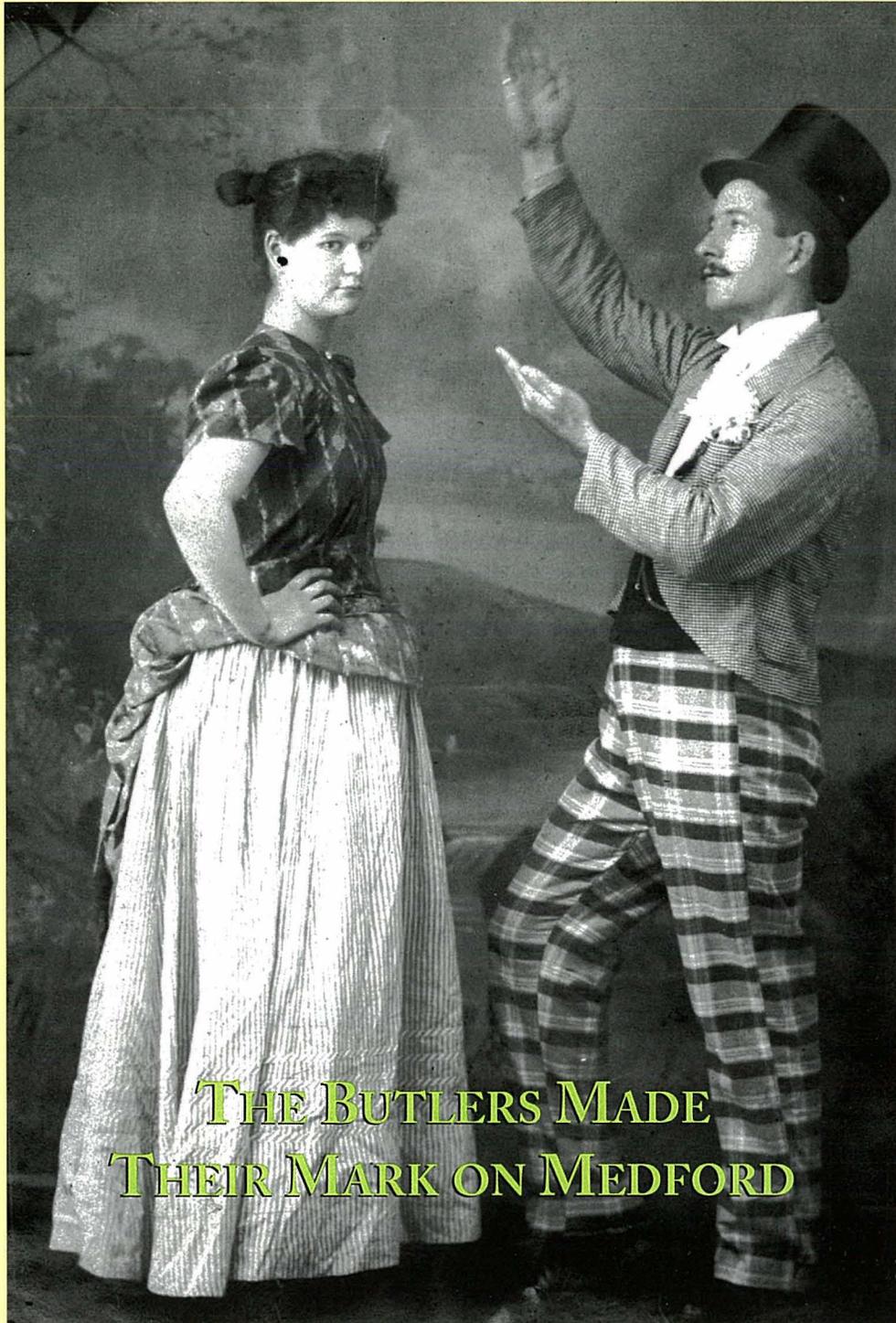


SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

April 2003 Vol. 5, No. 4

Today



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THEIR MARK ON MEDFORD





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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Today

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COURTESY OF ANN HORTON

DEPARTMENTS

VOICES

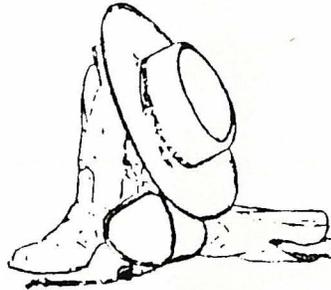
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COURTESY OF ALICE MULLAY

ON THE COVER

John Butler appears in a local theatrical production in 1895, a year after he arrived in Medford.

Southern Oregon Historical Society



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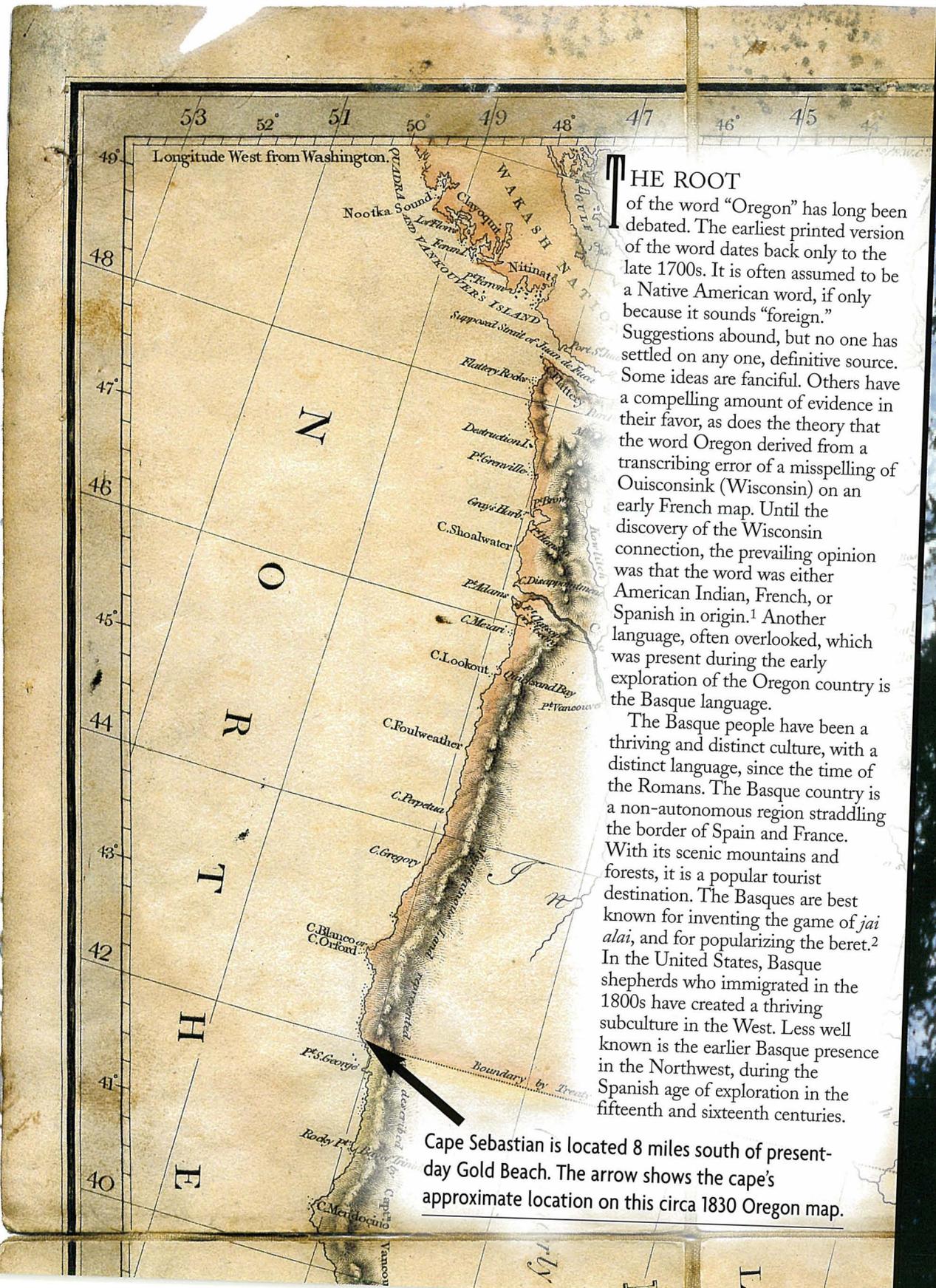
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A New Look at the Word "Oregon"

