

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

June 2002 Vol. 4, No. 6

Today

## Electrical Treatments Simplified

1. How to Start.



Muscle Building, Lung Development. Improves circulation.

2. Sponge (+) Relieves Pain.



Headache, Earache, Toothache, Neuralgia, Neuritis, Soreness.

3. Sponge (==) Roller (+)



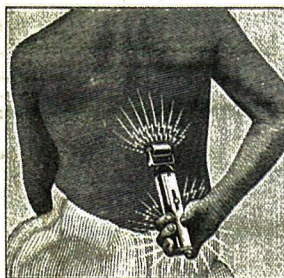
Tonsillitis, Catarrh, Asthma, Goitre, Voice, Throat.

4. Roller (+)



Pleurisy, Chest Pains, Reducing, Making Lethesome.

5. Roller (+)



Breaks up Congestion. Lumbago and Backache.

6. Sponge and Roller.



Regulating Internal Organs. Stomach, Indigestion, Bowels, Constipation.

7. Spinal Treatment.



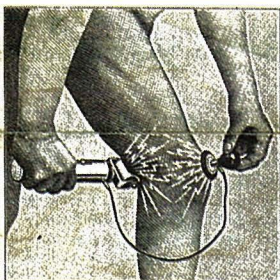
Tonic, Up Current, Debility, Nervousness, Liver, Kidneys, Spine.

8. Electric Hand Massage.



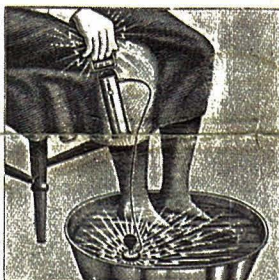
The Touch that Soothes. Electricity and Personal Magnetism.

9. Concentrated Application.



Rheumatism, Stiff Joints. Breaking up chronic conditions.

10. Sponge (==) Stimulates.



Electric Bath, Poor Circulation, Tired Feet, Improving Dry Chapped skin.

11. Scalp Brush.



Falling Hair, Dandruff, Itchy Scalp, Brain Stimulation, Restfulness.

12. Beautifying Hair.



Enlivens the Hair, Enriches the Color, Stimulates Luxuriant Growth.

NEW SOCIETY EXHIBIT • MEDFORD'S PARKS







# HISTORIC HANLEY FARM

1053 HANLEY ROAD 11AM - 4PM  
BETWEEN CENTRAL POINT & JACKSONVILLE

ADMISSION CHARGED • MEMBER, CHILDREN 5 & UNDER FREE • SENIOR DISCOUNT

*Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays*  
May 25 - September 29

## Hanley Farm Summer Season 2002

**MAY 31, JUNE 1 & 2**

### *Late 19th-Century Farm Life*

The Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will demonstrate the use of a turn-of-the-century hay-baling press and provide horse-drawn wagon tours of Hanley Farm on Saturday and Sunday. Plus miniature horses!

**JUNE 7, 8 & 9**

### *Native American Lifeways*

Tom Smith, craftsman and member of Southern Oregon Indian Center, will demonstrate traditional tool making and flintknapping. Explore the traditions and culture of the first peoples who lived here through hands-on activities and displays.

**JUNE 14, 15 & 16**

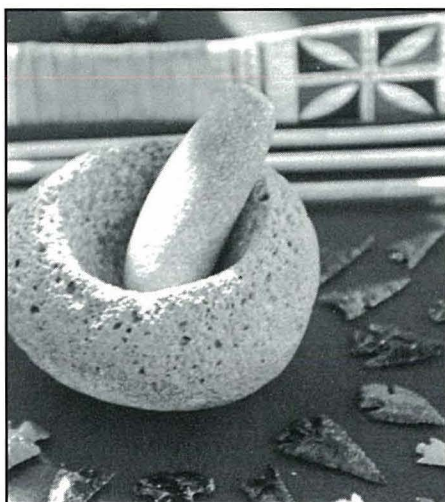
### *Pioneer Lifeways-Dairy Days*

June is dairy month. Milk the Hanley "cow," pet a dairy goat, taste fresh-made cheese, try your hand at making butter with an old-fashioned butter churn, and sample some "butter" milk. The Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will provide horse-drawn wagon tours of Hanley Farm on Saturday and Sunday.

**JUNE 21, 22 & 23**

### *Early 20th-Century Farm Life*

Members of the Early Gas Engine and Tractor Association branch 141 will display tractors and provide tractor-pulled wagon tours of Hanley Farm on Saturday and Sunday. The Mountain Star Quilters will demonstrate quilting from 1:30 to 4 p.m. each day.



Each weekend enjoy hands-on activities and engaging programs highlighting one of five different themes: Native American Lifeways, Pioneer Lifeways, Late 19th-Century Farm Life, Early 20th-Century Farm Life, and Old-Fashioned Holidays. House and garden tours are offered each day. Wagon tours of the farm are available on Saturdays and Sundays on Pioneer, Late 19th- and Early 20th-Century weekends. Bring a picnic and spend the day—there's plenty to see and do for families of all ages! And, you'll be able to buy fresh farm produce on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hanley Farm Farmers' Market.

**JUNE 28, 29 & 30**

### *Pioneer Lifeways-Hammer-In*

Experience the excitement of a hammer-in as members of the California Blacksmith Association and Jefferson Smiths demonstrate this ancient art form. Members of the Southern Oregon Stitchers chapter of the Embroidery Guild of America will display, demonstrate, and answer questions about a variety of needlework as they instruct visitors in redwork embroidery. If you stitch with them on Saturday for a half hour, you'll be eligible for an end-of-the-summer drawing for one of seven tea towels to be created this season. The Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will provide horse-drawn wagon tours of Hanley Farm on Saturday and Sunday.

*See News & Notes for more information on lectures and youth programming at Hanley Farm.*



SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

Editorial Guidelines

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

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

# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

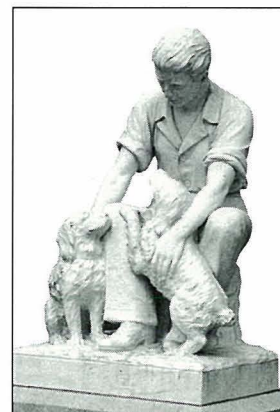
Today

## FEATURE:

### For the Love of the Land: A History of Medford's Parks

by Molly Walker Kerr

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DANA L. JACKSON

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COURTESY OF JOE PETERSON

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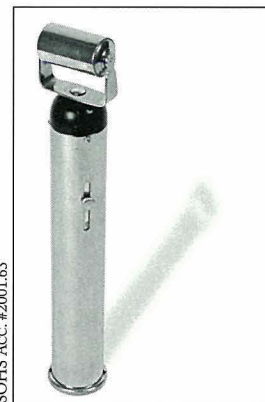
#### THINGS TO DO:

Exhibits, program updates,  
and calendar

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SOHS Acc. #2001.63

### ON THE COVER

Patented in 1919, the "Electreat," powered by flashlight batteries, claimed to effectively treat a variety of ailments. Now on display in the Society's new exhibit *Milestones* in the Jacksonville Museum.



