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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

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From the Director

Dear members and friends:

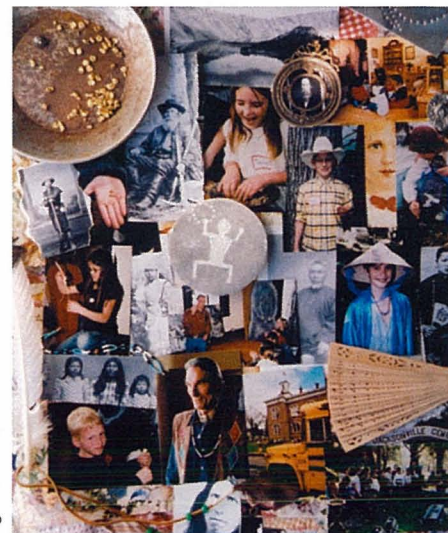
By now, I hope most of you have seen our outstanding new exhibit, "Peter Britt: The Man Beyond the Camera," at the Jacksonville Museum. It not only is the most extensive exhibit on photographer Peter Britt, but also will give you a glimpse at the kind of exhibit SOHS will be doing in the future. Funded through corporate and private donations, it includes historic artifacts and photographs, as well as a rich high-tech element including DVD-based photos and a new video on the life of Britt produced by SOHS. I urge everyone to see this great exhibit.

By the time you receive this magazine, SOHS will be in final preparations for a major membership campaign. With partners U.S. Bank, NewsWatch 12 (KDRV) and perhaps others, the kickoff date for the membership drive is April 30 and it will run until July 4. Our goal: 500 new members. As you know, the future of SOHS depends on the loyalty and generosity of our members and others in the community, and we are determined to make SOHS an organization that old and new area residents alike will be thrilled to join and support. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 30, SOHS and the city of Jacksonville will host an open house at the Jacksonville museums, with free admission to all, entertainment, food and other features. We wish to celebrate with the community of Jacksonville the move of our administrative headquarters back to that historic community, and to kick off our membership campaign all on the same day. Please join us!

Many of you love our quarterly magazine *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*. Our summer issue, due out July 1, will focus on race and ethnicity in the region. As part of putting together this issue, we also are seeking to expand and deepen SOHS's collection of historic photographs and illustrations of minorities and diverse populations throughout the region, particularly prior to white settlement of the area, and from the 1850 to 1920 era. Do you or other family members have local photographs or paintings from this period? If so, please contact Research Librarian Carol Samuelson at 541-773-6536, ext. 237.

We at SOHS look forward to seeing you this spring and summer at the museums in Jacksonville, and at our "First Weekends" events at Hanley Farm in June, July, August and September.

John Enders
Executive Director



ON THE COVER

Collage from photos taken at the 20th Annual Children's Heritage Fair, 2005, in Jacksonville, with artifacts and photos from the SOHS collection.

COLLAGE AND PHOTO BY ANTHONY DIMAGGIO

Heritage:

a source of pride
where we come from
our roots
and history



Then and Now

HOMework, THEN AND NOW • 4

Exhibits

PETER BRITT:

THE MAN BEYOND THE CAMERA • 5

Happenings

EVENTS TO REMEMBER • 6

SOHS IS ON THE AIR: AS IT WAS • 7

Features

THE 20TH ANNUAL
CHILDREN'S HERITAGE FAIR

by Jan Wright • 8

THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES:
GROWING UP IN SOUTHERN OREGON

by Bill Miller • 12

Community

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT BUILDING BRIDGES

by Warren Merz • 18

SOHS Today

SCENES FROM OPENING NIGHT
OF PETER BRITT:

THE MAN BEYOND THE CAMERA • 19

Members/Donors

• 20, 21 & 22

Sponsors

• 22 & 23

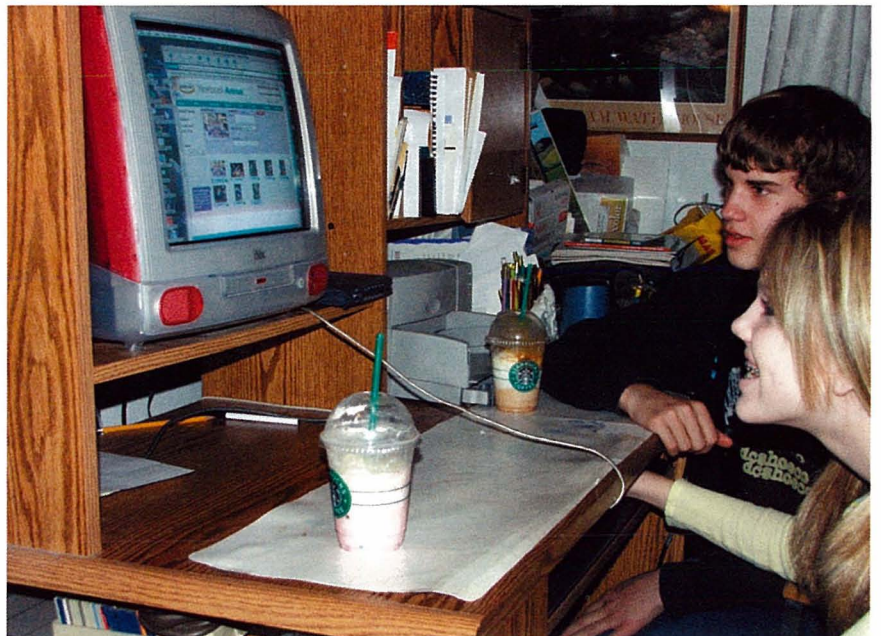


homework

then and now

ABOVE: Southern Oregon students Marjorie Edens (left) and Edna Welch (right) doing their homework in 1958. Marjorie Edens was a long-time employee of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Her best friend, Edna Welch, was tragically killed in a car accident in 1960.

RIGHT: Jesse and Carley Quick doing their homework on the Internet in 2005.



NOW AT THE JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM

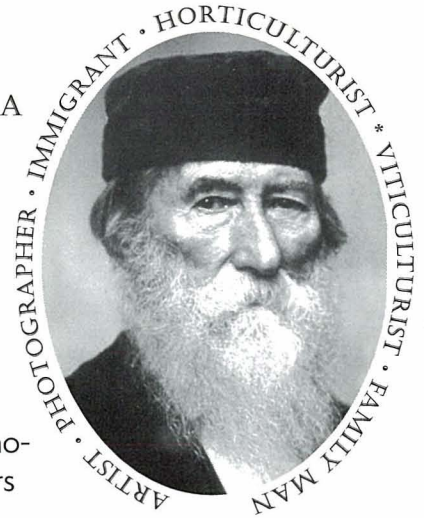
5TH & C STREETS, JACKSONVILLE



PETER BRITT THE MAN BEYOND THE CAMERA

With nearly 400 artifacts and images—many never before seen on public display—and exciting multi-media presentations, this is the Southern Oregon Historical Society's most innovative exhibit to date. We'll soon be adding a "stereoviewing" kiosk, which will allow visitors to see some of Britt's photographs in "3-D." Stereoviewers were popular from the

late 1800s to early 1900s and the effect is quite amazing—even by today's technological standards. If you have already visited the Peter Britt exhibit, you'll want to return to see this latest addition.



Three cheers for SOHS!
What a wonderful exhibit...
thanks John. Ed Foss

Great Job with the
exhibit. It has
deepened our appreciation
for the man and the hill
Don
Miller

The Exhibit
is beautiful
thanks!
Mike Stung

Thank You John
and the Historical Society!

Thanks for
the tour
Sara King Cole

Thank you
if we so much!
the field trip a great
the exhibit a great
Wade

What a
great exhibit!
Enhanced my view
of Peter Britt &
the hill
triumphantly
Joey

MUSEUM HOURS: FREE WEDNESDAYS!

The Jacksonville and Children's museum hours are
Wednesday through Sunday, 10am to 5pm.

Admission is free Wednesdays from 2pm to 5pm.

See page 19 for photos of opening night at the Britt exhibit.

Children's Museum

5TH AND C STREETS, JACKSONVILLE



SOUTHERN
OREGON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Children of
all ages
experience
history
through
creative
play and
hands-on
learning.
Realistic
exhibits
depict
story-book
settings
from the
Native
American
and
pioneer
eras to
the 1930s.