By Amanda Casserly



THE ROOT
of the word "Oregon" has long been debated. The earliest printed version of the word dates back only to the late 1700s. It is often assumed to be a Native American word, if only because it sounds "foreign." Suggestions abound, but no one has settled on any one, definitive source. Some ideas are fanciful. Others have a compelling amount of evidence in their favor, as does the theory that the word Oregon derived from a transcribing error of a misspelling of Ouisconsin (Wisconsin) on an early French map. Until the discovery of the Wisconsin connection, the prevailing opinion was that the word was either American Indian, French, or Spanish in origin.¹ Another language, often overlooked, which was present during the early exploration of the Oregon country is the Basque language.

The Basque people have been a thriving and distinct culture, with a distinct language, since the time of the Romans. The Basque country is a non-autonomous region straddling the border of Spain and France. With its scenic mountains and forests, it is a popular tourist destination. The Basques are best known for inventing the game of *jai alai*, and for popularizing the beret.² In the United States, Basque shepherds who immigrated in the 1800s have created a thriving subculture in the West. Less well known is the earlier Basque presence in the Northwest, during the Spanish age of exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Cape Sebastian is located 8 miles south of present-day Gold Beach. The arrow shows the cape's approximate location on this circa 1830 Oregon map.



Basque sailors and ship builders were an integral component in the success of early Spanish expeditions. Many sailing vessels were Basque-built, and even more had a predominantly Basque crew.³ A noted Basque researcher has stated “it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that no major expeditionary force ... was entirely devoid of persons of Basque origin.”⁴ It is probable that many of these men would have spoken Basque, if only amongst themselves. Even those who had assimilated the dominant Spanish culture to the point that they could no longer speak the language of their ancestors would have had a passing familiarity with their traditional homeland in northern Spain.

There is a town in Navarra, in the Basque region of Spain, known in the Basque language as *Orreaga*. The name means “place where the pine trees grow,”⁵ or “grove of junipers.”⁶ The town, known in Spanish as Roncesvalles, was important both historically and in Basque tradition. It was the site of the battle in A.D. 778 that was the inspiration for the famous epic poem “The Song of Roland.”⁷ Because of its history, *Orreaga* would have been a familiar word to anyone of Basque descent, even those who did not otherwise speak Basque. And the word *Orreaga* bears a striking resemblance to the word Oregon.

The Basque presence on the Pacific Coast, while not popularly known, is well documented. A good example is the explorer Sebastian Vizcaino. Vizcaino, whose surname literally means “the Basque,”⁸ sailed along the Oregon-California coast under the Spanish flag in 1602-1603. Vizcaino left many place names in his wake, including Cape Sebastian, on the Oregon coast, named after the patron saint of the day of its discovery.⁹ While Vizcaino was a Basque, or at least had Basque ancestry, all records left of and by him are in Spanish. This is not unusual. A noted researcher of the Basques in America has pointed out that “the investigator who attempts to trace Basque activities ... finds his subjects masked under their French or Spanish nationality rather than identified as Basque.”¹⁰ Vizcaino himself would have had compelling reasons for downplaying his heritage. The Basque country was politically volatile and was often at war with Spain for its independence. As a merchant who had been granted an official command,¹¹ Vizcaino would have been wise to emphasize his Spanish

loyalty, and not his Basqueness. In addition, Vizcaino had been instructed to create usable charts of the coast,¹² and Basque terms would have been obscure.

The visual similarity between the word *Orreaga* and the word Oregon, coupled with the fact that the meaning of the Basque word is such a perfect description of the state, makes it impossible not to want to find a connection. And indeed, there is ample evidence that Vizcaino and those accompanying him did not fail to notice the wealth of trees on the coast of Oregon and northern California.

Father Antonio de la Ascension, the priest aboard Vizcaino’s vessel, noted that in the area near Cape Sebastian “there were very large ash trees, willows, brambles, and other trees of Castile.”¹³ It is worth noting that the term Castile, while frequently used to refer to Spain generally, is specifically a central region bordering the Basque country. Vizcaino himself is credited with describing the coast in the vicinity of what is now Oregon as “covered with great forests of pine trees and much snow.”¹⁴

Basque sailors, if not Vizcaino himself, could easily have drawn a comparison between the rugged and heavily forested Oregon coast and the rugged and heavily forested foothills of the Pyrenees in the Basque country and referred to the new land as *Orreaga*. Basque sailors traveled widely and would have had plenty of opportunities to put terms in circulation, however unofficially. Indeed, there is a precedent for Basque sailors using Basque names in the New World. Historian Mark Kurlansky states that in Newfoundland, on the Atlantic coast, French attempts to name various ports and bays failed because “fisherman continued to use bastardized Basque names.”¹⁵ In the Spanish territories of northern Mexico, the Basque influence was strong enough that by Vizcaino’s time an entire province was named *Nueva Vizcaya*.¹⁶

Orreaga might also have spread inland, carried by survivors shipwrecked on Oregon’s treacherous coast. There are several legends among Native American tribes of the region that describe Europeans appearing on the shores. One of these stories concerns a Spanish vessel, the *San Francisco Xavier*, which disappeared in 1707. The *Xavier*, thought to have been driven off course by pirates, was captured by Santiago Zabalburu,¹⁷ whose surname is Basque.¹⁸ Historians

have theorized that marooned sailors could have introduced a Spanish source for the word Oregon,¹⁹ but the possibility of a Basque word being spread in the same way has never been explored.

Basque sailors might have used the word *Orreaga* and seen little need to record it, even if they had had the opportunity. In addition, Spanish coastal exploration north of California was officially suspended shortly after Vizcaino’s expedition,²⁰ so the “place of the pines” was of no concern to later sailors. The mapping for the Vizcaino voyage extended only as far north as Cape Mendocino, and doomed ships like the *Xavier* would have left no documentation of their influence. No matter how it came to be introduced, the word that became Oregon would likely have been corrupted through the French, Spanish, and other languages before becoming generally used. All of these factors would have ensured that the term was slow to come into usage and that its derivation from *Orreaga* was virtually untraceable once it did. ■

Amanda Casserly is an Ashland resident with a long-standing interest in history and linguistics.

