

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

May 2002 Vol. 4, No. 5

*Today*

CRATER LAKE  
NATIONAL PARK: A  
CENTURY OF WONDER







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# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

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

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# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

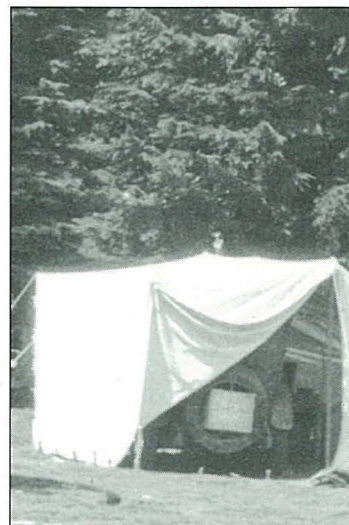
Today

## FEATURE:

### The Photographic Legacy of Alex Sparrow

by William Alley

p. 8



SOHS #15288 DETAIL

## DEPARTMENTS

### SUNDAY DRIVING

#### The Sinnott Memorial

by Stephen R. Mark

p. 4



CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS, CRLA #8898-1335

### PIONEER BIOGRAPHY

#### Frances Fuller Victor

by Stephen R. Mark

p. 13

### PRESERVATION PROFILE

#### Lady of the Woods

by Stephen R. Mark

p. 14

### ROOTED IN HISTORY

#### Tracks in the Ash

by Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon

p. 16

### MEMBERS & DONORS

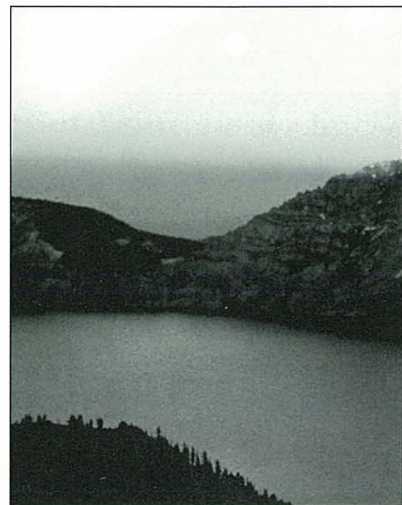
p. 2

### SOHS NEWS & NOTES

#### THINGS TO DO:

Exhibits, program updates, and calendar

p. 6



CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS, CRLA #1-8-37

### ON THE COVER

With Wizard Island in the foreground, the sun sets on Dutton Cliff to the right of Kerr Notch and Anderson Point.



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# The Sinnott Memorial

by Stephen R. Mark

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND

documentary evidence show that the site known as Rim Village has served as Crater Lake National Park's main visitor-use area since the late nineteenth century. It might seem to first-time visitors to be dominated by two parking lots located on opposite ends of a roadway, and where randomly placed buildings lack any overarching architectural theme. That impression may hold true until visitors use the walkway defining the northern edge of Rim Village. Bordered by a masonry wall on one side, the promenade was intended by its designers to furnish a safety feature and consistent foreground from which to behold the sublime "picture" of Crater Lake.

Just below the Kiser Studio (the small stone cabin-like structure used as a visitor center during summer) is an overlook reached by walking down a short trail from the promenade. It is not readily discernible at first because the trail was planned to yield only partial views of the lake and a structure sitting atop Victor Rock. Once inside the Sinnott Memorial, however, visitors find that its parapet provides a spectacular and unobstructed view of Crater Lake and surrounding peaks. Even though it is a confined space with a sheer drop of some 900 feet to the shoreline, this building combines two functions. The first is to provide a venue for interpreting what transpired to produce a lake of such magnificent beauty, while the other is aimed at enticing visitors to explore the park.

Opened in 1931, the Sinnott Memorial is designed to present Crater Lake in a naturalistic way. In keeping with this

design philosophy, the structure should fit into the surroundings as a sign of human subservience to the scale and grandeur of the scene. The designer, landscape architect Merel Sager, went so far as to spend hours in a rowboat on the lake, doing so in order to devise ways to make the building virtually invisible against the inner caldera wall. The memorial started as a "rest" dedicated to its namesake, eight-term Oregon Second District Congressman Nicholas J. Sinnott, who chaired the House Appropriations Committee prior to his death in 1929, but it quickly evolved into a more ambitious project. John C. Merriam, Carnegie Institution of Washington Foundation president and a leading advocate for interpreting the national parks, envisioned a sheltered overlook whose porch or parapet might facilitate better visitor orientation to the park story.

As a former professor of paleontology, Merriam recognized the educational value of a short talk about the origins of Crater Lake, but in a spot where visitors could both see and understand. A museum needed to be simple and not separate people from the park they came to experience. Toward this end Merriam and several other leading scientists had already established the precedent of combining a parapet with a museum at Yavapai Station in the Grand Canyon. Unlike Yavapai, which is situated a mile east of where visitor services are centered in Grand Canyon Village, the Sinnott Memorial is part of Rim Village and therefore close to where most visitors congregate at one time or another. The building's location away from

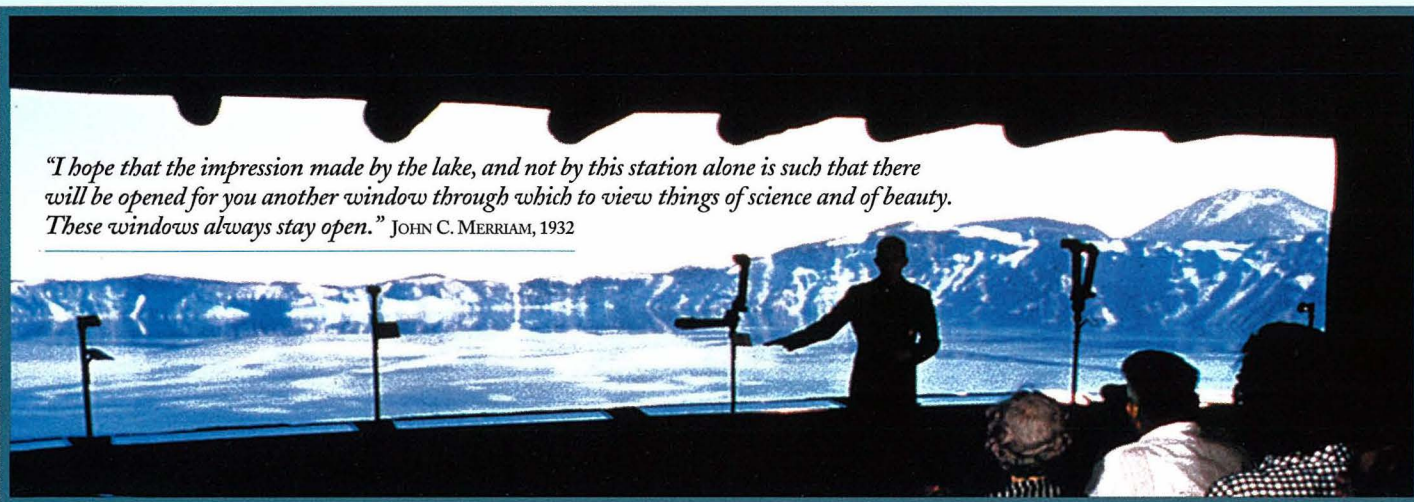
the promenade and roadway conversely provides isolation, a quality that reinforces visitor acceptance of the Sinnott Memorial as both viewpoint and classroom.

