

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

March 2003 Vol. 5, No. 3

Today

FOOD AND TRADITION IN THE KLAMATHS' WORLD
PIONEERS GATHER AROUND THE JUBILEE CEDAR



Southern Oregon Historical Society

AND THE
JACKSON COUNTY
HISTORY MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION



By John Enders

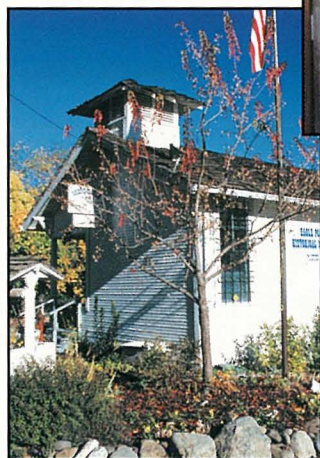
2003

TALKING POINTS FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS, ETC.

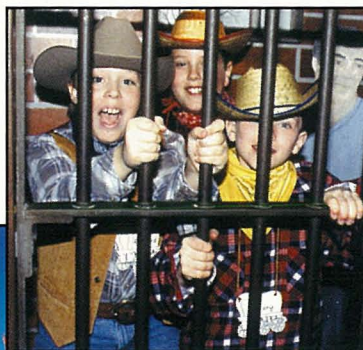
The Southern Oregon Historical Society has suffered dramatic funding cutbacks in the past four years, and has reduced its staff and its budget accordingly. SOHS supporters need to state their support publicly at this time and in coming weeks in letters to the editors of the Medford, Ashland and other local newspapers, and in conversations with friends and colleagues. **Please consider writing a letter to the editor; here are some points to remember:**

History Matters! Today's statewide financial problems must be dealt with, and they will be dealt with by local officials, legislators and the new governor. There is a point, however, at which cuts in the budgets of historical and other cultural organizations begin to undermine the very existence of these organizations.

A significant portion of the Southern Oregon Historical Society's annual budget goes to the fourteen smaller historical associations and museums in the region. Dramatic new cuts in Society funding will impact those associations as well.



The Southern Oregon Historical Society is charged, under agreements with Jackson County, to maintain and preserve county-owned historical sites, including the U.S. Hotel building, the Beekman House and Beekman Bank, and the historic Jackson County courthouse (now the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History) and the historic Jackson County Jail (now the Children's Museum). Many maintenance and preservation needs at those sites have been deferred in recent years due to budget cutbacks. Some of those needs threaten the structural integrity and future of those sites.



At left, Eagle Point Historical Society is just one of the fifteen JCHMA members. Above, children play in the Jacksonville Children's Museum "jail" during Heritage Fair, where 2,800 fourth-graders participate annually.

As the Society's new director, I am charged by the Board of Trustees with building new partnerships with other organizations and institutions in the region, and efforts to make the Society's work more visible and cost-effective. Further cutbacks at this time would undermine this new direction just as it is in its early stages.

Related to our lawsuit on the funding issue: The Southern Oregon Historical Society is involved in a court case against Jackson County because we believe the tax funding system approved by voters in the 1940s and still included in Oregon statutes remains valid. The Society is NOT attempting to overturn Measure 50, the tax limitation measure. Our Historical Levy no longer exists; it was rolled into one "permanent rate" levy by the county. But the amount included in the Historical Levy was included by the county in its computation of how much tax to levy. Those funds should be designated for historical uses, not be used at the discretion of the commissioners. We simply believe that the county commissioners are violating the law by not designating funds that are raised under the former Historical Levy for historical purposes. We believe the courts will rule in our favor.

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.

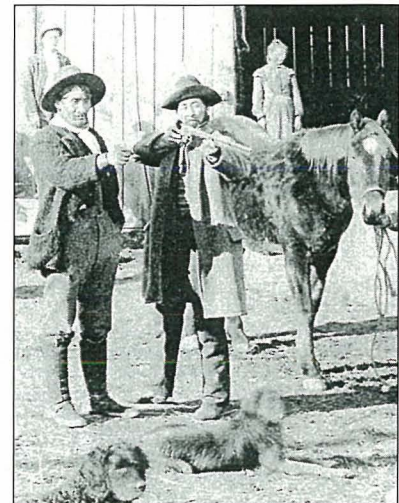
SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE Today

