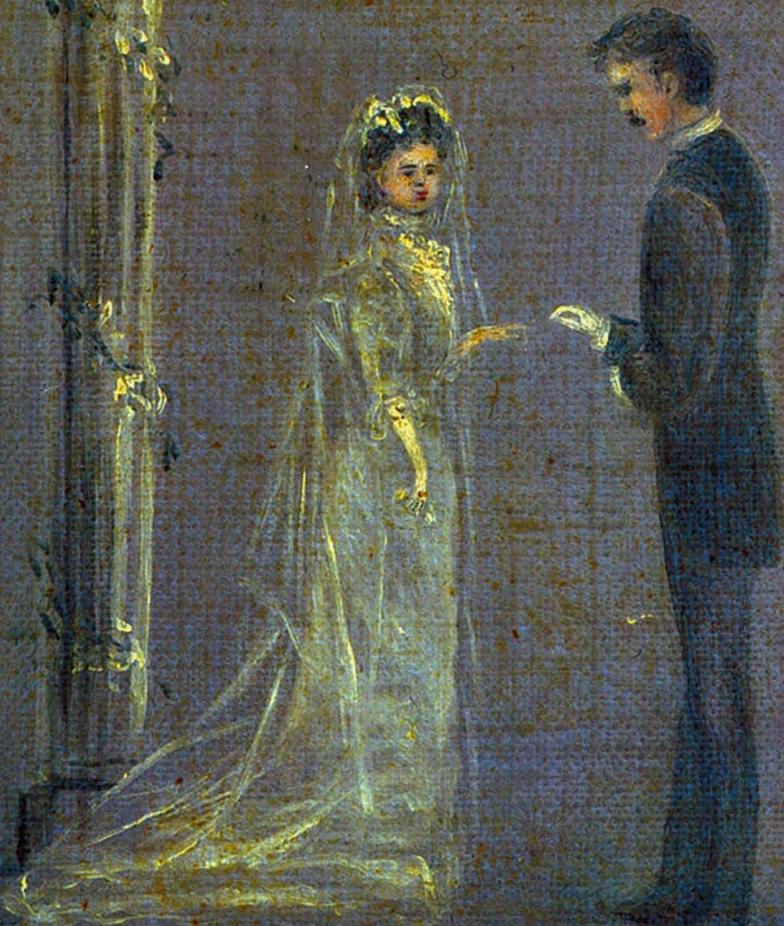


SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

December 2001 Vol. 3, No. 12

Today



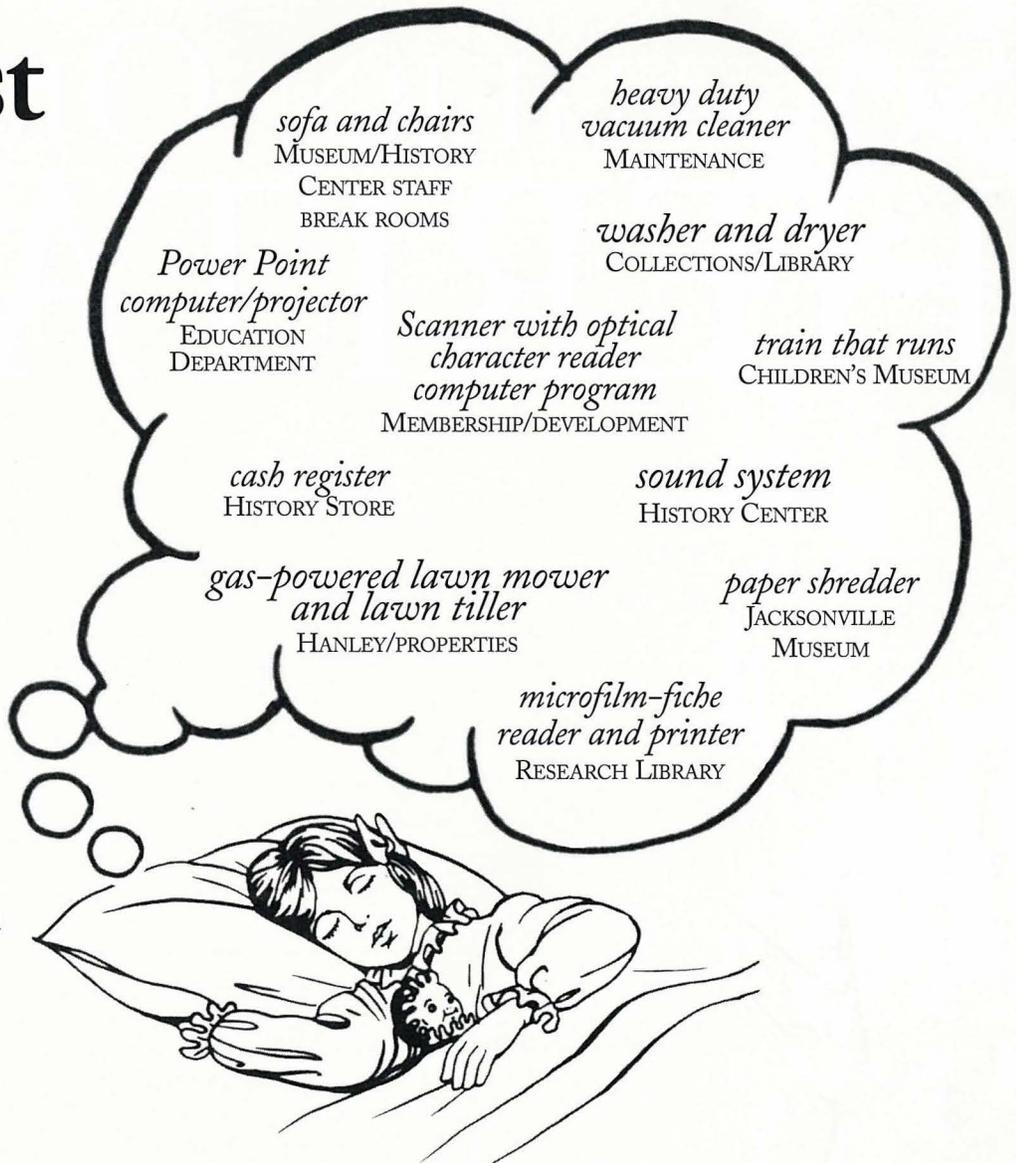
WHAT WEDDINGS WERE LIKE IN THE LATE 1800S
COLUMNIST'S WIT TICKLED ROGUE VALLEY READERS
EIGHT MILLION CHRISTMAS TREES FROM OREGON



Wish List

by SOHS Staff

AS YOU CAN SEE, STAFF IN Society departments don't have visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads—they dream of: stackable washer and dryer to clean sheets for collections/rags for maintenance/gloves for research library); heavy duty vacuum cleaner; lawn tiller and gas-powered lawn mower; microfilm-fiche reader and printer; cash register (extra for sidewalk sales or use at the History Center); power point computer and projector; sound system; sofa and chairs; paper shredder; optical character reader computer program; a model train (train in use—second one since opening the museum—is running out of steam). If you have any of these items taking up needed space in your office or home and are in a position to donate something, call Brad Linder at (541) 773-6536. Tax rates will drop in 2002, so a deductible donation made by the end of December 2001 will be worth more than one made next year.



