

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE *Today*

HISTORY AROUND EVERY TURN  
**Butte Falls Discovery  
Loop Tour**

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON  
**A Memorial Mystery**

MEDFORD'S 'FLOURY' PAST  
**The Valley's  
Merchant Miller**

**CAUTION**

**JACKSON COUNTY  
HISTORY AT RISK**

(see page 2)

**DATE CHANGE!**  
**PUBLIC HEARING  
NOW MAY 4  
10:30 A.M.**

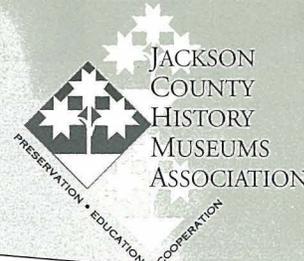
**MAY 2000  
Vol. 2, No. 5**

# Jackson County Historical Societies at Risk!

**DATE CHANGE!**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**NOW MAY 4**  
**10:30 A.M.**

**MEETINGS POTENTIAL 27 PERCENT FUNDING CUTS**

With the upcoming meeting of the Jackson County Budget Committee on April 27, Jackson County museums are faced with a 27 percent reduction in funding. This would impact all services, with major cuts in museum and library hours, programs, exhibits, publications, and other vital services. Please help us preserve our current levels of funding and services by voicing your support.



## Why Is History Worth Preserving?

In a recent publication from the American Association of State and Local History, the value of history in American society was discussed and included some of the following points:

- 1 People who share a history—even different sides of the same story—can discover the understanding, insight, and respect needed to build a common future. History provides the foundation for talking about things that matter in our communities today.
- 2 When people get involved with the past they begin to see themselves as connected to others. The result is a sense of belonging, direction, and meaning.
- 3 By preserving and presenting evidence of the past, and actively connecting past, present, and future through public programming, history organizations pass the gift of history on to future generations.
- 4 History organizations make their communities more attractive places in which to live, work, and visit. And they are themselves travel destinations, employers, purchasers of goods and services, and recipients of gifts and grants. History organizations are economic engines in their towns, cities, and regions.
- 5 When people understand the differences made by the actions of those who have gone before, they see that their actions can make a difference. They realize that they, too, can make history.

## The Gift of History

In 1948 the Rogue Valley was booming. World War II had ended, returning veterans were demanding new and bigger homes, businesses flourished selling goods to fill those homes, and sawmills ran almost constantly to supply the much-needed raw materials to make much of this possible. New people were moving into the valley and rapid changes were an everyday part of life. Early pioneer families watched as elders died, taking their wisdom and values with them, and local historical landmarks were in danger of disappearing. Concerned citizens of Jackson County decided to place on the ballot a special, continuing levy dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting local history. The levy was approved by a majority of the voters and 25 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property valuation was dedicated to history. This was one of the few continuing levies in the state of Oregon, requiring no serial approval every few years. This was a pretty amazing thing to do! The historical fund currently provides core support—\$1.7 million—for the Southern Oregon Historical Society and thirteen other historical organizations that make up the Jackson County History Museums Association (JCHMA).

The Southern Oregon Historical Society and the other organizations of the JCHMA make wise use of the resources and funding provided by those forward thinking citizens who, in 1948, cared deeply about their communities and pledged to share their heritage—the gift of history—with future generations.

Jackson County administrative staff has proposed a 27 percent reduction in historical funding for the fourteen organizations in the JCHMA for fiscal year 2000/2001. If you would like to support our efforts to preserve current funding levels, please join the JCHMA and me at the Jackson County Courthouse auditorium, at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, and let the Jackson County Budget Committee know how important it is that we preserve the past by connecting it with the present and the future. Or, send a letter supporting our efforts to the Board of Commissioners at the same address.

Thank you.  
**Al Alsing**  
President, Southern Oregon Historical Society

## Your voice can make a difference.

### Two ways to support maintaining current funding levels:

- Come to the Jackson County Budget Committee meeting, **Thursday, April 27** at 12:45 p.m. at the Jackson County Courthouse auditorium (10 South Oakdale, Medford).
- Send a letter to the Board of Commissioners, 10 South Oakdale, Medford, OR 97501.

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 cutlines using the Chicago Manual of Style. The author is responsible for verification of cited facts. A selection of professional, unscreened photographs and/or line art should accompany 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.

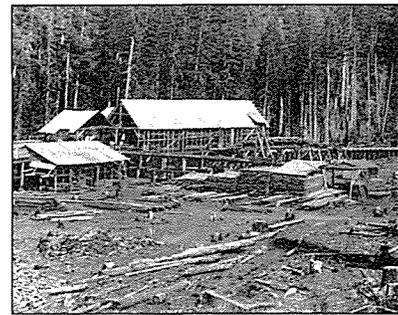
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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE Today

FEATURE:

Butte Falls Discovery Loop Winds Through History

by Nancy Bringhurst ..... p. 8



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #16449

DEPARTMENTS

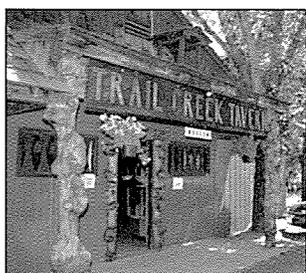


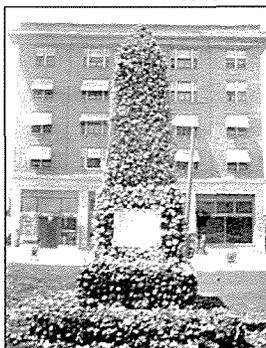
PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

SUNDAY DRIVING

Upper Rogue Historical Society Finds a Home

by Jim and Alice Collier p. 4

SOHS #17055



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ROOTED IN HISTORY

Camas: Meadow Flower, Edible Root

by Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon p.16

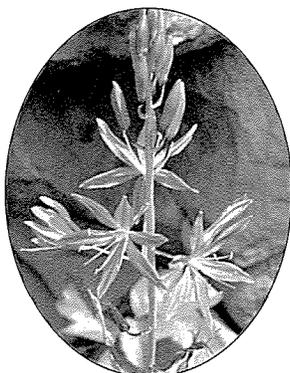


PHOTO BY DONN L. TODT

OUR OWN VOICES

Support Society efforts to maintain funding p. 2

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MEMBERS AND DONORS

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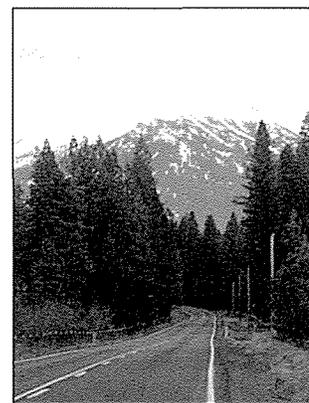


PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

ON THE COVER

Lord of the eastern skyline, Mount McLoughlin, a slumbering volcano, towers over the Butte Creek basin on the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY #2928

THE PIONEERS:

The Valley's Merchant Miller—A.A. Davis

by Bill Miller p.14

Southern Oregon Historical Society

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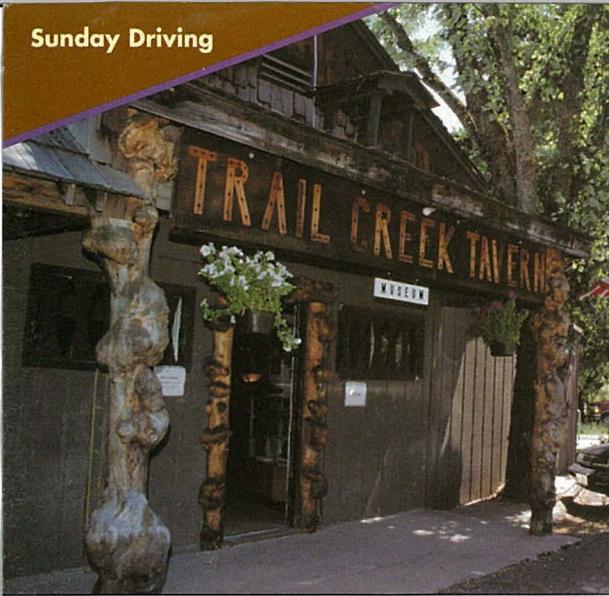


PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

# Upper Rogue Historical Society Finds a Home

by Jim and Alice Collier

*The former Trail Creek Tavern, parts of which date to 1914, is now the home of the Upper Rogue Historical Society.*

The Upper Rogue Historical Society (URHS) was organized and incorporated in 1988 for the purpose of helping to secure park and museum land in Shady Cove. That project did not materialize. In 1996, the URHS participated with the Spirit of the Rogue Nature Center located at McGregor Park by providing both staff and material for public display. That was our first mini-museum. Many things have happened since.

