

10/81

THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Director's Corner

For many years the trustees of the Southern Oregon Historical Society have expressed the need for the development of a Public History Research Center which would house the Society's vast holdings of library and archival materials as well as provide office space for the staff. Currently the library collection is housed in six rooms in three buildings. The staff offices are in seven different buildings. This situation leads to confusion by the public and loss of time and efficiency by the staff. It is more expensive to operate the program.

The trustees and the staff have worked together to present their needs and to list the functions of the new center. Three architects were requested to submit individual architectural plans to the trustees. The trustees then chose one of the three plans and submitted it to the Jacksonville Design Approval Committee. Members of this Committee, after a study of the plan, suggested several changes. These changes were incorporated into the plan and the design was resubmitted to the Committee whose members rejected it. They were of the opinion that a two-story building on the selected site would be too large and that it would dominate the area. It might thus reduce the historic significance of the neighboring buildings.

The Design Approval Committee has an important but difficult task. They are charged with the enforcement of rules that are anything but clearly defined. While the SOHS trustees are quite sympathetic with the problems faced by the Committee, they felt that they must appeal the decision to the Jacksonville City Council. A great many local tax dollars have been spent. If the designing process must start anew, it will cost many thousand dollars more to build a similar building a year or so later. The appeals process is a valid process, and using it by no means indicates that the trustees do not appreciate the Design Approval Committee's worth to the community. In this instance the Board of Trustees simply does not share the Committee's conclusions.

If the City Council of Jacksonville reaffirms the Design Approval Committee's decision, the Southern Oregon Historical Society will no doubt go back to the drawing board with the knowledge that its members acted responsibly.

At this writing the meeting with the City Council has not yet taken place so the outcome of the appeal is not known. What is important to understand is that in this country there is the freedom to disagree while not losing respect for each other. It is our hope that whatever the decision of the City Council may be, the usual friendly lines of communication will remain open.

Bill Burk

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Lady Oscharwasha
"Jennie"
Last of the Takelmas

A Peter Britt photograph



THE TAKELMAS

THE TAKELMAS

THE TAKELMAS

They were our own Indians. And we destroyed them. Don't look for them. Like the northern curlew and the passenger pigeon, they are no more. There weren't very many of them, even in the beginning, five-hundred or six-hundred. Other tribal groups lived in the adjoining lands, but the Takelmas inhabited the Rogue River Valley from the Illinois River south to the Siskiyou Mountain range. They claimed the Bear Creek Valley, upper Applegate, the Jacksonville country and the valleys and foothills surrounding the Table Rock area. They took their name from the Indian word, *da Gelman*, which means "those living alongside the river."

One must go and stand on a hill and look over the valley, mentally erasing from his sight the freeway, its overpasses, the roads, the buildings, the orchards, the bridges, the people and see only the land and the river and the sky. That was the world of the Takelmas.

Oak and pinetrees, chapparel and manzanita climbed the slopes to the base of Table Rock. Deep forests grew here and there in the valley, and the Rogue,

rapid and often dangerous, coursed its way along the valley floor. The Takelmas had lived in this beautiful country for as long as they could remember.

They weren't threatening in appearance. The men had "pleasing features and were nowise sullen or distrustful in their behavior." They averaged about five feet, eight inches in height and were muscular and athletic. The women were smaller with rather pretty faces and graceful hands and feet. The men wore shirts, buckskin trousers and moccasins. They made their caps of bear scalps and left the bears' ears attached. The women wore buckskin dresses, fringed, and reaching to their knees. Their hats were woven baskets. All of them were fond of decorating their clothing with the bright feathers from red headed woodpeckers and with white dentalium shells. The red feathers, shells and deerskins were their wealth, and the Takelmas were naive in their delight at displaying their treasures.

They lived in small groups of two or three families because large bands would soon deplete the game in an area. In winter they dwelt in wooden huts built over a rectangular dugout. The floor was covered with woven mats, and drying meat hung from the ceiling. A hole in the roof let out smoke from the fire. In the summer they lived in wigwams.

The Takelmas were one of the few tribes that did not plant crops. Game was plentiful and the region abounded with acorns, berries and nuts. Even so, it was not a life of complete ease. Everyone had his duties. There were baskets to weave, arrowheads to be chipped out, food to be caught and prepared, and hides to be worked.

They fished in the river at their dams, they occasionally scrapped with their neighbors, and they gambled on the outcomes of their athletic games. It was in the main a pleasant life. It's no great wonder that they fought so desperately to save it.

At first they were shyly friendly with the white men who trespassed through their valley. There are early reports that the Takelmas guided several parties over difficult mountain trails and took them across the river in their dugout canoes, refusing to accept payment. They thought the strangers were something special. It's not difficult to determine which side made the first treacherous gesture. Many travelers came with the preconceived idea that all Indians were hostile, barbaric and godless, and that it was one's Christian duty to destroy them.

At the beginning, as early as 1826, the white travelers were in parties sent out in search of furs for the Hudson's Bay Company. These were men with no interest in the area, other than for the furs they could acquire, and no regard for the natives. There were occasional altercations between them, and they gave the Indians their first insight into the true nature of the newcomers to their valley.

Reports of the occasional murder of a member of a neighboring tribe reached





the Takelmas, and some of them also fell victims of the white man's distrust and fear. Several young braves on an island in the Rogue were murdered by a party of white men. Their excuse was that, having malaria in their camp, they feared the Indians might tell others of their weakened condition and thus bring about an attack. Such outrageous acts were not forgotten by the Takelmas. It was not long before they retaliated in a like manner. Their actions won them the reputation of being warlike and savage.

While there have always been those who held profound sympathy for the Indians, and there were even a few of them in pioneer times, there has never been any doubt that the Rogue Valley Indians were truly rogues. Unarmed travelers and those in small parties often learned that fact in no uncertain terms. It was an eye for an eye from the very first. The Rogues could not accept invasion of their lands and would not submit to domination. When the whites fired at them, they fired back. They had master teachers in treachery and they were gifted pupils. The Rogue River Valley became known as bad Indian country.

By 1840 the Takelmas' land was being used as a passage and grazing ground for parties who were taking goods to and from California. Sometimes groups of men, either enterprising or greedy, would face the dangers of the trail to bring profitable bands of cattle to the Willamette Valley. At one time missionaries came to investigate the prospects for establishing a mission. Deciding that the Indians were too scattered and that "the doom of extinction was over them because the hand of providence

would give (preference) to a people more worthy of this beautiful country," the men of God gave up the endeavor. It was not prudent to become concerned for the salvation of men already marked for annihilation.

Nearly 900 immigrants crossed the Oregon trail to the Willamette Valley in 1843. In 1845 over 3,000 more moved into Oregon. The massive migration of Americans had begun.

In 1848 Congress passed the Organic Act which created the Northwest Territory. This Act reinforced a Northwest Ordinance made in 1787 that the land and property of the Indians should "never be taken from them without their consent, and in their property, rights and liberty, they (should not be) invaded."

Unfortunately members of Congress soon forgot their promises. In 1850 they passed the Oregon Donation Land Act and began to give away the Indians' land. Congress awarded 320 acres to every settler over the age of eighteen who could get to Oregon before 1850. The expiration year was later extended to 1855.

In a short time, under the Donation Land Act, much of Oregon was claimed by settlers. The natives were shoved aside. Pioneers, sometimes armed, drove them away and burned their villages. When they resisted, they were deliberately murdered. As the throngs poured into Oregon, the Indians were forced into the hills. One Takelma village became a sawmill near the present site of Ashland, their favorite winter camp was occupied by miners, and the best hunting and fishing spots were taken for homesites. The number of bloody episodes grew and

reaction from the Takelmas. They burned many of the homes which had been left unprotected when the settlers fled to the safety of the forts. Haystacks were fired and livestock was slaughtered. In their encampments the Indians held war dances and planned for all-out warfare.

The settlers were enraged. Parties of volunteers, armed and relentless, traveled about the region killing every Indian they could find, even shooting women and children. Frightened citizens approved of their actions and called for the death of every Indian. "Extermination!" became their battle cry.

The leader of the volunteers sent a petition for help to Captain Alden at Fort Jones informing him that their lives were threatened by a combination of several tribes, organized and well armed. The captain ordered out all his available force and headed for the scene of the trouble. At Yreka he raised a volunteer company of eighty men and they soon reached Jacksonville where the captain recruited two more companies. The army numbered at least 200 men.

General Joseph Lane, the former territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, arrived in Jacksonville just in time to assume command of the forces. Learning that the Indians had gathered at a fortification on Table Rock, he organized his troops and they marched out to meet the enemy. Lane had previously dealt with the Takelmas when, as Governor, he had tried to bring about peace, and they held great respect and admiration for him.

Captain Alden's battalion was sent up Evans Creek; Lane, with his men, proceeded directly to Table Rock. The Indians' trail was discovered about fifteen miles beyond the base of the rocks. The rough terrain made following it extremely difficult and the Indians had made every effort to obliterate their tracks. They had set the hillside on fire, and the heat and smoke made the route almost impassable. But finally, one week after they had started out, the Army came upon the Indians in the Evans Creek region, well hidden in the thick brush on Battle Mountain.