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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Things To Do in April



PROGRAM	DATE • TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS • FEES
Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Paper Quilts • free with admission
Work Day	5 Sat • 10 AM - 4 PM	HANLEY FARM	See details below • Preregister by April 4
Garden Tours	5 Sat & 12 Sat • NOON - 3 PM	HANLEY FARM	See details below • Preregister by April 4 \$2 members & \$3 non-members
Chautauqua Program	12 Sat • 2 PM	HISTORY CENTER	"The Ties That Bind: Quilts of Community" free
Good Clean Fun	12 Sat • NOON - 3 PM	BEEKMAN HOUSE	Soap Making Workshop • Preregister/prepay by April 5 • \$7 members & \$10 non-members

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

For times and locations, see schedule above.

CRAFT OF THE MONTH

Paper Quilts

Piece together a pioneer pattern—or make one of your own!

WORK DAY AT HANLEY FARM

We will continue cleaning the Hanley 1850s barn, identifying objects we find, and hewing replacement loft beams for the barn. Please call Dawna at 773-6536, and sign up if you would like to help. You'll need to wear grubby clothes—and bring a lunch if you plan on staying the entire day.

SPECIAL SPRING GARDEN TOURS AT HANLEY FARM

Depending on the weather, showy blooms of magnolias, daffodils, camellias, and violets may be announcing the arrival of spring at Hanley Farm—and this is your chance to see them!



On **April 5 and 12, from noon to 3 p.m.**, tours of the farm grounds will be offered on the hour. Special arrangements can be made for garden and other related clubs. **Please note: the house will not be open these two days.**

"THE TIES THAT BIND: QUILTS OF COMMUNITY"

Quilt historian Mary Bywater Cross will illustrate her discussion with slides of contemporary and historic community-based quilts. Women drew communities together through quilting for one of four purposes: raising funds for programs and organizations; creating tributes to individuals who supported and guided a group or community; commemorating cultural, social, or economic events; and attending to the utilitarian necessities for warmth and social interaction. Ms. Cross enjoys unraveling clues stitched in a quilt's construction that reveal much about the time and place that the quilt maker lived. The most humble of quilts has a story to tell.



(This presentation is made possible by funding from the Oregon Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.)

GOOD CLEAN FUN

This soapmaking workshop shows that getting clean used to be a lot of hard work! Watch as we make a batch of soap the old-fashioned way; then make and mold your own bar of soap to take home. A variety of soap types, oils, and other ingredients will be available to choose from.

COUNTY BUDGET HEARING

The county Budget Committee's public hearing on the historical societies' budget for the coming year is scheduled for **10:30 a.m., Thursday, April 24, at the Jackson County Courthouse Auditorium in Medford.** Society Executive Director John Enders will present the budget request and a brief statement. It is important that members of the Society and the Jackson County History Museums Association be present to show their support. Because hearing times can change, call SOHS (773-6536) or Jackson County (776-7248) a day or two before the hearing to confirm the time.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Interested in volunteering this summer at Hanley Farm? It's great fun and a wonderful chance to meet new people and make new friends. We're looking for adult volunteers to give, garden and wagon tours; greet visitors and sell tickets in our admissions booth; and present interpretive talks on a variety of farm-related topics. Youth volunteers (ages 10 and up) assist with heritage crafts and games and may train for wagon tours. Our first required training session is **Saturday, April 26.** If interested, please call Dawna at 773-6536.

VALUED VOLUNTEERS

In celebration of **National Volunteer Week, April 27 - May 3**, the Society wishes to recognize and honor the 300+ adult and youth volunteers who have assisted the Society through the year. Society volunteers have helped with public programs, behind-the-scenes projects, and fundraising endeavors. Each volunteer has made a unique contribution and all efforts have been greatly appreciated. Thanks for such valuable support!

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www.sohs.org

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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
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Lifetime ...	\$1,000	
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Curator ...	Two years \$200	One year \$120
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Family ...	Two years \$55	One year \$30
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EXHIBIT	LOCATION	DATE • TIME
Lasting Impressions: The Art and Life of Dorland Robinson	HISTORY CENTER	Tues - Fri • 9 AM - 5 PM Sat • 10 AM - 4 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—70 of which are on display. The diversity of mediums—charcoal, watercolor, pastel—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, this exhibit shows 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. 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."

HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS:

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The Butlers Find Their Way

By Bill Miller

H O T , B R E E Z Y A N D S T I C K Y ,

it was the summer of 1893 in Clarion, Iowa. Corn was knee high in July and that was good. The fizz and bang of the Independence Day celebration two days earlier had faded away and once-frightened animals had returned to their everyday calm. In muddy bogs, pigs grunted serenely, rolling in cool delight. The darting eyes of hawks scanned for mice in the fields below, while their lazy bodies floated on thick air currents.

Watchmaker Basil Butler locked his shop and began his walk home for supper. He noticed the air was beginning to get very warm, as he pulled a large watch from his vest. It was five o'clock. Clouds that looked like a summer shower were forming above. By the time he reached his front porch and met his wife, Anna Belle, the sky had turned black and the wind whipped and wailed. The couple saw an approaching black cloud, boiling with dirt, trees and paper.

Tornado! Anna Belle frantically gathered up baby Jeunesse. The family tried to run against what was now a deafening wind. Basil managed to drag his wife and baby into the relative safety of the cellar, where they huddled in fear for an hour. They heard explosions, the crashing of tin roofs, and the splintering of wood. The now shrieking wind mixed shredded fragments of the town and carried them miles away. It was easy to think that this might be the end of the world.¹

The "Pomeroy Tornado" was named for a nearby Iowa town that suffered most from the storm. Along the twister's fifty-five mile path, seventy-one people were killed and at least 200 injured. Winds were estimated at more than 260 mph. In today's dollars, the destruction estimate exceeded \$7.5 million.²

The wrath of the storm soon faded to a moan, as it trailed away to the northeast. The town had been turned upside down. No trees and barely any grass were left standing in the countryside. Walls had been shattered. People were bruised, bleeding, and walking in stunned silence through mounds of debris. The Butler house barely survived. Of their neighbors'

houses on either side, only rubbish and remnants remained. Basil Butler made up his mind. He "would seek a location where devastating storms are unknown." He chose Harrisburg, Oregon.³

Born in Hamilton County, Indiana, Basil Napoleon Butler had spent his entire life dodging tornadoes in the Midwest. His father, also Basil, had moved the family to Mapleton, Iowa, where he owned a combination sawmill and gristmill. In 1863, when the younger Basil was sixteen, his mother, Louisa, died. His father married again to the widow Angeline Warren, who brought her teenaged daughter into the house. It may not have been love at first sight, but in 1869 Basil and his stepsister, Anna Belle, were married.⁴

By 1878, Basil's father had become a watchmaker, advertising himself as "the best clock cleaner around." Basil also learned the business, and for the rest of his life, watch and clock repairing was his profession. There would be six children. The oldest daughters, Olive and Elizabeth, would marry and eventually move away. Six-year-old Melvin and younger sister Ellie both died in 1881. That same year the family moved to Clarion and ten years later, Jeunesse "Sally" Butler was born. Basil had been the leader of the Mapleton town band and daughter Jeunesse would inherit his musical talent. His only surviving son, John, who was born in 1868, would be heir to Basil's jolly attitude and flair for the dramatic.⁵

Within four months of his arrival in Harrisburg, John Butler married Florence Busey. Her father and mother, David Busey and Nancy Porter, had arrived in Oregon by wagon train—David in 1852 and Nancy one year later. While not

"...wind whipped and wailed ... black clouds, boiling with dirt..."