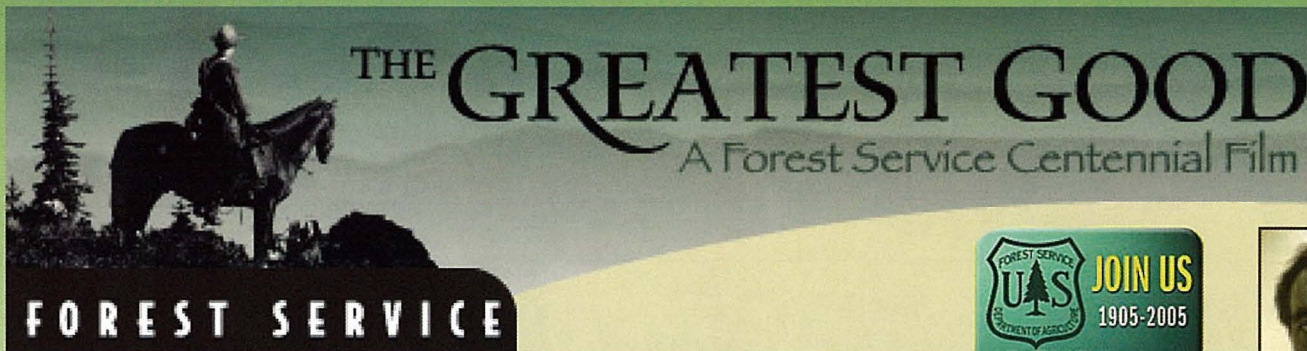
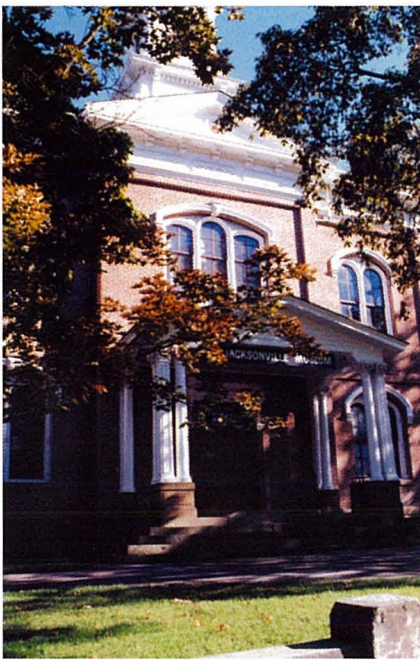
Welcome Back to Jacksonville

Saturday, April 30

Join the City of Jacksonville, NewsWatch 12 (KDRV) and U.S. Bank as they welcome the Southern Oregon Historical Society "Back to Jacksonville" on Saturday, April 30 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Jacksonville Museum.

Highlights will include food, music, entertainment, living history figures, volunteer docents and free admission to both the Jacksonville Museum and Children's Museum for the day. In addition, dignitaries will be on hand to officially welcome the SOHS to its new administrative offices (under construction behind the museum) and kick-off our 2005 Membership Drive.

Our goal is to add 500 new members—individual, family and business—by July 4. So come celebrate our upcoming move to Jacksonville and help us spread the word about just how valuable an SOHS membership can be. See you there!



GIFFORD PINCHOT, 1905

The Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest and Southern Oregon University's School of Sciences are co-hosting the following free, open-to-the-public events to mark the Centennial of the founding of the U.S. Forest Service:

- **APRIL 12, 7PM**, MEDFORD CENTRAL LIBRARY: showing of the just released 2-hour 100th anniversary film on the history of the Forest Service, "The Greatest Good."
- **APRIL 13, 7PM**, SOU'S STEVENSON UNION ROGUE RIVER ROOM: presentation by Professor Char Miller, noted public speaker, historian and biographer of Gifford Pinchot, founder of the forest service.
- **APRIL 14, 7PM**, SOU'S STEVENSON UNION ROGUE RIVER ROOM: second showing of the 2-hour film, "The Greatest Good."

La Lande Appointed to Advisory Committee

Jeff LaLande, an archaeologist and historian for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, has been appointed to the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation (SACHP) by Governor Ted Kulongoski.

LaLande, an adjunct professor of history at Southern Oregon University who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon, has published widely on the anthropology and history of Southern Oregon. His interests range from prehistoric Native Americans to the political history of the "State of Jefferson" (i.e., Southern Oregon and northern-most California).

The SACHP is a nine-member committee appointed by the governor that reviews National Register nominations in Oregon and votes on their eligibility. When the committee determines that a nomination is eligible, it recommends that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) sign the nomination and forward it to the National Register Office in Washington D.C. for its review and listing. The committee meets three times a year to review nominations brought forward by SHPO's National Register coordinator. The committee also advises SHPO on matters of program, policy and budget. For more information on the committee, see <http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCD/sachp.shtm>

Downtown Medford



PHOTO BY ROBERT HILDENBRANDT

Although we are moving our administrative offices to Jacksonville, the Southern Oregon Historical Society's Research Library and archive will remain at its present location in downtown Medford. Please come visit us and let our knowledgeable, courteous staff assist you with your research needs.



RESEARCH LIBRARY

History Center

106 North Central Avenue, Medford

Tuesday - Friday

1 - 5 PM

(541) 773-6536 EXT. 238

SOHS is On the Air



The Southern Oregon Historical Society, in cooperation with Jefferson Public Radio, is pleased to announce the beginning of a new era of the popular *As It Was* radio series.

Begun in 1992, the original *As It Was* series saw more than 1,200 episodes air on JPR's network of public radio stations. The show proved so popular that in 1998, the JPR Foundation compiled many of these scripts into book form. *As It Was: Stories from the*

History of Southern Oregon and Northern California quickly sold out its first printing of 2,000. The book continues to sell steadily to this date.

In 2003, Hank Henry, the long-time voice of the show, passed away, and the program's primary writer, Carol Barrett, decided to retire. *As It Was* was so popular among listeners, however, that JPR did not discontinue the show, but rather has continued to air reruns for the past year and a half. During that time, SOHS and JPR conducted a series of meetings to ascertain the potential of creating all new episodes of *As It Was* with an entirely new staff.



Shirley Patton, the new voice of *As It Was*

What rose from those meetings was a commitment to continue the program with a new writing crew, host, and production staff. SOHS and JPR selected SOHS historian Dawna Curler as the new chief writer and script coordinator for *As It Was II*. Ms. Curler has a M.A. in Museum Studies from SUNY Cooperstown and has worked for SOHS for the past twenty-two years. Her team of volunteer writers includes published authors, university students, and staff members of SOHS and other historical societies in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

Noted Ashland actress Shirley Patton is the program's new host. Raymond Scully is the program's new volunteer producer.

JPR began airing episodes of *As It Was II* on March 1, 2005. The shows can be heard Monday through Friday at 1:55 pm on JPR's Rhythm & News station, and 9:30 am and 12:59 pm on Classics & News. As station locations on the dial vary depending on where in Southern Oregon you live, visit www2.jeffnet.org for details.

The 20th Annual Children's Heritage Fair

February 23 - March 18, 2005

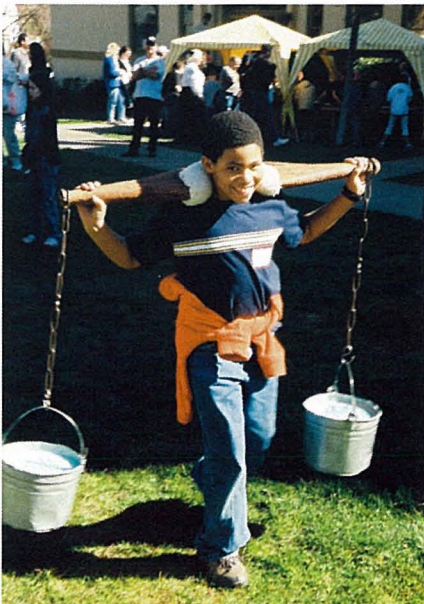
by Jan Wright

ALL PHOTOS BY ANTHONY DIMAGGIO
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



For twenty years, the Southern Oregon Historical Society has offered an innovative, hands-on history experience at its annual Children's Heritage Fair. In 1985 the idea of using the Jacksonville Museums as a setting for fourth grade field trips was conceived and implemented on a small scale.

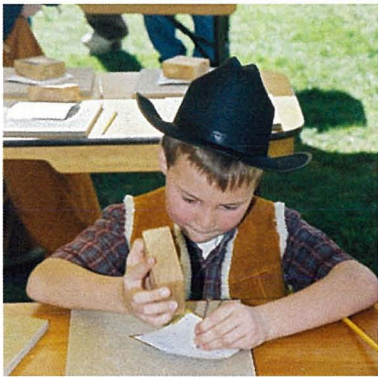
At first, the event was limited to two days of activities and demonstrations for only a few classes. Changes were gradual from year to year until in the mid-1990s when the Children's Heritage Fair graduated to its current standard of intense, year-long preparations and precision scheduling to meet Oregon State benchmarks for fourth grade history. This year, more than 2,300 fourth graders attended Heritage Fair.



Activities at the Children's Heritage Fair have changed over the years, but the interactive element has always remained at the core. In years past, children have had the chance to feel the texture of flour they have ground themselves, put out imaginary fires with a bucket brigade, form questions for the living history characters and design tombstones. Both the Beekman House and the U. S. Hotel have also been used as way stations for gathering to hear music, eat lunch or churn butter. The grounds outside the museum were once an arena for using split rails to build fences and log cabins, and for relay races and quilt tying.



This year, the children took pride in planting flower bulbs in front of the Jacksonville Museum. This is their own contribution to history and something they can see the results of for years to come.



The Children's Heritage Fair would not be possible without the volunteers who have helped out year after year posing as pioneers, miners and bankers, or serving as cemetery guides. Over the last twenty years, volunteers have come away dirty from the printing press, soaked from the rain and sometimes even a bit frustrated when time ran out. But they have always managed to radiate patience and enthusiasm while teaching children the importance of preserving and respecting our heritage.

