

SPRING 2007



# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

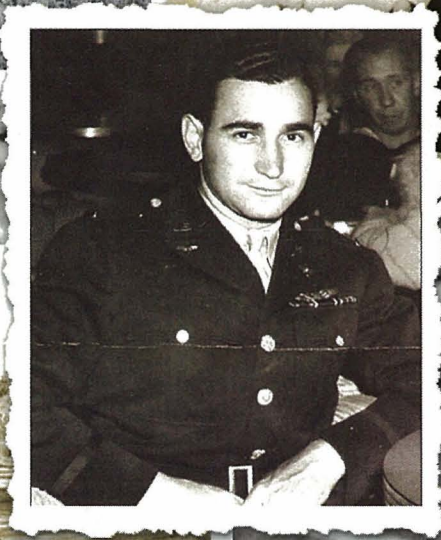
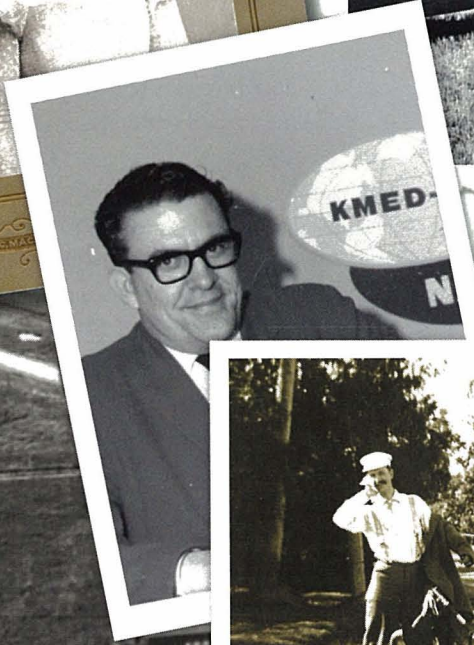
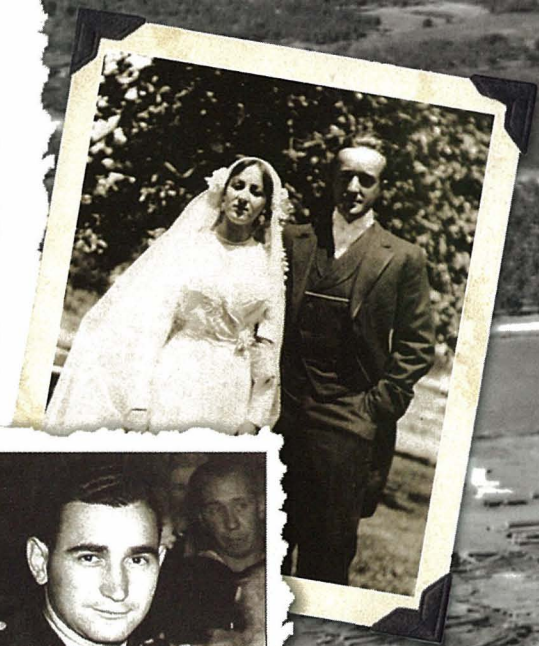
VOL. 9, NO. 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Today*

## WORD *of* MOUTH

*Preserving the Past  
through Oral Histories*





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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members and Friends:

It's an exciting and challenging time. As I said in this space in the Winter issue of *Southern Oregon Heritage Today*, there are many changes underway in Jackson County and at the Southern Oregon Historical Society. This year and next year



will be a defining and important time in the history of the Society. For years now we have been adapting to ever-reducing budgets, and this year's decision by the county budget committee to terminate all funding for historical societies has brought that slow and very painful process to an end.

As of July 1, the Society will not receive any public funding. We have been preparing for that day for several years, fortunately, and we believe we will be able to continue our operations at the two museums in Jacksonville, the Research Library in Medford and at Hanley Farm with the funds that we raise via memberships, donations, grants, sales and rentals. However, our budget is being reduced by about half, and I have had to announce staff cutbacks and salary reductions, and we are forced to reduce our hours of operation at all facilities and cut way back on our publications and our programs.

We have publicly announced our plan to establish a countywide Heritage District and to fund that new district via a small and focused tax levy that will support SOHS, the smaller historical museums and associations in the county, as well as create a new historical preservation and restoration fund to help with at-risk historic structures in the county. We hope you will become involved with us in this Heritage District campaign, which will go before Jackson County voters in the general election in November 2008.

We have received the support or endorsement for our Heritage District strategy from a wide array of individuals and groups, including the Oregon Heritage Commission, the Oregon Historical Society, the members of the board of the Oregon Museums Association, the cities of Jacksonville and Medford (Historic Commission), and the *Medford Mail Tribune* editorial board. We look forward to conducting our campaign in coalition with the smaller member groups of the Jackson County History Museums Association, and to carrying out a successful grassroots campaign over the coming year and a half.

Because of our recent budget cutbacks and the need to economize as much as possible during the coming two years, we are changing the format of *Southern Oregon Heritage Today* to that of a newsletter. It will come to you in hardcopy form and also be available online on our website ([www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org)). This represents a huge cost savings to us at this critical time, and we hope that with passage of the Heritage District levy we will be able to return to publishing our award-winning four-color heritage magazine. We do understand how important it is to our many members, and ask that you be patient as we reestablish the financial stability of the Society and return *SOHT* to you, its loyal readers.

John Enders  
Executive Director



# HERITAGE

*Today*



Leo Zupan (bottom row, third from left) and crew, WWII. See Leo's oral history on page 9. Photo courtesy of Leo Zupan.

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### ON THE COVER:

(clockwise from top): The Mayfly lands in Klamath Falls, Conro and Grace Fiero's wedding day, Leo Zupan during WWII, Frank Clark on a bicycle ride, Hank Henry, and Effie Birdseye.





## Children's Heritage Fair

ONCE AGAIN, THE CHILDREN'S HERITAGE FAIR turned out to be a great success with more than 2,000 fourth graders visiting Jacksonville during the month of March. From learning to dance the Virginia Reel with live music by the Old Time Fiddlers to learning American Indian life ways from Tom Smith in the new Native American exhibit space, CHF proved to be an invaluable experience for students and teachers alike. Thanks to all our hard-working SOHS volunteers and staff for making it possible.

## History Lunch

ON THURSDAY, MARCH 15, more than 200 people gathered at the Red Lion Hotel in Medford for the SOHS First Annual History Lunch. Guest speakers at the one-hour fundraising event included Oregon's Poet Laureate Lawson Inada, former SOHS volunteer Jessica James, SOHS Executive Director John Enders, and SOHS Board of Trustees President Bruce Budmayr. Kathie Olsen, member of the SOHS Board of Trustees, served as emcee.



History Lunch guests pledged more than \$200,000 to the SOHS over the next five years, ensuring that this will become a regular event for years to come.

## History Tours

FOLLOWING OUR SUCCESSFUL HISTORY LUNCH last month, people have been asking about upcoming "History Tours" of SOHS facilities. We are happy to announce that we will now conduct free tours on the last Friday of each month, from 10 to 11 am. You can choose among the SOHS Research Library, Hanley Farm, and the SOHS buildings in Jacksonville. Please come yourself and invite your friends who would like to learn more about the Society and our many activities and facilities. Call 773-6536, ext. 226, to reserve your spot.

## Technical Assistance Grant

SOHS HAS RECEIVED A \$25,000 GRANT from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for its Regional Heritage Technical Assistance Statewide Project. SOHS was selected to create and operate technical assistance projects throughout Southern Oregon. The primary purpose of these projects is to provide pro-active consultation to historical societies, museums, landmark commissions, and other cultural and preservation organizations. Tina Reuwsaat, the SOHS Assistant Curator/Registrar, will serve as the manager of the grant and will conduct workshops and provide assistance locally and at facilities around the region.





# Exhibits

## WEAVING OUR WAY, THEN AND NOW



Above: Tom Smith, SOHS Cultural Interpreter, demonstrates fire-making techniques to a visiting group of 4th grade students during this year's Children's Heritage Fair.

