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# THE TABLE ROCK SENTINEL

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NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# Director's Corner

Volunteers! Now there's a word that the Director's Corner has often emphasized. It's an old subject, but one that is always of top importance around SOHS.

We recently celebrated National Volunteers Week by hosting a luncheon which was attended by 50 of our 140 volunteers. These people annually give us from 4000 to 6000 hours of dedicated, often tedious work, and it is frequently work which we could not afford to pay someone to do.

As deeply as we appreciate the endeavors of our volunteers, we think we can make even more advantageous use of their time and, at the same instant, make their efforts more interesting to them. We will soon establish a formal training program which will provide them with more in-depth experiences in our various departments and teach them more about the historical society itself. We want them to become an integral part of our staff.

To assist us in this project, Mrs. Marilyn Carson has agreed to edit a newsletter designed solely for these workers. This publication will offer news and features of interest, and it will keep the volunteers informed of current and future plans and activities of the historical society. Maureen Smith, our membership secretary, has agreed to assume the additional duties of a co-ordinator, and with the help of other members of the staff and other experienced workers, she will develop the new program. Although she is presently doing her homework, the project will not be officially underway until July 1, 1983.

To make the volunteers and the staff a more unified team, a volunteer will attend one staff meeting each month, along with representatives from the Gold Diggers Guild, the Museum Quilters and the Museum Performers. Those at the meeting will be encouraged to contribute their ideas and suggestions to the group.

For the present, those interested are encouraged to make suggestions to Maureen, and, at the same time, to recruit a friend. Your contribution will be even more important and indispensable in the future.

Bill Burk

Cover photograph: BUM NEUBER'S JACKSONVILLE GOLD BRICKS  
Top row, left to right: Ed Donegan, Pat Donegan, Charley Dunford, Charley Nunan, Louis Ulrich. Bottom row, Luther Davidson, Dick Herlog, Harry Thresher, Dick Donegan, Chuck Wilcox. Southern Oregon historians will be able to spot, among others in the grand stand, Henry Hoefs, Peter Applegate, Vance Colvig, Dave Cronemiller and Don Colvig.

Features in the Table Rock Sentinel are written by Raymond Lewis.

## THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Photographer	Doug Smith	899-7522



**A** SAHEL and ALEXIS HUBBARD came to Oregon in 1885. Their father, who had preceded them in 1883, had established an implement business, first in Jacksonville and then in Medford, at the corner of East Main and Riverside Avenue. After the store was moved across the street to its present location in 1891, it became the Hubbard Brothers Hardware. This picture was apparently taken a few years later. This is a guess based on the fact that the *Medford Enquirer* (office in the background), a daily newspaper, was established in 1894 and ceased publication in 1904. Swem's building and the Nash Hotel tower are visible in the background.




 To a native of America, baseball is an instinct. If you hand a stick to a toddler, who doesn't know first base from a mud pie, and toss him a ball, he'll whack it soundly, intuitively run around the field in a circle, and return ecstatically to home plate. He will also know instinctively that three strikes are out and that a little spit and a sprinkling of dust on the bat will produce a more efficient implement. Thus, after the pioneer had toned down the belligerent natives a little and finally got the crop in, his next natural move was to whip-up a baseball game.

In southern Oregon there wasn't any formal organization of teams for a couple of decades; baseball was a let's-choose-up-sides-and-have-at-it situation. But by 1875 several teams had been organized here and there around the countryside and the players had decided they were ready to outdo their competition.

A confident bunch in Ashland concluded that they were practically invincible and that they could smear just about any other team that would meet them, man-to-man. On June 17, 1876, the following announcement appeared in the *Ashland Tidings*:

BASE BALL - Ho! ye that thirst for base-ballists fame, come to the

front or forever after hold your peace! The Ashland Base-Ball Club hereby challenges any club in southern Oregon or northern California...Yreka and Jacksonville papers please copy.

