

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

*Today*

THE COURTHOUSES OF JACKSON COUNTY  
**Citadels of Justice**

A STORY OF HYDRAULIC MINING  
**Sterling Mine Ditch Trail**

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...  
**Preservation: 3-D History**

APRIL 1999  
Vol. 1, No. 4

The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society





# Public Heritage Grant Program

by Brad Linder

**H**istoric preservation has been an important mission for the Southern Oregon Historical Society since 1946, when concern for the deteriorating state of the former Jackson County Courthouse — built in 1883 in Jacksonville — was one of the primary reasons for creation of this organization. Through our current Public Heritage grant program, publicly owned or operated properties are preserved for future generations of Jackson County citizens to use and enjoy.

During the last three years the Society has awarded \$575,930 in grants for historic preservation projects in Jackson County. (All of the properties are either listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are eligible for listing). Funding



PHOTO BY DHE

*Above, the mausoleum at Medford's Eastwood Cemetery dates to 1925. A Society grant is assisting the city in repairing the cemetery, which has suffered from neglect and vandalism, as the partially restored window at right attests.*



PHOTO BY NATALIE BROWN

for this program comes primarily from Jackson County property taxes that are dedicated to history. This is the same source that currently provides core funding for eleven historical societies throughout Jackson County (including the Southern Oregon Historical Society).

Recipients of these grant funds include: the city of Ashland, \$47,500 for restoration projects in Lithia Park; city of Medford, \$45,000 for repairs at Eastwood Cemetery; city of Talent, \$39,100 for rehabilitation of the Community Hall; city of Jacksonville, \$28,500 for renovation of historic structures and plans to restore some of the Britt gardens; and Jackson County — \$389,995 for a Historic Structures Report and the continuing renovation of the 1932 courthouse. The HSR for this building will establish working guidelines for rehabilitation work and help define the areas with high historic significance and separate those from sections of the building where modern improvements can be made safely without harming the 1932 appearance.

Historic preservation makes good economic sense and ensures that what we leave behind is in better shape than when we found it. ■

*Brad Linder is executive director of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*



PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*Above, floodwaters caused extensive damage to Ashland's Lithia Park and Plaza on New Year's Day 1997. Below, a new bridge over Ashland Creek near the park entrance is only part of the extensive restoration effort at the historic park, partially funded by a grant from the Society.*

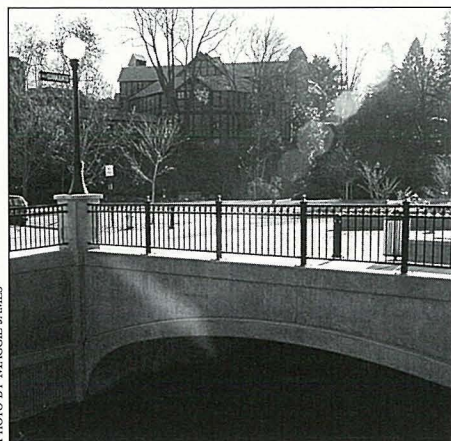


PHOTO BY MAGGIE JAMES



PHOTO BY DHE

*Grant funds from the Society helped Talent restore its Community Center, which originally served as Talent City Hall.*



PHOTO BY DHE

*The Society is working closely with Jackson County to renovate the current courthouse, which dates to 1932, while leaving architecturally important features of the Art Deco structure intact.*

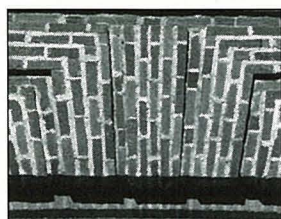
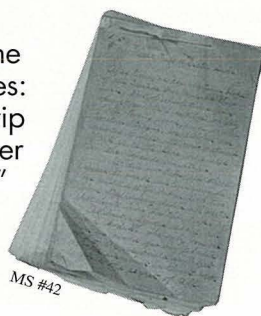


# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE *Today*



Our Own Voices:  
Public Heritage Grant Program

From the  
Archives:  
"Our trip  
to Crater  
Lake..."



Profiles in Preservation:  
"If these walls could talk..."

## SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY Editorial Guidelines

Feature articles average 3,000 to 4,000 (pre-edited) words. Other materials range from 500 to 1,000 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 submission—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 Today* 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 Today* or the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

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## FEATURE

### Citadels of Justice ..... 8

The Courthouses of Jackson County

by Robert Russell, Jr., Ph.D.

## DEPARTMENTS

### Our Own Voices ..... 2

Public Heritage Grant Program

by Brad Linder

### Sunday Driving ..... 4

Sterling Mine Ditch Trail

by Mary Louise Lyman

### From the Archives ..... 5

"Don't get discouraged, it is there"

The diary of Kate Myers; Crater Lake, 1903.

by Jacque Sundstrand

### SOHS News and Notes ..... 6

Exhibits and program updates and calendar

### Profiles in Preservation ..... 14

3-D History: The *Stuff* of History

by Margaret H. Watson

### Members' and Donors' Corner .... 15

### The Pioneers ..... 16

C. C. Hoover – A Rendezvous with the Future

by William Alley

## ON THE COVER

Jackson County Courthouse shortly after its completion in 1932. Built in the Art Deco architectural style of that era, it remains an expression of civic pride and a symbol of democracy in action.

Southern Oregon Historical Society



Feature:  
The Courthouses of  
Jackson County



Sunday Driving:  
Sterling Mine Ditch Trail

The  
Pioneers:  
C. C.  
Hoover



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #7247

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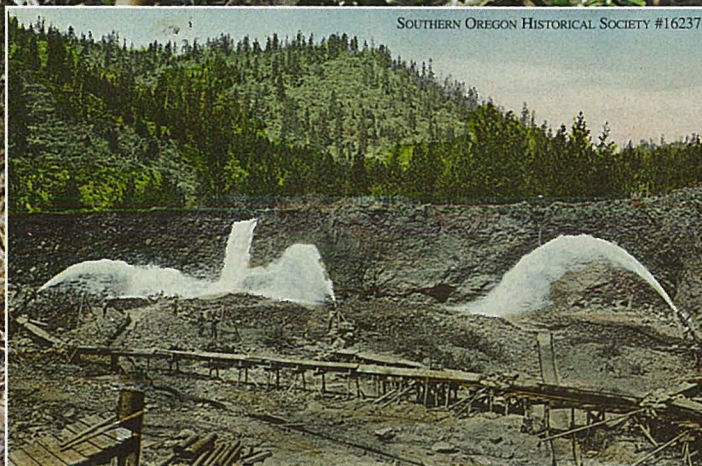


SOUTHERN  
OREGON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



# Sterling Mine Ditch Trail

by Mary Louise Lyman



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16237

This 1901 photo shows the destructive power of hydraulic mining equipment used to wash away soil to expose placer gold deposits.

PHOTO BY KATHY PICCOLI

James Sterling came to the Oregon Territory from Pennsylvania by way of Illinois in 1853.<sup>1</sup> He worked his Donation Land Claim in the Eden precinct (now Phoenix) in partnership with Aaron Davis. They farmed in the summer and planned to work a mining claim near Jacksonville during the winter when farm chores were done and water was plentiful. However, the original claim was “jumped,” so they went looking for another site.

One day when they had stopped for lunch beside a stream in a little valley along the old Indian trail that led across the mountains back to the Eden precinct, they panned an astonishingly rich amount of gold in a very short time. Since they’d already had one claim jumped they didn’t want to announce their find so they didn’t post any notices claiming their site, nor, for some reason, did they file the claim in Jacksonville.