To take the fullest advantage of the opportunity presented by this venue, Merriam orchestrated funding for volcanologist Howel Williams to produce what is still considered to be a classic work on the geology of Crater Lake National Park. With only slight revisions since its first publication in 1941, this study has served as the primary reference for naturalists giving talks in the Sinnott Memorial.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it may not be surprising that Merriam first considered utilizing the adjacent museum room to provide more in-depth information on the park's geological story. He even went to Europe in 1931 and found film footage of volcanic eruptions, but changed his mind about a theme by the time this exhibit area finally opened seven years later.

Merriam's approach to the museum centered on the lake's beauty being so exceptional that it provided a way to see the underlying unity in nature. Most images presented in the museum were photographs, but he also donated several paintings. Harold Bryant, one of Merriam's proteges who was chief of research and education in the National Park Service at that time, articulated the rationale behind this effort:

The dispensing of knowledge about park features was a goal, important and useful, but it was hoped that the park visitor could be taught to think great thoughts, could be sent home actually inspired. Based on what was seen and heard a visitor could be aroused to contemplate the origin and evaluation of the world we live in, the laws which control it and the interrelations of its parts. If Crater Lake represents an outstandingly beautiful landscape, how can the visitor be helped to appreciate it?<sup>2</sup>

*"I hope that the impression made by the lake, and not by this station alone is such that there will be opened for you another window through which to view things of science and of beauty. These windows always stay open."* JOHN C. MERRIAM, 1932



CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
COLLECTIONS, CRLA #8898-1144



Although it was intended to play a key role, the park development philosophy of aiding the appreciation of nature went well beyond the confines of the Sinnott Memorial. One of the aims, for example, behind reconstruction of the road around Crater Lake starting in 1931 involved better presentation of what Merriam and others felt were the top points of interest. Specially chosen pullouts or "stations" were designated along the new "Rim Drive" to highlight geological and scenic focal points seen from the road, with walls and other features such as planting beds taking their cue from precedents established in Rim Village. Merriam's convention of calling the Sinnott Memorial "Observation Station No. 1," was adopted for a time because the overlook and museum represented a logical starting place for visitors traveling a circuit thirty-three miles in length.

Rim Drive continues to hold its place among the nation's most notable scenic roads, one regularly rated among the top ten by the American Automobile Association. It even served as the showpiece for the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway (a route running well beyond park boundaries) being named as one of the few All-American Roads in 1998. The stations and substations designed as part of Rim Drive still exist, though several have since suffered unflattering "improvements."<sup>3</sup> Few of the pullouts are signed as such and none are presently linked with the Sinnott Memorial in wayside exhibits or the park brochure.

Visitors still hear regularly scheduled talks during the summer season at the Sinnott Memorial. These presentations emphasize geological and limnological aspects of the park story, just as they always have. Non-personal interpretation in the museum and for the parapet exhibits has taken several different courses over the years, generally overlooking Merriam's observation that:

Just as all who see the lake come under the spell of its beauty, so there are few for whom the story of its coming to be does not take on increasing importance as acquaintance grows. The sublimity, power, and orderly operation expressed in this process of creation develops in us a sense of appreciation corresponding to influence of reactions produced by other elements which we recognize as beauty and harmony.<sup>4</sup>

The foregoing statement is worth considering in light of the average visit consuming less than four hours, as well as the high likelihood that a large number of these visits will not be repeated. If

there is little or no formal linkage between the beauty that initially draws people to Crater Lake and interpreting the origins of park features, it will probably be difficult for visitors to find them meaningful when they return home?

Whether or not Merriam was successful with his approach to helping visitors appreciate nature can be debated, especially because his approach hinged so much on his concept of unity. On one level there is visual unity, of the kind where landscape architecture harmonizes with an awe-inspiring spectacle such as Crater Lake. This goal may lead to what is best about

experiencing Rim Drive, but is secondary to a unity best characterized as conviction. The latter does not detach art from science, since each has a role in grasping larger meanings in nature that are the stuff of inspiration. Merriam once described the value of this kind of unity in an article about the Grand Canyon:

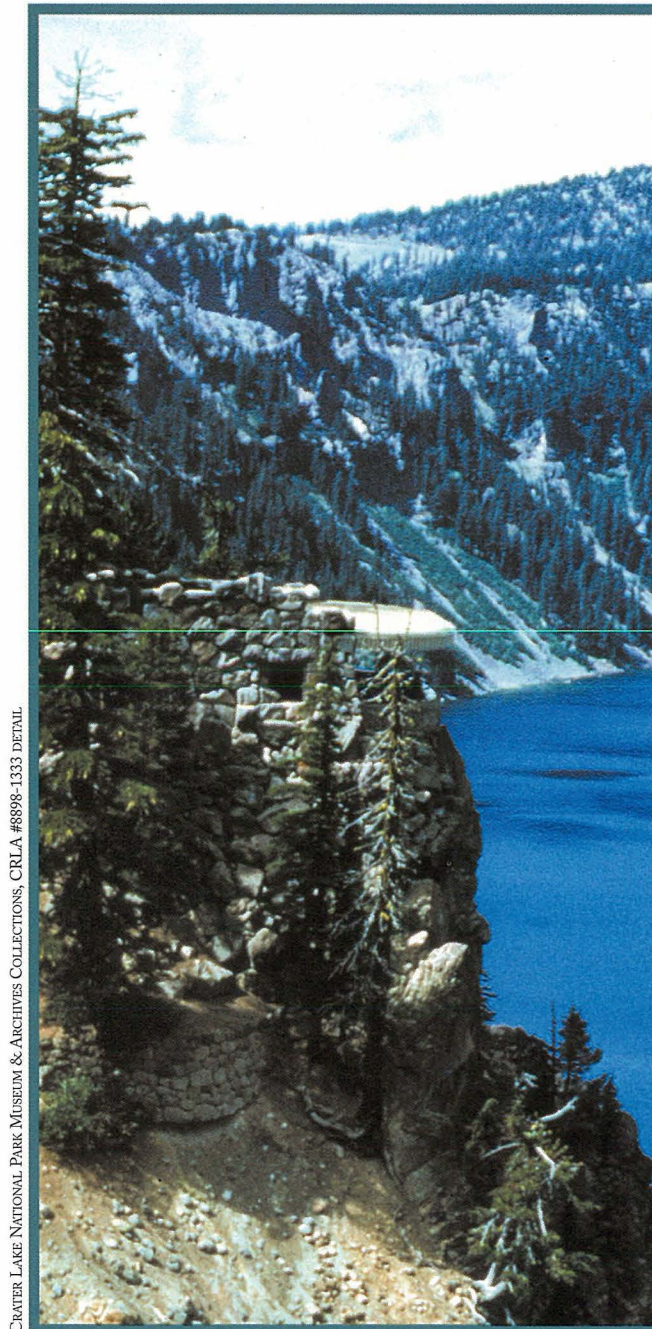
Through such visualization of nature seen as a whole we come often to the realization that, even when enlarged by the lens of knowledge, the picture indicates the presence of something beyond that vision does not fully reach. So, in various other ways, artist and