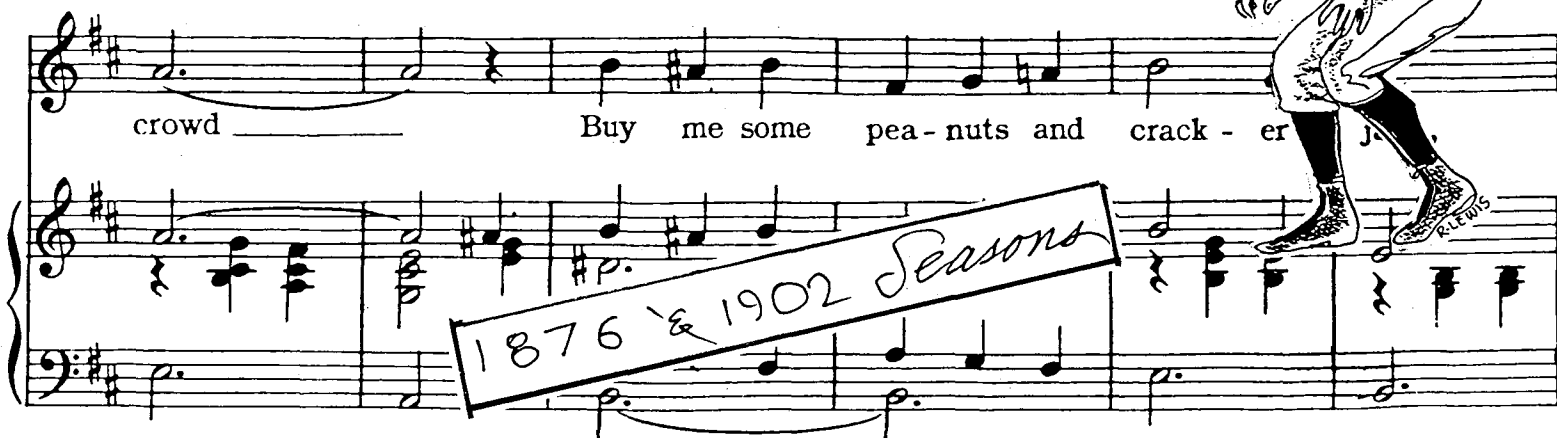
J.D. FOUNTAIN, Pres't  
 G.H. GILLETT, Sec'y

Ashland players had been enthusiastic, and so many eager candidates had turned out, that Messrs Fountain and Gillett made up two teams: The First Nine (A-one players) and The Second Nine (scrubs).

By July 1, the Ashland B.B. Club had accepted two challenges: one from the Greenhorn B.B. Club of Yreka and the other from the scrubs of Jacksonville. The *Tidings* boasted: "On the Glorious Fourth the Ashland teams will easily clean out the Jacksonville and Yreka clubs!"

The Yreka team was a snap. Ashland's First Nine beat by a score of 40-32. But Jacksonville's scrub team neatly swamped the Second Nine by a score of 73-38. Some of the Ashland rooters hinted that there were some first stringers slyly added to the Jacksonville scrubs. Ten days later, however, Ashland's First Nine met Jacksonville and won 27-23. By now Ashland's BBers were feeling pretty classy and they challenged the Mystic B.B. Club of Fort Klamath. Again they

# Take Me Out To The Ball Game



came in winners, 25-8. They were obviously the Elite, with a 3-0 record and handy wins over Yreka, Jacksonville and Fort Klamath. In fact they were such a powerhouse that no one wanted a rematch, and the team members had to sit around idly basking in their glory.

But the boys at Jacksonville, after some concentrated practice, regained their confidence, and, deciding to try for a second go at it, challenged Ashland to a play off game. The unbeatables enthusiastically accepted.

The natives of Jacksonville then concluded that since their team had done the challenging, the players must have a few tricks up their collective sleeve and would be certain to flatten the competition. The betting began and it was heavy. The fans in Jacksonville had a sure thing going. They bet with anyone who would meet their boast. Even the Jacksonville players got carried away and bet on themselves. The newspaper announced that there was at least \$20,000 riding on the game, and, at that time, \$20,000 wasn't just chicken scratch.

The game was a fitting way to end the season. The *Ashland Tidings* declared that each club was "thoroughly disciplined, and very skillful playing is anticipated." The bleachers were full and some of the fans had to

stand. Everyone was agog, eagerly awaiting the show-down when his side would wipe out those bums on the opposing team.

The game finally began with a noisy fanfare. It would take a little time for the Jacksonville tricksters to get started, and their cocksure supporters weren't concerned when Ashland easily took the lead in the first couple of innings. But as the game continued with Ashland still ahead and none of the Jacksonville players pulling spectacular tricks or rabbits out of their caps, their dumbfounded supporters grew worried and silent. As inning after inning slipped by with Ashland always in the lead, some of those who had made sizable wagers and were in peril of losing their shirts, realized that something must be done.

When the score was 29-21, in the eighth inning, with Jacksonville at the plate, a bunch of rowdies from the grandstand stormed out onto the field, loudly declaring that the umpire had made an incorrect ruling three innings before. They bullied two players off the field and milled around arguing and waving their arms. The Captain of the Jacksonville team, who had apparently bet heavily on his own boys, sided with the noisy complainers, and the umpire and the managers of the teams called off the

game.

Since the game was halted before the full nine innings were played, the argumentative Jacksonville fans announced the game was unfinished and that all bets were off. They withdrew their money from the pot, and the season ended with an undeclared victory for Ashland. The *Tidings* reported: "To the credit of the Jacksonville club, they behaved like gentlemen, and in nowise endorsed the actions of those who bursted up the game."

Thus ended the first big southern Oregon competition.

## PART II

**T**he second season of interest which is worthy of a brief review took place eighty-one years ago, in 1902. In Jacksonville, during the early spring of that year, George Neuber and a partner, Mr. Taylor, started construction on a ball playing field which was located at the present sight of Van Wey's Market. The ball park was built to take the place of the one at Bybee's Grove which had not been maintained and was a mile or so from town. The *Democratic Times* reported that the new field was being prepared at great expense and that a fine grandstand had been constructed. An eight foot fence was put up around the area to shield it from the street, and to discourage any spectators without tickets. In addition to the impressive diamond, the Jacksonville players had been supplied with brand, spanking new uniforms, blue in color and trimmed with gold. Each suit had cost almost \$7 so they were naturally quite splendid.

