

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

July 2001 Vol. 3, No. 7

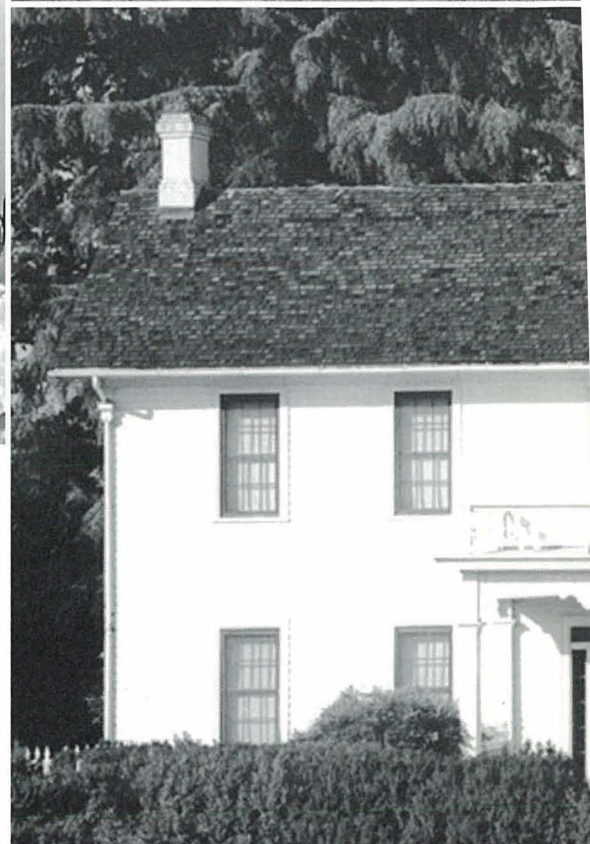
Today



HOUSES OF ILL
FAME? HERE?

HISTORIC IMAGES ON CD

MEDFORD'S LADY LIBERTY TURNS FIFTY



HISTORIC HANLEY FARM

1053 HANLEY ROAD,
BETWEEN CENTRAL POINT AND JACKSONVILLE
(541) 773-6536 • sohs.org



Friday, Saturday, and Sunday

through September 30

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

*Admission: \$5 adults, \$3 children 6-12 and seniors 65+,
children 5 and under and SOHS members free*

Arrive in style!

Jacksonville-Hanley Farm

TROLLEY

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California and 3rd, Jacksonville

SPECIAL THEME WEEKENDS INCLUDE

• TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

July 6, 7, 8 SPECIAL FREE DAY JULY 6!

Bring a picnic and join in an old-fashioned baseball game, ice cream social, patriotic speeches, a parade, music and games.

• PIONEER SETTLEMENT

July 13, 14, 15

Candlemaking demonstrations. On Saturday and Sunday, enjoy wagon rides and talks with Mary Elizabeth or Gran Sue, "pioneers" who travelled the Oregon and Applegate trails.

• NATIVE AMERICAN LIFEWAYS

July 20, 21, 22

Demonstrations, hands-on activities and games. Shasta basketmaker Mary Carpelan will display baskets from her collection and demonstrate open-twined basketry. Justine Richey, SOU intern, will interpret an archaeology site.

• LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY FARM LIFE

July 27, 28, 29

Wagon tours! Gardening and games. For the price of a penny create a "penny square." On Saturday and Sunday, Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association demonstrations.

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

Hanley Farm: owned and operated by the Southern Oregon Historical Society

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE
TODAY

Editorial Guidelines

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

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

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE *Today*

FEATURE:

Sins of Southern Oregon: A Brief History of Prostitution in Jackson County

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SOHS #1730 DETAIL

DEPARTMENTS



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SOHS #16581

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Obenchain, wife of
Bartlett Obenchain.

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SOHS PHOTO DEPT. 1983

ON THE COVER

A clematis gracefully drizzles bouquets of delicate blossoms over the doors of the garage at Hanley Farm, where special theme weekend events create new experiences for visitors all summer long.

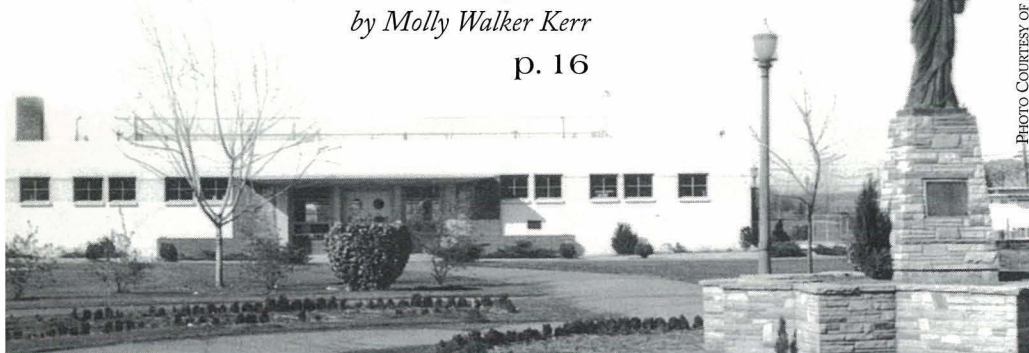


PHOTO COURTESY OF MEDFORD PARK & RECREATION, 1951



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Lost Creek Lake

by Bill Miller

IF YOU CREATED A LAKE TWENTY-SIX MILES north of Medford and it was fed by two separate streams both called Lost Creek, what else would you call it but Lost Creek Lake? However, the choice really isn't that simple because most of the lake's water comes from the Rogue River, and other creeks sporadically add to the flow. One suspects that whoever made the final naming decision couldn't resist the oddity of finding two creeks with the same name in such close proximity. Today the lake plays a role in water storage, flood control, and power generation as well as providing a host of recreational opportunities, but lost under its thousands of acre-feet of water are the places where earlier people once lived, worked, and played.

Before the dam was constructed, the Rogue River gently twisted through a small valley, depositing sand and gravel bars and strewing rocks along its banks. Except for winter, when the river's peaceful flow could become a violent surge, this was a good place to live. Anthropologists believe that for centuries up until the 1850s, Native Americans of the Upland Takelma tribe camped in this valley. With plentiful game and a river full of salmon, there is little doubt that the tribe prospered.