John Butler and his sons, Arnel and Warren, pet a dog during a visit to Harrisburg in 1901.

wealthy, David Busey was prosperous, sharing a brick and masonry business with his father and working a modest farm.⁶

The Butlers' stay in Harrisburg was brief. Financial panic and bank foreclosures were increasing throughout the country and soon the recession of 1893 would become the era's "Great Depression." Basil tried to work as a watchmaker with little success. Newly married John was struggling too. "My only possession was a young wife and an irresistible desire to get to the Rogue River Valley," he said.

With more optimism than money, John Butler hopped a train and "beat" his way to Medford. He and friend Frank Wilson joined with thousands of idle and desperate men, stealing free rides on passenger and freight trains. Because railroad employees were ordered to throw vagabonds off of the trains, it was a potentially dangerous trip. Many members of the train crew relished the chance to carry out their orders, especially if it meant "busting a few heads."

By the time Butler and Wilson had reached the Cow Creek Canyon, near Canyonville, they had already been tossed off the train twice without injury. The partners decided to give it one more try and jumped aboard another train. When an angry brakeman discovered them, it was Frank Wilson's quick thinking that saved them from injury. He had recently joined the Odd Fellows, a fraternal group whose members vowed to always help their "brothers." Wilson

asked if there were any other Odd Fellows on board. The brakeman said yes, and took them to the conductor. With this newfound "brother's" help, Wilson and John Butler stayed on board, and arrived in Medford that same day.

At the depot they met Charlie Palm. Palm traded in real estate and, in just a few years, would become one of Medford's richest men. When Palm asked the penniless travelers if they would like to buy some land, their answer was quick and simple. "Not now. What we need most of all is something to eat and a bath."⁷

Before the end of 1894 John Butler had settled in Medford. There he met another newcomer, Albert Green, and the two opened a paint and wallpaper company, in a wooden building on the north side of East Main. "Butler & Green" hustled and kept busy

painting and papering the town. They gained a reputation as "artists of high standard" and craftsmen who offered "good, honest work."⁸

Anna Belle Butler, John's mother, visited in Medford for Christmas 1894. Her husband, Basil, had remained in Harrisburg hoping to make some holiday sales in his shop. He would join his son in Medford in the spring, but was waiting for an end to foul winter weather. By March 1895, Basil had settled in Medford and opened a repair shop in the same wooden building occupied by his son. When he soon added jewelry sales to his business the newspaper predicted that, "Mr. Butler has worked himself into a good business in prescribing for sick watches and clocks and there seems no

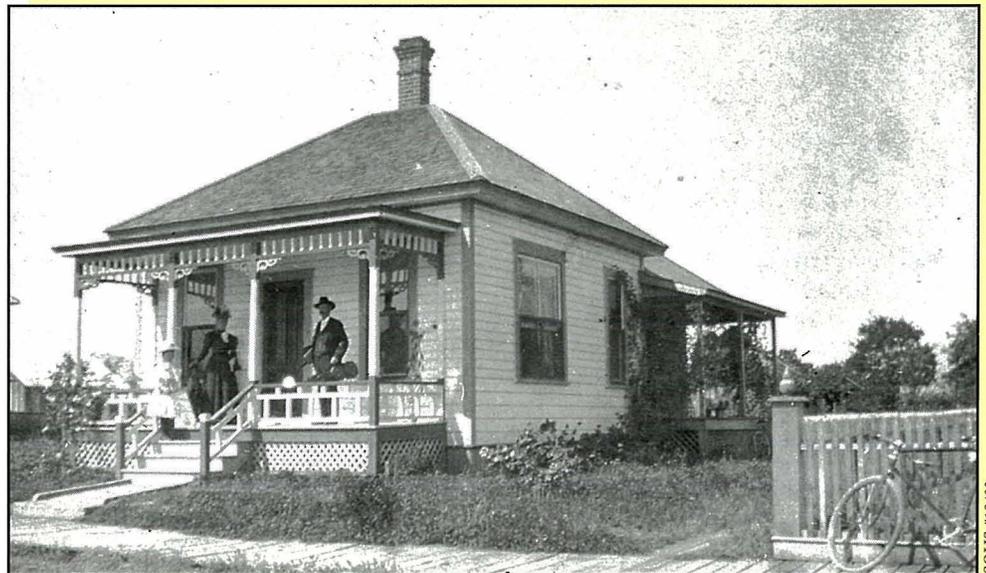
reason why he should not duplicate his success on the sale of jewelry." Success did not come and by August 1898 Basil had "given up" jewelry sales and returned solely to his repair business.⁹

Just months after he had arrived, Basil Butler moved his shop to the northeast corner of Front and Main, across from the Nash Hotel and near the train depot. The shop was in the same building as Charlie Palm's real estate office and, inevitably, Palm convinced Basil to pay \$160 for two lots on South Orange Street. Early in 1896, weary of paying rent, the elder Butler hired five men to build his family a small house. Three weeks later he moved in, and incredibly, his twenty-by-twenty foot Medford home still stands.¹⁰

According to John Butler, he and Albert Green remained partners until 1899 when Green left for California. In fact, the end of the business may have come sooner. Advertising for "Butler & Green" disappears in late 1897, about the time that Green was selling most of his property.¹¹

Exactly when John Butler and Isaac Webb began a business relationship is uncertain, but it seems likely that it was soon after Albert Green's departure. Webb had come to Medford in 1884 and built a furniture store on Main Street. The men were probably well acquainted, as Butler's business had been directly across the street from Webb's. Their association was formed and John Butler became a student of furniture sales—and of undertaking. The combination seems odd to us today, but was not unusual in the nineteenth and

Basil Butler had this home built in 1896 at 8 South Orange Street. That's Basil with Anna Belle and daughter Jeunesse on front porch, circa 1902. The house still stands.



early twentieth centuries. Furniture stores often offered the only funeral services in town. Storeowners had once manufactured their own merchandise and, when times were slow, coffin building supplemented family income. Even though by 1900 most of their furniture came by train, Webb and Butler carried on as funeral directors.¹²

With a dramatic flair, John Butler in his early years was a gregarious and popular young man. The newspapers nicknamed him the “Jolly Undertaker.” He was an amateur stage actor in both Harrisburg and Medford. In December 1895, as a member of the Medford Dramatic Society, he took the comic role of Simon Stone, jack-of-all-trades, in a performance of the play *Comrades*. The amateur troupe was raising money for Medford’s public school and the show was such a big hit the company took the play to Ashland. There they received politely favorable reviews and good box office receipts. “J. H. Butler made a hit,” wrote an Ashland newspaper reporter. The effort of the society actors was “cordially appreciated by the Ashland public.”¹³