Right: A sampling of artifacts on display in the new exhibit: (top) gloves, (middle) small beaded bags and purses, (bottom) cornhusk bag.

### American Indians in Southern Oregon

Suzanne M.M. Warner,  
Curator of Collections

A NEW EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTING ARTIFACTS from the American Indian collections at the Southern Oregon Historical Society is on display at the Jacksonville Museum. The exhibit explores the region's indigenous peoples and their handwork, and also encompasses tribal artifacts from other areas in North America.

Located in one room on the first floor of the museum, "Weaving Our Way Then and Now" begins with a Veteran's Wall that explains the importance of a warrior culture.

It includes a collage of photographs of local Honor Guards and caps from each branch of the United States Armed Services along with several stories, both historical and contemporary.

There is also a display of warrior implements and accessories from the collection including war clubs, bows, arrows, blades, arrowheads, and other handmade items.

Examples of small containers and bags used for holding fire-making tools, food ration tickets, paint, mirrors, and other possessions and tools are also on display along with small, exquisitely woven baskets from several geographic areas. These artifacts come from many places and times and are fine examples of the artistic accomplishments of the groups they represent.

The exhibit has some fine examples of larger basketry and rugs that come from our surrounding areas, the Southwest, and the Northwest Coast. Beaded items in the living display area include baby carriers, moccasins, parfleche bags, pipebags, pottery, and storage containers. There are also items that have been made specifically for trade. Displayed on the walls above this exhibit are magnificent Navajo rugs and large baskets.

There are two large windows in the room and a canvas covering has been fashioned to suggest a tipi opening, and to the left of that is a depiction of a plankhouse. Plankhouses were a common form of shelter in Southern Oregon and Northern California. This area of the exhibit provides a comfortable, intimate space in which Tom Smith, SOHS Cultural Interpreter, can present programs to museum visitors and school groups about American Indian life ways and customs.

If you haven't yet seen "Weaving Our Way Then and Now," we invite you to come by and experience it soon.







THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL Society's Hanley Farm has been a favorite of SOHS members for its programs, history, and its serene beauty for over twenty years. To help the farm continue serving SOHS members and the public, it is now returning to agricultural production, with a number of products and events that will put Hanley Farm on the road to being self-supporting. We hope SOHS members will take the lead in making these ventures successful.

## Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, May 5, 10am-3pm. We will be offering a wide variety of heirloom vegetables and flowers for sale including favorite old heirloom tomatoes such as Brandywine and Purple Cherokee, and contemporary varieties like Medford, Early Girl, and Sungold Cherry. We will also have a wide variety of peppers, greens, squash, and melons available in our unique soil blocks, which eliminate plastic containers. We will also be offering garden tours, during the height of our spring bloom and free wagon rides. Come make a day of it!

## Market Garden and Fall Pumpkin Patch

The front field along Hanley Road has been plowed and diske by members of the Southern Oregon Draft and Harness Association (SODHA) in preparation for planting a wide variety of vegetables and pumpkins. We will have a roadside stand on-site this summer and a pumpkin patch in the fall, and have applied to be included in the Rogue Valley Farmer's Markets in Medford and Ashland. Days of operation are not yet determined, but we'll let you know our schedule in future bulletins so you can

plan to come out and purchase farm-fresh, pesticide- and chemical-free vegetables from one of the oldest farms in the county.

## Pasture-fed Chickens and Turkeys

We will be using small mobile coops to move flocks of chickens (Cornish Rocks and Red Rangers) and turkeys (Bronze variety) across our pastures. Doing so has a positive affect on the health, cleanliness, and well-being of these birds, as they live in the fresh air and sun, eating grass, bugs, and weed

seeds. This also greatly improves the fertility of the soil and the birds receive exercise and produce superior tasting meat. Unlike so-called "free-range" birds, which are raised in confinement housing and are offered "access to pasture" (meaning a dirt strip for a short period of time each day), our birds will be on fresh pasture full-time and will not need the extensive antibiotics that conventionally grown birds must take just to stay alive.

In order to succeed, we need to have those interested order their birds in advance, so that we know how many chicks to order from the hatchery. Turkeys will be available for pick-up before Thanksgiving and Christmas, and chickens will be available at our First Saturday events held the first Saturday of each month, June through

September. A deposit of \$30 is required on turkeys.

Please help Hanley Farm become self-supporting by buying your fresh vegetables and poultry, spring vegetable starts, and your holiday turkey from Historic Hanley Farm today. For more information, or to order your chickens/turkeys, leave a message at 541-773-2675 or e-mail us at [hanleyfarm@clearwire.net](mailto:hanleyfarm@clearwire.net). Thank you for your support!



Photo by Kyle Riggs

*"The front field along Hanley Road has been plowed and disked by members of the Southern Oregon Draft and Harness Association (SODHA) in preparation for planting a wide variety of vegetables and pumpkins. We will have a roadside stand on-site this summer and a pumpkin patch in the fall, and have applied to be included in the Rogue Valley Farmer's Markets in Medford and Ashland."*



## THE MAGNIFICENT STUTZ

AMONG THE AMAZING collection of artifacts entrusted to the Southern Oregon Historical Society is a magnificent Stutz 1200 Triple Combination Model 0 fire engine, originally purchased new in 1925 by the city of Medford for approximately \$8,500 and donated to SOHS in the early 1960s. Today, while the body has been restored to near-original condition, the engine is in need of some mechanical repairs before it can once again return to the streets of Medford. Of course, its fire-fighting days are over, but it will make a wonderful addition to any local parade or special event.

In 1979, Daryl Brown gave a recorded talk to the SOHS Board of Trustees about the Stutz fire engine (SOHS OH #117).

### *What can you tell us about the Stutz fire engine?*

"Harry Stutz started building automobiles in 1922. He started a company called the Stutz Motor Car Company. And for a couple of years he made very elite automobiles [with] morocco leather and hardwoods for the very expensive young gentlemen of the times....



The Stutz engine is of a very special design because Harry Stutz invented everything himself. He felt there were new and better ways to do things than the way they were being done in his day.... When it was pumping and in operation—and a lot of these fires, like the Medford Furniture fire pumped for 48 hours straight, non-stop—they had to remove these plates and the engineer had to hand-oil the valve train. And, when it went on a long trip, being driven

for a day, they would hand oil the valve trains and then that oiling would be good for several hours before they would have to re-oil.... It is a big engine in terms of fire trucks that they had in those days. It will pump 1,200 gallons a minute."

*Above: The Medford Fire Department showing off its brand new Stutz fire engine, May 1925. SOHS Photo #3444.*

*Below: The Stutz fire engine today.*





# WORD OF MOUTH

## *Preserving the Past through Oral Histories*

*"Our collection of approximately seven hundred transcribed interviews captures a broad range of topics reflecting our region's historic, social, artistic, and business cultures. The collection of tapes and transcripts is available through the Society's Historical Research Library."*



### *What is Oral History?*

It is difficult to create a concise definition of oral history. In simplest terms, oral histories are collected spoken memories and reflections preserved for future use. The Southern Oregon Historical Society's oral histories are recorded on audio tapes that are then transcribed into unedited text documents. In addition to preserving the stories of those who provide an oral history, the audio recordings capture the unique qualities of human speech and mannerisms. Our collection of approximately seven hundred transcribed interviews captures a broad range of topics reflecting our region's historic, social, artistic, and business cultures. The collection of tapes and transcripts is available through the Society's Historical Research Library. To learn more about our oral history program, contact the Library at 541-858-1724.

*The oral history segments appearing in this issue of SOHT were researched and compiled by Margaret LaPlante.*





# Leo Zupan

Sept. 24, 2003

Interviewed by Pat Clason

SOHS OH #629.19

LEO ZUPAN WAS BORN IN PRICE, Utah. As a young man he went to work for the forest service in Elko, Nevada. One day Leo received a letter from a friend who had moved to Ashland encouraging him to move to the Rogue Valley.

Leo moved to Ashland just before Pearl Harbor was attacked. In May 1942, Leo enlisted in the United States Air Force.