On May 1, 1902, a few days before the work on the field was complete, the Jacksonville team went to Applegate to meet the Applegate team in a pre-season



game. The Jacksonville line up was:

J. Pernoll, catcher  
Pat Donegan, pitcher  
Charles Nunan, short stop  
Louis Ulrich, first base  
Harry Helms, second base  
Oscar Lewis, third base  
R. Donegan, left field  
Armstrong, right field  
Wendt, center field.  
The Applegate lineup:  
H. Sandry, catcher  
Sandry, pitcher

Offenbacher, short stop  
Barkdull, first base  
Ray, second base  
F. Bolt, third base  
Beatle, right field  
Matney, center field.

UMPIRE.....Judge Prim

The newspaper editor promised a close contest but after the game, he reported that the Applegate players lacked practice. That was no great wonder. During April a progressive farmer can't dilly-dally around practicing ball; he has to be in his fields. The Jacksonville team didn't wear their natty new uniforms--they were saving them for the grand opening of the Neuber-Taylor park--but they played a fine game and Pat Donegan, Pernoll and Ulrich performed like professionals. The final score was Jacksonville 21, Applegate 2.



The eagerly awaited official opening of the Neuber-Taylor field was held on May 22, with the home team in their new blue flannel suits, meeting the Medford club. A special train left Medford at 1:15, bringing a load of spectators to the county seat. Jacksonville's men played in the same positions as they had at the Applegate game. The Medford team was made up of Dow ss, Myers lb,

Anderson p, Brous 2b, Morrison rf, Isaacs cf, Kelso 3b, Rothermal lf, and McCaulay c. The umpire was again Judge Prim.

The *Times* review grieved that "By all the traditions of baseball, the game should have been Jacksonville's; but they fell down in the seventh." Rats. And in those flashy new uniforms, too. The *Times* continued, "In the seventh Jacksonville allowed the ball to be knocked all over the field, the Medford players traveling around the diamond in rapid succession until 9 had crossed home plate...But it was one of the best games ever played in the county and it ended by a score of 9 to 6 in favor of the visitors." If there were any rowdy, small time gamblers in the new grandstand, they stayed in their reserved seats and didn't barge out onto the field to embarrass the citizens as that bunch of thugs had done earlier, in 1876. Probably they had all put their money on Medford this time, and gleefully watched as their hometown got skillfully creamed.

The second game on the new field was held on June 5, between Ashland's Thornton and Hildreth team and the Medford club. Ashland's players were Webb 3b, Engle 1b, Closser ss, Hammond 1, Sackett 2b, Robley p, Carter cf, Stroop rf, and Ross cf. Ashland also brought along a whole dugout full of substitute players: Stanley, Redwine, Cooper, Cline, Hulen, Derrick, Rice, Somers, McNeil and Miller. The umpire was Jacksonville's star player and pianist, Pat Donegan.

The review:

"It was a fast snappy game. Robley, the Ashland pitcher, easily fanned Anderson and Dow, even though he is new at the 'twirler's box,' During the first innings things looked favorable for Ashland, but by the sixth and seventh innings no one could get past second base. From the eighth on,

Medford outplayed Ashland and the final score was 8 to 5."

Gosh. Is that upstart Medford going to smash all the others in the league? One suspects that the list of Medford players might include a couple of professionals imported into the valley to spark up the team. Anyway, Robley of Ashland was the star player of the day.

The third game of the season was a clinker. On June 12 the Phoenix team faced Jacksonville at the new field. Jacksonville maintained its regular line up, and the Phoenix players were Boardman, Kleinhammer, Rose, J. Smith, H. Shaffer, P. Smith, J. Shaffer, Jacobs, and Dunlap. The editor either forgot the umpire or

the man wasn't important enough to rate a mention in the *Democratic Times*.

The review was headed:

## GREAT BIG FROST

PHOENIX PEOPLE TRIED  
TO PLAY BALL; BUT DIDN'T

About the worst exhibition that ever occurred in Jacksonville took place last Sunday afternoon when some boys from Phoenix went up against Jacksonville. They lasted six and one-half innings, the score then standing 30 to 1 and so quit.

Their only run was in the first inning when Pitcher Pat Donegan made two wild throws and let Kleinhammer in. These were the only errors made by Jacksonville, who put up a fine game, worthy of a better cause. The features were a double play, Helms to Lewis, and a homerun by Helms. (This must have been one of those rare times when Helms and Lewis didn't have a bottle of spirited waters tucked away in the dugout--or, on the other hand, maybe it was one of the times when they did.) The final score when the Phoenix manager threw in the towel was 30 to 1. One's sympathies are with the Phoenix team. Perhaps the







1902 JACKSONVILLE BASE BALL TEAM: Top row: Wendt, Pat Donegan, Harry Helms, Armstrong; Center: Louis Ulrich, Oscar "Duke" Lewis; Front Row: Ed Donegan, Charley Nunan, Richard Donegan.

members had severe sunburn or had contracted something itchy. In any case they were too gallant to offer excuses.

