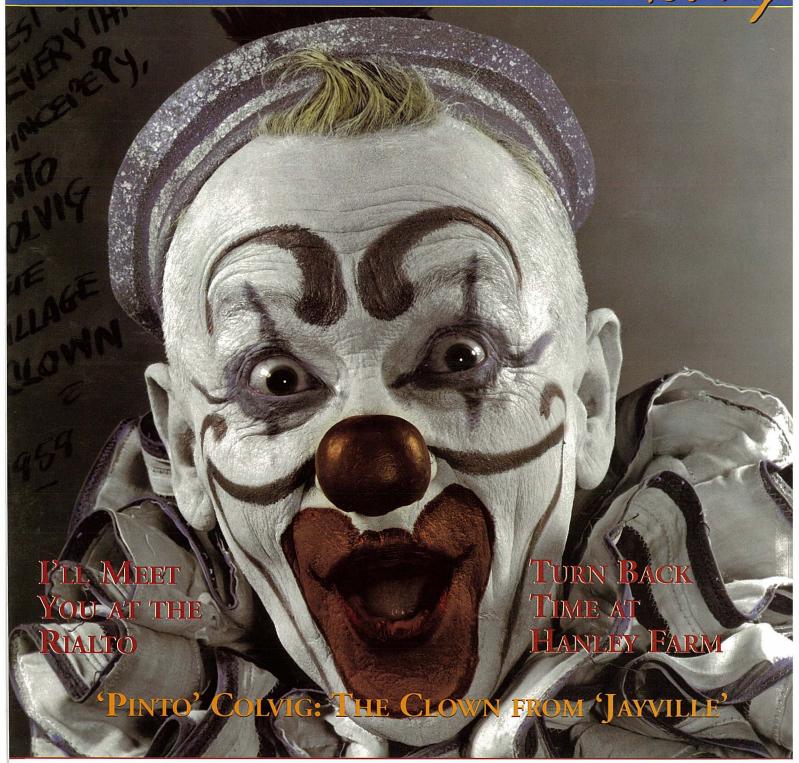
SOUTHERN OREGON



What's Cookin'? Two Centuries of American Foodways



On exhibit at the

HISTORY CENTER

May 5 - August 17

OR MOST OF US, FOOD IS MORE THAN FUEL FOR OUR BODIES. What we choose to eat depends upon our family traditions, ethnic heritage, and regional customs. Whom we choose to eat with defines our circle of family and friends. Eating together is an important family ritual. Good manners often were equated with virtue, and family dinner times taught youngsters proper mealtime behavior.

While immigrants who did not adopt traditional Anglo-American foods were criticized by social workers for their "un-American" eating habits, native-born Americans began to encounter and enjoy immigrant cuisines in restaurants. Southern cuisine was based on such standards as fried chicken, cornbread, and greens cooked with pork. In the Middle Atlantic states sausages, pickles, hot salads, and slaw were favorites. New Englanders enjoyed bean dinners and brown bread, and Texans loved their chili, burritos, and tamales. By the turn of the twentieth century Americans were eating more and eating better than ever before.

What's Cookin'? explores the many aspects of the foods we eat, as well as how we prepare and serve them. Twelve exhibit panels provide an overview of the impact of immigration, changes in food technology, changes in food preparation, and changing images of what constitutes healthy eating. A vast array of cooking equipment from the Society's collection--stoves, refrigerators, kitchen and dining room furniture, picnic supplies, food packaging, china and tableware, kitchen linens and aprons will provide a feast for the eyes.

Dorich Ranch housekeeper, near Talent, March 13, 1937.

What's Cookin'? was produced by the Rogers Historical Museum, Rogers, Arkansas, and supported in part by a grant from the Historical Resources and Museums Services section of Arkansas State Parks in the Department of Parks and Tourism.

(continued from page 15) _

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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

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ON THE COVER

Jacksonville native "Pinto" Colvig's zany Hollywood career left us a legacy of laughter to remember him by.



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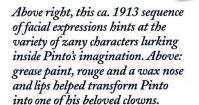
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by Mary Ames Sheret

Pinto Colvig: A Clown at Heart

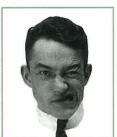




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Who hasn't heard Disney cartoon characters Goofy or Pluto? How about Grumpy and Sleepy or the practical pig in *Three Little Pigs*? Perhaps you learned to read while listening to ""Bozo the Capitol Record Clown." All these voices and more belonged to a talented writer, lyricist, musician, cartoonist, clown, and entertainer named Vance DeBar "Pinto" Colvig who was born in Jacksonville in 1892.

Pinto began his long career as a newspaper cartoonist and writer, but he soon joined the A.G. Barnes Circus as a clown. In the early 1920s, Pinto moved to Hollywood and worked as a title writer and comedian on silent comedies and early sound cartoons. In 1930, he signed an eight-year contract with Walt Disney. His next move was to Florida to work for Max Fleischer Studios on animated films, and Pinto was soon providing voices and sound effects for radio programs, including "Amos 'n Andy" and "The Jack Benny Show" where he supplied the sounds made by Benny's "Maxwell" Car.