There is no surviving account of why they delayed or who told of the strike, but the end result was that by the time Sterling had gathered supplies to work the claim, word had leaked. When he got back to the site all the most promising claims along the creek were taken, one by Aaron Davis. Davis had reserved only a half of a claim for Sterling instead of the one to two claims customarily reserved for the strike discoverer. Furious over what he considered betrayal, Jim Sterling permanently left the area for California. He had some success in mining there,

and he died in California in 1903.

The town of “Sterlingville,” later just “Sterling,” waxed and waned with the prosperity of the miners. After the first influx of transient miners, the full-time residents of the valley were farmers as well as miners. Following the fall harvest, they went prospecting and mining.

The miners depended upon the rainy season to swell Sterling Creek with enough water to wash away rocks and soil to reveal the gold-bearing layers of the streambed. Several attempts were made to build a ditch from the Applegate River to provide a year-round source of the water, but none was very successful. Eventually the mining claims became consolidated into one large Sterling Creek Mine. In 1875, David P. Thompson,<sup>2</sup> a former territorial governor of Idaho, came along with enough capital to actually build a usable ditch, which extended over the hills for twenty-three miles. Subsequent owners of the mine earned varying amounts of revenue thanks to Thompson’s ditch. As no deposit of gold lasts forever, the mine ultimately became unprofitable, and it was closed in the early days of World War II.

Today, as you walk the trail beside that ditch you can still see the devastating rearrangement of the landscape caused by the hydraulic equipment – powered by water from the Sterling Ditch – that the

miners used to strip away the soil of the hillsides to wash out the gold.

The town that grew to supply the miners, the creek that runs through where it stood, and the subsequent mines that produced handsomely for several owners all bear the name of a man who benefitted not at all from the riches he discovered. ☞

*Mary Louise Lyman is a volunteer editorial assistant for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. “Sunrise to Sunset at Sterlingville,” *Table Rock Sentinel*, March 1982.
2. Ibid.



#### Directions to Sterling Mine Ditch:

From the town of Ruch, go 2.8 miles south on Upper Applegate Road and turn left at the junction with Little Applegate Road. From the junction, follow the mileposts to mile 11.6, where you’ll find the Little Applegate trailhead on the left side of the road.



# "Don't get discouraged, it is there"

by Jacque Sundstrand

From Manuscript No. 42:

## "OUR TRIP TO CRATER LAKE, AUG. 26TH TO SEPT. 8TH, 1903"

A trip diary written by Kate Myers

*"After living on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains for three years... We decided we wanted to visit the new national park at Crater Lake... It did not take us three years to make up our minds we wanted to go, but it took two years of planning before all parties fell into line for the trip."*

Thus, Kate Myers begins her tale of the 1903 trip her group took to Crater Lake National Park, established the previous year.

Six adults and three children undertook this camping adventure: Kate and her husband, James W. Myers, accompanied by Thomas Williamson, his wife, Addie, and their two children, Louise, eight, and Lloyd, five, as well as Rosetta Kenney and her daughter, Frances, nine. Etta Taylor, visiting from Indiana, was also part of the group. Except for Taylor, all lived in Jacksonville.

Dressed for travel, the group left Wednesday, August 26, at 12:30 p.m., loading up gear and food for themselves and horses onto two wagons.

"One [wagon] had a fine canvas top for the passengers to ride under; the other was for freight. ... We had springs under the wagon beds, also spring seats. ... Mr. Williamson had put a 'lazy back' to each seat so we were very comfortable."

The group camped just beyond Eagle Point, which was as far as any of them had ever been. They had traveled all of twenty-two miles the first day.

Peter Britt was the first to capture the wonder of Crater Lake on film in this 1874 photograph.

The next day they traveled into more mountainous country, lunching at Big Butte Creek bridge and camping at the Higinbothams' in a pine grove.

"Here we made our first acquaintance with flees [sic], and they were so taken with our company that they never left us during the whole trip, and never let us forget them."

On Friday, the group entered the Rogue River canyon. While the horses rested from their steep climbs, the party visited three natural sites, including Mill Creek Falls.

"The going down is easy, but the coming back, Oh! Oh! It takes both muscle and breath, I tell you, and plenty of time."

That night they arrived at the Prospect Hotel, where they had dinner.

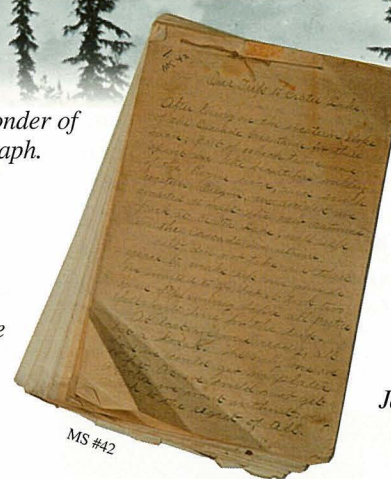
"The Hotel was a large frame building, just the board partitions up and five or six rooms finished. We climbed an open stair. The upper floor was loose boards laid over beams. ... Our room had a curtain for a door."

Sunday the party crossed Whiskey Creek, viewed Castle Creek Canyon in the afternoon, and came to the Crater Lake fork.

"Here a sign met our gaze, it read – Two miles to Crater Lake. Don't get discouraged, it is there."

By this time it was sundown and both wagons stopped due to the steep ascent.

"Addie, Etta, Kate, Louise and Lloyd said they would walk on, and see what kind of road it was and how far to the Lake. So we pressed on and just as the sun



Kate Myers' 1903 diary describes her group's monumental thirteen-day journey from Jacksonville to Crater Lake and back.

was sinking behind some of the highest points about the Lake, we came to it.

"There is nothing to tell you that you are near it. You climb quite a steep hill and as you reach the top that beautiful body of water stretches out in full view. No one can describe the feeling that comes over you as you catch your first view. We stood speechless. We forgot we had gone to look out the road and report. We forgot everything and just stood there drinking in the wonderful beauty of the scene."

On the return trip the adventure continued via Fort Klamath and Pelican Bay. Returning along the Dead Indian route, they arrived in Jacksonville at 2:30 p.m. on September 8.

"We had driven over 200 miles in 13 days. We were all tired out and glad to be home again. But we felt we would gladly go through rougher country to have the pleasure of seeing and knowing what a beautiful and wonderful country we live in." 🐾

Jacque Sundstrand is library/archives coordinator for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.



The intrepid travelers bounced their way to Crater Lake National Park in this hay wagon.





# News & Notes

## of the Southern Oregon Historical Society

April 1999

### HISTORY STORES UPDATE

In order to maintain the most efficient and cost-effective outreach, the Society is reorganizing its History Store activity. The Jacksonville History Store is now closed, but will reopen for the busy summer season May 29 with a new look and new merchandise mix and will remain open through September 12. The History Store at the Rogue Valley Mall will close on April 17 and reopen in mid-October for the Christmas season. Be sure to join us for the History Store moving sale at the Rogue Valley Mall store, April 1 through 17. Thank you for your continuing support of the Southern Oregon Historical Society and its History Stores. We look forward to serving you in the future.

### Program Schedule

#### WANTED! BEEKMAN LIVING HISTORY CHARACTERS

We're looking for a few characters to round out our family of living history interpreters and greeters for the Beekman Living History program. Volunteers of all ages are needed – from teens to septuagenarians. Call 773-6536 soon for more information. Training begins this month.

#### CRAFT OF THE MONTH JAPANESE FANS

All month; Free  
Children's Museum,  
Jacksonville

There once was a time when Rogue Valley farmers sang opera. Explore the musical heritage of Southern Oregon by making your own Japanese fan and re-enacting Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado."



### CONVERSATIONS WITH . . .

Saturday, April 3, Free  
Ashland Branch  
1:00 p.m.