writer have presented the idea that, in looking upon these great examples of unity in nature, what we see may only be the shadowy expression of things greater still, which neither eye nor mind has yet been able to define.<sup>5</sup> 𐄂

*Stephen R. Mark is the park historian for Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument.*

#### ENDNOTES

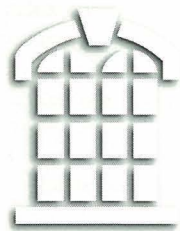
1. Howel Williams, *Crater Lake: The Story of its Origin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941). The full study is *The Geology of Crater Lake National Park* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1942).
2. Harold C. Bryant, "The Beginning of Yosemite's Educational Program," *Yosemite Nature Notes* 39:7 (July 1960), p. 165.
3. The greatest distinction between stations and substations was that stations were visited as part of a naturalist-led Rim Caravan, a service discontinued by the early 1950s. A segment of East Rim Drive, one twelve miles in length starting beyond Cleetwood Cove and extending to the Phantom Ship Overlook at Kerr Notch, is perhaps the best surviving stretch of road in accordance with the original design.
4. John Merriam, "Crater Lake: A Study in the Appreciation of Nature," *The American Magazine of Art* 26:8 (August 1933), p. 361.
5. John Merriam, "The Unity of Nature as Illustrated by the Grand Canyon," *Scientific Monthly* 33 (September 1931), p. 234.



*The Sinnott Memorial as viewed from a point near Crater Lake Lodge in the summer.*

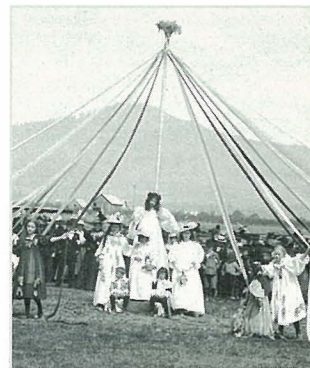
CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS, CRLA #8898-1333 DETAIL





## SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Things To Do in May



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

	<u>DATE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Make a May Basket or Wand; 25¢
Games Galore!	Sat., May 4; 1 - 3 p.m.	WOODVILLE MUSEUM, Rogue River	Family Day. Free
Helping Hands Workshop	Wed., May 8; 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Pioneer Chores; ages 3-6; members, \$4; non-members, \$5
Celebrate "The Women of Hanley Farm"	Thurs., May 16, 7 p.m.	HISTORY CENTER	Free
Historic Cookery Class	Sat., May 18, 2 - 5 p.m.	PIONEER HALL, Lithia Park	\$49 per person
Hanley Farm Opens-reduced admission May 25 & 26 only	Sat., May 25, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sun., May 26, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.	HANLEY FARM	May 25 & 26 only: \$1/person, ages 6 & up; members /children under 6, free
Living History Program Begins	Sat., May 25, 1 - 5 p.m. Sun., May 26, 1 - 5 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	adults \$3; ages 6-12 & seniors 65+, \$2; members free

## PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

## MAY CRAFT OF THE MONTH

## Make a May Basket or Wand

Welcome the merry month of May by making a May Basket to take home, fill with goodies, and hang on the doorknob of someone you love!

## GAMES GALORE!

## A LET'S PLAY FAMILY DAY

Bring the whole family for an afternoon of fun and games playing a variety of well-loved outdoor games including foot races, tag, and good old-fashioned tug-of-war.

## HELPING HANDS WORKSHOP

Children will learn by doing traditional pioneer chores such as laundry, grinding wheat, making butter, kneading bread, and picking wool. Kids will print their painted hands on a dishtowel for a keepsake or perhaps to use as a Mother's Day gift!

**Preregistration and prepayment are required by Friday, May 3.**

## CELEBRATE "THE WOMEN OF HANLEY FARM"

Join Society Programs Associate Dawna Curler for a trip into the past as she explores

the family heritage and legacy of the Hanley sisters. Climb the Hanley family tree and trace the contributions that this pioneering family made to its community. Letters, photographs, and family papers reveal insights into the actions, thoughts, and attitudes of those from earlier generations. See what such documents have taught us about the women whose lineage links them to the farm and the rich pioneering heritage of Southern Oregon.

## HISTORIC COOKERY CLASS AT PIONEER HALL IN ASHLAND

Join us as we team up with Allyson's of Ashland for this unique "Cookery" class that will explore culinary traditions from the turn of the last century, recreating the dining experience of the elegant Ashland Depot Hotel, a popular stop on the Southern Pacific Railroad's route between Portland and San Francisco. Following a half-hour presentation by Society Outreach Coordinator Stephanie Butler Cotts highlighting the history of Ashland's railroad district and little-known stories about the Depot Hotel, participants will take part in making recipes from the Southern Pacific's cookbook for dining car chefs, including Chicken Fricasse, Creole Stuffed Tomatoes, and Caramel Turnovers. The class will be led by expert chefs Allyson Holt and Kathleen Albiani. **Call Allyson's**

**of Ashland at (541) 482-2884 to preregister and prepay as soon as possible.**

## HANLEY FARM OPENS

Bring a picnic lunch and a blanket to sit on and enjoy the sights and activities at historic Hanley Farm. Explore a variety of activities and games for the whole family, tour the historic home and grounds, savor a dish of ice cream and strawberries, and enjoy live music. Riders of the Western Range, a traditional cowboy music group, will play May 25 from noon-3 p.m. Listen to the songs of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and the Sons of the Pioneers as played by this group of 2 men and 2 women. On May 26, enjoy music by the Old Time Fiddlers.