In February 1997, the old Trail Creek Tavern and grounds became available for purchase. Immediately, two members of the URHS bought the

property with the intent of providing a home for a museum in the building, which dates at least to 1934, with original construction at the site going back to 1914. Today, that museum has become a reality. The museum opened its doors on May 23, 1997, when Jackson County Sheriff Bob Kennedy and

Oregon State Police Trooper Gerald Jacobson each cut a green ribbon to signify that this project was a "go" for the URHS and the community.

The Trail Creek Tavern museum now houses a growing collection of both donated and loaned items reflecting the history of the Upper Rogue area. The

URHS began the purchase of the property in December 1998 and will have the mortgage paid off in January 2003. Of course, this would not have been possible without financial help from the Jackson County historical tax fund. The Society sincerely thanks the people who pay into that fund each year and the county commissioners who see to it that the fund monies are distributed back into the community.

The museum is located in "downtown" Trail on Old Highway 62 at the end of the new bridge over Trail Creek. The museum is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thursday through Monday mid-April to mid-October. We are closed Tuesday and Wednesday except by appointment. The Society offers an activity program for youngsters of all ages on Wednesday afternoons. Winter hours are Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m. You get in free but must sign the guest book to get out!

We need volunteers in order to be open more hours. Membership is open to everyone. For more information about the URHS, call 878-2259. ☛

*Shady Cove residents Jim and Alice Collier are both native Oregonians, descendants of pioneer families, and retired schoolteachers. Jim Collier serves on the Board of Trustees of the Upper Rogue Historical Society.*



PHOTO FROM UPPER ROGUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*This 1938 Macvey loader in the URHS collection was one of the first mobile log loaders used in the upper Rogue region.*

The Trail Creek Tavern museum now houses a growing collection of both donated and loaned items reflecting the history of the Upper Rogue area. The

## A CALL FOR VOTES

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY Reader's Choice Writers Award for 1999

You've read the stories; now pick a winner! Readers are being asked to vote for their favorite feature article writer from the 1999 issues of Southern Oregon Heritage Today. **Your entry must be received by, or postmarked no later than, June 2.** Submit your entry—marked SOHT—in one of the following ways:

- e-mail to [www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org)
- FAX (541) 776-7994
- call (541) 773-6536
- mail on a postcard to  
106 N. Central,  
Medford, OR 97501

ISSUE	AUTHOR	FEATURE
January	Nancy Bringham	Carving a Life of Tradition: Victor Gardener, "an American Stradivari"
February	William Alley	The Man in the High Silk Hat: H.C. Mackey
March	William Alley	1st National Bank of Medford—"No Substitute for Safety"
April	Robert Russell, Jr., Ph.D.	Citadels of Justice: The Courthouses of Jackson County
May	Pat Paeper	Frenchglen the Hard Way
June	Connie Fowler	Ashland's Cloverleaf Dairy: Many Hands Make Light the Work
July	Nan Hannon and Donn L. Todt	A Woman's Space to Create: The Hanley Gardens
August	Sherry Wachter	Always Use a Silver Knife: Preserving Food in the Early 1900s
September	Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon	Historic Harvest: Wild Plums
October	William Alley	Personality Portraits from the Shangle Studio
November	Nancy Bringham	They Found a Slice of Paradise: Pioneers of the Colestin Valley
December	Nancy Bringham	Eugene Bennett: Artist Brings Color and Light to the Rogue Valley

# A Memorial Mystery

by Bill Alley

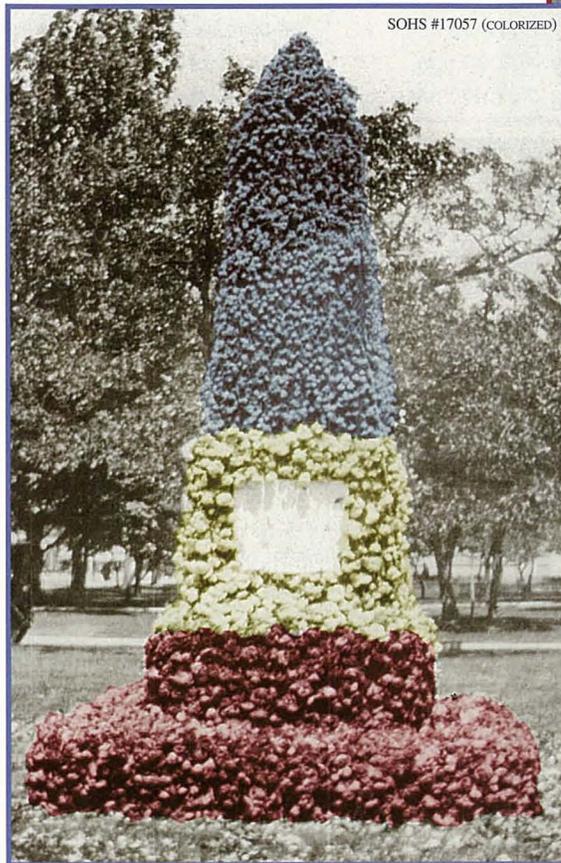
Among the three quarters of a million photographs preserved in the collections of the Southern Oregon Historical Society are three small images of a floral monument in front of Medford's Carnegie library. One shows the monument from the vantage point of Main Street, with the library building behind it. One shows the monument with the Medford Hotel in the background. The third shows the monument looking east toward what then was library park. None of the photographs has any information on the back or in the donor files to help date or identify the monument.

In order to solve this mystery we must turn to the photographs themselves. The presence of the library building gives us our first clue. Medford's new Carnegie library opened to the public in February 1912. This establishes the earliest possible year the photograph could have been taken. The photograph from the opposite side of the monument provides additional clues. The most obvious clue is the lack of a sixth floor on the Medford Hotel. This addition was made in 1926, so we now have a cut-off date. Also missing in this photograph is the "wireless telegraph" antenna that once occupied the hotel's roof. This antenna was removed in the spring of 1913, after a more sophisticated array was built nearby. We now know that these photographs were taken between May 1913 and 1926.

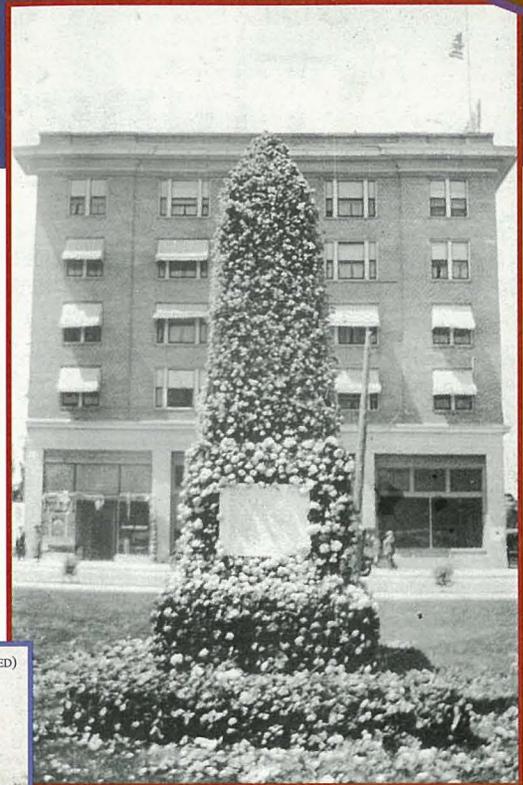
A date range of thirteen years, however, still presents a formidable challenge in trying to pin down a particular event. Fortunately, the hotel photograph provides an additional clue to facilitate our search; the flag on the roof is flying at half-staff. If the flag is at half-staff in honor of the passing of an unknown individual, it will not aid us in narrowing down our search for an identification of the photographs. There is, however, one day every year when the nation's flags are traditionally flown at half-staff. That day, Decoration Day, is better known today as Memorial Day. If this photograph was taken on a Memorial Day, our search parameters are now very

much narrowed. We need only consult the local newspaper for May 30 of each year.