On June 19 Jacksonville played Ashland for the first time. This was an important game; it would determine who faced Medford on the Fourth of July for the district championship. Henry Orth was the umpire.

The paper declared "the game was interesting from start to finish, and there were several brilliant plays, including a double play made by Pat Donegan and Harry Helms. In the sixth inning Helms knocked the ball over the fence" into Fifth Street and made a spectacular home run. Jacksonville


won by a score of 9 to 7. "At this game," wrote the reviewer, "the crowd got their money's worth." Jacksonville's win was as it should have been; after all, Neuber and Taylor, Jacksonville citizens, supplied the playing field.

From the middle of June to July the Fourth was a long interlude. The Jacksonville players didn't want to get rusty waiting for the big game against the formidable Medford team so when Ashland challenged them to a clincher-game on June 24 to be played at the Ashland ball park, they accepted. The paper reported that the game was devoid of outstanding features although Donegan struck out




7 and Robley fanned 5. The final score was Jacksonville 13, Ashland 6. The game kept the Jacksonville players charged up, allowed them to flex their joints, and gave them an opportunity to strut around town for a couple of days.

## JULY FOURTH, 1902 DAY OF THE BIG GAME

 he natives awoke at dawn on July Fourth, with a volley of thirteen shots fired from the Britt hill, the customary opening of the day's festivities. Morning was dark, with heavy clouds which threatened rain, but by 10:00 o'clock, parade time, the cover had thinned out and the weather promised to behave itself. During the year the city trustees had raised \$750 for the day's entertainment and they blew it all on another of their inimitable celebrations.

Early in the day the visitors began arriving and by the time the parade was under way, almost 3,000 people lined the streets. As the *Table Rock Sentinel* has featured Jacksonville parades in great detail in previous issues, a brief report of this procession will have to suffice.

 lex Orme was parade marshal, and, setting a spirited pace, he headed the march, preceding the flag bearer and the Grants Pass band. Many of the entries were traditional -- the floats with the Angel of Peace, the Goddess of Liberty, the Spirit of Justice, and the lodge groups in full regalia--but there were some novel entries too: the thirteen original colonies represented by thirteen young ladies in smart black riding habits mounted on handsome horses, the battle ship *Oregon*, manned by Charlie Prim, Vivian Beach and Byrant De Bar, and an enchanting




group of fairies which included Laura Neuber, the winner of the big popularity contest six years later.

Just behind the Old Woman in the Shoe and her thirteen children, the Jacksonville Baseball Club appeared. They were clad in their blue and gold finery, and although they stepped along proudly, they were probably a little self-conscious because they knew they were the stars of the show. Vance Colvig, as mascot, brought up the rear, leading a goat. The sight of the players was accompanied by wild cheering, whistling and prolonged applause, the noise of which enveloped

the young men and followed them along as they made their way through town.

After several more floats, the members of the Medford team marched into view. The racket made by their loyal fans was no less enthusiastic than that for the Jacksonville team, and the last of the marching groups, the volunteer firemen, who always received an enthusiastic round of applause, had to be content with a definite second place.

 he parade made its way to the court house grounds where a decorated platform had been set up for the serious part of the day's celebration.

Judge P.P. Prim presided over the program, which began with a concert number by the Grants Pass band and a group of patriotic songs by the Gore brothers quartet. Rev. S. H. Jones gave the benediction, Miss Leila Prim read the Declaration of Independence "with fine elocutionary effects," and Mr. W.I. Vawter, the prominent Medford lawyer, gave the oration. After a final prayer, the crowd dispersed to the picnic grounds for their noonday dinners.

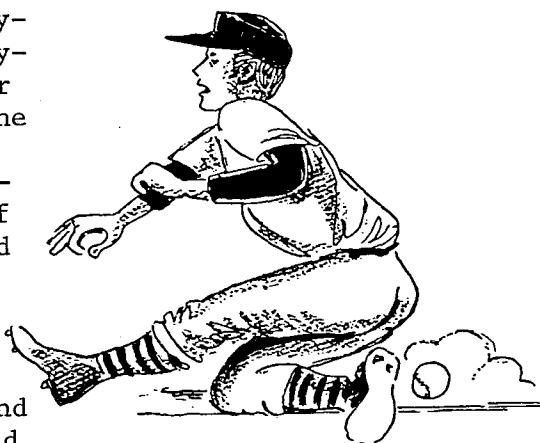
By two o'clock in the afternoon the spectators had



arrived at Neuber-Taylor field, and everyone was impatient for the game to start. The grandstand had been extended with temporary bleachers made of some scrap lumber, and some of the more resourceful folk had brought wooden boxes to sit on, but a lot of people had to stand or sprawl on the ground.