This year Peter Britt, a Swiss pioneer who arrived in Jacksonville in 1852, was on hand to share his personal story, his belongings and his life's work as a painter, photographer, horticultural expert and landowner.





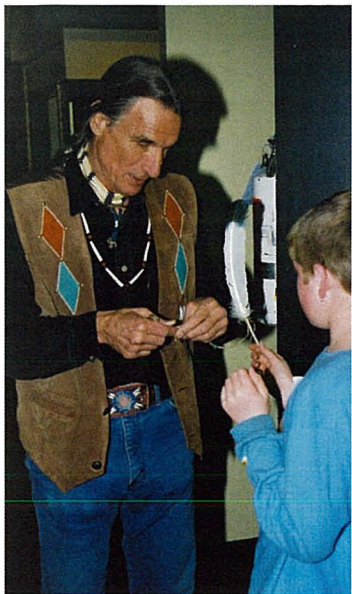
At the Children's Museum, Cornelius Beekman, Jacksonville's first banker, accepted gold nuggets that lucky "miners" panned for outside in wooden sluices or troughs. "Beek" handed out bank certificates for students to take home in exchange for the gold; they were exact replicas of those he issued in his bank on California Street in the 1850s.

Meanwhile, at the U.S. Hotel, Mrs. Beekman was busy sharing stories of her family's journey to Jacksonville across the Oregon Trail, how she met and married Cornelius Beekman and what life in Jacksonville was like in the early twentieth century.



At the Jacksonville Cemetery, students learned that a cemetery is a place of remembrance, contemplation and respect for those who have gone before us. Tour guides there shared information about some of the city's earliest inhabitants, their occupations, contributions and families.





Tom Smith, SOHS's Native American Cultural Interpreter, demonstrated the life ways of Oregon's first peoples in the pre-contact era. He shared how food, clothing, shelter, tools and hunting weapons were made, showing authentic replicas that he has made himself. Tom's presentation always includes a special story, usually one that has some "teaching" in it, in the traditional way.

At the end of each day, the teachers turn in their

evaluations, often telling us that the event was an overwhelming success. For the teachers, it proves a gratifying reinforcement of concepts already taught in the classroom. For the children, the Fair has been more than just time away from their school desks; it has enabled them to experience the rhythms of the past and develop a deeper appreciation of the place they call home.

Twenty years and more than 50,000 fourth graders later, the Children's Heritage Fair continues to be the Southern Oregon Historical Society's premiere educational program and one of its most popular and important contributions to the preservation of our common heritage. We already look forward to our twenty-first anniversary in 2006. 🏠

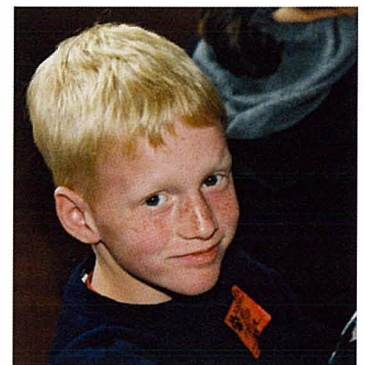
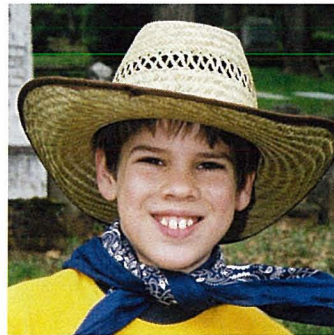


PHOTO BY DANA JACKSON

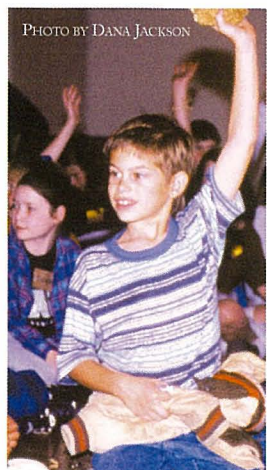


PHOTO BY DANA JACKSON



Through Children's Eyes:

Growing Up in Southern Oregon

by Bill Miller

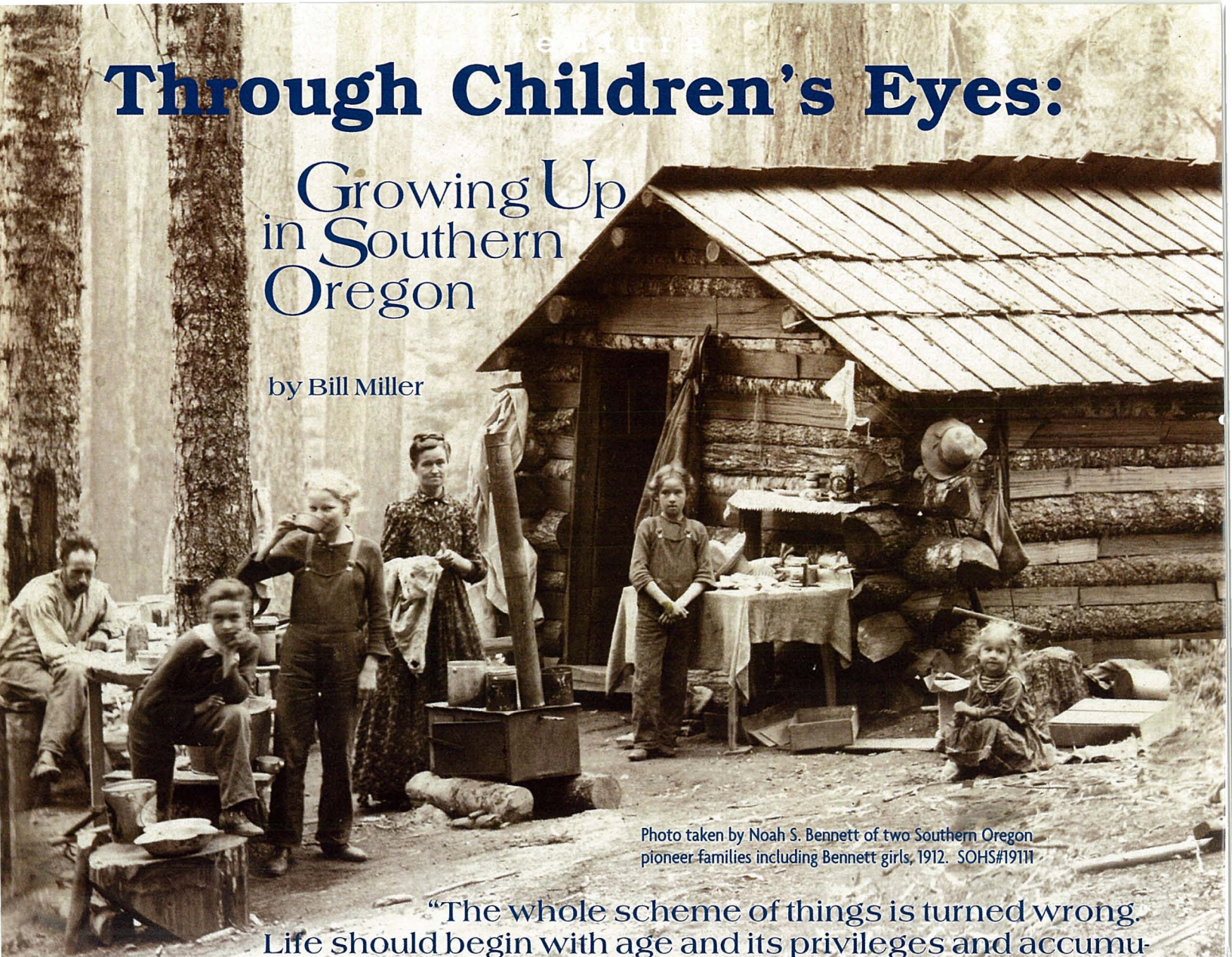


Photo taken by Noah S. Bennett of two Southern Oregon pioneer families including Bennett girls, 1912. SOHS#19111

“The whole scheme of things is turned wrong. Life should begin with age and its privileges and accumulations, and end with youth and its capacity to splendidly enjoy such advantages.”¹

— Mark Twain

So often, histories tell just the “sunny side” of life stories. In this article, Bill Miller tries to give a little more realistic portrayal of what life was like for children in the 1800s...

NO EXPERIENCE A CHILD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE WORLD AS AN ADULT IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE. We grown-ups tend to look at childhood through a prism where the good times shine brightly and the bad hide in shadow. So, when a son or daughter asks, “What was it like?” we tell them where we think we were and what we think we did. If we are lucky, someone saves one of our roughly scrawled letters, or presses a school composition between pages of a family book. But in the end, all we really know about childhood, any childhood, are the memories we carry with us.

A Pioneer Childhood

When trappers for the Hudson's Bay Company came through Southern Oregon early in the 19th century, it is likely that Native American children secretly watched from pine forests. They may have giggled at the long beards, or been frightened by the strange clothing and even stranger language. These children were living in a land where all of the children had played the same games and done the same chores for thousands of years. Within a few decades they would be gone, carried to distant reservations, where what little survived became bits and pieces of books and scientific studies.