A search of the Medford papers, however, proves discouraging. Every Memorial Day from 1913 through 1918 is recognized with a short parade down Main Street and a ceremony at the Page Theater, followed by a visit to the I.O.O.F. Cemetery to decorate the graves of the veterans. Nineteen-eighteen, the final year of the Great War in Europe, is a particularly solemn occasion, on the recommendation of President Wilson.



SOHS #17057 (COLORIZED)



SOHS #17055

There is no mention of any monument near the library. It is not until 1919 that the mysterious origin of the floral monument comes to light. The Memorial Day celebration that year, described by the *Mail Tribune* as the "Most Impressive in Local History," includes "a big and beautiful floral monument on the library lawn [which] was made by the Red Cross women. "On the floral obelisk are the names of those from Jackson County who lost their lives during the recent war. The paper goes on to describe the ceremonies surrounding the monument and list the names on the monument. Our three previously unidentified photographs are now accurately dated and identified, documenting an event held eighty-one years ago. ☞

*Bill Alley is historian/archivist with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*

*Information in these three photos helped historians solve the memorial mystery: at top right, the Medford Hotel looking north; above, looking east toward present Alba Park, and right, looking southwest toward the library.*



SOHS #17056



# Things To Do in May

## PROGRAMS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	<u>DATE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
May Craft of the Month	Museum hours	Children's Museum	"Paper Flowers & Banners"
Cinco de Mayo Celebration	Fri., May 5, 3:30-4:30 p.m.	Children's Museum	Traditional Mexican crafts
Conversations with...	Sat., May 6, 1:00 p.m.	Ashland branch	Laura & Ken Jones, Billings family history
To Mom from Me	Wed., May 10, 3:30-4:30 p.m.	Children's Museum	Mother's Day masterpiece
Living with the Land lecture series	Thurs., May 11, 7:30-9:00 p.m.	Ashland Elks Lodge 225 E. Main	"Geologic Aspects of the Rogue Valley" "Native Peoples of Southern Oregon: Archaeology and Ethnography"
	Thurs., May 18, Thurs., May 25, Thurs., June 1,	Ashland Elks Lodge	"Land Use & Settlement of the Rogue Valley" "Southern Oregon's Suitable Structures"
Family Day Sunprints	Sat., May 13, 1:00-4:00 p.m.	Ashland RR Park	Make a sunprint
Ashland Historic Commission Awards	Fri., May 19, Noon	Ashland branch	Ceremony honoring preservation in Ashland
"The Wonderful Country"	Sat., May 20, 2:00 p.m.	History Center	American Western Mythology
Beekman Living History Program	Sat., May 27, 1:00-5:00 p.m.	Beekman House	Visitors step back in time to 1911

## Program Details

*For times and locations, see schedule above.*

### MAY CRAFT OF THE MONTH

#### "Paper Flowers & Banners"

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo all month with these traditional Mexican crafts. Families; 25¢.



### CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION

Celebrate the victory of the Mexican army over the French during Cinco de Mayo. Create a traditional Mexican decoration and take a swing at our piñata filled with treats. Families; free program with admission.

### CONVERSATIONS WITH...

Laura and Ken Jones, lifetime Valley residents, share 150 years of family history. Laura's grandfather, G.F. Billings, was a founder of the Chautauqua in Ashland. His wife, Frances Myer, traveled the Oregon Trail in 1853. Their book, *The Oregon Trail is Still Alive*, documents a 1995 trip in combination with Myer's diaries. Free.

### TO MOM FROM ME

Dads bring their children or Moms relax at the Jacksonville Museum and watch a historical movie in our "Mother's Lounge," while their children create masterpieces for Mother's Day. **For children ages 3-6.** Fee \$3.00 members; \$4.00 non-members. Preregister by Friday, May 5.

## Preservation Week 2000: May 14-20

*"Taking America's Past into the Future"*  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

### LIVING WITH THE LAND

*Four-part lecture series on the history of Southern Oregon.*

The series features the following speakers: May 11—Monty Elliot, professor/chair, SOU Dept. of Geology; May 18—Jeff LaLande, Rogue River Forest Service Archaeologist; May 25—Pat Acklin, assistant professor, SOU Dept. of Geography; June 1—Carol Samuelson, Southern Oregon Historical Society library manager and photo archivist. Fee: \$30 members/\$40 non-members, or \$10 per lecture. **Preregister by calling 541/773-6536 by May 5;** prepay by sending check to the History Center, or pay at door. Refreshments served. Tours of the Elks Lodge building follow each lecture. Parking at the rear of the building.

### FAMILY DAY SUNPRINTS

Drop in and create a sunprint using special photographic paper and various shapes and designs. Families; free to members; \$1.00 non-members. Ashland Railroad Park. A and Seventh streets. Weather permitting.

### ASHLAND HISTORIC COMMISSION AWARDS

As part of Preservation Week, Ashland's Historic Commission awards individuals

and businesses that have contributed to the preservation of Ashland's rich architectural history. Presentations will occur in conjunction with the Southern Oregon Historical Society's exhibit highlighting the Skidmore District at the Ashland branch. Refreshments served.

### AMERICAN WESTERN MYTHOLOGY

Molly Gloss, award-winning author, will present "The Wonderful Country: How the Myths and Stories of the Frontier West Have Shaped American Culture." (Program made possible by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.) The public is invited and admission is free.



### BEEKMAN LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM

Step back in time and meet the family and friends of Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Beekman. Open daily Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, the Beekman House will transport you to the year 1911 as you tour its rooms and hear its stories. Families. Fee: small admission for non-members.

### National Historic Register Open House

May 2, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Clark-Norton House  
127 NW D Street, Grants Pass

# EXHIBITS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	LOCATION	MUSEUM HOURS
Century of Photography: 1856-1956 Ernest Smith, Butte Falls Photographer	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Sat. 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Jacksonville: Boom Town to Home Town Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience Hall of Justice Yesteryear's Children's Playroom: One Hundred Years of Toys (1890-1990)	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00 am.-5:00 pm Sunday, noon - 5:00 pm
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibit	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00 am.-5:00 pm Sunday, noon - 5:00 pm
Public Places and Private Lives Streetscapes and City Views Skidmore District	ASHLAND BRANCH	Wed. - Sat., 12:00 -4:00 pm  (Opens May 17)
Putting a Spin on Fibers	3RD ST. ARTISAN STUDIO	Saturdays, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Archaeology of the Upper Rogue	EAGLE POINT HIST. SOC.	call 826-4166 for hours

## Exhibit Details

*For times and locations, see schedule above.*

### CENTURY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1856-1956

Highlights the work of two area photographers Peter Britt and James Verne Shangle, with cameras from the Society's collection.

### ERNEST W. SMITH, BUTTE FALLS PHOTOGRAPHER

The Butte Falls Historical Society exhibit features Ernest W. Smith, Butte Falls photographer and surveyor (north window, History Center).

### MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

Explores the development of the Rogue Valley and the impact the industrial revolution had on the settlement of Southern Oregon.

### JACKSONVILLE: Boom Town to Home Town

Traces the development of Jacksonville.

### POLITICS OF CULTURE: Collecting the Native American Experience

Cultural history of local tribes and discussion of contemporary collecting issues.

### HALL OF JUSTICE

History of the former Jackson County Courthouse.

### YESTERYEAR'S CHILDREN'S PLAYROOM: One Hundred Years of Toys (1890-1990)

Delightful antique and collectible toys fill the playroom. Runs through May.

### CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Explore home and occupational settings from the 1850s to the 1930s through "hands on history."

### PUBLIC PLACES AND PRIVATE LIVES

Focuses on Ashland landmarks such as Dunn House, Will Dodge Way, and Butler Bandshell.

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

### STREETSCAPES AND CITY VIEWS

Explores the visual history of Ashland through the eyes of yesterday's photographers.

### SKIDMORE DISTRICT

Photo exhibit of the area between Briscoe and Granite streets owned by Reverend Joseph Henry Skidmore who operated the Ashland Academy (now Briscoe School) in the 1870s. Opens May 17.

### PUTTING A SPIN ON FIBERS

Rogue Valley Handweavers, Far Out Fibers and the Saturday Handweaving Guild will present a handspinning exhibit. Various fibers used in handspinning, tools and finished articles will be displayed. Spinners will be demonstrating this traditional art form with hands-on experience for the public. The exhibit runs through May 31.

### ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE UPPER ROGUE

For almost thirty years, archaeologists have studied the history of the native peoples of the Upper Rogue. The BLM and Southern Oregon Historical Society have designed a small traveling exhibit reporting this archaeology work. The exhibit is traveling to local historical societies over the course of the year.