Society Board member, Al Alsing, is a Retired Ashland Public Works director and city engineer. Alsing will share stories of lithia water and Lithia Park, and perhaps even a taste of Ashland's own "rare mineral table water."

### MUSICAL MUDSLINGING

Saturday, April 10; Free  
History Center, Medford  
2:00 p.m.

Join us as Oregon State University Instructor William Earl presents "Musical Mudslinging: The Power of Political Campaign Song, 1860-1880." Earl will combine campaign songs with insightful commentary while he tickles the ivories on the Society's Peter Britt piano. Call 773-6536 or email [program@sohs.org](mailto:program@sohs.org) to preregister before April 7. This unique program is made possible by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### HANDWEAVERS MEET

Saturday, April 10; Free  
Ashland

This month's meeting includes a field trip to tapestry weaver Barbara Schoonover's studio in Ashland. Call 592-6415 for details.

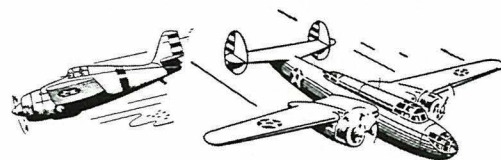
Tuesday, April 13; Free  
History Center, Medford  
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Bring a sack lunch to the History Center and meet with the Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. Program highlights include discussion of antique coverlets led by Southern Oregon Historical Society staff.

### OREGON'S SPA ERAS

Saturday, April 24, Free  
Bellview Grange, Ashland  
2:00 p.m.

The geography of Oregon abounds with natural hot springs — 131 of them in fact! "Hope Springs Eternal: Water Cures During Oregon's Spa Eras," is a slide presentation which identifies both turn-of-the-century and present-day natural spas. The presentation will also show the significance of the hot spring culture to ideas about health and relaxation across the twentieth century. Preregister by calling 488-4938 before 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 23. The Bellview Grange is located at 1050 Tolman Creek Road, Ashland.



### "V" IS FOR VICTORY

Wednesday, April 28  
Children's Museum, Jacksonville  
3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
ages 3 to 6  
\$3 members/\$4 nonmembers

World War II was a time in history when people pulled together to accomplish daily tasks. Join us as we learn about rationing and recycling on the home front and plant a small victory garden to take home. Call 773-6536 or email [educate@sohs.org](mailto:educate@sohs.org) to preregister before April 23.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING April 28, 5:30 pm

### APRIL 18-24 IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK.

We salute our more than 300 volunteers for the good works and major contributions they make all year long.

For more information about the Southern Oregon Historical Society, contact us at:

106 North Central Avenue · Medford, Oregon 97501 ■ Phone 541 · 773 · 6536 ■ Fax 541 · 776 · 7994 ■ Email [info@sohs.org](mailto:info@sohs.org) ■ Website [www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org)

VOL. 1, NO. 4



## Exhibition Schedule

### NOW ON DISPLAY AT THE ASHLAND BRANCH

**P**hotographing the Frontier, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution, presents a history of the expanding West as seen through the lens of anonymous photographers. These images provide documentary evidence of Western life, and serve as examples of the skillful work done in developing a medium.

A new selection of images from the Simpson-DeHaven collection has been hung. These images, taken by amateur photographer Ida Hargrove Neil, depict Ashland's early years.



### MYSTERY OBJECT OF THE MONTH

**A**pril's Mystery Object: Shaped like a wooden spoon, this item is cut lengthwise and has a brass hinge at the end of the handle. The inside is hollowed out and has a round, brass pan that is attached to a wooden dowel by strings. The dowel has black dots on it. Chinese characters are on the outside. It measures 15" long. What was this item used for? A winner will be drawn from all correct answers received by April 30 and will be awarded \$5 in "Applegate Trail Scrip" good toward any Society purchase. Send your answer on a 3" x 5" card with your name, address, and phone number to: *News & Notes* Mystery Object, SOHS, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501, or email [info@sohs.org](mailto:info@sohs.org).

*March's Mystery Object  
Charcoal Iron*

March's Mystery Object was a charcoal iron. It was used in the laundry owned by Dong Chong Kee in Portland around 1902. The iron opened in the back where hot coals were placed. The top spout at the front was for adding water to make steam for ironing.

Congratulations to January's Mystery Object Winner, Mrs. Helene Jensen of Medford, Oregon.

Enjoy the Mystery Object feature? Then be sure to watch "Kid's Q&A" on KTVL-TV10. Throughout the day youth from around Jackson County will try to stump you with four different Mystery Objects each month.



Ashland-related artifacts from the Society's collection will be added to the Ashland Community Collects Gallery. The Gallery features the collections of Ashland residents. Currently on display is a refreshing collection of Lithia Water bottles. To display your collection in the Gallery, call Ashland Program Associate Jay Leighton at 488-4938.

### WHEN IN JACKSONVILLE . . .

**V**isit the Third Street Artisan Studios and learn more about overshot weaving. The studio's new exhibit features traditional and contemporary overshot weaving made by members of Far Out Fibers, Saturday Handweavers Guild and Rogue Valley Handweavers Guild. The exhibit can be seen Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. through May 22.

### NEW AT THE HISTORY CENTER

**O**ne of the Rogue Valley's most photographed buildings, the Woods house in Eagle Point, will be on display at the History Center. The model was built by Roger Nielsen, a retired architectural designer who has been making architectural miniatures for many years.

Also at the History Center will be *Sports*, a new exhibit featuring a variety of winter and summer, indoor and outdoor sports equipment and photographs from the Society's collections. Both of these new displays can be viewed from outside of the building, so be sure to stop by and have a look!

The Camp White Historical Association's current window display at the History Center highlights the history of the United States Army and the West Point Military Academy. The display includes photographs and uniforms.

#### HISTORY CENTER

106 N. Central Avenue, Medford  
Mon - Fri, 9:00am to 5:00pm  
Sat, 1:00 to 5:00pm

#### RESEARCH LIBRARY

106 N. Central Avenue, Medford  
Tues - Sat, 1:00 to 5:00pm

#### THE HISTORY STORE, MEDFORD

Rogue Valley Mall,  
Lower Level  
Daily, Mall hours

#### JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM

5th and C streets, Jacksonville  
Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm  
Sun, 12:00 to 5:00pm

#### CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C streets, Jacksonville  
Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm  
Sun, 12:00 to 5:00pm

#### THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIOS

3rd and California streets, Jacksonville  
Fridays and Saturdays, 11:30am to 4:00pm

#### U.S. HOTEL

3rd and California streets, Jacksonville  
Upstairs room available for rent.  
Call 773-6536 for information.

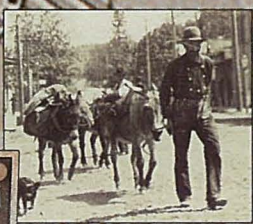
#### ASHLAND BRANCH

208 Oak Street, Ashland  
Wed - Sat, 12:00 to 4:00pm

#### HANLEY FARM

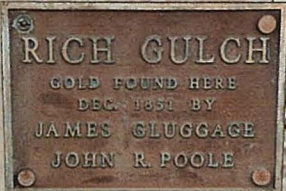
Open by appointment. Call 773-2675.





Gold miner in Jacksonville

SOHS #10484 (DETAIL)



Gold discovery marker

Jacksonville jail gallows, 1886



SOHS #2422



Judge Deady ca. 1860



PHOTO BY ROBERT RUSSELL

Wasco Courthouse, ca. 1859

Jackson County was established on January 12, 1852, from the original Yamhill and Champoege districts of the Oregon Territory. The impetus for the creation of the new county was the discovery of gold in Jacksonville and the consequent arrival in the territory of substantial numbers of men badly in need of local governmental authority. As originally constituted, Jackson County was enormous, comprising all of the territory west of the Cascade range, south of Umpqua County and north of the California border. There was never a question of where the seat would be: all the action was in Jacksonville, and at this point in Oregon history the creation of counties was a reactionary process, a response to settlement.