For many pioneer families, their future generations' memories began with the Donation Land Act of 1850, which opened up a new world of opportunity and brought a wave of immigrants to the Northwest. The Act meant that every unmarried white male citizen eighteen or older could claim a half section, 320 acres, if he arrived in the territory before December 1, 1850. If he married before December 1, 1851, his wife could claim another 320 acres in her own name—an unusual recognition of women's contributions to new settlements. White settlers and their children started arriving in large numbers to take advantage of the free land.

The local Indian tribes may have found it curious that the new arrivals seemed to be in such a hurry to fence off the land, but they didn't seem that worried about it at first. The Natives had seen many white men passing through on their way to the gold fields of California and, although there had been a few minor scuffles, for the most part relations were peaceful.

"We met with very few Indians in the Rogue River country," remembered George Riddle, "and those we met were friendly." In September 1851, six months from Illinois and headed for the Cow Creek Valley, eleven-year-old George and his family of twelve camped on the Rogue River, across from today's town of Gold Hill. "We were visited by Indians that brought some splendid salmon for trade and we all had a feast."²

George's father had barely set up tents on his new land claim, when the camp was surrounded. "The Indians came from every direction. This caused no alarm," said George. "They were curious about everything – the children were objects of interest, many of them never having seen a white child."

Settlers and Natives managed to communicate with a made-up sign language. George's mother offered the tribe's chief a chair, "which he declined, and seated himself on a blanket on the ground." His name was Miwaleta. He stood six-feet tall and was nearly seventy years old. The old man's hand rested gently on the head of a boy, who sprawled on his stomach in front of the chief. About the same age as George, this boy was Miwaleta's grandson and these very different youngsters soon became inseparable friends.

In a few months, George said that he and the Indian boy "had learned the Chinook jargon...[he] learning a great many English words, while I learned the native Indian...On our hunts we would each give the English and the Indian name for every bird or animal that we saw." They adopted special names for themselves. George became "Jode" and he called his friend "Sam." "Sam was my constant companion and he soon learned to handle my rifle."³

The friends took turns acting as "chief," leading a band of six or seven Indian boys on hunts through trees and brush. They shared George's rifle, shooting at deer and the difficult-to-see grouse. "The boys were a great help," said George. "Their keen eyes would spy out the grouse. ... When shot, they would flutter down the steep mountain sides. But the boys would re-trieve the

game in short notice ... , which would be from ten to twenty birds for a full day's hunt. When we returned home, my mother would give the boys some bread and sometimes some of the game. Those were happy days for both white and red boys."⁴

George and the dozen Native boys in the nearby village spent every minute of spare time playing ball, swimming, hunting or fishing. The ballgame was played in the meadow with goal post stakes stuck in the ground at each end of the field. The game started when a wooden ball, about 1 1/2 inches in diameter, was thrown into the air. Players struck at it with flattened sticks, crooked at one end like a hockey stick. "Oh boy!" George said. "But there was action for you. ... [they were] stripped to the breech cloth and scattered over the field to intercept the ball and drive it through their

“They were curious about everything – the children were objects of interest, many of them never having seen a white child.”

opponent's goal. At times, the interference would be terrific and skins would glisten with perspiration."

But there is usually more to childhood than fun and games, and in the spring of 1853, Sam caught a fever. George got permission from the tribe and his mother to bring Sam home and take care of him. For three months he encouraged his friend, praying that he would recover. "During Sam's sickness I was nurse," George said, "and when he died I was chief mourner; also undertaker, and sexton. I buried him under some young pines on the banks of Cow Creek. ... Pardon me for giving this sketch of Sam, but his death was my greatest boyhood grief."⁵

More and more miners and settlers moved in, threatening this relative harmony between cultures. Battles were fought and a treaty finally signed, leaving both sides increasingly wary of each other. A shaky peace held for another two years before final battles began. As in most cultural clashes, the innocent of both sides suffer

most, and the most innocent of all are the children.⁶

An early morning settler attack on a small band of Indians encamped on the Rogue River near the mouth of Little Butte Creek in October 1855, killed between thirty and eighty people, mostly women and children. There never was a definitive count because the countryside erupted in war. In retribution, tribesmen followed the Rogue River north, burning cabins and killing settlers as they went. At the Harris cabin, not many miles south of George Riddle's home, Mrs. Harris and daughter Sophia held off an attack for nearly a day, while Mr. Harris lay dead in the corner. Their eight-year-old son David, who had been sent on an errand, was never seen again. There is no doubt that Native children experienced the same sort of terror, but their stories have disappeared, taken with nearly all of the local Native people to the Oregon Indian Agency Reservation on the Grande Ronde River.⁷

In their isolated surroundings, settler children faced a strict daily routine. With fields to plow, crops to harvest, meals to prepare and cows to milk, everyone, young and old, pitched in. The children had time to play, but only after they finished their chores. George Riddle had special memories of gathering wood. "My duties were to chop wood for two fireplaces and a cook stove," he said. "The manner of getting wood was to fell oak trees, trim up the limbs, and drag them with oxen to a convenient distance from the house, where the wood was chopped. I also had to carry water about 150 yards for the household."⁸

"I do not remember that we ever went hungry," George said. Their fields were "full of wheat, hominy corn and bushels and bushels of potatoes." Their principal meal was a wheat mush, swirling in fresh warm milk. "Good? Of course it was good!" he said. "We had venison, fish and wild fowl in abundance too." George lightheartedly remembered that because berries grew everywhere, white horses and cows "changed to a strawberry color, just from rolling over the ripe fruit."

Of all of his childhood clothing, George could only remember his buckskin suits – deerskins "dressed and smoked to the fashionable tint." Every year he and his brothers had a new suit of coat and pants, each trimmed with fringe, two inches long at the seams. But when they got wet and the boys tried to dry themselves by the fire, the skins would dry hard, irritating their knees and other sensitive body parts.⁹

"Schoolin'" Comes to Oregon

Southern Oregon began to "civilize" overnight. A steady stream of immigrant families washed the grimy, foul-mouthed miners away. Canvas tents and ramshackle shanties gave way to wood framed houses, brick storefronts and schools. The number of schools claiming to be the first in Southern Oregon rival the early 20th century arguments over who were the first white children born in the area. But officially, the first school district in Jackson County—Jacksonville District #1—was created on July 19, 1854.¹⁰

The curriculum could be daunting for students. As the school district formed, one of the nation's favorite series of textbooks, *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*, became the official school reader. Considered a most important influence in 19th century elementary education, *McGuffey's* prepared the student with "a careful attention to progression, by which the learner is led forward, step by step, along an easy graduation; a pure moral and religious sentiment, inculcated in interesting and instructive lessons." Students received instruction in the "Principles of Elocution," which included oral reading exercises, lessons in articulation, proper inflection, gestures, the control of voice and rhetorical notation. Included in the exercises were masterful writers and thinkers, such as Shakespeare, British Prime Ministers Disraeli and Walpole, and Americans Edgar Allen Poe and Patrick Henry.¹¹

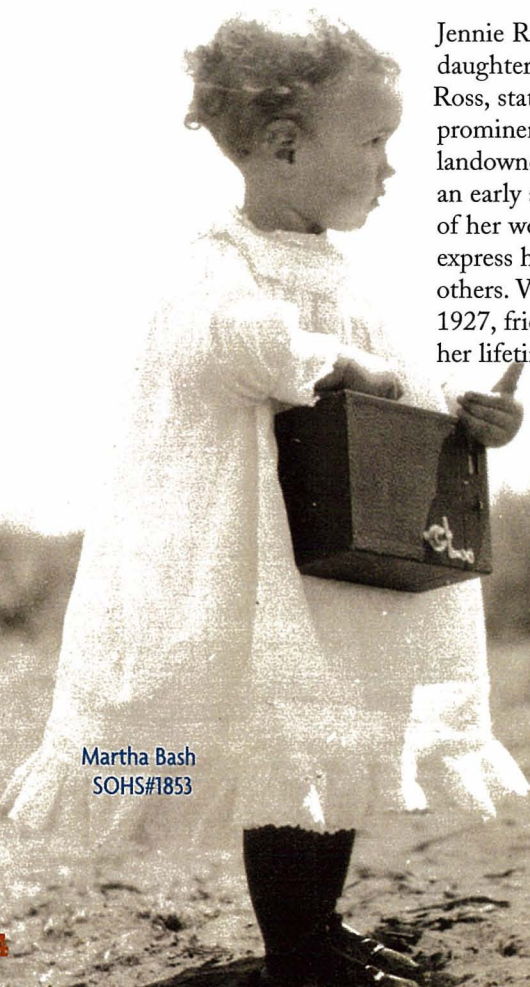
The influence of this kind of lesson shows in a remarkable composition completed as a class assignment in 1863 by eight-year-old Jennie Ross:

The harvest days have come and the people are cutting their grain, but some people have none to cut, for they have none to make their bread. They go from house to house begging for something to eat, and beg for money for their children and they may be suffering on beds of sickness and suffering for bread. I would hate to be in their places. I have a father and mother.