In 1946 Pinto went to work for Capitol Records and the "Bozo" legend began. Inspired by the lack of good albums for his own five children, Pinto created a storybook and record combination. It was a huge success that seems to have combined all of Pinto's extraordinary talents and made him a household name for generations.

After his death in 1967, Pinto's family donated many mementos of his long career to the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Pinto used this carpetbag, decorated with corncobs and clown noses, as a stage prop and marked it "Jayville, Oregon," in honor of his hometown.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Things To Do in May

PROGRAMS: (see listings below for complete descriptions)

May Craft of the Month	DATE & TIME Museum hours	LOCATION CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	DESCRIPTION Paper Hats; families; 25¢
Springtime Family Day	Sat., May 5, 1 - 4 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Maypole, Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo; Fee
Hats on Parade	Wed., May 16, 10 - 11 a.m. and 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Hat design; \$3 members/ \$4 non-members
Living History Program	Sat., May 26, 1 - 5 p.m. Sun., May 27, 1 - 5 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Enter the year 1911; adults \$3; ages 6-12 & seniors 65+, \$2; members free
Jacksonville-Hanley Trolley	Sat., May 26, 11 a.m 4 p.m. Sun., May 27, 11 a.m 4 p.m.	3rd & California streets	Guided tour; adults \$4; ages 6-12, \$2; 5 & under free
Hanley Farm Opens	Sat., May 26, 11 a.m 4 p.m. Sun., May 27, 11a.m 4 p.m.	Hanley Farm	adults \$5; ages 6-12 & seniors 65+, \$3; members free. Strawberry Social.

PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

MAY CRAFT OF THE MONTH Paper Hats

Families are invited to stop by the Children's Museum in the month of May and learn the art of paper folding and create a hat to wear home.



SPRINGTIME FAMILY DAY

Welcome springtime by weaving ribbons around a maypole, creating decorations for Cinco de Mayo, and celebrating the history of Mother's Day! Free admission for up to five children with each paid adult.

HATS ON PARADE

Join in the last Children's Museum workshop for the season as we celebrate the history, folklore, and traditions of hats.

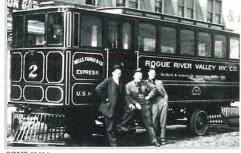
Participants will try on hats from different time periods and occupations while designing their own felt hats to take home.

Preregistration and prepayment are required by Friday, May 11.



BEEKMAN HOUSE OPENING

Step back in time to the year 1911 and enjoy a visit with costumed interpreters portraying Cornelius C. Beekman (Jacksonville's first banker) and his family members. Admission fee: \$3 for adults; \$2 children and seniors; ages five and under free; Society members, free.



SOHS #1614

JACKSONVILLE-HANLEY TROLLEY RIDES

The trolley will tour hourly--from 11 a.m.-p.m.--between Jacksonville and Hanley Farn on Friday, Saturday and Sundays May 26 through September 30. Tickets: \$4, adults; \$2, children six-twelve and seniors; ages five and under, free. Purchase of a trolley ticket at the History Store also provides \$1 off Hanley Farm admission.

HISTORIC HANLEY FARM OPENS

Visit Hanley Farm by way of the trolley and receive \$1 off admission. Enjoy tours of the house and grounds. Walk the trail to the top of Hanley Butte and enjoy the interior of the early twentieth century barn. Admission fee: \$5 adults; \$3 children and seniors; ages five and under, free.

EXHIBITS: (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	LOCATION	Museum Hours
"What's Cookin'?"	HISTORY CENTER	Mon Fri., 9 a.m 5 p.m.
Century of Photography: 1856-1956		-
The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z		
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed Sat., 10 a.m 5 p.m.
Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience		Sun., noon - 5 p.m.
Camp White Military Uniforms		
Hannah		
Hall of Justice		
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibits	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed Sat., 10 a.m 5 p.m.
		Sun., noon - 5 p.m.
Third Street Artisans' Studio	JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE	Sat., 11 a.m 4 p.m.

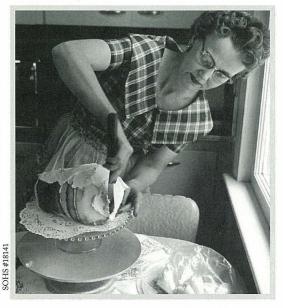
EXHIBIT DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

"WHAT'S COOKIN'?"

Two Centuries of American Foodways

People express many aspects of their culture through the foods they eat, as well as how they prepare and serve foods. Portions of "What's Cookin'?" explore such topics as the impact of immigration on food history, how technology has changed the availability of food, food preparation at home, the increase in dining out, and changing images of what constitutes healthy eating. This exhibit was produced by the Rogers Historical Museum, Rogers, Arkansas, and supported in part by a grant from the Historical Resources and Museums Services section of Arkansas State Parks in the Department of Parks and Tourism. (See page 2 for more details.)



HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS:

• State Historic Preservation Office prd.state.or.us - click on "publication" PHONE: 503-378-4168

• Southern Oregon Historical Society PHONE: 541-773-6536

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.

THE HISTORY OF SOUTHERN OREGON FROM A TO Z

Do you know your ABC's of Southern Oregon history? Even local oldtimers might learn a thing or two from the History Center windows along Sixth and Central as each letter of the alphabet tells a different story about the people, places, and events that have shaped the region we live in.

MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

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

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.

THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO

Rogue Valley Handweavers, Far Out Fibers and the Saturday Handweavers Guild will present an exhibit of handwoven Linens for the Home at the Third St. Artisans' Studio in Jacksonville. Coverlets, table runners, breadcloths and handtowels will be some of the items displayed. There will also be members demonstrating the traditional art forms of spinning and weaving. The exhibit runs from May 12 through June 30, open on Saturdays 11 a.m.-4 p.m. The studio is located in the U.S. Hotel building, Third and California streets.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITES

PHONE: (541) 773-6536 unless listed otherwise

FAX: (541) 776-7994 E-MAIL: info@sohs.org WEBSITE: sohs.org

HISTORY CENTER 106 N. Central, Medford Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

RESEARCH LIBRARY 106 N. Central, Medford Tues. - Fri., 1 to 5 p.m.

JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM 5th and C, Jacksonville

5th and C, Jacksonville Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sun., noon to 5 p.m.

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville Beginning May 26 Open Wed. - Sun., 1 to 5 p.m.,

HANLEY FARM 1053 Hanley Road Beginning May 26 Open Fri., Sat., & Sun., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. (541) 773-2675.

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

JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE Beginning May 26 Wed. - Sun., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO
3rd and California, Jacksonville
Sat., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
MAY 12 - DECEMBER 15

CATHOLIC RECTORY 4th & C streets, Jacksonville

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Director										\$	2	5	0	-	\$50	0
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SHRINE OF THE SILENT ARTS:

THE RIALTO THEATER"Where Every body Goes"

by William Alley

N MAY 12, 1917, ARTHUR J. MORAN AND HARRY L. PERCY, recently arrived from San Diego, California, negotiated a lease with Alfred Weeks and Edith Orr, owners of the building that housed the Weeks and Orr furniture store, and C. W. Palm, who owned the building next door. Their intention was to build and operate a "well-appointed and modern" movie theater. Medford architect Frank C. Clark was retained to prepare the plans to convert portions of the two buildings to house a 1,000-seat motion picture theater. The hiring of Clark to design the modifications was, in the words of the *Medford Mail Tribune*, "assurance of most artistic effects in arrangement and finish."

With the plans in hand, contractor B.F. Fifer began the remodeling on May 15. The western portion of the building owned by Palm was converted into the box office, entry, and theater lobby. This portion of the theater measured twenty feet across and stretched 125 feet deep. Doors along the west wall provided access into the auditorium in the building next door.²

The auditorium proper occupied the rear half of the adjacent Weeks and Orr building. The main floor would contain 850 aircushioned seats upholstered in leather at a cost of approximately six dollars per seat. The floor was carpeted with a luxurious Wilton velvet, with the same pattern used in San Francisco's new Casino Theater.³



Moviegoers queue up for tickets in the warm light under the Rialto marquee in 1947. By this time, the forty-year-old theater had seen better days; it would close in 1953.

Above the auditorium, Percy and Moran installed a mezzanine with twin balconies. The original plans called for 150 cretonnecushioned chairs finished with old ivory. This floor also had a "beautifully furnished ladies room with every convenience." To support the weight of this mezzanine floor, a fifty-six foot steel and concrete girder, weighing twenty tons, was installed on a solid concrete foundation. It was reportedly the heaviest beam used in any construction project between San Francisco and Portland. In all, \$25,000 was budgeted for the renovation of the theater, and the lease represented an obligation of \$60,000.4

At the time of its completion, the Rialto was considered one of the region's most modern movie houses, going so far as to bill itself as "The Shrine of the Silent Arts" in its advertising. For the patrons' comfort, a luxurious thirty-one inches separated the rows of "comfortable and commodious" upholstered seats. A modern ventilating system circulated fresh air from outside, with the theater's entire volume of air replaced every three minutes. In the

heat of Southern Oregon's summers, this provided welcome relief from the stuffy movie houses of old. The promise of cool, fresh air on a hot summer day was used as a lure to draw in patrons.⁵

It was the published policy of the Rialto's management to provide only the best in motion picture entertainment. Percy and Moran, in fact, negotiated the first contract of any Northwest theater to exhibit films produced by the new Goldwyn Pictures Corporation. To ensure that none of their patrons

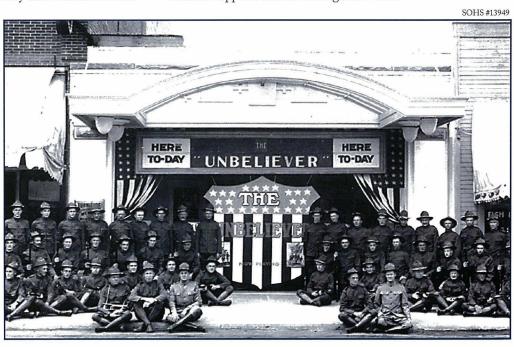
National Guard troops flank the entrance to the Rialto, showing the 1918 war film, the Unbeliever. would be the least bit offended by any of Hollywood's offering, the Rialto's management set up their own editing system, "thus eliminating any scenes that might be objectionable."

