene and the names of the forty W.R.C. members in gold. The banner was

made by H. S. Evans and Mrs. M. F. Casey and presented to Lizzie McCall two weeks before the social. The *Ashland Tidings* reported that the event at the Ganiard Opera House was "a very pleasant affair and decided success in every way." There were six hundred seventy-five guesses for the number of fabric pieces in the quilt. The winner, J. R. Tozer, was the closest with one thousand forty-five.

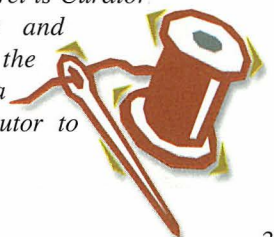
Crazy quilts were a raging fad in the 1880s and 1890s. Ladies magazines sold patterns for them along with bags of silk scraps, and introduced outlined embroidery and fancy stitches around the patches. Although referred to as quilts, they were not quilted and rarely contained batting. The maker embellished her work with imaginative details, such as painted designs, outlined embroidered pictures,

chenille appliqués, ribbons, lace, beads, fringes, ruffles, scallops, and fancy edges.

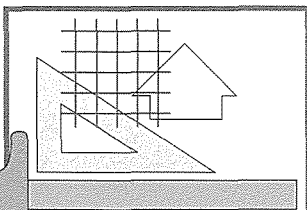
From May to October, the Southern Oregon Historical Society has joined regional art galleries, museums, and businesses to celebrate textile and fiber arts in *The Whole Cloth*. A short history of quilting is shown in *Piecemaking from the Whole Cloth* in Jacksonville. *Quilts of the Rogue Valley* at the History Center in Medford, exhibits quilts made by local women, or brought to Oregon on the overland trail.



Mary Ames Sheret is Curator of Collections and Exhibits for the Society, and is a regular contributor to Heritage.



Society Facts



The National Park Service calculates the size of their archival holdings using a formula of 1600 items per linear foot. Using that same formula to estimate the size of our collection, which is approximately 4000 linear feet, The Southern Oregon Historical Society can boast a manuscript collection of approximately 6.4 million items in addition to the 750,000 historic images in the photograph collection.

Society Fun

Whole Cloth

As part of *The Whole Cloth*, fabric constructions of every kind have filled the art galleries, museums, and shops in several southern Oregon communities. Quilts unite a popular enthusiasm for traditional craft with the aesthetic excitement and formal rigor of an art form.

The Whole Cloth is a distinguished series of national and regional quilt exhibits, related fiber arts exhibits, programs, classes and events. These exhibits aim to increase awareness of the visual arts as part of the cultural mix that already exists in the Rogue Valley.

For more details and updates on workshops, classes or programs at multiple venues call (800) 982-1487, or (541) 734-3982.



Isabel
H.
Sickels

The entire Rogue Valley has suffered a tragic loss with the death of Isabel H. Sickels. In addition to sharing in the general bereavement, we at the Southern Oregon Historical Society have missed the opportunity to let Isabel, a past board member, know how much we appreciated one of her last generous acts.

On May 13, 1998, to accommodate the Society, and Southern Oregon University (SOU), Mrs. Sickels graciously opened her lovely home for a reception for Richard Leakey, the noted paleoanthropologist who was in the Valley developing a scholarship fund for a Kenyan student at SOU. Mr. Leakey spoke briefly about the overburdened state of higher education in Kenya today, the result of current political unrest. The gala gave approximately seventy-five Valley residents an opportunity to meet Mr. Leakey "up close and personal."

Others who joined Mrs. Sickels in contributing to the occasion, and to whom we also owe our gratitude are: Alex's Ashland Bakery Cafe, Ashland Vineyards and Winery, The Black Sheep, Chateaulin, Casey Mitchell, Pilaf, Pyramid Juice, Quinz, Standing Stone, and Weisingers of Ashland.

Remembering the joy and camaraderie of this occasion, and the warmth, vivacity, and unstinting generosity of Mrs. Sickels makes our loss all the more poignant. As Society Development Coordinator and longtime friend Michael O'Brien said,

"She was truly a philanthropic giant in this region and generations as yet unborn will enjoy the heritage of her community focused generosity."

Corrections

Vol. 3 No. 1: All photographs included in the article "When the Geese Come Back to Klamath" should have been credited as courtesy of U.S.F. & W.S.
Vol. 3 No. 3: In the "Camp White" article the photograph of the USO party is identified as being held at the Sacred Heart. The correct location of that photograph is the Saint Mark's Episcopal Church.