In the early 1850s the non-native population began to arrive. In the Lost Creek area a few hardy souls tried to establish homesteads, but most eventually moved on. Probably the earliest to stay was William Rumley, who settled on the south side of the river in 1867. In 1890, a post office was opened and the community was named Leeds, after William H. Leeds, publisher of the *Ashland Tidings*. Ruben Peyton, a former member of Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show, also homesteaded in the area, and his name was given to the bridge that now spans the Rogue River near Lewis Road at the upper end of the lake. A post office named Peyton also existed in the area from 1900 to 1912. Many residents of the Lost Creek vicinity called their community Laurelhurst, and when the post office closed in 1913, that name finally stuck. Today the site of the old post office and most of Laurelhurst lies submerged near the center of the lake. The Upper Rogue Historical Society conducts boat tours of the lake, pointing out significant locations of the now-lost community.¹

The destructive floods of 1955 and 1964-65 forced the issue of flood control on Jackson County residents. By August 1972, construction began on an earthen dam across the Rogue River, which would be 3,750 feet long and 345 feet high. When completed on July 14, 1976,

the dam was expected to create a reservoir storing up to 465,000 acre-feet of water, but Mother Nature didn't cooperate. A two-year wait for sufficient snow and rain began, delaying opening ceremonies until June 10, 1978. Ironically, it rained on Senator Mark Hatfield's dedication address.²

When you visit Lost Creek Lake, your first stop should be at the visitor's center at McGregor State Park for a quick orientation. You will also find handicapped-accessible paths along the river and a number of secluded picnic tables. Reach the park from Highway 62 with a left turn on the road that leads to the Cole M. Rivers Fish Hatchery. At the hatchery you'll find another visitor's center, a fish ladder, and the raceways where salmon and steelhead are raised for eventual release. Between the dam and the hatchery is a "fly fishing only" portion of the Rogue River called the "Holy Water" by local anglers. The road you followed to the hatchery turnoff is part of the original Crater Lake Highway, which used to follow the north bank of the river. If you continue on this road, you'll pass a viewpoint where you can walk across the dam, which, in 1996, was named to honor the first chairman of the Rogue Basin Flood Control and Water Resources Association, William Jess. Traveling further, you'll come to a boat launch area, where, in dry years, you can actually see the old highway disappear under the waters of the lake.³

Return to Highway 62, make a left turn and follow the signs to Stewart State Park. The park is named for Joseph H. Stewart, who is credited with the first commercial fruit shipments from the valley. Just before 1900 he bought the Lost Creek property that is now the park as the site for a summer home; later, his son-in-law would turn it into a pear orchard. Today you'll find a large campground, picnic areas, a marina with rental boats and a place to swim in the lake.⁴

Lost Creek Lake offers so much to the outdoor enthusiast, that most people will need more than a weekend to do it all. Whether you hike, boat, or simply sit on a bench, it's a great place to relax and ponder a little history. 🏠

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

ENDNOTES

1. Robert M. Weiss, *Laurelhurst: Lost Community of the Upper Rogue* (Eagle Point, Ore.: Laurelhurst Publications, 1991), pp. 2-7, 15-19. Interestingly, the U.S. Geological Survey shows Leeds' location as one land section east of the location given by the 1895 and 1910 Jackson County maps.
2. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 10 August 1972; 15 July 1976; 11 June 1978.
3. The park was named for Donald McGregor, former director of the Rogue Basin Flood Control and Water Resources Association. The Hatchery opened in 1973 and was named for "Mr. Rogue River" Cole Rivers, who studied and protected the river while working with the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, between 1942 and his death in 1966.
4. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 8 June 1978.

The Rogue River emerges from the foot of Lost Creek Lake, offering a short stretch of fly fishing-only water just above the fish-collection dam at Cole Rivers Fish Hatchery and upstream of McGregor State Park.

Acc #2000.41.5

Obenchain: A Family, A Mountain, A Road

by Louise A. Watson

THEIR NAME CHRISTENS A MOUNTAIN and a road northeast of Medford. They planted Southern Oregon roots in a rugged area of deep springs, jagged rocks, oak, pine, and well-timbered land with good soil. Their name is Obenchain.

Family roots go back to Botecourt County, Virginia, where John W. and Margaret Obenchain, descendants of German immigrants, became parents of their first son, Bartlett, on September 22, 1827. Two years later, in 1829, the family moved west, first to Indiana, then to Illinois in 1842, and finally to Iowa in 1844. In 1861, the Obenchain family, which now included four more sons—John Allen, Madison, James, and George—headed for Oregon.¹

The Obenchains' Oregon homestead was situated on what was then a narrow dirt wagon trail just over the mountain's summit, halfway between Eagle Point and the later community of Butte Falls. With the construction in 1863 of the military road between Fort Klamath and Jacksonville along portions of the same route, the enterprising couple made their homestead a stage stop and way station. They also had five more children.

Bartlett Obenchain had married Nancy Morse in Iowa in 1850; she was a cousin of telegraph inventor Samuel F.B. Morse. They migrated west with the elder Obenchains, the younger couple settling and farming on more than 100 acres a mile west of Central Point.²

Eventually, the family fanned out to many parts of Southern Oregon, continuing its tradition of farming, hard work, and community involvement. Bartlett's brother, John Allen, became postmaster when the Big Butte Post Office opened at the way station on October 6, 1888. It was a post he held until March 31,

1908. John Allen, father of five daughters, died on June 16, 1913, in Butte Falls.³

His great-great-granddaughter, Katherine Gott Wilkinson of Portland, is documenting the Obenchain family genealogy. Lucinda, her great-grandmother and John Allen's daughter, married William Henry Chambers, the grandson of Aaron Chambers, who built the Chambers House in Jacksonville. According to Wilkinson, another Obenchain relative, Maldoren Obenchain, moved to Klamath Falls in the late nineteenth century and became sheriff there.⁴

Most of the Obenchains are buried in the Jacksonville Cemetery, Wilkinson said. It does not appear that anyone named Obenchain still lives in Butte Falls,