FEATURE

Tules, Wokas and C'wam— Aspects of Traditional Klamath Culture

by Doug Foster

6



COURTESY OF ANNABELLE BATES

DEPARTMENTS

Southern Oregon Historical Society

ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

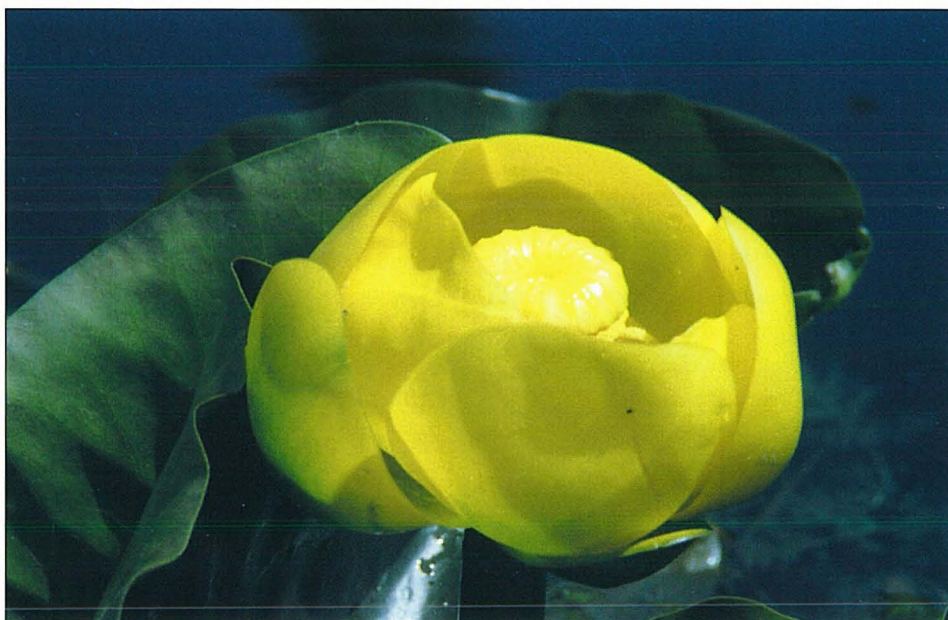
13

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Jubilee Cedar

by William Alley

16



COURTESY OF ANNIE WICKLUND

Wokas is the Klamath word for the seed that grows inside this pond lily and which was a staple in the Klamath diet. The Klamaths harvested the seeds from the lily, which grows in great profusion in Klamath Basin marshes.

VOICES

2

SOHS NEWS & NOTES

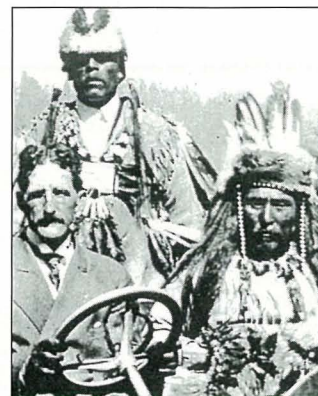
Things to Do

Exhibits, program updates,
and calendar

4

MEMBERS & DONORS

15



COURTESY OF LAUREL ROBINSON

ON THE COVER

This postcard, circa 1907, shows three Klamath Indians dressed in regalia. From left, Pat Kane, Charles Cowan and James Jackson. The driver is Will Warden, son of the Klamath Indian Reservation allotting agent, Major Warden.



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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Things To Do in March

New Hours!

**HISTORY
CENTER**

Tuesday - Friday
9 AM to 5 PM

Saturday
10 AM to 4 PM

PROGRAM	DATE • TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS • FEES
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Owls • free with admission
Chautauqua Program	8 Sat • 2 PM	ASHLAND NORTH MOUNTAIN PARK NATURE CENTER	"Westward I Go Free: Women and Freedom in the Frontier West" • free
Public Heritage Fair	22 Sat • 1 - 4 PM	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Public Heritage Fair • free with admission

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

For times and locations, see schedule above.

CRAFT OF THE MONTH

Owls

Color and assemble your own owl to take home.

"WESTWARD I GO FREE: WOMEN AND FREEDOM IN THE FRONTIER WEST"

Through journals, songs, readings, and discussion, historian and author Susan Butruille examines and interprets cultural concepts and legal definitions of freedom in the Trans-Mississippi west, with a focus on the meaning of freedom for women and ways in which historical interpretations shape our notions of freedom today. Freedom exerted a compelling pull for the bold, often reckless, and sometimes reluctant souls who made their way to the Trans-Mississippi west in the nineteenth century. What did freedom mean to them? How was it defined differently for men and women, for the people who were already there, and for non-Anglo people who made their way west? (This presentation is made possible by funding from the Oregon Council for the Humanities.)



PUBLIC HERITAGE FAIR

Families are invited to discover what fourth grade students from Jackson and Josephine counties do when they visit the Society's museums and other historic sites in

Jacksonville during the Society's annual Children's Heritage Fair. Explore Native American lifeways, go on a cemetery tour, learn about Oregon's state symbols, and make a pioneer toy.

2003 COLLECTOR'S WINE GLASS

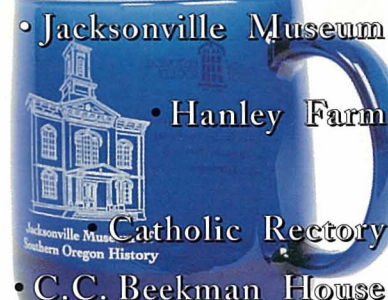


Hanley Farm
botanical

A benefit of Membership to the
Southern Oregon Historical Society*

COLLECTOR'S MUGS

Four Historic Designs for sale



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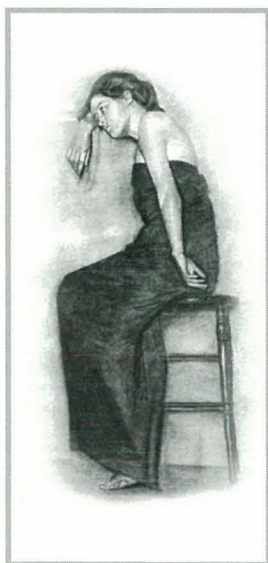


EXHIBIT	LOCATION	DATE • TIME
Lasting Impressions: The Art and Life of Dorland Robinson	HISTORY CENTER	Mon - Fri • 9 AM - 5 PM
Century of Photography: 1856-1956		
The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z		
History in the Making: Jackson County Milestones	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed - Sat • 10 AM - 5 PM Sun • noon - 5 PM
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker		
Politics of Culture: Collecting the Southwest		
Crater Lake: Picture Perfect		
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibits	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed - Sat • 10 AM - 5 PM Sun • noon - 5 PM

EXHIBIT DESCRIPTION

For times and locations, see schedule above.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS: THE ART AND LIFE OF DORLAND ROBINSON



Dorland Robinson (1891-1917), a historic Jacksonville prodigy, produced an exceptional body of work. The diversity of mediums—charcoal, pastel, watercolor—in Robinson's Impressionistic-influenced paintings, is presented in this largest ever exhibit of her work.

CENTURY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1856-1956

Highlights the work of two area photographers, Peter Britt and James Verne Shangle. Britt's cameras and studio equipment are featured.

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.