## BEEKMAN HOUSE OPENS

Step back in time to the year 1911 and enjoy a visit with costumed interpreters portraying Cornelius C. Beekman (Jacksonville's first banker) and other members of his family.

## CRATER LAKE SCREENSAVER

To commemorate the Centennial of Crater Lake National Park, the Society has produced a screensaver containing 30 historic images which sells for \$12. Eighteen of the images are transition effects and can be used to create desktop wallpaper. The screensavers can be purchased at the History Center or at the Jacksonville History Store.



# EXHIBITS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	LOCATION	MUSEUM HOURS
Let's Play: Pastimes From the Past Century of Photography: 1856-1956 The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
History in the Making: Jackson County Milestones Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Politics of Culture: Collecting the Southwest-Art and History 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.

## EXHIBIT DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

### LET'S PLAY:

#### PASTIMES FROM THE PAST

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# The Photographic Legacy of **ALEX SPARROW**

by William Alley

## THE IMPACT OF THE AUTOMOBILE

in the early years of the twentieth century was wide-ranging and profound. As automobile ownership grew, it transformed cities and towns across the country and led to the establishment of a network of highways from coast to coast. The auto also played a significant role in the growth of the nation's national park system. As road construction made parks more accessible to motorists, park visitation soared. At Oregon's Crater Lake National Park the annual attendance jumped from 3,736 in 1910 to a staggering 20,507 during the 1920 season.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1905 Bill Hudson of Medford laid claim to being the first to drive an automobile to the rim of Crater Lake. The following year three other men, Harry Pelts, W.A. Hobson, and Albert Allen each motored to the park, assisted over some of the more difficult terrain with extra "horsepower" supplied by borrowed teams of mules. These early trips resulted in several conflicting claims of being the first to drive to Crater Lake. These early motorists also proved to be the vanguard of a steadily increasing tide of automobile traffic into the park.

*Superintendent Alex Sparrow poses by a Park Service automobile. The lodge, sporting the cedar siding added in 1922, can be seen in the background.*



SOHS #15627

CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
COLLECTIONS, CRLA #8898-1333 DETAIL



In 1910, auto stage service to the lake was inaugurated; the fare to ride the Locomobile from the Nash Hotel in Medford to Crater Lake was twenty-five dollars. The following year work was begun on improving the access roads and initial planning was inaugurated on a proposed road around the lake's rim.<sup>2</sup>

In response to the growing presence of automobiles in Crater Lake National Park, Congress, in 1912, appropriated \$627,000 for the improvement and construction of new roads within the park. While the genesis of this road-building program was during the administration of the park's first superintendent, W.F. Arant, the bulk of the work was carried out under his successor, William Gladstone Steel. In 1913 the Department of the Interior brought in a retired army engineer, Alex Sparrow, to oversee the construction of the park's road system.

Sparrow was born in Toronto, Ontario, in 1871. Before reaching the age of consent, the young Sparrow, exaggerating his age, enlisted in the United States Army. The next six years in the United States Cavalry instilled in Sparrow a deep love of horses that remained with him throughout his life. After six years with the Fourth United States Cavalry, Sparrow transferred to the engineers and served with the Second United States Army Engineers for the next eighteen years. During the Spanish-American War, in 1898, Sparrow saw service in the Philippines and served a tour with the army of occupation in Cuba making maps. He later returned for two more tours of duty in the Philippines. Finally, in 1912, after twenty-four years of service, Sergeant Major Alex Sparrow put in for retirement. He had refused an offer of an officer's commission to make way for younger men seeking a career in the army.<sup>3</sup>

Upon retirement Sparrow returned to his native Toronto, but after only a few short months at home was asked to serve as superintendent of construction at the Celilo Falls locks on the Columbia River. Celilo Falls was the upper end of the Dalles-Celilo Canal, construction of which had begun in October of 1905. The canal was intended to bypass The Dalles rapids and Celilo Falls and open the upper reaches of the Columbia River to shipping. In 1913, Sparrow was recruited as assistant engineer for highway construction at Crater Lake National Park. There he set up housekeeping at the engineers headquarters at Government Camp in Munson Valley and oversaw the construction of trails, access roads, and the new rim road.<sup>4</sup>

In 1917, shortly after Congress had created the National Park Service as a bureau within the Department of the Interior, Sparrow was appointed superintendent of Crater Lake National Park. That year the park hosted 12,042 visitors. When the rim road was finally completed in September of 1918, Sparrow had the honor of making the first trip around the lake's rim in one of the government's trucks. Although a difficult road, with many tight turns and easily rutted, it was passable for most cars, although it was advised that those making the trip carry additional water for their radiators. With the completion of the new rim road, the number of visits to the park took a big jump. During the 1919 season 16,645 visitors were recorded.<sup>5</sup>

In the midst of the 1921 season a thirty-year-old woman named Ruth Clemens arrived at Crater Lake National Park seeking some quiet to recover from treatment for her ulcers. While at Government Camp she took an interest in the many horses used by the engineers and rangers. This interest resulted in an introduction to Sparrow; the two soon began riding together around the park. The fifty year-old superintendent began to court the younger Clemens, and during the ensuing winter became a frequent caller at her home in Medford. Ruth, the mother of two young daughters, Frances and Harriet, had managed to extricate herself from an unfortunate previous marriage. Although she had by this time become enamored of the handsome park superintendent, she was reluctant to impose a stepfather on her daughters. When she finally broached the subject to the girls the following year they were ecstatic; they too had succumbed to Sparrow's charms.<sup>6</sup>

Ruth Clemens's family was Episcopalian, and she was saddened by the fact that because her estranged husband was still living, she would be unable to marry in her church. Several weeks before the planned wedding, however, she received news that her former husband had passed away. As a widow she was now able to have her much-desired church wedding. The two were married in Medford on May 9, 1922. The following day, after the couple set off on their honeymoon, a notice appeared on the bulletin board at the Medford Elk's Lodge: "The Sparrows Have Flown."<sup>7</sup>