Jennie Ross
SOHS#19112

Jennie Ross was a privileged daughter of Colonel John Ross, state legislator and prominent Jackson County landowner. Yet even at such an early age, she was aware of her world and able to express her compassion for others. When she died in 1927, friends remembered her lifetime devotion to the poor and needy.¹²



Martha Bash
SOHS#1853

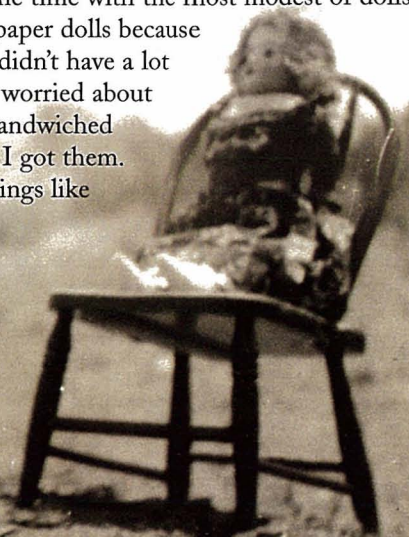
For the well-to-do there were many school options. Peter Britt's children attended private schools. His son Emil studied at both "Baron" De Bussche's Select School and William Kreutzer's German Private School. These classes gave special emphasis to the German language and culture. Daughter Mollie Britt boarded at St. Mary's Academy for Young Ladies in Jacksonville, a strict Roman Catholic institution that emphasized domestic arts, music, elocution and rhetoric. Though Mollie's friends left for a Portland finishing school, Peter Britt refused to enroll her. "These fashionable female seminaries," he said, "educate girls to a sphere of life which they, very likely, will never occupy, and not increase their future happiness, and not teach them common sense and practical knowledge."¹³

In Sickness and in Health

Children drawn together in classrooms were exposed to more than just difficult lessons. Closer contact meant the spread of germs and disease, which could erupt in epidemic. Colds, measles and mumps periodically made the rounds, but the disease most feared was smallpox. Before the late 19th century, the available smallpox vaccine was unreliable and rarely found in small towns. One of Jacksonville's worst outbreaks of the disease came in early 1869. Yellow flags, marking infected homes, lined the streets on every side. Business was suspended, schools closed. *The Oregon Sentinel* newspaper brought readers to the deathbed of three-year-old Maggie Love. "The seal of the destroyer was on the little sufferer, when she brightened up and commenced talking with her mother. No one was in the room but the two nurses, but the child insisted that her mother was standing at the foot of the bed and had come for her." Maggie was buried in Jacksonville Cemetery beside her mother, Sophia Love, who had died of smallpox two weeks earlier. When she was just eleven-years-old, this same Sophia had survived the 1855 Indian attacks on the Harris cabin.¹⁴

But life wasn't always hard times and youngsters did get the chance to play. Appropriate play in pioneer days was clearly defined: domestic toys for the girls and an outdoor world for the boys. Young brothers had lassos, wagons, marbles and real guns, while their sisters played with scraps of cloth, thimbles, needles, tiny dishes and dolls. Wealthy or poor, the girls really loved their dolls. Frontier girls might have just one, made of old rags, wood or plant leaves tied together, with hand-painted faces and hand-stitched dresses. Other more fortunate girls, like Jacksonville's Regina Dorland Robinson, owned an entire collection of manufactured dolls, many with porcelain faces and elaborate wardrobes.¹⁵

As a girl making the long cross-country trip to Jacksonville, Oregon, Myrtle Pitz passed the time with the most modest of dolls. "I was great on playing with paper dolls because in those days, you know, you didn't have a lot of toys," she said. "And I was worried about my paper dolls. And Mama sandwiched them in among books and so I got them. But my doll bed and a few things like that, I had to leave."¹⁶



The Circus Comes to Town

It could seem like a humdrum world to young people in those days, but Circus Day certainly changed all of that. Elephants, camels and clowns parading down main streets brought squeals of delight. Under the Big Top, muscular ladies and gentlemen in tights walked a wire, swung from a trapeze or stood on the backs of horses. Along the Midway, it seemed every show had the world's strongest man, a bearded lady and a collection of "freaks." Peter Britt's children remembered running to meet the incoming vans, sometimes sneaking a free show under the tent, and when they were lucky, watering the elephants. The New Great Syndicate Shows and Paris Hippodrome, "the Mighty Monarch of All!"

brought Ashland youngsters the "\$10,000 School of Educated Sea Lions." What the sea lions had learned seems never to have been reported.¹⁷

After the railroad arrived in 1884, some of the finest shows in the nation brought their tents to Southern Oregon. Ringling Brothers, Sells-Floto and Barnum and Bailey were yearly visitors. The circus could be educational, as in 1899, when the Walter L. Main Circus paraded the first automobile ever seen in Medford. For Myrtle Pitz it brought a new taste discovery. "I never had seen an ice cream cone before, so I ate the ice cream out and throwed [sic] the cone away," she said. "I thought it was just paper."¹⁸



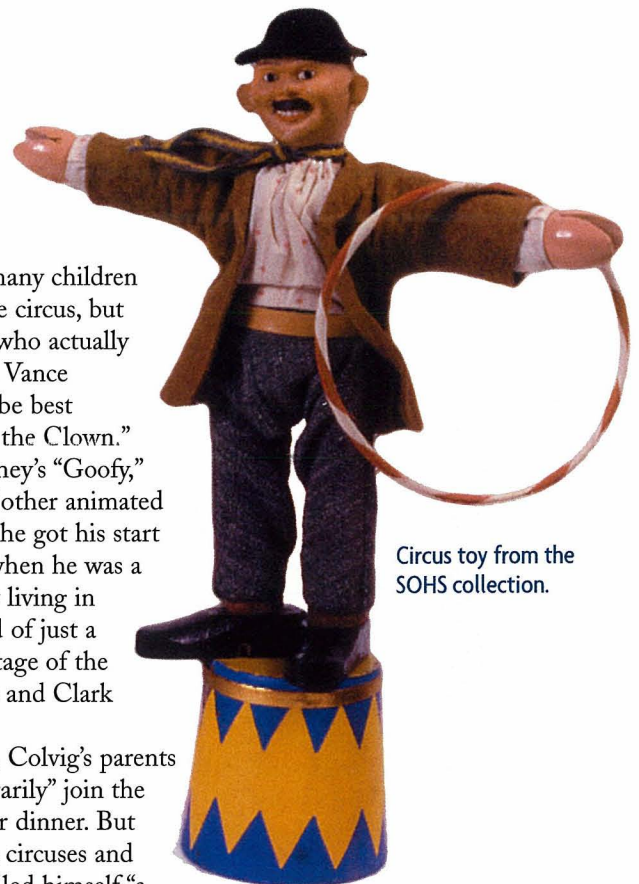
Circus elephant amuses crowd in downtown Medford, circa 1940. SOHS #9136



Vance "Pinto" Colvig, age 12, riding a cow in Jacksonville, 1904. SOHS#1791

There is no way to know how many children dreamed of running away with the circus, but luckily we know of one local boy who actually did, or at least always said he did. Vance "Pinto" Colvig would grow up to be best known as the originator of "Bozo the Clown." He also was the voice of Walt Disney's "Goofy," "Pluto," "Grumpy" and dozens of other animated characters. He told everyone that he got his start by running away with a carnival when he was a freckle-faced, twelve-year-old boy living in Jacksonville. In fact, this consisted of just a few appearances on the midway stage of the "Crazy House" at the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland.

When carnivals came to town, Colvig's parents would sometimes let him "temporarily" join the show, as long as he came home for dinner. But Pinto said he could "never get the circuses and carnivals out of my blood." He called himself "a goofy-looking kid" and figured that if people were going to laugh at him, "they might as well pay for it." As a young man he toured two seasons with the A. G. Barnes Circus.¹⁹



Circus toy from the SOHS collection.