"HISTORY IN THE MAKING: JACKSON COUNTY MILESTONES"

An abundance of artifacts and photographs, from Chinese archaeological material to an early

cellular telephone, 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.

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

This exhibit presents extraordinary examples of pottery and textiles from the American Southwest.

CRATER LAKE: PICTURE PERFECT

Can the majesty of Crater Lake be captured on film? In celebration of this national park's centennial, the Jacksonville Museum presents an exhibit of attempts to capture its essence. Peter Britt's first 1874 photo of Crater Lake marks the beginning of this exhibit. Other sections include early colorized photos, picture postcards, and park improvements. Of special interest is the most controversial Crater Lake image, believed by many as documentation of a visit by Theodore Roosevelt. Examples of how the Crater Lake name and image have been used to sell products ranging from butter to a hospital round out this exhibit.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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

Southern Oregon Historical Society

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MUSEUMS AND SITES

HISTORY CENTER

106 N. Central, Medford

TUES - FRI • 9 AM to 5 PM

SAT • 10 AM to 4 PM

RESEARCH LIBRARY

106 N. Central, Medford

TUES - FRI • 1 to 5 PM

JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C, Jacksonville

WED - SAT • 10 AM to 5 PM

SUN • NOON to 5 PM

HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road, Central Point

(CLOSED FOR THE SEASON)

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville

(CLOSED FOR THE SEASON)

C.C. BEEKMAN BANK

3rd & California, Jacksonville

THE HISTORY STORE

3rd & California, Jacksonville

WED - SAT • 10 AM to 5 PM

SUN • NOON to 5 PM

THIRD STREET ARTISAN'S STUDIO

3rd & California, Jacksonville

(CLOSED FOR THE SEASON)

U.S. HOTEL

3rd & California, Jacksonville

UPSTAIRS ROOM AVAILABLE FOR RENT

CATHOLIC RECTORY

4th & C, Jacksonville



We invite YOU to become a member!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP will support the Southern Oregon Historical Society in its work to collect, preserve, research and interpret the artifacts and documents that connect us to the past.

MEMBERS RECEIVE a variety of benefits including a monthly subscription to *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*, free admission to the Society's sites and invitations to wonderful new exhibits and programs.

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Friend ... Two years \$35 One year \$20

TULE, WOKAS AND C'WAM

Aspects of Traditional Klamath Culture

By Doug Foster

L
LANGUAGE, ALWAYS A WINDOW INTO A CULTURE,

reveals how keenly the Klamath Indians of Southern Oregon observed the natural world. In the Klamath language, for example, redwing blackbirds were called *koko'klaus* and mallard ducks were called *wa'eks*—names that, when spoken, mimic these birds' calls. Just as English speakers gave the name "chickadee" to the small bird that calls "cha-dee-dee-dee," the Klamaths bestowed names on mallards and redwings that in their language sounded like these birds' calls. While the Klamaths were attentive to and clearly felt reverence for the natural world, they drew their sustenance directly from that world, and so they sometimes ate not only ducks but also redwing blackbirds.

Traditionally, the Klamaths would eat the paws and flesh of grizzly bears, but not coyotes, wolves,

Lee Snipes, also known as "Captain Sky," dances in Plains-style regalia but with traditional Klamath-style white pigment on his face, circa 1929. Captain Sky was reportedly the last Klamath Shaman to hold a "first-sucker ceremony" in the 1930s.



KLAMATH COUNTY MUSEUM



In the days before automobiles, Klamaths followed the trail along the shore of Upper Klamath Lake on horseback and in wagons to get from the reservations to Klamath Falls.

or badgers. They ate mink but not marten; beavers but not mountain beavers; squirrels, but not chipmunks. They ate porcupines, cranes and pelicans, but not skunks, except as a cure for rheumatism.¹ Reading ethnographer Leslie Spier's long list of birds and animals that the Klamaths considered acceptable and unacceptable to eat is reminiscent of the Old Testament's arcane and complex dietary code; and the Klamaths' dietary restrictions, no doubt, were also originally based on practical or compelling considerations.

The aboriginal territory of the Klamath Indians sprawled across the northern end of the Klamath Basin, a high, wide basin

lying against the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains.² Their permanent villages clustered around Upper Klamath Lake, its tributary rivers and adjoining marshes. At twenty-eight miles long and five miles wide, Upper Klamath Lake is today the largest lake in Oregon and one of the largest natural lakes in the western United States. With an assured water supply and adequate drainage to the Pacific Ocean through the Klamath River, Upper Klamath Lake remained relatively constant in size over the last few thousand years, and so formed the basis for the evolving material culture of the Klamath people.

The Klamath Basin held so many lakes that from the "earliest times," a local historian wrote, "boats were the leading means of transportation."³ Klamath Indians crafted two varieties of dugout canoes, each from the trunk of a single tree; their deep-water dugout canoes could carry loads of about 1,800 pounds.⁴ The cultural significance of this big lake to the aboriginal Klamaths is reflected in their name for themselves: *E-ukshikni maklaks*, abbreviated as *E'ukskni*, which means "people of the lake."⁵

The original peoples of the Klamath Basin, according to the late Professor Luther Cressman of the University of Oregon, "built a culture that was integrated around the resources of the rivers and the swamps" of that area. "One has the feeling," he wrote, "of a people in a favorable but isolated habitat who through a long period of time worked out a simple but efficient adaptation to a fairly distinctive ecological potential"; and the archaeological record showed a continuity of Klamath development there from "perhaps 10,000 years ago until historic times."⁶ The Klamath homeland, according to University of Oregon Professor Theodore Stern, fostered a distinctive and "somewhat provincial" culture adapted to local geographic conditions because of its isolation: far removed from major centers of Indian cultural development and protected from neighboring tribes by relatively inhospitable terrain.⁷



In this 1930s, photograph, Klamath tribal member Mary Elvira Allen and her sons process *wokas*, the seeds of a pond lily abundant in the Klamath Basin and an important traditional food in the Klamath diet.