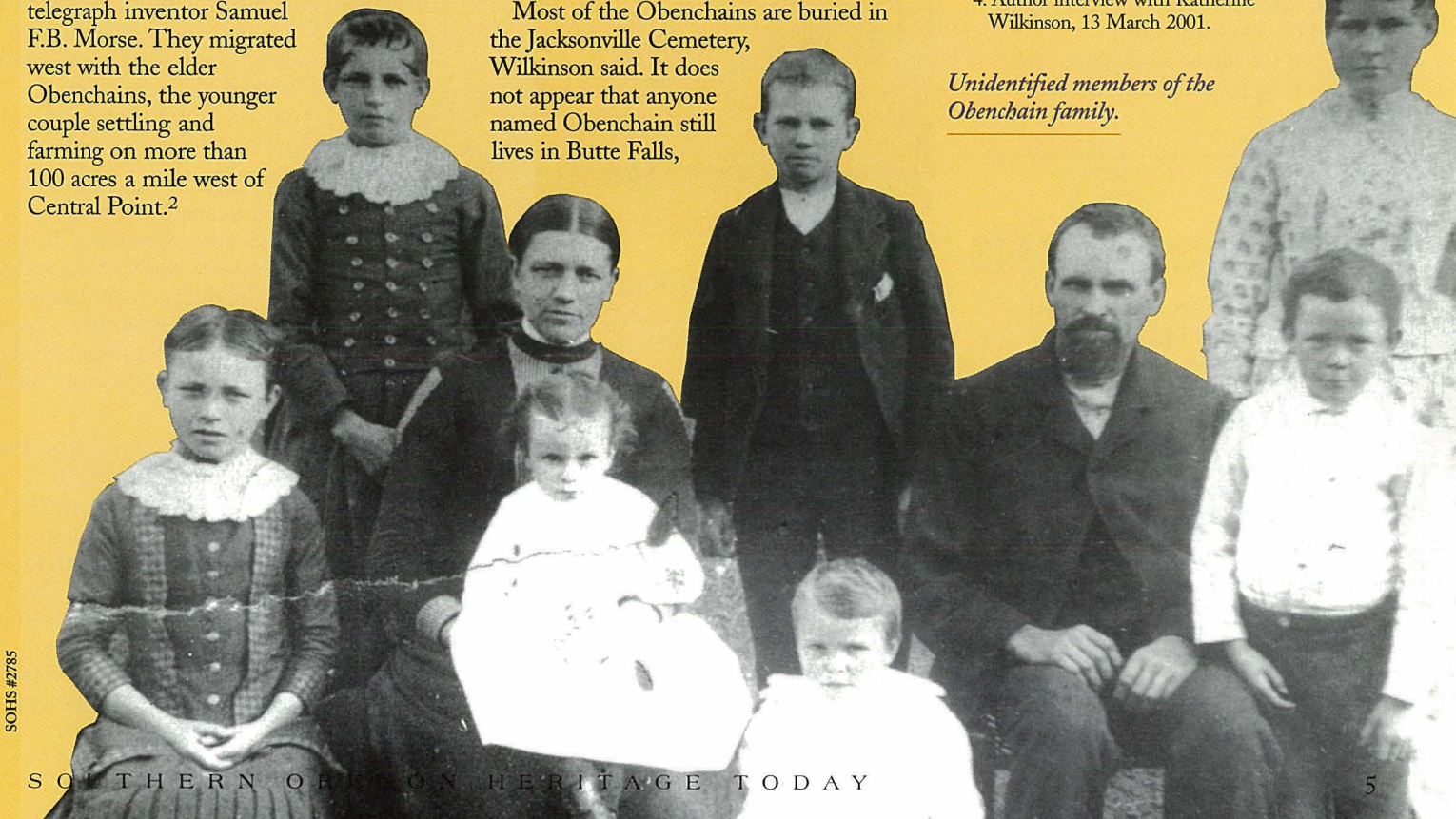
according to longtime residents Ansel Conley and Nellie Ragsdale.⁴

Louise A. Watson is a Medford freelance writer and editor.

ENDNOTES

1. Barbara Hegne, "Families: Old and New, Country Folk, Butte Falls, Derby, Dudley," archives of Southern Oregon Historical Society, p. 43 and 73.
2. *Portrait and Biographical Record of Western Oregon*, (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1904), p. 868.
3. Hegne, "Families: Old and New," p. 73; Jacksonville Cemetery Records, p. 245.
4. Author interview with Katherine Wilkinson, 13 March 2001.

Unidentified members of the Obenchain family.



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Things To Do in July

PROGRAMS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Tambourines; families; 50¢
StoryTime	Fri., July 6, 13, 20, 27, 2 p.m.	HANLEY FARM	Farm Stories
Living History Program	Wed. - Sun., 1 - 5 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Enter the year 1911; fee
Jacksonville-Hanley Farm Trolley	Fri., Sat., Sun., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.	3RD & CALIFORNIA STREETS	Guided tour; fee
Hanley Farm	Fri., Sat., Sun., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fri., July 13, 2 p.m. Fri., July 20, 2 p.m.	1053 HANLEY ROAD	Activities, programs; fee "Locating Your Family Homestead" "History of the Shasta People"

PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

JULY CRAFT OF THE MONTH

Tambourines

Explore homemade music as you create your own tambourine at the Children's Museum.

BEEKMAN HOUSE LIVING HISTORY

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: \$3 for adults; \$2 children and seniors; ages five and under free; Society members, free.

MAP REPRODUCTIONS

Available at the Society's Research Library and History Store!
(541) 773-6536

- **CITY OF ASHLAND, 1910 • \$7.95**
"Climactic Paradise, Italy of America, Metropolis of Southern Oregon and the famous Rogue River Valley."
- **JACKSON COUNTY, 1910 • \$5.95**
- **FOSTER & GUNNELL'S MINING MAP OF SOUTHERN OREGON, 1904 \$9.95**
"Showing principal Quartz and Placer Mines, Wagon Roads, Sawmills, Post Offices, etc., in Josephine and Jackson counties."

Mail orders add \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

JACKSONVILLE-HANLEY FARM TROLLEY RIDES

The trolley will tour hourly—11 a.m. to 4 p.m.—between Jacksonville and Hanley Farm on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays through September 30. Tickets: adults, \$4; children six-twelve, \$2; ages five and under, free. Purchase of trolley ticket at History Store provides \$1 off Hanley Farm admission.



HISTORIC HANLEY FARM EVENTS

Visit Hanley Farm by way of the trolley and receive \$1 off admission. All events are free with price of admission.

FRIDAYS at the Farm are designed with adults and families with young children in mind.

• 2 p.m. on Friday, July 13, genealogist Chuck Eccleston will present **"Locating Your Family Homestead."**

• 2 p.m. on Friday, July 20, a Shasta representative will present **"The History of the Shasta People."** (Plan to arrive 15 minutes early as there is a limit of 20 participants.)

• 2 p.m. weekly, a special story hour for 3-6-years-old will be held.

Special FREE day, July 6!

July 6, 7, 8—Picnicking at Hanley Farm has been described as "something straight out of heaven." Bring your family, a blanket and a picnic and join in celebrating the weekend. An old-fashioned baseball game at 1:00 p.m. Sunday. Scheduled for Saturday and Sunday: ice cream social, patriotic speeches, parade, music, and games.

July 13, 14, 15—Explore pioneer life all week-end long. Demonstration on candlemaking will be featured. On Saturday and Sunday, enjoy wagon rides and talks with Mary Elizabeth or Granny Sue, "pioneers" who traveled the Oregon and Applegate trails.

July 20, 21, 22—Explore Native American lifeways through a variety of demonstrations, hands-

on activities and games. Shasta basketmaker Mary Carpelan will display many baskets from her collection and demonstrate open-twined basketry. SOU intern Justine Rickey will interpret an archaeology site with hands-on activities.

July 27, 28, 29—Activities focus on late 19th century farm life. Embroidery Guild members will demonstrate their craft and visitors will be able to create a "penny square," a preprinted 1 square of cloth to embroider—for the price of a penny! Farm chores, gardening and games will be part of the fun. On Saturday and Sunday, the Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will demonstrate using horse-drawn farm equipment and provide wagon tours.

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

	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MUSEUM HOURS</u>
"What's Cookin'?" Century of Photography: 1856-1956 The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Jackson County Milestones Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience Camp White Military Uniforms Pioneer Potters on the Rogue Hall of Justice	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday, noon - 5 p.m.
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibits	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday, noon - 5 p.m.
Weaving Demonstrations/Sales	3RD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO	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.