In 1904, after twenty years in Medford, Isaac Webb had decided to sell out and leave town. John Butler and his father-in-law, David Busey, joined in partnership with Frank Hollis of Salem and purchased Webb’s “entire stock of furniture, carpets and undertaking goods ... amounting to \$16,000 to \$17,000.” That amount is over \$300,000 in current currency. With incorporation papers filed with the state, the Medford Furniture Company was born.¹⁴

John’s sister, Jeunesse, was now thirteen years old and already an accomplished pianist. Reporting that her father, Basil, had presented her with a new piano, a newspaper story called Jeunesse “one of Medford’s most promising musicians.” The report was an understatement. Alfred Metzger, music critic for *Musical Review*, had earlier described her playing as, “musical maturity greatly beyond her years.” She studied in San Francisco with the noted German pianist Herman Genss. Genss, who arrived in California in 1899, had been a student of Louis Kohler and Franz Liszt.¹⁵

Jeunesse returned to Medford at the end of 1907 to teach piano, music theory, and harmony. Christening her father’s living room “Studio 8–South Orange,” she began what descendants call a lifetime struggle to survive. The lessons were barely profitable and so in 1912 she briefly wrote a music and drama review column for the *Mail Tribune*. Between 1914 and 1917 she tried to find her place in the music world. She joined a ladies’

orchestra in Seattle, occasionally playing solos. There were recitals in Portland and in Southern Oregon, but mostly she taught. Beginning in July 1917 she began another music column for the *Mail Tribune*, but this also failed and, in February 1918, Jeunesse left the paper and returned to teaching.¹⁶

Her struggles matched those of her now aging father Basil. By 1909 he had given up his own shop and became the watchmaker and jewelry repairman at Martin Reddy’s jewelry store. After another five or six years he rejoined his son, John, at the Medford Furniture and Hardware Company, working there until he died in June 1919. John’s mother,

SOHS #17022



Anna Belle, lived on until 1934.

For John Butler, life was relatively untroubled. He and agricultural partner Clarence Noe were dreaming of profits from orchard land. Together they purchased 100 acres not far from where Foothill and Delta Waters roads meet today. Sixty acres were planted in pears and the remaining set out in apple trees. In late 1911, Butler left the city and lived at the orchard for about a year. Noe sold his share to Butler in May 1912 and John immediately sold it to Jessie Monroe of Fresno, California. Finally, in 1913, Butler sold his remaining orchard lands to Harry Leland for \$15,000 and returned to business at the store.¹⁷

The company had undergone a dramatic change after the death in 1908 of David Busey, John Butler’s father-in-law and furniture store partner. The business suddenly needed new investors. Hardware merchant Horace Nicholson and his partners and recently arrived brothers John, Sam, and Horace Howard were allowed to buy shares. Jacksonville undertaker Charles

Conklin also joined the expanding firm, moving to Medford and replacing John Butler as undertaker. New investors would bring new merchandise, new buildings, and new ways of doing business.¹⁸

Although Medford Furniture Company would not add hardware to its name until 1911, the partners began to move in that direction. They leased an adjoining storefront and filled it with new lines of stoves, ranges, pots, and pans.¹⁹

“Business is very good,” John Butler told a reporter. “We are working more men and handling more goods than ever before. The outlook is fine!”²⁰

John was one of Medford’s early “fire boys,” volunteering to fight fires with



SOHS #16684

Basil in 1918, a year before his death. Above, Jeunesse and her mother Anna Belle pose for a photograph in 1925.

buckets and a water-carrying hose cart. During his fire career, the department evolved from one fire company into two. A brick fire hall was built and a more effective chemical engine was added. By the time Butler retired as assistant fire chief in 1911, the city council was adding a motorized fire engine and had finally agreed to pay the firemen a regular salary.²¹

Although he would always be an active supporter of the department, his business needed him. The company was moving into the Rogue Valley’s first four-story concrete building. Construction had cost over \$150,000 and was financed by the Howard brothers, whose father had been a wealthy Texas rancher.²²

Almost immediately, the shareholders began to see profits decrease as the local economy fell into gradual economic recession. After World War I, the Howard brothers left the city, leasing two floors of the building to the remaining partners and selling the structure completely in 1921. By 1920, Medford’s population had decreased

by thirty-five per cent, new competition had arrived, and the company's strength was weakening.²³

When the Medford Furniture and Hardware Company's lease was not renewed, the partners moved into a newly constructed two-story building on the southwest corner of Sixth and Bartlett streets. Wafers and punch helped celebrate the formal opening, on October 13, 1922.²⁴

John Butler was in the middle of a successful Medford City Council campaign. As part of "The Business Men's Ticket," he was recommended as an individual who "owns his own home, is a heavy taxpayer and therefore interested in keeping the expenses of the administration down."

you do—weep or start doing something else?" she asked. Without giving up music, Jeunesse tried something else.²⁷

Attendance at live music performances declined with the increased popularity of recordings and motion pictures, but silent pictures still needed sound. Organ accompaniment wasn't high art, but it did provide steady employment for a talented musician. In 1920, with diligent self-instruction, Jeunesse was soon receiving enthusiastic reviews as organist on local theater keyboards.

"Miss Butler is a young lady of rare musical ability and was organist at the Rialto Theater. One day she was called upon to play the Wurlitzer organ at the Page [theater], which is an entirely different model ... and without hesitation or any instruction she jumped right in and has accomplished wonders."²⁸

Jeunesse was not satisfied with her performance and, in the summer of 1921, announced she would travel to San Francisco to take further instruction on the Wurlitzer. Before she left, there was one last concert at the Page Theater: "Janice Butler" (everyone always seemed to misspell or mispronounce her

name) "On the Big Wurlitzer Organ. ... Playing the old songs you have always loved in the way you love to hear them."²⁹

She stayed in San Francisco for over a year, taking her lessons and playing in the Bay City's theaters. She revived her writing career and wrote articles for the "Town Crier," the official publication of the San Francisco Fine Arts Society. One of her articles attempted to elevate the public's opinion of the organist's talent.