SOUTHERN
OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

MUSEUMS, SITES, AND EXHIBITS

• The History Center

106 N. Central Ave., Medford
Going Places: Travel To and Through the Rogue Valley. 1826-1996, ongoing; "Quilts of the Rogue Valley," May through December and Community Collects Gallery and office hours: Monday through Friday, 9-5. The gallery is also open Saturday, 1-5.

• Research Library

The History Center, Medford
A large manuscript and historic photo collection covering topics of local history, open Tuesday through Saturday, 1-5.

• The Medford History Store, Rogue Valley Mall

Toys and gifts reminiscent of another era. Open mall hours.

• Jacksonville History Store

Corner of California and Third streets, Jacksonville
The works of regional artists and artisans presented for sale in this gallery-like setting. Thursday through Sunday, 11:30-4:30. Friday & Saturday, 11:30-6:30

• Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History

Fifth & C Streets, Jacksonville
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker; Piece Making from the Whole Cloth; Politics of Culture, Hall of Justice, a history of the county courthouse in Jacksonville, and more. Wednesday through Saturday, 10-5; Sunday 12-5.

• Children's Museum

206 N. 5th St., Jacksonville
Hands-on history for the entire family. Wednesday through Saturday 10-5; Sunday 12-5.

• C.C. Beekman House

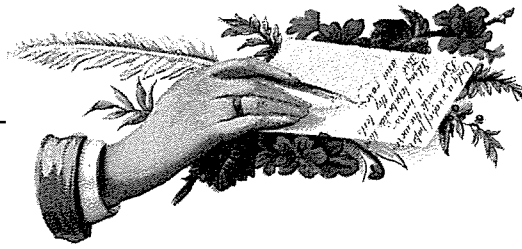
California and Laurelwood streets, Jacksonville
Beekman House is open Memorial Day to Labor Day, 1-5 daily.

• C.C. Beekman Bank

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

• SOHS Online

Visit our website at www.sohs.org.



Survey Response

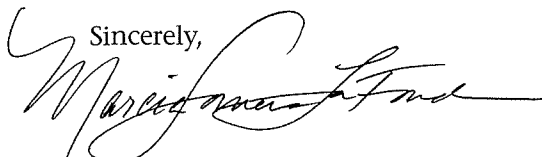
Dear Readers:

Thank you so much for responding to our survey in the last issue of *Heritage* magazine. We found out a lot of interesting things: You love the photographs (we do too): Pioneer history is of the utmost interest, followed by a tie between history from the 1920s to the 1950s and personal profiles. We also found out you like maps. We load the magazine with photographs, and have been focusing more on recent history, so we will temper that with more pioneer history and include some of the special maps in our collections. We were happy to see that most of you are really pleased with the look and content of the magazine you are receiving.

Some of you are concerned about what looks to be a very expensively produced magazine. Let me assure you, it is not. The pre-press and printing processes, called *production*, are paid for as long as we maintain a minimum of 827 subscribers. This is an incredible accomplishment, especially for a non-profit institution, and for a magazine that does not have paid advertising. It is done through technology. Through the use of a computer scanner, wise usage of color, (it appears on the same sixteen pages in every magazine), and using the cheapest paper possible, while still maintaining industry standards, we were able to reduce costs by more than 50%. It is cheap, efficient, and paid for. Thanks to you. Several of you mentioned that it was hard to read the glossy paper. Unfortunately, this is the cheapest paper. Matte and dull finishes are more expensive.

With the help of the entire Society, the magazine takes flight every quarter. We rely heavily on the library and collections staff for research, artifacts, photos—even articles. The publications staff itself consists of a photographer and an art director who work tremendously hard to ensure the timeliness and quality of not only this publication, but *ArtiFACTS*, a number of brochures, advertisements, invitations, annual reports, business cards, etc. that the Society needs. We have a wonderful revolving staff of interns and volunteers who help in a myriad of ways, doing everything from research, writing, proofing, taking photographs, to keeping the office running. I am the only staff member devoted full-time to this project. We are very lucky.