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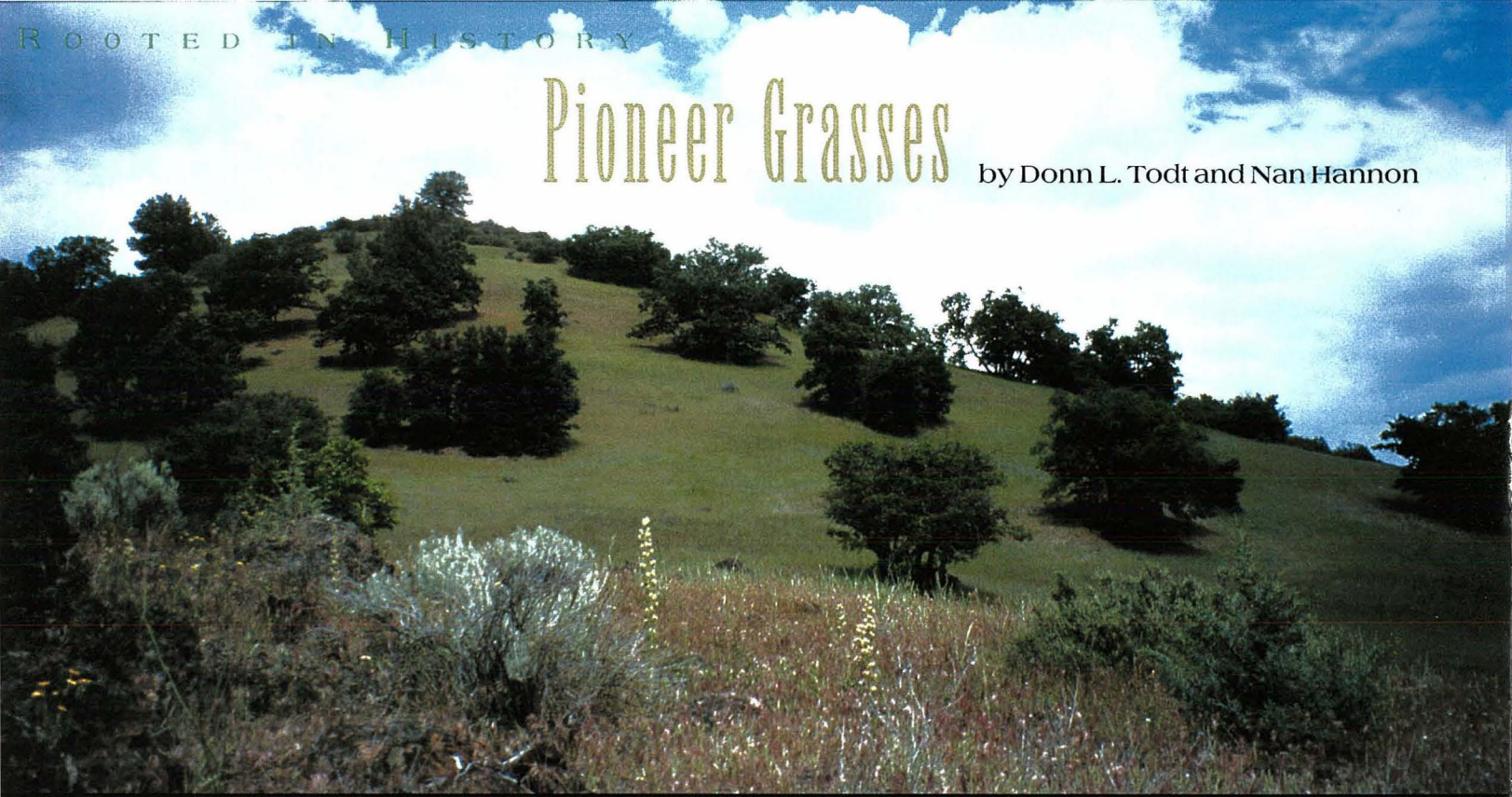
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# Pioneer Grasses

by Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

## IN LATE MAY AND EARLY

June, as the days warm toward summer and soils dry, the grasses of the Rogue Valley ripen. Each day the palette of colors changes as greens leach from the landscape, leaving highway shoulders and hillsides brushed with broad strokes of mahogany, amber and tan. Surprisingly, the harvest colors of the landscape and the grass species themselves would have been unfamiliar to the valley's original Native Americans and perhaps to the earliest pioneers.

Like the pioneers, these grasses are recent arrivals. Their roots are in the Mediterranean and Eurasia, where they coevolved with agriculture and herding.

Common names like wild oats and wild barley show a close connection to the plow plants, but certify a roguish, independent nature. They are our docile domesticates' evil twins. As Euroamericans settled the Rogue Valley, these plants moved onto the land, transforming the ecology of our region. These grasses appear lowly enough, but each has an immodest agenda: to inherit a fair portion of the earth's surface.

Like oats and wheat, these grasses are annuals, completing their life cycle in a year. They germinate following the first soaking autumn rains and grow while soil moisture is readily available. These grasses race to maturity. Their plumed seed heads dance with the warm breezes that precede summer drought.

Our original native grasses are perennials.

They live for years, surviving summer drought by establishing an extensive moisture-gathering root system and by conserving that moisture. Foliage is often blue-grey and shows many adaptations for moisture retention during the long season of scant rainfall. In late spring, the native grasses send up tall panicles that wave gracefully as seeds develop from wind-pollinated flowers.

These once-abundant native grasses have become so uncommon and localized in the Rogue Valley that it takes a careful botanist to find their scattered remnant patches. Replacement of our native perennial bunch grasses with introduced annual species from the Old World is the most radical historical change in the nature of the vegetation of the Far West. It has many practical consequences. Annual grasses dry early in the season, resulting in a more fire-prone landscape. The dry grasses that fire departments require us to remove from around our homes and side lots are all introduced species. The roadside grasses that ignite with a flicked cigarette are likewise introduced. Summer wildfires sprint up dry hillsides toward the forest, feeding on the tinder of heat-cured annual grasses.

How did these grasses become established? Undoubtedly early pioneers broadcast weedy grass seeds with the first oats and wheat planted in the Rogue Valley. Migrating birds may have brought seeds from California where annual grasses had spread rapidly from the early Spanish missions. Seeds also may have

arrived when the first cattle entered the Rogue Valley. In 1837, Ewing Young trail-bossed a cattle drive from the Central Valley of California into Oregon Territory. No doubt grass seeds hitched a ride north on the matted hair of Spanish longhorns.<sup>1</sup> However they came, the newly-arrived plants flourished. The perpetual disturbance associated with farming and grazing aided their rapid expansion. While the plow provided localized favorable environments for introduced grasses and other weeds, grazing, especially the heavy grazing of the late 1800s and early 1900s, facilitated the landscape-scale conversion of perennial grasslands to grasslands dominated by annuals.

When grass seeds mature and dry, their dispersal mechanisms operate. Sharp points and barbs hook unsuspecting travelers. A walk through a field of dry grass results in a harvest of seeds on socks and shoelaces. We all become unwitting seed vectors.

By July, the harvest colors of the hills fade into a brittle brown. Veteran valley residents take the summer-brown hills for granted while newcomers are puzzled and sometimes put off by this sere landscape that is itself composed of newcomers. ■

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

## ENDNOTE

1. Kenneth L. Holmes, *Ewing Young* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1967) pp. 114-136.



# Something New in History

by Steve M. Wyatt

at the Jacksonville Museum

**WHAT WERE THE MILESTONE** events in your personal history that made you who you are today?

A new exhibit at the Jacksonville Museum, *History in the Making: Jackson County Milestones*, poses this same question with an eye on a slightly bigger picture. The milestone events that made Jackson County what it is today are explored using an abundance of artifacts and photographs. This diverse exhibit contains artifacts ranging from nineteenth century Chinese pottery to an early cell phone. Museum visitors seeking a hands-on experience will find a working telegraph, wallbox (jukebox), computer terminal, and DVD player.

Early milestone events include the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850, and the discovery of gold in 1851-52. Many of the artifacts in this exhibit section came with this area's settlers across the Oregon Trail or on the sea route that often included a trek across the Isthmus of Panama.

Many of the county's towns (not just Jacksonville), date from the gold rush era. They got their start producing lumber or foodstuffs for miners. The region's population diversified briefly when Chinese miners moved to the area. Pottery and other seldom-seen Chinese artifacts figure prominently in this exhibit.

Life for the Chinese and everyone else changed dramatically with the arrival of the railroad in 1884. Moving produce, products, and people suddenly got easier. Communities like Medford and Gold Hill owe their very existence to the railroad.