COURTESY OF ANNIE WERLUND

The Klamaths' great reliance on several Klamath Basin marsh plants for construction material, Cressman wrote, reveals the "closeness of these people to their environment"; they mostly relied on tules, also called bulrushes (*Scirpus lacustris*), and cattails (*Typha latifolia*), since these grew in such great profusion in marshes and along quiet stretches of rivers. The Klamaths would cut, split, and weave these plant materials to form a great variety of items, from sandals to woven "plates" to game articles used in play. Traditionally, both men and women wore twined basketry hats and fringed skirts made from tule or sagebrush bark. Basketry, Cressman wrote, was "perhaps the most important product of the Klamath people" because it was "used in house construction in the form of mats, in utensils for the

collection of different kinds of seeds and their preparation, in most of their costumes, in their household effects, and as the main outlet for the expression of aesthetic impulses."⁸

Another essential marsh plant was the pond lily (*Nuphar polysepalum*), the seeds of which, called *wokas* (or *wocus*), were a Klamath dietary staple—"a trait not found elsewhere in the West."⁹ The small, black pond

The Klamath Basin marshes provided abundant food and fiber that met the Klamath's needs. From the suckers and salmon that thrived in the lakes and streams to the *wokas* of the pond lilies, the marshes were generous suppliers of Klamath dietary staples. The tules and cattails also provided fiber for clothing, housing, and basketry.

lily seeds had to be separated from the white mucilaginous mass inside lily pods before the seeds could be dried, winnowed, and prepared for eating; and so the Klamaths developed specialized tools for harvesting and preparing *wokas*. According to Cressman, gathering lily seeds for food was of fundamental importance because it brought about seasonal migration of whole villages to the pond lily marshes.¹⁰

The Klamaths led a semi-sedentary life. Their only permanent settlements were winter villages where they built semi-subterranean earth lodges to shelter themselves from harsh weather. The Klamath Basin is 4,000 feet above sea level, and severe winters there can pile snow in deep drifts and freeze lakes, marshes and sometimes even rivers. The Klamaths' winter villages were usually situated next to running water or warm springs at the edges of lakes, sites where they could catch fish in winter.¹¹ In early spring, these villages would break into family groups and disperse to favored fishing sites to catch and dry fish, where families sometimes camped for months to harvest successive fish runs. Then, during summer, they trekked to upland areas to gather edible roots and berries or to the mountains or desert to hunt game.

When the pods of pond lilies ripened in August and September, though, most Klamaths would again congregate at selected marshes. Their favored site was Klamath Marsh, a broad expanse of wetlands on the Williamson River, about fifteen miles north of Upper Klamath Lake. At the turn of the century, Klamath Marsh was estimated to hold more than 10,000 acres of pond lilies and was said to "promise in good years an abundance not to be exhausted by the demands of man." *Wokas* was such an important source of food for the Klamaths that the month of its initial harvest, August, marked the beginning of their year.¹²



COURTESY OF CARROL HOWE (DETAIL)

More important to the Klamaths and Modocs than Salmon were the suckers that inhabited the Klamath Basin. Tribal members would gather each year on the Lost River to catch and dry an estimated fifty tons of suckers, such as those drying on these racks in this 1898 photograph.

Lost River suckers

or *c'wam* in the Klamath language, could grow to three feet and weigh over sixteen pounds

Another mainstay of the traditional Klamath diet was fish. Since fish thronged in such profusion in the basin's lakes and streams, fish were the staple of the Klamath diet, their primary food—an even more important source of food than *wokas*. Many of the Klamaths' winter villages clustered along the Williamson River because this major tributary of Upper Klamath Lake funneled fish runs into a narrow channel where the Klamath people could catch fish year around. One measure of the importance of fish for Klamaths was that their society's traditional division of labor based on gender—men functioning as hunters of game, and women as gatherers of roots and seeds—did not apply to fish; both genders would fish. Since “their primary dependence is on fish,” Spier wrote, the Klamaths' pursuit of fish was a “well-nigh year-round pursuit,” with summer and autumn the most important seasons “for laying up a store of fish against the coming winter.”¹³

The Klamaths caught spawning salmon with spears and nets when these sea-run fish from the Pacific Ocean ascended the Klamath River and reached the tributaries of Upper Klamath Lake to spawn.¹⁴ For the Klamaths, though, suckers were a more important source of food than salmon. The Klamath Basin supported several indigenous species of suckers, ancient lake-dwelling fish that spawned in streams and springs beginning in the spring and continuing until mid-September.¹⁵ The largest variety, called “Lost River suckers”—or *c'wam* in the Klamath language—could grow to three feet and weigh more than sixteen pounds. Each spring, Klamaths and a neighboring tribe, the Modocs, would gather on the lower reaches of Lost River at a shallow reef where the rocky bottom forced suckers to swim near the surface; in a few weeks they would catch and dry an estimated fifty tons of spawning suckers at this site.¹⁶ (The Lost River sucker runs were so prodigious that settlers later built a cannery and another commercial operation processed “enormous amounts” of suckers into oil and dried fish.)¹⁷

The Klamath Basin's abundant suckers sustained the Klamath people and therefore played a key role in their culture and spiritual beliefs. In place of the “first-salmon ceremony” common among the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Coast, who principally relied on salmon for sustenance, the Klamaths traditionally observed a “first-sucker ceremony.” In early spring, about mid-March, when the *c'wam* began their spawning run in the Sprague River, Klamath Indians would gather to hold their ceremony at a site four miles upstream from the present town of Chiloquin. According to ethnographer Leslie Spier, whose 1930 book is considered “the most comprehensive account” of traditional Klamath culture, “the first sucker is roasted and allowed to burn to ashes”; and, “if the rite is observed, suckers will be plentiful.”