Again, we are very pleased with the positive response we got from you. We will continue to look for ways to utilize the valuable information gathered from this survey. Thank you for your participation

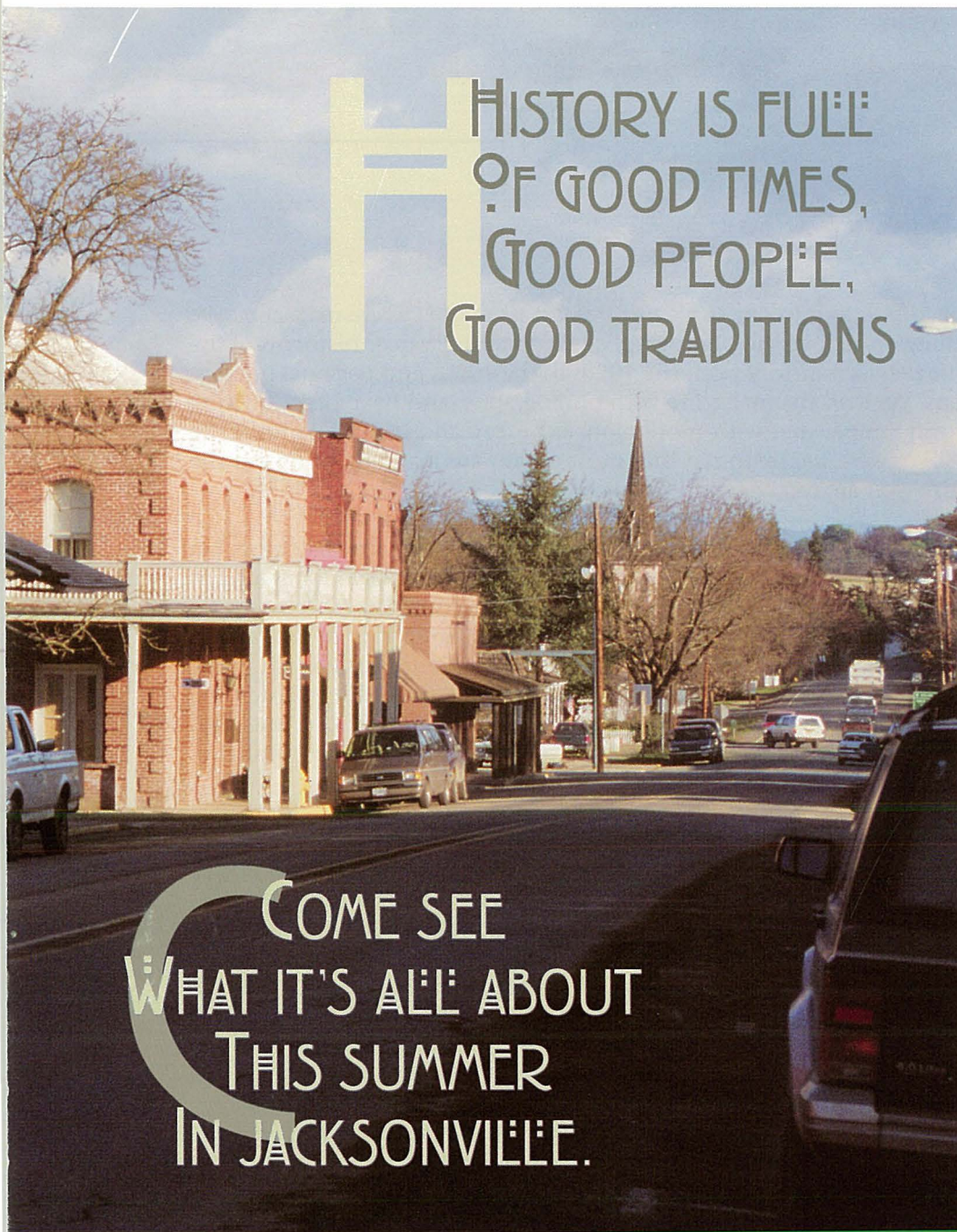
Sincerely,

 Marcia Somers La Fond, Editor

Southern Oregon Heritage Editorial Guidelines

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

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

The Southern Oregon Historical Society secures rights to full and final editing of all manuscripts, layout design, and one-time North American serial rights. Authors will be notified of acceptance of manuscripts within ninety days of receiving materials. In most cases, payment is upon publication. *Southern Oregon Heritage* takes great care with all submitted material, but is not responsible for damage or loss. Only photocopies of irreplaceable original historical documents should be submitted. Facts, views, and opinions expressed in signed submissions are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints or opinions of *Southern Oregon Heritage* or the Southern Oregon Historical Society.



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OF GOOD TIMES,
GOOD PEOPLE,
GOOD TRADITIONS

COME SEE
WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT
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IN JACKSONVILLE.



1 Children's Museum
5th & C streets
Daily 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

2 Jacksonville Museum
5th & C streets
Daily 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

3 Beekman Living History
California & Laurelwood streets
Daily 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

4 Third Street Crafts & Trades and the
Jacksonville History Store
U.S. Hotel, 3rd & California streets
Daily 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,
Friday and Saturday open until 6:30 p.m.



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