COME & ENJOY
OLD-FASHIONED
CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE

*Experience the sights, sounds, and smells of
Christmas past*

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE
California & Laurelwood streets, Jacksonville

&

CATHOLIC RECTORY
202 N. 4th street, Jacksonville

DATES

BEEKMAN HOUSE
December
1, 2, 8, 9, 15 & 16
12-4pm

CATHOLIC RECTORY
December 8, 9, 15 & 16
12-4pm

FREE Admission

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Join us at the Children's Museum for a VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

SATURDAYS IN DECEMBER

- DECEMBER 1 • Papermaking
- DECEMBER 8 • Christmas Card Stenciling
- DECEMBER 15 • Printing Press Cards
- DECEMBER 15 • Storytime with Mrs. Claus
- DECEMBER 16 • A special day with Mrs. Claus

FAMILY EVENTS

1-4 pm
FREE Admission
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
5th & C streets, Jacksonville



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.

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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Today

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MS #60

ON THE COVER

The cover painting depicts the 1882 wedding of Dr. James Robinson and Sarah Matilda "Tillie" Miller, daughter of Jacksonville gunsmith John Miller. The couple later became the parents of artist Dorland Robinson.



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A History of Season's Greetings

by Bill Miller

IN LONDON during the Christmas of 1843, friends of Sir Henry Cole opened envelopes containing a hand-colored lithograph on a stiff piece of cardboard. Now regarded as the world's first commercial Christmas card, Cole's idea of an easy greeting for the season was designed by his friend, English artist John Horsley. Graphic images at each end of the rectangular card illustrated the religious virtues of feeding and clothing the poor. The message, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You," was printed in the middle, and above it, a picture of a family celebrating Christmas with raised wine glasses. Temperance groups said the card was using Christmas to glorify drunkenness and demanded the card not be sold.

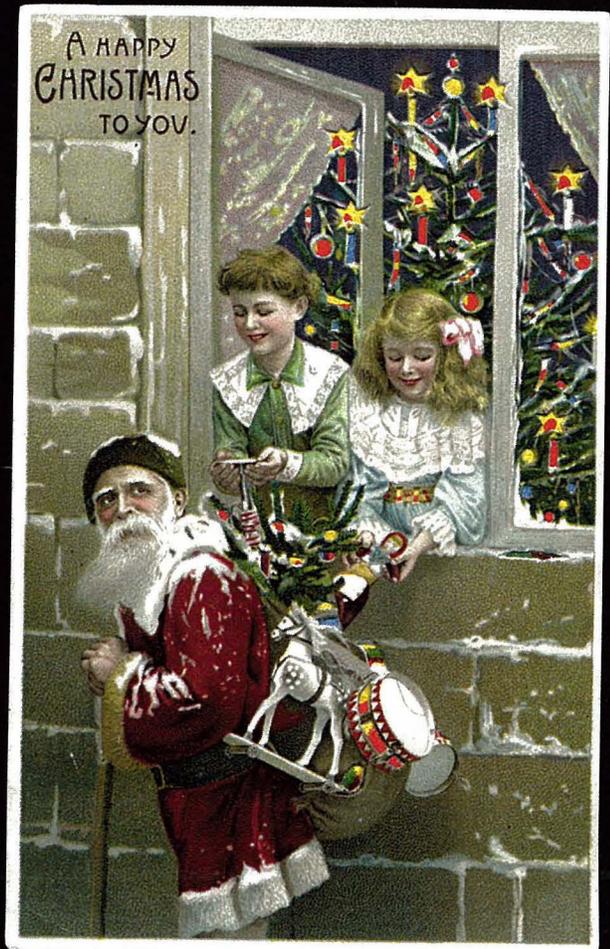
In the late 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century, sending and collecting postcards became a

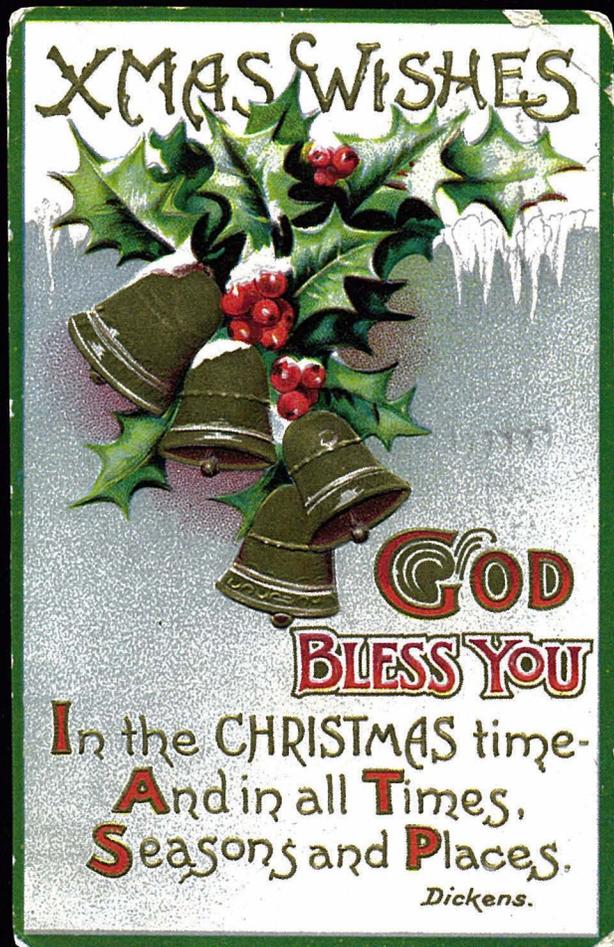
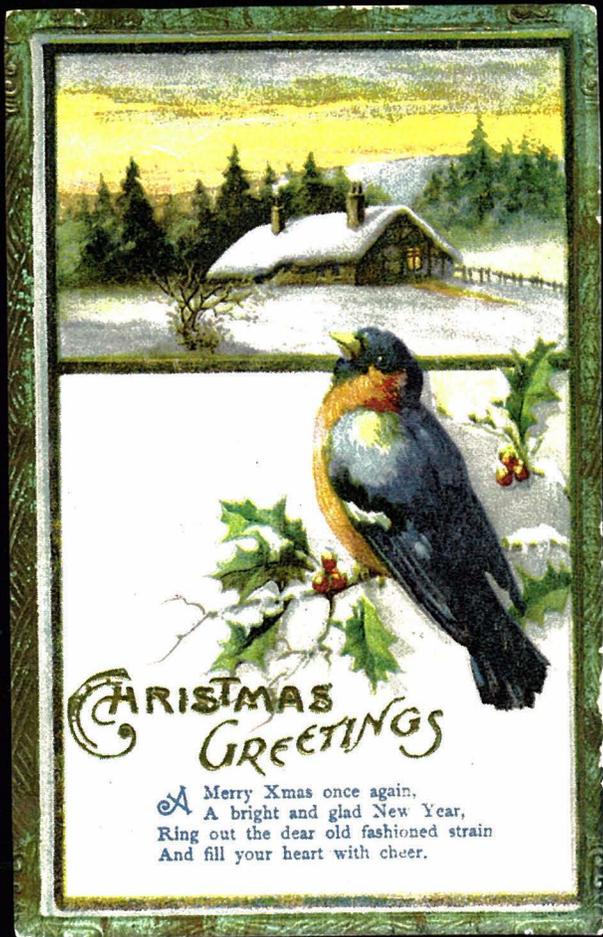
national craze in the United States. Photographs and illustrations of every conceivable subject, including Christmas, soon flooded the market. Surprisingly, the most economical cards sold in the United States were printed in Europe, with the majority coming from Germany. The cards on these pages are examples of this period, which is known as "The Golden Age of Postcards" [ca. 1902 - 1918]. With the outbreak of World War I, European cards became scarce and the enthusiasm for sending postcards dwindled. Christmas cards went back into envelopes and the holiday greeting card tradition continued.¹