Companies were deployed to each side of the hideout. Captain John Ross led his men around to attack from the front and Joseph Lane and his men approached from the rear. The Indians were surrounded.

Lane gave the orders to fire. The natives were surprised but ready. Both sides, hiding behind trees, bushes and boulders, began shooting at each other and kept up a steady bombardment for four hours. The Indians held. They had plenty of ammunition and they were near a spring, well fortified by logs. The soldiers could find no way to drive them out.

At last the Indians learned that Joseph Lane was with the enemy. Surprisingly they called for a parley. Lane, who had been severely wounded in the shoulder, concealed the wound beneath his coat and met with the chiefs who told him that their hearts were sick of war and killing. They requested a meeting to be held at Table Rock in a week from the day. They would then give up their arms and make a treaty. Lane agreed to the proposition.

For two days both sides kept the truce. The Takelmas and their women carried water to the troops and helped bring the wounded soldiers down the steep mountainside. The Indians went to their villages and waited to see what the peace talks would bring.



CAPTAIN JOHN ROSS, Indian fighter. He commanded troupes in many battles with the Indians, both Modocs and Takelmas. He acted as interpreter at the parley for peace.

more trouble began with the discovery of gold.

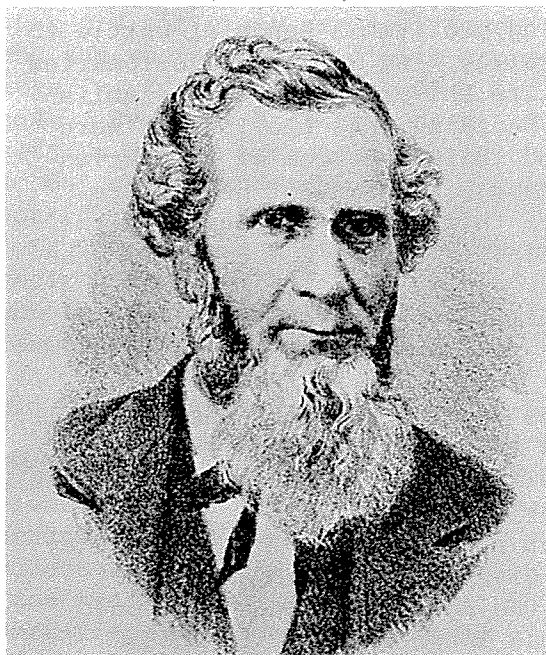
In California in 1848 swarms of men rushed to the mines in the Sierra Mountains. In 1850 a miner made a strike in the northern part of California, and a horde of miners surged into that area. Eventually, in 1852, with the discovery of gold in Jackson Creek the miners flooded into southern Oregon.

One symptom of gold fever is the destruction of the quality of humanity and the development of cruelty. The miners were unscrupulous men who had no respect for law or life. There were constant bloody encounters provoked by both sides. The situation grew more desperate. To make peace, the governor, John Gaines, promised that the whites would leave the Indians alone; the Indians agreed that they would no longer attack the whites. The truce was broken almost before it was made.

The men who used the Indian lands as a passageway to reach another area were great nuisances to the natives, but those travelers went on through, stopping no longer than was necessary. The immigrants and miners settled in and built shacks and cabins.

The men who looked for gold flooded the rivers with mud. Salmon no longer ran up some of the streams. The settlers killed the deer and elk. The farmers fenced the fields. Little remained as it had been before the white man came. The government made promises: the Indians could stay in their old territory; the Americans would give them blankets, clothing, tools and money; they would be paid for their land. *Yet not one promise was kept.*

The situation at last became intolerable for the Takelmas. They doubled their attacks, the whites doubled their acts of revenge, and the tension between them approached the breaking point. Twenty-six white men were ambushed as they forded Rogue River, a pack train was fired upon, and a four-hour battle occurred on Bear Creek. The Indians were becoming more and more formidable and the tragic incidents more and more frequent. There were too many battles, treaties and broken promises. One can't list them all; there isn't space.



JOEL PALMER, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He gave the Takelmas homes which they did not want and tried to make farmers of them.

In 1852 and 1853 the white men established towns in Indian lands. Scottsburg, Kerbyville, Waldo and Jacksonville became active trading settlements.

Joel Palmer was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He realized that the Takelmas had been forced to their outermost boundaries. They needed urgent help. Yet he thought the answer was to change them. They should be more like white men and become farmers. The government should provide them with seeds and farming implements and show them how to cultivate the soil. Missions should be established to teach these fallen people the Gospel.

Before Palmer could initiate his policy, hostilities again erupted. The Indians, forced from their hunting grounds, did not have enough to eat and raided the cabins of the settlers. Several men were killed. The white people gathered in Jacksonville for protection.

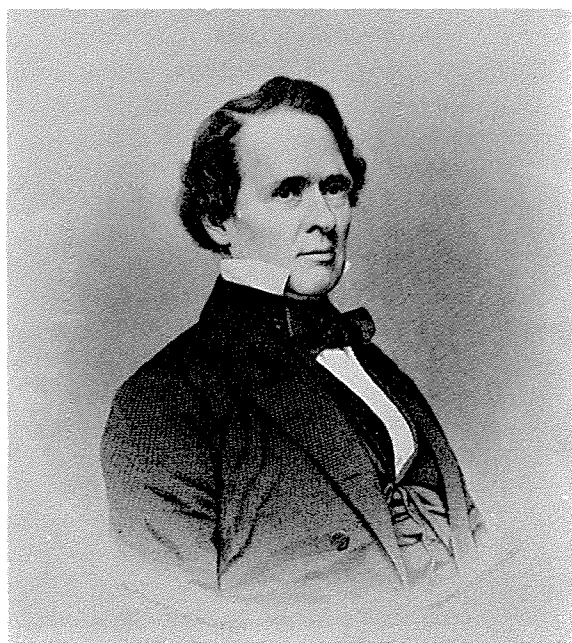
Two Indians were caught, both in war paint, and hanged by a gang of miners. The mob also executed a seven-year old Indian boy who was unlucky enough to appear just at that moment. This brought an immediate

Yet during the respite before the meeting, several unsuspecting Indians were murdered by white men seeking revenge.

In the meantime a twelve-pound howitzer, extra rifles and ammunition were sent from Vancouver to the army. Additional volunteers from the Willamette Valley appeared and joined the troops. The army at this point outnumbered the entire tribe of Takelmas, including men, women and children. The sight of the new arms and the throng of fighting men helped persuade the Indians to concede to the demands made by the whites during the peace talks.

On September 10, leaving their men at the foot of the mountain, eleven unarmed white men rode to the Table Rock encampment. Chief Joseph greeted them. Several hundred armed braves in war paint waited nearby on the hillside. After the talk had continued for several hours, it was abruptly interrupted by the arrival of an exhausted, naked Indian boy who breathlessly announced that a young chief had been captured by miners near the Applegate River. The white men had tied him to a tree and shot him. The assembled warriors became greatly agitated and noisy. They clutched their guns and threatened to hang the eleven members of the peace party. Joseph Lane, appearing outwardly calm, emphatically stated that if that happened it would mean the absolute extinction of the Indians. He assured them he would capture and punish the guilty miners. The angry warriors eventually quieted down and the parley continued.

The Indians agreed to give up their guns and almost all of their lands for peace. They were promised \$60,000 in payment, but the settlers demanded that \$15,000 in damages to their property be deducted from that amount. The lands reserved for the Indians were on the dry sloping hills, covered with poison oak, to the north of Table Rock. The Indians could do nothing but accept the terms. The *Portland Oregonian*, in an editorial, expressed the opinion that since the treaties had meant nothing to the Indians, total extermination was certainly the only course left.



JOSEPH LANE, first Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He was at one time candidate for vice-president of the United States.

At the conclusion of the talks, business and travel once more resumed and the people looked forward to peace. It was not to be. The whites persisted in killing the Indians and the Indians could not resist taking their revenge when the opportunity arose. Several times the Indians threatened renewed warfare.

In 1854 the Indians were in great distress. The battles the year before had prevented them from storing food, and the best root grounds were now occupied by whites. They had given up their guns, and a new law passed by the territorial legislature prohibited the sale of firearms to any Indian. The whites could hunt elk and deer as they wished, but the Takelmas had to survive by using their bows and arrows. The lack of sufficient food induced disease and at least one-fifth of those who entered the preserve died during the winter. Even the once powerful Chief Joseph, the peace maker, had returned to his deserted lodge at Big Bar and had died there of tubercu-

losis. One year after the treaty no houses had been built, no blankets, no farm equipment, or money had been delivered to the Indians. The promises of the whites had brought them only hunger and poverty, and still the unwarranted murder of the Takelmas continued. Deeply concerned for their survival, Samuel Colver, the Indian Agent at Phoenix, gave many of them permission to leave the reservation and return to their old way of life.

There were continual tragic incidents. Whenever an angry Indian threatened a white, some early historian hastened to record it for future history books. The same historians chose to ignore incidents in which the settlers betrayed the Indians. But it was not then the Indians who wanted war. The soldiers spent more time protecting the Indians than they did patrolling the settlers. In October the Agents realized it would be wise for the Takelmas who had left the reservation to return. The Army assisted in rounding them up, but they carelessly overlooked many of them including a band of defiant, hostile warriors.