From the arrival of the railroad to the present, technological innovations have dramatically changed the county. A notable example is the automobile. When this technology reached Jackson County, it became the first in Oregon to issue road construction bonds. In 1915, one of the nation's first auto camps was built in Ashland's Lithia Park. A replica of a 1940s roadside diner booth complete with a working wallbox that plays early automobile songs is a visitor favorite.

Moving Jackson County produce and products by roads and railroad made a wide

range of industries possible. Artifacts in the industry section range from a Harry and David fruit box to chain saws. The tourism industry was also made possible by improved transportation. The great outdoors, festivals, and celebrations have drawn vacationers for more than one hundred years. The Britt and Shakespeare festivals are highlighted because they have become a part of their communities identity.

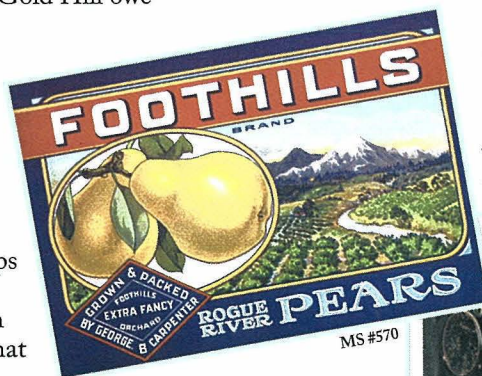
Medford is often identified with the health care industry. It has become a regional mecca for people seeking medical treatment. Early drugs, and surgical instruments, along with bogus electric shock treatments (see cover), are displayed.

Technological innovations in electronic communication have affected virtually everyone. The information age—from the area's first newspaper to the arrival of the Internet—is not overlooked. An information station features a computer terminal with an internal Jackson County history web site. It is also equipped with low-tech reference material (books) and a working telegraph.

This exhibit is in the historic Jacksonville Museum at Fifth and C streets. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. There is a minimal admission fee. For more information, call (541) 773-6536 or visit the Southern Oregon Historical Society's Web site at [www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org).

*Steve M. Wyatt is exhibits manager at the Southern Oregon Historical Society.*

*At left is a pear-crate label. Below, an Acme Portable Projector shows 35mm film and slides and was patented in 1919.*



*Clockwise from left, a vase found at a Chinese mining camp in Union Creek in the late 1800s; a Western Electric candlestick-style phone, circa 1917; a precursor to a modern-day disco ball, this advertising lamp came from Strang's Drug Store in Medford, circa 1910; a two man, "Mall" brand chainsaw, circa 1960.*





# SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Things To Do in June



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

	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Clothespin Dolls; 50¢
Chautauqua Program	Sat., June 8; 2 - 3 p.m.	U.S. HOTEL BALLROOM, Jacksonville	Oregon Voices; free
Summer Sunday in the Park	Sun., June 9; 2 - 3 p.m.	BUTLER BAND SHELL, Lithia Park, Ashland	Ballet Folklorico Latin Reflections ; free
Beekman Living History Program	Wed. - Sun., 1 - 5 p.m.	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Enter 1911: adults, \$3; ages 6-12 & seniors 65+, \$2; ages 5 & under and members, free
Hanley Farm	Fri., Sat., Sun., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.	1053 Hanley Road, Central Point	Activities, programs; adults, \$5; ages 6- 12 & seniors 65+, \$3; ages 5 & under and members, free

## PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

### JUNE CRAFT OF THE MONTH

#### *Clothespin Dolls*

Use your imagination and some scraps of paper or fabric to decorate a clothespin and create an old-fashioned doll to take home.

### CHAUTAUQUA PROGRAM

Historian and folklorist Twilo Scofield will present "Oregon Voices," a program of Oregonians and their work through oral history, customs, songs, stories, and traditional love. The presentation focuses on several ethnic groups, including the Old Believers, the Czechs of Malin, the Scandinavians, and other Oregon ethnic communities. (Made possible by funding from the Oregon Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.)

### BALLET FOLKLORICO LATIN REFLECTION

This Mexican folkdance troupe, comprised of students and graduates of South Medford High School and other community members, will perform a one-hour program of traditional folkloric dances from five Mexican regions in full traditional costumes.

### BEEKMAN

#### LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM

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.

### HISTORIC

#### HANLEY FARM EVENTS

Enjoy hands-on activities and engaging programs highlighting one of five different themes. Tour the house and gardens. Take a wagon ride. Bring a picnic lunch! Purchase fresh produce on Sundays (11 a.m. - 3 p.m.) at the Hanley Farmers' Market.

#### JUNE 1 & 2: *Late 19th-Century Farm Life*

Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will demonstrate the use of a turn-of-the-century hay baling press and provide horse-drawn wagon tours of the farm.

#### JUNE 7, 8 & 9: *Native American Lifeways*

Traditional tool making and flint knapping demonstrations by craftsman Tom Smith.

#### JUNE 14, 15 & 16: *Pioneer Lifeways*

Milk the "cow," pet a dairy goat, taste fresh-made cheese, make butter with an old-fashioned butter churn, and sample buttermilk.

#### JUNE 21, 22, & 23: *Early 20th-Century Farm Life*

Members of the Early Day Gas Engine and Tractor Association will display tractors and provide tractor-pulled wagon tours of the farm. Mountain Star Quilters will

demonstrate quilting from 1:30 - 4 p.m. each day.

#### JUNE 28, 29 & 30: *Pioneer Hammer-In*

Members of the California Blacksmith Association and Jefferson Smiths will demonstrate this ancient art form. Members of the Southern Oregon Stitchers chapter of the Embroidery Guild of America will display, demonstrate, and answer questions about a variety of needlework. Stitch with the group for half an hour to become eligible for a drawing at the end of summer of one of seven embroidered tea towels.

### HANLEY BARN & GARDEN LECTURE SERIES

Free with admission. Fridays, 2 - 3 p.m.

**Preregister by calling 541/773-6536.**

MAY 31: Closets, Cupboards a Correspondence

JUNE 7: Making Use of Resources—Traditional Natural Law Relationships

JUNE 14: Herban Legends

JUNE 21: Southern Oregon's Suitable Structures

JUNE 28: Pioneers & Petticoats

**Hanley Farm Youth Programming** for ages 3-6 provides storytelling for one-half hour at 1 p.m. each Friday.

**A special workshop** for kids ages 7-11 will be held on Saturday, June 1, from 1-2 p.m., and is free with admission. **Participants must preregister by May 31 by calling 773-6536.** Discover the toys and games of times past. Create a "buzz saw" to take home; try your hand at rolling a hoop.



# 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 OF THE PAST

This traveling exhibit uses photographs, documents, and artifacts to provide an intriguing look at the ways Americans enjoyed their leisure time at the turn of the 20th Century. It explores toys, the fitness craze, the role of organized sports, the rise of the sportswoman, and America on wheels. Developed by the Rogers Historical Museum, Rogers, Arkansas, and supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### 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"

Be sure to take in this exhibit of ten major turning points (milestones) in Jackson County's history. An abundance of artifacts and photographs, running the gamut from Chinese archeological material to an early cellular telephone, are used to tell the county's story. Not everything is behind glass - a working 1940s jukebox plays vintage automobile songs, a DVD player reproduces historic film clips, and a computer with an internal website of Jackson County history offer museum visitors a hands-on historical experience.

### 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 Southwest-Art & History*

Cultural history of local tribes and information on contemporary collecting issues. **Most Thursdays in June, from noon - 5 p.m., Southern Oregon Indian Center member and craftsman Tom Smith will demonstrate tool making and flintknapping in the exhibit.**



Recently researched objects from the Society's Southwest Native American collections are now on display. Highlights include ancient Anasazi and historic Pueblo pottery. Textiles include two Navajo women's dresses, a Navajo Germantown blanket, and a Hopi/Pueblo "maiden's shawl."

### HALL OF JUSTICE

History of this former Jackson County Courthouse.