The *Times* declared: "By far the largest crowd that has assembled in Jackson County to see baseball, witnessed the game." In order to add a little spice to the contest, some of the backers had come up with a winner's purse of \$100, but the big prize would be the honor of being declared the undisputed champions of the district.

Jacksonville fizzled. Perhaps they were over confident, but more likely they were outplayed. Medford took the lead in the second inning and held it throughout the game. Twice Jacksonville had the bases full, and failed to make a single run. The final score, 9-6, was close enough to keep the game interesting, and by the end of the fifth inning, the teams were neck in neck; either side could have taken the honors. But in the sixth, luck ran out for the hometowners. For Jacksonville,



Nunan and Helms made two runs each and Ulrich and Pernoll scored single points. For Medford, Barkdull, at 3 runs, was top man, followed by Myers 2, Rothermel, Brous, Anderson and Morrison with 1.

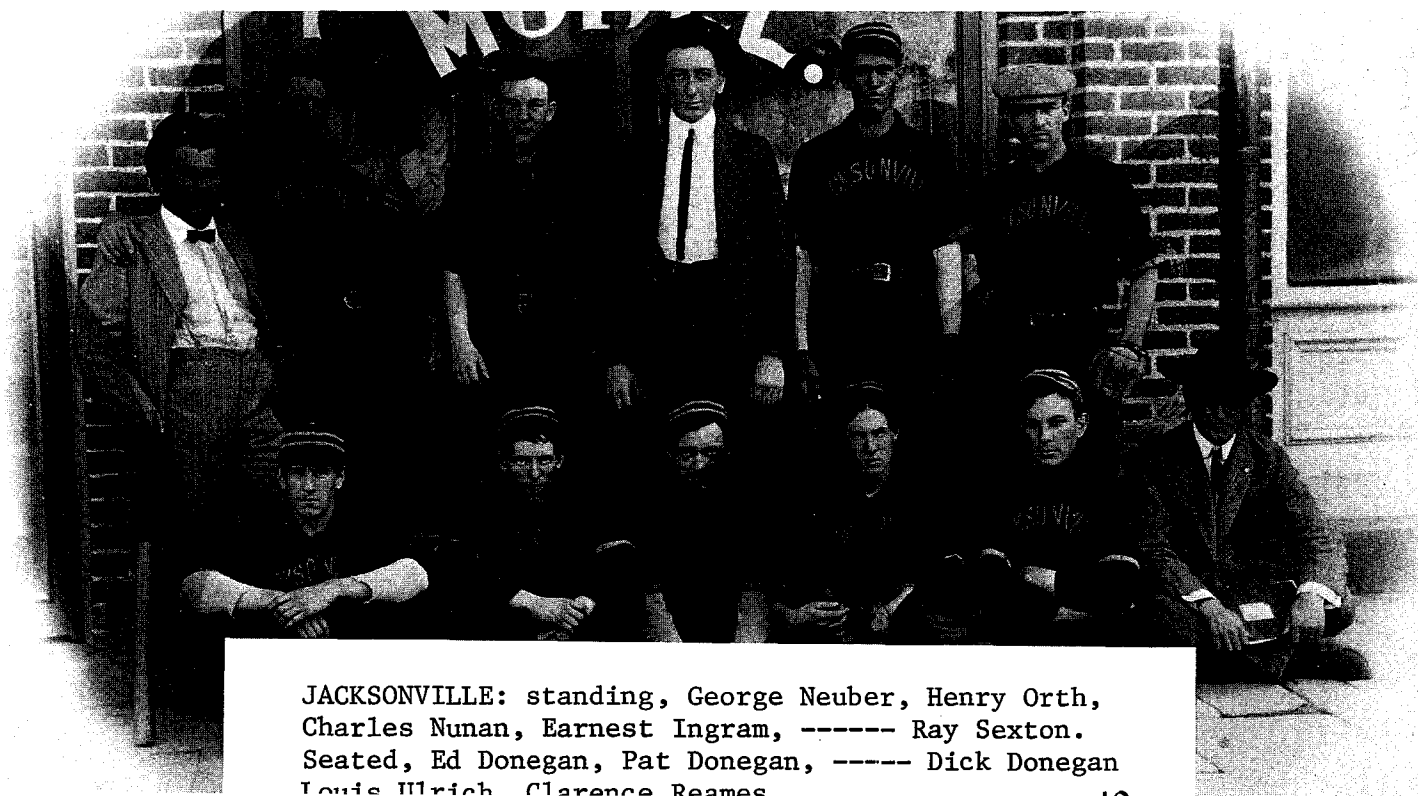
MEDFORD:0,2,2,0,2,2,0,1,\*  
J'VILLE:0,0,1,2,2,1,0,0,0



Although the outcome of the game dampened half of the crowd,

the other half was jubilant and ready to go on with the festivities. After supper the Grants Pass and Jacksonville bands entertained the gathering at a street concert until it was dark enough for the fireworks to make a spectacular showing. The celebration ended with a grand ball at Orth's Hall.