At this time the infamous "Major" James A. Lupton appeared on the scene. (*Table Rock Sentinel*, Vol. I, No. 8) This bigot, notorious for his hatred of the Indians, led an army of volunteers, fortified with liquor, in a tragic early morning surprise attack on an Indian encampment of old men, women and children. Many inhabitants of the village were killed.

This was the excuse the renegade Indians still at large were waiting for. A small group, under the leadership of Applegate John, set out on a path of revenge. Aside from Europe's holocaust and America's atom bomb the atrocities committed by these Indians upon the white settlers have seldom been matched in recorded history. From Jewett's Ferry on the Rogue to Graves Creek they left a trail of destruction and murder, brutally killing unarmed men, women and children, cattle and horses and burning every building they passed. Surprisingly the homes of the Birdseye and Dean families, both of whom had befriended the Indians, were spared destruction. The raiders passed them by. One wonders that they did not seek out the blood-thirsty miners and the drunken volunteers who had brought on the tragedy.

Their desire for revenge somewhat surfeited, the Indians, now certain that the whites would soon retaliate, withdrew to the hills along Graves Creek. There was no turning back. Both the whites and the Indians were bent on the destruction of their enemy.

The Indian chief, Applegate John, had spent two years making alliances with neighboring tribes. The settlers faced a well armed and well prepared army of at least four-hundred Indians. Bands of warriors from the Shastas, Scott Valley, Graves Creek, Cow Creek, the Umpqua and the Klamath tribes were represented. This conflict was not limited to the Rogue River Valley alone. Indian uprisings swept through the entire Oregon territory.

In Jackson County the volunteers numbered five-hundred mounted men and two companies of Regulars. Their strategy was to push the Indians toward the mouth of the Illinois River and destroy them. It was the end of October 1855.

At the first encounter, the battle of Hungry Hill, the troops planned a surprise attack, but found an abandoned camp instead with the Indians waiting on a well fortified ridge about four miles away. The officers ordered an attack and met with devastating fire from hidden warriors. The white men were driven into a canyon where they were held by rifle fire for 24 hours. In the morning the Indians withdrew. The troops, after burying their dead, returned to the fort. The Indians moved further into the inaccessible mountain passes and established a fortification at Little Meadows just below Galice Creek. Here they could use their skill in making surprise attacks.

During November the volunteers made several raids on the Indian encampment but they had little effect. On Christmas eve the troops attacked an Indian camp on Little Butte Creek. They killed several Indians and took all their horses. At a neighboring battle site the volunteer fought for six hours and killed all

the men in camp. The victorious heroes boasted about their great victory, but the general at the fort in his official report, called it murder. They had killed Old Jake, a longtime friend of the settlers, and his band of thirty old men. The Indian women and children, desperately seeking help, arrived at the fort with their hands and feet frozen.

These outrages added fuel to Chief John's anger. He even made a raid on the reservation, killing the Takelmas' cattle and destroying their property to show his disdain for Indians who had given up. During the winter he made sporadic attacks on the settlers and arrogantly refused to discuss peace. From November to February the constant attacks by the whites had telling effects on the besieged Indians. Hundreds of warriors were killed by the better equipped army and hundreds more deserted to return to their tribes. Many of the Takelmas, hungry, cold and poorly clad, returned to the reservation at Table Rock.

Faced with ultimate defeat, John remained haughty and proud. Even though only a scattering of braves remained in his once powerful army, he refused to admit he was beaten.

In February the government selected the territory along the Oregon coast from Cape Lookout to the Umpqua River to be the Indians' permanent home. The area included two reservations, the Siletz and the Grand Ronde. The reservation originally contained well over a million acres but over the years the government withdrew sections for homesteaders until in time it dwindled to 2600 acres.

Superintendent Palmer decided that the Takelmas must be removed from their preserve and join the other tribes in the Grand Ronde. Agents appointed to make a census of the Indians discovered that there had been a massive loss of life. Only a few hundred Takelmas remained. Never before had existence been so difficult for them. They were in rags, had no houses and little food. Many were ill with measles and tuberculosis.

In the dead of winter, February 22, 1856, the Takelmas began their long "trail of tears." Herded together by a hundred U.S. Army soldiers, they set out on the two hundred mile trip to Grand Ronde. It was a desolate, hungry, despairing group of once imperious Indians. About thirty-five of them who were too old or too sick to walk were provided with wagons; the others started out on foot for a new land, a land foreign to them and one to which they did not wish to go. The end had come for the Takelmas. Scattered behind them on the slopes of Table Rock were their abandoned tools and baskets, their bright red feathers and their dentalium shells. The departure brought a great weeping. The old women wailed as they, and the others, looked for the last time on the lovely valley, their beloved Great River and Mount McLoughlin, topped with winter snow. The wails and moans ceased only when the mourners grew too tired for emotion.

As the march went on the days and nights grew colder. Freezing weather arrived and made the crossing of streams a torturous task. In thirty-two days of walking, eight people died from the cold and exposure.

Arriving finally at Grand Ronde they met few friends. The whites were afraid of the "savages," and the other tribes showed them no welcome. They had held to the pledges made in the Treaty of 1853 and it had brought them only persecution and hunger. Now it brought them exile and death in an alien land. And they were our own Indians.

For a time Chief John held out. With Indians from other tribes he made many raids on the whites, even burning the settlement at Gold Beach. In 1856 the government, realizing that the wars must be stopped, raised an army of over a thousand men. Chief John had only thirty-four exhausted warriors, but he was not ready to surrender. He delivered a message to the commander of the fort:

You are a great chief. So am I. This is my country. . . My heart is sick with fighting but I want to live in my own country. If the white people are willing I will go home to Deer Creek and live among them as I used to do . . . [But] I will not lay down my arms and go with you to the reservation. I will fight. Good-bye.

There was no answer. Chief John led his men to their last battle. Weary with fighting and greatly outnumbered they were soon beaten.

Realizing the futility of further fighting, John attempted to negotiate. He requested that his people be allowed to keep their guns. The reply was to the point: "Continue the fight or tell your people to stack their arms against a rock." Towards evening the defeated warriors came in a group and laid their rifles against a boulder. John was the last to come. Setting his gun down, he suddenly grasped it again and wheeled around to face the soldiers. Before it reached his shoulder, fifty rifles were pointed at him. He slowly turned his back and relinquished his weapon. The last battle had ended. John and his warriors were herded to the reservation at Siletz where it was not the war but the peace which destroyed them.



CHIEF APPLGATE JOHN

He was famous for his taunts aimed at the enemy. When Captain A.J. Smith yelled, "We will catch you and hang you, sir," John shouted back, "Oh? YOU go on reservation. Hiyu muck-a-muck. (Plenty to eat.) Hiyu clothes. (Plenty to wear.) You do not go on reservation, white man, YOU get this rope."




POSTSCRIPT

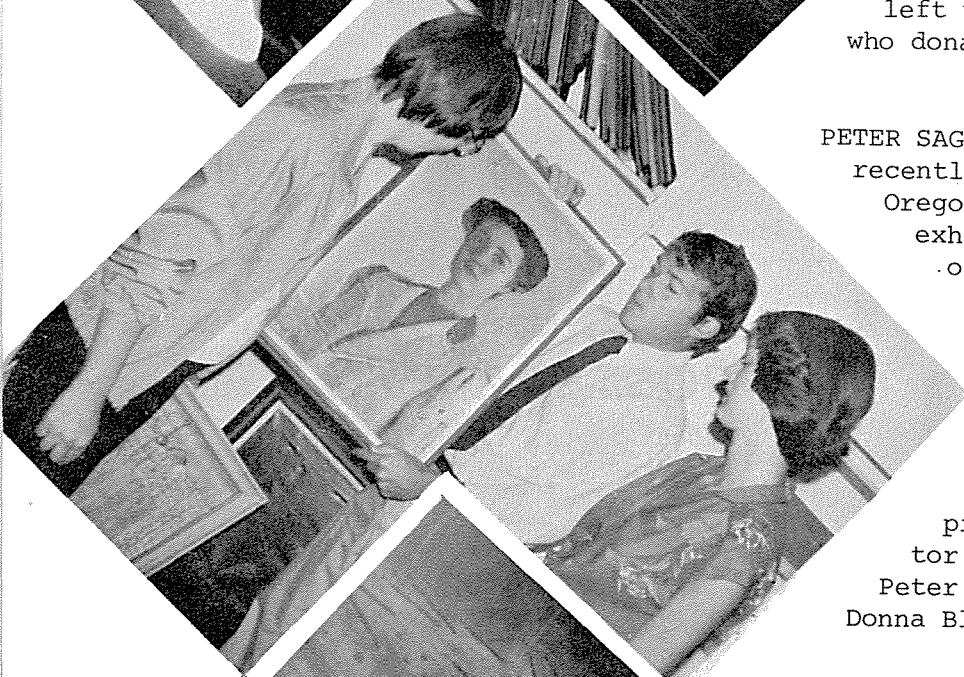
Recent issues of the newsletter have featured stories of conflict with the Rogue Valley Indians presented from the viewpoint of the white settlers. We hasten to state that we are not pro-white nor pro-Indian; we are anti-cruelty. Deliberate unkindness can never be condoned, even when on the surface it appears to be justified. Atrocities by the whites are as deplorable as atrocities by the Indians. In the battles of the Rogue River Indian wars, the Indians suffered utter defeat and were classic victims of the white man's inhumanity. Civil Liberties Union, where were you when we needed you?