In its collections, the Society has hundreds of postcards, from varied years and categorized by subject.

ENDNOTES

1. Hallmark Cards, <<http://www.pressroom.hallmark.com>>; Postcard Collectors, <<http://www.postcard.co.uk>>; Victorian Journal, <<http://www.livingvictorian.com>>; A Victorian Christmas, <<http://www.victoriana.com>> (4 October 2001).





SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 

Things To Do in December

PROGRAMS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	<u>DATE & TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Ornaments & Dreidels; free
Paper Making	Sat., Dec. 1, 1 - 4 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Colorful recycled paper; free with admission
Card Stenciling	Sat., Dec. 8, 1 - 4 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Create holiday cards; free with admission
Antique Printing Press Cards	Sat., Dec. 15, 1 - 4 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Old-fashioned cards; free with admission
A Visit With Mrs. Claus	Sat., Dec. 15 & Sun., Dec. 16; 1 - 4 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Christmas stories; free with admission
Graham Cracker Houses	Wed., Dec. 19, 10 - 11 a.m. & 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Workshop. Fee \$5; \$4 members. Ages 3-6
Open House	Sat. & Sun., Dec. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 & 16; noon - 4 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Traditional Victorian Christmas; fee
Open House	Sat. & Sun., Dec. 8, 9, 15, & 16; noon - 4 p.m.	CATHOLIC RECTORY	Traditional Victorian Christmas; free

PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

DECEMBER CRAFT OF THE MONTH *Ornaments and Dreidels*

Families are invited to celebrate the holiday season by creating an ornament or dreidel to decorate the Children's Museum tree or their own trees. Free. Children's Museum.

GRAHAM CRACKER HOUSES

Children ages 3-6 can create a traditional holiday craft to eat when they are finished by decorating tasty graham cracker houses with frosting and candy! Preregistration is required by December 14.

BEEKMAN OPEN HOUSE

Add a touch of nostalgia to your holidays by experiencing a traditional Victorian Christmas. Interpreters will answer questions about holiday traditions and share cookies fresh from the woodstove. Fee: \$1.00 for ages six and up; free for Society members and ages five and under.

CATHOLIC RECTORY OPEN HOUSE

The Gold Diggers' Guild will host tours of the Rectory, decorated with Christmas finery.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Volunteers of the Year: Alan Neal & Pat Stancel; Rookie of the Year: Fran Short; Youth Rookies of the Year: Alitia Monasmith & Holly Sutton; Youth Volunteers of the Year: Maisey Shroy & John Thompson; Gold Digger Extraordinaire: Nancy Hamlin; Quilter Extraordinaire, Pat Hume; 10-year Achievement: Lee Chamberlain; Extended Service: Janie Stewart. Volunteers who have served 1000 hours: Vicky Beyer, Jerry Doran & Janie Stewart; 2000 hours: Wes Downing; 3000 hours: Marian Place.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM: closed December 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and January 1.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: closed December 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and January 1.

HISTORY CENTER: closed December 24 - 31, & January 1.

RESEARCH LIBRARY: closed December 24 - 31, & January 1 - 4.

THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO: close for the winter December 16.

THE HISTORY STORE will add special hours on December 24, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and hold an *after-Christmas sale* December 26 through January 13 on normal business days & hours.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR HISTORY BUFFS

Looking for unique and nostalgic gifts for the history lovers on your Christmas list?

• **SCREENSAVER** • \$12.00

The Society has just produced two **screensaver** for PCs. Volume 1, *Rogue Valley Memories*, contains 25 historic images from Society collections, representing the people and scenery of Southern Oregon. Volume 2, containing 30 historic images, commemorates the Centennial of Crater Lake National Park. Both volumes feature 18 transition effects and can be used to create desktop wallpaper.

• **JACKSON COUNTY 1910** map reproduction • \$5.00

• **CITY OF ASHLAND, 1910** map reproduction • \$5.00

• **FOSTER AND GUNNELL'S MINING MAP OF SOUTHERN OREGON, 1904** reproduction • \$5.00

• **AN AIR MINDED CITY** video • \$24.95; Society members; \$19.95

• **A CENTURY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ART IN SOUTHERN OREGON: A Directory of Jackson County Photographers, 1856-1956** • \$5.00

Mail orders add \$3.00 for shipping & handling.

• **ATLAS OF OREGON** • \$100 hardbound, \$60 soft cover; membership discount applies • Purchase at History Store only.

EXHIBITS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MUSEUM HOURS</u>
Century of Photography: 1856-1956	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed.- Sat., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
History in the Making: Jackson County Milestones Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker		Sunday, noon - 5 p.m.
Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience		
Hall of Justice		
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.

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.

"HISTORY IN THE MAKING: JACKSON COUNTY MILESTONES"

The spirit of America is captured in the history of Jackson County. Follow in the footsteps of early residents who experienced the five historic milestones explored in this colorful new exhibit. You'll be inspired by the pioneers who arrived by sea or land; see the gold rush from the perspective of Chinese sojourners; discover the local impact of the railroad and automobile, and more. Artifacts include rare Chinese archaeological material and an early Coleman stove. A 1940s jukebox plays music and oral histories describing automobile travel experiences.

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 this former Jackson County Courthouse.



THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO

Members of the Rogue Valley Handweavers, Far Out Fibers, and the Saturday Handweavers Guild will demonstrate the traditional art forms of spinning and weaving at the Third St. Artisans' Studio, Third and California streets, Jacksonville. Closes for the winter December 16.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Everyone enjoys exploring the home and work settings from the 1850s to the 1930s through "hands-on-history."

HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS:

December 5, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- H. L. Whited House
321 N. MAIN, ASHLAND

December 5, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Schuler Apartment Building
38 N. OAKDALE, MEDFORD

December 8, noon to 4 p.m.

- Charles T. and Mary Sweeney
2336 TABLE ROCK ROAD, MEDFORD
- State Historic Preservation Office
prd.state.or.us - click on "publication"
PHONE: 503-378-4168
- Southern Oregon Historical Society
PHONE: 541-773-6536

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITES

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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
(open by special appointment)
(541) 773-2675

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE
California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville

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

JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE
3rd and California, Jacksonville
Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sun., noon to 5 p.m.
Special holiday hours

THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO
3rd and California, Jacksonville
Sat., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Closes for winter Dec. 16

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!*

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



Calico and Pearls:

Getting Married in Southern Oregon, 1850-1890

by Sherry Wachter

THERE'S AN OLD TRADITION ASSOCIATED with weddings. The bride's friends gather one day, each bringing pieces of cloth—old dresses, blankets, shawls, shirts, small swatches on which they have embroidered pictures—anything to trigger a memory. Together, they piece the quilt, then fill and back it, and present the finished quilt to the bride on her wedding day—a remembrance of the life she is leaving as she begins life as a married woman.

As I read the newspaper and journal accounts of Southern Oregon weddings in the last half of the nineteenth century, I found myself thinking of a memory quilt—a patchwork of rich and poor, simple and elegant, that somehow blends together to create a fascinating composite. Generalizations are difficult, largely because the area changed so quickly and radically between 1850 and 1890. In the beginning,

Jacksonville was nearly inaccessible—it was the living embodiment of those “you can't get there from here” jokes. The only way in was on horseback and—with great difficulty—by wagon. The only reason for traveling to Jacksonville was gold, and later, farmland. By the late 1840s the dangerous Applegate Trail was in use, but by the mid-1880s the railroad had come to Southern Oregon—and it had become a different, more civilized place altogether.

Weddings in Southern Oregon cannot be addressed as a single unified subject, any more than a patchwork quilt is created from a single sheet of fabric. But, like a quilt, it is possible to assemble the pieces, stitch them together—and discover that they have become more than the sum of their parts. They yield a unique look at an otherwise invisible bit of Southern Oregon's history. Here, then, is a memory quilt of weddings.

Who Can Find a Virtuous Woman?

Southern Oregon was very much a man's world in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its inaccessibility made wagon travel difficult, even after the Applegate Trail was blazed. Moreover, one of the primary lures in Jackson County was gold, and gold prospecting and mining was very much a man's world.

Nevertheless, gold mining certainly wasn't the only game in town; increasing numbers of settlers sought land, not gold, and for settlers, a wife was an asset in many ways. First and most obviously, of course, a wife provided companionship. Claims could be remote, and a wife provided someone to talk to and to love. Second, married men could claim land in their wives' names as well as their own, which meant a married man was eligible for twice as much free land. Third, a wife provided labor not only in the work she could do herself, but in the children the couple produced.

Some men brought their wives with them. Many, though, found themselves competing for a disproportionately tiny number of women. In 1859 John Watson, a lovelorn young settler, complained to his brother that in Siskiyou County, California, there were only fifty "young marriageable ladies" out of a population he estimated at 10,000.¹ He went on to complain that Humbug Creek in the Applegate suffered from the same shortage. He finished sadly that out of a population of 500 there were "very few ladies and what there is—is all married but one."²

The upshot of this, of course, is that the competition for marriageable women—girls and widows both—was fierce. Watson writes that young men frequently gave the women they hoped to win gifts—substantial gifts such as clothing. Some gave white dresses; some provided a full set of clothes, head to toe. Watson himself gave a "veil, cost 5 dollars, a riding skirt cost 3 dollars, and ... was out about 2 dollars for wine, lemonade, and such like trash, 22 dollars in all." Added to the gifts, of course were the entrance fees charged for balls and even parties—twelve dollars for a ball, and two to three dollars for a smaller party.³ If the price of a "virtuous woman" wasn't exactly "far above rubies," winning a wife was still an expensive business.

Some young men resorted to newspaper advertisements. Others, like Watson, decided to backtrack a bit—head home, find a girl, marry her, and then return. By the 1880s, wife hunting became easier, though, and weddings had become frequent occasions in Southern Oregon—times for celebration, for visiting, and for fun.

Popping the Question: The Rules

There is little documentary evidence describing the ways in which marriage was proposed in Southern Oregon in the second half of the nineteenth century. Numerous etiquette books existed—and most dealt with courtship, proposals, and weddings in convoluted detail.

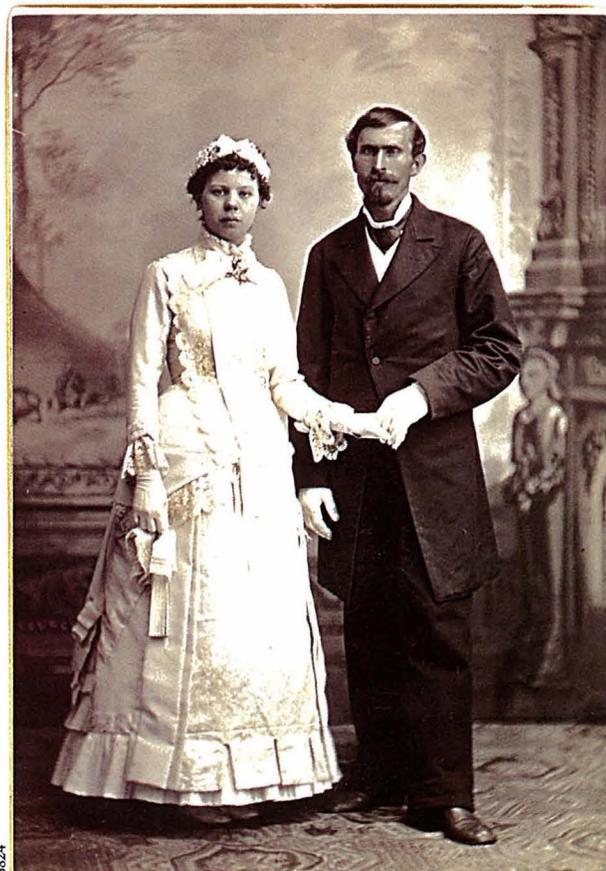
The etiquette books were written for young men and women who lived in a place where slow, leisurely courtship was possible, where one left calling cards, strolled to church, attended socials, and had the latitude to slowly build a relationship. For much of its history Southern Oregon was not that kind of place. The fierce competition for women, the relative difficulty many faced in meeting a potential mate, and the hardships of

life would seem to dictate a very different style of courtship. Watson's letters seem to bear this out.

However, this is not to say that etiquette didn't matter. Newspaper coverage of the day describes numerous weddings reflecting the influence of the etiquette books. It's safe to assume that the rules of polite society regarding proposals got equal attention.