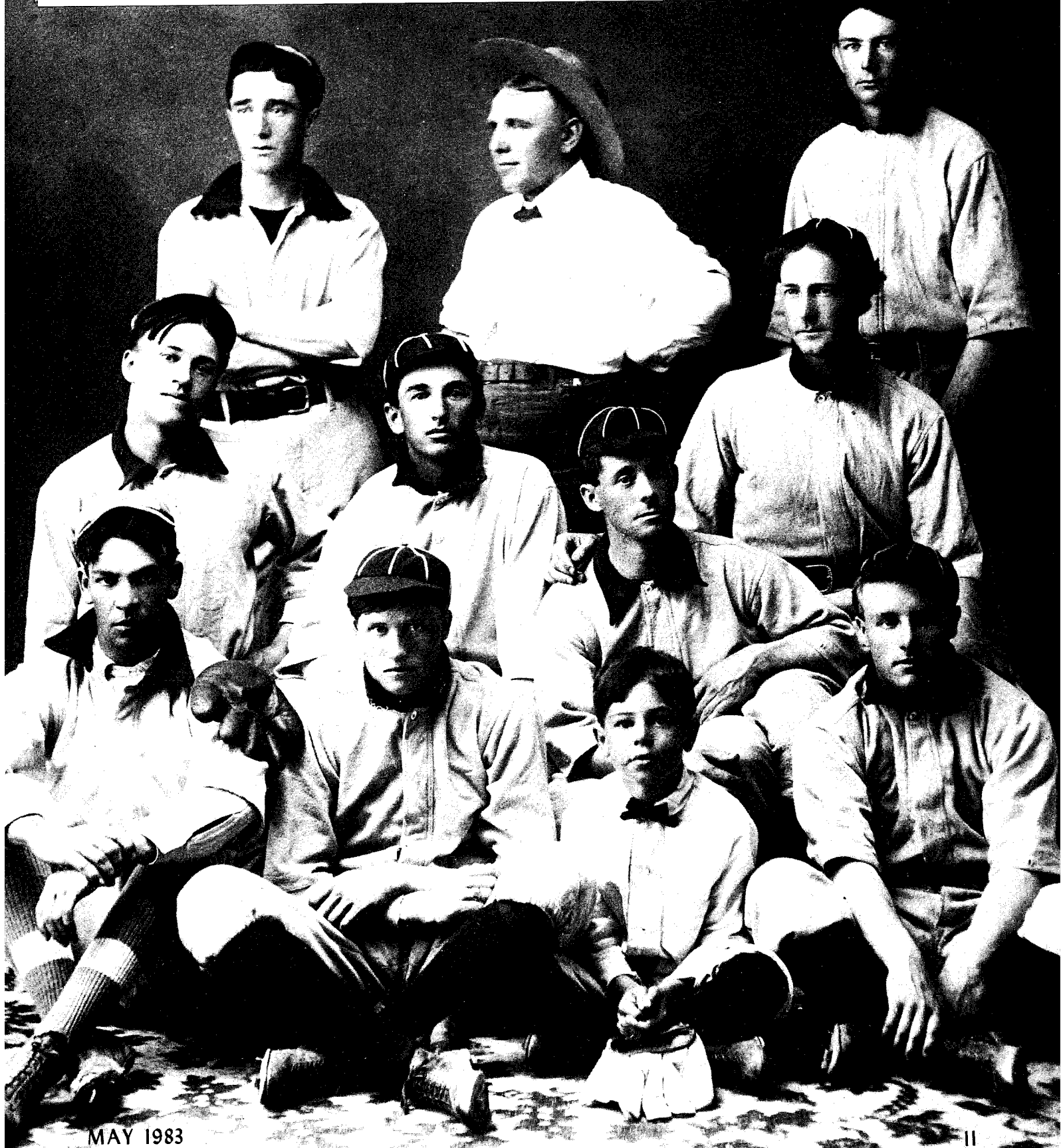
The Fourth of July, 1902, closed with the revelers all tired from enjoying themselves so much. As the out-of-town visitors hitched-up the patient horses to the wagons, the Jacksonville trustees resolved to make the next Fourth of July even more notable. There had been no rock concerts, no automobile smash-ups, no parking tickets, no Big Macs, no smooching in public, and no one had stayed home with his eyes glued to the television set. And that's as it should be.