Straying From the Path

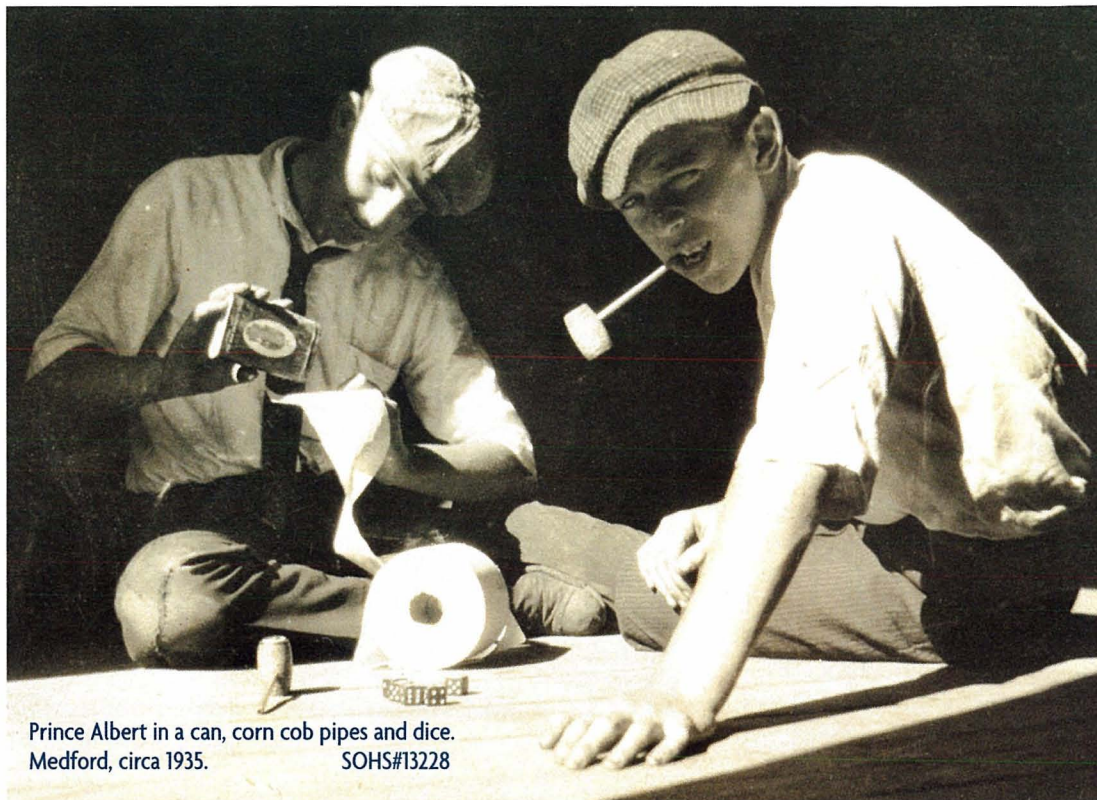
Unfortunately, not all the area's young boys were as focused and determined to succeed as Pinto. Many strayed and wound up "ringing the hoodlum bell"—a popular euphemism for juvenile delinquency used in the early 20th century. The troublemaking ran from simple pranks—like the cow that would mysteriously appear in the bell tower of a local school on Halloween nights—to occasional violence.²⁰ In 1885, a band of rowdy students actually ran the teachers out of class and threw the principal out of a first floor window. A schoolyard fight in 1898 sent eleven-year-old Jesse Wilson running home for his mother's pistol. Returning to school, he fired two shots that fortunately missed another boy. He was subsequently sentenced to an "indefinite" stay in reform school.

Parents worried about their sons chewing tobacco or smoking pipes and cigarettes—and for good reason. Tobacco manufactures used pictures of naked ladies on the packages to attract young eyes and local merchants could—and would—sell tobacco to anyone, regardless of age.

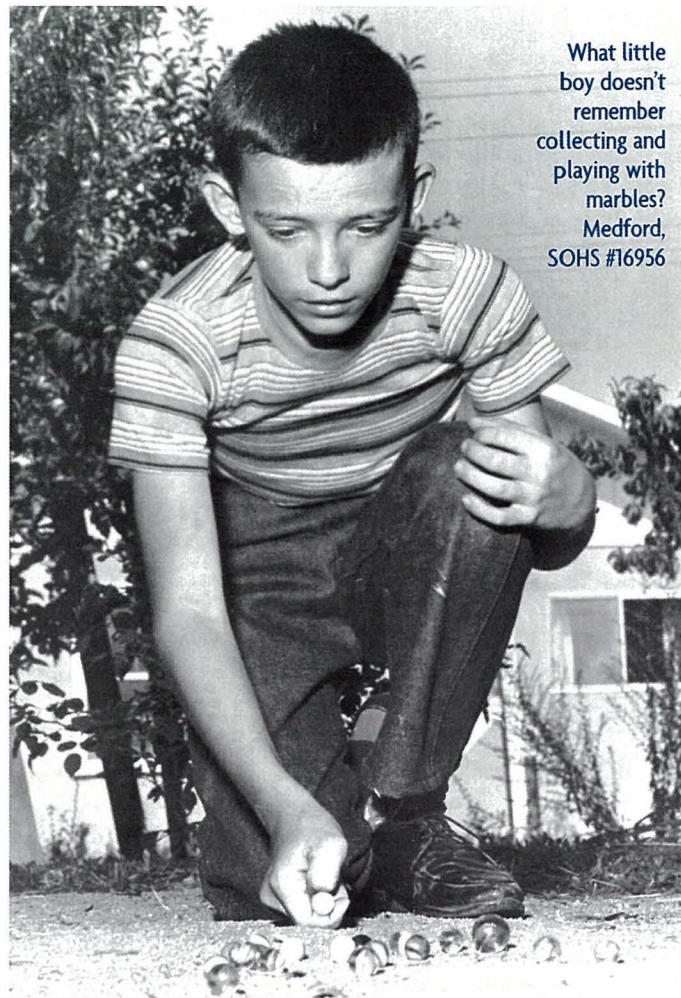
In a 1902 editorial in the *Medford Southern Oregonian*, music was suggested as a possible antidote to juvenile delinquency. "We think that very few of the parents realize the pleasure that boys derive from musical rehearsals of the band and orchestra," the editorial stated. "It seems a much better way of spending their time than loafing the street until the 'hoodlum' bell rings, and then shinning down the alley to a dry goods box to idle the rest of the day. ... Music is fun, and it's fun that lasts, leaving no sting behind."²¹

Some family issues were considered too private for extensive coverage in newspapers, leaving the false impression that they never existed. For example, we know that teenager Olive Murray of East Medford died in childbirth, not from a severe cold as reported. A handsome stranger from Portland had seduced the young girl, then quickly left town. She and her baby were buried together in the Eastwood Cemetery in Medford, while her parents hid their shame by claiming the baby as their own.²²

Divorce was another issue not often written about or commented on in public, yet couples divorced in greater numbers than is generally thought. Early in 1910, Jackson County recorded sixty percent more divorce applications than marriage license requests. Youngsters frequently found themselves living with mothers who had no means of support.²³



Prince Albert in a can, corn cob pipes and dice.
Medford, circa 1935. SOHS#13228



What little boy doesn't remember collecting and playing with marbles?
Medford, SOHS #16956

Over a century ago, children growing up in Southern Oregon played games, worried about their lessons, pulled pranks and did things their parents told them they shouldn't. Today, children still play games, although many are of the electronic kind, and their parents still worry about them taking up bad habits like smoking cigarettes. Many still find their school classes daunting and their parents' rules difficult to accept. And teenage sexuality still confounds and creates problems for parents and society. Proof, perhaps, that regardless of what our memories suggest, the more things change, the more they stay the same. 🏠

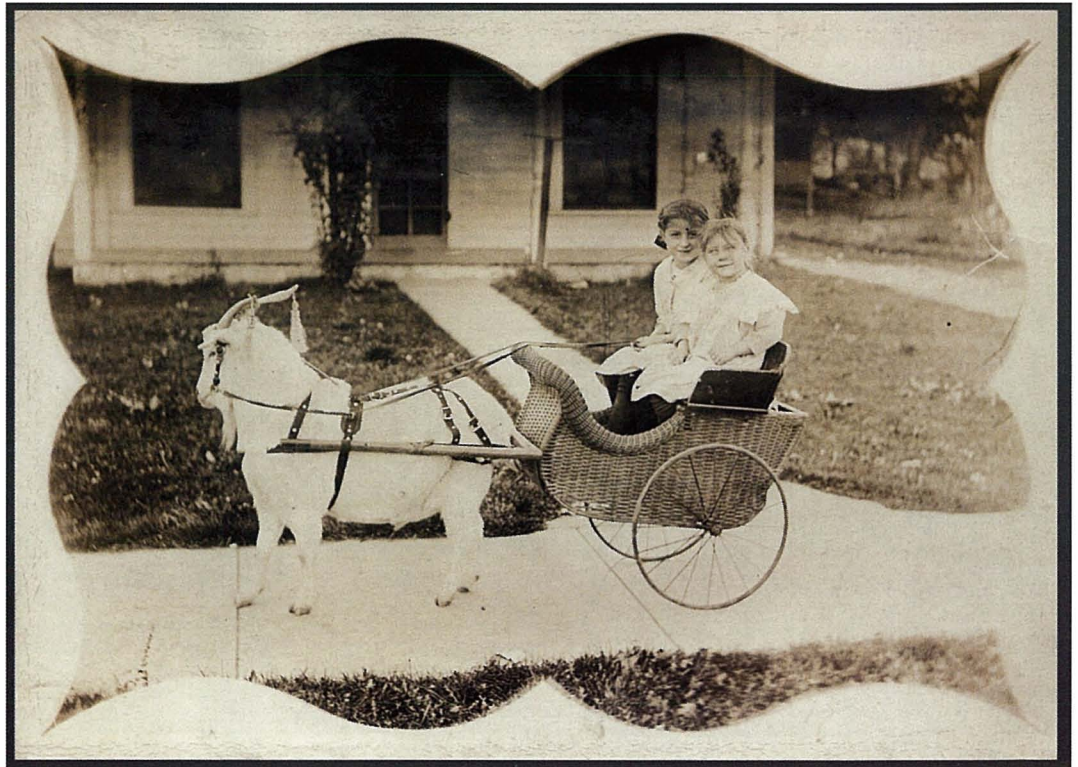


Peter Britt's children, Mollie and Emil, led a privileged life in Jacksonville. SOHS#768