It always takes the law a little time to catch up to events, and the first appearance of "legalized society" in Southern Oregon was when the famously peripatetic U.S. District Judge Matthew Deady held court in September of 1852. "The courtroom," it was reported, "was next to the state saloon. [And] a dry goods box covered with a blue cloth served as the Bench."

While typical of early justice, this state of affairs could not long be adequate, and the more substantial Jacksonville citizens began to dream of better things. The earliest Jacksonville plat shows the site for the courthouse on the north side of California Street, between Third and Fourth streets: that is, right in the middle of town. Justice is good, but profit is better, and this commercially valuable site was not sacrificed to the common good. The courthouse was built elsewhere.

Where it was finally located turns out to be a relatively common site for western county courthouses. The block bounded by Fifth and Sixth streets and C and D streets is a couple of blocks removed from the business district, and consequently not prime commercial land. It is in a part of town where commercial activity shades into a residential zone. The history of courthouse building on the site also has much in common with courthouses in other Oregon counties.

The historical marker that presently stands near the Jacksonville courthouse is a little misleading in its information. The casual visitor stopping to read the marker is informed that in 1859 the Masons built their lodge – a two-story building – at the northwest corner of Fifth and C streets. They rented the ground floor out as a courthouse and held their meetings upstairs until they sold the entire structure to the county in 1867. Information in the Southern Oregon Historical Society archives tells a slightly different story. There was a modest, single-story structure (about twenty-four feet by forty feet) built on the site at some point in the 1850s. In 1858 the Masons enlarged this existing building, which was already being used as a courthouse, by adding their second-floor hall. Access to this hall was via an outside staircase.<sup>2</sup>

In this photo, taken between 1863 and 1865, this two-story structure is believed to be Jackson County's original courthouse, then located at the edge of Jacksonville.



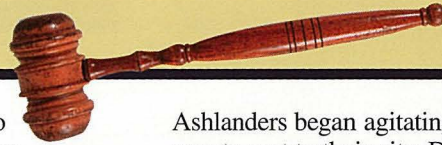
SOHS #13977 (DETAIL)



# CITADELS OF JUSTICE

## The Courthouses of Jackson County

by Robert Russell, Jr., Ph.D.



While no detailed photographs are known to exist of this earliest Jackson County Courthouse, it was described in a Medford *Mail Tribune* article of the late 1920s as "Classical Revival." Even given the tendency of newspaper reporters to confuse architectural style, this is probably pretty close to the truth. The one surviving Oregon county courthouse from the middle of the nineteenth century provides us a reasonably good idea of what a frontier Greek Revival courthouse looked like. The first Wasco County courthouse was built in The Dalles in 1859 as a two-story wooden structure with the courtroom located upstairs (the jail and sheriff's office were downstairs), reached by an outside staircase.

The second step in the development of Jackson County justice was also fairly typical. A modest wooden building, while perfectly acceptable for a frontier county before the Civil War, must have started to look pretty frumpy before long. In 1871 the Jacksonville *Democratic Times* complained about the courthouse, saying that "This dilapidated old structure is a disgrace to the county." It took more than ten years before anything was done to remedy the situation, which suggests that the sentiment voiced by the local newspaper had more to do with a heightened sense of propriety than with the actual physical condition of the little courthouse.<sup>3</sup>

In 1882 the County Court ordered that a new courthouse be erected. By this point Jackson County was no longer what it had once been. The gold had long since disappeared from the hills and creeks around Jacksonville, and Ashland and Medford were the up and coming places in the county. Though there is no firm evidence that this was the case, I suspect that the 1882 decision to build a new and decidedly imposing courthouse in Jacksonville was at least partially motivated by the fact that the Oregon & California Railroad had decided on a route that completely bypassed poor old Jacksonville. Since the railroad was built into Jackson County starting in 1883, the planned route must have been well known the year before.

It is clear that by now there were citizens who felt that things had changed substantially from the days when Jacksonville was the only settlement in the county. When plans were announced to build a new courthouse in 1882,

Ashlanders began agitating for the transferral of the county seat to their city. Despite "strenuous opposition" to the construction of the new courthouse, they were unsuccessful, and the cornerstone of the new building was laid on June 23, 1883. Work progressed rapidly, and by September the cupola over the western entrance was complete.<sup>4</sup>

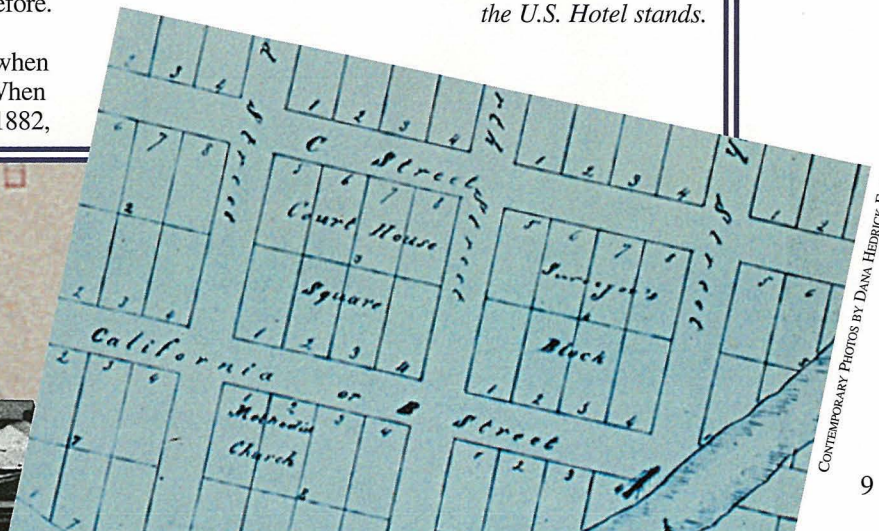
Although unsuccessful in getting the county seat moved, Ashland did provide the architect for the new courthouse: G.E. Payne. Payne had to work closely with the members of the County Court, who provided him with the building program, which had already become significantly more complicated in the mere twenty-five years since the first courthouse had been built. This new building was designed to house, in addition to the County Court, the circuit judge of the District Court, the county surveyor, the school superintendent, the district attorney, the sheriff, the county treasurer and the clerk. Real county government was in place in Jackson County by the 1880s.<sup>5</sup>

It appears that the judges of the County Court pretty much decided the internal arrangement of the building, and left the rest of the design – the exterior and the details of the interior – to Payne. He responded by providing one of the great monumental late nineteenth-century courthouses in the state.<sup>6</sup>

The heart of the building – its reason for being – is the grand courtroom, which occupies essentially the entire second floor. This room, sixty-eight feet by forty-one feet with a twenty-foot ceiling, is perhaps the grandest nineteenth-century courtroom in the state. It was reached by means of a double stairway rising from the western entrance.