### 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:

- **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

PHONE: (541) 773-6536

unless listed otherwise

FAX: (541) 776-7994

E-MAIL: info@sohs.org

WEBSITE: sohs.org

### HISTORY CENTER

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

### RESEARCH LIBRARY

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

### JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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

### HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road  
Fri., Sat., Sun., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

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

### C.C. BEEKMAN BANK

3rd and California, Jacksonville

### JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE

3rd and California, Jacksonville  
Wed. - Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sun., noon to 5 p.m.

### THIRD STREET ARTISANS' STUDIO

3rd and California, Jacksonville  
Sat., 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### U.S. HOTEL

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

### CATHOLIC RECTORY

4th and C streets, Jacksonville



*We invite YOU to become a member!*

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

Lifetime ...	\$1,000	
Business ...	Two years \$200	One year \$120
Director ...	Two years \$450	One year \$250
Curator ...	Two years \$200	One year \$120
Patron ...	Two years \$110	One year \$60
Family ...	Two years \$55	One year \$30
Friend ...	Two years \$35	One year \$20



# FOR THE LOVE OF THE LAND:

# A History of Medford's Parks



MEDFORD PARKS DEPT.

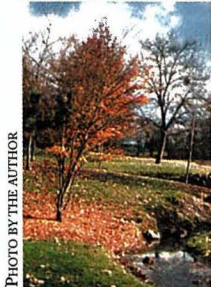


PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

IN A TIME OF DISAPPEARING ORCHARDS AND FRENZIED BUILDING PROJECTS, MEDFORD RESIDENTS ARE GRATEFUL TO EARLY CITY OFFICIALS AND CIVIC-MINDED LAND DONORS WHO HAD THE FORESIGHT TO PRESERVE MUCH OF THE AREA'S PRECIOUS LAND FOR PARKS.

by Molly Walker Kerr

At present, Medford has more than two dozen parks including regional open space, urban, community, neighborhood/school, mini, special-use, and linear (such as along Bear Creek)—as well as acres of set-aside park land awaiting development.

Here are sketches of the city's nine major parks:

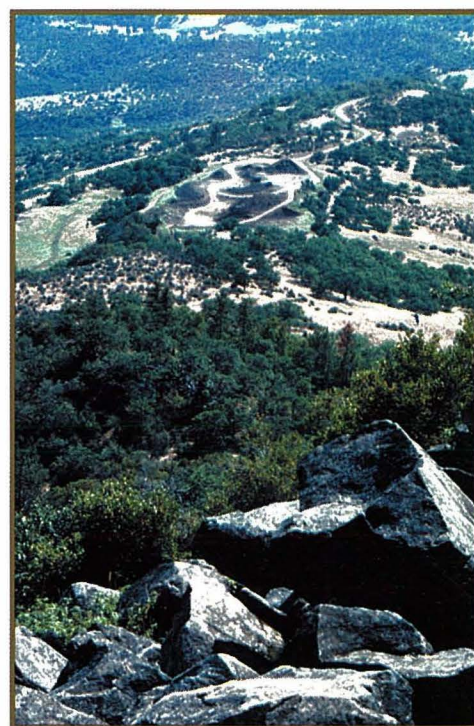
## Prescott Park

Located at the summit of Roxy Ann Peak, Prescott Park is the largest of Medford's parks. Although owned by the city, it is not within the city limits or the urban growth boundary, making it unique. Its size, 1,740 acres, is four times more than the combined acreage of all the other city parks, including undeveloped park land.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the other city parks with their manicured lawns and paved paths, this mountaintop park is rustic and pastoral. From its elevation of 3,571 feet above sea level and 2,000 feet above the valley floor, the park offers a breathtaking panorama of the wide valley, the Table Rocks, pear orchards, and the magnificent mountains surrounding the valley.

In 1933 the city acquired the land from the federal government with the stipulation that it be used for recreational purposes. With the help of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the park was developed in the late 1930s based on a master plan devised by the National Park Service. It blossomed into picnic areas, hiking trails, day-use facilities, and scenic overlooks frequented by youth groups and service organizations. The park was named for George J. Prescott, a Medford police officer who was shot and killed on March 16, 1933, in performance of his duty. Known for his courage and kindness, he had been a devoted supporter of the park.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1950s, concrete block storage structures and associated radio relay towers were added. Then the park fell into disrepair due to vandalism and neglect, its condition declining over the years.

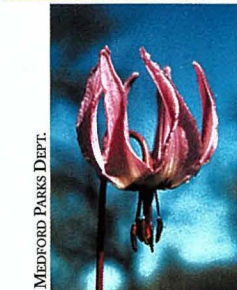


MEDFORD PARKS DEPT.

*The sweeping views from the summit of Roxy Ann Peak are among the attractions of Medford's Prescott Park, by far the city's largest at 1,740 acres.*



MEDFORD PARKS DEPT.



MEDFORD PARKS DEPT.



In the 1980s, volunteers attempted to clean up the park in order to restore it as a wilderness recreational area, but the plan fizzled when key volunteers moved away. In 1997, Gwendolyn Scott, the city Parks Department's planting designer and tree program coordinator, donated her time as volunteer coordinator to rebuild some of the CCC trails from the 1930s, recruit cleanup groups, and get more people to discover what the park had to offer.<sup>3</sup>

Although there is much work to be done, the park is a community treasure worth restoring. With its hiking trails, overlooks, and benches, it offers visitors a serene sanctuary where they can watch birds and black-tailed deer, find buttercups specific only to this mountain peak, walk dogs, ride horses and mountain bikes, hike the four-mile loop, or simply stand in awe of the spectacular view.

## Bear Creek Park

Stepping from the busy eastside neighborhood through the entrance to Bear Creek Park, Medford's only large urban park, visitors may be swept into a world of fantasy and fun.

The 101-acre park, open year-round, offers a medley of choices. Visitors can stroll or jog on sun-dappled paths, rest beneath shade trees, play tennis, race bikes, fly into the air on skateboards, or listen to concerts on warm summer evenings.

This incredible park began when early city officials saw a need for a park and in 1939 purchased the prime property from Frank and William Earhart. In 1962, a federal grant enabled the city to purchase forty-seven undeveloped acres, and monies from the park improvement fund were used to obtain the remaining parcels. It expanded along Bear Creek until it became the 101 acres of today.<sup>4</sup>

Besides manicured gardens, rolling green hills, blossoming trees, and large picnic areas, the park offers twelve acres of multi-purpose fields, including soccer and Little League fields on the west side of Bear Creek where parents can cheer on their future Babe Ruths.

But the main attraction is the enormous 16,000-square-foot castle playground with its turrets, mazes, tunnels, slides and swings.

In October of 1988, three mothers—Nancy Strahl, Debbie Frierson, and Nancy Heyerman—organized a committee and hired nationally known architect Robert Leathers of Ithaca, New York, to design one of his famous playgrounds. Having built 450 nationwide, including two small ones in Grants Pass, he followed his formula for success: using children's drawings as a guide, then soliciting community support. Enthusiastic children collected pennies, grants and donations poured in, 1,500 volunteer builders stepped forward, and supplies were provided as needed. The builders quickly became experts and the entire



*An inviting fantasy land of interesting shapes, secret passages and winding walkways characterizes the Robert Leathers-designed playground at Bear Creek Park.*

playground was completed in only seven days.<sup>5</sup>

The park's newest attraction is the long-awaited Medford Skate Park. Groundbreaking began in September of 1998 and the 24,000-square-foot park officially opened on May 26, 2000, to a throng of eager skateboarders.

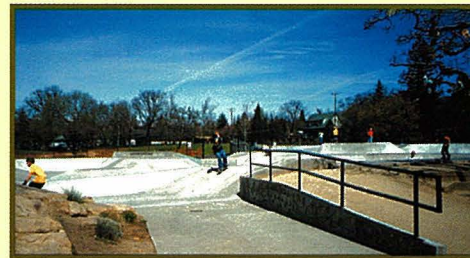
With its competition-size bowl up to ten feet high and its thirteen-foot pillar in the second bowl, the skate park attracts professional skaters as well as daring locals who go flying straight up over the top while onlookers hold their breath.