The Klamaths' first-sucker ceremony was held near a large cave on the banks of Sprague River that the Klamaths identified as the home of *Kemu'kumps*, whom Spier described in anthropological jargon as the Klamath “culture hero.”¹⁸ In the late 1940s, Luther Cressman, Oregon's most respected archaeologist, excavated this cave and established by radiocarbon dating that it had been intermittently occupied for more than 6,500 years.¹⁹

Former Klamath tribal chairman Lynn Schonchin, writing in 1990, described the Klamaths' first-fish ceremony held near *Kemu'kump's* home, from the perspective of a cultural insider:

The Creator instructed the People to have this ceremony on the Sprague River, near the Cave from which the Klamath People were created. They were to catch the first sucker fish, burn it and return its ashes to the river. In doing this they were giving thanks for the fish to eat, paying it honor for supplying sustenance, and by placing its spirit back into the water, they would ensure that the fish would always return in plentiful supply.²⁰

Similar customs regulated initial harvests by younger tribal members, according to Spier, whose account of Klamath culture was based on information collected in 1925 and 1926 from “aged informants who still remembered the aboriginal pattern.” “The first fruits of a young hunter or root gatherer are looked upon as something altogether special,” Spier wrote, and so must be treated properly “if future success is to be assured.” For a young woman, “the first roots she gathers alone” should be destroyed by burning and not shown to anyone; the second basketful she gathers should be distributed among her companions; and “only after this may she keep what she gathers.” The tribal elders who spoke to Spier gave conflicting reports on proper conduct for young hunters: one elder said the first deer killed should be abandoned and never eaten, while another said the first deer should be eaten by the hunter's parents.²¹

Experienced Klamath hunters were also guided by their spiritual beliefs. As recorded by an anthropologist in 1934, tribal member Peter Schonchin would say a prayer to a slain animal by speaking “for the animals,” which he explained as talking “as if I were this animal so he can notify the others and they can find out what happened to their brother.”²²

More than fifty years later, Peter's grandson, Lynn Schonchin, offered a poignant explanation of these traditional customs:

According to the creation story of the Klamath People, the Creator made a land with resources for the People to use and then created a People to use the land. One might state that no one owns the land, but that we were caretakers of it. On this basis a society and culture were developed based on the Creator's rules and teachings. Of utmost importance is the teaching that all things have a spirit and that spirit must be respected and care must be taken to preserve it to ensure the continual harmony with the universe.

When the creation was completed, the People followed the teachings and they found the gifts of the Creator. From the formations of the land and the explanations of why it was developed came the basis of instruction that taught where and why things were as they were. ... Religion, social values and mores were taught to the youth as they grew into adulthood, values such as sharing and caring for extended family members who were in need or want.

People of the lake

→ *E-ukshikni maklaks*

The young men and women were taught to give away their first fish, deer, basket, or food gathered. It was an honor to share with the elders or with a woman who had no husband to hunt for her. They also learned to pray in giving thanks for their bounty. When the bounty was eaten, they prayed giving thanks and threw bits of food in all the directions sharing back with the land for what it had provided and sharing with the animals. The prayers spoke of sharing, even with the flea.²³



COURTESY OF MODOC TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

In 1930, Spier wrote that the Klamaths' "ancient culture exists only in their memories, save as the older people keep up domestic pursuits."²⁴ While he was certainly right that the rapid changes forced on the Klamaths had a tremendous impact on their aboriginal economy and lifestyle, contemporary Klamaths maintain that resilient aspects of their traditional culture have endured and adapted. For example, in the late 1950s, Lynn

Peter Schonchin and wife, Lizzie, posed for this dignified portrait at Sprague River in 1930. When he killed an animal while hunting, Peter told an ethnographer in 1934 that he would say a prayer to the other animals "so they can find out what happened to their brother."

Schonchin's mother taught him to shoot a rifle, told him to eat part of the raw liver of the first deer he killed to "honor the animal," helped him skin and cut up that first deer carcass, and told him to share the meat with "older people in the community." This shows that traditional Klamath customs were still alive then but had evolved: while traditional gender roles had been modified, the cultural importance of sharing was still given great emphasis.²⁵

Unlike the Northwest Coast tribes, Spier wrote, the Klamaths had no feeling of class stratification. A chief was a "leader and nothing more," and a chief's spouse and children were neither known by distinctive titles nor treated better than "commoners."²⁶ Klamath children from all social strata would play together; the "children of chiefs or shamans are no different from the rest."²⁷ According to one anthropologist, the Klamaths' most important and basic sociopolitical unit was the extended family, and this "relatively loose and weak" political "integration" allowed individuals in Klamath society a "great amount of personal freedom."²⁸

The traditional Klamath religion was "very closely associated with shamanism," and in aboriginal times shamans were the "most important, powerful, and feared individuals in the tribe."²⁹ Each Klamath village had its own shaman, "who functioned in the multiple roles of curer, magician, and entertainer."³⁰

According to Cressman, both men and women could become shamans; and individual Klamaths could seek supernatural power, which would often be revealed to them in spirit dreams.³¹

"On the whole," Spier wrote, the Klamaths were "a hospitable and friendly lot. Good breeding demands that visitors be invited to share one's meal." But like other cultures, Klamath culture was filled with contradictions. While Spier concluded that Klamath culture was not stratified, this was not true for the Klamaths' slaves. In the years before European-American contact, the Klamaths served as middlemen in the movement of slaves to markets on the Columbia River, purchasing slaves that their southerly neighbors, the Modocs, had captured in raids against other tribes. In addition, some Klamaths did slave raiding on their own. The few slaves that the Klamaths kept for their own use, Spier wrote, likely had a life "much like that of any poor Klamath," although he did not know whether, or to what extent, these slaves might have been abused by their owners.³²



COURTESY OF ANNABELLE BATES

More than seventy-five years ago, a Klamath family pose for an outdoor portrait with some prized possessions, including bonnets, wicker furniture, and a pony.