In 1923, Sparrow tendered his resignation as superintendent in order to again retire, this time with his new family. He left the park at the end of March to settle in on his and Ruth's farm on the

Rogue River, Kirtland. This idyllic retirement lasted a mere five years before Sparrow again was asked to serve the public. The Central Committee of the Jackson County Republican Party had met at the Medford Hotel on October 26, 1928, to select an individual to fill out the remaining month of County Judge W.J. Hartzell's six-year term after the latter's death, and then stand for re-election in

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*"It was hard to believe, until  
I saw your pictures, that we  
now have the means of  
getting access to the Lake by  
horse or muleback."*

---

November. Several local Republicans expressed their interest in the position, which is analogous to today's chairman of the county board of commissioners, but as soon as Sparrow's name was mentioned all opposition evaporated; his nomination was unanimous. "I don't mind running against any Democrat they can put up," Sparrow stated upon accepting the nomination, "but I absolutely refused to run if the Republican Party was to be split." Oregon Governor I.L. Patterson accepted the recommendation of the local Republicans and made the appointment. Sparrow was sworn in on October 27, 1928, and the following month stood for re-election. His stature in the community was such that he ran unopposed for the full six-year term.<sup>8</sup>

During this term Sparrow's training and experience proved to be a boon to the county. This was a period of extensive road paving in Jackson County and Sparrow's expertise was immensely helpful. His engineering and construction background was also beneficial when it was decided to undertake the construction of a new Jackson County Courthouse in Medford.<sup>9</sup>

But in January of 1932 tragedy struck. Sparrow had accompanied a delegation to inspect a hog fuel heating plant in the basement of the Hirvi Building in Klamath Falls. They were looking for a system to install in the nearly completed Jackson County Courthouse. While someone was searching for the light switch, Sparrow stepped back in the dark and fell into an unseen concrete pit, sustaining a serious blow to his skull. He never recovered, and died during the night of January 24. He was buried in the Jacksonville Cemetery.<sup>10</sup>





SOHS #15290

Alex Sparrow spent almost his entire life in service to his adopted country. After serving nearly a quarter century in the United States Army, he went on to supervise the fledgling road system at Crater Lake National Park. While much improved and altered in the ensuing years, today's Rim Drive owes its existence in part to Alex Sparrow. Even after his second attempt at retirement, Sparrow could not resist what he saw as a duty to serve his community and agreed to serve in county government. Were it not for the tragedy of his untimely death, he would surely have contributed a great deal more. Shortly after his death he was honored with the dedication of the Alex Sparrow Memorial Clinic for Children, the public health clinic in the new Jackson County Courthouse.

An enduring legacy to Alex Sparrow and his work at Crater Lake National Park came to the Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1990. Thanks to a generous donation from Alex and Ruth Sparrow's family, the Society now has among its collections some of the papers of Alex Sparrow, and, even more importantly, his sizable photograph collection of more than 1,400 images. Some of the photographs date to Sparrow's days in the Army in Texas and the Philippines, but the vast majority document his years at Crater Lake National Park.

Sparrow used some of the photographs that ultimately made up the Sparrow collection to document the progress made on road and trail construction at Crater Lake. Many of his reports to his superiors in Washington, D.C., were illustrated with

these images. When Sparrow completed the trail to the lake in 1917 that would bear his name, he wrote a letter to Horace Albright, the acting director of the National Park Service. "A short time ago I purchased a camera and a small carload of films to practice on. ... Have just got back a bale of prints and am sending you a sample of my best work, you can guess what the worst was like," Sparrow wrote.<sup>11</sup>

Albright wasted no time in responding. "I am very glad indeed to have these pictures, which so eloquently describe the tremendous work you have accomplished since I left the park the first of August," he wrote. "It was hard to believe, until I saw your pictures, that we now have the means of getting access to the Lake by horse or muleback." Albright was duly impressed with Sparrow's use of photographs to document the progress made at the park. "Unless you want to keep the camera which you purchased for the purpose of photographing your summer's work," the acting director continued, "I think you had better arrange to make it a charge upon the park's funds and keep the camera as a part of the equipment of your office."<sup>12</sup>

Not all of the photographs that make up the Alex Sparrow collection were used for "official" purposes. The popular superintendent would frequently act as tour guide for friends, relatives and dignitaries. At various locations around the park Sparrow had his favorite "photo-op" locations for taking souvenir snapshots for these visitors. The collection contains many different groups at such locations as Sentinel Rock or along a particularly picturesque corner of the rim road with a

clear view of Wizard Island.

It is unclear exactly how many of the images in the collection were actually taken by Sparrow. A small number were taken by visitors known to the superintendent and mailed to him at a later date. A number of the winter images were taken by a long-time park employee, John Maben, an avid amateur photographer who often spent time as winter caretaker at the lodge. It was the practice of the Park Service to keep an employee at the park throughout the winter season when the park was closed. Generally, one ranger would spend the first half of the off season at the lake and then be replaced in late January or early February. "If I kept one man there all during the winter season," Sparrow once commented, "he would soon go clean bughouse with lonesomeness." Maben performed a similar service for the concession that operated the lodge.<sup>13</sup>

Maben would occupy some of his time during the long winters taking photographs of the lake and surrounding environs. Some of these images would be used in reports to Sparrow about conditions in the park as preparations were made for the spring opening. Whatever the motive for the creation of the images, however, the 1400 photographs in the Alex Sparrow collection provide an incomparable documentation of the early years of one of the Pacific Northwest's most spectacular natural treasures. What follows is a sampling of those images. ■

*William Alley is the former senior historian for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*



Alex Sparrow had several locations for taking souvenir photographs. At left, a photographic location for Sparrow was Anderson Point along the rim road with a view of the lake and Wizard Island. At right, a Park Service truck parks precariously close to the rim near Crater Lake Lodge.



SOHS #15789



SOHS #15494

On July 4, 1930, a small mountain hemlock was planted on the rim of Crater Lake in honor of the late Stephen T. Mather, the first National Park Service director. In this photograph Jackson County Judge Alex Sparrow, formerly the superintendent of Crater Lake National Park, unveils the newly dedicated tree.