The designer, Eric Dawkins, a local skateboarder, also designed parks in Ashland, Talent, and Jacksonville. Medford's is the largest one of its kind in Oregon—twice the size of the others. "The Bear Creek facility will be one of the best in the nation," Dawkins said while the park was under construction. He was right, as the Medford Skate Park has been written up in major skateboarding magazines.

Other special attractions at Bear Creek Park include: the BMX bicycle track, where serious cyclists test their skills; the walks of the drought-tolerant gardens with Lilli Ann and Marvin Rosenberg's magical artwork where most labor and materials were donated; and the spacious outdoor amphitheater, completed in June of 1993, accommodating 2,000 Sunday evening concertgoers on its grassy slopes. They relax to blue-grass, classical, and jazz while the sun tosses pink and orange blazes across the sky before it slips behind the mountains.

There is something for everyone—even dogs have their own special area. The Dog Park got its start in 1997 as a community service project by Michelle Anderson, then a freshman at St. Mary's School. Lack of city funds for fencing had placed earlier plans on hold. Michelle was appointed fund-raising coordinator, raised the needed money; the fence went up with donated labor, and the 2.5-acre Dog Park became a reality.<sup>6</sup>

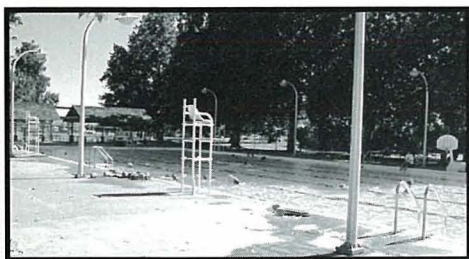
Bear Creek Park is a treasure—the crown jewel of Medford's parks.



*Top, skaters and skateboarders enjoy one of the nation's premier skate parks at Bear Creek Park. Above, this inviting site has become an all-grass amphitheater where families enjoy evening picnics and summer concerts.*

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR





*Top, the pool building and the Statue of Liberty replica dominate the raw skyline at Hawthorne Park in 1951, the year after it opened and before the park's "forest" of trees began to mature. Above, the pool at Hawthorne Park still resounds with children's laughter and splashes on warm summer days.*

## Hawthorne Park

Medford is fortunate to have a large community park right downtown. Hawthorne Park with its spreading lawns, benches, and rose gardens offers a pool of calm in the midst of a busy city. Workers on quick lunch-hour hikes stroll along the creek and the paved paths crisscrossing the park. Those with time to spare try their luck at horseshoes, take part in go-for-blood soccer games, swim a few laps in the pool, or reach for the sky on the swings.

In 1944, city officials and locals, concerned about the future of the nation's youth, wanted to create something lasting, cohesive, and youth-friendly in their own community. On March 7, 1945, the city purchased the twenty-acre park site from Frank and Katherine Farrell. After six years of planning, building, and landscaping, the new park emerged. Medford hosted a huge opening celebration on June 4, 1950, to blot out the war years and look ahead to a secure future. When Mayor Diamond Flynn cut the ribbon, he promised, "The park will serve as a youth center." And it has. Fifty-two years later, children's animated voices still resound from the pool, playground, and soccer fields.<sup>7</sup>

Swimming classes fill up fast, as does the annual Skyhawks soccer camp. KTVL Kids Day is a riotous event with free games, interactive arts and crafts and plenty of pizza. The Easter egg hunt hosted by the Kiwanis Club brings hordes

of tiny hunters to spread out across the wide, green lawns. After weeks of planning, the bright-colored eggs disappear within minutes.

A favorite park event is Cinco de Mayo—the colorful Mexican festival.

The Harvest of Arts Festival, held in the park each September, was moved to downtown in 2000 and renamed Art in Bloom. Things don't always stay the same. The Statue of Liberty, a bronze replica of the original in New York Harbor, graced the park entrance for more than fifty years until recently, when she was severely vandalized for the third time. Removed for repair, she may not return to where she once raised her torch in welcome—a more visible spot may be found. Nature lovers appreciate the fifty-six tree varieties throughout the park. (An identification guide and map are available at the Parks Department.) Tree names resemble a United Nations roll call—English hawthorne, Norway spruce, Spanish fir, Chinese holly, Siberian Elm, Portuguese laurel, American basswood, to name a few.

Hawthorne Park offers shade in an overheated world.

Mainwaring Park for two beloved police officers who loved kids.

Clyde Fichtner, who joined the police department in 1937, was Medford's first motorcycle traffic patrolman. Children flocked to him wherever he went. He retired a captain in 1971, and died in 1974. Kenneth Mainwaring, a caring Medford police detective, drowned in the Rogue River while on a backpacking trip with a group of children.

The wide, flat park is perfect for soccer games and tournaments. Walkers and joggers appreciate the paved path surrounding the park—no hills.

Besides the soccer fields, the park offers a small playground with swings, a slide, and bouncing animals to ride, picnic tables, tennis courts, a lighted sand volleyball court, a basketball court,

*Fichtner-Mainwaring Park, named to honor the memory of two Medford police officers who loved children, was once a Harry and David pear orchard. It now provides welcome open space along busy Stewart Avenue.*



## Fichtner-Mainwaring

This thirty-two acre park sits where blossoming pear orchards once stood. In August of 1974, Harry and David Bear Creek Orchards donated sixty-four acres on Stewart Avenue to the city. The easterly thirty-two acres were made into a park, and in 1976 the westerly thirty-two acres were sold by the city to be developed for single-family dwellings.

Originally called Oakdale Orchard Park, it was officially renamed Fichtner-

manicured gardens, and plenty of off-street parking. A white gazebo built by Herb Gifford provides a fanciful setting for weddings and birthday celebrations.

The small duck pond was "Dedicated to the Children of Medford" by Jean Winkler in memory of her aunt and uncle, Virgie and O.D. Blakemore. Two nearby purple benches—donated in memory of Goldie McCauley—provide a place to watch kids splash in the pond's bubbling fountain.

Children's joyful laughter would be a welcome sound to the two police veterans for whom the park is named.



## Holmes Park

John Holmes, son of Harry Holmes of Harry and David Bear Creek Orchards, once lived in the white mansion on South Modoc Avenue. On May 3, 1973, he deeded the 19.4-acre parcel surrounding his home to the city to be turned into a park.

This neighborhood park has two parts—one manicured and the other natural. The manicured part includes a tiny playground, a round track (five times equals a mile), picnic tables, tennis courts, and a large field in the center of the track used for soccer and softball games.

The natural area, with unpaved paths ascending and descending hills, has been devoted to disc golf. This sport provides participants a chance to play golf without expensive clubs, dues or green fees. All they need is a Frisbee and some know-how. Enthusiasts play year-round, whether under blistering heat or against strong winds.

Hoover Elementary School and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management placed a granite map identifying peaks to the south, on the hill facing a spectacular view. Behind are two rows of benches for outdoor classes.

The natural area constantly changes—green in winter, tall swaying grasses in early summer until mowed, then hot August gold. School children practice their running on the paths and shout to each other on early mornings amid the mature oaks dotting the grounds.

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*In 1944, city officials  
and locals, concerned  
about the future of the  
nation's youth, wanted to  
create something lasting,  
cohesive, and youth-  
friendly in their own  
community.*

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## Donahue-Frohnmayr

This park land located on Spring and Springbook once belonged to two families, the Donahues and the Frohnmayers—good friends and neighbors since the 1940s. On December 15, 1989, the city purchased the Donahues' five-acre parcel. Then the Frohnmayers donated their adjoining 5.75-acre parcel on December 20, 1989, for use as a park.