Three children of Charlie Captain, a full-blooded Klamath, play in front of the family home in the Modoc Point district of the Klamath Reservation in 1927. At the time, Charlie dry-land farmed a sixty-acre allotment there.

One compelling feature of many Klamaths' world view is their self-deprecating sense of humor: a sometimes subtle, sometimes quirky and ironic, generally delightful sense of humor. Most early ethnologists' reports reveal this humor in Klamath legends and daily life. The Klamaths, for example, believed that prominent rocks in their territory, and there are many such rocks, were petrified mythical beings; and one of Spier's informants reported that where the tales provided no other explanation, it was held that the "transformation was effected" by Raven "laughing at them."³³

Klamath children would ask to be told tales of well-liked characters in Klamath legend, especially Little Weasel, Chipmunk, Coyote, and Skunk. "Skunk is funny because he thinks himself very clever, but all his undertakings are fiascos. After a Skunk story, children are warned, 'don't be like that.'"³⁴ Klamath parents often gave their children light-hearted names; for example, *Lopa'ktcis*, which meant "rolls when walking." Klamath parents customarily chose a name in infancy and usually based it on some personal characteristic—the child's appearance, or some habit—much like nicknames today; for example, the name *K'lokla'ndjamks*, which referred to its bearer's big knees.³⁵

The Klamaths even found humor in the most sacred aspects of their lives. For the Klamaths, according to one anthropologist, *Kemu'kumps* was not only the Creator but also the player of devilish jokes, and so would appear in many Klamath "tales of amusement and entertainment, especially in his role as trickster."³⁶ In the Klamath cosmology, the Creator took himself lightly. Herbert Nelson, then a seventy-year-old Klamath, explained in 1947 that *Kemu'kumps* made the sacred cave on Sprague River especially for himself because it was just opposite a very good fishing place, and while the cave leaked very badly in the rain, "*Kemu'kumps* did not seem to mind."³⁷

Ethnographer Albert Gatschet's study of Klamath culture in the 1880s, however, reveals little Klamath humor. Gatschet did identify several Klamath songs as "songs of satire," including one he translated as: "He goes around giving away sticks of tobacco, and is very noisy about it." Another satirical Klamath song he translated as: "Slow-running horses he paid for his wife." But instead of considering these Klamath songs to be witty, Gatschet

faulted them for having been "dictated" by feelings of "derision" and "criticism," and he rebuked such songs for "scourging mercilessly the infirmities" of others.

Gatschet's reporting of Klamath humor probably reveals more about him than about Klamath culture because this literal-minded German ethnographer, at least in his professional writing, appeared to lack a sense of humor.

Gatschet categorized some Klamath songs as "cooing and wooing" songs, including one he translated as: "My husband has the voice of the white goose." Perhaps Gatschet was not familiar with the call of white geese (now called snow geese), which are renowned for their loud, raucous yelping.

The Klamaths, according to Gatschet, believed that "amphibians, insects and the organisms standing below these in the zoogenetic scale" possessed magic powers, and "the songs of the toad and of the spider are supposed to be especially effective."³⁸ Magical toad songs? What compelling irony: to ascribe supernatural power to such small and apparently weak creatures as toads and spiders, instead of big, scary animals. If Klamath beliefs had been documented by someone with a greater sense of fun and irony, perhaps the rendering of their singing spider would be more reminiscent of the compassionate,

magical spider in E. B. White's popular children's book, *Charlotte's Web*, a spider that could spin words in her web.

Characterizing the aboriginal Klamath culture as "modest in scale" and "loosely structured," Professor Stern concluded that their culture "made possible a good life in which dignity and worth had a place." Stern, who studied the Klamaths in the

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1950s, wrote that, like people everywhere, the Klamaths would sometimes overly romanticize their past and depict the earlier, aboriginal era as "halcyon days."



KLAMATH COUNTY MUSEUM

To balance this picture, he quoted Henry Blow, a Klamath chief and captain of the government-appointed reservation police force, who said in 1873: "Before the Bostons came there was no law. The strongest man took what he wanted and the man who had the property and the most friends was the chief. ... Might was right in those days and there was much fighting and killing everywhere. ... Those were bad times as we see now, since the Bostons have come and made law to protect every man's rights and property."

While Stern acknowledged that Chief Blow was "almost certainly" exaggerating, he maintained that Blow's statement possessed an "essential truth."³⁹ This may have been true with regard to relations among tribal members, but the historic record shows that "might makes right" generally controlled relations between these tribal people and the "Bostons"—the newly arrived emigrants who, over time, had an overwhelming impact on traditional Klamath culture.⁴⁰ ■

Doug Foster is a writer and historian living in Ashland.

ENDNOTES

1. Leslie Spier, *Klamath Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930), pp. 156-157.
2. The Modoc Indians, who occupied the southern part of the Klamath Basin, spoke a dialect of Klamath, a language unintelligible to other tribes. The Klamaths and Modocs had "strong cultural similarities" because both occupied the same marsh and lake environment; and, according to Professor Stern, they felt their political separation to have been a recent event. Because of this cultural relatedness, much of this article's description of aboriginal Klamath culture also applies to aboriginal Modoc culture. Theodore Stern, *The Klamath Tribe—A People and Their Reservation*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965): pp. 4, 283, n. 4; Verne F. Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist—The Modoc Indians of Northern California*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), pp. xii-xiii, 134, 164, 201; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 224-238.
3. Rachel Applegate Good, "Early Transportation," *Klamath Echoes*, 2 (1965): 8.
4. Harry J. Drew, *Early Transportation on Klamath Waterways*, Klamath County Museum Research Paper No. 6 (Klamath Falls, 1974), p. 1.
5. Albert Samuel Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of Southwestern Oregon*, U. S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, Contributions to North American Ethnology, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1890), pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
6. Luther S. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory: The Prehistory of the Culture of the Klamath Lake Area, Oregon*, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 46, pt. 4 (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 377, 388, 397, 466, 470.
7. Stern, *Klamath Tribe*, pp. 4-5.
8. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 386, 393, 397.
9. Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist*, p. xiii.
10. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, p. 388; for the Modocs, see Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist*, p. 199.
11. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 386, 389; Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist*, pp. 160-161.
12. Stern, *Klamath Tribe*, pp. 10-13.