*On August 29, 1944, the unthinkable happened.*

*What do you remember?*

"Our mission was oil and fighter manufacturing.... We were going on a raid to a big industrial area (flying over Czechoslovakia). A P-38 had gone over two days ahead and observed this train being loaded with all kinds of equipment for the front and they also had a synthetic oil plant there. So in two days they put this major raid up and we put in around 800 planes in the air that day. About 400 of those were fighters. Anyway, we were flying tail-end Charlie. That's when you're in the last squadron. And when you're flying in a group, a group has four squadrons.... It was proven that this box formation gave us the most protection and the most firepower....

"The Germans moved a bunch of fighters down into Slavis in the Czech Republic there, and they hit us with these fighters and we didn't have any escort. They'd pulled them up to the target area and the Germans hit us with about eighty-five fighters. The Germans hit us with about 85 fighters and they came in out of the sun, from the tail. And they knocked out our whole squadron and three other

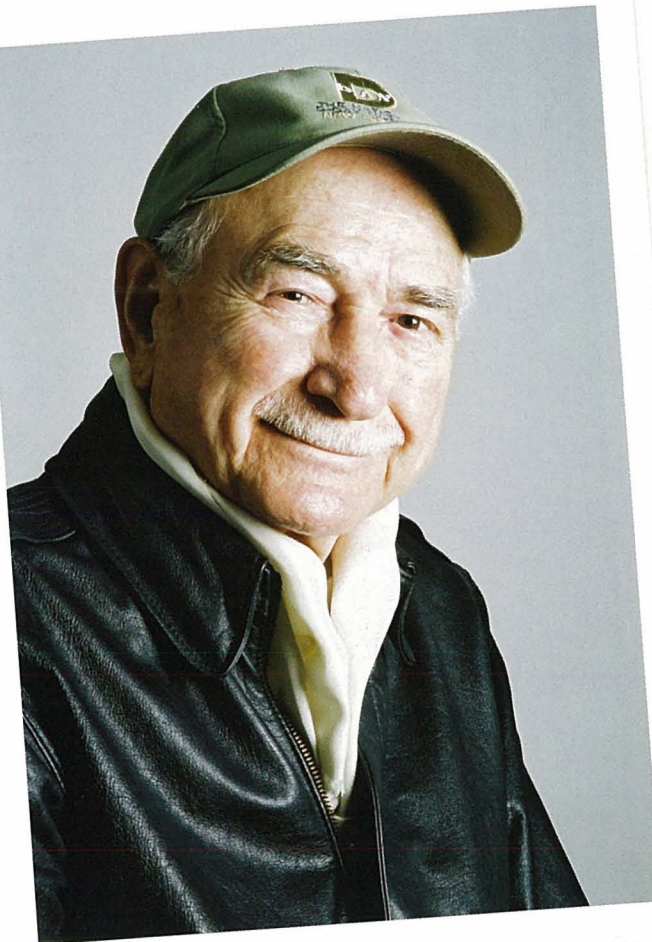
bombers.... When we first got hit, I was flying the plane.... I saw this small fire out in front. I thought for a minute it was mobile flak. I went to hit the mike and mention it and the tail gunner called in and says, 'They're coming in six abreast out here. Fighters!.... Then we got one in the number one engine and it's on fire.... [In] no time at all, the group was gone, and there was one other plane with us. The rest of them

his face. The fire got into the wing and they got another engine and it caught on fire.... The fire got worse and these two fighters wouldn't let us go.... The plane just shuddered and Bill and I looked at each other and we decided we've got to get out.... We decided that we were going to have to drop [the] bombs.... We had about a dozen 500 pounders.

"I had never bailed out before. When we left the plane we were at 18,000 feet. So I bailed out headfirst and just went ssssh-hhh, spinning, tumbling and I straightened out. Everything was quiet and serene. I went down to what I considered about 3500 feet before I thought I'd better see if this chute will work. I pulled it and there was a little pause and it finally went. I'm looking down and I can see these people all running towards where I'm going to land and I landed on their front lawn.... I just hit there and these fellows came over and helped me up.

"Al Novak, the bombardier (from Leo's squadron) was standing against the house when I got there ....All the neighbors were there and there was a young fellow probably twelve or thirteen [who spoke] English. We asked him, you know, we'd like to get away; we'd like to just take off. He said,

'Well, you can't do that.' They had their home guard. This lady said, 'Come with me.' And we went into the kitchen and she gave us each a glass of milk. And these two soldiers, two Czechs were there with their rifles.... And we weren't there too long when the Gestapo came and they came in a big car like you see in the movies. They put the two of us in the middle and a guy on each side with their guns and they took us down into this little town. They had this white build-



Leo Zupan, 2007. Photo by Anthony DiMaggio.

[had] all been shot down. There's two of us flying, and there's two fighters. We thought for a minute we might get away, you know, but finally this fellow was gone and we didn't see him anymore. And Bill (Bill Garland, co-pilot) and I was there flying this bomber and these two fighters [kept] attacking us. This fighter comes in firing, and then he goes swish, right over the top and I could see



*“What a wild town that was! Then I came up to Ashland and I met Veda and we were together for two weeks and I told her goodbye because I was going to leave the next day. I got a delay en route, got two more weeks [of leave] so we got married! They said it wouldn’t last. It’s [been] fifty-eight years!”*

ing and they have us go over and stand against the wall with our hands up.... Then they wanted us to leave.

“We got on this truck and we had to go into [the] city of Moraviaoskow.... We get into this city and here’s this beautiful building.... We get in there and they take our dog tags.... Then this major, he came down [the line] and grabs these guys and just slaps them. And he got to me and they beat the hell out of me.... They’d knock me down and I’d shake my head and they’d help me back up and I’d think I was okay and they’d do it again. And they’d kick me.... This [one] guy hauls off and he hits me right between the eyes. He broke my nose and they threw me against the wall.... Then they took us to an old jail and

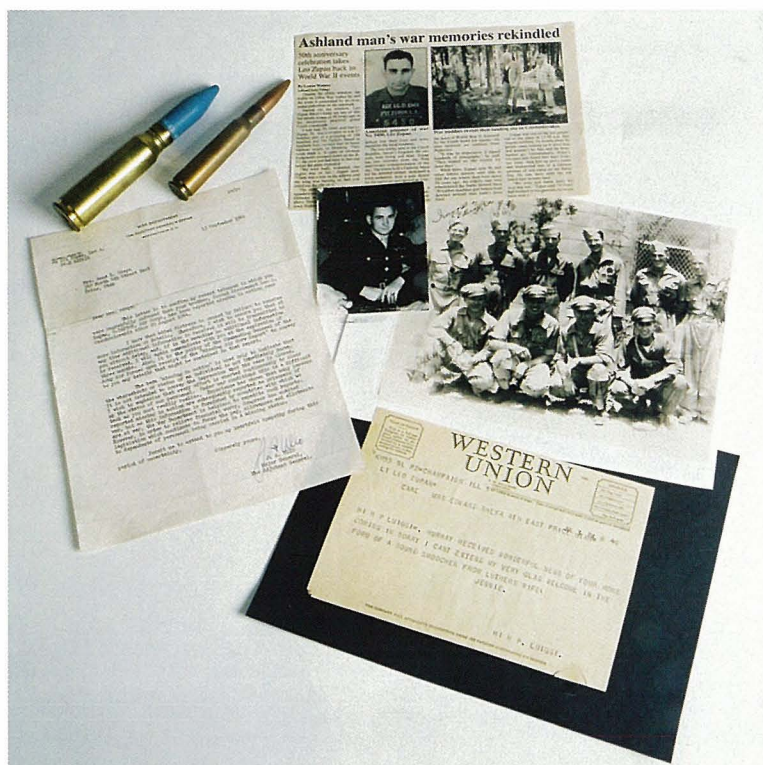
there was two or three mattresses. So we crawl on these mattresses and it’s getting dark and you fall asleep and you can’t believe what happened to you today.”