There have been many inaccurate stories told about the Indians' battles with the virtuous whites. One fable relates that the Takelmas, pushed to the edge of Table Rock by the advancing soldiers, leaped off the cliffs into Rogue River. That would have been a neat trick - a jump of about a mile through space. Although this report omits a great many recorded facts, we think it is historically accurate.


SOHS ACTIVITIES . . .



PINTO, the museum clown, contributed his talents to the Jerry Lewis Muscular Distrophy Telethon. For two days he manned the fish-bowl which held donations from the public. KYJC radio sponsored the fish-bowl which was located at Sherm's Thunderbird Market on Biddle Road. Pinto gave over 2,000 Jacksonville Bakery cookies to kids who contributed. He is shown at the left with a couple of friends who donated to the telethon.



PETER SAGE, County Commissioner, recently requested the Southern Oregon Historical Society to exhibit artworks on the walls of the reception area in the County Commissioner's office. The first display features ten paintings by Regina Dorland Robinson. Exhibits will be changed every six months. In the picture Jime Matouch, Curator of Exhibits, is assisting Peter Sage and his secretary, Donna Bladek, in the selection.



MIKE BURK tests his skill at operating the new log and buck saw in the children's museum. This replica of logging equipment, which is like that used for cutting the log after it has fallen, is constructed of oak and plywood with carpeting effectively used as bark. It has been most realistically painted. The display is completely safe for children to manipulate and is part of the "hands on" exhibits in the museum.

C. William Burk Director

BILL BURK was born in Ashland, Oregon, forty - give or take a few - years ago. He was raised in Klamath County. After his graduation from the University of Oregon and a hitch in the military, he became involved in museum work.

In 1960 after a short stint as a volunteer worker, he became a part-time employee at the Klamath County Museum in Klamath Falls. In 1965 he was appointed Director and continued his duties there until 1976 when he left to establish a railroad museum in Cottage Grove. This facility included rides on a steam-operated train.

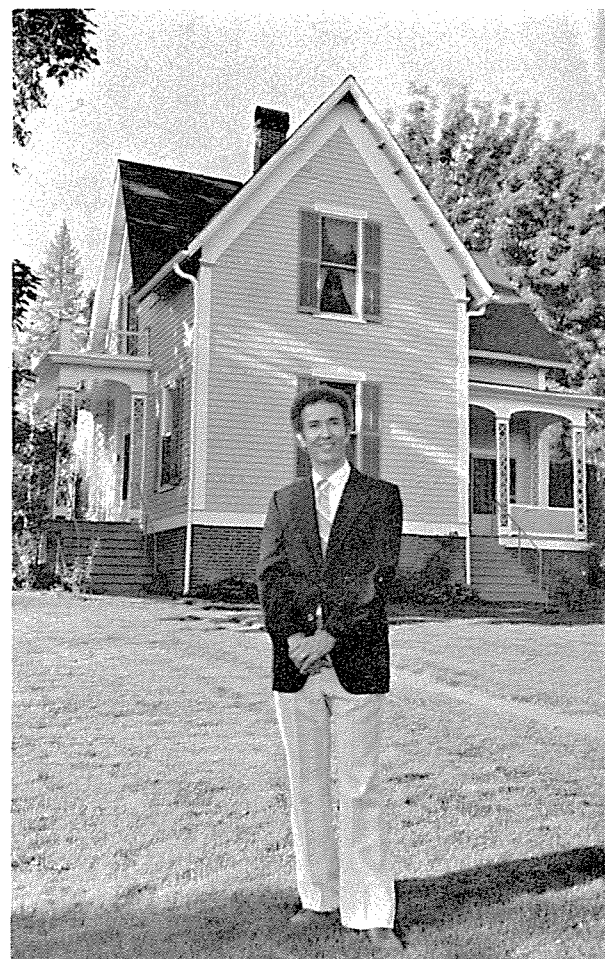
From Cottage Grove he went to Eugene where for two and a half years he was Office Manager and Personnel Director of the Holt Adoption Program. "While I was at Holt," said Bill, "I learned a great deal about sound management techniques." He added, "I also saw more job dedication by the employees there than I had ever seen before." He feels that his experience with the Holt Program has been an extraordinary asset to his professional transactions. During his stay in Cottage Grove and Eugene, he was the President of the Cottage Grove Historical Society and an adviser on the Lane County Co-operative Science Museum Committee.

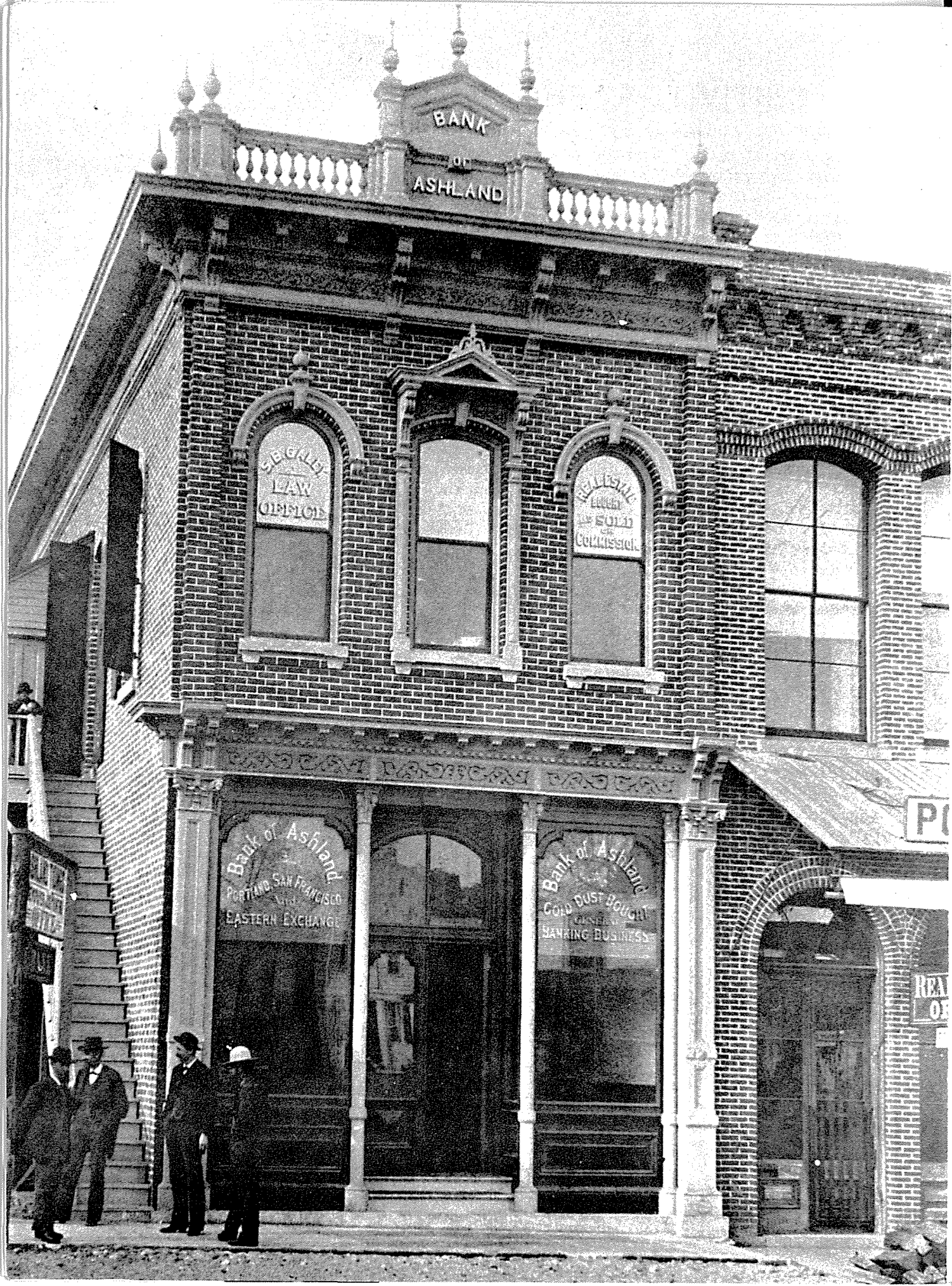
In 1976 he became Director of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. The magnitude of the situation became apparent shortly after his arrival. "The properties and collections were in need of immediate and serious attention," he said, "and there were vacancies in half of the positions for department heads." He discovered there were only five volunteers, and he found the newsletter to be virtually non-existent. "During that first year," he stated, "I frequently asked myself, 'What am I doing here?'"

At last steady progress began to be made. Funding improved and the necessary personnel was added. "At the present time," Bill reported, "we have a solid core of dedicated people on the staff backed by at least eighty volunteers." Currently the membership count is 950, considerably more than the total of 195 in 1976.

He feels that yet to be solved is the need for a new facility to house a Public History Research Center and provide adequate office space. "The situation is critical," he said, "and the necessity has long been recognized by the Board of Trustees."

There is also a need to extend the influence of the Society to other areas in the county in addition to Jacksonville. "The SOHS staff is capable of advancing to these new directions," concluded Bill, "and volunteers in these fields will be greatly appreciated and most welcome."