Not only did they promise to select only the best in photoplays, Percy and Moran also sought to provide the best equipment possible to show the movies selected. A Simplex projector and a Hertner Transverter, which provided the correct electrical current, were installed in the Rialto's projection room. "The Simplex projector," a full page advertisement in the *Medford Mail Tribune* boasted, "is so constructed to eliminate all eye strain, flicker and kindred faults, projecting a clear, rock steady,

velvet smooth picture to delight audiences at all times." A Hill "Wonder" projection screen, twelve by sixteen feet, was installed on the auditorium's west wall.⁷

To accompany the silent features, the Percy-Moran Company installed "at great cost a Symphonic Orchestral Organ and engaged a musician of professional skill so to interpret the photoplays that the audience may continuously be in intimate touch with every feature of the story."8

The Rialto opened its doors to the viewing public on August 30, 1917. A capacity crowd filled the theater and many others were turned away for lack of room. The first movie shown at the new Rialto was a "nine-section super feature" titled *The Barrier*, "a virile, heart-holding, stirring story of the Yukon," based on a novel by Rex Beach, one of the era's most popular novelists. An added special attraction was *A Zeppelin Attack on New York*, a photoplay inspired no doubt by news stories from the past few years of German Zeppelin attacks on England's cities.9





For the customers' convenience, the Rialto also advertised a "telephone attendant" whose job was to provide information on current and future programming, as well as personal news of people's favorite movie stars "or any other information desired by our patrons regarding the motion picture industry. Just call 490 or 297-L" (the latter number being Percy's home telephone number).

Five weeks after the Rialto's grand opening, the theater's final decorative features, delayed due to the war effort, were installed. Of greatest interest was the large glass canopy and marquee over the entrance on the Palm building. Also attached at this time was the



Taking pictures would not reach Medford until 1928, so patrons responding to this 1922 Rialto advertisement for Stormswept would have had to read the titles and listen to the organ music for the movie to "come alive."

the colors," a euphemism for being drafted, leaving Percy as the Rialto's sole manager. Percy's wife, Helen, worked the box office, where she charmed the theater's patrons. At the conclusion of the war Moran returned to the Northwest and he, Percy, and new partner C.F. Hill expanded their chain of theaters, operating under the name Globe

Theater Company. One of their earliest acquisitions was the Antlers Theater in Roseburg. In June of 1919 they also acquired a ten-year lease on the Page Theater in Medford and the Majestic in Roseburg. A pair of theaters in Albany rounded out their theatrical holdings.¹¹

In the fall of 1919 a familiar face in Medford's theater circles returned to town. George A. Hunt, who had managed the Natatorium, the Star, and the Page theaters before the war, reacquired the Star Theater, now renamed the Liberty in honor of the recent victory in the First World War. Shortly afterward, Hunt, in partnership with his wife Enid, Richard Antle, and Julius Wolfe, formed the George A. Hunt Theater Company. In December this new concern bought out the holdings of Percy and Moran; as of December 1, 1919, George Λ. Hunt assumed control of the Rialto.¹²

It wasn't long before the Hunt Company's flair for promotion began to again manifest itself, and the new partner, Dick Antle, a banker by profession, proved almost as adept as Hunt. On March 10, 1920, the Rialto was playing a "splendid military comedy" titled 232 Hours, and Antle arranged to have all the usherettes dressed in army uniforms. In the midst of the evening performance, while the title slate on screen read "Soldiers Returning to the Cantonment," the auditorium doors flew open and, to the surprise of Hunt and the theater patrons, members of Company D, Oregon National Guard, marched briskly down both aisles onto the stage and out the rear entrance of the theater. 13

After seven years of accompanying movies in the Rialto, the original organ had become obsolete, and Hunt, always desirous of keeping his theaters up to date, ordered a new Robert Morton Orchestral Organ. The new organ, built to order for the Rialto, arrived from Van Nuys, California, on May 8, 1924. "The possibilities of this organ are limitless," the *Mail Tribune* reported, "and one picture accompaniment alone could not exhaust the varied combination of tone nor hint at the vast musical literature in store." ¹⁴

To showcase his new organ, Hunt brought in Grace "Betty" Brown, popular organist at the Page Theater for the three years

The Rialto management used more than just newspaper ads and marquee announcements to drum up business. This car bannered an ad for John Ford's classic 1939 Western, Stagecoach, in a Medford parade.