### May Mystery Object:

This box has a handle, a lid, and hole in the front. It could have been used to change things and might be made of old soap boxes. It measures 4"Hx13.5"Lx6"W. Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and phone number to: News & Notes Mystery Object, SOHS, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501, or by email to info@sohs.org.

April's mystery objects were telephone pole spikes. Congratulations to February's Mystery Object Winner, Vivian Rice of Yreka, California, who correctly identified the object as a percussion musical instrument.

## SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITES

Phone: (541) 773-6536

*unless listed otherwise*

Fax (541) 776 7994

Email info@sohs.org

Website www.sohs.org

### HISTORY CENTER

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

### RESEARCH LIBRARY

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

### JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C, Jacksonville  
Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm  
Sunday, noon to 5:00pm  
daily 10:00am - 5:00pm  
beginning May 27

### THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIO

3rd and California, Jacksonville  
Saturday, 11:00am to 4:00pm

### U.S. HOTEL

3rd and California, Jacksonville  
Upstairs room available for rent.

### HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road (between Central Point & Jacksonville) Open by appointment.  
(541) 773-2675.

### ASHLAND BRANCH

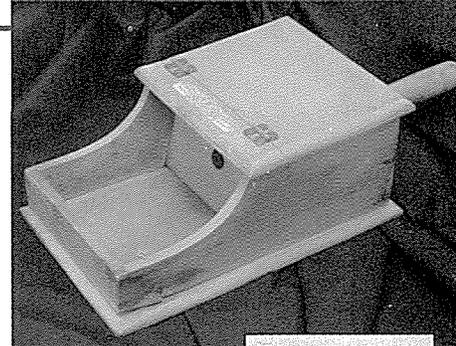
208 Oak, Ashland  
Wed - Sat, 12:00 to 4:00pm  
(541) 488-4938

### JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE

daily, 10:00am - 5:00 pm  
beginning May 27

*The History Center and Research Library will be closed Saturday, May 27 and Monday, May 29 for the Memorial Day holiday.*

## MYSTERY OBJECT OF THE MONTH

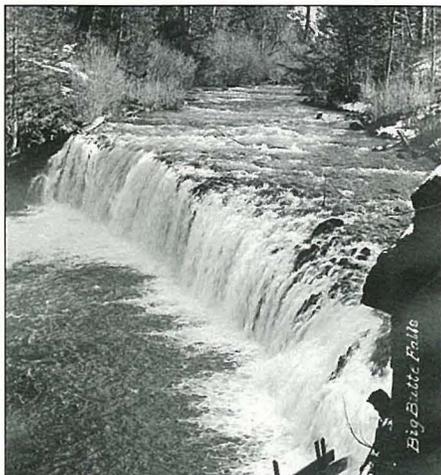


April's Mystery Objects: telephone pole spikes

# BUTTE FALLS DISCOVERY LOOP TOUR WINDS THROUGH HISTORY

By Nancy Bringhurst

*Big Butte Creek tumbles over the falls that lent the town its name in this early photograph by Ernest W. Smith, one of the community's leading citizens.*

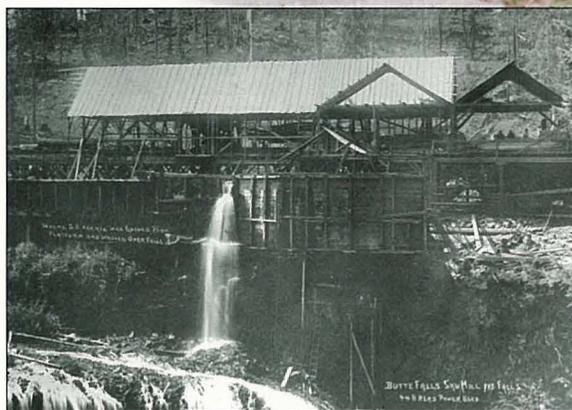


SOHS #2879 (DETAIL)

*A fenced log cabin in a clearing was home to members of the Parker family, Butte Falls-area homesteaders.*



*The Big Butte Creek Falls seemed to the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company like the perfect spot to build a sawmill to process the old-growth timber being logged in the area. This early 1900s photo includes a note pointing to "where B.K. Harris was gushed from platform and washed over falls."*



SOHS #2822



*This is Butte Falls in 1912, the year after it was incorporated as a city. The buildings at upper right, from left to right, include the Marcy Grocery, Stoddard Hardware, Cross Hotel, and Carson Barber Shop & Confectionery, all shown from the back.*

**I**f some beautiful day you find yourself reluctant to spend it chiseling away at that list of chores, why not take a giant step back in time and spend it, instead, deep in a forest rich in multicolored splendor and a silence alive with the tales of the folks and forces that helped shape our landscape and our history?

Indeed, what a perfect day to take the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour. With modern conveyance and a detailed map, you can follow the path of pioneers who, fueled by dreams of possibilities and a sense of adventure, left their comforts to wrestle with the hardships of frontier life. This self-guided sixty-mile tour winds on mostly paved roads through a beguiling portion of the Rogue River National Forest.

The Big Butte country must have resembled a bit of heaven to the hardy trailblazers of the past. Here were seas of trees one could drive a wagon through, streams rife with fish, game in

abundance, a "kitchen" of edible wild plants, and scarlet fritillaries and trilliums among the hundreds of wildflowers to soothe the spirit.

Native Americans, who'd hunted and fished in the area for centuries, came for the same reasons. They didn't take kindly to the intrusion by European American hunters, trappers, and packers, or the ranchers who followed. Nor were the newcomers pleased with their inhospitable welcome. For a while it was unsafe for both sides, until, sadly, the Indians were "obliged" to retire to the reservations.

Settlers taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862 filed claims for 160 acres of wilderness and got busy clearing land, building cabins, and planting gardens. When the first sawmills appeared between 1870 and 1890, small logging outfits began harvesting the first timber from the forests of Big Butte.<sup>1</sup> It didn't

take long before locals and outside entrepreneurs recognized a bonanza in the old-growth stands of sugar and ponderosa pine just waiting to be harvested.

In 1906, the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company built a small sawmill at the falls of Big Butte Creek; the following year a larger mill was added. This meant workers, which meant houses, stores and schools. A town site was surveyed on the land above the falls, and Bert Harris, a timber cruiser from Michigan, laid out the town with a 300-foot-square plaza at its heart. The community began to grow; in 1911, local citizens voted to incorporate and Butte Falls officially became a city.

The town is where the loop begins, but for an interesting and relevant preface to the tour, just before entering Butte Falls from the west on Butte Falls Highway, take a left on the gravel access road just after crossing the cattle guard; follow the sign to the falls and the remains of the mill. Had you been here in 1907 you would have seen a mill that could produce about 25,000 board feet a day, bustling with up to twenty-five employees.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1998, you'd have seen a neglected, disheveled, abused area.

Today, thanks to the efforts of Butte Falls' students and generous community residents, you can appreciate nature's intention once again. From a wide viewing deck you can watch the falls and listen to its mighty roar, or picnic at a wooden table under the cool canopy of trees.

"This is one of my favorite places," says forester Alan Buchta. "I walk here in the remnant footprints of the mill surrounded by trees once again, and I'm reminded how triumphantly nature renews itself."

Do take one more engaging and informative detour: as you enter Butte Falls, population 450, make a left on Pine Street to the Bill Edmondson Memorial Museum located in the Dr. Ernest W. Smith House. This museum commemorates the

lives of two of the town's most celebrated characters. Here you'll find Dr. Smith's rare and beautiful photographs going back to 1906 in his pictorial history of Butte Falls.

Smith was a fine photographer, but he was also a teacher, a chiropractor, a U.S. Forest Service fire watchman, a surveyor, and an inventive tinkerer who, among other things, invented the alidade, which helps firefighters pinpoint forest fires.

Edmondson was a timber faller and an artist who created intricate wood carvings documenting life in the early logging days. He began whittling during the Depression, when time was about all he had, never imagining his work would someday be exhibited at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. "One should not miss this museum," says Joyce Hailicka, chairperson of the Big Butte Historical Society. "Dr. Smith's 1930s house has been refurbished with pieces depicting the era. That, along with his priceless photographs, will give you a special flavor of the time."