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BROKER
& SOLID
COMMISSION

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AND
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GENERAL
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05

Bank of Ashland Has Significant History

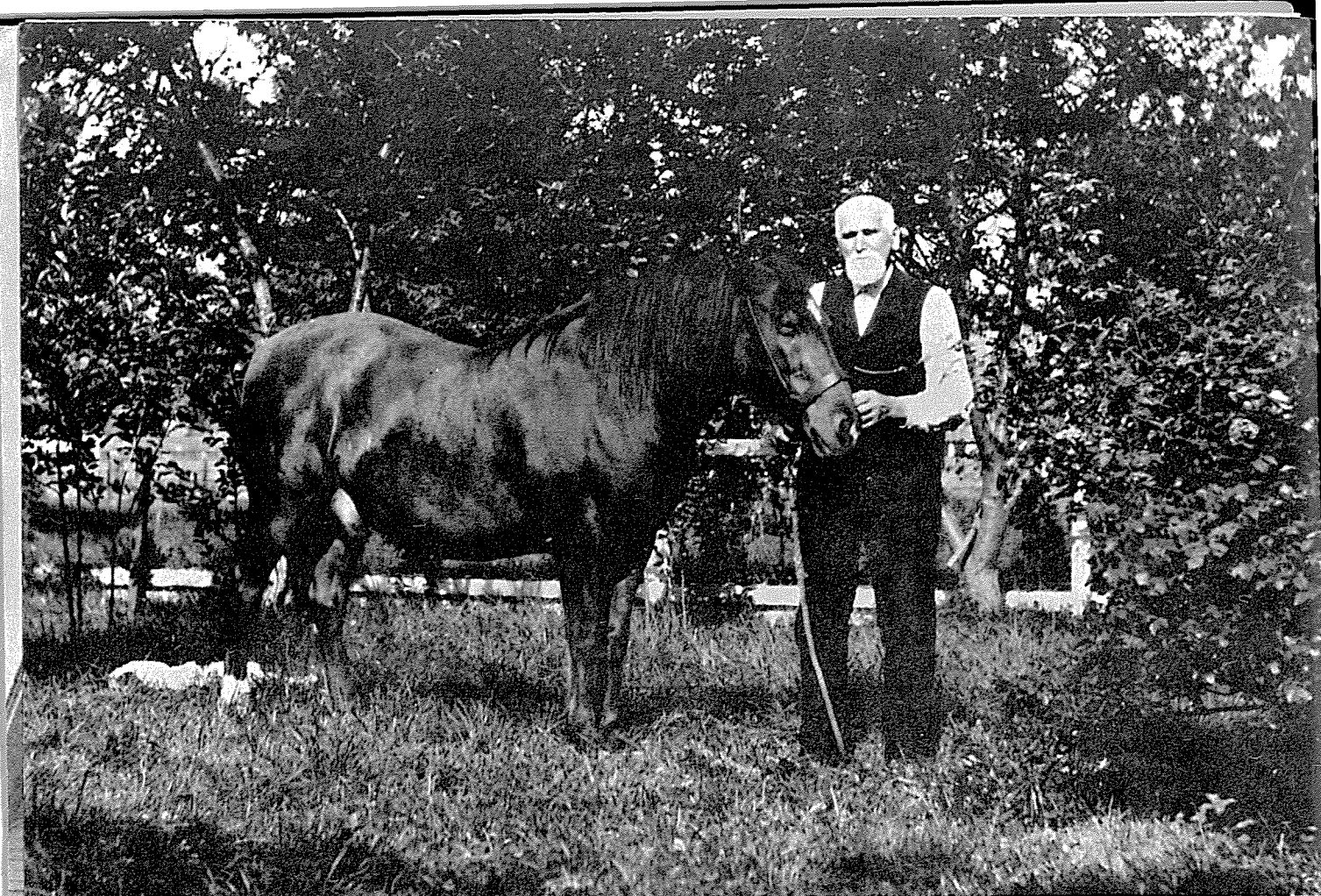


he Bank of Ashland was built in 1884, at a cost of \$6800, to house the first banking facility in the community of Ashland. It is one of several brick buildings on the plaza which replaced the wooden frame structures destroyed by fire in 1879. The front of the first story was constructed of cast-ironwork with plate glass for the windows and doors. The foundation work was done by J.C. Whipp, the Jacksonville stonemason. At that time Ashland was a growing business center with a population of 1500 people. A college, a flour mill, a woolen factory, a public school and several churches were located there.

The founding of this bank brought together Ashland's most successful businessmen and community leaders. W. H. Atkinson was the first president of the bank and served in this position until his death. He was a partner in the Ashland Flouring Mills and business manager of the Ashland Woolen Manufacturing Company. J.M. McCall was the vice-president. He was also a partner in the flour mill, founder of the Ashland Library Association, Brigadier General of the Oregon State Militia, a representative in the Oregon State Legislature and a member of the Board of Regents of the State Normal School. E.V. Carter, the cashier, also served on the board of directors and as janitor for the first five years. He eventually became president of the bank.

The offices of the *Ashland Tidings*, the town's weekly newspaper, were located on the second floor. S.B. Galey, an attorney who married Mr. Carter's daughter, and a real estate agent also had offices there.

In 1909 the Ashland Bank converted to a national bank and became affiliated with the First National Bank. It was relocated in new facilities on East Main Street. The old bank building was sold, and over the years it has housed many other business establishments.



Abel D. Helman and Friend

ABEL D. HELMAN, FOUNDER OF ASHLAND

One has to be astonished when he considers the unlimited vigor, the remarkable energy and the versatility of interests demonstrated by so many pioneers. Men like C. C. Beekman, Squire Hoffman and William Bybee could wash out a panful of gold dust, build a log cabin, break a horse, scatter a few Indians, run for political office and still be home for supper. These men did all these things because, if they didn't, who would?

1850 was no time for specialists. There is an advertisement in a early *Oregon Sentinel*, entered by B. Rostel, a barber in the Orth Building, who, in addition to cutting hair and giving shaves, declared he was good at fractures, external diseases, cupping, leeching, bleeding and extracting teeth at all hours. He could also stuff birds and put them in the most natural shapes. How about that? Today's carburator-man, who doesn't know a differential from a celanoid, should blush. Here's where Abel Helman comes in. He was a master of many skills, he could perform all the necessities, and, in addition, he established one of Oregon's nicest cities, Ashland.

Helman was born in Ohio in 1824 of German parents who had settled on a farm in Ashland County. As a boy he was educated at a "subscription school," a log cabin furnished with rough slab benches and tables. The pupils wrote with quill pens and used slates. When Abel was still a little boy, he began learning the carpenters' trade. In his teens he worked as a cabinet maker. In 1849, when he was 25, he married Martha Kanaga and the two of them settled on

a small farm in Ohio.

Marriage, in his case, didn't dampen his yen for adventure. In 1849 everybody was excited about the discovery of gold in California. Stories reached Ohio of the wonders of the west: the fortunes to be scooped up from the creek beds, the fertile land to be had for the asking, the almost perpetual sunshine. Abel could not resist its lure.

Early in 1850 he left Ashland, Ohio, to get his share. Martha remained at home. She was pregnant. Batting around in rough mining camps and wading through muddy water holes are not exactly required activities for a lady, especially a lady who is preggish for the first time. Abel would return and fetch her after he had struck it rich.

He didn't join a wagon train; he made it the easy way. Starting out in January he traveled, via foot and stagecoach, to New York City where he took passage on a boat going to the Isthmus of Panama. This boat made all local stops and even took a little side excursion up the Mississippi. On the first day of March it docked at the Isthmus. There Abel disembarked and walked the 28 miles to the Pacific side. Once across the Isthmus he again cooled his heels; the north-bound boat left right on schedule - exactly a month later. In May he arrived at San Francisco, almost five months after he had left Ohio. Even with all the rest stops along the way, this snail-paced jaunt beat the socks off tourist class Conestoga Wagon Limited, the route which was taken by almost every other pioneer.

Abel soon found that the life of a prospector is not a mad round of earthly delights. He moved from one mined-out location to another, always hoping for the fortune which lurked just around the bend in the creek. In addition to his failure to find the fabled vein, he was lonely for home and Martha. An entry in his journal, dated March 23, 1851, at Salmon Creek states: "I think if I ever get home, California will never see me again. I never wished myself home until I started this trip and since that, I have wished me there more than twenty times."

Supplies of food were scarce and the cost of the absolute necessities rose so high that prospectors were barely able to exist. In another journal entry, Abel wrote, "Nothing to be had at any price, nor has been for the last two weeks. Flour is \$5 and only one pound to the man." Once during a blizzard, he and several other miners were snowed in for several weeks. They were near starvation and lived for those two weeks on practically nothing but sugar. The group surely couldn't have included one of those anti-sugar advocates who are found haunting the buffet tables, tut-tutting and nagging, "That sugar isn't good for you," and surreptitiously sneaking little chunks when no one is looking.

To Abel the habitat of a prospector was really the pits. Hearing tales about the grandeur of the Willamette Valley in Oregon, he decided to investigate for himself this Garden of Eden. He sold his mining equipment, accepted a job driving a mule team to Oregon, and set out for Salem. On his way he passed through the Rogue River Valley.