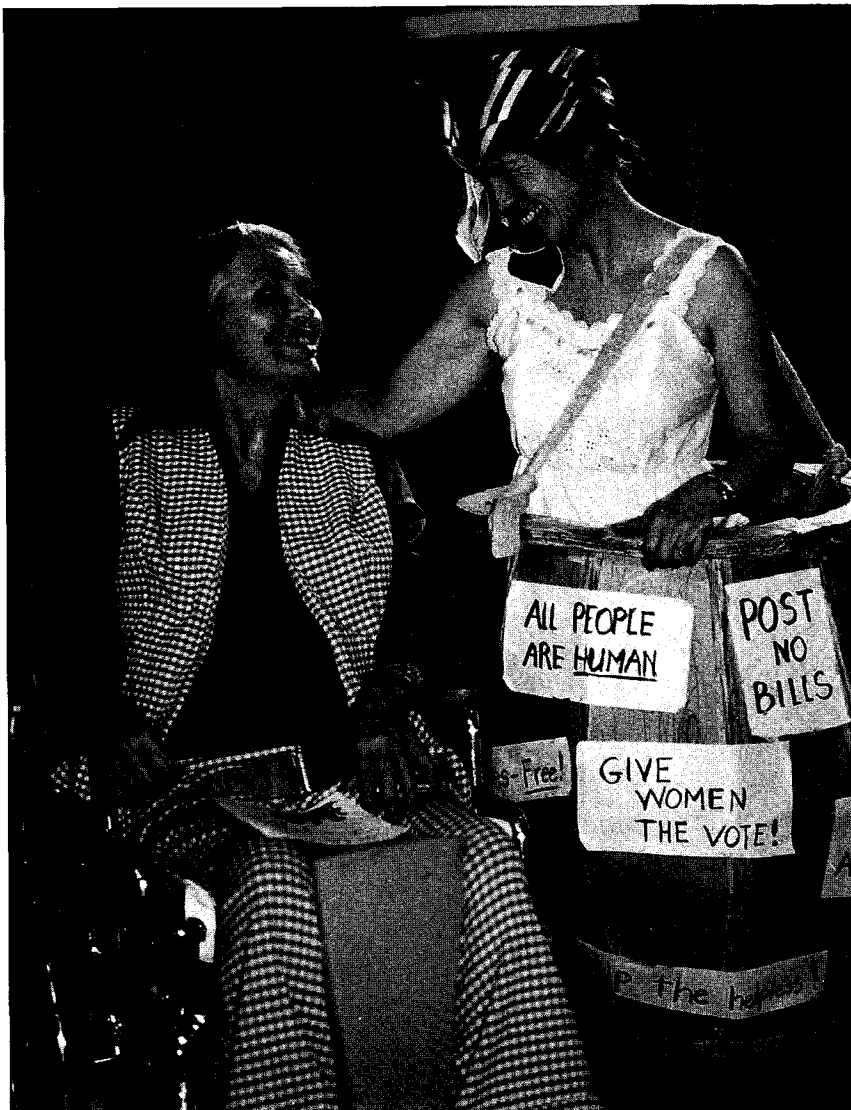


JACKSONVILLE: standing, George Neuber, Henry Orth, Charles Nunan, Earnest Ingram, ----- Ray Sexton. Seated, Ed Donegan, Pat Donegan, ----- Dick Donegan Louis Ulrich, Clarence Reames

## MEDFORD BASEBALL TEAM - 1904

Seated, left to right: Frank Isaacs, John Wilkinson, Randy Schultz (Mascot) and Claude Miles; center row, Justin Eifert, Bill -----, -----Geiger and Charley King; top row, Emil Payette, Court Hall and Slim Purdy. The mascot, Randy Schultz, grew up and continued his interest in baseball. He played on the American team in the Olympics for three years.





Oma Lowe, as Grace Wick-Merritt, campaigned for human rights in a barrel. Following the "Influence of Pioneer Women in Jackson County" production at Hearthstone Manor, she chatted with patient, Betty Molloy, about the enjoyment of her audience-participation role when she was pushed into the scene in her wheel chair to become a saloon patron.

(A Jane Cory-Van Dyke photograph)

## MUSEUM PERFORMERS ANNOUNCE CLOSING FOR THIS SEASON

When a successful play nears its farewell performance, there is always a touch of sadness. So it is with "The Influence of Pioneer Women in Jackson County." The closing presentation of this playlet by the Jacksonville Museum Performers will be given on Monday, May 30, at 11:00 A.M. on the Museum lawn. Spectators are asked to bring lawn chairs if they wish.

During the past year the Performers--16 to 18 members, of whom more than half are seniors or Veterans--have given 20 performances for service clubs, convalescent homes and organizations for seniors. Researching, writing and producing their own scripts, which were based on provocative and authentic local history, members of the group have devoted over 6,500 volunteer hours. Beginning with a group of eight theatrical-minded people who read plays for each other's entertainment, the project really got underway when SOHS agreed to sponsor a production in 1980. Since then the Performers have achieved a respectable popularity in the community. In fact they find

themselves unable to fulfill all the requests they receive.

An impetus to their success was a one-time grant from The Oregon Committee for the Humanities. This, and the addition of Dr. Edwin Bingham, Professor of History at the University of Oregon, as narrator, enabled them to upgrade their performances. Not satisfied to rest on their laurels, the group is planning for an even better season next year. Their next production will be a play of pioneer life written for them by Ilene Hull, a Jacksonville citizen who has been active in southern Oregon theater for some time, appearing, in an earlier season, in the Shakespearean Festival as Lady Macbeth. Pat Patton, the Shakespearean Festival Production Manager and a favored director, will act as Artistic Consultant for the Performers.