Here, then, is how young men of Southern Oregon were advised by one etiquette book to propose: "Never lose an opportunity. What can a woman think of a lover who neglects one? In every case, it is fair to presume that when a woman gives a man an opportunity, she expects him to improve it; and though he may tremble, and feel his pulses throbbing and tingling through every limb; though his heart is filling up his throat, and his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, yet the awful question must be asked—the fearful task accomplished."⁴

"A point is often carried by taking a thing for granted. A gentleman paying particular attention to a lady says, 'Well, Mary, when is the happy day?' 'What day, pray?



SOHS #16824

L. Britt Photo.

Joshua Neathammer and Emma Haymond, July 2, 1884, Gold Hill.

Love Conquers All?

Even Mark Twain took a crack at writing an etiquette book. His advice includes a set formula for proposing under great difficulty: He assures his readers that the form fits any number of adverse conditions: hurricane, earthquake, runaway team, railway collision, and—something young men of Jacksonville would have done particularly well to note, given the town's fiery history—fire.

“Form of Offer of Marriage from Young Gentleman to a No. 2

[persons toward whom the operator feels a tender sentiment, but has not yet declared himself], during Process of Extracting Her from Boarding House on Fire and Conveying Her out of the Same in His Arms:

Ah, I supplicate, I beseech, I implore thee, dearest [here insert given name of party only], to have compassion upon thy poor kneeling henchman [do not attempt to kneel – this is but a figure of speech] and deign to be his! Deign to engender into bonds of tenderness those bonds of chill conventionality which enfold us in their silken tie, and he will ever bless the day thou didst accept the refuge of his arms in fleeing the fiery doom which, with crimson wing, o'ershadows us.”⁶

she asks, with a conscious blush. ‘Why, everybody knows that we are going to get married.’ ... Cornered in this fashion, there is no retreat,” the author concludes reassuringly.⁵

We’ll never know exactly how young men in Southern Oregon popped the question, but pop it they did; by the late 1870s and early 1880s weddings were occurring with some regularity, judging by the frequency of newspaper announcements and the diaries of local clergy.

The Wedding:

Get Me To The Church On Time—Or Not

Grandma used to have an expression she used in talking about weddings she’d attended: “They had a nice church wedding,” she’d say. The expression doesn’t mean much today, since almost everybody has a “church wedding.” For brides and grooms in Jackson County, however, a church wedding was truly worthy of comment—and comments there were (see page 12, Making the News). Most weddings took place at home, and rated little more than a three-line notice in the newspaper. Little can be deduced from the notices, other than the legal fact of the ceremony. Fortunately, though, Southern Oregon had the Reverend Moses A. Williams, a circuit-riding preacher and a faithful diarist, to document weddings.

Williams’s diary provides a glimpse at the small, private marriages that didn’t make the paper. These weddings were shoehorned in around a week of work—and around Williams’s visits. Take, for example, the reverend’s records for three Wednesdays in his life in the 1880s:

“Morning work. While studying a messenger came from Jacksonville to have me go and preach at the funeral of Valentine S.

Rools. So I hastened, got my horse and was off, and reached Jacksonville a little before

12 N. Had to wait till 3 p.m. before

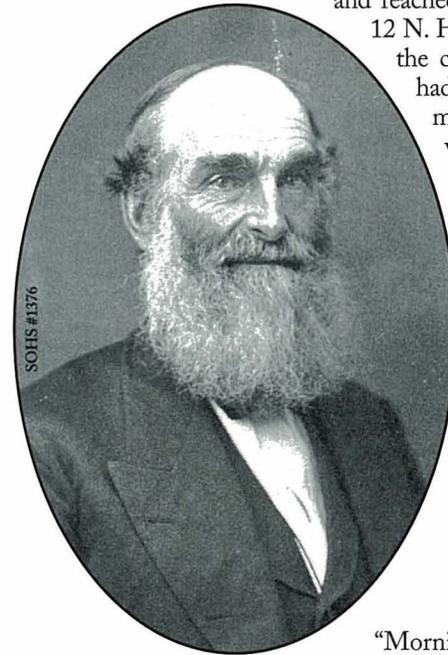
the corpse was brought, as they had some 8 miles to come. I

made a practical talk. Then waited till nearly dark to

unite two young people in marriage, see the Register.

Returned home, milked my cow, or rather, let the calf do it, fed the horses

and was in the house by 10 p.m.”⁷



Reverend Moses Allen Williams squeezed in simple wedding ceremonies between working on sermons and hoeing weeds in his garden, and faithfully kept a diary of his day's work.

“Morning work. After breakfast hoed weeds in the upper lot. Then studied a sermon for a long while. After dinner a Mr. Messenger and Miss Marsh came and united them in marriage. Lord, bless the union and guide them by Thy counsel. Read and finished the Century.”⁸

“At Rock Point. Walked up to Mr. Jacob Neathammer’s and joined his two daughters in marriage. Miss Sarah, the elder, to Mr. Eugene S. Trumble, and Miss Ellen E., the younger, to Mr. Julius C. Trumble, two brothers and two sisters. Had a good breakfast, or rather, an early dinner. Then I rode up to Gold Hill station, and after waiting some time, a gravel train came along. They allowed me to go aboard, and brought me up to Medford before sundown. Talking a little while with Mrs. Johnson about Sabbath School arrangements, I walked home two miles before dark.”⁹

Weddings were important—but Williams’s diary probably reflects the reality for many: they were simply another part of life, to be done after “morning work,” and fitted in around funerals, devotionals, farming, and pastoral calls. Very occasionally he describes a larger wedding, making note of a “sumptuous” [sic] meal, a large number of guests, his talk, or his sleeping arrangements. He never describes a dress. It’s easy to put this down to the bias of a minister whose mind was on “higher” things (or “morning work,” for that matter), and that may certainly be part of the explanation. However, his silence on wedding attire reflects another reality of many Southern Oregon weddings: the bride’s dress would be her best—but not necessarily new or made for the occasion, quite likely not white, and almost certainly not destined to be put away as a keepsake after only one wearing.¹⁰ The brides who came riding up to Reverend Williams’s door were dressed in prints, in plaids, in calico, in wool. They dressed in their best.