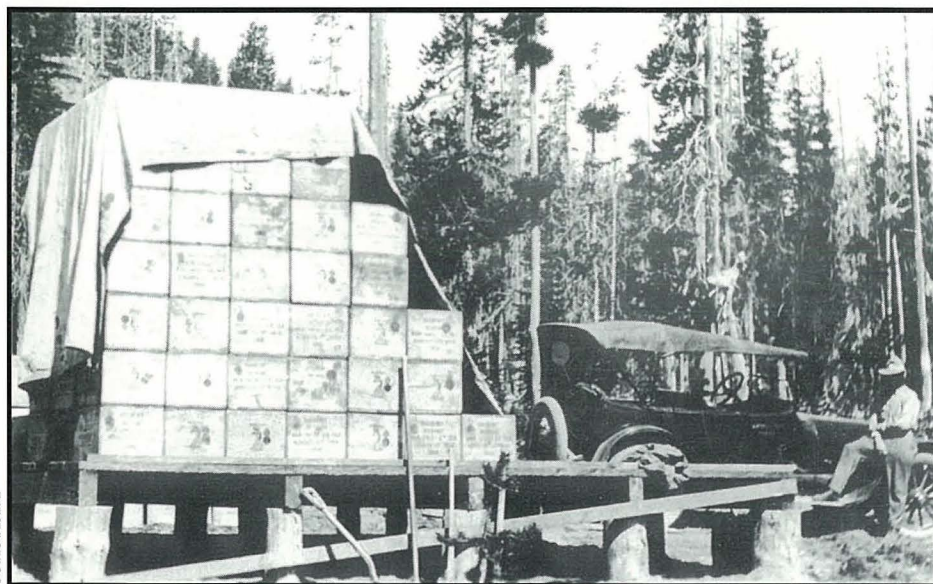


SOHS #15668

This image shows one of the several bridges that have spanned Annie Creek, the original headquarters for Crater Lake National Park. This photo, circa 1920, clearly shows the superintendent's residence and the park headquarters building behind the bridge. The National Park Service shifted its headquarters three miles further north, to the present location, in 1924.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Larry and Lloyd Smith, *A Chronological History and Important Event Log of Crater Lake National Park, 1832-1985*.
2. Larry and Lloyd Smith, *A Chronological History*.
3. Interview with Frances Sparrow Firth, Southern Oregon Historical Society Oral History, tape No. 128B, p.3.
4. William F. Willingham, *Army Engineers and the Development of Oregon: A History of the Portland District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 75-77.
5. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 18 August 1917.
6. Interview with Frances Sparrow Firth, SOHS Oral History, tape No. 128B, p.10.
7. Interview with Frances Sparrow Firth, SOHS Oral History, tape No. 128B, pp. 34-45; *Medford Mail Tribune*, 10 May 1922.
8. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 27 October 1928.
9. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 27 October 1928.
10. *Ashland Tidings*, 25 January 1932.
11. Alex Sparrow to Horace Albright, 21 October 1917, unpublished correspondence, Albright papers, courtesy Crater Lake National Park Museum and Archives Collection.
12. Horace Albright to Alex Sparrow, 30 October 1917, unpublished correspondence, Albright papers, courtesy Crater Lake National Park Museum and Archives Collection.
13. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 4 February 1920.



SOHS #15291

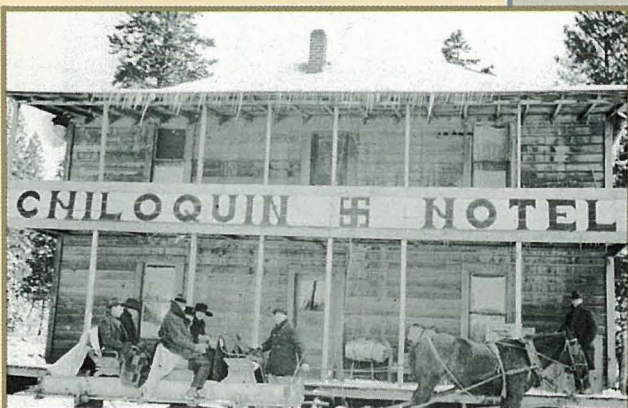
Rim road builders used a large quantity of explosives to blast apart rock and carve out a road bed. Wooden cases of dynamite stacked under a tarp await use by road crews in this photo, circa 1918.



SOHS #15694



*One popular photo opportunity location was at Sentinel Rock, on the lake's east rim. A narrow trail leads from the road to this site, affording an unobstructed view of Crater Lake.*



SOHS #15296

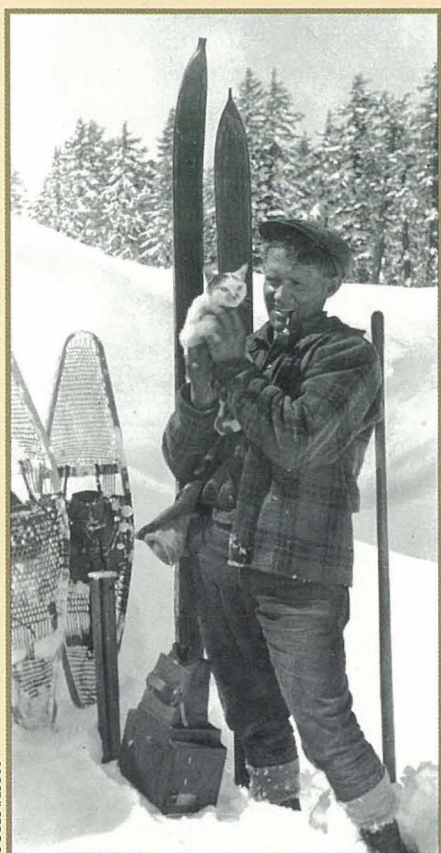
*At left, a group prepares to depart from the Chiloquin Hotel in a horse-drawn sleigh.*



SOHS #15410

*The Sparrow Trail, which led from the lodge to the lake and which was named for Superintendent Alex Sparrow, was completed in 1917. In this image, a man on horseback pauses near the boat landing at the trail's end.*

SOHS #15306



*During the off season, John Maben would often winter over at Crater Lake. Here he is holding his only companion, Nameless the cat.*

SOHS #15789



*In September 1917 the park contracted with F.P. Salter of Medford to build two cabins for the eastern and western entrances to the park. At left, several men pose at the eastern entrance ranger cabin, located on the road to Kirk at the park boundary. This cabin was demolished in 1938.*



# Frances Fuller Victor

Stephen R. Mark

*"I should like to be buried  
with a rock for my monument,  
beside the lovely and awe  
inspiring Crater Lake."*

FRANCES FULLER VICTOR TO O.C. APPLGATE  
September 16, 1896

## THE PRECIPICE NAMED FOR

her still attracts many thousands of visitors each year, but she is not buried in Crater Lake National Park. Frances Fuller Victor was both a travel writer and a professional historian in nineteenth century Oregon, with works such as *River of the West* (1870) and Bancroft's *Oregon I* (1886) to her credit. She came to Crater Lake in July 1873 after being recruited by the Applegate family to write a popular account of the recently concluded Modoc War. It was O.C. Applegate who named a viewpoint located just below the rim for her, once the two of them made their way to it and gazed upon the lake some 900 feet below. Victor Rock remains the single most popular spot for park visitors to congregate, it being the site of the Sinnott Memorial building.