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

*Holmes Park packs a lot of features into a small, developed space on Modoc Avenue, including a jogging track, a playground, tennis courts, and a "disc golf" course in the unlandscaped natural area. Below, Donahue-Frohnmayr Park is built on a pair of properties once owned by two Medford families on the north side of Spring Street. Its special feature is a memorial grove where residents can honor loved ones they have lost.*



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

This neighborhood park, with its playground, paved paths, and covered picnic area, was chosen as the site for the WinterSpring Memorial Grove, the city's millennium project. Landscape architect John Gailbraith volunteered to design the memorial setting, to be placed in the northwest corner of the park in a natural grove of native oaks. He incorporated the ideas of volunteers with WinterSpring (a support network for those dealing with grief and loss), bereaved people, and members of Medford's Tree Committee who participated in the planning process.<sup>8</sup>

The 1.5-acre Memorial Grove will have a waterfall, a curving stone wall inscribed

with names of loved ones, and benches to offer a place for quiet reflection.

The desire to leave memorials to loved ones is a strong one. According to city Parks Director Greg Jones, "We receive calls almost every month—pleas from bereaved families seeking a lasting way to remember their loved ones. They want to plant a tree or buy a bench." He says the result has been a patchwork of private memorials placed throughout the city's parks, scattered shrines that challenge work crews trying to balance reverence and basic maintenance. The Memorial Grove will provide one public area for all to share.<sup>9</sup>



## Railroad Park

The most unusual city park of all, Railroad Park, is located at the end of Berrydale Avenue off Table Rock Road. When the whistles blow, visitors scramble aboard the scaled-down trains for a mile-long adventure. The volunteer engineers offer free rides (donations cheerfully accepted) on the second and fourth Sundays from April through October.

Railroad Park began in 1962 with a single locomotive. When the Medford Corporation (Medco) discontinued using trains to transport logs from Butte Falls to its mill in Medford, the company decided to part with its locomotives. Medco donated one to the city for public display in west Medford's Jackson School Park. Built by Willamette Iron and Steel Works of Portland, it became known as the Medco 4-Spot.

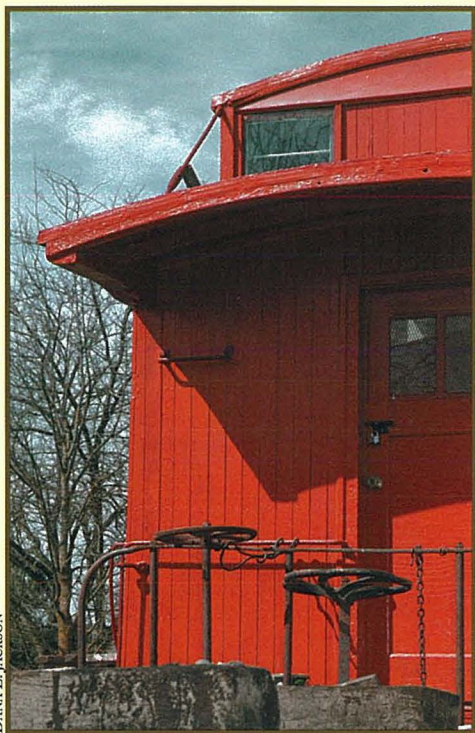
The Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society attempted to obtain title to the engine and move it to Portland. Medford railroad enthusiasts then formed a Southern Oregon Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and appealed to the city to find a parcel of land for a permanent historical railroad park where the Willamette locomotive could be displayed. The Southern Oregon Live Steamers and the Rogue Valley Model Railroad Club joined the cause. The city offered a choice of four parcels, from which the present site was chosen. In 1986, the railroad enthusiasts moved the locomotive—the only remaining Willamette locomotive in Oregon—from Jackson Park to its permanent home in the new Railroad Park.<sup>10</sup>

Besides the full-size locomotive, the park has a double-decker car barn, switching yard, crossing gates, train station, tunnels and a 70-foot trestle bridge built entirely from donations from the community and club members. Members of the Live Steamers build, own and operate locomotives on the 7 1/2-inch gauge track.

Other railroad-related groups also share the park: the Model Railroaders, Garden Railroad Scale, and Morse Telegraph Group. Children especially thrill at the chance to try Morse code.

Donations from Southern Pacific, Weyerhaeuser, and Medco are on permanent exhibit: semaphore signals, a model caboose, a flanger (for removing snow), a 1940-vintage caboose, and a hopper car, to name a few.

Loaded down with souvenirs and happy memories, park visitors look forward to their next visit, to hear the "All aboard!"



DANA L. JACKSON

*The distinctive lines of a caboose tickle train fanciers' imaginations at Medford's Railroad Park, which features an old Medco logging locomotive and train rides offered by members of the Southern Oregon Live Steamers on a small-gauge railroad that winds around the park.*

## Alba Park

Alba Park, a special-use park, was once known as City Park or Library Park because of its location in downtown

Medford across from the Carnegie Library. Shade trees and picnic tables provide a peaceful setting for downtown workers seeking fresh air and a break from the daily routine.

In the center of the park a memorial statue of a boy and two dogs sits above a pond once filled with lilies. Charles and Callie Palm placed it there in 1934 as a memorial to their son.

The land was donated to the city by the Oregon Transcontinental Railway in 1910, one-half to be used for a park and the other half for the county's Carnegie Library. The park was dedicated on January 20, 1931. Upon completion of a new library, the Carnegie site reverts back to the city.

Due to its location and ambiance, the park is a popular place for events including the Pear Blossom Festival, political rallies, art festivals, and the Friday noon summer concerts.

A Japanese cannon dating back to World War II sits quiet now. Captured during the war, it was placed in the park when the war was over. Children are especially fascinated with this relic.

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the elegant park gazebo, usually used for happy occasions, became a place for grieving citizens to place flowers, letters, and poems.

Library Park was renamed Parco d'Alba on May 31, 1985, Memorial Day, when the original Alba Park on Highway 99 was rededicated as Veterans Park.



DANA L. JACKSON

*This gazebo is a focal point of shady Alba Park, named for Medford's Italian sister city, and formerly known as Library Park.*



# Veterans Park

This park began with a single maple tree. In 1919, a young man named Paul Rynning planted it in memory of a friend killed in World War I. After that, other trees were planted, each a dedication to the memory of a World War I soldier who had given his life in the war. The 2.3-acre parcel belonging to Jackson County evolved into Maple Grove Memorial.

In 1938, World War I veteran Charley Myers came to Medford to head up maintenance and building for the CCC, with headquarters adjacent to the memorial, then overgrown. Myers met a grieving couple standing in the Memorial Grove next to the tree they had planted in their son's memory twenty years before. They told him the story of the trees—how people had planted them in memory of their war dead.

Myers approached Captain Meyering, commanding officer of the local CCC division, with the moving story, and CCC workers became involved. They cleared brush and weeds, removed dead trees, trimmed others, and planted grass seed. The CCC maintained the memorial until the corps was disbanded in 1942, not long after Pearl Harbor.<sup>11</sup>

During the following years Kiwanis and the Jaycees contributed to the park's upkeep.

On August 25, 1958, Jackson County conditionally deeded the property to the city of Medford for purposes of a public park. It officially became known as Maple Grove Park. On September 1, 1962, the park was rededicated and its name changed to Parco d'Alba in honor of the city's sister city, Alba, Italy.

On August 14, 1966, the Veterans of World War I, Barracks 540, together with its auxiliary, erected a small monument in the park honoring the 106 war dead. The inscription told "The Story of the Trees." Local folks recall that from sometime during the 1920s until after World War II, a four-foot-square sign nailed to a tree bore the inscription "Veterans Park." It is unknown who placed it there or who removed it. There is no record of any formal dedication proceedings.

Myers, as a member of the Jackson County Veterans Allied Council, requested that the council look into restoring the park to its original purpose. The council passed a motion to do so and nearly four years later, on Memorial Day, May 31, 1982, the park was rededicated as Veterans Park.

According to Al Mullis, a veteran and chairman of the Veterans Memorial Committee, "The park was created through donations ranging from labor to materials. But, it's not complete. Eventually the sycamores and hawthorne trees will be removed to make way for fifty-one maples, mostly started from seeds taken from the first tree planted in the park. The trees will honor the fifty-one local casualties of World War I."<sup>12</sup>

The volunteer Veterans Committee oversees construction of memorials and maintains and improves the park, which features a flag plaza, rose gardens, and granite walls inscribed with names of donors and memorial plaques.