prior to its destruction by fire in 1923, to provide a recital, featuring the "Robin Hood Overture," by De Koven. Afterwards Betty turned the keyboard over to Jeunesse Butler, who was the Rialto's regular organist. With the Rialto' new organ in place, Hunt focused his energies on the construction of his newest theater, the Craterian. 15

With the opening of the new Craterian in October 1924 behind him, Hunt again turned his attention to the Rialto, whose furnishings were beginning to become a bit worn since the 1917 opening. In November, Hunt completely renovated the Rialto's interior with new paint, new carpets, and new rest room fixtures. The mantel in

the lobby was decorated with mirrors and candles and a large painting of Crater Lake dominated one of the walls. The renovation was so complete the local newspaper mused that a stranger in town might have trouble determining which of Medford's theaters was the newer one. ¹⁶

In 1927 the Rialto was again given a new makeover, in effect a major renovation of the structure. J.L. Reid served as general contractor on the rewiring work and the installation of a new and improved ventilating system. The Oregon Granite Company supplied the marble for a new ticket booth, and the interior decorating was carried out by the B.F. Shearer Division of the National Theater Supply Company, the same people responsible for the work on Hunt's Craterian Theater. While some of the work was carried out with the theater remaining open, the final stages of the redecorating necessitated that the Rialto be closed for three days in early June. National Theater's representative, Ed Weisenborn, and his crew of decorators worked night and day to ensure all was ready for the scheduled opening on Thursday, June 9. This renovation also saw the removal of the original glass marquee. It would be replaced with a new one equipped with flashing electric lights visible the length of Main Street and ample room on the front and sides to feature the titles of the current attractions. 17

Hunt pulled out all the stops in promoting his new Rialto, and the notices in the local newspaper read as if they were written by the Hunts themselves, which just might have been the case. "George Hunt will present a show house which will eclipse their [moviegoers'] most optimistic expectations," the *Medford Mail Tribune* effused on the afternoon of the Rialto's re-opening. "The new, remodeled Rialto is a work of art, an example of the last word in theater decoration ... a worthy rival to the Craterian Theater, also operated by the George A. Hunt Company. The

Rialto, in fact, will deserve a place alongside the Craterian as one of Oregon's finest amusement houses, and bright flashing electric signs will beckon theatergoers to stop and pass away pleasant hours." ¹⁸

Thursday night's opening was a gala affair, and for it Hunt scheduled a film starring one of America's most popular actresses, Clara Bow, the "It Girl," in her latest feature, *Rough House Rosie*. Both showings that night were to sellout crowds, and all agreed that the new Rialto was a gem. To greet the patrons, George and Enid Hunt, and Mr. and Mrs.

Julius Wolf of the George A. Hunt Amusement Company, and Mr. Mendenhall, the theater manager were on hand, along with the organist, Sterling Rothermal, and Fred Ryan, the Rialto's projectionist.¹⁹

In addition to being artistically pleasing, the Rialto's new design served the intended purpose of making the small theater appear larger than it actually was. Even the uniforms of the usherettes had undergone a change. "The artistic and pleasing effect even extended to the new uniform costumes of the pretty girl ushers, which included white silk blouse and skirt, jacket of rich red plush and red scarf." The only disappointment that night was the absence of the new marquee, which had yet to be installed. An additional two weeks were required before it would be completed.²⁰

The closing years of the 1920s witnessed dramatic changes in the motion picture industry, and Hunt was determined to keep abreast of all the advances. In 1928 Hunt had equipped his flagship theater, the Craterian, with sound equipment. The following year Hunt scheduled the Rialto for installation of similar equipment, estimated to cost between \$12,000 and \$14,000. When Hunt first made the announcement of the addition of sound equipment, he was unsure as to when the work might be

completed. "The exact date of its installation," the *Mail Tribune* reported, "is not yet known, pending other developments." This cryptic remark, little noticed at the time, would foreshadow a dramatic change in the George A. Hunt Theater Company.²¹

With the installation of this new sound equipment, the Rialto would show talking movies exclusively, with the exception of some of the newsreels, many of which were still distributed as silents. The equipment selected for installation in the Rialto was essentially the same as Hunt had had installed the previous year in the Craterian. Both Movietone and Vitaphone systems would be installed. To introduce the Rialto's new sound system, on September 12, the enormously popular Marx Brothers movie, *Cocoanuts*, which had played to full houses at the Craterian the previous week, was held over so those who missed its first Medford release could avail themselves of this second opportunity to see one of the years' most popular and zany comedies.²²

Talking pictures were almost universally accepted from their inception in 1927, but their popularity was not without casualties. In addition to the film stars who were unable to make the transition to speaking roles, the countless organists and musicians across the country who accompanied the silent movies saw the writing on the wall for their livelihoods. Appreciating this dilemma, Hunt kept the Rialto's organist, Sterling Rothermal, on salary for a time, in order to make a smooth transition for the patrons, who still expected the long accustomed music, and to provide his musician time to seek alternative employment.²³