Leo was taken to the infamous Stalag Luft One prison camp located north of Berlin on a peninsula just south of the Swedish border. He was there for nearly ten months until liberated by the Russians. After his release, he remembers being in San Francisco for V-E Day, May 8, 1945—the day the war in Europe officially ended:

“What a wild town that was! Then I came up to Ashland and I met Veda and we were together for two weeks and I told her goodbye because I was going to leave

they wanted us to come over. We all took our wives and went over there. They had quite a reception for us and they had a church service. Then we went to the cemetery where we had twenty-eight guys buried and they had a plaque there. They wanted some history [so] that their children would know what happened in the Second World War....”

“We wanted to find out where our plane was shot down. We rented a car and started out for Moravioskow, which was about a hundred miles from Slavcin.... So I was telling Bill, this sure looks like the area.... This was all rural farm country and there was a house there with a little porch on it and there was a thin, tall guy standing on it. I stopped the car and Lenka (the translator) went up and talked to him. He got in the car with us and we drove about



*A collection of Leo Zupan's WWII memorabilia. Photo by Anthony DiMaggio.*

the next day. I got a delay en route, got two more weeks [of leave] so we got married! They said it wouldn’t last. It’s [been] fifty-eight years!”

*Several years ago, you and some of your fellow survivors returned to Czechoslovakia. What was that experience like?*

“We went back about five or six years ago to Slavcin where we were shot down. [I received] a letter from the mayor there and they were building a museum and

three-fourths of a mile.... There was a nice brick home and the owner comes out and we go down [to] some woods and they show us where our plane went down.... We went back [to the farmers house]. He went in the house and came out and he had two fifty-caliber shells. And he was going to give them to us. And Bill said we’d better not take them. I said, yeah, yeah, you’re right. They’d find them on the airplane, that wouldn’t be good.”



# Effie Birdseye

1961

Interviewer unknown,  
edited by Marjorie Edens  
SOHS OH #61-117-4

IN 1961, WHEN EFFIE BIRDSEYE was 78 years old, she provided the Southern Oregon Historical Society with an oral history looking back at life on her in-laws' family farm where she had resided since she married Victor Wesley Birdseye in 1901. She describes the relationship her father-in-law, David Birdseye, and mother-in-law, Clarissa Birdseye, (affectionately referred to as Grandfather and



Effie Cameron (Birdseye), ca. 1900. Photo from "Clarissa: Her Family and Her Home" by Effie and Nita Birdseye, book in SOHS Collection.

*"Some of the whites had done something to upset them. The white people had done something to make them angry and they were getting in here too thick. They were coming in too fast.... The night they went on the warpath and did some damage out in the valley, why, they just went around and around the stockade and then took off...."*



The 1856 Birdseye home as it looks today, located along the Rogue River Highway. SOHS staff photo.

Grandmother) had with the local Native Americans during the Rogue Indian Wars.

## *When did your grandfather arrive in Oregon?*

"Dave Birdseye and his uncle, Charlie Birdseye, were from Connecticut and they came to the west coast in 1849. They went down and came around the Horn, along the California coast, and were mining up and down that California coast before they came to Oregon. Dave was supposed to be one of the first men to go up the Columbia River on a boat to Portland. They were engaged in buying stock from the immigrants and they would meet them at The Dalles and he'd buy anything they wished to dispose of. He had a good-sized pack-train and when gold was discovered in Jacksonville in January 1852, by Jim Cluggage and his partner, they started south with a train load of supplies. They had no intention of mining but would take gold in exchange

for the things the miners needed. And they built a store and Uncle Charlie, he took care of it while Dave did the freighting.... Then, after Dave and his uncle were settled in Jacksonville, they had the store up there but then Grandfather going by the farm here, he got interested and filed a claim, Donation Land Claim. It was open for settlement, you could file on it and he fell in love with this strip of land along the Rogue River and he filed a Homestead."

## *How did your grandfather and grandmother meet?*

"He met her in Portland. Her father and mother were running a hotel in Portland. He stayed at their hotel in Portland, and he fell in love with her and she with him and so he brought her down here. Came all the way on horseback from Portland. And I said, 'Well, were you happy?' She replied, 'Yes, I was, I was really happy down here amongst the Indians.'"

*continued on page 19*



# Robert J. Keeney

Jan. 24, 1980

Interviewed by Marjorie Edens  
SOHS OH #121 A&B

TAKE A DRIVE THROUGH the older sections of Medford and Ashland and you'll see many beautiful homes and commercial buildings that were designed by Frank C. Clark. Clark received his training on the East Coast, worked briefly in Jerome, Arizona, and then for large architecture firms in Los Angeles and San Francisco before moving to the Rogue Valley. In 1980, Frank Clark's partner, Robert J. Keeney, gave SOHS an



Robert Keeney in 1979. SOHS Accession #79.71

oral history on their work here in the Rogue Valley.

*What year did you join Frank Clark and what was the first project you worked on?*

"I joined him March 1, 1932.... Oh, we had lots of projects.... That was when he started the development of sketches for the Bear Creek Orchard plant. At that time, Bear Creek Orchards was a little shed by the tracks.... So, we started making drawings and preliminary studies of a new plant for Dave and Harry.... And that was going to be the only plant they were going to build, that was as big as they were going to get, they wouldn't need anymore. Don't worry about expansion, that was it! And they hardly got it built and we were expanding. And for all the years I was with Mr. Clark, there was never a time that we weren't working for Dave and Harry in conjunction with their growth."

*Did you design everything three-dimensionally on paper?*

"Yes, you see, you'd take a piece of butcher paper, you'd buy it in rolls and we had a bracket that held it at the end and we pulled that paper right down. And then we would start at the roof and draw it full size, all the moldings and we came right down through the building.... When we did a home, why we would have to take every detail and full-size it. All the fireplaces, all the cupboards, the classic moldings, cornices had to be full size detail.... Then you could cast your shadows with [a] projectional.... We'd full-size a fireplace and then get back and study it. He would correct maybe a molding, he'd flatten it a little bit to get the right shadow on it. He was a master at that."

*What were some of your favorite projects?*

"I enjoyed our residential work very much, like working with Dr. and Mrs. Lemery. It was kind of an interesting job. It was all taken from a movie that she'd



Frank Clark. SOHS Photo #16970

*"Take a drive through the older sections of Medford and Ashland and you'll see many beautiful homes and commercial buildings that were designed by Frank C. Clark."*

seen little things in. And Mr. Hunt, the fellow that owned all the theatres here, had us come down and we sat there. The minute she saw something she liked, they rang the bell, he'd identify it and then had them cut pieces out of the film and then had them blown up for us. And so, that's how that house was designed. So it was a fascinating job."

*Did Mr. Clark ever say which project he was the most proud of?*

"I think he was quite proud of some of his beautiful old residences. He was particularly proud of John Tomlin's home out on Old Stage Road (1845 Old Stage Road)."



# Seely Hall

Jan. 22, 1975

Interviewed by Gerald Baum

SOHS OH #36

SEELY HALL IS KNOWN as Medford's "Father of Aviation." In 1919 Seely Hall and his partner owned the first Medford-



Seely Hall after his retirement in 1958. SOHS Photo #20405

based airplane, a 90 horsepower Curtis Jenny, that they named "The Mayfly." Seely was instrumental in establishing the Pacific Air Transport, the first air-

mail service in Oregon. Seely went on to a rewarding career with United Airlines and returned to Medford in 1949 as the honored guest at the 20th anniversary of the Medford Airport. In 1975 Seely provided SOHS with an oral history regarding the early days of aviation in the Rogue Valley.

## *How did you first become involved with aviation?*

"Well, my first interest was in joining the aviation branch of the army signal corps, March 17, 1917. I was sent to Vancouver, Washington, when war was declared. Then I was transferred to Rockwell Field in San Diego. And within a very short time, why, a few months, they created an air corps. I was transferred from the signal corps to the air corps. As soon as they declared war, they started sending recruits in to overhaul the engines.... I stayed during the whole war and I became very familiar with the overhaul of aircraft and engines."