The Gold Star Memorial Circle is for those killed or missing in action in all wars, including those killed in recent so-called peacetime. Central to Memorial Circle stands the memorial stone—a five-foot-high figure of "The Patriot" sandblasted onto the face of an 8 1/2- by 3 1/2-foot granite stone. The Patriot represents the citizen soldier of yesterday, today, and tomorrow proudly bearing arms.

The Honor Circle is dedicated to any and all recipients of the Purple Heart medal.

The theme of the Veterans Memorial in Veterans Park is "Just to say thank you." The memorial is not a monument to war, nor even to peace. And it is not a cemetery. It is simply to say from the thankful hearts of a grateful people: "We remember."<sup>13</sup>

Parks provide a sense of ownership, of preserving something good—for the love of the land.

*Starting with a maple planted in 1919 in memory of a local man killed in World War I, Veterans Park now includes monuments of thanks to all who have served their country.*

According to Jones, the city's parks director, "It's a privilege to participate in preserving the open space for future generations. When I see children playing, or someone tossing a Frisbee, it's worth it all."<sup>14</sup>

As Will Rogers once said about land, "They ain't makin' it anymore." 🏠

*Medford free-lance writer Molly Walker Kerr is a three-year veteran of the Medford Parks Commission.*

## ENDNOTES

1. 1999 Prescott Park Management Plan revision of that approved January 19, 1984, by City Council, prepared by Special Subcommittee of Medford Parks and Recreation Commission.
2. Ibid.
3. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 2 November 1997.
4. Molly Kerr, "Bear Creek Park, Medford's Fantasy Land," *Oregon Parks Magazine* (May/June 1994), pp.18-21.
5. Ibid.
6. *Medford Mail Tribune*, November 1997.
7. Molly Kerr, "Hawthorne Park, Medford's Downtown Sanctuary," *Oregon Parks Magazine* (February 1995), pp. 33-35.
8. Medford Millennium Project Report, Medford Parks and Recreation Department, 19 June 2001.
9. *Medford Mail Tribune*, May 2001.
10. Bert and Margie Webber, *The Sewer City Short Line* (Webb Research Group, 1993) pp.101-102.
11. Veterans Memorial Committee Report, November 1986.
12. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 28 August 2001.
13. Ibid., Veterans Memorial Committee Report.
14. Interview with Medford Parks Director Greg Jones, 13 March 2002.

## Other park properties in Medford

- Abraham Lincoln Elementary/Delta Waters Park, 3101 McLoughlin Drive
- Earhart Park, between Siskiyou and Fortune streets
- Hoover Elementary, 2323 Siskiyou Boulevard
- Howard Elementary, 286 Mace Road
- Jackson Park and Pool, Summit and Clark streets
- Jefferson Elementary, 333 Holmes Avenue
- Kennedy Elementary, 2860 North Keeneway Drive
- Library Park, between Main and Eighth streets
- Lone Pine Elementary, 3158 Lone Pine Road
- Virginia Vogel Park/Mini-Park, Central and Main streets
- Orchard Hill Elementary, 1011 La Loma Drive
- Roosevelt Elementary, 112 Lindley Street
- Ruhl Park, Hillcrest and Modoc streets
- Senior High Park, (North Medford High School), 1900 North Keeneway Drive
- Union Park, Plum and Prune streets
- Washington Elementary, 610 South Peach Street
- Wilson Elementary, 1400 Johnson Street

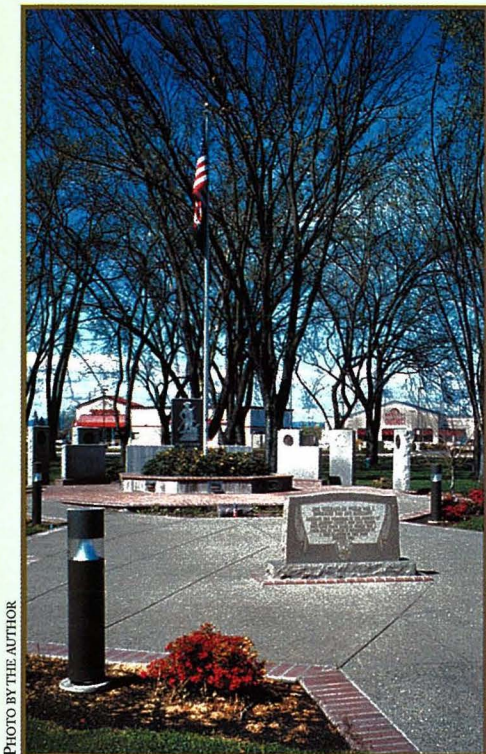


PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR



# What is the Year That Was?

by Bill Miller

PICK UP AN OLD NEWSPAPER AND BECOME A BELIEVER. There really isn't anything new under the sun. Not only the headlines, but sometimes entire stories could easily be pulled out of the past, placed in any of today's newspapers, and no one would know the difference. These are local-interest stories, not necessarily national or foreign news. We pride ourselves on our original thinking, while often promoting solutions that were championed long ago and forgotten. Here are excerpts from one year of "page-one" reporting by Medford newspapers. Your assignment is to determine when these stories were written. Names or phrases that could reveal the year have been edited out. Endnotes do not include the newspaper's name or year of publication. The answer is given in the form of a simple word puzzle in the last paragraph. We offer only one clue: the year you seek is in the early part of the twentieth century.

Good Luck!

*ILLS OF LOCAL PEAR INDUSTRY PONDERED.* Pear growers of the Rogue Valley met yesterday afternoon in a three-hour clinic, which delved thoroughly into some of the ills of the industry here. The industry is not near death, but neither is it enjoying perfect health.<sup>1</sup>

*ROGUE BILL IS PASSED BY BOTH HOUSES.* Measure Forbidding More Dams Now Goes to Governor. With passage of the bill, upper Rogue sportsmen have secured the measure they deem necessary for protection of fishing.<sup>2</sup>

*BUILD A GRAND MUNICIPAL PARK ALONG BEAR CREEK POPULAR IDEA.* Since expressing this idea in our columns last week, we find we have hit a popular municipal chord.<sup>3</sup>

*PROBLEM OF TRAFFIC TO BE STUDIED.* Crowded Streets Must Be Cleared Up, Is Opinion. The necessity of working out some adequate system of parking in downtown Medford was emphasized. It was suggested that the one-hour parking limit be enforced on just one side of the street so that those who drive to work could park on the other side.<sup>4</sup>

*KLAMATH WAR HAS SLOW OPENING.* Legislature Refuses To Ask Congress To Aid Irrigationists. The irrigation district was settled a long time ago, by farmers who bound themselves to pay the government for the project, which gives them water, together with all consequent expenses. The charges were originally low, but have increased to the point that farmers say they are a heavy burden.<sup>5</sup>

*HATCHERY IS HARD HIT BY LACK OF FISH.* A highly authoritative source says that the government fish hatchery on the upper Rogue is experiencing difficulty in getting salmon to spawn and would find its hatching operations curtailed to twenty-five per cent of last years figures.<sup>6</sup>

*SKATING ON STREET IS UNDER BAN.* The city council lowered the hammer last night on skaters, calling them a public nuisance. An ordinance was passed making it unlawful for anyone to skate on the streets of Medford. Nothing was said about skating on the sidewalks, but the general opinion is that there won't be much of it done, since it will be necessary to take off skates to cross any street from one sidewalk to another.<sup>7</sup>

The most chilling and dreadful news item found during this mystery year was the newspaper's announcement of a new daily feature:

*WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN CRIMINALS USE PLANES?* There is not a useful invention that has not been turned to destructive uses. Electricity, greatest servant of mankind, takes its toll of lives and damage. The same gas that is a dreadful wartime weapon is an aid to agriculture in times of peace.