The utopia of the Willamette Valley was right in the middle of its wettest season when Abel arrived. The streets were quagmires of black mud, hub-deep. Helpful citizens had laid down boards for walkways across streets, but they had soon submerged. The rain was incessant. All-in-all it wasn't a big turn-on for Abel who concluded that if this was the best the far-famed Willamette Valley had to offer, it should have been left to the Indians. He retraced his journey back to Yreka where he worked as a carpenter and cabinet maker until 1853.

It was only natural for him to recall, from time-to-time, the pretty valley he had passed through in southern Oregon. He began to believe that opportunities there might be unlimited, and he decided to return. At this time Abel met several men who became his associates for the rest of his life. One of them, Eber Emery, had come from Ashland, Ohio, Abel's birthplace, and a second, James Cardwell, had come from Ashland, Kentucky. These three men decided to join forces and soon they

sallied forth on foot, headed for Jacksonville to establish their mining claims. By the time they reached southern Oregon they found that all the successful claims had already been staked out. They noted, however, that lumber was selling at startingly high prices, and they determined that, since there was no mill in the valley, they could strike it rich in the lumber business far sooner and much easier than they could in the creek beds.

They located a suitable spot at the foot of the Siskiyou Mountains near a stream which they called Rock Creek. It was later named Ashland Creek. The Indians had long before found this locality to be a desirable one and they had established a village there. When Abel and his crew began construction of the mill, the Indians departed for a less populated place.

The mill was started in February of that year and completed in June. The name they selected for their joint enterprise was, not suprisingly, the Ashland Sawmill. The mill proved to be successful beyond their expectations. Settlers at Jacksonville provided an eager market for their lumber.

Two years earlier Eber Emery had, like Abel Helman, left his wife and child in Ohio. He and Abel had filed for their donation land claims when the construction of the mill began. It was time to go back and round-up their families, but that required only one man, and both of them wanted to go. They drew straws and Abel won the longer one. That's as it should be; after all, he's our hero.

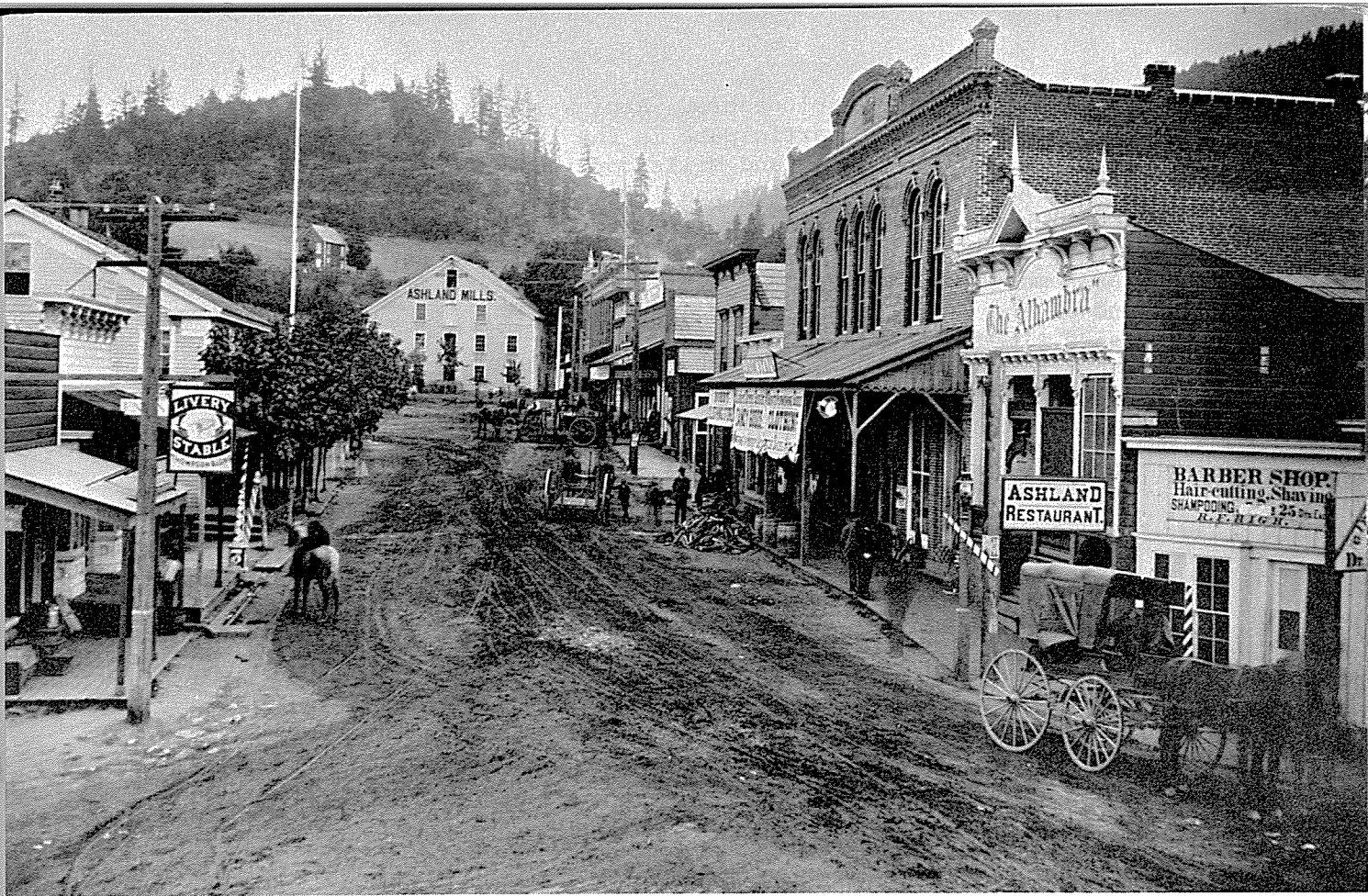
He began his long trip this time by hiking to Knight's Landing, near the present site of Crescent City, where he boarded a small freighter and sailed to San Francisco. From then on, following the route he had traveled almost three years earlier, he reached Ohio in 1853. He wrote in his journal, "It cost me, Abel D. Helman, to go from Ashland Sawmill, O.T., to Rawsburg, Ohio, \$254.24." That's not cheap, but a wait for the Southern Pacific would have taken longer.

Upon arrival at his old home, Abel sold his farm, helped Eber's wife dispose of her stuff - they held a mid-nineteenth century garage sale - and gathering in his brother John, and Eber's brother Jake, Abel appointed himself tour-guide and escorted the group to Oregon. At Panama he hired mules and the two ladies rode across the Isthmus. They made it to Red Bluff by water, and from Red Bluff to Yreka they again went via mule. Eber Emery met them at Yreka with wagons, expecting that they would be heavily loaded with household goods, but almost all of their possessions had been lost or stolen along the way. Although angry Indians were lurking in the mountain passes, the party arrived safely in the Rogue River Valley in style, and the vivid autumn leaves gave them a welcome.

While Abel was away Eber had built a log cabin, and for the first year both families lived there. During the winter Abel constructed for his family the first frame house in the settlement. His donation land claim, including one also filed for Martha, extended through the present plaza area up into the park, almost to the bandshell, and down to the "flats" below the present railroad tracks. Oh, that Abel. He certainly used his intuition glands when he established that claim. He now owned nearly all of the most desirable land in the area.

On January 7, 1854, the Helmans' second child arrived, the first baby to be born in the settlement of Ashland Sawmill. They named him John Kanagy, his mother having come from a long line of Kanagies.

Earlier, in 1852, E. K. Anderson had brought the first supply of wheat seeds into the area, and James Russell had done the same with seed potatoes. Many of the settlers, including Helman and Emery, had extensive fields under cultivation. Abel the Intuitive could see that there would soon be great need for a grist mill. The two Emerys and a fellow named Morris joined with him in this endeavor, and they built a flour mill at the present entrance to Lithia Park. They dug a mill race and brought water in from Rock Creek to turn the huge mill wheel. In the



The Ashland Flour Mill is pictured in the far background. The two-story structure on the left is the Ashland House, Helman's hotel.

fall of 1854 the first flour was made from wheat raised on the Anderson homestead. It was cause for a wowsor of a celebration. They set up a groaning board, heavy with pioneer cooking - that is not to say the pioneer cooking was heavy, although with no pre-sifted, vitamin-enriched and preservative-packed flour what could you expect? (Betty Crocker was undeveloped and had not yet made her impact.) And a big gala ball was held in the sawmill. Such a party! The Indians from the wrong side of the tracks probably sneaked a peek through the windows to see those pushy whites cut didoes.

Early on, Abel had a vision that one day the settlement would become a city. In 1855 he laid out twelve lots around the plaza and included a site for a City Hall. In the next few years he sold off these sections, one by one, as the town grew. A blacksmith shop, a meat market, a cabinet shop, and a general store (owned by Robert Hargadine) appeared. The original Emery cabin was turned into a school. The first teacher was Frank Clark, called "Hog" Frank by the boys. Some disciplinarian. Intimidated, no doubt, by those big louts who sat in the back row, he obviously spared the rod.