Born in upstate New York, Victor (1826-1902) first saw Oregon in 1864. Although her books about the Pacific Northwest resulted in regional acclaim during her lifetime, the need to make a living as a writer dictated extended residence in California. There she worked for the H.H. Bancroft History Company beginning in 1878. Victor produced volumes on Oregon and other western states over the following eleven years, all marketed by subscription and issued under Bancroft's name. This was company policy, but the persistently low wages (never more than \$100 per month) eventually led her to resign.<sup>1</sup>

Once back in Oregon, Victor stirred up enough interest to publish a book she titled *Atlantis Arisen, or Talks of a Tourist about Oregon and Washington*. Intended to impress readers with the "possibilities of the Pacific Northwest and with enough about what is to be *seen* to attract tourists," it devoted several pages to Crater Lake drawn from her experience

*Historian Frances Fuller Victor  
was an early visitor to Crater Lake.  
Her accounts of the lake's beauty in a book  
about touring Oregon and Washington helped  
stir public interest in what would in 1902  
become Oregon's only national park.*

there in 1873.<sup>2</sup> *Atlantis Arisen* sold well and helped to make the lake a popular destination for leisure travelers. The lake's growing reputation served as a necessary precursor to the national park designation finally bestowed by Congress in 1902.

Victor Rock remained on maps of the park after Victor died, yet construction of the Sinnott Memorial in 1930 quickly eclipsed the use of her name to identify that locality. Rather than see it fade further into oblivion, Park Superintendent E.P. Leavitt initiated the process of naming another spot along the rim for Victor in 1945. He chose a place on the east Rim Drive, near Sentinel

Rock, and named it "Victor View."<sup>3</sup> As a person twice honored at Crater Lake, she joined the select company of William Gladstone Steel, Clarence Dutton, and John C. Merriam. ■

*Stephen R. Mark is the park historian for Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument.*

### ENDNOTES

1. Jim Martin, *A Bit of a Blue: The Life and Work of Frances Fuller Victor* (Salem: Deep Well Publishing, 1992), pp. 160-175.
2. Victor to Judge Matthew P. Deady, 18 August 1890, quoted in Martin, *A Bit of a Blue*, p. 180.
3. Steve Mark, "Victor Rock and Victor View," *Nature Notes from Crater Lake* 29 (1998), p. 15.



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# Lady of the Woods

by Stephen R. Mark

**W**INTER CAN LAST FOR more than seven months at Crater Lake National Park's Headquarters located a mile or so below the rim in Munson Valley. A sign of the coming of spring appears when enough snow has melted to reveal a figure known as the Lady of the Woods. When the snow finally disappears, which is usually in June or July, visitors can take a short trail located behind the Steel Information

*The Lady of the Woods, a shy, seated nude chiseled into a rock by a Park Service physician in 1917, still greets visitors down a short path in the forest behind Park Headquarters.*

Center to view the diminutive sculpture. Chiseled from a boulder, this unfinished work of art blends almost perfectly into a sub-alpine forest of mountain hemlock. It is now more than eighty years old and shows a few signs of age. The most noticeable is pitting in the once-smooth volcanic rock, but there are also some details that have begun to fade with time and exposure to the elements. Despite its inevitable decay, the sculpture is still striking and should remain recognizable well into the current century.

Oddly enough, the Lady of the Woods was its creator's first attempt at sculpture. At the time that he carved it, Earl Russell Bush was a thirty-one-year-old medical doctor who attended to the road crews that built the first road around Crater Lake's

rim. The season's work had largely ceased by the end of September 1917, and Bush found himself with almost two weeks at his disposal. Bush finally left the park on October 20, after having chiseled and hammered a recognizable form on the hard rock. He had worked from memory and, several years later, tried to explain what possessed him:

This statue represents my offering to the forest, my interpretation of its awful stillness and repose, its beauty, fascination, and unseen life. A deep love of this virgin wilderness has fastened itself upon me and remains today. It seemed that I must leave something behind. ... If it arouses thought in those who see it, I shall be amply repaid. I shall be satisfied to leave my feeble attempt at sculptural expression alone and unmarked, for those who happen to see it and who may find food for thought along the lines it arouses in them individually. It would be sacrilege to assign a title and decorate it with a brass plate.<sup>1</sup>



CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS, CRLA #8898-1469



By the 1930s the statue acquired both a title (suggested by Fred Kiser, the photographer, who always seemed to find different ways to promote the park) and a wooden sign with raised lettering. The idea of leading visitors there with a trail came under attack for the first time in 1930, and is an objection that has been voiced several times since then—not by visitors or conservation groups, but by park employees who thought the sculpture did not belong in a “natural” area.<sup>2</sup> To them, such artifice had no place even at park headquarters, where rustic architecture and naturalistic landscape design blend aesthetics with function. Just as with stone masonry (which is used on buildings and is evident in walls, steps, curbs and even drainage features inside the park), the carving constitutes an attempt to design with nature. The only difference is that the sculpture’s functional aspects may not be immediately apparent to those viewing it.

Whereas the function of most built features at park headquarters has been put in terms of visitor services (information, restrooms) or support facilities (employee housing, offices, equipment storage), the Lady of the Woods serves to instruct and inspire. The sculpture can speak to change, because eight decades ago the park headquarters site looked considerably different than it does today. When Bush made his carving in 1917, there were only three log buildings and a barn with no attempt at year-round occupancy of the site. Less than a decade later the National Park Service began building a headquarters on the site of the former road camp, then slowly expanded it over time to impinge on the sanctity of the mostly undisturbed forest that Bush once knew.<sup>3</sup>

The Lady of the Woods is not, however, a merely antiquarian artifact (where the past is separated from the present) because landscape architects working for the National Park Service incorporated it within an exceptionally coherent site design, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in

1988 as the Munson Valley Historic District. Despite the recognition, designed landscapes cannot be frozen in time and compromises remain apparent—most notably in the Park Service utilizing historic park headquarters structures for winter operations. This can be seen even along the 400-foot trail that leads to the Lady of the Woods. Not only have the old mess hall and meat house been adaptively reused (for ranger operations and a trail cache, respectively); looming in the distance between them is a more recent maintenance shop. The latter is an especially unfortunate example of form following function, very much out of place next to a historic district where design with nature is so evident.