### BUTTE FALLS, STOP 1.

Edmondson's life-size carving of logger Ralph Bunyan, Paul Bunyan's younger brother, greets you in the Ernest W. Smith Memorial Park near the gazebo, in Butte Falls, STOP 1 on the tour. The gazebo, made of eight massive yew wood posts and four other locally milled woods, offers a window into the past through seven interpretive panels illustrated with original artwork and photographs. On May 11, 1996, the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour dedication took place in this park. Four years of planning, designing and construction made the dream of Butte Falls community leaders come true. With local timber-related jobs vanishing, their hope was to attract tourists to the area to establish a new economic base for the town. The Butte Falls Economic Development Commission adopted the loop tour project in partnership with the Forest Service.

Across from the park, buildings still in use date to the early 1900s when Butte Falls was a prospering logging community with a post office, schools, stores, hotels, bank, dance hall, and even an athletic club.

The Pacific and Eastern Railroad line connected Butte Falls to Medford. After the first train rumbled into town on November 15, 1910, the hotels and campgrounds soon filled with folks eager to escape the valley's oppressive summer heat and relax in the refreshing mountain air.

Today, the Butte Falls community is intent on resurrecting those "good old days." This tour is only one example of their commitment. Notice the new cast-iron street lights, reminiscent of the old gas lamps. Turn right at the blinking light to see the 1890s caboose, now a museum. That caboose, originally owned by Southern Pacific Railroad and later owned by Medco, was sold as scrap at one point in its career before it was recovered and returned to Butte

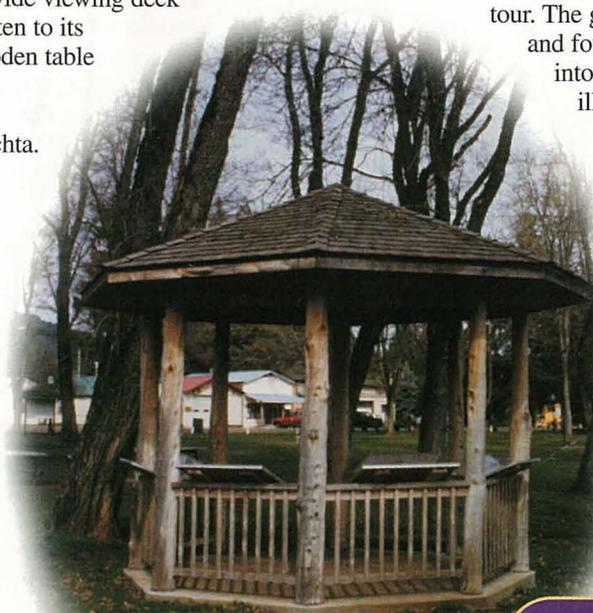


PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

SOHS #15211 (DETAIL)



SOHS #10307

*Early Butte Falls storefronts line the street in this photo of Mollie Britt and Mr. and Mrs. John Miller visiting the town in the early 1900s. The stores are the same ones viewed from the back in the adjacent photo.*



SOHS #10565

*Top, the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour starts at the gazebo in Smith Park in the center of town. Above, passengers arrive in Butte Falls aboard the Pacific and Eastern Railroad. The short line connected with Medford, hauling lumber, logs, and people.*

PHOTOS BY  
ALAN BUCHTA

Falls. Across the street, you may recognize the Casey Jones Station Restaurant from Medford. It bore such a resemblance to the old depot in Butte Falls that when it was for sale the community bought and moved it to its new site to become the library. October 11, 1990, was a big day for the children of Butte Falls. Not every day does a school close so the children can watch a depot roll into town.

Visit the Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management office at the edge of town for a trail pass if you intend to hike, and look at their treasury of maps, brochures, and books relevant to the area. Call ahead for reservations if you intend to camp overnight at one of the sites on the tour; the number is (541) 865-2700.

**THE FISH HATCHERY, STOP 2,** provides a picnic area, restrooms, and a show pond full of hungry rainbow trout visitors feed. This hatchery is one of the oldest in Oregon, its water some of the purest. The state Department of Fish and Wildlife has announced plans to close the hatchery, but concerned citizens are lobbying hard to preserve the historic facility.

The hatchery goes back almost to the town's incorporation. In 1915, the Michigan-based Dewing Company, under the name Butte Falls Lumber Company, sold just over ten acres to the Oregon Game Commission for ten dollars to be used for a hatchery to raise salmon, steelhead and trout to stock lakes and rivers. Even today, if you fish in the Coquille River you're probably catching chinook and coho salmon released from this hatchery, as are the rainbow trout in Howard Prairie Lake and the coho salmon in the Umpqua River.<sup>3</sup>

A few miles from the hatchery going east, on the right-hand side of the highway, a marker identifies the Brownlee Olds Logging Company's Camp Three. When Olds sold to Owen-Oregon Logging Company it became their Camp One (1925-1928). You can still see the cinder quarry that later provided the ballast for the railroad along with remnants of the old railroad bed, but you'll have to use your imagination to see the tents and shacks that once housed the tired logging crews.



**THE WHISKEY SPRING INTERPRETIVE TRAIL AND CAMPGROUND, STOP 3,** is a perfect place to spend a night or more. Botanists, birders and historians will find an added bonus. As you walk among the magnificent bounty of pines, firs and cedars, or marvel at the ponds and marsh created by the beavers' ingenuity, it's difficult to imagine that the area was clear-cut in the 1920s. In 1922, Whiskey Spring was part of a 5,000-acre timber tract along Fourbit Creek sold for harvest by the government. By the early 1930s, the area had been totally harvested. Pine stumps along the marsh edges attest to those railroad logging days.

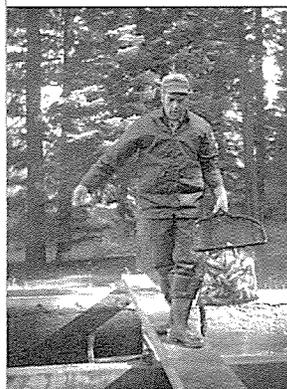
Whiskey Spring Interpretive Trail was officially dedicated by the Forest Service in June 1994. A mile-long, wheelchair-accessible loop trail with footbridges, viewing platforms, and interpretive signs guides visitors. Historian and forest archaeologist Jeff LaLande provided the sign text, interpreting the past and present natural and human history along the trail.

A small campground and trail were built at Whiskey Spring in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps camped at South Fork. The campground was modernized in the 1960s and offers thirty-five sites, picnic tables, stoves, restrooms, and gravity-fed water to faucets. Overnight campers: while you're sitting by your campfire listening to what Siberian natives call "the whispering of the stars," imagine the clangor of the logging machinery and the steam engines that once rumbled through this now peaceful space that is once again a healthy forest.

A mile and a half north of Whiskey Spring you'll cross Fourbit Creek at the entrance to the Fourbit Ford Campground, with seven sites, hand-pumped well water, and good fishing in the creek. According to LaLande, Fourbit Ford got its name in the 1860s when a trooper lost a four-bit piece (half-dollar coin) when fording the creek. Soldiers and teamsters crossed this stream when traveling on the Military Wagon Road (1863-1909) between Jacksonville and Fort Klamath.<sup>4</sup> As you head south on Forest Road 37, you'll cross the old wagon road, marked by a wooden sign.



*Fourbit Creek allegedly got its name when a soldier from Fort Klamath lost a coin at the creek crossing in the 1860s. Visitors can still see traces of the Old Military Road to Fort Klamath near Fourbit Ford.*



SOHS #2838



PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*Above left, a worker negotiates a catwalk above fish ponds holding trout and salmon fry at the Butte Falls Hatchery, one of Oregon's oldest. Visitors who stop for a peek at the holding ponds will see huge brood trout like the one at right.*



PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

*This rusty piece of equipment is all that is left of a logging arch, used to straddle and lift one end of a heavy log so it could be skidded to the railroad landing. Below right, a man and three children stand on a plank over the mill race that once channeled Big Butte Creek's water to power the sawmill.*

PHOTO BY ALAN BUCHTA



**STOP 4**

**LOGGING ARCH, STOP 4.**

A short, easy trail leads to this rusty reminder of logging technology in the 1920s. "These ungainly looking hydraulic contraptions straddled a load and lifted the lead end of a log off the ground, thereby permitting easier skidding to the railroad landing," says LaLande. Eventually this arch was broken, left behind, and forgotten until Forest Service workers discovered it in the 1980s. It was further damaged by a falling tree in the winter of 1999.