## *When you returned to Medford after the war, how did you become involved with aviation?*

"Floyd Hart, who had been a pilot, he and I got together one day and decided that it would be a nice thing if

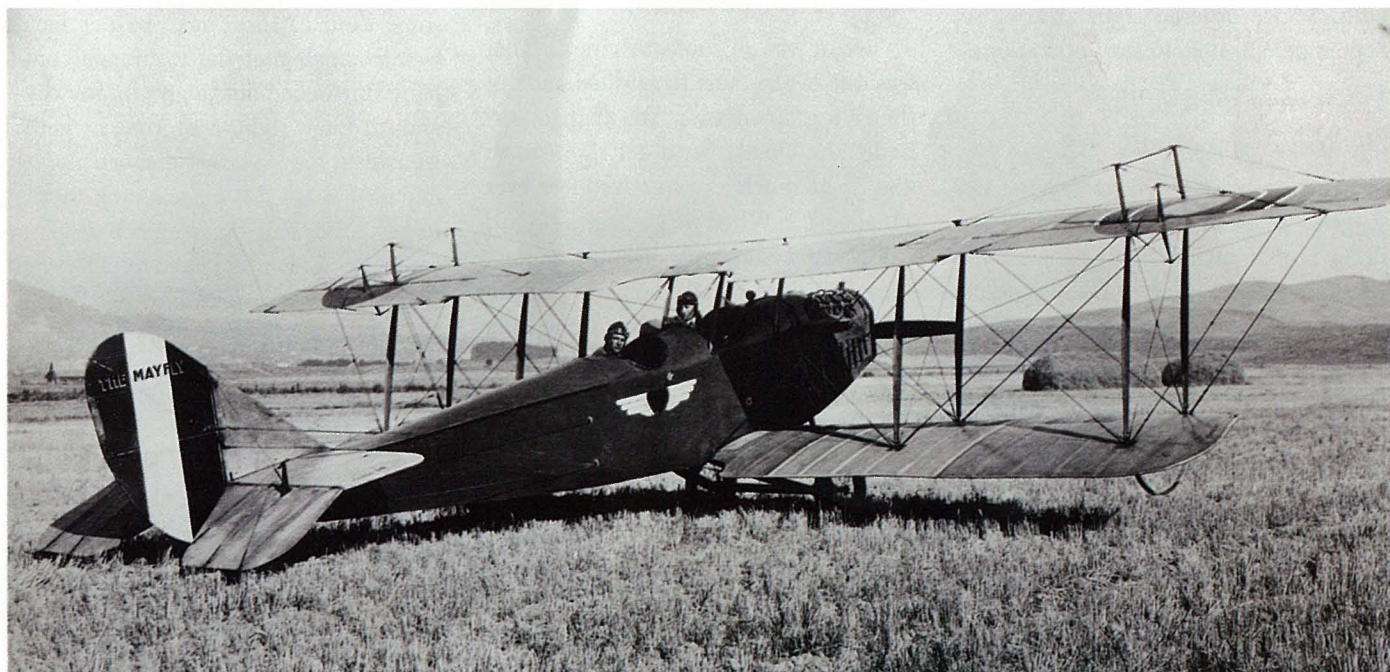
we bought an airplane and started in barnstorming, thought we could make a little money. So we went up and down the street, 1919, and we sold stock at a hundred dollars a share to about thirty people and formed what we called the Medford Aircraft Operation.... So we went down to Sacramento and bought [a plane] for \$2,850. We landed out at Gore's field, that's a wheat field out there just about half way between Jacksonville and Medford. We started in hauling passengers; it was five and ten dollars a head."

## *How did you come up with a name for your first plane?*

"We were sitting out there one day, it was pretty cold. [Floyd said], 'I don't know whether the thing [will] fly, maybe I'm warming it up for nothing. Floyd said, 'Well, it may fly.' I said by golly, that's it: Mayfly."

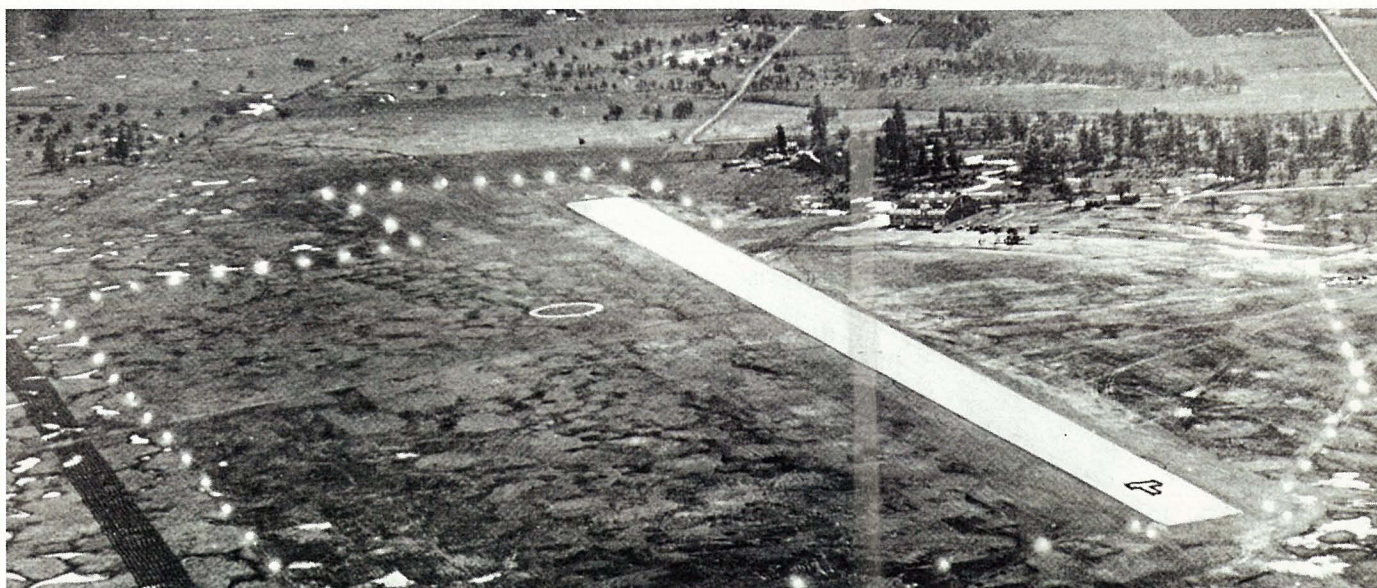
## *How did you become involved with Pacific Air Transport, the first airmail delivery in Oregon?*

"Vern Gorst felt that airmail someday would grow into passenger business besides the mail and he felt maybe he would bid on it.... And so he said, 'would you give me an idea about what you think it would cost?' I thought he could prob-



The "Mayfly" lands in Klamath Falls, Oregon, August 13, 1919. SOHS Photo #12490





Aerial view of Medford Airport landing strip, ca. 1930. SOHS Photo #8728

ably buy enough airplanes to set up one trip each way for about \$68,000.... Later Gorst got in touch with me. He says, 'I don't have any stockholders, I wonder if you can go up and down the street over there in Medford and sell some stock'.... So I went up and down the street here and I got about fifty names to buy one share at a hundred dollars.... Gorst went up to Meier and Frank at Portland; they took out about \$25,000. worth. Anyway, he ended up with enough capital so we decided to buy some Ryan monoplanes. The Ryan monoplane was the same airplane that Lindbergh flew the Atlantic with. So we ordered eight and we set September 15, 1926 to start operations."

### *What were some of the challenges you faced?*

"The contract called for leaving Los Angeles at 12:01 a.m. and fly to San Francisco. It wasn't a lighted airway, you see, there was no lights in Los Angeles. So they bought these big Ford headlights and put them on the water towers in different towns along the road. You pretty much followed the highway. You'd fly from one light to the other.... You never flew from one to where you couldn't look back and see one, and see one in front of you. Most of the airplanes were awfully slow in those days; you had to use a lot of lights. Nowadays, it's a bit different."