"We would ask of you picture fans, open your hearts a little wider and include the musical-interpreter of the pictures, who ... realizes his tremendous responsibility, and is striving to dignify his task, who considers real art to be art for humanity's sake, and works accordingly."³⁰

By 1924, Jeunesse was back at the local organ keyboards. It was at the Rialto Theater where she learned the intricacies of a newly installed Robert-Morton Orchestral Organ. The instrument could imitate cellos, flutes, xylophones, cymbals, drums, and even a bird. Keys, pedals, and stops were pushed, pulled, and pressed,

challenging the performer's hands and feet to match the speed of a flickering film.³¹

Long before the "talkies" arrived in Medford, Jeunesse Butler began to move away from music performance and picked up a news reporter's pen. As early as 1924 her byline began to appear again in local newspapers, although she briefly changed Jeunesse to Janice; perhaps tired of hearing her name mispronounced. She was society editor for the *Jackson County News* and its successor the *Medford Daily News* between 1924 and 1929. Recognition of her writing skill led to assignments that gradually moved from society and music, through entertainment, to those of a valued news reporter. From interviews with local hero "Pinto" Colvig, who was working in Hollywood and would soon become the voice of Walt Disney's "Goofy," she soon was interviewing some very prominent people.³²

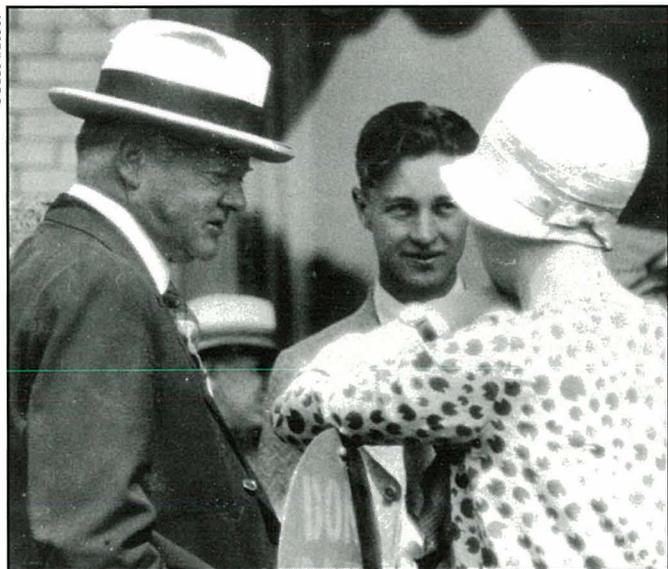
On July 30, 1928, three months before the national elections, she captured her most important interview with presidential candidate Herbert Hoover as he left the Hotel Medford. He was visiting the Rogue Valley for the tenth time and in just three months would be elected the thirty-first president of the United States. Her front-page story in the *Medford Daily News* may well have been her most successful moment as a newspaperwoman. Within a year the *Daily* was sold and Jeunesse was scrambling again.³³

She did try other investments, such as a partnership with Medford photographer Verne Shangle. She was the business manager for the Butler-Shangle Studio. Within six months she sold her share to Shangle and announced that she would now concentrate on writing and newspaper work.³⁴

By 1930, Jeunesse's brother, John, was watching the slow unraveling of the Medford Furniture and Hardware Company. The Depression had begun and only three of the original partners still survived. Competition from newly arrived J.C. Penney and Montgomery Ward stores significantly reduced company profits. Many people never paid their bills at the store, remembered Butler's daughter-in-law. In the fall of 1933, the store dropped most of its furniture lines and moved into a smaller portion of the building.³⁵

Fifty-two years of furniture and hardware sales ended on August 29, 1936. While talking to a neighbor in his own front yard, John Butler clutched his chest and fell. His health had been failing for months and he died instantly.³⁶

John left behind his widow, Florence, and three children, Warren, Arnel, and Arliene.



Then the social editor of the *Medford Daily News*, Jeunesse interviews presidential candidate Herbert Hoover outside the Hotel Medford on July 30, 1928.

When he took office in January 1923, his long career with the fire department made him the obvious choice to chair the council's Fire and Building Committee.²⁵

Butler's company still had not turned the corner on tough times and business pressures forced him to resign his council seat in March 1924. The mayor and council refused to allow "such a valuable city official" to resign and persuaded Butler to stay. He returned for a few months, but by September his decision was final and he returned to his business career.²⁶

While Butler's successes were dwindling, his sister Jeunesse had realized that she would never be a concert performer. "If you had spent all your childhood and girlhood preparing for one profession, and then, while still a young woman, modern inventions had swept away all opportunity for utilizing that profession, what would



Jeunesse continued to write, receiving occasional byline credit for stories printed in local newspapers. In 1934, she became editor of the *Pear O' Scope*, a trade journal of the Rogue Valley fruit industry. The magazine was discontinued during World War II, but she quickly became editor of another, the *Blue Goose Bugler*. The *Bugler* was an in-house publication for the Medford Division of American Fruit Growers, Inc. Even when the company lost its buildings in the Medford packinghouse fires of June 1946, Jeunesse managed to find a temporary office and the journal was published without missing an issue.³⁷

There was little stability in her hardscrabble life. She juggled her time between being an ever-patient music instructor and a freelance writer. For many years, she was the *Christian Science Monitor's* local correspondent and special correspondent for the *Grants Pass Courier*. With the revival of the *Medford News* in the mid-1940s, she gradually worked

At left, John and his wife, Florence, pose with Florence's mother, Nancy Busey, in 1936, shortly before John's death. Below left, John plays with his grandson Robert, Arnel's son, in 1929.

herself into a regular reporter's position and, for a few years, there was steady employment. Under the pen name, "Sally" Butler, she wrote "Sallying Forth," a gossipy column about Rogue Valley personalities. But when the *News* ceased publication in 1951 she was again forced to change careers. The woman who had seen the phonograph and motion pictures overshadow the concert hall, who had witnessed sound movies and radio, finally became a reporter for Medford's KMED Radio. It was her last regular position.³⁸

On November 30, 1956, at age sixty-five, Jeunesse died at the home of a friend. She was buried in Eastwood Cemetery, next to her father and mother.³⁹

These Butlers were no different from any other family who left "home" for a better life in Oregon. Though they traveled by train rather than covered wagon, they still faced the challenges of daily survival. Their days were sometimes happy and sometimes ended in pain, but in the end, they did what we all do—struggle to find our place in the world. 🏠

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Aunt Jeunesse poses for a portrait with her brother Arnel's children, Ann and Robert, in 1937.

Jackson County Sheriff's Posse

By Sarah Kaip

THE HORSE RIDIN' men and women of Jackson County have served their sheriffs well over the years. From rough-riding Oregon posses that helped hunt down outlaws and scoundrels in the mid-1800s to the search-and-rescue posse of the 1940s, to the public-relations posse of today, these folks volunteered to perform invaluable missions for their county's sheriffs.

Around the time our state was founded, volunteers on horseback were called up by sheriffs to hunt down murderers, robbers, and other criminals.¹ It wasn't until 1940 that Sheriff Sidney I. Brown formally organized the Jackson County Sheriff's Posse, a specialized and trained volunteer posse that would provide him with backup deputies to carry out search-and-rescue missions and assist with law enforcement.²

Posse members undertook training in map and compass reading, first aid, human tracking, and riding through rugged country in order to participate in search-and-rescue operations. When World War II began, posse members were needed to help enforce wartime regulations including blackouts and traffic control. Donald Thumler, the youngest member of the original posse at age sixteen, remembered his father, Bernie Thumler, being called up for duty by the sheriff just after bombs struck Pearl Harbor. "I still remember him loading up his horse at night and hauling him to the Medford airport to provide security," recalled Thumler.³

Unlike other posses in the state, the Jackson County posse was always fully self-supporting, supplying its own horses and tack, and paying its own expenses while on duty.⁴ The Jackson County Sheriff's Posse raised funds by hosting the annual Rogue River Round Up, Medford's most popular event in the 1940s and rated as one of the country's top rodeos. During the round up, the posse's outstanding forty-two-member drill team performed complicated drill exercises. Even more extraordinary at the time was the inclusion of women on the drill team. A.W. "Dusty" Rhodes, president

of the Oregon Association of Mounted Posses in 1949, said, "The Jackson County Sheriff's Mounted Posse has the most unique drill team in Oregon in that it is a combined lady and man team. Other posses have tried to have women and men combined drill teams, but gave them up as too difficult."⁵ Not only were men and women able to work together as a team, they won some of the area's most coveted trophies under drillmaster Shelby Tuttle's direction.