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.

HANNAH POTTERY

Examples of pottery made over four decades ago by the Hannah family.

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 through June 30.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Everyone enjoys exploring the home and work 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
Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sun., noon to 5 p.m.

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

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE
California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville
Wed. - Sun., 1 to 5 p.m.

C.C. BEEKMAN BANK
3rd and California, Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE
3rd and California, Jacksonville
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.

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

CATHOLIC RECTORY
4th and C streets, Jacksonville



We invite YOU to become a member!

Join now! Our goal is 2,000 members by June 30, 2001.

Member support is more important than ever due to the 14.5% budget cut by the county this past June.

Your membership will support: preservation of Southern Oregon's rich heritage; Society exhibits and educational events; outreach to schools; workshops for adults and children; living history programs; and tours and demonstrations at historic Hanley Farm.

Members receive *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*, the Society's monthly magazine with newsletter, providing a view into the past and keeping you up-to-date on services provided by the Society.

For membership information, call Susan Smith at 773-6536.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Friend	\$20	Curator or Business	\$120-\$200
Family	\$30	Director	\$250-\$500
Patron	\$60-\$90	Lifetime	\$1,000

Sins Sins Sins of Sins Sin Southern Oregon

A Brief History of Prostitution in Jackson County

by Josh Gary

MANIFEST DESTINY AND WESTWARD EXPANSION

brought entrepreneurs from the East to settle the Northwest and exploit its vast natural resources. With the Gold Rush of 1849 and the prospecting boom that followed, mining camps in California and Oregon enticed thousands of young men to try their luck. Logging the Northwest forests also drew large numbers of single young men with ambitions of becoming wealthy in a land of opportunity. But compared with the economic opportunities available to men, women of the 1800s had fewer

economic options in a male-dominated society.¹ Women married young—often in their early teens—in keeping with social conventions of the time and because of a lack of economic options for aging single women. Still, in the face of constant discrimination, some women managed to make a living by settling near mining and logging camps and providing female companionship—for a price. Prostitution flourished in these single male societies in Oregon and California.²

It is easy to see how the business of prostitution was successful. Viewed from an economic perspective, the demand for women as wives and/or lovers was high and their numbers were very limited. Miners and loggers worked in remote locations for weeks at a time, then headed to the nearest town to bathe, drink, gamble, and enjoy the company of women. A prostitute was often able to take advantage of a man who was longing for attention.³ Long periods of work and only a few days to let off steam served the "sporting girls'" purposes well. Many a lonely, worn-out miner knew neither family nor love, and was starved for intimacy. Confiding in the ladies of the night, miners shared their troubles and boasted of their successes. Many prostitutes comforted their clients and gave them something that was more important to them than sex—someone to talk to.

Jacksonville's boom town period of the 1850s saw exponential population growth accompanied by the production of large amounts of gold. This is also the time "the largest number of European American women identified as probable prostitutes was found in the 1856 manuscript census of Jacksonville."⁴

Prostitution was a much more complex business than it may seem. The business of sin had something for everyone. From the richest, most dignified and respected businessman to the dirtiest, hardest-living miner, the working women of Jacksonville adapted to meet the demand. Four categories of organization characterized prostitution in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Each category had specific characteristics that set it apart from the others and catered to the specific needs of the customer.

The first and finest category was the parlor house, typically a large, beautifully constructed house that, from the street, looked like a wealthy family's estate. Inside, the atmosphere was similar to that of the richest and finest homes of the area. The carpets were often red wool and the curtains were white lace.⁵ A large sitting room gave the prosperous customers a place to drink choice liquor and champagne. Music was also played. The women working in the parlor house were of the highest quality and beauty. The fees for a night in a parlor house were higher, and this kept the number of the finer parlor houses small. Women lounged and chatted with the clients until the man chose a lady he was partial toward. It was common for men to spend hours chatting with the girls in the sitting room.⁶ A man would also often stay the entire night with the lady of his choice, and the clients of parlor houses were never hurried out the door. The class of customers meant they spent far more than average men, and the favorable treatment kept customers coming back for more.⁷

Prostitution worried many of Medford's citizens, and was even a topic of discussion in community churches; a Medford Sun reporter filed this story for the July 15, 1913, edition of the newspaper after covering just such a meeting at the First Baptist Church.

MUST BE CLEAN-UP IN MEDFORD

SO SAYS ATTORNEY MEARS AT SUNDAY MEETING

Laws Not Enforced by Public Officers Pledged to Enforce Them

"Realizing the difficulties confronting every public officer," said Attorney F. W. Mears at the First Baptist church Sunday, "I am the last to criticize when there is evidence of conscientious endeavor but I wish to remind the members of the present administration that they have gone on record for law enforcement and that unless the laws in this city are enforced there will be a reckoning at the next election."

"Notorious houses are running on the principal streets of the city and have been for weeks, and if the members of the city council don't know it they don't know what every citizen knows."

"Unless there is marked improvement in local conditions the issue will be clearly drawn between those who believe in law enforcement and those who don't, between those who wink at houses of prostitution and corruption of the young and those who believe that the city of Medford should do everything to improve the moral conditions of the city and raise the standards which go to form our environment."

"There are state laws that will aid self-respecting people in Medford and elsewhere to secure those surroundings which they desire for their families and children. One is the law giving women the vote, the other is the law making it impossible for anyone to register on election day."

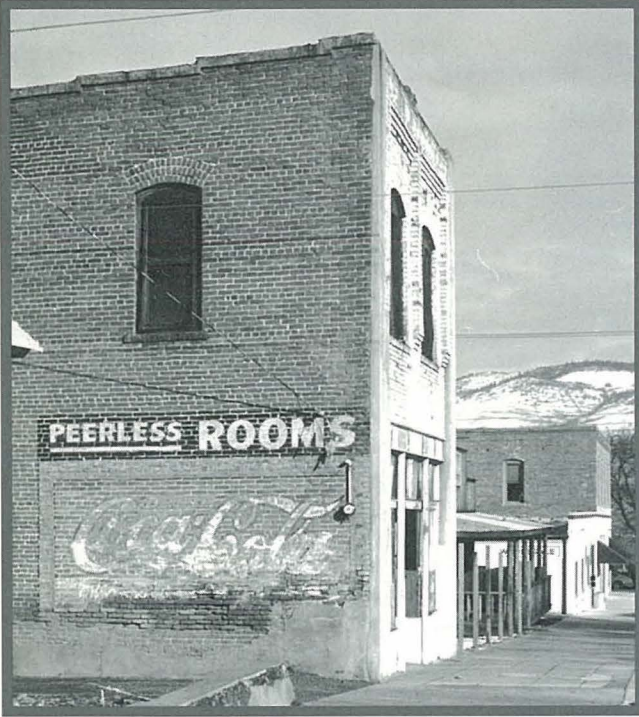
"If Medford is not cleaned up, by that I mean if the laws in this city are not enforced those responsible will have to answer at the next elec

THE MEDFORD SUN, JULY 15, 1913



With the number of parlor houses limited due to expense, the lower-class brothels and bawdy houses flourished and were far more numerous. A brothel could be nearly as elegant as a parlor house, but with less expensive decor.⁸ From the outside, these houses of ill fame appeared to be nothing more than simple hotels or rooming houses, but the guests rarely stayed the night. Often a brothel was nothing more than a few small apartments above a saloon. The red-light ladies who worked their nights in brothels and bawdy houses were not the beauties of the parlor house, but this did not stop men from desiring their services.⁹ In many towns a red-light district allowed women to set up brothels and practice their trade without fear of persecution by the police.¹⁰ A brothel was a place for a more common businessman who was far from being rich but still preferred a higher-class prostitute.