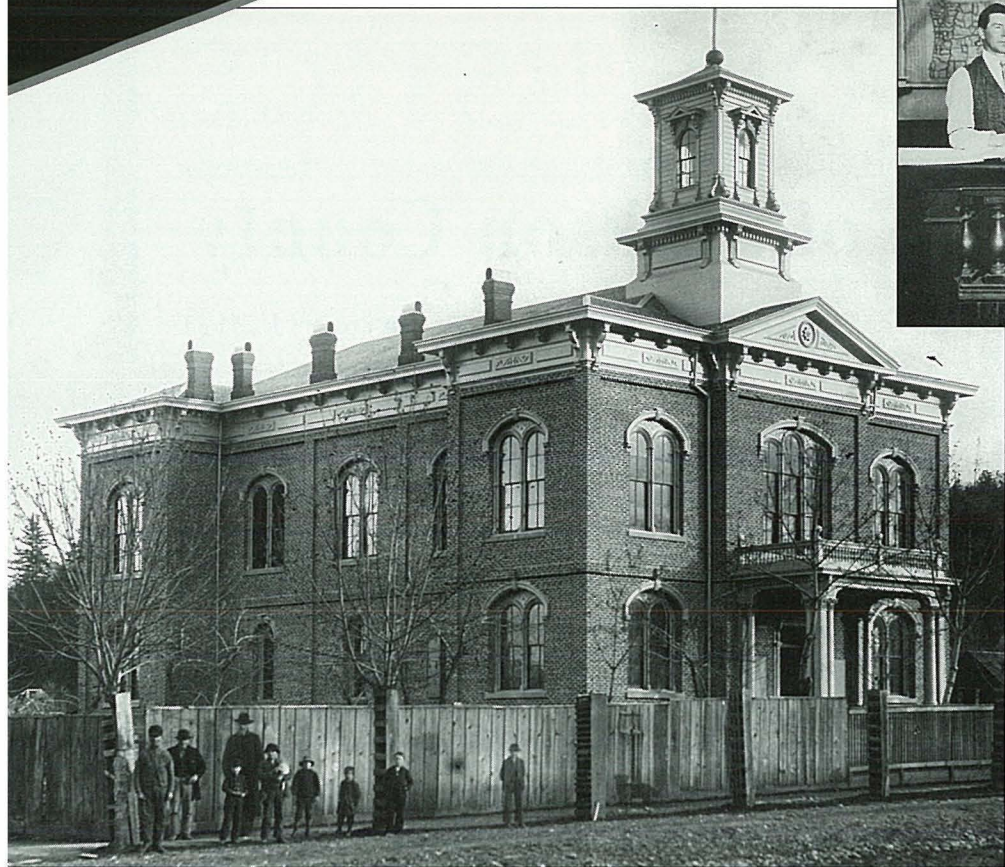
This grand courtroom was set within a two-story building with an "I"-shaped footprint and marked at the

*The earliest Jacksonville plat had the courthouse downtown on California Street on the block where the U.S. Hotel stands.*

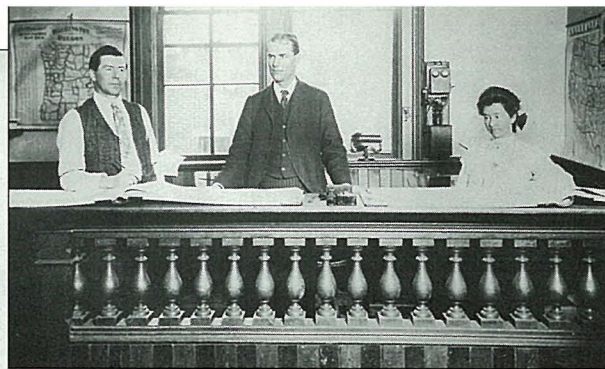


CONTEMPORARY PHOTOS BY DANA HERRICK-EARP





*Jackson County's much grander second courthouse, inaugurated in 1884, featured distinctive Italianate-style windows, cupola and entry porch. The courthouse served as the seat of county government for nearly half a century.*



SOHS #861

*This 1905 photo shows, from left, Deputy Sheriff Oris Crawford, Sheriff Joe Rader, and Amy Crawford in the sheriff's office at the courthouse.*

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #864

entrance by a noble cupola. It is Italianate in style, which was the most popular architectural style in America in the 1870s and '80s. It is a simple building, really, the Italianate features being restricted mainly to details: the entrance porch (originally even more overtly Italian when it had a flat roof with a balustrade around it), the round-headed windows with their hoods, the bracketed cornice, the flattish roof and the cupola. But details are

frequently what people notice, and the popular reaction to the building was largely prompted by these details.<sup>7</sup>

This new courthouse was inaugurated on February 11, 1884, with a grand ball held in the courtroom itself, even before all the detailing was complete.<sup>8</sup> It served for nearly half a century as the stately and dignified locus for county justice, and has functioned for the last half century as the Jacksonville Museum.

*This intricately carved wooden cornerpiece came from the original cupola prior to the building's restoration.*



*Cast iron grills covered vents to chimney flues and air shafts.*



PHOTOS BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*The bracketed cornices and round-headed windows of the old Jacksonville courthouse are characteristics of Italianate buildings.*



This second Jackson County Courthouse has remained as intact as it has because by the time it was outgrown it had already become clear that it no longer made sense to keep the seat in Jacksonville. Medford and Ashland marked the new axis of county development, and Jacksonville was a long, difficult and inconvenient journey away. By the early 1920s there was substantial support for transferring the seat to Medford (Ashland was no longer a serious contender). The first popular referendum on shifting the county seat was held in 1923, and citizens elected to keep it in Jacksonville by 900 votes. The arguments for the status quo were exclusively from Jacksonville residents and appealed overwhelmingly to sentiment and tradition. The Medford *Mail Tribune* a few years later still called the courthouse "the most imposing and important structure in southern Oregon."<sup>9</sup> The Medford Chamber of Commerce argued business practicality, but the sticking point seemed to have been cost: citizens were hesitant about assuming the increased tax burden necessary to construct a new courthouse.<sup>10</sup>

The county business interests regrouped and began to plan for another referendum almost immediately, this time securing the cooperation of the city of Medford, which agreed to provide a permanent, free site for a new courthouse if the people of the county voted to move the seat. In November of 1926 the second referendum passed by 1,830 votes (of 7,712 cast) and the seat of Jackson County government was transferred to Medford in 1927. The next step was to figure out where the new courthouse would be built.

This was a crucial point, and the final decision took several years. Indirect evidence suggests that the reason for the delay was largely political. There were at least six sites proposed for the location of the new courthouse, each with its vocal supporters. When the County Court finally settled on what was known as the "Washington School site" (because it was



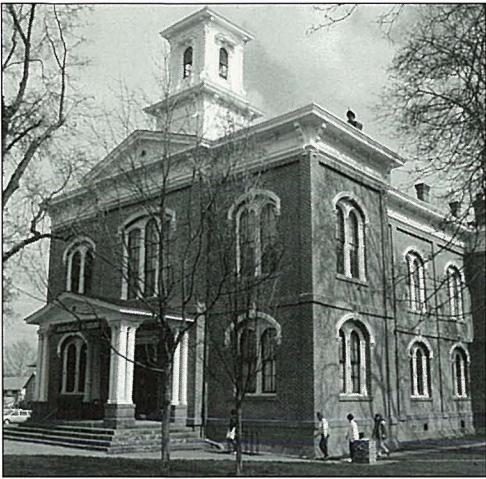


PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*Today the former Jackson County courthouse looks much as it did in 1884, although the original flat-roofed entry porch was replaced by a gabled entry by spring 1946.*

the site of an early public school in Medford), the reasons given for the selection were that it was in a central location with easy accessibility, that there would be ample parking and that – to a number of influential Medfordites – this site had great potential to become a “civic center.” Medford engaged a Chicago planner, Jacob L. Crane, Jr., who came to the city in the early spring of 1930 and clearly galvanized a number of leading citizens with his vision for a new civic center, with the courthouse as its heart.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to say that all Medfordites were enthusiastic about the possibilities of a civic center. W. H. Gore, the president of the Medford National Bank and a voice to be reckoned with, was opposed to the idea of a new, coherent (and no doubt expensive) civic center, but supported the Washington School site for the new courthouse because, as he said, “it [would] discourage any civic center movement, which would be out of place in Medford.”<sup>12</sup>

Scarcely a week after this comment was made, Jacob Crane came to Medford and praised the Washington School site *because* it would make an impressive civic center. Crane obviously was persuasive in selling his civic center vision, and in the *Mail Tribune* of May 25, 1930, a rendering of the proposed county courthouse/civic center was published.<sup>13</sup>

This drawing must be understood more as a promotional tool than as an architecturally specific expression of what was intended for the city. The draftsman, C. Lewis Wilson of Los Angeles, had no previous or subsequent involvement in the Medford project. The article

accompanying the drawing made clear that the dominant building, the courthouse, was to be the first erected. The rendering shows the courthouse on its site, facing Oakdale Avenue, and presents it as a rectangular block, but beyond these general similarities there is little to connect this drawing with the courthouse that was to be built. This is not surprising. No one yet knew what the courthouse would really look like in 1930. Its architect had not even been chosen.