The day following the sound premiere at the Rialto, the George A. Hunt Theater Company made an announcement that confirmed vague rumors that had been circulating for several weeks. In August 1929, the Hollywood trade publication *Variety* had printed a story that the George A. Hunt Company was in

negotiations to sell some of its theaters to the Fox Theater chain. Hunt immediately responded that such stories were "premature." On September 13, however, the Hunts made the official announcement: the Craterian and Rialto theaters had been sold to the William Fox Theater Company, for an undisclosed sum. Hunt would retain ownership of his Grants Pass and Roseburg movie houses, operating under the name Umpqua Amusement Company Because the Hunts had extensive real estate holdings in Medford, they announced that they would

remain in the Rogue Valley.²⁴

For the customers' convenience, the

Rialto also advertised a "telephone

attendant" whose job was to

provide information on current

and future programming, as well

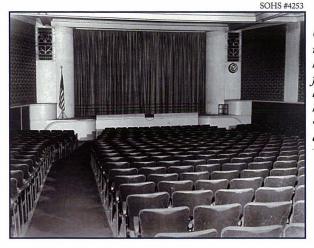
as personal news of people's

favorite movie stars.

It is not known what impact the stock market crash the following month had on the Hunts. It is possible the sale of their Medford theaters might have provided them with a comfortable amount of cash to carry them through the financial crisis. Unfortunately, there are no surviving records to indicate how they weathered the immediate financial crisis. Before the end of 1930, however, the Hunts had changed their minds about remaining in Medford, and the two relocated to Roseburg.²⁵

The hard times wrought by the Great Depression took a toll on theaters across the country, and box office receipts plunged. In 1933 the Fox theater chain was forced to file for bankruptcy. According to the terms handed down by the courts, the leases on Fox's Medford theaters were canceled and the theaters turned over to their previous operator, George Hunt. Once again Hunt was back in Medford as operator of both the Rialto and the Craterian.²⁶

Over the years the Rialto would continue to enjoy the occasional remodel or upgrade. In 1931 the Fox Company closed the theater briefly to install new seats and make other minor improvements. Sometime between 1938 and 1947, an elaborate new neon marquee was also installed, with a larger area for listing



Generations of Rogue Valley moviegoers will remember holding their popcorn and fidgeting in these seats looking at the Rialto stage, here circa 1940, as they waited for the lights to dim and the movie to start.

The Rialto's auditorium, which occupied the back half of the Weeks and Orr Furniture Company's building, would be used for that company's planned expansion. The lobby, in the adjacent Palm building, sat vacant for a number of years before finally being leased. In 1968 a fire destroyed much of the Palm building and the remains were razed. Today all that remains of Percy and Moran's "Shrine of the Silent Arts" are a handful of photographs in the collections of the Southern Oregon Historical Society and a small tribute to the

old movie house in the Joseph Winans Furniture store, the successor to Weeks and Orr.

William Alley is senior historian/research manager with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

the current featured attraction.²⁷

George Hunt remained the dominant force in Southern Oregon's theater scene until his untimely death in an automobile accident in 1943. Control of Hunt's theaters, including the Rialto, soon passed to Walter Leverette, owner of the Holly Theater. In May 1945, the Hunt Theater Company was formally dissolved. Leverette would later run into financial and legal difficulties that ultimately led to a term in prison. Eventually the Rialto was acquired by the Lippert Theater Company and added to their Oregon California Theater Company chain.

The years after the conclusion of the Second World War were ones of decline for the Rialto, now entering into its fourth decade as a movie house. Instead of the finest in first-run motion pictures, the Rialto was now playing primarily western, "B" and second-run movies on a continuous basis. Finally, on December 30, 1952, management of the Oregon California Theater Company announced the Rialto's imminent closure, on January 3, 1953. The final performance would be John Wayne in "Red River" and "So You Won't Talk," starring Joe. E. Brown. It was explained that old theaters such as the Rialto were falling victim to changes in the motion picture industry, which was no longer producing the type of movies these theaters were showing. The phenomenal growth of the drive-in in the post-war years also had a negative impact on the older movie theaters across the country. Moviegoers were abandoning the old theaters like the Rialto in favor of the new drive-ins, and, with the Lippert Company preparing to open a new drive-in in Medford, it was time for the venerable old playhouse to be closed.²⁸