SOHS #12510 DETAIL

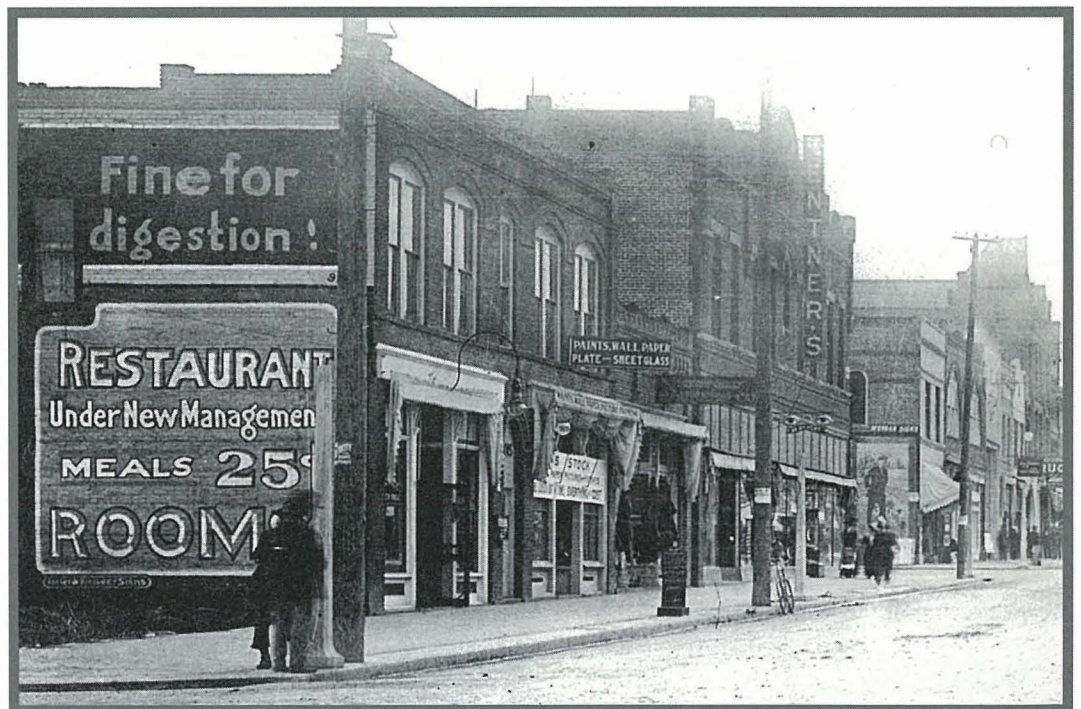


The most colorful members of the prostitution business were the madams of the houses of ill repute. These women often owned the parlor houses and brothels. They were often fascinating women with skills in managing business and dealing with the laws of society. The madam of the house was the “mother” to the girls who worked for her. Many madams offered comfort and a place to live off the street to young women society had rejected. Jackson County was home to several famous madams who ran illegal businesses while avoiding the legal consequences. Ladies with names such as “Featherlegs,” “Big Eva,” and “Stella the Redhead,” are examples of women who were successful in running these houses of ill fame.¹¹ The Imperial Rooms operated by Stella the Redhead at 30 N. Front Street in Medford were well known and still seemed to escape the attention of the local authorities in the years leading up to World War I. The same was true for Big Eva’s Peerless Rooms in Ashland.¹²

One of Southern Oregon’s most infamous madams may not even have been a madam. Madame Jeanne DeRoboam, who owned the elegant United States Hotel in Jacksonville, was born to an aristocratic family in France and moved to Oregon prior to 1860.¹³ News writers of her time often spoke of Madame DeRoboam as “that outrageous madam whose indiscretions, or worse, kept the eyebrows of all respectable women lifted.” Rumors in Jacksonville also mentioned the “sagging walls and spicy history” of her hotel.¹⁴ She was popular with the men of Jacksonville because of her hospitality and fine cooking. Her three dead husbands did little to strengthen her reputation with the “respectable” women of Jacksonville. While there is no evidence to prove that Madame DeRoboam’s hotel was a house of ill fame, there were many rumors of lewd practices.¹⁵

Further down the ladder from parlor houses and brothels, the lower-class prostitutes worked in two other areas, box houses and on the line. A box house was similar to a dance hall. The scantily dressed waitresses served drinks and flirted with the clients.¹⁶ The emphasis of the box house was to cater to the

Prostitution was a fact of life in Medford and Ashland early in the twentieth century, and it was an open secret that the Imperial Rooms operated by Stella the Redhead in Medford, at right, advertised on the side of this building at Main and Riverside streets, and the Peerless Rooms, above, operated by Big Eva in Ashland, advertised on the side of this building on A Street, were in fact brothels.



SOHS #3395



Although it has never been proven that U.S. Hotel owner Madame Jeanne DeRoboam was anything more than a gracious hostess, Jacksonville residents of more than a century ago gossiped about the "spicy" goings-on at her hotel.

working class. High-priced alcohol was a more lucrative portion of the business than the services of prostitutes.¹⁷ The atmosphere of a box house was less appealing to the high-society gentlemen who frequented parlor houses and brothels. Box houses survived by taking advantage of recently wealthy miners and loggers who were not used to having money. These lower-class houses had less than elegant working girls who often turned their tricks in a secluded corner of the dance hall or in small, walled-off cubicles. Modesty was not a characteristic of the working girls in box houses. It was not unusual for the girls to push their drinks while walking around topless.¹⁸ The lure of sex and lewd dance sold mass quantities of overpriced and watered-down alcohol.