These weddings were frequently attended by few guests, if any. That is not to say, though, that they weren’t celebrated. While Williams has nothing to say about dresses, he frequently mentions the food served up afterwards. In this, also, he echoes a central theme of Southern Oregon weddings: no wedding was complete without food. He refers to the meal following a wedding at the Bybees’ home as a “most sumptuous supper of considerably over a hundred, probably, and there was a great clatter of merry tongues.”¹¹ After Charles Nickell and Ella Prim’s wedding he says, “we all repaired to Judge Prim’s residence for a truly grand supper.”¹² After he married Dr. J.M. Robinson and Sarah Matilda Miller, he joined the other invited guests—about 150 people—at a “sumptuous feast of good things.”¹³

If food and friends were two of the most important elements in Southern Oregon weddings, a third was gifts. As today, the gifts at weddings depended on the wealth of the bride and groom—and the guests. Williams seldom mentions gifts in his journal. After marrying Isaac Burriss and Frosine Erb at his home he notes, “Gave them some nice grapes after the ceremony,” thus killing two birds with one stone, so to speak; he provides the food and the gift in one bunch of grapes.¹⁴ After the Robinson-Miller wedding, Williams writes, “A great many presents were made to the bridal pair: 3 sacks of flour, a vast variety of groceries, corn meal, oysters, coffee, tea, wash tub, wash board, soap, clothes-line, clothes-pins, bucksaw, wood horse, axe, broom, mop, lamps, silver, dishes, ... knives, forks, spoons, and many other things which must have

cost much.”¹⁵ The Robinsons’ gifts quite likely reflect the gifts that many couples received—practical things, suitable for establishing a home.

Quiet But Tasteful

While most home weddings are only recorded in three-line notices and Reverend Williams’s diary, some made the pages of the *Ashland Tidings*. Perhaps the participants were a little better off financially, better connected, more savvy about inviting the newspaper reporter, or simply more newsworthy. At any rate, these weddings made the news, even though they were small, relatively private occasions. They provide tantalizing glimpses into personalities—and into what Southern Oregon aspired to in a wedding. Whether this reflected the reality of weddings or not is something of a question. Take, for example, the Tolman/Anderson wedding:

J. C. Tolman, Jr. son of Surveyor General Tolman, and Miss Minnie, daughter of E.K. Anderson, were married last Tuesday, Sept. 23rd, at the Anderson Homestead on Wagner creek, [sic] The wedding company comprised some thirty guests, who were nearly all relatives of the allied families. Elaborate preparation had been made for the occasion, and everything connected with it was consummated with unusual style and elegance. The venerable minister Rev. M. A. Williams, himself a bran [sic] new bridegroom, performed the marriage ceremony, and the bride and groom were supported by Mr. F. M. Drake and Miss Hattie Tolman, as “best man” and bridesmaid, respectively. Shortly after eleven o’clock a.m., the vows were spoken, and when the rush of congratulations had subsided, the guests, with keen Southern Oregon appetites, were invited out to an elegant dinner.

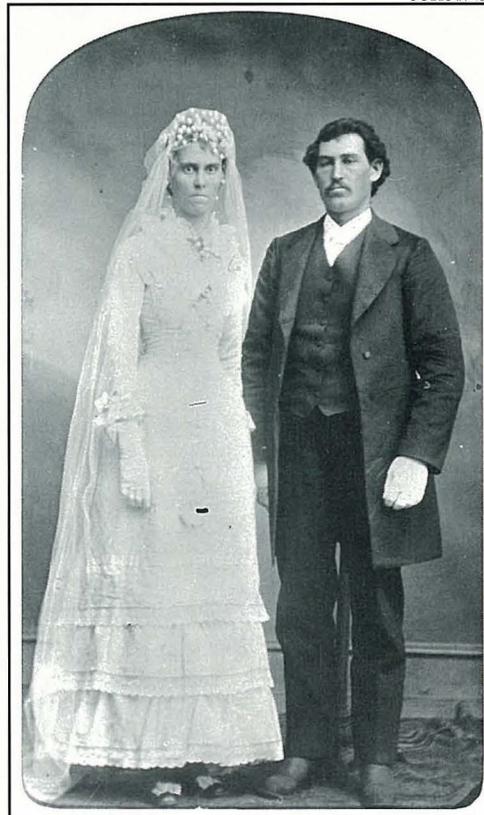
The costume of the bride was rich and elaborate, and there was a large number of costly and elegant bridal presents. In the afternoon the bridal party drove to town and were served lunch at the residence of Gen. Tolman, after which they started upon the evening train for Portland. The party, besides the bride and groom, included Surveyor General Tolman and wife, Mr. E. K. Anderson and wife and Miss Ida Tolman. About the first of October the bride and groom, in company with Judge Tolman and wife will start for Iowa for a two months’ visit, after which they will return to Portland to reside.¹⁶

SOHS #8059



Above, Nels Hanson and Hilda Anderson, October 30, 1894. Hilda made her own wedding gown—in black. Below, Jeff and Jennifer Wilson

SOHS #9430



The *Tidings* coverage may reflect the reality—possibly Minnie and her family managed to put together an elaborate, elegant, stylish event out at the homestead, and possibly her guests brought her elegant and costly gifts, as she was marrying into a family of some affluence—but one wonders, particularly since nearly all wedding coverage uses the identical words: The bride and groom are loved by friends, co-workers and family; they receive many elegant (and expensive) gifts; they serve an elegant meal following a stylish wedding the likes of which has seldom been seen in Southern Oregon; and the happy couple will be setting up housekeeping in Ashland, or Jacksonville, or Washington Territory, or Portland. (The pioneering spirit was far from dead, it seems). One is inclined to suspect an idealizing of actual events to suit the subjects of the story, rather than reality. Certainly brides then, as now, wanted their wedding days to be special, and seem to have put a great deal of effort into ensuring that happened.

Making the News:

Nice Church Weddings

While most weddings were small affairs held at home, there were others—weddings that read like fairy tale extravaganzas. If there's some question about editorial accuracy in the shorter articles, the details included in the longer articles leave no doubt that, for a few brides, their wedding days truly were fabulous. For those few brides, coverage in the paper meant more than just a generalized, idealized paragraph; it meant a preliminary announcement a week or two prior to the wedding as well as a column in the paper following the wedding including a detailed discussion of the couple's background, their families, friends who helped decorate, the decorations themselves, the bride's dress, the bridesmaids' dresses, the bride's mother's dress, occasionally the groom's mother's dress, the wedding service, the meal following the ceremony, the party, the entertainment, the honeymoon (if any), and a gift by gift list of what one presumes were the more impressive presents,

complete with the names of the givers (see sidebar). In this spate of wedding details, the groom is lucky to get two lines—generally describing his attire as “standard” or “customary,” with maybe a passing reference to his boutonniere, or his “happy smile.”

While some weddings made the news because they were epic productions, others made the news simply because they were newsworthy, such as this one, reported in the *Tidings* in 1884:

A marriage occurred at Eagle Point last Thursday night in which the respective ages of the bride and groom were rather remarkable. H.G. Schock, the bridegroom, is fifty-four years of age and Mrs. Wooley, the blushing bride, is eighty-three. A dance followed the wedding ceremony, this bride participating with high glee. This is hardly a case of 'January and May.' Perhaps we might call it October and December.¹⁷

And that, perhaps, is the key—Southern Oregon weddings were about people—rich, poor, old, young. They were times of celebration, and—as is the case today—the form that celebration took was as individual as the couples involved. 🏠



From left, the Hoaglands, the Pankeys, and the Walkers.