By 1855 the postoffice was established. Until then the mail service had been slow and uncertain, but with stagecoaches on a regular run between Portland and Sacramento, mail began arriving in the settlement once a month. Abel, having been instrumental in establishing the postoffice, was appointed Postmaster and held that position for 27 years until 1882. A second postmaster was paid an unbelievable \$600 a year for his services; one can only surmise the handsome salary bestowed upon Abel.

The year, 1855 to 1856, was the period of the final bitter resistance made by the Rogue River Valley Indians. Many times women and children fled to Fort

Wagner and the men joined the volunteers. Abel was assigned duty at the fort with The Mountain Boys and did not participate in the last battles against the Indians.

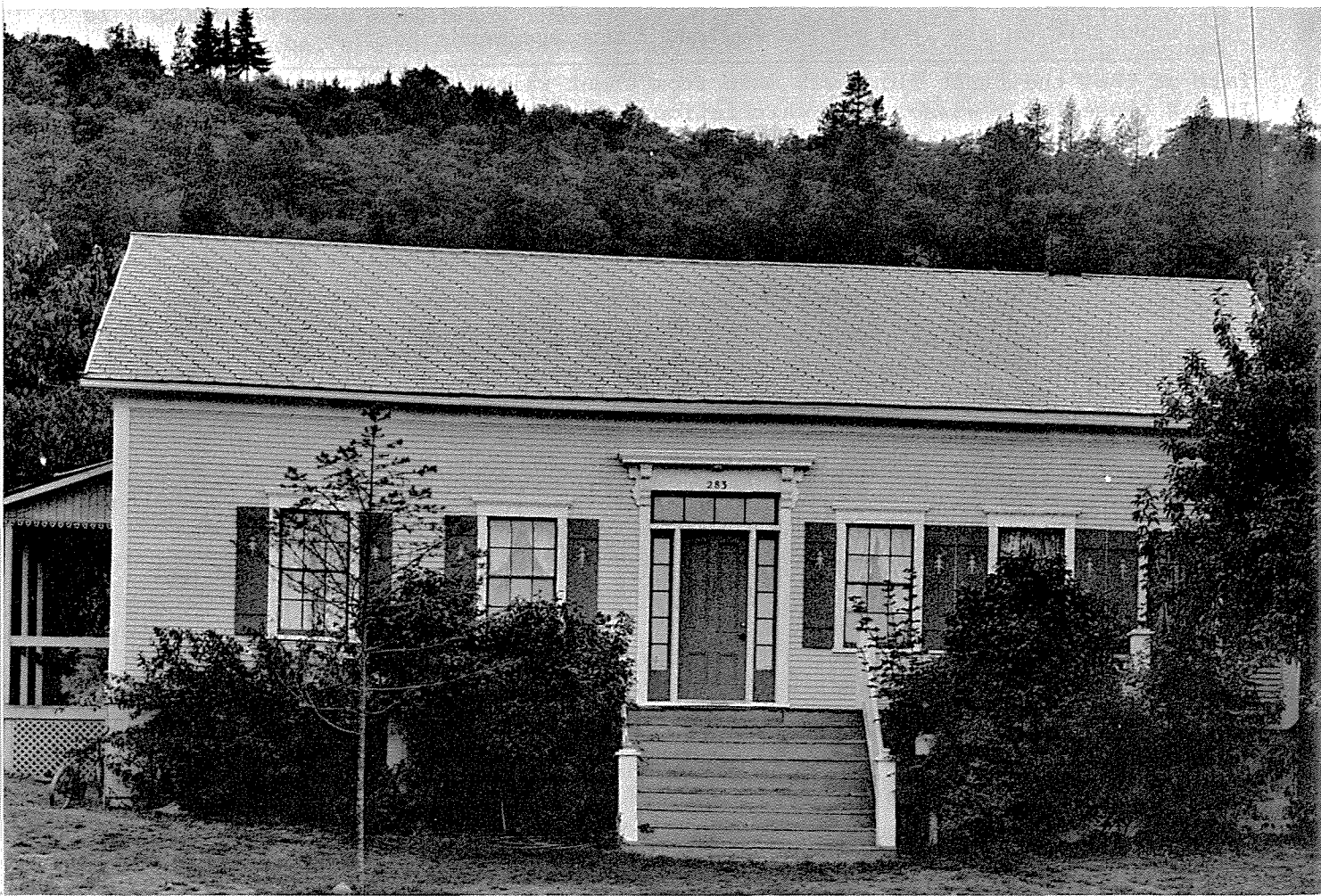
In the succeeding years, Ashland Mills continued to grow. Eber Emery built a large hotel, the Ashland House, which was later purchased and operated by Abel. It became a well-known stopping place for travelers. A permanent school and a church were built. During the Civil War Abel was made captain of a company of men who served as home guards, and from then on he was called Captain Helman. Shortly after the end of the Civil War the last of the Helman children was born. They were christened Almeda Lizette, John Kanagy, Mary Elizabeth, Martha Jane, Abe Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, Ulysses S. Grant and Otis Orange. Wow. A run-through the names of those kids will reveal Abel's favorite political party. Abel's frame house became too small and another house with four rooms was built in 1860. The Helman Elementary School now stands on the site of the first house.

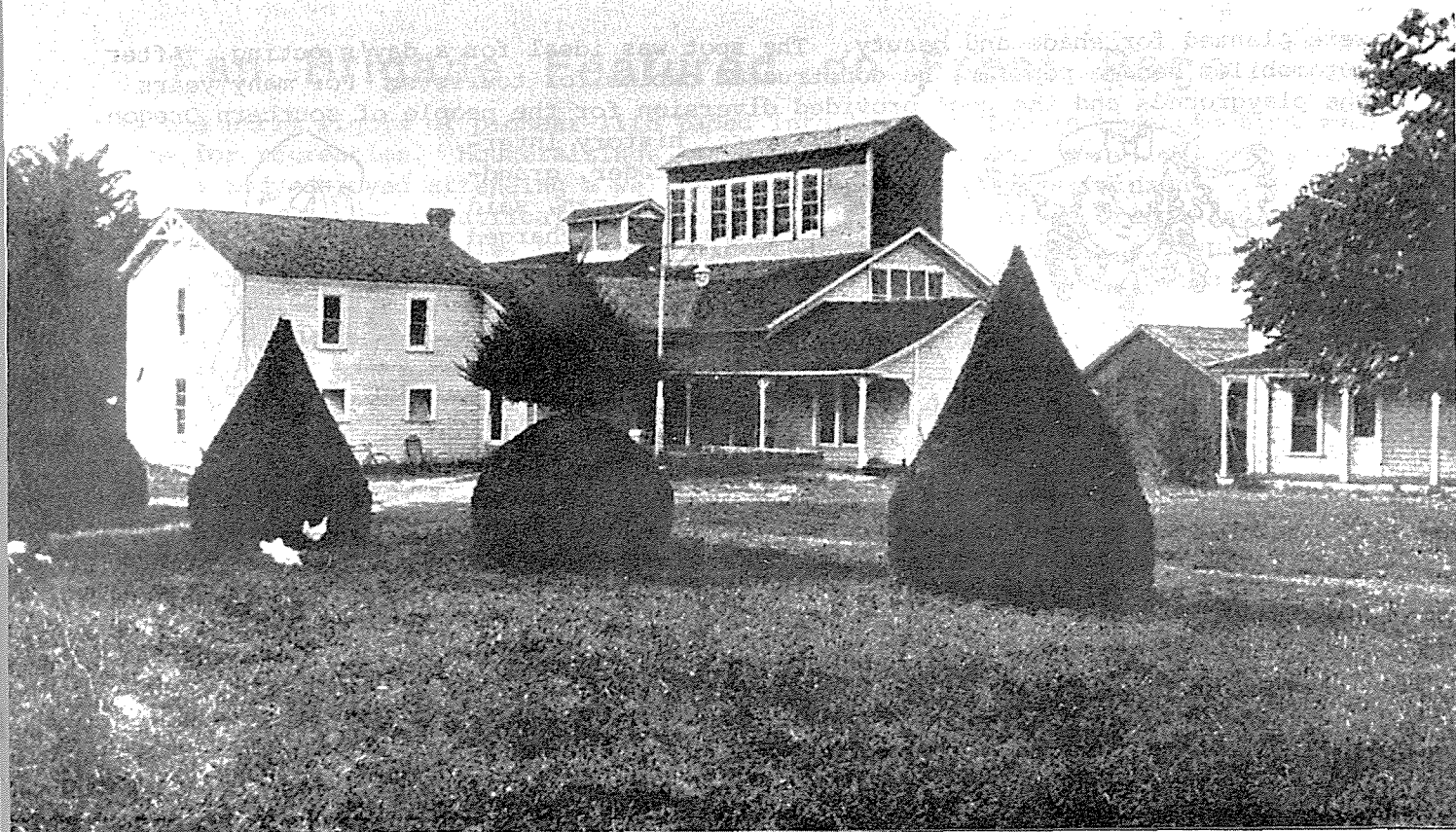
The second house is still standing on the hillside overlooking Bear Creek Valley. Over the years rooms have been added and the house is much larger than it was originally. In July of this year, at the request of its present owners, the Bradfords, the house was given a Southern Oregon Historical Society marker.