The women of the line in the late 1800s and early 1900s were similar to the street walkers of urban areas today. These women rented small, eight-by-ten-foot rooms in a large apartment building; each room having its own door to the street.¹⁹ Several of these women developed nasty reputations and prostitutes of this style often attracted the attention of the police. These colorful women of the night often had lavish made-up names such as Wild Rose, French Rita, Velvet Bon, and Black Cat.²⁰ They had little protection from violence and were often shunned by the majority of society.²¹

Prostitution was successful in Jacksonville because the working girls and madams were able to adapt to a changing society. A growing Jackson County meant the construction of more stable and conventional communities, which led more women and families to settle in the area. Mining slowed, and logging and agriculture took over as the main economic bases of society. With a more family-oriented atmosphere and many churches being built, the women of ill fame were forced into more secluded areas behind the scenes. Oregon passed a law on bawdy houses and houses of ill fame in 1864.²² The law is clear, and states:

If any person shall keep or set up a house of ill fame, brothel or bawdy house, for the purpose of prostitution, fornication or lewdness, such a person, upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail, not less than three months, nor more than one year, or by fine not less than one hundred dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars. ORS 651. October 19, 1864.²³

The passing of the state law had little effect on the business of prostitution in Jackson County. As long as the prostitute was discreet, business was good. High-profile gentlemen often frequented these bawdy houses, and police looked the other way. In the Jacksonville newspapers no complaints of prostitution were found, yet Jacksonville passed an ordinance banning prostitution in 1873.²⁴ Police saw prostitution as a victimless crime and a waste of law enforcement time because there were more serious matters to address.²⁵

For the most part Jacksonville's working women abided by the ordinance and set up their brothels outside of town near the mining and logging camps. Ellis Beeson recalled, "An enormous frame building was built on the top of the grade going into Blue Ledge a few miles west of Jacksonville. It was only about, oh, I'd say maybe a couple of hundred yards from the mine ... and the buildings where the miners lived, you know."²⁶ The one-building settlement called Eileen was built as a house of ill fame.²⁷ Beeson explained that, "The girls from Jacksonville would get on the stage there when the

miners got paid at the Blue Ledge Mine, ride the stage out to Eileen, relieve the miners of their money, and then they would come back to Jacksonville."²⁸

Another infamous site just west of Jacksonville was Kanaka Flats, also known as One Horse Town.²⁹ Writing in *Bonville's Western Monthly*, W.W. Fidler explained Kanaka Flats as a place with "evils Satan himself could desire." It was a place filled with minorities including the "Chinese, Spanish, Mexicans, and Negroes."³⁰ Fidler also described the miners' inability to stay away from drinking, gambling, and frequenting the ladies of the night in One Horse Town. He wrote, "It was difficult for a young man to look on a great while at the unseemly carousal without wanting to participate in the festivity's temptations."³¹

The spacious Hotel Eileen was adjacent to the Blue Ledge Mine on Joe Creek at the headwaters of the Applegate basin. One old-timer recalled how the "working-girls" of Jacksonville took the stage to the hotel when it was payday at the mine.

This wide-open, hell-roaring mining camp had whiskey, gambling, and prostitution within every miner's reach. Preacher Thomas Fletcher Royal tried to curb the evils when he saw them, but was unsuccessful, and the hot spot flourished for years.³²

SOHS #5561



Prostitution flourished in many areas in Jackson County. The city of Medford had a problem with brothels and bawdy houses as well, which left citizens demanding the city be cleaned up by the police. Town meetings in July of 1913 featured angry citizens protesting the vice conditions in Medford. The passage of new state laws in 1913 was supposed to end the prostitution problem in Oregon.³³ But City Attorney Bert R. McCabe stated, "the city government and officials were absolutely helpless to suppress prostitution, the council had no authority to order the police to close notorious resorts, and the new law that permits the closing of a disreputable house because of common 'fame' is unconstitutional."³⁴

After the council declared itself powerless to act on the newly approved state and local laws, fifty men present at the meeting walked out of the hall. The council invited attorney Fred W. Mears to produce evidence and describe what he knew of the vice activities in Medford.³⁵ Mears offered ten leading citizens who would testify to the existence of houses of ill fame in Medford. Each witness knew of specific hotels or rooming houses that they were sure were immoral places. A few of the eyewitnesses confirmed each other's testimony by incriminating many of the same places.³⁶ Many of the leading citizens with whom Mears talked in his investigation confirmed their knowledge of these places by common fame.³⁷

One witness was a leading physician in Medford. Mears declared the doctor told him "he had just treated professionally a woman whom he knew to be a prostitute, and that she told him that she had a room in one of these places on Main Street."³⁸ Another prominent citizen was Councilman George H. Millar.³⁹ Millar testified "that the Royal Rooming House on North Bartlett and First streets was a sporting house."⁴⁰ Mears attacked the council, reminding them of their promise to the community to enforce the law. He explained that he had presented more than sufficient evidence for the council to give an order to the police to shut the suspected places down.⁴¹ Mears called for action and suggested that the police charge the proprietors of immoral establishments and not just simply run the residents out of town.⁴²

Several leading citizens voiced their concerns and complaints about the number of houses of ill fame and the lack of prosecution of prostitutes in the Medford area. Many of these citizens were ministers of local churches.⁴³ A 1913 article in *The Medford Sun* titled, "Minister Asserts Recall Will Be Used," quotes a handful of Medford's religious leaders and their Sunday sermons. The Rev. Dr. E. O. Eldridge of the Methodist Church said the movement in Medford to end prostitution was growing in cities all over the world. Eldridge responded to the council's statement that the law was

unconstitutional: "City officials and lawyers should not try to interpret the laws," he asserted, "or inquire into their constitutionality as that is the business of the courts."⁴⁴ Instead, Eldridge demanded that the laws be enforced.

The Rev. R. W. McCullough of the Baptist Church also voiced concerns regarding vice in Medford. McCullough brought up the issue of who had the power to stop the prostitution problem in Medford.⁴⁵ The reverend blamed the laws of Oregon for the problems that city officials were having with controlling vice. McCullough also defended the City Council, saying, "I left the meeting with a feeling of pity for the board, and do not believe they are responsible for any immoral conditions that may exist here." *The Medford Sun* also interviewed the Rev. D. D. Boyle. In his response to the city attorney, Boyle said: "Now we must go home and tell our families and our children we are helpless against vice and immorality and our boys and girls must grow up surrounded by these conditions."⁴⁶

Jackson County newspapers do not mention prostitution again for nearly five years. On July 3, 1918, the city of Medford held a council meeting where "it was decided to have a moral clean-up in Medford."⁴⁷ The council planned another meeting to discuss two ordinances, "one licensing all rooming-houses and hotels, and another giving the local officials authority to make physical examinations of all suspected women, and reporting all cases of sexual diseases."⁴⁸ The actions were suggested by attorney David Robinson representing the War Department. Robinson reported to the crowd attending the council meeting that 62,000 men in the United States Army suffered because of sexual diseases.⁴⁹ He also claimed that, "You may think Medford has a good record in this regard. It hasn't. In the May draft one-third of the infected men from this state contracted the disease in this city." Mayor C.E. "Pop" Gates assured Robinson that the two ordinances, which had been said likely to be laughed out of court at a previous meeting, would be drafted into law and rigidly enforced.⁵⁰



SOHS #9312 DETAIL

The Rev. Dr. E. O. Eldridge, pastor of Medford's Methodist Church, added his voice to those of other citizens and clergy who in the summer of 1913 demanded the Medford City Council order the closure of brothels in the city under a new state law. The fact that the council refused to act, on the theory that the state law was unconstitutional, angered citizens who wanted their city "cleaned up."