SOHS #4742

SOHS #8576



*Gladys Sanford and George Rose,
April 24, 1907.*



Eubanks-Russell

Here is how the *Ashland Tidings* reported the 1884 wedding of J.S. Eubanks, Jr., and Mollie Russell:

The Presbyterian church was filled early last Wednesday evening, to witness the wedding ceremony of Mr. J.S. Eubanks, Jr., and Miss Mollie Russell. About the altar were beautiful and tasteful decorations of roses, ferns, and myrtle, the monogram "E.R." being conspicuous. From the center of a magnificent arch of rich-colored roses was suspended the wedding bell, symmetrically formed of pure white roses. About half past eight the wedding march was sounded. ... The bridal couple entered the church, accompanied by Miss Mattie Russell with J.C. Eubanks and Miss Annie Anderson with H.T. Chitwood, as bridesmaids and groomsmen, respectively. Beneath the floral arch and bell [the couple, united] by the authority and with the established ceremony of the church, were pronounced man and wife by the Rev. Robert McLean. At the conclusion of the ceremony the bridal party of six immediately left the church, while the audience remained to hear a few graceful remarks, appropriate to the occasion, from the minister. The wedding guests then gathered at the residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Russell, where the reception was held.

The costumes of the bride and bridesmaids should no doubt be described to please the lady readers of the *Tidings*, but it would require a pencil less clumsy than ours in society matters to do them justice. All were beautiful. That of the fair

bride was of white silk, elaborate, rich, and exceedingly becoming to the wearer.

The wedding supper was a profusion of delicate viands, choice fruits, elegant cakes of varied and artistic designs, (such as Mrs. Russell is famous for making) and all the et ceteras known to the ladies who take pride in excelling upon such occasions.

About half-past ten o'clock the band appeared in front of the house, to serenade their chief officer and his bride. After playing several pieces, they were invited in to supper, but politely declined the invitation.

The guests of the evening were handsomely entertained, and we can safely say that all united in wishing the future of the happy young couple to be as joyous and bright as this event was brilliant and pleasant.

The display of bridal presents was unusually large and choice, many handsome and valuable gifts being received. Following is as nearly complete a list as could be made at the time:

Family Bible, *Mrs. J.S. Eubanks*
Do. [ditto, meaning the same],
Mrs. J.H. Russell
Pair white blankets, *J.S. Eubanks*
Real lace curtains, *Nellie Russell*
Lace lambrequins, *Mrs. J.D. Fountain*
Mirror, *Mattie and Hortense Russell*
Stained glass water set, *J.B. Russell*
Silver knives, napkins, and "splasher,"
Mrs. Pauline Rea
Solid silver spoons and forks,
Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Thompson
Bed room set, *J.C., G.G., and C.F. Eubanks*
Panel picture, *Miss Lizzie Dunn*
Do. *Miss Annie Anderson*
Crazy-work sofa pillow, *Mrs. E.F. Rockfellow*
Hat for bride, *Miss Adah Horton*
Seth Thomas clock, *Ed. Donaghy*
Plush-trimmed clock, *R.T. Vining*
Toilet set, *W.P. Benjamin*

Do. *Miss Emma Pape*
Cologne set, *Mr. and Mrs. Fraley*
Do. hand decorated, *Miss Libbie Burrows*
Perfumery casket, *Mr. and Mrs. G.M. Willard*
Thackeray's works, *Frank Hasty*
Gold bracelets for bride, *Mrs. B.A. Owens*
Silver spoons and knives,
Prof and Mrs. Henry
Sil card receiver, *Katie, Irene and H.T. Chitwood*
Sil knives, *J.L. Norris and W.H. Vining*
Card receiver and vases, *Mrs. E.E. Hill*
Sil forks, *Miss Ida Muller*
Towel rack, *Mrs. J.S. Parson*
China tea set, *Mr. and Mrs. M.L. Alford*
Set cabinet frames, *Mr. and Mrs. H.C. Myer*
Majolica fruit basket,
Mr. and Mrs. P.L. Fountain
Plush rug, *C.H. Gillette and wife and Cliff Harris*
Rug, *W.H. Leeds and wife*
Oil painting, *O.R. Myer*
Fancy rug, *A.F. Giddings and wife*
Real lace curtains, *Miss Corda Smith*
Bed spread, *J.M. McCall*
Decorated library lamps,
Mrs. L. and Carrie Gillette
Oil painting,
Mrs. Houck and Minnie Anderson
Chair mat, *Mary Eubanks*
Table spread, *Albert Eubanks*
\$10 gold piece, *E.M. Miller*
[Other present omitted, not being able to report them correctly.]¹⁸

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ENDNOTES

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7. Moses A. Williams, *Diary*, 17 September 1881, Southern Oregon Historical Society collections.
8. Williams, *Diary*, 5 July 1882.
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11. Williams, *Diary*, Thursday, 18 August 1881, p. 5.
12. Williams, *Diary*, 5 October 1881.
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14. Williams, *Diary*, 29 October 1881.
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COURTESY MEDFORD ELKS LODGE #1168



Smudge Pot Perry

by Bill Alley



SOHS #9267

S EVEN DAYS A WEEK, FOR MORE THAN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, Arthur Perry brought his unique brand of good-natured journalism to the readers of Medford's newspapers. Perry's wry sense of humor, poking good-natured fun at the famous and powerful and the local farmer and shoe-shine alike, captured the fancy of local readers, many of whom undoubtedly turned to Perry's column first when reading their paper.

For one who commented for so long about so many, however, it is ironic that the details of his own life are so sketchy. Perry was born on September 26, 1883, in Kansas and orphaned at an early age. He next comes to light in Spokane, Washington, at the close of the new century's first decade. There, Perry was employed on the staff of the *Spokesman-Review*, and it was there that Perry met a young editor by the name of Robert Ruhl. The two would forge a life-long partnership.

In 1911 Ruhl bought an interest in the two Medford newspapers, the *Mail Tribune* and *The Medford Sun*, and moved to Medford to become editor of the latter. He brought with him his colleague, Arthur Perry. A confirmed bachelor, Perry took up rooms first in the Holland Hotel and later the Medford Hotel, where he lived for the rest of his life.

The first daily column that can be attributed to Perry appeared in the *Sun* in March 1913, under the title, "The Conning Tower," by "Scoop in Command." Perry's unique style of commentary, a series of short paragraphs on a variety of topical subjects, was established in this early column. In September 1913, Perry "repainted, remodeled, and thoroughly fumigated" his column. Given the preeminent position of the region's fruit-growing industry, this revamped feature was called "The Smudging Pot." It would later be shortened to "Ye Smudge Pot."

Perry's keen wit enabled him to cut directly to the heart of an issue, and his commentary on any one subject rarely exceeded a sentence or two. "Perry's wit flashes," his friend Edison Marshall wrote, "and it cuts through bigotry and hypocrisy like a sword, and it has a way of puncturing, with a word or two, self-inflated people and pompous schemes." Such was his gift, however, that Perry's quips and jibes were never mean-spirited or malicious.