### *The fog poses quite a problem to this day for airlines flying into the Rogue Valley. What did you do in those situations?*

"In those foggy deals, we could take the mail by car over to Montague, California. Montague was high enough, didn't have much fog and fly from there to San Francisco.... They also gave us the authority to stop a train any place to put airmail on.... So a lot of the trips in the winter went out of Medford by car."

### *Did you have instruments or radios in the airplanes?*

"No, it was all contact flying.... That was one of the most hazardous parts of the flying business.... You had to stay under the clouds, we'd get right down and fly as much as a hundred feet over a highway.... When we got the radio (in) 1931, you could have ground contact then. We used to talk airplanes down, we'd be on top of a hanger or something like that, tell them the ceiling, then they'd come down through."

### *Where was the first airport located in Medford?*

"Where they had the old fairgrounds (near present day I-5 and Barnett Road) that's where we started operating. They called it Newell Barber Field. Newell

was the son of Dr. Barber here.... He enlisted for World War I. On his first trip across the lines, he was shot down and killed. So they called that Newell Barber Field.... It was the first airfield and airmail field in the state of Oregon. We didn't have any place to land in Portland; we flew across and landed at Vancouver. So we were the first and only airmail stop in the state of Oregon."

### *Why did you leave Newell Barber Field and move out to Biddle Road in 1929?*

"To haul passengers you had to have some kind of insurance. Barber Field was so small that the insurance company threatened not to give us any coverage. I knew right away, that, by golly, we had to have a larger airport.... One day we spotted this place out on Biddle Road.... We had the air photographer come down from Portland and decided that's where we would build it. Put it out to a vote, \$120,000. That was one of the first bond issues in the country for an airport and it was very successful, 1800 to 1."



# Grace Fiero

June 18, 1963

Interviewed by Seth Bullis SOHS

OH #18 and by Russ Jameson (date unknown), SOHS OH #36

## *How did you arrive in Medford?*

"I think it was about 1905 when I first came here. I was playing in New York City on the stage in the 'Rose of the Rancho' and Mother and Father had moved out here to Medford. Uncle Ed of the Andrews Opera Company came through here. I can't remember whether they played here, but anyway he fell in love with this country and he wrote back to Mother and Father and oh, many, many people in Minnesota, that this was the most marvelous place in the world and that they must all pack up and move here. So, I wrote Mother and Father every day in those days and said, 'Don't move to Medford, to Oregon, it's the end of the earth. I'll never see you again.' But they paid no attention to me, they came right out anyway."

## *How did you meet your husband, Conro Fiero?*

"I came out here with my round-trip ticket, just to visit Mother and Father for the summer. Edith and James, my brother-in-law, were coming to visit and I went down to the station to meet them. I saw this man in riding clothes. He was the best-looking thing I had ever seen. I just took a long deep breath and said, 'Whew....' And then I heard through Withington (a family friend) that this Conro Fiero wanted to meet the girl with the red hat with the cherries on it.... I went to this dance and Conro was there and I danced every dance with Conro .... Conro and I saw each other every day

and he wanted to marry me. So, I turned in my return railroad ticket and stayed on. Conro and I were married the following June."

## *Where did you live?*

"During our engagement we were building the house out there which is now Mon Desir (a popular restaurant

once located in Central Point). We called it Woodlawn Orchard."

## *A movie was made in 1914, "Grace's Visit to the Rogue Valley."*

## *What do you recall about that?*

"You know we had such a lark making this picture that I don't think we realized that it was to be shown at the Panama Exposition. And afterwards, I was in San Francisco and went to see the Oregon building down there, and this film was running and I was so surprised and of course, thrilled to see the film. There's a picture taken in Lithia Park, that was a beautiful little park in those days and they were having me drink the Lithia water. It was the first time I had tasted it and I had a difficult time smiling through that picture. And then they took us all over the valley for different shots. They had a scene where Uncle Ed enacted the early pioneer days with the Indians and a hold up of a stagecoach. It was quite exciting."

## *After you left Medford, where did you live?*

"Conro and I were in Washington, D.C. during the war (World War I). I had a marvelously interesting job in the state department deciphering cablegrams, so secret, secret.... I was anxious to get into the war game, to do my bit, you know, in work .... Then the war was over and Conro got this position in Paris. He was representing the Buda Motor Company. When the Buda Motor Company was not prospering, Conro went [to] the White Motor Company and they sent us to Africa.... We lived there for two-and-a-half years."



*"There's a picture taken in Lithia Park, that was a beautiful little park in those days and they were having me drink the Lithia water. It was the first time I had tasted it and I had a difficult time smiling through that picture."*

Center: A publicity photo of Grace Fiero starring as "Juanita" in the stage production of "Rose of the Rancho," ca. 1905. SOHS Photo #3539.



# Hank Henry

Nov. 4, 1985

Interviewed by Nora Henry

SOHS OH #393

HANK HENRY JOINED KMED Television (now KTVL-News 10) in January 1963. In November 1985 his wife, Nora Henry, interviewed him for an oral history project for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

## *What do you recall about the early of KMED Television?*

"The station went on the air in October 1961.... I was hired as an announcer in January 1963.... It was very primitive in



Hank Henry in his famous red jacket.  
SOHS Photo #12741

those days.... The first six months that I was there, we did the news in a 15-minute format with Polaroid pictures, as our only picture source. We had no movies, no tape, just Polaroids. So, I would drive around town using my own Volkswagen bus and take pictures with my Polaroid camera. And it was a big folding camera that looked like an old fashioned Kodak folding camera except that it was three times the size of those old cameras. And the temperature made a real difference in those Polaroids. They were designed to work at room temperature, 70 degrees, so if you had the camera out in the car and it was 40 degrees, you'd get different results. And these were self-developing black and white pictures.... You'd shoot the picture, pull

on the tab and the picture would pop out and you'd let it develop for a minute and then you would take the backing off the picture. The chemicals spread across the picture when you pulled the tab. That meant you got chemicals all over you and all over the car. By the end of the day, the passenger side would be stacked high with rolls of excess paper backing from these Polaroid pictures."

## *What would you do with the Polaroid pictures?*

"One of the first things they (KMED Television) bought was a projector for Polaroid transparencies.... You had the Polaroids mounted in plastic frames and put into this slide changer. They would run television cameras up within a few inches of this slide changer. You could press a button and the next Polaroid would slide into place quickly. It worked fairly well, but boy, it was cumbersome. Well, this was so primitive that I finally talked management into getting a movie developer. We had a movie camera but they had no developer so they'd have to send it to Portland or San Francisco to get developed."

## *When did you get your first sound television camera?*

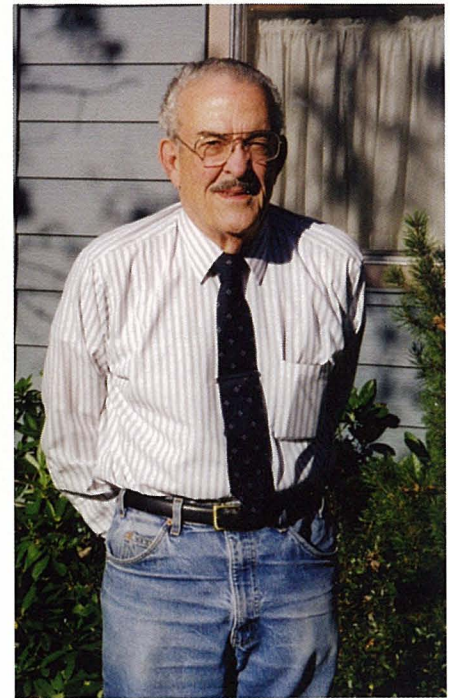
"The summer of '64. It was an Auricon 16mm optical sound camera.... This camera, which had only a hundred feet capacity, which meant two-and-a-half minutes of sound and then you were out of film. Also, in '64 we went to a half-hour newscast. We kept our Auricons for twelve years."

## *What were some of the challenges you faced?*

"We had no two-way radios in those days. We had no communication with the station. We had no way of knowing if there was a breaking story while we were out."

## *What other changes did you see during your career?*

"We added color, I think about 1975, could have been a little later than that. We were one of the last stations I think



Hank Henry in 2001. SOHS staff photo.