ENDNOTES

- 1. Medford Mail Tribune, 17 May 1917.
- 2. Medford Mail Tribune, 27 June 1917.
- 3. Medford Mail Tribune, 27 June 1917.
- 4. Medford Mail Tribune, 17 May 1917.
- 5. Medford Mail Tribune, 31 August 1917.
- 6. Mcdford Mail Tribune, 8 August 1917, 29 August 1917.
- 7. Medford Mail Tribune, 27 August 1917, 29 August 1917.
- 8. Medford Mail Tribune 29 August 1917.
- 9. Medford Mail Tribune, 29 August 1917.
- 10. Medford Mail Tribune, 29 August 1917, 6 October 1917.
- 11. Medford Mail Tribune, 29 August 1917, 27 June 1918, 30 August 1918, 19 June 1919, 21 June 1919; Home Telephone and Telegraph Company Telephone Directory, October 1917; Polk's Jackson County Directory, 1921,
- 12. Medford Mail Tribune, 2 December 1919.
- 13. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 March 1920.
- 14. Medford Mail Tribune, 8 May 1924, 17 May 1924, 19 May 1924.
- 15. Medford Mail Tribune, 8 May 1924, 17 May 1924, 19 May 1924; Rogue River Courier, 2 May 1924.
- 16. Medford Mail Tribune, 21 November 1924.
- 17. Medford Mail Tribune, 5 June 1927, 9 June 1927.
- 18. Medford Mail Tribune, 9 January 1927.
- 19. Medford Mail Tribune, 5 June 1927, 11 June 1927.
- 20. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 June 1927.
- 21. Medford Mail Tribune, 30 August 1929, 11 September 1929.
- 22. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 September 1929.
- 23. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 September 1929.
- 24. Medford Mail Tribune, 30 August 1929; 13 September 1929.
- 25. Pacific Telephone and Telegraph directories, June 1930, January 1931.26. William Alley, "George A. Hunt, Medford Impresario, and the Craterian Theater," Southern Oregon Heritage, vol. 2, no. 3, Winter 1997, p. 26-27.
- 27. Medford Mail Tribune, 7 July 1931.
- 28. Medford Mail Tribune, 30 December 1952, 2 January 1953.



West Main was a two-way street in 1939, when this photo was taken at the intersection of Main and Fir. That's the Rialto on the right, between the Men's Shop and the furniture store-now Joseph Winans.



NE OF THE PLANTS ABOUT WHICH WE ARE MOST FREQUENTLY asked is Zigadenus venenosus, commonly called death camas. How did Native Americans avoid poisoning themselves when death camas often grows intermingled with the true camas (Camassia quamash) important in Native American diets?

Native Americans kept an eye on their food gathering places, noting where death camas grew, and women surely weeded death camas out of the camas patches that they harvested. They also took careful note of the characteristics of the two plants so that they could distinguish between them.

True camas may bear either white or blue flowers. Death camas is white. The flowers of the two plants differ greatly, and the seed heads, which linger on the plant for more than a month after flowering, are also very different. And to the practiced eye, subtle differences in the bulb coat distinguish death camas from true camas. As a last resort, an Indian woman uncertain about which plant she had dug might perform the taste test. The smallest bit of death camas immediately numbs the lips and tongue, leaving no doubt that the bulb should be discarded. (We've done this experiment for you. *Please do not try it yourself.*)

But why is death camas poisonous while camas is not?

Because plants can't run away from predators, they adopt different strategies to keep from being gobbled up by hungry animals. Some plants protect themselves with spines, thorns or tough foliage. Most plants contain chemicals that render them unpalatable or poisonous. Others adapt to habitats beyond the reach of their predators. True camas and death camas, both members of the lily family, evolved different methods of protecting themselves.

True camas adopted the evasive strategy. Rodents such as pocket gophers relish plump camas bulbs. To survive, camas adapted to two habitats that foil rodents. They grow in wet soil or rocky ground in which rodents can't burrow. One of these habitats is easy for humans to harvest. The other isn't. Indian women did their bulk harvest of camas in the wet areas in which the bulbs grew close to the surface in moist, loose soil, such as the mountain meadows of the Cascade uplands. Camas is easy to harvest in such soil, and women popped the bulbs out of the ground with their digging sticks. However, at some spots in the Rogue Valley, camas bulbs grow at depths of eighteen inches in almost impenetrable rocky soils. Under these conditions, one expends more calories than one gains in harvesting camas bulbs and it is unlikely that Native American women bothered to collect camas from these sites.

Death camas took a different evolutionary route to survival by developing a toxic alkaloid compound called zygacine, found in all parts of the plant. Native predators avoid it, and death camas can thus grow in unprotected soils where true camas gets gobbled up. However, death camas may also grow in the same habitats as true camas, keeping human harvesters on their toes.

Native Americans recognized the virtues of death camas. Various Indian tribes of the West used the *Zigadenus* species medicinally to induce vomiting, or externally as a poultice to relieve the pain of rheumatism, sprains and broken bones. Well aware of the numbing properties of the toxic alkaloid in death camas, the Navajo used a tiny amount of a pulverized bulb—with great care—to numb the area of the mouth around an aching tooth.²

Livestock have died from grazing on the leaves of *Zigadenus* species, but there is actually no documented human fatality from consumption of death camas, a beautiful plant that commands respect.

Anthropologist Nan Hannon and ethnobotanist Donn L. Todt garden in Ashland.

ENDNOTE

- Nancy J. Turner and Adam F. Szczawinski, Common Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms of North America (Portland: Timber Press, 1991), pp. 106-107.
- Daniel E. Moerman, Native American Ethnobotany (Portland: Timber Press, 1998), pp. 612-613.