Indian students and their teachers gather for a portrait at the Klamath Agency boarding school on the Klamath Reservation.

13. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, p. 386; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 144-45, 147-48.
14. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 148.
15. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Recovery Plan—Lost River and Shortnose Sucker*, (Portland: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1993), pp. 4-5.
16. Carrol B. Howe, *Ancient Tribes of the Klamath Country* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1968), p. 158; Carrol B. Howe, *Frontier Stories of the Klamath Country* (Klamath Falls: *Herald & News*, 1989), pp. 89-90.
17. *Recovery Plan*, pp. 4-5; Howe, *Ancient Tribes*, pp. 156, 158.
18. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 148-149; Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 387-388; Stern, *Klamath Tribe*, p. 11.
19. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 398, 400-401.
20. Lynn J. Schonchin, "Visions and Values," in Nan Hannon and Richard Olmo eds., *Living with the Land: The Indians of Southwest Oregon; The Proceedings of the 1989 Symposium on the Prehistory of Southwest Oregon*, (Medford: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1990), p. 150.
21. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 168; Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 387-388.
22. Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist*, pp. 27-28.
23. Schonchin, "Visions," p. 153.
24. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, introduction.
25. Author interview with Lynn J. Schonchin, 27 July 1993.
26. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 38-39.
27. Marion Pearsall, "Klamath Childhood and Education," *Anthropological Records*, vol. 9, no. 5 (Berkeley: University of California, 1950), p. 342.
28. Patrick M. Haynal, "From Termination through Restoration and Beyond: Modern Klamath Cultural Identity" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1994), pp. 55-56.
29. Pearsall, "Klamath Childhood," p. 345.
30. Haynal, "Termination through Restoration," p. 48.
31. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, pp. 394-95; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 239; Haynal, "Termination through Restoration," pp. 47-48.
32. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 39-40, 91; Ray, *Primitive Pragmatist*, pp. xiii, 134; see Thomas E. Dutelle, "Development of Political Leadership and Institutions among the Klamath Indians" (master's thesis, Columbia University, 1951), pp. 13-14.
33. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 59-60, 143, 156-157.
34. Pearsall, "Klamath Childhood," p. 344.
35. Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 59.
36. Haynal, "Termination through Restoration," p. 47.
37. Cressman, *Klamath Prehistory*, p. 398.
38. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians*, pp. ci, 183, 189-190.
39. Stern, *Klamath Tribe*, p. 21; Dutelle, "Political Leadership," p. 32.
40. The settlers' mere presence in the Klamath Basin introduced new diseases from which Indians lacked natural immunity. The smallpox epidemics of the late 1840s, according to Spier, "considerably reduced" the Klamaths' population. (Some Indian societies in the Willamette Valley and along the Oregon Coast lost 25 to 50 percent of their populations in these epidemics.) Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 5; Keith Murray, *The Modocs and their War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 17-18.

Arts and Cultural Resources Survey

INTERESTED IN ARTS, HERITAGE AND HUMANITIES IN JACKSON COUNTY?

The Jackson County Cultural Planning Committee needs you!

The Oregon Cultural Trust is a unique initiative designed to guarantee that every Oregonian benefits from our state's cultural assets. It is also a long-term funding plan designed to preserve and strengthen Oregon's arts, heritage and humanities. The Cultural Trust raises funds in three ways: private contributions made by individuals and companies who receive a tax credit when they donate to a nonprofit cultural organization and to the Oregon Cultural Trust; funds received from the sale of state-owned surplus lands; and revenue derived from the sale of a special cultural license plate.

The Jackson County Cultural Coalition Planning Committee is a group of individuals appointed by the County Commissioners to develop a

Cultural Plan for Jackson County by October of 2003 in connection with the efforts of the Oregon Cultural Trust. The Jackson County Cultural Coalition Planning Committee's mission is to inventory the county's cultural resources and to create a Jackson County Cultural Plan. The plan will prioritize cultural needs and establish criteria for local public funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust to address those needs. As a first step to establishing grant criteria, the Planning Committee is developing an inventory of individuals, organizations and businesses involved in producing or preserving arts, heritage and humanities in Jackson County. Later, we will be gathering information from users of these arts, heritage and humanities resources.

Please help us by completing the form below and by distributing it to others you think it would be important for us to hear from. Also, please answer section 4 if you are interested in supplying us with further information or participating in focus groups.

For more information about the trust on the web go to www.culturaltrust.org. Additional copies of this survey may be printed out from the arts council web site at www.artscouncilso.org.

Please return the survey as soon as possible to:

**The Arts Council of Southern Oregon,
33 North Central Avenue, Suite 300
Medford, OR 97501**

Thank you for your participation!

JACKSON COUNTY CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY SURVEY

If you are completing this as an **individual**, please complete section 1 and 4.

If you are completing this for an **artistic or cultural organization**, please complete section 2 and 4.

If you are completing this for a **business**, please complete section 3 and 4.