*"We had no two-way radios in those days. We had no communication with the station. We had no way of knowing if there was a breaking story while we were out."*

in the whole world to go to color for news.... Which meant that we had to buy a color processor and we bought a CP-16 camera that ran us about \$9,000. And the developers around \$20,000. Color film was expensive. A four-hundred-foot roll cost, I think, \$45. And it cost us another \$10 to develop it and we'd have only about ten minutes of film."

## *Any final thoughts on your career?*

"Just trying to stay on top of the news was a major proposition. Really enjoyed it! It was a great twenty years.... It was really a good career!"



# Kenneth Beebe

Jan. 30, 1995

Interviewed by Marjorie Edens  
SOHS OH #564

KENNETH BEEBE'S GRANDPARENTS arrived in Oregon by train from Nebraska in the late 1880s. They purchased land on Hamrick Road in Central Point and began farming. Kenneth's parents lived on the farm and took over as the second generation at Beebe Farms. Kenneth gave an oral history to Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1995 at the age of 74 describing his life growing up on the family farm. Kenneth passed away in 2003, having spent 75 of his 82 years living and working on the family farm.

## *Can you share some of your fondest memories of your grandparents?*

"I always remember the first night, the first time they had lights. We all went down and had kind of an opening, a lighting of the fuse, so to speak. I always remember that, seeing a light bulb hanging in the middle of the room. You'd pull the switch and it came on. That was quite a deal! They always used coal oil lamps before that. They still used coal oil lamps for the bedrooms and things like that. It was a long time before they put lights in the rest of the house. I always remember back in the thirties, in the depression, if we turned a light on in the daytime, we were scolded immediately because my grandmother, if the bill went over a dollar, why, she'd just shut the lights off. That's all there was to it. And when the power meter reader came around, grandmother would stick her head out, 'How much is it?' He'd figure it out, maybe ninety-six cents, or eighty-seven cents, that was fine...."

*"Dad talked about the Halloween pranks when he was growing up. They had an old threshers/separator above the depot, which must have weighed three or four tons, thirty feet long, and Dad said every Halloween morning that threshing machine would be crossways of Main Street."*

"Grandmother had a rocking chair in the kitchen, a big wood box, and her wood stove. It was a Saturday and she was baking something. I was sitting, rocking in that chair waiting for the results to come out of the oven. Grandfather came in and said, 'Where's the checkbook, Ma?' Grandmother went to the cupboard, handed it to him. She said, 'What are you going to do?' He said, 'Well I need some new tires.' And it wasn't more than an hour and this brand new car drove in the driveway. Grandmother looked out the window [and] said, 'Who is that?' I said, 'I think it's Granddad. I think he got his new tires....' He came in kind of grinning. She said, 'What in the land a goshens did you do?' He said, 'Well I told you I was going to get some new tires.' Course a car then was around six or seven hundred dollars.... Granddad and his new tires, I never did forget that. He was such a character!"

## *What are some of your memories from growing up in Central Point?*

"Halloween around here was quite a challenge when I was a boy. We'd take in all of our gates, wagons, everything, lock them in the barn. You didn't leave anything around that could be moved, because you're likely to find that gate in Grants Pass or somewhere else. Dad talked about the Halloween pranks when he was growing up. They had an old threshers/separator above the depot, which must have weighed three or four tons, thirty feet long, and

Dad said every Halloween morning that threshing machine would be crossways of Main Street. And he said the city fathers would get teams of horses and pull it back where it belonged. He said after a few years of this, they got tired of it, so they moved it out to the county fairgrounds, clear out of town about a mile-and-a-half. And he said, why the next Halloween, it was back across the street.... He said when they were putting in the sewer system, about 22 feet down, in the center of town, Halloween morning, besides the threshing machine, there was a cow down on the bottom of that trench. He said they had a time getting that cow out of there."

*"He said after a few years of this, they got tired of it, so they moved it out to the county fairgrounds, clear out of town about a mile-and-a-half. And he said, why the next Halloween, it was back across the street."*

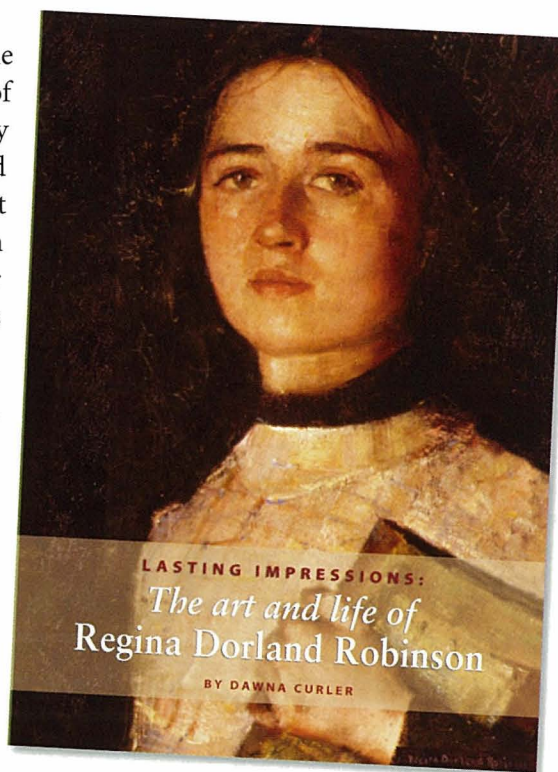


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### *How did your grandparents get along with the Indians?*

"Well, they got along very well with the family.... They had an exchange. Now, for instance, when the Indians would come and they had no guns, you see, like the white folks had. They'd come and borrow the guns and go hunting for a deer and they always shared the meat with Grandmother. And if they fired one shot, they had meat. There was lots of deer. But she said they were generous in their sharing.

"Another thing, she said that the squaws would come and they were so interested in her little 'white' child, the little Boston they called him, because he was a little 'white' child. And she would loan them the baby. They would take him down to the bank of the river, or the creek, and fix their meals. She said they had the blackest looking bread.... And then they put the baby out in the middle of that blanket and they'd give him some of their black bread." (The baby referred to is James Birdseye who later ran a blacksmith shop and served as sheriff of Jackson County.)

### *What can you tell us about Fort Birdseye?*

"They built a fort, however, for their own protection and too, they had to keep travelers, people who would come through and be caught here at night, why, they had to stay, so they had the fort. It was only two rooms and then a stockade around it. [It was located] just right back of where the house stands.... They started building the house just before the Indians were taken away.... Then after the war was over, and they moved into the house, well, Grandmother said it was like a mansion compared to the way she had been living." (The family home still stands today but the fort was taken down after the Rogue Indian Wars.)

### *What did your grandparents tell you about the Rogue Indian Wars?*

"Well, it was the whites infringing on...there were too many coming in and there were a lot of them, Grandmother said, they weren't honest with the Indians and so that caused the trouble.... Some of the whites had done something to upset them. The white people had done something to make them angry and they were getting in here too thick. They were coming in too fast.... The night they went on the warpath and did some damage out in the valley, why, they just went around and around the stockade and then took off.... That was the only outbreak and that was the finish.... They started down the river with their canoes and loaded those squaws and children into canoes and all of their household goods and things, and they went right down the river.... Grandmother said the river was just lined with canoes the night before and the next morning there wasn't a canoe in sight."

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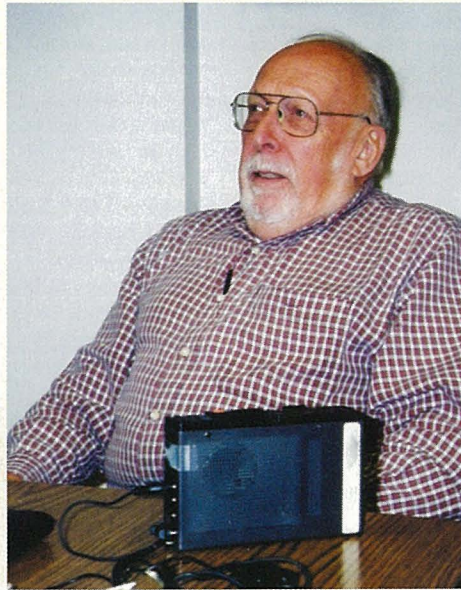
### Pat Clason

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, Pat Clason has been conducting oral histories for the Southern Oregon Historical Society, keeping the stories of our region from fading away and disappearing.