1. Albert Bigelow Paine, "Letter to Edward L. Dimmett, July 19, 1901," in *Mark Twain's Letters*, arranged with comment, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Bros., 1917), p. 709.
2. George W. Riddle, *History of Early Days in Oregon* (Riddle, OR: reprinted from the *Riddle Enterprise*, 1920), p. 27.
3. Riddle, p. 33-34, 56.
4. Riddle, p. 41.
5. Riddle, p. 55-56.
6. "The Murder of the Indian Boy," *Asbland Tidings*, 25 October 1878.
7. Houston T. Robison, "The Rogue River Indians and Their Relations with the Whites" (master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1943), pp. 138-141; A. G. Walling, ed., *History of Southern Oregon* (Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884), p. 246.
8. Riddle, p. 58.
9. Riddle, p. 40.
10. Margaret Nesheim, *One Hundred Twenty-Three Years' Search for Community: The Unwearied Effort for Public Education in Jackson County ...* (Medford, OR: Gandee Printing, 1977), pp. 17-18.
11. Neishheim, p. 34; McGuffey, William H., ed., *McGuffey's New Sixth Eclectic Reader*, (Cincinnati, OH: Sargent, Wilson & Hinkle, 1867) pp. 6-9.
12. SOHS VF "Ross," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 15 October 1927.
13. Alan Clark Miller, "Peter Britt: Pioneer Photographer of the Siskiyou" (master's thesis, Trinity College, 1972), pp. 33, 36.
14. Christopher S. W. Koehler, Ph.D., "Science, 'society', and immunity," *Modern Drug Discovery Magazine*, October 2001, pp. 59-60; various undated clippings found in SOHS VF "Smallpox."
15. Linda Peavy & Ursula Smith, *Frontier Children* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), p. 91-92.
16. SOHS Oral History #86, pp. 5-6
17. Miller, p. 34; *Asbland Tidings*, 4 July 1895.
18. *Medford Mail*, 15 September 1899; SOHS Oral History #86, p. 6
19. Rhinelander (Wisconsin) Daily News, 22 July 1958; *A Brief History of Vance DeBar Colvig* (1892-1967), Southern Oregon Historical Society pamphlet, 1980.
20. *Jacksonville Democratic Times*, 10 February 1888; 21 March 1889; *Asbland Tidings*, 19 September 1898; *Medford Mail Tribune*, 17 June 1931.
21. *Medford Southern Oregonian*, 17 May 1902, special school edition.
22. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 25 January 1901; Olive Murray - A Promising Life Lost, *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*, June 2001, p. 5.
23. *Medford Mail Tribune*, 27 February 1910.

Local girls
find their own
brand of fun
at 137 Ivy Street
in Medford.
SOHS #19113

This pioneer doll
from the SOHS
collection
must have
brought
joy and
comfort to a
pioneer
child over
100 years
ago.





Community Involvement: Building Bridges

by Warren Merz

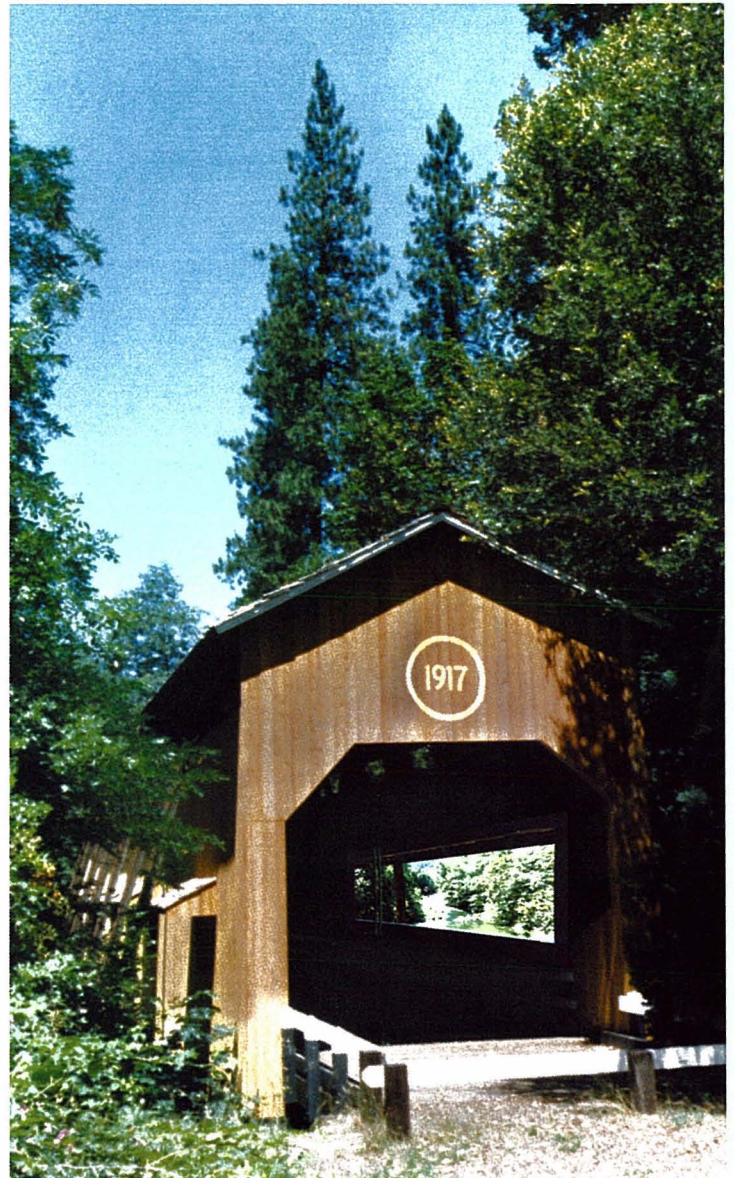
Christmas 2004 is past, but there is a Christmas story still worth telling. The Jacksonville, Oregon, Victorian Christmas parade held on December 3 was not only a grand success, but witnessed the collaboration of two community organizations that came together to celebrate this special season.

The Upper Applegate Grange and the McKee Bridge Historical Society jointly presented a parade float featuring a scaled-down replica of the McKee Bridge (see photo). Grange members, some of whom have had Grange memberships for more than 65 years, joined Grange-sponsored Brownie scouts in helping escort the float, which was one of 34 entries in the parade.

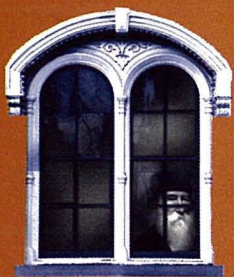
The McKee Bridge spans the Applegate River at approximately the nine-mile marker of Upper Applegate Road. Originally built in 1917, the bridge was refurbished in 1965 and today is one of the last working covered bridges in the West.

The Upper Applegate Grange and McKee Bridge Historical Society will once again collaborate on May 26 when they present an auction at the Grange, with proceeds going towards completing needed bridge repairs. On June 11, they will work together on a McKee Bridge Day picnic and parade. Both events are currently in the planning stages, and other Applegate community organizations will be encouraged to participate.

Several years ago, the Upper Applegate Grange adopted the precepts of the Action Grange, an organizational change developed by the National Grange, whereby a commitment is made to the development of families through dynamic programs and activities that educate, engage and enrich lives while enhancing rural communities.

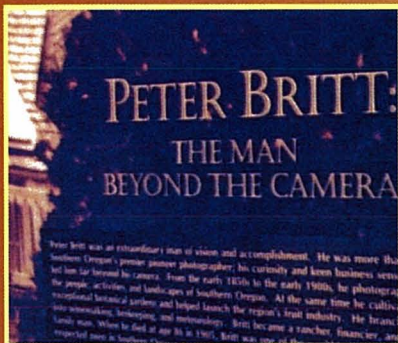


Warren Merz is President of the Upper Applegate Grange and a member of the Southern Oregon Historical Society Board of Trustees.



SOHS members and special guests enjoyed a reception on January 28th to celebrate the grand opening of the Peter Britt exhibit at the Jacksonville Museum.