While change is important, character-defining features of the historic district and (in particular the Lady of the Woods) are more significant as representations of continuity. This type of continuity pertains to how parks evolved as a cultural expression of interaction with a certain setting or environment. Parks began as simple enclosures, intended as places where the nobility exercised exclusive hunting rights. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries parks fused with ornamental gardens, the latter having originated in the ancient world from an urge to manipulate nature and create pleasing effects. Features of the garden (such as plantings that imitated growth in the wild, walks, and statuary or other structures built to arouse introspection in those allowed access) followed classical models at first and then became more “natural” as the desire to emulate landscape paintings spread throughout Western Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The English were especially adept at creating “landscape gardens” and developed a vocabulary for enjoying the “picturesque” surroundings contrived to appear more natural than Nature itself. The private landscape gardens of the gentry and a newly rich class of merchants thus became models for newly established public parks that first appeared in the nineteenth century.

Patrons of the landscaped parks brought their vocabulary with them when they went beyond their estates and searched for “sublime” scenery. These first “tourists” followed their guidebooks to find monumental scenery that matched the lighting effects employed by landscape painters to animate mountains, forests, lakes, waterfalls, caves, and coastlines. Americans as a mass embraced

the aesthetic tastes of Europe at roughly the same time as the public park movement came across the Atlantic. It is therefore no surprise that public parks could encompass not only the countryside within or adjacent to cities, but also the most sublime scenery, particularly where the land remained in the public domain. National parks are really part of a vast national estate, where a few of the most unusual features such as Crater Lake can be protected for future generations to contemplate. By seeing sublime landscapes as art, the prevailing taste allowed for access but sought to minimize visitor impact. Consequently, developments in the national parks have usually had both functional and ornamental qualities, with the best being subordinate and inspired by their surroundings.<sup>5</sup>

Employees and visitors are now prevented by government regulations from making artistic statements similar to Bush’s, but the Lady of the Woods is a rare window into the cultural patterns behind the origin and use of national parks. Through this sculpture and rustic architecture elsewhere at Crater Lake, it is possible to relate the story of how a collective perception of nature developed through time and found expression in gardens, parks, and finally sublime landscapes like the area around the Park Headquarters. ■

*Stephen R. Mark is the park historian for Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Anne Shannon Monroe, “The Lady of the Woods” in *Oregon Out of Doors* (Portland: The Mazamas, 1922), p. 124.
2. E.C. Solinsky, Superintendent, to Dr. Earl Bush, 17 July 1930, manuscript files, Crater Lake National Park.
3. Steve Mark, *Park Headquarters Historic Walking Tour* (Crater Lake: Crater Lake Natural History Association, 1999), p. 7.
4. William Gladstone Steel, “Lady of the Woods,” *Steel Points Junior* 1:1 (July 1925), pp. 4-6.
5. Richard M. Brown, “The Lady of the Woods Revisited,” *Nature Notes from Crater Lake* 21 (1955), pp. 5-12.



# Tracks in the Ash

by Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon

*The end came with alarming suddenness. A puff of vapor from the summit gave warning. Quickly it expanded, like a cluster of giant balloons, boiling and seething with incredible energy. Then came an ear-splitting roar.<sup>1</sup>*

## MOUNT MAZAMA'S ERUPTION SENT

Mpumice and ash billowing away from the summit to settle, snow-like, over a vast portion of the interior Far West. Were there people present to leave tracks in that fresh layer of ash?

That was an open question in the 1930s. Scientists were puzzling out a history that recognized Euroamerican presence in the West as only the most recent page in a long series of volumes. Anthropologists judged that evidence for an ancient Native American presence in the interior Far West was tenuous at best; the occupation of such a seemingly inhospitable place as the Northern Great Basin was surely a relatively recent occurrence.

The question of the chronological relationship between early peoples and the eruption of Mount Mazama was illuminated in the dim light of an excavation within a cave near Fort Rock, southeast of Bend. Luther Cressman, of the University of Oregon, was doing field work in the vicinity of Fort Rock.<sup>2</sup> When he dug a test pit into the floor of one of the Fort Rock caves, he encountered several artifact-rich layers before reaching a sterile layer of gritty, gray ash and pumice. Below that distinct horizon Cressman found a woven sandal. Obviously, if the gray layer above was ash from an ancient volcano, as Cressman suspected, then the occupation of this northern desert occurred before that eruption. Cressman felt guarded elation. Which volcano might have provided the ash? How old was that eruption?

Geologists identified the gray grit as Mazama ash. Cressman then knew that people had lived in Oregon's Great Basin for far

longer than most archaeologists of the time realized.

Radiocarbon dating and tree-ring analysis later suggested a date for the Mazama eruption at about 6,800 years ago, a date recently refined to about 7,720 years ago. A partial sandal from the same cave was radiocarbon dated to about 9,000 years ago, providing more evidence for the great antiquity of this sandal-making tradition.

Archaeologists excavated nearly 100 sandals and sandal fragments from the Fort Rock Cave. Nearly all were made from the twisted and twined bark of sagebrush, one of the most characteristic plants of the Great Basin. Sagebrush, besides being readily available, was easy to work with, fragrant, and provided welcome insulation. A flap at the front of a sandal pulled back over the toes and secured with a twine of twisted sagebrush fiber protected people from the cold northern desert air.

Additional archaeological work in eastern and southeastern Oregon, as well as in other parts of the Great Basin, has

revealed numerous plants used by early peoples of the region. In many of the excavations, a layer of Mazama ash provides a readily identifiable marker in time, a pale, thin geological stratum inserted into the indefinite chronology of the peopling of the Far West.

The book of the ancient Native American history of the West is still difficult to read, but one conclusion is clear. People have been at home here for a very long period of time. Tracks made in the ash of Mount Mazama were a continuation of tracks laid across the landscapes of the West by Native American peoples for thousands of years prior to the great mountain's eruption. 🏠

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



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*Dr. Luther Cressman, head of the Anthropology Department at the University of Oregon, excavated these twined sagebrush sandal fragments from a Fort Rock cave in 1938.*

### ENDNOTE

1. Howel Williams, *The Ancient Volcanoes of Oregon* (Eugene: Oregon State System of Higher Education, 1962), p. 46.
2. L.S. Cressman, *The Sandal and the Cave* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1981).



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