Political figures and Hollywood celebrities in the headlines were always good fodder for roasting over the smudge pot, as were fashion fads, speeders, and "cravat agriculturists" [Editor's note: Today they would be known as "hobby farmers."] "Some of the cravat agriculturists are becoming acclimated rapidly, and cuss the roads and

taxes with the free and easy manner of a homegrown Oregonian." But was the fun the columnist had with the local residents that seemed the most popular. Perry was friends with them all, from the leaders of the business and political community to the man who shined his shoes, and this genuine affection for his friends and neighbors clearly showed in column. "Wig Ashpole is spoken of for Co. Comm.," Perry wrote in 1922. "Wig feels as bad about it as if they threatened to commit him to the legislature." "A baseball game in old man Jones' pasture broke up in the seventh inning in an uproar when Joe Spivis slid into what he thought was third base."

He developed his own stable of nicknames over the years, which caused some puzzling to those reading his column out of the context of their time. Delroy Getchell of the Farmers and Fruitgrowers Bank was dubbed "The Banker Poet," Copco's Horace Bromley was soon "Horsedrugger" Charles Strang was "the Pioneer Pillist," and Heine Flurher's Bakery was dubbed "the Demon Baker." Although baffling to a reader today, at the time Perry was writing there was never any question of just whom he was describing.

When Ruhl took over the *Medford Mail Tribune* in the spring of 1919, "Ye Smudge Pot" moved also. Perry's column appeared with such regularity that it was later reported that he had never taken a vacation. This is not exactly true, of course. He did take two weeks off once in 1927. The "Smudging Pot" also went on a two-year hiatus in April 1919 when Perry joined the United States Navy during the First World War.

Perry's humor and homespun philosophy soon spread far beyond the confines of the Rogue Valley. His column was frequently quoted in newspapers across the country, and lucrative offers to lure him away to larger papers were routinely refused. Perry had found his niche and had no desire to move on.

It was with some degree of surprise when, on January 8, 1948, reading of "Ye Smudge Pot" found the column missing. None could remember the time when Perry had missed a day to illness. The following day Perry was back, but a short nine days later an aneurism struck the popular columnist down, silencing "one of the longest individual feature authorships in newspaper history."

"Art Perry was unique," Ruhl wrote in an editorial. "His humor, his style were unique. He was literally a rare bird and there is and will be one to fill his shoes."

"Nor will there be another 'Smudge Pot,' for Perry was the smudge pot."

Perry's passing was not the end of the popular column, however. In 1952 the *Mail Tribune* began a new feature called "The Flight of Time." Included were reprints of items from "Ye Smudge Pot." In 1978 the paper again went to the Smudge Pot for the "Forty Years ago Today" feature.

Thirty-five years of Arthur Perry's commentary provide a unique insight into the era in which he lived. His lively style and wit continue to this day to entertain those who take the time to read his words. 🍷

More of Perry's Pearls

May 26, 1922

"The Rosenberg boys have designed and executed a pear label that is a cause eastern customers to eat the label instead of the pears."

September 11, 1926

"The airmail opens next Wed. Citizens should be careful they do not get hit in their backyards with a Sears-Roebuck catalog."

June 8, 1933

"The attorney-general of Oregon has ruled that shooting fish with a bow and arrow is illegal. The Bow and Arrow Club of the valley thanks the attorney-general for the compliment, in intimating that they could hit a fish with a bow and arrow."

August 13, 1942

"Tax experts in Washington, D.C. are now talking about a 'holding tax.' Rumor says this means four bureaucrats to hold the victim while the fifth turns his pants pockets inside out."

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



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Oregon: The Christmas Tree State

by Nan Hannon and Donn L. Todt

AS THE HOLIDAYS APPROACH, AMERICA TURNS TO OREGON to provide almost half of the nation's cut Christmas trees. Each year Oregon produces more than eight million Christmas trees on more than 60,000 acres of land. In the days before Thanksgiving, trucks loaded with neatly tied trees set out from Oregon for California and other parts of the country.

Noble fir, balsam fir, and Scotch pine are all popular Christmas trees, but nearly half of the Christmas trees purchased in the United States are Douglas firs. Douglas fir makes an ideal Christmas tree because of the natural pyramid shape of the young tree, the sweet smell of its blue-green needles, and because those needles cling firmly to the tree during transport and display. Most of the Christmas trees grown in Oregon are Douglas firs.

Douglas fir is a tree of the Far West, naturally ranging from Alaska to Central California and common in Western Oregon. It is one of the world's most important timber trees. Named in honor of plant explorer David Douglas, the tree is not a true fir, but is unique to its own genus: *Pseudotsuga*, meaning false fir. Douglas fir is Oregon's state tree, proudly displayed on the standard Oregon license plate.

Christmas tree production has been big business in Oregon since the 1920s. Until the 1960s, most of the state's Christmas trees were cut from forestland. In the 1950s, however, Oregon entrepreneurs began planting Christmas tree plantations, which now provide almost all the commercial Christmas trees grown in the state. Growers plant bare-root seedlings and grow them for seven to ten years. By then, trees have reached six to eight feet in height, the best size for the average American home. Growers often shear the trees as they grow, to encourage the classic pyramidal Christmas tree shape.

Over the years, Oregon has twice had the honor of providing the White House Christmas tree that adorns the Blue Room. In 1991, Oregon sent a noble fir to Washington, D.C., and in 1992, a grand fir.

The Christmas tree has roots in the European nature religions that associated immortality with plants that remained green through the long winters and celebrated these plants at the winter solstice in late

December. Another clear ancestor of the Christmas tree is the Paradise Tree, a prop in a religious play dating to the eleventh century and popular through the Middle Ages. On December 24, the feast day of Adam and Eve, the story of the Garden of Eden was acted out in front of the Paradise Tree: a fir hung with red apples. In Middle Europe, the evergreen Paradise Tree gradually moved into homes and was decorated with other ornaments. The symbolism of the tree gradually shifted toward marking the birth of Christ, often represented on the tree by a candle.

By the eighteenth century, the Christmas tree was known throughout Europe. In 1834, German-born Prince Albert, the consort of Great Britain's Queen Victoria, introduced the Christmas tree of his homeland to Windsor Castle. Christmas trees quickly became popular with Her Majesty's subjects. German immigrants brought the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree to North America in the 1700s, but the custom did not become widespread in the United States until the middle of the nineteenth century.

In 1851, an enterprising Pennsylvanian named Mark Carr cut Christmas trees in the Catskill Mountains, loaded them on ox-drawn sleds, and set up the world's first Christmas tree lot on a street in New York. Today some families celebrate Christmas with living trees or artificial trees, but 98 percent of Americans who display trees buy cut trees from lots. And 48 percent of those trees come from Oregon, the Christmas tree state.

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



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