Photos from Opening Night



For information on how you can become a member of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, please call Richard Seidman at (541)773-6536 x226, or email development@sohs.org.



members

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Francis and Mary Cheney, Ben B. Cheney
Foundation, *Tacoma, WA*
Patricia and Robert Heffernan, *Medford*
Jean W. Jester, *Sandy*
Marjorie O'Hara, *Ashland*
Donald E. and Jean Rowlett, *Ashland*
Mary Tooze, *Portland*

Lifetime

Kay and Al Alsing, *Ashland*
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H. Walter and Rosie Emori, *Jacksonville*
David & Gladys Fortmiller, *Talent*
Fred and Vyvyan Gardner, *Canyon City*
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John and Nancy Hamlin, *Medford*
Tom Hamlin, *Medford*
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Edward B. Jorgenson, *Medford*
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Eugene I. Majerowicz, *Los Angeles, CA*
Alice Mullaly, *Central Point*
Zoe Dell Nutter, *Xenia, OH*
Ram Offset Lithographers, *White City*
Marilyn L. Sibley, *Gold Hill*
Davis Young, *Medford*

New & Rejoining

DECEMBER 1, 2004 - FEBRUARY 28, 2005

DIRECTOR • \$500

Judson Parsons & Diana Gardener, *Salem*

DIRECTOR/PIONEER • \$500

Fitz & Ann Brewer, *Medford*
Dr. David & Libia Trask, *Medford*

BUSINESS • \$250

Good Bean Coffee Company, *Jacksonville*
Jacksonville Inn, *Jacksonville*
State Historic Preservation Office, *Salem*
Rogue Aggregates, Inc., *Central Point*

BUSINESS/PIONEER • \$250

Hakatai Enterprises, Inc., *Ashland*

CURATOR • \$200

Randy Boardman, *Ashland*
Bernie & Shirley Croucher, *Jacksonville*
Curator, W.A. & Ruby Graff, *Medford*
Curator, Steve & Sandy Hess, *Medford*
Curator, Charles & Betty Howe, *Ashland*
Curator, Betty Root, *Medford*
Curator, Stephen & Mary Ryder, *Medford*
Curator, Stanley Stark, *Medford*
Curator, Steven & Sharon Swartsley, *Medford*

CURATOR/PIONEER • \$200

Nancy Walker, *Keizer*

PATRON/PIONEER • \$100

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Jacksonville Booster Club, *Jacksonville*
Dr. Mario & Edie Campagna, *Medford*
Bill Dickey, *Portland*
Norma Garrison, *Medford*
Karen Gernant, *Talent*

Stan & Marlene Grout, *Medford*
Dr. Ron & Patricia Mayerle, *Medford*
Lola Milhoan, *Medford*
John & Pam Sanderson, *Henderson, NV*
Lynn & Doris Sjolund, *Medford*
Paul Taylor, *Sacramento, CA*
William & Angela Thorndike Jr., *Medford*
Mayor Gary Wheeler, *City of Medford, Medford*
Dr. Robert & Joanne Wilcox, *Central Point*
Charles Wiley, *Medford*
Colette & Allan Wright, *Medford*
Robert & Marcia Zellman, *Jacksonville*

PATRON/PIONEER • \$100

Victoria Enders & Curtis Hinsley, *Flagstaff AZ*
R.A. & Mrs. Herndobler, *Medford*
Helen Scott, *Grants Pass*
Donald & Patricia Wright, *Los Altos, CA*

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Frank Bash, *Austin, TX*
Charles & Ruth Beck, *Medford*
Dr. Thomas & Arlene Bolton, *Medford*
Willard Brown & Judith Ginsburg, *Ashland*
Carolyn & Mike Burrill, *Central Point*
Dot Clark, *Ashland*
Bill & Marion Collins, *Gold Hill*
Joan Collins, *Ashland*
Jon & Gini Deason, *Medford*
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Dr. Bonnar & Laurie Dysart, *Medford*
Robert & DeAnna Eastman, *Central Point*
Robert & Barbara Fsel, *Medford*
Jeanne Freel, *Shady Cove*
Duane & Jan Gleaves, *Medford*
Don & Ellen Goheen, *Jacksonville*
Ken & Jeannie Green, *Ashland*
Sarah & Warren Hagen, *Ashland*
Patt Herdklotz & Kim Yasutake, *Ashland*
Bob & Barbara Heyerman, *Ashland*
Ernest & Patricia Himmelman, *Prospect*
Joe & Starr Hungate, *Grants Pass*
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Jim & Dona Key, *Medford*
Kim & Bill Kezer, *Medford*
Yvonne Kitchen, *Talent*
Emily & Leroy Knight, *Medford*
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Bob Lindsay, *Ashland*
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Art & Pamela Lumley, *Gold Hill*
Susan & Frank Maesen, *Jacksonville*
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W.B. & Marie Myers, *Medford*
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Greg Walter & Mary Reynolds, *Cave Junction*
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Shiena & Culley Polehn, *Medford*
Irma & Ernest Potter, *Talent*
Dr. John & Betty Jo Reynolds, *Ashland*
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Phyllis Skinner & William Matthews, *Medford*
Billy & Ruth Slack, *Ashland*
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Sheila & Warren Straus, *Jacksonville*
Dale Throckmorton, *Hillsboro*
William & Patricia Walls, *Central Point*
Ron & JoAnne Weatherford, *Salem*
Donald & Catherine Wilkinson, *Medford*
Wayne & Earlene Wyatt, *Central Point*

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Diane Appleton, *Medford*
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Natalie Barker, *Medford*
Robert & Bonnie Beall, *Hillsboro*
John Biewener, *Beaverton*
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Carroll Hauptert, *Medford*
Darlene Heckenlaible, *Medford*
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Carole Krause, *Medford*
Robert & Erma Kyle, *Medford*
Peter & Natalie Lastiwka, *Medford*
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Joanne Loutocky, *Medford*
Doris Lundahl, *Ashland*
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Myrna Wagler, *Central Point*
Janet Walker, *Selma*
Jeff Walston, *Central Point*
Matthew Warren, *Jacksonville*
Jennifer Williams, *San Rafael, CA*
Roger Wolf, *Englewood, CO*
Fye Wyatt, *Roseburg*
Mary Zvonek, *Jacksonville*

Member Profile



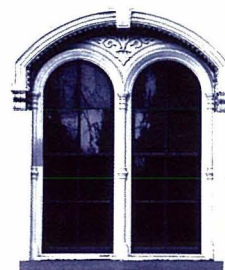
Wanting to learn more about her Jacksonville relatives, Jeanena contacted the SOHS Research Library. With the staff's help, she was able to track down census records, land grant maps, photographs and other information about her ancestors. The most exciting discovery was the journal notes written by the traveling minister the day he married her great grandfather, John Seyferth, and great grandmother, Sarah Collins, at her home near Table Rock.

The help she received from SOHS inspired Jeanena to become a member of the Society. She said, "SOHS linked my history to three more generations of ancestors. I'm proud to be an Oregonian and a member of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. I encourage others to stop by to learn about the rich history of this region and help support the Society. The staff and volunteers are extremely helpful and share in your joys of discovery."

What inspires you to support SOHS? Please let us know your story by calling Richard at (541)773-6536 or e-mailing: development@sohs.org.

In 1957, with her fourth grade class from Kerby Elementary School, Jeanena White Wilson made her first trip to Jacksonville. At the time, she didn't realize her own ancestors had been Jacksonville pioneers. Soon after this memorable field trip, her family moved to California.

Two years ago, bringing a friend to meet the family, she stopped in Jacksonville once again. She and her friend were both excited to find a small community that honors history, yet remains open-minded. Within months they purchased a home, married and moved to town.



Membership Benefits

Memberships last one year.

ALL MEMBERS RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- ❖ Free admission to SOHS museums and sites.
- ❖ Subscription to *Southern Oregon Heritage Today* quarterly magazine.
- ❖ Subscription to *Monthly Calendar* and historic photograph suitable for framing.
- ❖ 10% discount at the History Store in Jacksonville.
- ❖ Free admission card to 22 Pacific Northwest children's museums.
- ❖ Reciprocal benefits through "Time Travelers," a network of more than 150 historical societies and museums around the country.
- ❖ Discounts on workshops, programs and special events.
- ❖ Invitations to exhibit previews and members-only events.
- ❖ Ability to vote for Board of Trustees.
- ❖ The satisfaction of supporting *your* historical society.

Membership Categories:

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FAMILY • \$50

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HISTORIAN'S CIRCLE • \$1,000

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LIFETIME • \$2,500

Includes all of the above benefits.

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Includes subscriptions, recognition in Annual Report and *Southern Oregon Heritage Today* and 10% discount for all employees on memberships, admissions and History Store purchases.

Continued from page 20.

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Continued on page 23.

Continued from page 20.

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Leave a legacy of history by becoming a member of the Heritage Circle. You join the Circle when you state your intention to leave a bequest to the Southern Oregon Historical Society Foundation. To include the SOHS Foundation in your will, consult your attorney or financial advisor. The description of our organization is: "The Southern Oregon Historical Society Foundation, an Oregon non-profit, tax-exempt corporation located in Jackson County, Oregon."

For more information on the Heritage Circle, please call Executive Director John Enders or Development Coordinator Richard Seidman at 541-773-6536.



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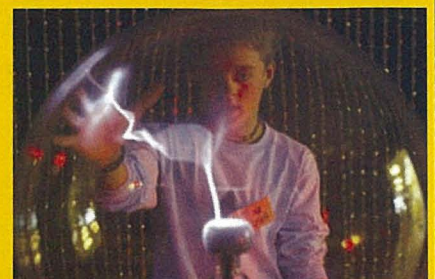
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A fourth grader from this year's Children's Heritage Fair
at the Jacksonville Cemetery.

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