The female members of the posse, known as The Ladies Mounted Troops



Members of the Ladies Mounted Troop Auxiliary promoted the Jackson County Sheriff's Posse at public events in the 1940s.

Auxiliary and composed of posse members' wives and daughters, promoted the posse at public events and attended to the daily office work needed for the

posse's survival. At age 100, Eva Thumler is the only remaining member of the Ladies Auxiliary of 1940. She remembered with amusement the trail ride she and fellow auxiliary members took to the top of Roxy Ann Peak. "We ate our lunches while our horses nibbled on grass. Little did we know our horses were grazing in the midst of poison oak. When we got home, every single one of us had poison oak on our arms and faces from touching our horses' noses."⁶

Women were allowed to participate in the posse as full members when the second posse formed in 1976, the first having disbanded in the 1950s due to a



Acc. #79.112.66

lack of interest. Under Sheriff Duane Franklin, the new posse was primarily a search-and-rescue unit. The new posse witnessed an influx of women while the number of men declined. Art O'Keefe, a posse member since 1976, observed that the new posse was split on whether it wanted to continue as a search-and-rescue unit or instead become a public relations arm of the sheriff's office. This division caused the posse to disband once again after only a decade.⁷

In March 1990, the posse formed once more as a public-relations entity under Sheriff C.W. Smith. According to Carol Murray, current president of the posse, the posse now helps bridge the gap between the sheriff and the community by educating the public about the sheriff's office, providing protection at public events, assisting in charitable activities, and participating in parades and rodeos.⁸

Over time, modernization carved out new roles for the posse, making it difficult to maintain ongoing traditions. Longtime member Judi Walch explained, "The further in time we move away from tradition, the harder it will become to remember the 'old ways' and emulate them."⁹ That is why she and the other enthusiastic posse members still march their horses down the parade streets proudly linking their sheriff to his citizens. 🐾

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Famous the World Over: MEDFORD'S WING IN CANTEEN

By William Alley ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LONG BEFORE THE JAPANESE attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States had been busily preparing for a conflict many believed to be inevitable. Military aircraft had become a common sight at the Medford Municipal Airport, which had always been an important refueling stop for West Coast traffic, with 135 Army Air Corps planes passing through in July 1941, and an even greater number in August. Earlier that same year the Army Air Corps had established a permanent presence at the Medford airport with the stationing of a "service detachment" to provide maintenance for planes in transit.¹

Although the Jackson County Court (the equivalent of the current board of commissioners) had set up a temporary recreational facility in the courthouse auditorium for the growing number of servicemen, it was too far away from the airport to be of benefit to weary flight crews in transit.² To meet the needs of these servicemen, as well as those being stationed permanently at the airport, the Jackson County Council of Defense, made up of leading members of the community, decided to open up a canteen at the airport.

The old building that once housed the Department of Commerce radio station when the new airport was built in 1929 was selected as the site for the new recreational facility and readily loaned by the city of Medford, which owned the airport at that time. The little building was quickly repainted and outfitted with some chairs and writing tables. The equipment from a former restaurant in the terminal building was cleaned up and installed to provide coffee, milkshakes, and hamburgers. To enable crews to contact loved ones, a pay phone was also installed. This diminutive military canteen was named The Wing In, and was ready to receive its first visitors in the second week of October 1941.³

Helen Carpenter, the wife of orchardist Alfred Carpenter and chair of the County Council of Defense's Recreation Committee, assumed overall supervision of the canteen, and appointed Grace Fiero as manager. In the early years of the century Grace Andrews Fiero was a successful Broadway ingenue who gave up her career to marry Conro Fiero, a wealthy local

orchardist. Numerous young ladies answered the call to staff the canteen as Red Cross Gray Ladies. They operated the Wing In during regular daily hours, usually working a four-to five-hour shift, and were also on call, ready to open the canteen anytime during the night to accommodate military flights. The Wing In would open daily at 7 a.m. and would remain open until the last serviceman had been fed, usually between eight and ten o'clock.⁴

Within months after the United States' entry into the war, the Army secured a lease on the airport from the city of Medford "for the duration of the emergency and six months." Included in the lease was the hangar and administration building; the city charged the Army one dollar per year. What little civilian flight activity remained, with the exception of the regularly scheduled United Airlines service, was moved to the old Newell Barber Field site at the County Fairgrounds, and later to a new airfield about two miles north of town, Piercy Field, west of Highway 99 toward Central Point. The Medford Municipal Airport was now a military installation and as such was off limits to civilians not employed there.⁵

With the United States at war, and the Army in control of the Medford airport, the Wing In quickly outgrew the little radio building. Staffing had increased from one person at a time to four, yet there simply was no longer enough room for all of the weary flight crews to find a cot, write a letter home, or simply relax with a cup of coffee and a piece of pie "like mother makes." "The canteen had a lunch counter, one couch and one easy chair, that's all there is room for," Helen Carpenter lamented. "Needed now," she continued, was "a lounging room and even a place where tired pilots may stretch out for forty minutes."⁶

An Army Air Corps inspector had high praise for the little canteen during an inspection of the airfield in 1942. He marveled at how the tiny sixteen-by-twenty foot structure could provide more than 2,000 meals in a month and remain financially self-sufficient. During his visit of less than an hour, forty hamburgers had been served.⁷

The Recreation Committee initially sought out space in the nearby airport

administration building, including that occupied by United Airlines, which was moving into a newly completed terminal facility nearby, but the military had priority on all available space in the administration building. Unable to secure any additional existing space, Helen Carpenter and the committee issued an appeal for public subscriptions to expand the canteen. Bakery owner and longtime pilot W. H. "Heine" Fluhrer took charge of the fundraising to secure \$2,000. The local community was quick to respond to the call.