Even without an architect, however, people were already thinking about what they wanted it to be and to express. An article in the *Mail Tribune* before the end of 1930 proclaimed that “the county court in its consideration of the courthouse is striving to eradicate all ‘gingerbread’ effects and have straight lines predominate in the lines of the courthouse. They disapprove of ‘offsets’ and bay windows. They want the structure to possess straight line simplicity.”<sup>14</sup>

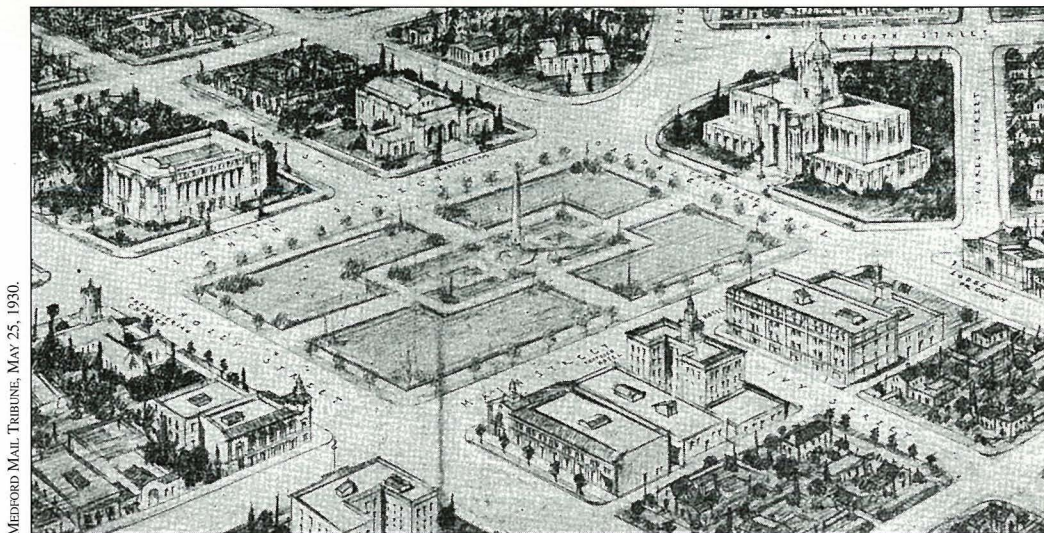
Never mind that the disapproved of architectural elements had been out of fashion since before the turn of the century. It seems fairly evident that the general desire was that the new building not look like the previous courthouse in Jacksonville.

Link was a good choice.

Born in Germany in 1870, he had immigrated to the United States in 1887, settling first in Denver for a few years before moving east to St. Louis in 1893. In 1896 he won the competition for the Montana State Capitol in Helena and moved to that state, settling first in Butte, then moving in 1906 to Billings, where he remained for the rest of his life.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the worsening Depression, there was a substantial amount of money available for construction, and the cost of the building was estimated at \$265,000 when Link was appointed architect. The total cost of the courthouse when it was finished in the late summer of 1932 turned out to be only \$287,000, a mere 8 percent more than the initial projection. In any event, the good taxpayers of Jackson County had to pay only \$17,469.75 for their share of the building. Most of the rest of the cost was paid for with Oregon & California Land Grant funds that came from federal administration of timberlands formerly owned by the Oregon & California Railroad.<sup>16</sup>

Link, who had worked in a very fine, restrained Beaux-Arts classical mode earlier in his career, had, by the 1930s, shifted to a more up-to-date Art Deco



MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE, MAY 25, 1930.

*This artist's 1930 rendering of a proposed Medford “civic center” dominated at the upper right by a new county courthouse to be built at Eighth and Oakdale seemed expensive and out of place to some of the city's movers and shakers.*

It is unclear how the county advertised for an architect for its new courthouse, but it must have been at least at a regional level. On May 28, 1931, the *Mail Tribune* announced that John G. Link, of Billings, Montana, had been chosen as architect of the new courthouse. He quickly associated with the Portland firm of Dougan and Beverman in order to work in Oregon, and began to design.

The Jackson County Courthouse seems to reflect a transitional moment between the two styles. There is still some evident classicism here, particularly in the pediment of the frontispiece, though it has already been nearly completely abstracted. The detailing, however, is almost all fully Deco in flavor. Link's original design called for a buff brick exterior with stone trim, but the shift to



PHOTOS BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP



*Up-to-date iron stair railings were provided by the Woodbridge Ornamental Iron Co. of Chicago. The railings were fitted between stainless steel newel posts. The inside stairs, wainscoting and corridor door casings were all made of Alaska marble, brought down from a Kodiak quarry.*

limestone and terra cotta ornament, decided on, apparently, before construction actually began, made for a sleeker and more elegant looking building – again in keeping with the Art Deco tendency toward “straight line simplicity,” which is what the planning committee had said that it wanted back in 1930.

The completion of the courthouse in the late summer of 1932 was an occasion for celebration and expressions of civic pride. This is always the case with the construction of a new county courthouse, but was especially true during the grim years of the 1930s. The rhetoric of civic progress that comes with the opening of a courthouse is no less sincere because it is predictable. It is therefore not surprising that U.S. Senator Frederick Steiwer would say that the courthouse was a “magnificent testimonial” to the “courage and Americanism, in a time of stress, of Jackson County citizenship.”<sup>17</sup> Neither is it surprising that the ceremonial dedication of the courthouse was the cause of one of the biggest parades in the history of Medford. An estimated 5,000 people

attended the ceremonies at the courthouse on September 1, 1932, and about 6,000 citizens toured the new building after the speeches to admire the marbled walls and steps, the aluminum and stainless steel doors, the wrought iron light fixtures and the latest in jail technology, which enabled a reporter to marvel at a facility that was “secure and at the same time airy.”<sup>18</sup>

The dedication ceremony itself was short by nineteenth-century standards, though it would probably try the patience of many today. There were two main addresses, one by the Medford National Bank’s Gore – the man most responsible for the financial arrangements that made the new courthouse possible. The meatier speech was delivered by I.E. Vining, a professor at Southern Oregon College in Ashland. His talk was full of sentiments predictable enough in a courthouse dedication address, but worth recalling in our own, less civic-minded day.