Before leaving the Big Butte Municipal Watershed, you'll pass Snowshoe Plantation, where seventy-two acres of ponderosa pines were planted in 1912, the oldest successful plantation of its sort in the Pacific Northwest. In more recent years, it has been selectively thinned to keep the trees healthy.

At the intersection of roads 37 and 3065 is a sign for the temporarily closed Snowshoe Campground. In the winter of 1910-1911, a Forest Service planting crew camped here in more than four feet of snow, sleeping and eating in large canvas tents. Their job was to re-seed the fire-blackened hillsides of the Cat Hill Burn. Day after day they went about the task on snowshoes (hence the name), but it was an exercise in futility. Only a handful of those trees grew, and of those that did, few have survived.

**CAT HILL BURN, STOP 5.**

If you look with some imagination to the east, you can see the hills of the 1910 burn that scorched almost 20,000 acres. No fire fighters are around today to describe the terror of facing a blazing Armageddon crackling all around them. None are here to tell us how long they stayed immersed under the

**STOP 5**



PHOTOS BY ALAN BUCHTA

SOHS #15229



**STOP 6**

*E.W. Smith captured this scenic view of Mount McLoughlin from a vantage point along the Pacific and Eastern Railroad.*

*The Cat Hill Fire was one of many that ravaged the Northwest in the summer and fall of 1910; only a combination of heroic firefighting and autumn rains could put it out.*

*Below, Snowshoe Plantation was an early reforestation failure, and got its name in 1911 when Forest Service workers attempted to replant a portion of the Cat Hill Burn in the dead of winter, on snowshoes. It was successfully replanted in 1912.*



PHOTO BY ALAN BUCHTA

tree-planting crew during the 1980s. "We had a twenty-five-person hoedad crew and a thirty-five-person auger crew planting ponderosa pines and Douglas firs that spring," she says. "Now, the place is thick with trees again."

**SCENIC VIEWS OF MOUNT McLOUGHLIN, STOP 6**

at the junction of roads 37 and 3770. Unless it's having one of its shy days hiding behind the clouds, you're in for a treat. Located in the Sky Lakes Wilderness, Mount McLoughlin, at 9,495 feet above sea level, is the highest point in Southern Oregon and one of the loveliest. If you're fortunate, you'll see the cone-shaped volcanic peak towering through the trees when you reach the junction of Road 37 and Road 3770. Be careful to whom you're speaking when you call it Mount McLoughlin, though. There are local old-timers who argue that its rightful name is Mount Pitt, as it was called for years due to the confusion of some early map-makers, though early settlers called it Snowy Butte. If Peter Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company explorer, were here, he'd argue that its name is Mount Sastise. After all, he was the first European American to see and name it. However, Ogden's boss, Dr. John McLoughlin, often referred to as the "Father of

Oregon,” was a more influential figure in regional history. Thus, Mount McLoughlin it is.<sup>6</sup>

If you want to see this mountain from a closer vantage point and have the time for a twelve-mile round trip, take Road 3770 to the end at Blue Rock. The Forest Service has a “Climbing Mount McLoughlin” brochure that includes a brief description of the history, geology, plants and wildlife of the mountain.

Back on Forest Road 37, Parker Meadows Campground, (elevation 4000 feet) is accessible by car less than a half mile from the road and offers huckleberries and good hunting in season. The “Adirondack-style” open shelter was built by the CCC in the 1930s.

**LOWER SOUTH FORK TRAILHEAD, STOP 7**

is reached just after you cross the South Fork of the Rogue River. The trail is an easy 5.3 miles beginning at Forest Road 34, ending at Forest Road 37. It’s usually free of snow from July to October, but not always free of mosquitoes in late spring and early summer. There is convenient parking at both ends of the trail.

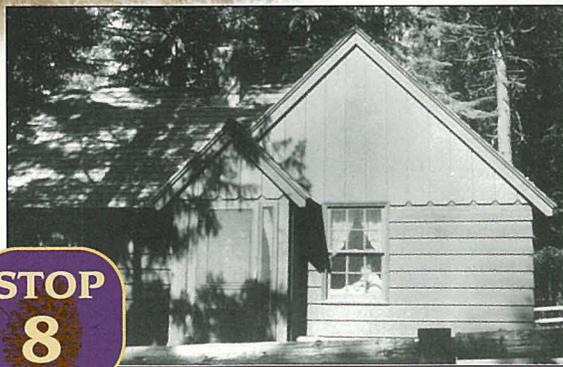


*Forest Road 37 crosses the South Fork of the Rogue River near the South Fork trailhead, Stop 7 on the Discovery Loop Tour.*

*Imnaha Guard Station, rebuilt by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, can be reserved for overnight stays.*

**THE IMNAHA GUARD STATION, STOP 8,**

is a perfect place to picnic or camp. According to historian LaLande, it was the lush meadow and the clear, cold water of Imnaha Creek that brought the early-day rangers to this site where they rested and grazed their horses. The station itself dates back to between 1908 and 1910, when a Forest Service trail crew built a small tool cabin that also served as seasonal temporary shelter for trail and fire crews. Before the road from Prospect was built, between 1925 and 1930, the camp was reached by trail only. In 1935-36, a CCC crew replaced the cabin with a new one in the rustic style, and the following year built a garage and



SOHS #12431

*Don't be surprised if you encounter deer, elk, bears, or even a curious cow on your loop tour trip through the Rogue River National Forest.*

campground facilities. These structures have been maintained and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In LaLande’s “Brief History of Imnaha Guard Station,” he writes, “The Imnaha Guard Station residence is a classic example of CCC construction. Note especially the Forest Service’s ‘pine tree’ symbol in the gable ends, the curved knee-braces at the front entrance, the wrought-iron hardware and other details of the door, and the chimney constructed of lava rock from a nearby quarry.”

For fifty dollars, you can spend the night in this historic residence by making reservations through the Butte Falls Ranger District at 541-865-2700. For free you can spend the night outside in your tent, throw horseshoes, picnic, and take a short walk up the path to see a mammoth eighty-six-inch-diameter Douglas fir.

**GIANT SUGAR PINE AND SOUTH FORK TRAILHEAD, STOP 9.**

If you haven’t come across any cows on the road yet, and you’re up for a good ten-minute walk uphill, you’ll discover a tree estimated to be 535 years old, one of the largest sugar pines growing on the Butte Falls Ranger District. An interpretive sign by the tree offers statistical information on this tree and its historical uses.

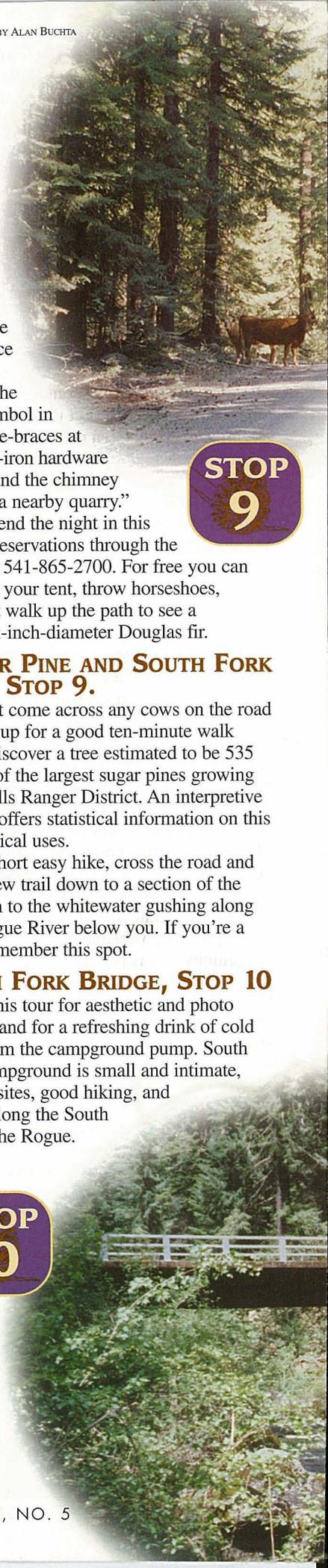
If you prefer a short easy hike, cross the road and take the relatively new trail down to a section of the South Fork Trail; listen to the whitewater gushing along the South Fork of the Rogue River below you. If you’re a hiker or a mountain biker, remember this spot.