What of the airplane? Police officials are already worrying about the time when outlaws will adopt it for more than just illegal substance transportation.<sup>8</sup>

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," warned American poet/philosopher George Santayana. Surely the past holds out more hope than is carried in Santayana's gloomy prediction of doom. When we remember the past, we see the threads of experience and humanity that we share with our ancestors. It can be comforting to know that they thought about the same things that we think of today. We say our lives are better than the lives of those who came before us, and they said the same thing. True, we study the past to avoid previous mistakes, but also to relish the joy of our human commonality. The worlds of past and present are different, but in many ways, they, and the people who live in them, are exactly the same. 🏠

Bill Miller is a historian with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

ANSWER to the question, "What Is the Year That Was?" The year is in the twentieth century, so the first two digits are "19." The next digit is what you get when you add one and one. The last digit is determined by subtracting one from ten. If you want to look up the complete news items, Medford Newspaper A in the endnotes is the Medford Daily News, Newspaper B is the Pacific Record Herald.

## ENDNOTES

1. Medford Newspaper A, 3 March.
2. Medford Newspaper A, 24 February.
3. Medford Newspaper B, 5 September.
4. Medford Newspaper A, 23 January.
5. Medford Newspaper A, 23 January.
6. Medford Newspaper A, 20 August.
7. Medford Newspaper A, 20 March.
8. Medford Newspaper A, 7 February.





## Lifetime

Kay and Al Alsing, *Ashland*  
 Connie Battaile, *Ashland*  
 Patricia Cook Harrington, *Central Point*  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. DeArmond,  
*Central Point*  
 Mr. and Mrs. John Hamlin, *Medford*  
 Mr. Tom Hamlin, *Medford*  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hight, *Medford*  
 Mr. Robert A. Johnson, *Medford*  
 Edward B. Jorgenson, *Medford*  
 Robert L. Lewis, *Jacksonville*  
 Dr. Eugene I. Majerowicz,  
*Los Angeles, CA*  
 Alice Mullaly, *Central Point*  
 Ram Offset Lithographers, *White City*  
 Davis Young, *Medford*

## New Members

### PATRON

Penelope Martens, *Ashland*  
 Mr. and Mrs. George Wheeler,  
*Jacksonville*

### PIONEER/FAMILY

Jacqueline Mitchell, *Medford*

### FAMILY

Barb and Kristen Alexander, *Medford*  
 ♦ Lori Koljord Johnson, *Medford*  
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Lewis, *Ashland*  
 ♦ Lee and Marilyn Lewis, *Jacksonville*  
 Annette Murphy, *Medford*  
 Bill and Karen Smaw, *Grants Pass*

### PIONEER/FRIEND

♦ Mr. Dale Casey, *Medford*  
 Diane Marsh, *Pullman, WA*  
 Julia Woosnam, *Half Moon Bay, CA*

### FRIEND

♦ Jesse Biezan, *Talent*  
 Daurel Coolidge, *Medford*  
 ♦ Cheryl Hass, *Medford*  
 ♦ Gerald Parsons, *Florence*  
 April Thomas, *Ashland*

## Renewing Members

### LIFETIME

\*Marilyn L. Sibley, *Gold Hill*

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# An Ashland Swan Song?

by Joe Peterson

**SOMETIMES HE RODE HIS HORSE AND** sometimes he simply peered out the window of his chauffeur-driven Lincoln limousine noting the empty pond. Despite a consuming preoccupation with early 1920s Ashland development and politics, newcomer Jesse Winburn thought about swans too-lots of them, every time he passed the upper pond in Lithia Park on his way to and from his cabin high in the canyon.

Clearly, that pond needed swans and if the city couldn't see fit to buy some, Jesse would. Brimming with the confidence that self-made wealth generates, he promptly ordered a dozen white swans at Simpson's Hardware.

But Simpson, not yet a self-made man and consequently more frugal, "...found that swans would cost seventy-five dollars a bird and decided six would be enough."<sup>1</sup> Thus began an eighty-year Ashland tradition of maintaining swans in Lithia Park.<sup>2</sup> It is little wonder long-time residents assert rather matter-of-factly, "They've always been here."

More than half a century of swan habitation later, and in honor of the new Black Swan Theatre opening, yet another Ashland resident would purchase swans for the park. "I thought it would be kind of neat to have a couple of black swans in the lower pond,"<sup>3</sup> recalls Duane Smith who, with young daughters in tow, traveled to a Northern California farm where the girls picked out two healthy specimens.

Shortly after a February 1977 "swan ceremony" installing the new birds, the resident and much more aggressive white swans took little time in running the newcomers out. Separate but equal seemed to be the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission solution to the dilemma as the birds were relocated to the upper pond appropriately renamed "Black Swan Lake."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, within fourteen months the Smith swans and another donated

anonymously were all dead. One had been stolen and returned dead while two others were killed by a car on Winburn Way.

Maintaining a swan presence has always been a challenge, but one solidly embraced by the city and the parks commission. Ashland swans have been victims of vandals, cars, other animals, and natural causes over the past eighty years.<sup>5</sup> More recently, polluted, stagnant pond water has been the culprit. A decision to remove historic dams on Ashland Creek to improve fish habitat resulted in a loss of fresh water flowing through the pond and yet another swan death. This latest episode caused one visiting wag to

note with *Catch 22* irony, "You killed the swan to save the fish!"

Until 2000, white swans were so much a part of Ashland's identity that everything from city stationary to parking lot signs to police officers' uniform patches proudly depicted graceful swans. No more. A new city logo is now officially in place. And as for the real swans? Their future reintroduction to the pond is yet to be decided by the parks commission. If the decision were left to those responding to a spring 2001 *Daily Tidings* Web site poll though, swans would make a comeback. Overwhelmingly, respondents voted "yes" when asked, "Should the city keep swans in Lithia Park?"<sup>6</sup> But then, as long as anyone can remember, "They've always been here." ■

Joe Peterson is an adjunct history instructor at Southern Oregon University.

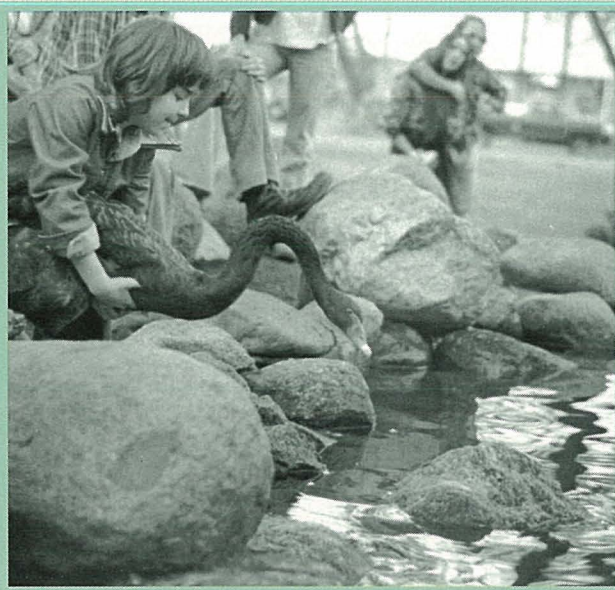


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

*A youngster releases one of a pair of black swans into the lower duck pond at Lithia Park in 1977, to honor the opening of the Black Swan Theatre. The resident white swans chased the black swans out, though, and park workers relocated the black birds to the upper pond.*

## ENDNOTES

1. Franklyn Mahar, "The Millionaire and the Village, Jesse Winburn Comes to Ashland," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 4, December 1963, p. 339.
2. "National Registry of Historic Places Nomination Form," Item 8, p. 2, May 4, 1981, Southern Oregon Historical Society vertical file "Lithia Park."
3. Duane Smith, personal interview, 3 December 2001.
4. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 20 March 1978.
5. Bob Reinholdt, personal interview, 28 November 2001.
6. *Ashland Daily Tidings*, 21 April 2001.