SECTION 1- INDIVIDUAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

1. Age: ☐ under 18 ☐ 18-34
☐ 35-54 ☐ 55-74 ☐ over 74

2. ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Ethnic origin (optional)

4. Please check the box that identifies your primary activity:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Writer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic artist | <input type="checkbox"/> Media artist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designer/director | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual artist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Actor | <input type="checkbox"/> Musician |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historian | <input type="checkbox"/> Curator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craft artist | <input type="checkbox"/> Folk artist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher (any field dealing with art or culture) of _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholar (any field dealing with art or culture) of _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

5. Approximately how much time do you spend engaged in this activity:

- ☐ less than 10 hours per week
☐ 10-20 hours per week
☐ 20-40 hours per week
☐ more than 40 hours per week

6. Is most of your work done in Jackson County? ☐ yes ☐ no

PLEASE GO TO SECTION 4
Section 2 and 3 on next page.





SECTION 2- AN ARTISTIC OR CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

Approximate year established: _____

7. Please check the box that best identifies your organization's primary cultural activity:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Dance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural or historic program | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallery/Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropic | <input type="checkbox"/> Public service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical society or association | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical site, landmark or landscape | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly fair or festival | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concert or theatre series | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching institution/school | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

8. Is your organization:

- ☐ 501(c)3
☐ Associated with a school or university.
☐ Other _____

9. If your organization is a membership organization, what is the approximate membership?

- ☐ 1-50
☐ 50-100
☐ 100-250
☐ 250-500
☐ 500-1000
☐ over 1000

10. If your organization holds events, what is the approximate patronage or total annual attendance?

- ☐ under 100
☐ 100-500
☐ 500-5000
☐ over 5,000
☐ don't know

11. What is your approximate annual operating budget?

- ☐ under \$1,000
☐ \$1,000-\$5,000
☐ \$5,000-\$10,000
☐ \$10,000-\$50,000
☐ \$50,000-\$100,000
☐ over \$1,000,000

12. Is the majority of your audience from Jackson County?

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

13. Is the majority of your workforce (inc. volunteers), from Jackson County?

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

PLEASE GO TO SECTION 4

SECTION 4 (Optional)- QUESTIONS FOR ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

15. Would you be willing to take part in a more in-depth survey? ☐ yes ☐ no

16. Would you be willing to take part in a focus group? ☐ yes ☐ no

17. I use the arts, heritage and humanities resources in Jackson County and would like to be included in that survey. Please give the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

18. What are the best times for you to attend a meeting?

- ☐ evening ☐ weekend ☐ lunchtime

SECTION 3- BUSINESS

Business Name: _____

Contact Person and Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Web site: _____

14. Please check the box that best identifies your business activity:

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agent/Arts manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture/design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation/appraisal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designer/director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Store |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturer/wholesaler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplier (sounds, lights, props, costumes, art supplies, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

PLEASE GO TO SECTION 4

Thank you for your participation! Please mail this survey to:

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33 North Central Avenue, Suite 300
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The Jubilee Cedar

By William Alley

1934 MARKED the seventy-fifth anniversary of Oregon's statehood, and Medford was selected by the state legislature to host the official Diamond Jubilee festivities. With the country still gripped by the Great Depression, this opportunity to host the statewide celebration generated a great deal of excitement locally. Many meetings were held here and elsewhere around the state to arrange the details of this celebration of Oregon's pioneer heritage, which was scheduled for the week of June 3.

Perhaps the earliest event commemorating the Diamond Jubilee, however, was a strictly local affair, hosted by the Medford Chamber of Commerce on March 26, 1934. That afternoon, 177 residents gathered at a luncheon at the Medford Hotel to honor the twenty-nine surviving "pioneer sons and daughters," residents who had made Southern Oregon their home for the past seventy-five years. Once seated at their table, "fragrant with lilacs, roses and forget-me-nots, the old-fashioned garden flowers, which gave Oregon her first characteristics of home," the guests of honor were presented with corsages and boutonnières. Master of ceremonies for the event was A.E. Reames, who would later be appointed to fill an unexpired term in the U.S. Senate in 1938.¹

Each honored guest was introduced in turn by Reames, himself descended from a pioneer family, including several who were unable to attend. One of the latter was B.F. Irvine, editor of the *Portland Journal*, fondly described as "the Sage of Jackass Creek."²

At the conclusion of the luncheon, the twenty-nine honored guests, now officially inducted in the honorary

Jackson County pioneers gather around a cedar of Lebanon dedicated March 26, 1934, the same year as Oregon's seventy-fifth anniversary as a state, and planted in their honor outside the new Jackson County Courthouse in Medford.

they were seated in chairs surrounding a fourteen-foot-tall cedar of Lebanon tree planted near the southwest corner of the new building. The tree had been donated by local nurseryman N.S. Bennett, proprietor of the Eden Valley Nursery, to honor the region's pioneer settlers.³

Professor Irving Vining, for decades the preeminent orator of the region, was selected to deliver the address at the tree's dedication. "The Rogue River Valley, shrined with pioneer memories, takes us back to the inspiration of the pioneer," Vining told the assembled crowd. "The most precious gift that Oregon can give the nation today is that spirit of the

"Three-Quarters Century Club," were escorted across the street to the recently completed county courthouse on Oakdale Street. There

pioneer. ... It is in that spirit, which Oregon will celebrate this year at her Diamond Jubilee in Medford and Jacksonville." The cedar was then dedicated to the memory of the pioneers "with a little prayer from all present that with its growth it will keep alive through the years the spirit of the early settlers."⁴

On hand to record the event was J. Verne Shangle, who took photographs, and Horace Bromley of the California Oregon Power Co., who recorded the event for the Copco Current Events newsreels. Sadly, while these images of the dedication have survived, the fate of the memorial tree is unknown. What is clear, however, is that the tree no longer stands where it was originally placed on the courthouse grounds, another memorial lost to later generations. 🏠

William Alley is a certified archivist and historian.

ENDNOTES

1. *Oregonian*, 13 February 1938.
2. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 26 March 1934.
3. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 28 March 1934.
4. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 26 March 1934.



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