**SOUTH FORK BRIDGE, STOP 10**

is on this tour for aesthetic and photo fanatics, and for a refreshing drink of cold water from the campground pump. South Fork Campground is small and intimate, with six sites, good hiking, and fishing along the South Fork of the Rogue.



*The South Fork of the Rogue River tumbles down out of the Mountain Lakes Wilderness, inviting visitors to fish its pools and hike the trails along its banks.*



## LOGPOLE KIOSK, STOP 11.

Railroad logging is an integral part of the history of Butte Falls. The interpretive sign here describes those early days when a steam engine hauled logs from the Big Butte country down to the mills in Medford. You can still see the old railroad grade behind the kiosk. When it became more efficient to haul logs by truck, railroad logging was phased out. In 1962, the final load from Butte Falls was hauled out by the steam-powered Baldwin locomotive "3 Spot."

Along Lodgepole Road (Forest Road 34), depending on the season, you'll see Pacific dogwoods and serviceberries among the ponderosa pines, Douglas firs, incense cedars, and white firs. Mushrooms await the experienced picker, too, but if it's the delicate matsutake (pine mushroom) you're after, contact the Butte Falls or Prospect ranger stations for information on licenses, seasons, and locations.

As you cross the cattle guard and re-enter Butte Falls, know that the town gained national attention when "Ripley's Believe it or Not" proclaimed it to be the only city in the world with a cattle guard at each end.

But that isn't why Joyce Hailicka, who also chairs the Butte Falls Economic Commission, helped to develop the loop tour: "We wanted to share our community with others, both our history and the natural wild beauty we're blessed to have," Hailicka says. "Our hope was that in doing this we could benefit the community at the same time."

According to Alan Buchta, Butte Falls community coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management, and who was also involved in developing this tour: "The response we've had assures us that we're realizing our dream. In an effort to help deal with economic difficulties, we've created a valuable opportunity that is being enjoyed by so many. I feel privileged to have been a part of this program."

But don't think for a minute the Butte Falls Economic Commission

and the town citizens are relaxing in their rocking chairs. A community water-bottling company is on the way, and commission members envision a visitor's center as well. Maybe someday visitors will take a tourist excursion train between Butte Falls and the Medco Pond—not just any old train, mind you, but the very same train that chugged through Butte Falls carrying lumber to Medford. We'll let you know when this happens, and you can skip that garage cleaning again and enjoy another day in the beautiful Big Butte country. 🌲

*Nancy Bringham writes lyrics and poetry from her mountain house in Ashland.*

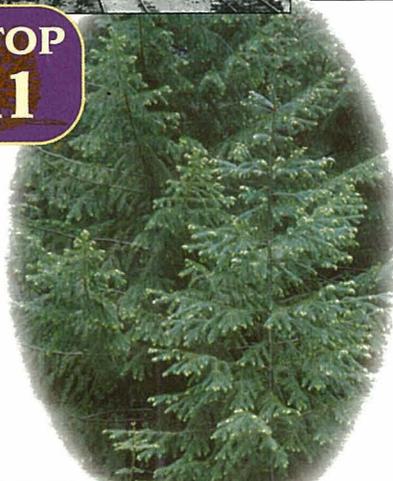


SOHS #4762

*Rail logging equipment stands on a siding near Butte Falls, across from Civilian Conservation Corps Camp 2 in this 1930s photograph. The railroad hauled logs from the Butte Creek basin until 1962, as the kiosk at Stop 11 explains.*

*Old-growth Douglas fir, sugar pine, and ponderosa pine originally attracted the founders of Butte Falls. Today, new forests continue to heal the scars left by the logging era and attract a different kind of visitor.*

## STOP 11

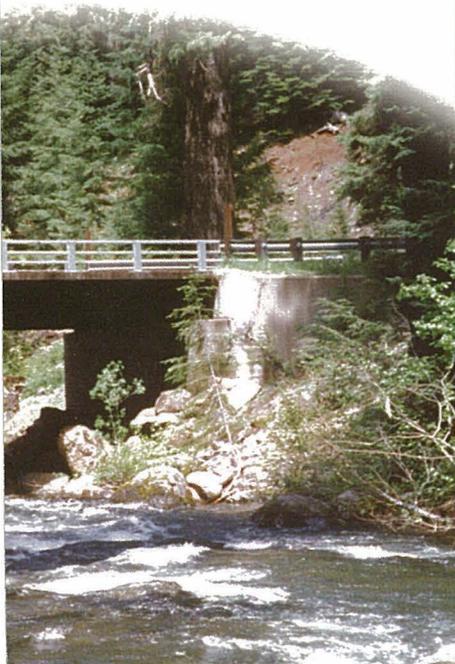


### ENDNOTES:

1. Robert Winthrop, "The Butte Falls Mill Site Development Feasibility Study Report," (Ashland: Cultural Solutions, 1999), p. 6.
2. Ibid, p. 9.
3. Jeff LaLande, "Historical Interest Narrative for the Butte Falls Discovery Loop." Unpublished manuscript, Rogue River National Forest, n.d.
4. Jeff LaLande, *Medford Corporation: A History of an Oregon Logging and Lumber Company*, (Medford: Klocker Printing Company, 1979), p. 33-34.
5. Jeff LaLande, "Historical Interest Narrative for the Butte Falls Discovery Loop."
6. Jeff LaLande, *Medford Corporation: A History of an Oregon Logging and Lumber Company*, p. 101.
7. Oral interviews with Joyce Hailicka, Alan Buchta,

## Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour Driving Guide

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|---|---|
| <p><b>MILE</b> <b>Stop 1: Town of Butte Falls and Gazebo.</b> Crossing the cattle guard</p> <p>0.0 Leaving town, set your trip meter to zero.</p> <p>0.5 <b>Stop 2: Butte Falls Fish Hatchery.</b></p> <p>7.4 Willow Lake Recreation Area Resort/Campground road to right.</p> <p>9.1 Turn left onto Forest Road 3065, visit kiosk.</p> <p>9.4 <b>Stop 3: Whiskey Spring Interpretive Trail.</b> Road junction left to trail and campground.</p> <p>10.5 Fourbit Creek and Fourbit Ford Campground</p> <p>12.9 <b>Stop 4: Old Logging Arch.</b></p> <p>13.7 Snowshoe Plantation</p> <p>14.2 Snowshoe Campground</p> <p>14.8 Straight ahead on Forest Road 37.</p> <p>15.4 <b>Stop 5: Cat Hill Burn.</b></p> <p>18.1 Junction with Forest Road 32, go straight</p> <p>18.9 Junction of 37 and 3770. <b>Stop 6: Scenic Views of Mount McLoughlin.</b></p> <p>19.5 Parker Meadows Campground</p> | <p>21.1 Cross the South Fork Rogue River and <b>Stop 7: Lower South Fork Trailhead.</b></p> <p>26.6 Junction Roads 34 and 37—turn right.</p> <p>27.0 Junction Roads 37 and 3780—turn left.</p> <p>28.9 Junction Roads 37 and 3785—turn left.</p> <p>31.2 <b>Stop 8: Innaha Guard Station.</b></p> <p>32.7 Caution: make an abrupt left turn here to Forest Road 3775. (<i>Straight on Forest Road 37 leads to Prospect</i>).</p> <p>34.2 Loop Road - stay to left.</p> <p>40.3 <b>Stop 9: Giant Sugar Pine and South Fork Trailhead.</b></p> <p>41.6 Turn right on Forest Road 34.</p> <p>41.9 <b>Stop 10: South Fork Bridge.</b></p> <p>42.1 South Fork Campground</p> <p>49.7 <b>Stop 11: Lodgepole Kiosk.</b> Turn left onto Butte Falls/Prospect Highway.</p> <p>50.2 Site of Medco Camp Four 1940-1960</p> <p>58.5 Turn right to Butte Falls.</p> <p>59.1 Cross cattle guard into Butte Falls.</p> |
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SOHS #10564 (DETAIL)

# THE VALLEY'S MERCHANT MILLER— A. A. Davis

by Bill Miller

*A. A. Davis and his second wife, Ida, break ground in Medford in 1905 for what became the Pacific and Eastern Railroad. Lured by the Medford Board of Trade, Davis built the flouring mill at left in 1889 at Ninth and Front streets to process the burgeoning grain crop produced by Valley farmers. Fire destroyed the structure in 1925.*