Pat got his start doing oral histories in 1995 when a group of retired Bureau of Land Management (BLM) workers asked him to interview old-time foresters. At the time, Pat knew nothing about how to go about recording oral histories, so he approached SOHS staff member, Marjorie Edens, for advice. She said SOHS could teach him the protocols for conducting interviews, provide recording equipment, and type up the transcripts, as long as SOHS got to keep copies of the interviews.

Pat was off and running. He followed the series on the BLM foresters with interviews of the founders of the Britt Festivals, on whose Board of Directors Pat served for fifteen years.

Over the coming years, he would conduct more than two hundred interviews. These first-hand stories recorded



*"There are lots of newcomers pouring in here, and oral histories can help these people, as well as long-time residents, understand how this region came to be the way it is."*

the lives of ranchers, loggers, miners, orchard workers, artists, aviators, and soldiers. Pat is currently on contract with SOHS to gather the oral histories of local WW II veterans.

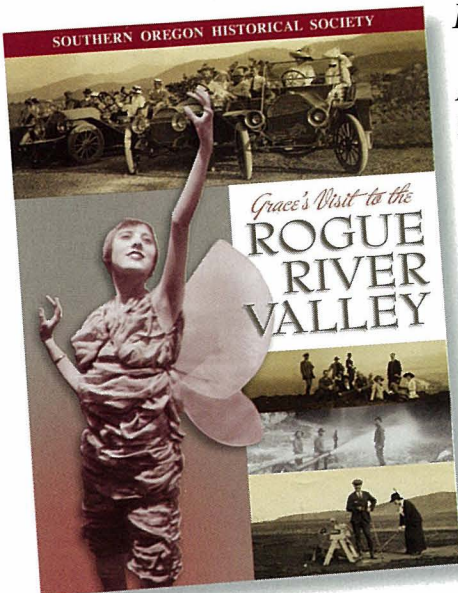
"We're capturing history first-hand," Pat says, "not necessarily from headline grabbers, but from people who were right there, toiling away in the trenches. We're capturing it so that we can learn from the mistakes of the past and also from what we did right in the past."

"There are lots of newcomers pouring in here, and oral histories can help these people, as well as long-time residents, understand how this region came to be the way it is. History is a vibrant, living thing that we ought to keep going, and the Society is the leader in this effort in our region. That's why I support the Southern Oregon Historical Society."

What inspires *you* to support SOHS? Please let us know your story by calling Richard at 541-773-6536 ext. 226, or e-mailing [development@sohs.org](mailto:development@sohs.org).

## GRACE'S VISIT TO THE ROGUE RIVER VALLEY

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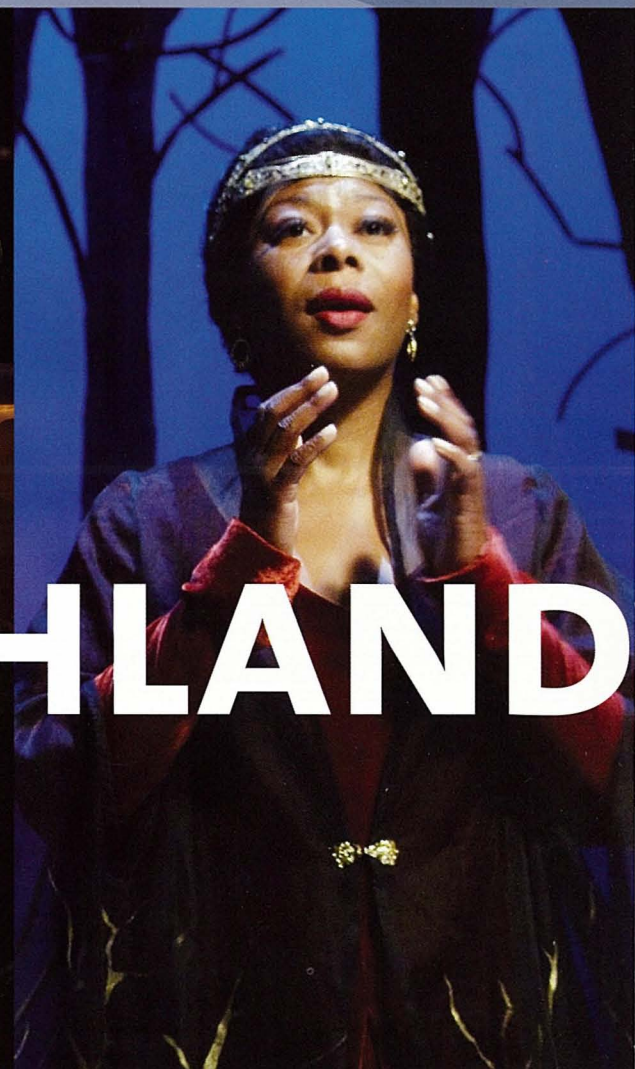
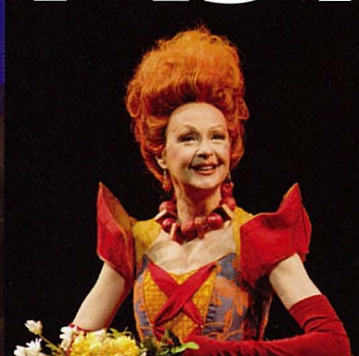
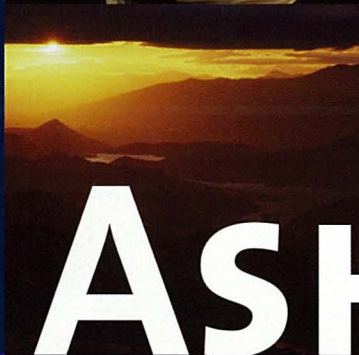
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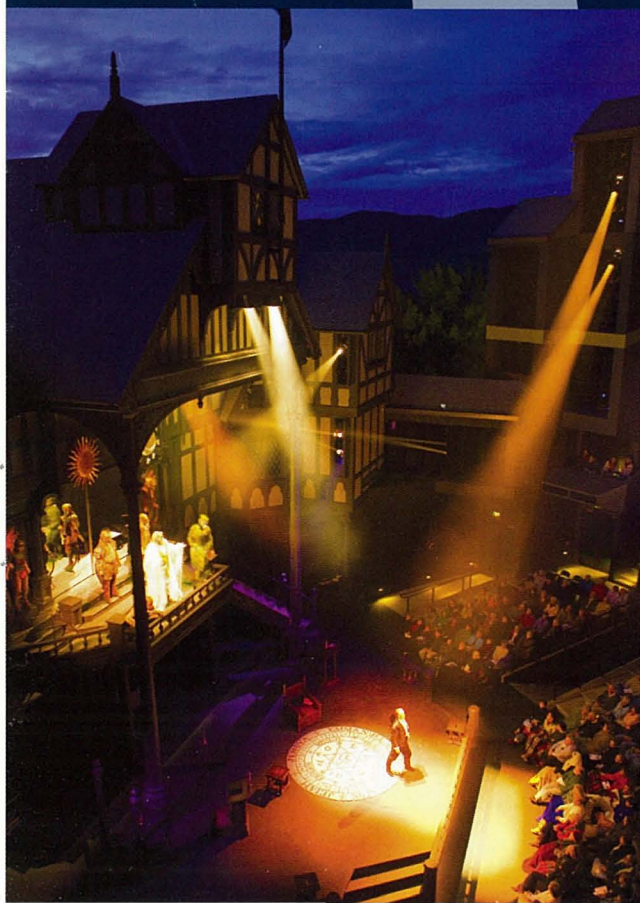
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Clockwise from top right, *The Winter's Tale* (2006): Greta Oglesby.  
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*Resident peacock at Hanley Farm. Photo by Kyle Riggs.*

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