Why the lack of arrests and criminal charges in the effort to stop prostitution? Were city officials simply incompetent or was it in their best interest to keep the city the way it was? The scanty arrest records of the time show a serious trend of racism. Jacksonville newspapers noted only one arrest under that city's 1873 ordinance banning prostitution.⁵¹ The lone arrest, involved a Chinese man, who was charged with occupying a bawdy house. No records were found indicating any of the brothel's employees also being arrested.⁵² A scan of Medford newspapers from the early 1900s to the late 1920s reveals only one arrest, and it involved a seventy-two-year-old black man named A. A. Johnson.⁵³ Prostitutes of bawdy houses were often simply run out of town without a trial.⁵⁴

Racism can also be found in the 1870 census of Jacksonville. It lists eighteen Chinese women who were "probably prostitutes." It also states that, "only a few other women, who appeared to be potential prostitutes, were identified."⁵⁵ Was this an obvious stereotype of minority women who listed themselves in the census as homemakers, or were minority women severely limited in employment options? How many European-American women listed themselves as homemakers, and were not classified as prostitutes?

Influential and successful businessmen often frequented the county's brothels and parlor houses. Possibly their political and economic power kept the police away for fear of losing their jobs if they arrested the wrong gentleman. Quite possibly the police were paid to protect the houses from being closed down. There is no record of this anywhere, but the lack of arrests suggests the question. The Rev. McCullough blamed Oregon's "rotten laws" for the lack of prosecution.⁵⁶ Many leading citizens such as the attorney Mears and the Rev. Boyle blamed inaction on the council and the mayor for not ordering the police to clean up vice in Medford.⁵⁷

Still, it wasn't until 1923 that Medford finally passed a city ordinance banning houses of ill fame inside the city limits.⁵⁸ The ordinance reads:

It shall be unlawful for any person to keep, set up, or suffer or permit to be kept or set up, a house of ill-fame, brothel, or bawdy house, for the purpose of prostitution, fornication or lewdness in any house, room, or shop or other building whatsoever, or any boat, booth, or other place which he is the owner, lessor, lessee or to the possession which he is entitled. Ord 1478, section 12, passed August 21, 1923, Disorderly Conduct Misdemeanor.⁵⁹

The immoral conditions seem to have been shut down or the participants forced into more discreet practices with proper legislation and enforcement after the city ordinance in 1923, as the subject came up only rarely in council meetings and local newspapers after that date.⁶⁰

The working women of ill fame in Southern Oregon found it harder to earn a living because Jacksonville, Medford, and Ashland were growing cities with larger, more family-oriented communities. After the passage of county and city ordinances, prostitutes were forced to either become more discreet or change professions altogether. Prostitution was not a glamorous profession to begin with and as a result of the growing communities, women's economic opportunities increased. No

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*Imperial Rooms operated
by Stella the Redhead at
30 N. Front Street in
Medford were well
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to escape the attention of
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the years leading up to
World War I. The same
was true for Big Eva's
Peerless Rooms in
Ashland.*

◆◆◆

longer were women put aside by the entirely male-dominated mining society. Agricultural, industrial, and mercantile jobs spread to the Rogue Valley and with them came a society that needed women for much more important reasons than prostitution. ■

Josh Gary is a senior at Southern Oregon University majoring in history and plans to attend the University of Oregon School of Law.

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Meeting Twenty-first Century Needs: Digitizing the Photo Collection

By Jacque Sunstrand

The Southern Oregon Historical Society's Research Library is proud to announce a partnership with 24-7-digital, a digital imaging and marketing company, that will allow greater public access to the Society's historical photograph and moving image collections.

Drawing on the Society's collection of more than three-quarters of a million images, the Research Library worked with 24-7-digital staff to scan and index an initial 5,000 historical photographic images, which will be marketed to various distributors through 24-7-digital. The scanning process uses a computer to record the visual information in a photograph as digital information that can be stored on a compact disk, which makes it much easier to store, access, and reproduce than having an actual copy print made. Selected news footage shot during the 1920s and 1930s by the California Oregon Power Company (COPCO) has also been scanned and made available in digital format.

Both the stills and the film footage are being marketed to advertising and television companies such as the History Channel and the A&E Network, as well as to textbook publishers such as McGraw-Hill. License fees will help generate operating funds for the Society. It is anticipated that the scanning project will be expanded to more photographs if it is well received. Jerry Skillett, chief executive officer of 24-7-digital, said: "We are excited to be able to work with the Southern Oregon Historical Society, which has some of the finest archival photographic collections in the world."

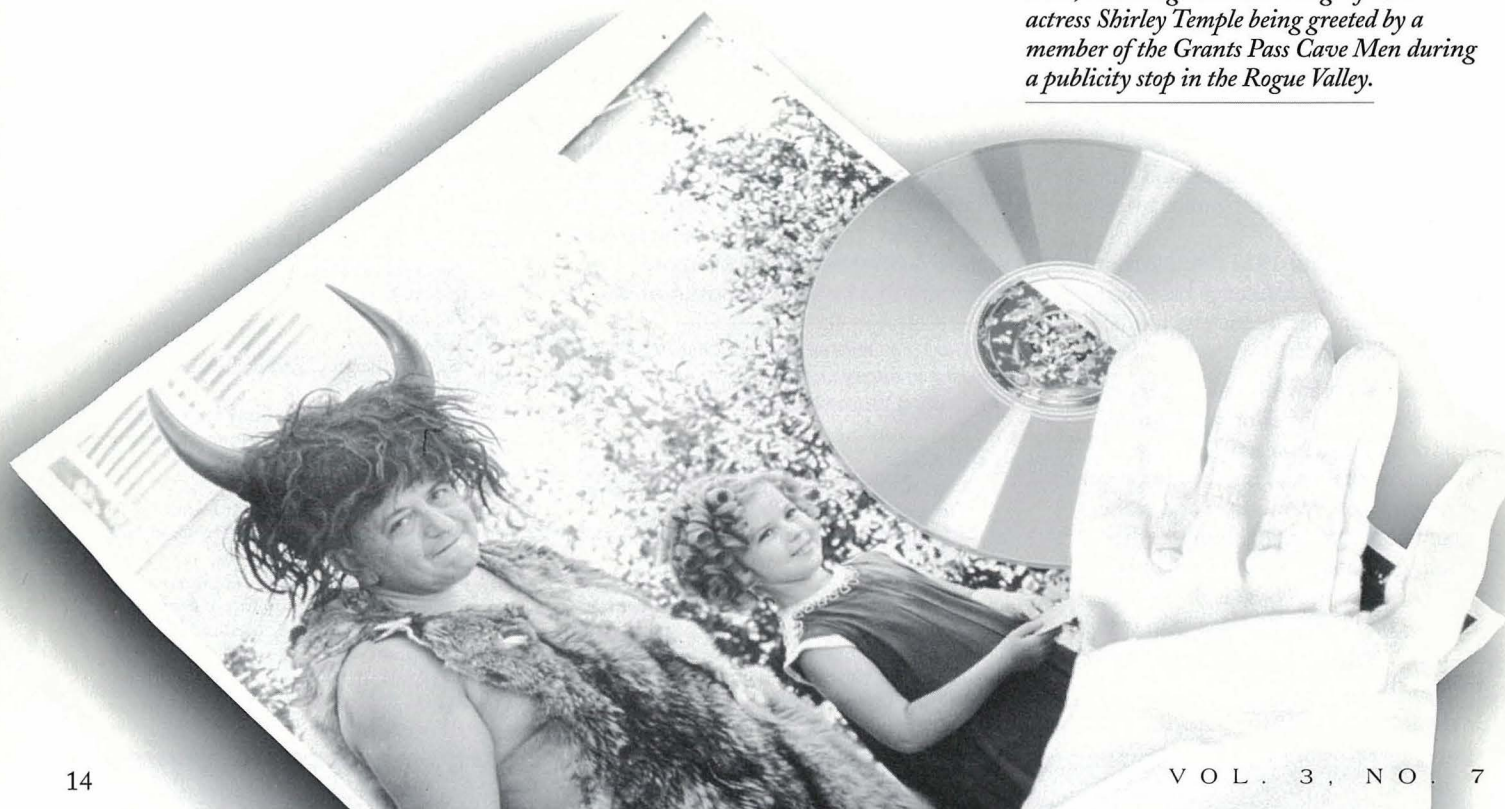
Currently, the footage and the digitized still collection selected for marketing can be viewed on the Internet at the Dynamic Graphics, Inc., Web site, <http://www.dgusa.com>.