Long before fruit orchards redefined the Rogue Valley landscape, the valley's agricultural lands were carpeted in golden acres of grain. Flouring mills from Ashland to Eagle Point processed grain into flour for local residents, but barely kept pace with the ever-increasing yields of the valley's farms. The economic benefits of expanding the valley's capacity to export its abundant harvests were obvious, and to entice an entrepreneur, Medford's Board of Trade in 1887 offered \$2,000 to anyone who would construct a mill with adequate capacity to process the local grain crop. After a year of frustration, the board in January 1889 signed an agreement with Ansel A. Davis.<sup>1</sup>

Davis was born in 1851, the eldest child of one of the first millers in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. In 1871 Davis married Angelia Langdon and established his own farm near Albert Lea, Minnesota. There he owned a general merchandise business for twelve years. In January 1889 he relocated to Medford, and within eight months his new steam-powered rolling mill at Ninth and Front streets had shipped its first carload of flour to Yreka, California, and he had built a home at Eighth and Ivy.<sup>2</sup>

At harvest time, lines of up to forty wagons loaded with grain would form at the mill, the patient farmers waiting for cash at fifty-five cents a bushel. Operating fifteen hours a day, the mill steadily increased its output from fifty to eighty barrels per day and Davis's profits rose accordingly. In 1890, he bought the Washington Mills in Phoenix. A year later, he built a mill in Davenport, Washington. A merger in 1899 added the Ashland and Central Point flouring mills to Davis's empire.

Davis invested his earnings in land, timber, and business ventures throughout the county. His investment in the Jackson County Bank created a long-lasting partnership with bank president W. I. Vawter. Between 1906 and 1910 they and other partners financed every building now standing on the east side of Central Avenue, from Main to Sixth streets. Less successful was their creation of the Medford-Crater Lake Railroad in 1905. Though it failed in 1907 after reaching Eagle Point, the line had provided jobs and hope during a time of national economic strain. It later became the Medco logging railroad, and was extended to Butte Falls.<sup>3</sup>

The community liked Davis. Citizens elected him to the Medford City Council and later to the school board. At Christmas he would deliver a sack of flour to every needy family he could find. When his wife died in 1900, Davis publicly thanked everyone for their outpouring of love and kindness. Angelia had been confined to bed since being struck by a train in 1897. The Rogue River Valley Railway passed in front of their house and Davis could not stand the reminder. Within a month of Angelia's death he sold the house and subsequently

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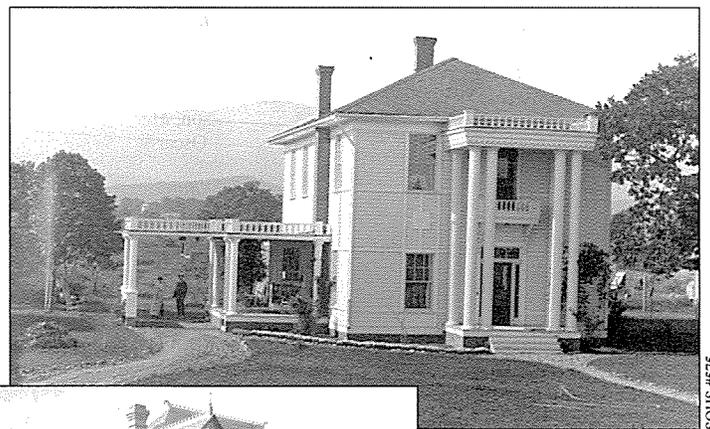
traveled extensively between Washington state and Medford. In 1904 Davis settled into a home on Tenth Street with his new bride, Ida Hale.<sup>4</sup>

By 1910, too many fields had been turned into orchards as the pear industry bloomed. Davis sold his mill, which burned down in 1925, and moved to California. He died in April 1930, never fully recovering from his collision with a bicycle-riding newsboy the previous Christmas. His contributions to the economy and success of the Rogue Valley have seldom been matched.<sup>5</sup> ■

*Bill Miller is a library assistant with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Jacksonville *Democratic Times*, 25 November 1887, p. 3:4; 24 January 1889, p. 3:5.
2. Medford *Mail Tribune*, 15 February 1966, p. 6A:1. The Davis home was at Eighth and Ivy—now the site of the Medford Post Office. The mill stood on the northeast corner of Ninth and Front.
3. Jacksonville *Democratic Times*, 20 February 1890, p. 3:3. *Medford Mail*, 14 July 1899, p. 7:1.
4. *Medford Mail*, 17 August 1900, p. 3:4. Davis's second home is now the Britt Festival headquarters, at 517 W. 10th Street.
5. Medford *Mail Tribune*, 11 April 1930, p.??.



SOHS #575



SOHS #8609

*At left, Davis's first home stood at Eighth and Ivy, a site now occupied by the Medford Post Office. Above, his second home on Tenth Street today houses the offices of the Britt Music Festivals.*



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# Camas: MEADOW FLOWER, EDIBLE ROOT

by Nan Hannon and Donn L. Todt

In 1806, when Meriwether Lewis first spotted camas meadows, he mistook the expanses of blue flowers for "lakes of fine clear water."<sup>1</sup> Today, grazing animals, the plow and the bulldozer have destroyed camas meadows in valley floor locations in much of the West, including Southern Oregon. Often, a few plants surviving along fence lines are all that remain of vast camas meadows that once fed Native American families.

Camas, a plant found only in western North America, grows in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, coastal Northern California, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. Camas is originally a Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) Indian word meaning sweet.<sup>2</sup>

Native Americans prized camas as a carbohydrate-rich food that could be harvested in large quantities and stored through the winter. In the Southern Oregon region, harvest took place in May and June, as family bands camped near camas meadows. While men hunted, groups of women pried mature camas bulbs from the earth with their digging sticks.

Native American harvest practices actually made a camas meadow more productive over time. Digging loosened the soil, providing a good germination bed for camas seeds and better rooting conditions for growing plants. Indian women kept the big bulbs that they dug, but tossed small ones back to keep growing. Released from competition with larger bulbs, the young bulbs flourished. As women worked through a camas patch with their digging sticks, their accidental nicking of bulb coats stimulated the plants to produce daughter bulbs.<sup>3</sup>

Camas requires slow cooking to convert its indigestible starches to sweet and nourishing fructose. Indian women

*At right, camas and buttercups bloom together in moist meadows in May and June. Remnants of an earlier time, camas lilies manage to survive in the midst of commercial development in Medford, below.*



PHOTO BY NAN HANNON

constructed earth ovens by digging pits at the edges of camas meadows, lining them with rocks and letting a fire burn to ash inside. Then they placed the camas bulbs on a layer of skunk cabbage leaves or other foliage laid atop the ashes and covered the pits with earth. Fires burned on top of the ovens for a day or more, until the camas baked to the consistency of roasted potatoes. Botanical explorer David Douglas likened the flavor to baked pears.<sup>4</sup> Women shaped the cooked camas into loaves that could be stored for years.

Today camas lilies can add native beauty to a perennial garden bed. Each plant flowers for a month-long period, as three-inch blossoms open up along the stalk. Although the *quamash* subspecies grows to two feet and *leichtlinii* to four feet, their sturdy stems require no staking. After bloom, the grasslike basal leaves are inconspicuous among companion plants.

Plant bulbs six inches deep and six inches apart in a sunny, moist location where the lilies can naturalize undisturbed. Since camas can take five years from seed

PHOTO BY DONN L. TODT



to flowering size, and bulbs should not be removed from the wild, buy mature bulbs from native plant nurseries. In our garden, we interplant camas with *Ranunculus gramineus*, the wild yellow buttercup that often grows naturally with camas in wet meadows and blooms at the same time.

To enjoy camas in the wild, look for the tall, blue flowers along the lower portion of the trail to Upper Table Rock in May. Or from late May to early June, visit the northern portion of Howard Prairie, east of Ashland. In the large meadow to the left of the intersection between Howard Prairie Reservoir and Dead Indian Memorial Highway, camas still blooms in such abundance that the meadow looks like a lake. ☺

*Ethnobotanist Donn L. Todt and anthropologist Nan Hannon garden in Ashland.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon, *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: British Columbia Ministry of Forests, 1994), p. 108.
2. Edward Thomas, *Chinook: A History and Dictionary*, (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1970), p. 59.
3. Alston Thoms, *The Northern Roots of Hunter-Gatherer Intensification: Camas and the Pacific Northwest* (Ph.D. diss., Washington State University, 1989), p. 176.
4. William Morwood, *Traveler in a Vanished Landscape* (New York: Potter, Inc., 1973), p. 64.



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