The phrase “temple of justice” is one that was applied to innumerable county courthouses, especially in the nineteenth century. Vining modified this and spoke of the courthouse as the county’s “new citadel of justice” before which all citizens ought to stand “in reverent admiration.”<sup>19</sup>

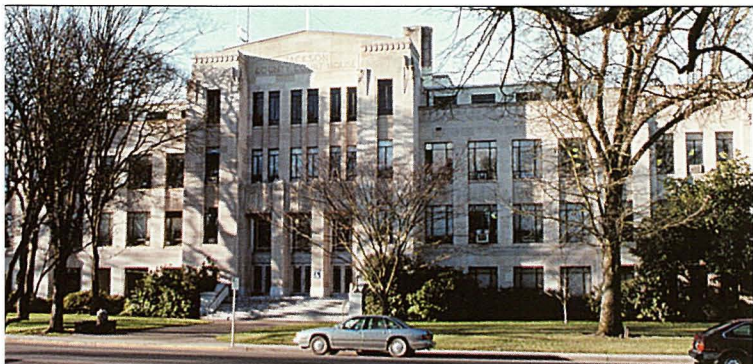
*“This building represents the guarantee of human liberty and human rights under the American Constitution. The right of trial by jury, of innocence until guilty, of individual thought and opportunity, of individual initiative and endeavor, so long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others.”*

– Southern Oregon College Professor I.E. Vining

Perhaps he used this more military term in reference to the relatively new Art Deco style of the building – a style that was also popular among designers of National Guard armories – or perhaps more generally in reference to the defensive nature of society in the face of troubled times. As Professor Vining reached his peroration he declared:

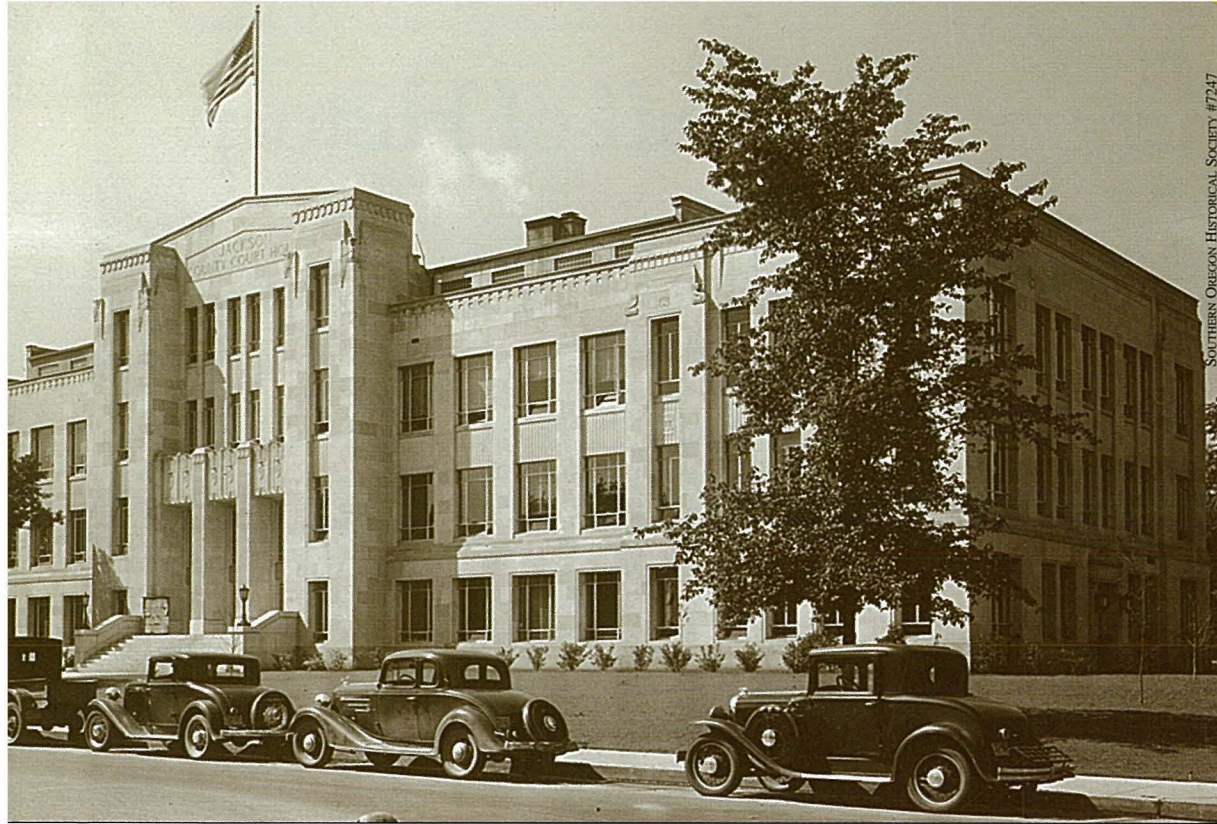
“This building represents the guarantee of human liberty and human rights under the American Constitution. The right of trial by jury, of innocence until guilty, of individual thought and opportunity, of individual initiative and endeavor, so long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others.”

These sentiments go a long way toward explaining this building – and county courthouses in general. The courthouse was an important addition to Medford, not because it was located on a site with “ample parking” or because it would bring specific economic benefits to Medford rather than Jacksonville, but because it was Jackson County’s expression of a fundamental American belief: the importance of local government. When, a few moments later Professor Vining turned to the actual building itself, he continued that “its beauty – its



*The 1932 courthouse still serves as the seat of county government today, although it no longer houses judges or jail inmates. A Historic Structures Report now being completed will guide efforts to renovate the courthouse while preserving its historic integrity.*





*The simple Art Deco lines of the courthouse may look elemental, but the structure boasts a rich complement of architectural details.*

#### ENDNOTES:

Research for this article, and for a book on Oregon county courthouses, presently nearing completion, was substantially aided by the generosity of Nathan and Marlene Addlestone and their endowment to the College of Charleston.

1. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 2 September 1932.
2. Southern Oregon Historical Society, Jacksonville, Ore. – Historic Houses, Etc. – Courthouse folder.
3. *Ibid.*



PHOTOS BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*The "high tech" cast aluminum entrance doors of the courthouse are framed by the modernistic abstracted classical features of the Art Deco limestone door surround.*



*The elegant wrought iron lamps flanking the entrance were considered "Old English" features when the courthouse opened in 1932.*

substantial character – bespeaks the pride of citizenship in its construction.” In a day when American counties all too frequently have forgotten that architecture can embody civic pride in a remarkably effective way – and when some few counties have gone so far as to abandon courthouses altogether as, we must suppose, frivolous and unnecessary expenses, it is worth recalling these laudatory phrases.

It is also worth remembering, as all the citizens of Jackson County walk into, or merely walk by, their courthouse on

Oakdale Avenue, that they are in continuing contact with their own citadel of justice; a still beautiful and still substantial expression of civic pride and civic participation. ■

*Dr. Robert Russell, Jr., a former Rogue Valley resident, is Addlestone Professor of Architectural History at the College of Charleston, in Charleston, S.C., where he is also co-director of the program in Historic Preservation and Community Planning.*

4. Inventory of Historic Properties (#98), State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon State Parks Department, Salem, Ore.
5. Southern Oregon Historical Society, Jacksonville, Ore. – Historic Houses, Etc. – Courthouse folder. HABS Survey n.ORE-69.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Inventory of Historic Properties (#98), State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon State Parks Department, Salem, Ore.
8. *The Oregon Sentinel*, 16 February 1884.
9. Southern Oregon Historical Society, Jacksonville, Ore. – Historic Houses, Etc. – Courthouse folder. HABS Survey n.ORE-69, undated (but late 1920s) *Medford Mail Tribune* article.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 21 February 1930.
12. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 23 February 1930.
13. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 March 1930.
14. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 December 1930.
15. He died in 1954. *Billings Gazette*, 6 January 1954.
16. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 31 August 1932.
17. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 1 September 1932.
18. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 31 August 1932.
19. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 2 September 1932.