Utilizing the monies donated by the public, a small building in Central Point was purchased and moved to the airport. The old radio building too was moved to a new location at the field, and the two structures combined, thereby doubling the available space. The newly expanded Wing In Canteen opened on May 1, 1942. When one of the many women volunteers working the canteen suggested that a piano would be a nice addition, Mr. and Mrs. Don Whitney of Ashland donated theirs for the cause. Additional funds were raised by the community to provide more furniture and a record player.⁸

The same characteristics that had made Medford an important stop in the development of commercial aviation fifteen years earlier ensured the airport's value to the military. Medford's strategic location halfway between San Francisco and Seattle made it an ideal refueling stop for all coastal military traffic, and each air crew that laid over took advantage of the Wing In Canteen. One United flight, a DC-3 carrying Marines returning from overseas, was forced to delay its departure because the entire complement had gone to the Wing In for hamburgers. Thirty-four Marines were served in a span of ten minutes by the two girls on duty that day.⁹ "In looking over the little register kept here," one of the locally stationed airmen, known as "airport boys," commented, "it would surprise one to see the number of visiting pilots who have taken refreshments and otherwise enjoyed the conveniences offered by this organization." Among the visitors were reportedly a number of "famous names" whose identities were withheld due to wartime censorship.¹⁰

Medford's Wing Inn Canteen soon became one of the best-known little secrets

of the air corps. Each Christmas the Wing In received numerous cards from soldiers around the world who remembered fondly their brief visits to the canteen. By the time the war in Europe was coming to an end, Medford's Wing In Canteen had become a favored stop. Army Air Forces General K.B. Wolfe admitted that it was common practice for training flights to arrange their flight plans to allow for a layover in

Medford. "Medford is no longer famous for its pears alone," General Wolfe told the *Mail Tribune*. "[It] has become famous all over the world for the hospitality and good food served by the women of Medford who give their time and services to the Wing In." By the time the war was over it was determined that the Wing In's sales had averaged 400 meals a day.¹¹

Of course it was undoubtedly more than

just the food that accounted for the Wing In's popularity. After all, most of the Gray Ladies were volunteers with little experience running a high-volume grill. One longtime volunteer jokingly reminisced many years later that it was a wonder many of the boys didn't suffer from food poisoning from undercooked burgers. What made the Wing In special was the hospitality offered the fliers. "Many of the women who have helped make this project famous have sons, a husband, or some other member of their family in the armed forces," a member of the Recreation Committee said. "So the men who drop in to enjoy the food receive the same welcome they would get at home, which, we believe, is what they want more than a hamburger or a piece of pie."¹²

The end of the war in August 1945 did not mean the end of the line for the Wing In Canteen. The process of demobilizing the massive military machine created to fight the Axis took much longer than many had anticipated. The War Assets Administration did not declare Medford's airport as surplus, a required step before the facility could be returned to the city, until the summer of 1946. Repairs and negotiations to acquire the properties adjacent to the airport acquired by the army took additional time. The city was forced for a time to operate the airport under an interim permit from the military. It was not until February 1947 that Medford's airport was finally returned to the city. During much of this period, the Wing In Canteen continued to serve members of the armed forces. Regrettably, no record was kept indicating exactly when the canteen closed its doors.¹³ 🏠

William Alley is a certified archivist and historian.

ENDNOTES

1. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 20 August 1941; 17 September 1941; 15 November 1945.
2. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 16 July 1941.
3. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 5 October 1941.
4. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 5 October 1941; 1 February 1942; Southern Oregon Historical Society Oral History Transcript 132-B, p. 48.
5. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 22 February 1942; 15 November 1945.
6. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 21 January 1942.
7. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 1 February 1942; 6 February 1942; 3 April 1945.
8. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 20 February 1942; 1 May 1942.
9. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 30 April 1945.
10. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 30 August 1942; 30 April 1945.
11. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 30 April 1945.
12. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 30 April 1945.
13. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 8 May 1946; 4 June 1946; 9 August 1946; 18 September 1946; 9 February 1947.



The Medford Airport's tiny Wing In Canteen developed a reputation all out of proportion to its modest size for the good food and the family-like welcome accorded military personnel stopping off during flights up and down the West Coast during World War II. Above Grace Fiero, Pat Thompson, and Kay Conroy staff the counter in 1942.



From left, Peachie Drury, Isabel Miller, Grace Fiero, Kay Conroy, and Pat Thompson keep the Wing In hamburgers grilling for pilots and soldiers passing through.

Cuts Could Make History a Thing of the Past

By John Enders

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A LETTER TO THE EDITOR and a recent public statement by a county official make it clear that a number of people in the area are not familiar with the history or work of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. As its new director, I hope to change that.

In 1927, Jackson County moved the county seat from Jacksonville to Medford, leaving the historic Jackson County Courthouse derelict. In the 1940s, history-minded individuals and groups passed a bond measure creating the permanent Jackson County Historical Levy, and funds were used to restore and protect the old courthouse.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society was founded with the mission "to collect, preserve, research and interpret the artifacts and documents that connect us to the past."

Southern Oregon's history is filled with colorful and unique people and events, from the Rogue Indian wars to pioneer-era photographer Peter Britt, the timber industry to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The Southern Oregon Historical Society is the repository for nearly 90,000 artifacts, from pioneer wagons to 100-year-old quilts; nearly 4,000 linear feet of archival materials; and more than 750,000 photographic images, including Peter Britt's photographs.

Our research library assists individuals and groups with historical, genealogical, and land/property research. Many of those patrons are referred to us by the county assessor's office.

The Society owns and operates two properties: the History Center in downtown Medford, with exhibit space, offices and research library, and the historic Hanley Farm, a gift to the Society from the pioneer Hanley family. Under agreement with Jackson County, we maintain, preserve, and operate other facilities: the original Jackson County Courthouse (now the Jacksonville Museum of Southern Oregon History) and Jackson County Jail (now the Children's Museum), the Catholic Rectory, Beekman House and Beekman Bank, and the historic U.S. Hotel building—all in Jacksonville.

The Jacksonville buildings are county-owned; we simply manage and preserve them, which underscores a huge irony: Jackson County is cutting our budget, while at the same time asking us to preserve and manage historic public buildings. The county can't have it both ways.

The Society also conducts educational programs. The month-long Children's Heritage Fair each spring reaches several thousand fourth-graders, helping to instill an appreciation for their Southern Oregon heritage. On-site and outreach presentations reach thousands more. And through our living history programs at the Beekman House and Hanley Farm, thousands more learn about nineteenth century life and its joys and rigors.

At a time when the local economy struggles, it is folly to cut programs and exhibits that bring tourist dollars into our communities. The elimination of programs and closure of museums or other sites in Jacksonville would have an immediate economic impact on that town and the region, which are heavily dependent on tourist dollars.

The cuts also would impact other communities—Applegate, Butte Falls, Eagle Point, Trail, Gold Hill and others.

The Society's affiliated organizations—members of the Jackson County History Museums Association—have sites and programs dedicated to the local history of those communities. Through the Society, those organizations receive the funding that ensures their health and financial well-being. Fifteen percent of our budget goes directly to the JCHMA members.

We at the Society understand that the property tax system in Oregon is broken, and that there are desperate needs in the county. We also understand that the state's public employees' retirement system and escalating insurance costs are placing a big burden on the county. Over the past four years, the Southern Oregon Historical Society's budget and staff have been reduced by about forty percent.

The county administrator is now proposing a reduction of \$250,000 per year over three years in our public funding. If these cuts are made, it will force us to eliminate many or all of our programs and to reconsider our agreements with Jackson County on the maintenance and preservation of the historic Jacksonville buildings that are the patrimony of us all. The last time the Society turned a building back over to the county because we were unable to maintain and manage it, the county sold it.

It is important that the residents of Jackson County know what a gem they have in the Southern Oregon Historical Society. And it is also vitally important that they, and members of the county budget committee, understand that additional deep cuts will mean an end to the Society as we know it.

I urge you to publicly support the Society as the budget process goes forward, by writing letters to the editor, in telephone calls or e-mails, or by attending the public budget hearing on April 24. 🏠



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