*I*n 1881 Martha died. Abel lived until 1910. He had made the first land claim in Ashland, had built the first sawmill, the first frame house and the first flour mill. He had been a farmer, a miner, a carpenter, a cabinet maker, a hotel keeper, an orchardist, a military officer, a postmaster, a member of the school board, the founder of a city and an exemplary husband and father.

His children all grew to maturity and presented him with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He well deserved the dignity of being remembered and honored as a worthy and memorable Ashland pioneer.

Photograph by Douglas Smith





The Helmans Baths. The third story was an addition to provide for the extension of the great slide. The structure contained two pools.

IX. LANDMARKS NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

The Helman Sulphur Baths

Long before Abel Helman acquired his land claim, the Indians had discovered the warm sulphur springs which flowed in the northwest corner of the area. They thought the white sulphur water had medicinal benefits and many of them bathed there. Several villages had been established nearby, but when Helman turned the region into his cow pasture, the Indians moved to more remote areas.

The first white man to test the curative powers of the water was James Russell (the husband of Ann Haseltine Hill, *Sentinel*, Vol. I No.4). He burrowed into the sand, allowed the water to flow around his rheumatic joints, and, upon emerging from the mud, declared himself cured. Abel Helman and Mrs. J. M. McCall, who were both afflicted with rheumatism, claimed that they had the same experience.

Reports of the magical waters spread throughout southern Oregon and soon dozens of sufferers arrived at the cow pasture to try the waters. Eventually it was determined that the mud baths cured not only rheumatism and sciatica, but skin diseases and stomach trouble disappeared as well.

In 1886 Grant Helman, deciding the visitors might prefer a little more privacy as they wallowed in the mud, built a small bath house with tubs in three separate rooms. It was not long before small boys discovered the pleasures of skinny-dipping in the warm water, and Grant, to accommodate them, built the first swimming pool in the valley. When more and more children and adults arrived for daily dips, Grant began charging a dime for the privilege. Helman Baths was born.

Otil Helman, succeeding Grant as manager, developed a public park. He laid out a baseball diamond and built a grand stand. A maple grove and many conifers

were planted for shade and beauty. The spot was ideal for a day's outing. After automobiles became popular, he constructed cabins for tourists. For many years the playgrounds and the pool provided diversion for the people of southern Oregon.



In an oral history interview Mrs. Almeda Coder, granddaughter of Abel Helman, said that her Uncle Otis charged only twenty-five cents admission. If the office furnished the hosiery, there was a ten-cent fee additional. "Some of the women thought they had to wear hosiery," Mrs. Coder added. "The ladies wore bloomers, and on top of the bloomers was a waist arrangement and the skirt went down below the knees. You can imagine how much swimming a woman could do in a costume like that. But anything else would have been absolutely indecent!"



In 1956 the complex was closed. The trees were uprooted and the building fell into great disrepair. In 1979 the building burned. The drafty wooden structure was almost consumed by flames by the time the firemen arrived.

In 1980 the present owner of the pool, Alia Eggert, had both pools covered with a steel building constructed on a framework of steel. It is not open to the public.

OVERBECK LEDGERS REVEAL PURCHASES

Local Citizens Buy Patent Medicines

Castor oil, Mustang liniment, saltpeter -- and medical services -- were just a few of the items sold by Jacksonville physician Andrew Overbeck to his patients during the 1860s. Overbeck lived and practiced medicine in Jacksonville from 1852 until his death in 1872. His ledgers, recently acquired by the Society, cover the years from 1859 to 1872 and include purchases made by patients from Ashland, Rock Point and Jackass (now Forest) Creek as well as Jacksonville.

Peggy Haines, SOHS librarian, stated that one researcher who used the ledgers declared, "It's just like peeking into somebody's medicine cabinet." The account books provide information on the purchases made by many citizens of early southern Oregon. Squire Hoffman bought liniment for his horses, cologne for his wife, and sal soda for himself. Helms and Wintjen, owners of the Table Rock Billiard Saloon, bought four dollars worth of Tom and Jerry, two dollars worth of billiard balls, and fifty cents worth of fly-paper. C.C. Beekman purchased fleapowder, birdseed and six bath tickets. William Bybee bought four dozen sarsaparilla, a court plaster, Shasta Alternative Syrup and three dollars worth of medicine for Elizabeth Ann.

The two volumes are housed in the research library, located in the main museum. Researchers are welcome to come in and peek into the medicine cabinets of early Jackson County via Dr. Oberbeck's ledgers.

Fan Brigade Featured on Front Page

As the early rigors of pioneer life faded into history, people began to find more time for recreation. Houseraising, dances and picnics were nice, but occasionally a body enjoyed attending a well-rehearsed, sit-down entertainment. Newspapers report that theatrical troupes traveled through southern Oregon and presented dramas or musicals, but these offerings were infrequent. A couple of times the Wizard Snake Oil Troup put on a musical show and sold a batch or two of its rare and exotic elixir to the townspeople. But, for the most part, enterprising folks organized their own do-it-yourself programs.

Any well furnished parlor had on casual display a volume of sentimental poems and lofty thoughts. Many cultured ladies could speak a piece or render a vocal solo on short notice, and some of them even had dazzling tremolos. Of course the text should point up a moral virtue, and the more heart-breaking the selection, the more deeply it was appreciated. A typical recitation might start with such a beguiling question as: "Why are you so stiff and cold, little cat? Are you happy where you're at, little cat?" This pathetic opus should be accompanied with the pantomime of caressing the poor creature's lifeless bod. A plea to dissuade all nice young men from entering the saloon - or worse - was always welcome. The elocutionist could get right to the point with

It is lighted, we know, like a palace,
That fair, gilded temple of sin;
It has signs on the walls; let us read them:
'The best of wine, brandy, and gin' ...
It will tarnish your glorious manhood,
My son, oh, my son, don't go in!

Tableaux vivants were popular and the actors didn't have to memorize lines. A young couple could strike a pose and present "The Soldier's Farewell to His Love" with little or no rehearsal. "'Tis Better to Die than to Endure" is the view, frozen for an instant in time, of a maiden on one knee, her little hand held aloft clasping a dagger, just at the moment before she plunges it into her poor betrayed heart. The actress might wear an oversized white nightgown and hold a white lily in her other hand to point up the purity aspect.

The program, however, had to have a little physical action. No big problem. Round up a gaggle of pretty girls, teach them a couple of drill routines, give them a little musical background and put them on the docket. Jacksonville had several of these delightful groups. Fortunately the Scarf Team, the Broom Club and the Fan Brigade were photographed by Peter Britt. The cover of this issue is a picture of the Fan Brigade taken in the early 1890s. The girls are (top row) Jo Nunan and Billie Muller; (third row) Mamie Donegan, Jennie Reams and Lulu Jones, (second row) Emma Helms, Maud Kress and Anna Helms; (front) Ella Orth.

Today, of course, television provides instant entertainment turned out with slick professionalism, but, golly, what a lot of spontaneity and charm have been lost forever.

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Historical Society to Sponsor Art Exhibit

The Southern Oregon Historical Society will sponsor a fine arts exhibit in the U.S. Hotel ballroom in Jacksonville from October 31 to November 8. Paintings and drawings by Regina Dorland Robinson (1892-1917) will be on display.

Featured also will be paintings by four Rogue River Valley women artists: Judy Howard, Betty LaDuke Westigard, Carol Rose and Elaine Witteveen. In addition the exhibit will include photopanel from the Smithsonian Institute showing the art conservators' techniques of examining and treating paintings.

Two opening receptions will be given. The first, for SOHS members, will be held on Thursday, October 29, from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M. A second, for members of the Rogue Valley Art Association, is scheduled for Friday, October 30, from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.

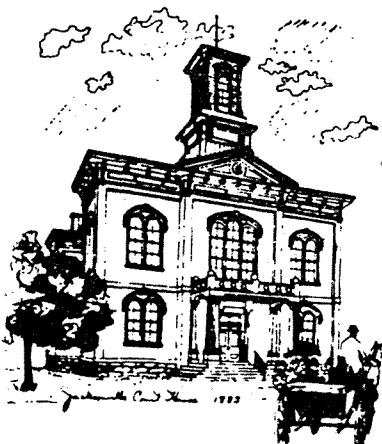
The exhibit will be open to the public from October 31 to November 8, 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The following became members of the Southern Oregon Historical Society during the months of July and August, 1981. We welcome them.

Frank R. Alley III, Medford
Glen C. Anderson, Anchorage
William Bennett, Toledo OR
Maxine Bigelow, Medford
Mr. R.D. Biggs, Medford
Jean Bowen, Redding
Rebecca Bowles, Redding
Doris Coster, Medford
Mr. & Mrs. E. Cossette, Central Point
Gale Culy, Medford
Maxine Daly, Seattle
Katheryn Davidson, Medford
Mrs. Arthur Davies, Jacksonville
Marguerite Fields, Medford

Zelda Hoyt, Nephi, Utah
Tom Irvin, Ashland
Wendell Johnson, Eugene
Mrs. E.W. Kessler, Medford
Betty A. Meyers, Medford
William Regan, Buena Park CA
Carol E. Sass, Redding
Mary Jo Smith, Jacksonville
Mr. & Mrs. K. Smith, Ashland
Anna N. Wendt, Central Point
George & Lillian Wendt, Modesto
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