Toggery Bill, of Course

by Bill Alley

EDFORD WAS STILL A SMALL TOWN with an unpaved main street when William F. Isaacs opened a men's haberdashery called "The Toggery." The date was March 1, 1903, and the

modest, 600-square-foot shop in the Palm Building had a staff of two, Isaacs and a part-time high school kid named Percy DeGroot. To give the appearance of conducting a brisk business, the young Isaacs often had his friends leave the store with bundles of purchases, only to have them swing around to the rear entrance to return them.¹

The son of early county pioneers George and Mary Isaacs, William was born on December 8, 1879, in Brownsboro.

After attending the local schools, Isaacs began his career in sales in Eastern Oregon, selling encyclopedias from a horse and buggy. Before embarking on his own retail clothing business, Isaacs had accumulated a mere six months' experience selling clothes at Simon Rosenthal's dry-goods store, located on East Main near Central.²

What Isaacs didn't know about men's clothing he quickly learned. From the outset he employed extensive advertising to promote his business. There was hardly a bridge in the county that did not sport a sign with Isaacs' slogan, "The Toggery, of Course" emblazoned on it. Isaacs had selected this slogan when he first opened his shop. It was inspired by local dentist James M. Keene, who was known for his constant use of the phrase "of course." Isaacs, who soon become known as "Toggery Bill," also used the tried and true advertising medium of the age, the broad side of the barn. Signs saying "Toggery Bill is the Farmers (or Miners) Friend"

could be seen on rural structures throughout Jackson County.3

Toggery Bill's business grew rapidly. By 1910 he had five salesmen in his employ, and the following year moved into roomier quarters on Main Street next to the Medford National Bank, where the U.S. Bank now stands. Toggery Bill did not confine his energies to his own business, however. He was among those local businessmen who boosted the growing community of Medford. He was a founding member of the Medford Commercial Club, forerunner of today's Chamber of Commerce, and, on the cultural front, was one of the founders of the local Choral Society and the Civic Music Association. Many of the local opera productions featured the voice of Toggery Bill Isaacs.⁴

In spite of Toggery Bill's reputation as a pioneer merchant, civic leader and a "most courteous gentleman," he was best remembered by those who knew him as an angler with a national reputation. Throughout his life Toggery Bill would play host to serious fishermen who came to fish the Rogue. Even Herbert Hoover, the famed "Great Humanitarian" and the nation's thirty-first president, was a guest at Toggery Bill's fishing lodge.

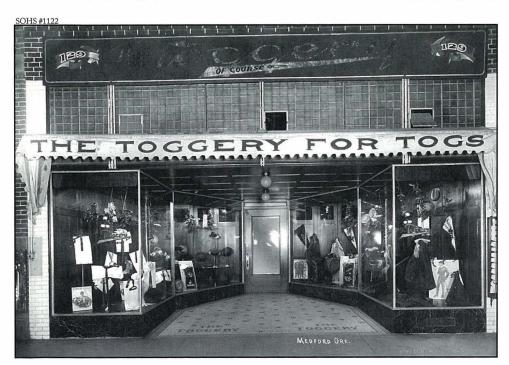
After his retirement from the Toggery in 1938, Isaacs spent most of his days on the river, or playing bridge with friends at the Medford Hotel. He died in 1961 at the age of 81.

Bill Alley is senior historian/research manager with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

ENDNOTES

- 1. Medford Mail Tribune, 1 March 1931.
- 2. Hank Pringle, "Memorial to Toggery Bill Isaacs," SOHS vertical files.
- 3. Medford Mail Tribune, 1 March 1931.
- 4. Medford Mail Tribune, 1 March 1931, 2 March 1931.

Toggery Bill Isaacs, above left, was a fixture in Medford men's retailing from 1903 to 1938. Below, cleverly placed advertising all over the county directed shoppers to The Toggery on Main Street.







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*Indicates upgraded membership category or monetary contribution in addition to membership dues for Society programs.

(continued on page 2)



Historic Hanley Farm owned and operated by the Southern Historical Society

Opens May 26



ITA BIRDSEYE RECALLED PICNICKING AT HANLEY FARM as "something straight out of heaven. ... We had ... beautiful little cream puffs ... fancy stuffed deviled eggs, ... beautiful, gorgeous potato salad, homemade rolls with ham, homecured ham, fried, and put in there in several little slices. Cake."

Bring your own "straight out of heaven" picnic and join us for our opening event, an old-fashioned holiday weekend complete with a strawberry social, music, games, and a parade!

Beginning Saturday, May 26, Hanley Farm will be open from 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, through September 30. Each weekend will feature a different theme—Native American, pioneer, nineteenth century farm life, and twentieth century farm life. Watch for weekly scheduled events! Come and see how much fun history can be!

Admission fee: \$5 adults; \$3 children and seniors; ages five and under, free.

The photos at right and below show events that took place last summer.





Hanley Farm is a Century Farm and is listed on the National Register and the Jackson County Register of Historic Places.