This partnership will in no way limit access to or use of the digitized footage or stills by Society members or the general public who are dealing directly with the Research Library.

Future plans for these digitized photographs include making a computerized catalog available in the Research Library. Library patrons wanting to locate photographs of "cowboys" or "log trucks," for example, from among these digitized photographs will be able to search for the images they seek by typing in subject-matter keywords. Researchers must now look manually at each photograph in a needed category, which is time consuming for the researcher and detrimental to the long-term preservation of the photographs. And, since a photograph can only be put away in one place, finding and selecting the needed image has not always been easy. The Society is also considering in the future placing these images on its Web site for Internet searching. 📖

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

The first 5,000 of the Society's collection of more than 750,000 images have been scanned and stored digitally on easy-to-access compact disks, including this 1936 image of child actress Shirley Temple being greeted by a member of the Grants Pass Cave Men during a publicity stop in the Rogue Valley.





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Medford's Lady Liberty Celebrates Fifty Years

By Molly Walker Kerr

IN 1951, EXCITEMENT FILLED THE AIR IN MEDFORD'S new Hawthorne Park. Just a year old, a park had been chosen by city officials as the site for the newly purchased replica of the Statue of Liberty. According to Medford Parks Director Greg Jones, this was indeed an honor, as "Medford's Lady Liberty is one of only thirteen such statues in the United States."¹

How, people still ask, did the relatively small town of Medford manage to obtain one of these replicas? It was all due to the dedication and enthusiasm of the local Crater Lake Council of the Boy Scouts of America. In 1950, several of the Scouts attended the annual Boy Scout Jamboree at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Because the jamboree theme was "Strengthen the Arm of Liberty," the Scouts visited the statue in New York Harbor, where they rededicated themselves to the Scout Oath and Law. Upon their return home, they were bursting with patriotism and wanted to do something for the city of Medford.

Cliff Hanson, then Crater Lake Council executive, heard about a sculptor in Kansas City, Missouri, making 8 1/2-foot-tall copper replicas of the original Lady Liberty. Reginald Parsons, a local orchardist and philanthropist who was also a former national vice president of the Boy Scouts, purchased the statue as a gift to the Scouts and the community. With the help of energetic Scouts and city officials, funds were raised to provide an Arizona flagstone base for the statue and transport it to Medford. Hugh Coleman, then owner of Crater Lake Motors, helped build the base.

On May 7, 1951, in a glorious, although rainy, ceremony following an enthusiastic parade of 400 Scouts, Oregon Gov. Douglas McKay unveiled the statue. He spoke briefly saying, "No other youth organization has contributed more to build the character of our young people than the Boy Scouts. It is fitting to be concerned with liberty in these times."² Parsons was represented at the ceremony by his daughter, Mrs. Mary Parsons Day, and his grandson, Boy Scout Jack Day, who lead the Pledge of Allegiance.³

Orlando J. Hollis, dean of the University of Oregon School of Law, was the principal speaker. He stressed the importance of preserving our liberty as symbolized by the statue and indicated the lighted torch of enlightenment is a vital part of that symbolism.⁴

In keeping with the speeches, the Scouts rededicated themselves once again, as they had the previous year at

the foot of the original statue in New York Harbor.

Also participating in the ceremony were the Rev. D. Kirkland West of the First Presbyterian Church, who offered the invocation; H. D. Christensen, president of the local Scout Council; Medford Mayor Diamond Flynn; City Council Parks Chairman Harold Frye; master of ceremonies Frank Van Dyke; and the Medford High School band.⁵

A plaque on the base of the statue states, "With the faith and courage of their forefathers who made possible the freedom of the United States, the Boy Scouts of America dedicate this copy of the Statue of Liberty as a pledge of everlasting fidelity and loyalty."⁶

For a time, the elegant statue was the delight of Medford, but over the years, like many statues, it succumbed to the insults of pigeons and vandals. The once-polished copper surface became dull and dented, and some of the spikes were missing from the headdress, broken off by miscreants. With the patriotic post-World War II years behind them, people had gone on with their lives. The statue stood forlorn and forgotten until 1986, when the original Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor celebrated its 100th birthday.⁷

Once again the Boy Scouts came to the rescue and helped raise funds to restore the replica. Scouts from the original dedication were invited to attend a rededication held October 28, 1986. The ceremony took place amid bands, flags and cheering crowds. Lady Liberty stood once again in shining splendor, restored to her original glory. Hanson, who chaired the rededication ceremony, said, "I appreciated being a part of both ceremonies. It was a thrill to do it again."

Fifty years after her arrival, the city Parks Department still keeps a watchful eye on the statue. Surrounded by roses planted by the Medford Rose Society, Lady Liberty lifts her torch at the entrance to Hawthorne Park, a symbol of grace, honor, and freedom. 🌹

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ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Greg Jones, July 1994.
2. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 8 May 1951, p. 11
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 8 May 1951, p. 1.
6. Ibid.
7. Molly Walker Kerr, "Hawthorne Park, Medford's Downtown Sanctuary," *Oregon Parks*, January/February 1995, p. 33.