*A fierce eagle motif glares protectively from a courthouse exterior corner, as if to guard the people's business.*





# 3-D History: The Stuff of History

by Margaret H. Watson

**W**hat is historic preservation? Well, it depends upon whom you ask.

Preservation is much more than just laws, National Register lists and tax incentives. Preservation is both a philosophy and a technique.

One basic tenet of preservation philosophy is that places, things and structures that remind us of the past do much more than just help us build a cultural identity. These places, things and structures also hold important physical evidence – material clues that help us discover new ways of looking at the past and seeing how things once were.

Recent trends in “doing history” have included looking beyond the big events and big names of the history books to the everyday lives and work of everyday people. Prior to the nineteenth century, most everyday folks could neither read nor write, so the problem for the historian was to find evidence of these people outside the written record. Historians began to use methods of inquiry well known to archaeologists and anthropologists – the methods of looking at the material a people created, their material culture.

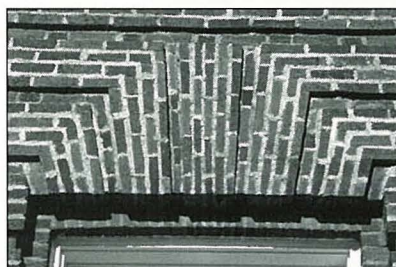
This means undertaking a fresh examination of tools, technologies, workmanship and unspoken ways of doing things in an effort to reconstruct pieces of these otherwise unrecorded lives.

This new approach to history is giving insight into the skills and working lives of the people who literally built the nation – the masons, carpenters, surveyors. Applying this approach, the places and things they left behind are proving to be as rich a source as documents in revealing the past.

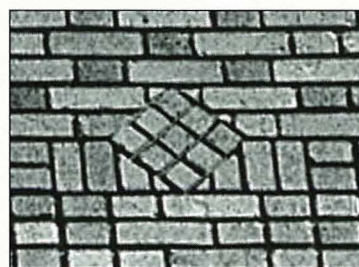
For example, have you ever looked closely at a brick building? Next time you do, remember that there are many ways to lay bricks, which create patterns called bonds. The sides of bricks – called stretchers – and the ends of bricks – called headers – are laid out in courses. The bond



*Even the pattern of brickwork, such as that used on Medford's Washington School in 1895, speaks to historians about the people who built it.*



*Medford's old federal building, built in 1915, shows a bold decorative pattern over the windows.*



*The 1930 Holly Theater brickwork shows the Flemish bond pattern, alternating rows of long (stretchers) and short (headers).*

they create is largely determined by the structural needs of the wall.

When you look at an old brick wall, you will notice a combination of headers and stretchers. But on most new buildings, you will notice only stretchers creating the bond. This is called running bond, which is often used for veneer walls, an indication that there has been a change in technology and building techniques. Bonds can also reveal the worker's ethnicity. There are Flemish bonds, English bonds and even American bonds, all testifying to our immigrant history.

Knowing that even the pattern of bricks can reveal historic information such as ethnicity and workmanship, when one looks at preserving an entire structure, every detail becomes important. This is where the philosophy of preservation becomes technique. Every length of wood, every bit of metal, every dimension can be

vital to understanding how, why and who worked and lived there. And technically, in light of this vital attention to extreme detail, preservation is different from restoration and reconstruction. In short, preservation uses original materials and methods, and pays attention to even the most extreme detail of the original. Restoration uses the same or similar materials and techniques, and reconstruction starts from scratch but ends in a product that on the outside looks the same.

As a result, the National Register programs, working with state partnerships, have created standards to encourage repair over replacement, and limited rather than wholesale change.

These standards for structures are compiled in a single publication, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation*, which includes recommendations on how to care for everything about a building from windows to energy conservation.<sup>1</sup>

Is preservation important? Few would argue that the Constitution of the United States is unimportant; it is the legal foundation of our

government and the philosophical mortar of the nation. So, too, are the unwritten documents of our past, our material inheritance, which contains so much more than just visual character. The buildings, spaces and places ever about us are the “stuff” of history, artifacts worthy of preservation because they record tools, technology and ways of doing things from people who never made the history books. They are literally the historical foundation and mortar of our country. ■

*Margaret H. Watson is the curator of Hanley Farm for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*

## ENDNOTES

1. *The Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation*, W. Brown Morton III, et al. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 1992. iv.





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# C. C. HOOVER

## A Rendezvous with the Future

by William Alley

**N**ot all of Southern Oregon's pioneers are of the ox wagon and homesteading variety. Our region can also boast its share of innovative pioneers, those who broke new ground in the development of new commercial or agricultural products or processes. One such pioneer was C. C. Hoover, whose work with grass seed development and, after his retirement, with tree planting, earned him a national reputation for innovation.

Charles Curran Hoover was born in Grants Pass on March 29, 1890, two months before his family settled in the emerging new town of Medford, where Hoover's father established a nursery business. After the senior Hoover's death in 1912, C.C. assumed control of the family nursery, which had an inventory in excess of 225,000 trees. The following year he married Elsie Wallace.

With the passing of the orchard boom, Hoover expanded his agricultural interests into farming and established one of the first commercial dairies in Southern Oregon.

During the decade of the 1920s, Hoover took an interest in some of the wild grasses found in the valley and began experimenting with them, testing their qualities as forage grasses. In mid-decade he came across a mysterious variety of grass at the Willows, the Hanley farm near Jacksonville. Hoover began to cultivate this grass, which was identified as *Poa bulbosa*, a winter bluegrass that was especially well suited to Southern Oregon's climate. As the decade came to a

close, Hoover had developed a national reputation as an expert on forage grasses.

Hoover continued to operate his farms until after the conclusion of World War II. At that time he decided to retire and turned the business over to his sons. Most would have been content to settle back after a lifetime of achievement, but not Hoover. He began experiments with tree planting at this time that would soon develop into the venture for which Hoover is most remembered.

In 1959 Hoover handed a small seedling to a young girl, telling her "This tree is your very own, forever. Plant it and care for it and someday, when you get to be an old cowpoke like me, you'll come back to this beautiful valley and look up at a big tree and you'll remember the day you planted it, and you will know it is your very own."

Hoover's experiments in tree planting near White City had led him to embrace a program to provide a free tree to every school-aged child in Southern Oregon. By the time Hoover was done, one million trees had been distributed, free of charge.

For his lifetime of innovation in agriculture, Hoover received much recognition, but his legacy was perhaps best noted by Medford Superintendent of Schools E. H. Hedrick. In thanking Hoover for his work providing schoolchildren with trees, Hedrick noted, "For perhaps the first time in their lives, many of these boys and girls have become the possessors of living things for which they are responsible, and for which they are permitted to care and serve; to labor for and await fruition. It is their first commitment to a rendezvous with the future." 🌱

*Thousands will remember Hoover as the man who gave them tree seedlings when they were Southern Oregon school students.*

*William Alley is the Southern Oregon Historical Society historian and archivist.*



*Nurseryman, dairyman and farmer, C. C. Hoover also was an expert on forage grasses.*

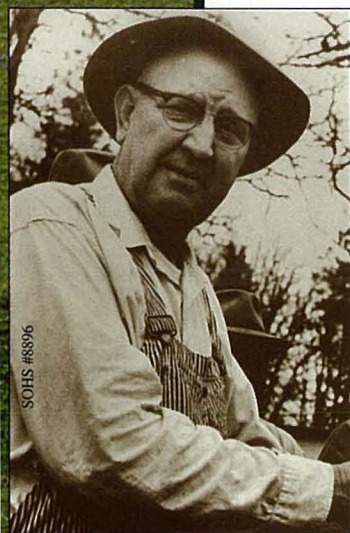


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