Since the shows are given without charge, the continuation of the program is dependent on financial aid from grants and gifts. A sharing system has been set up whereby individuals and organizations who wish to help may become donor members. Interested friends and organizations are invited to contribute.

For information about becoming a member of the Performers or for requesting a 1984 performance, call Marjorie Edens, Supervisor, 899-1711, or Elizabeth Vickerman, Director, 772-4606.



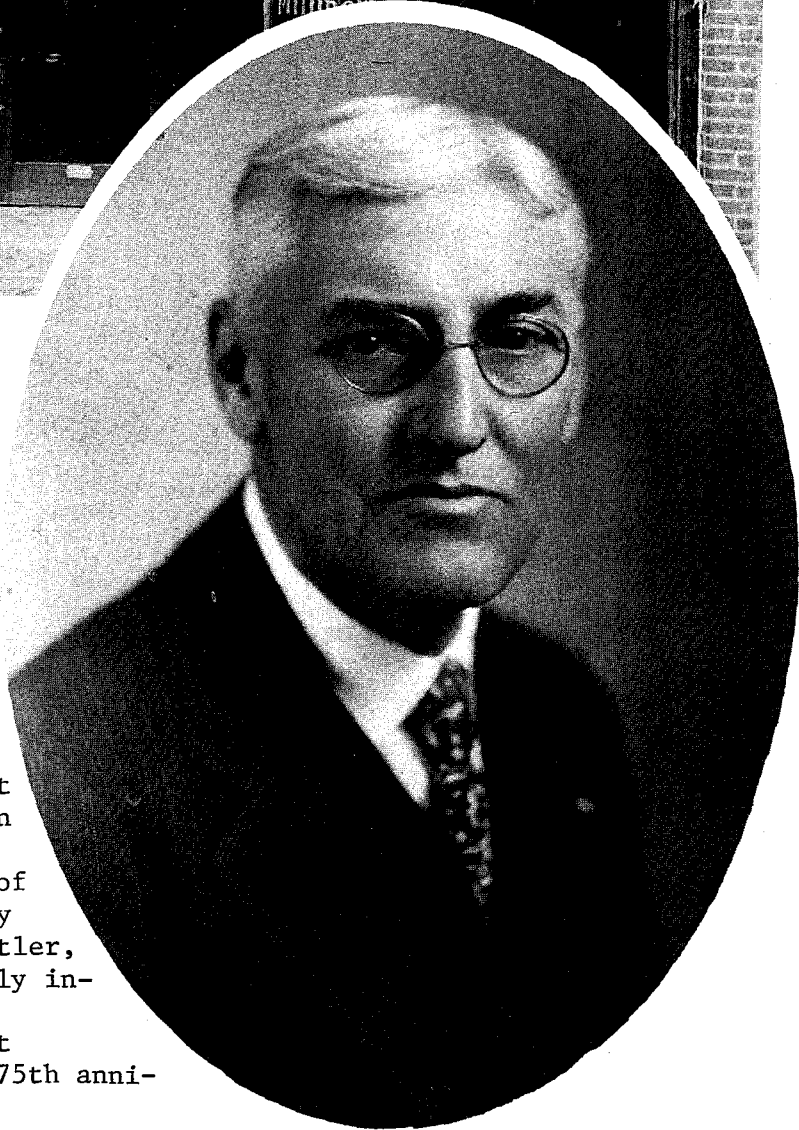
## 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

LAWRENCES' JEWELRY STORE, established in Medford in 1908, has become a tradition. Serving the Rogue River Valley with courtesy and distinction, the store has been operated by members of the Lawrence family since its opening.

It was founded by John F. Lawrence at 126 East Main Street. In 1951 Elsie Lawrence Butler, his daughter, Robert L. Butler, his grandson, and Julia Ann Horton, his granddaughter, assumed active management. Later generations of the Lawrence family, Charles and Jerry Horton, great grandsons, and Debra Butler, a great granddaughter, share the family interest.

This year LAWRENCES' JEWELRY, now at 232 East Main Street, celebrates its 75th anniversary.

We offer our congratulations!

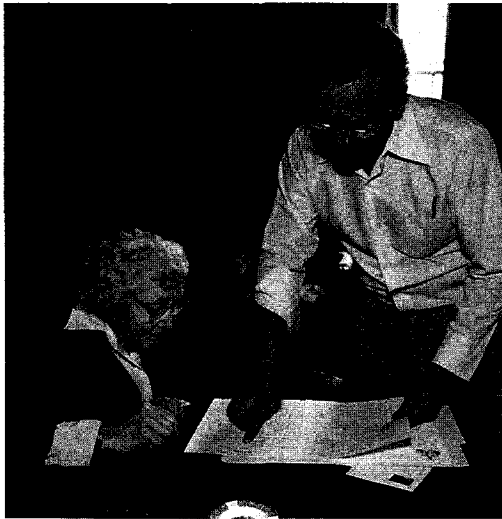


John F. Lawrence



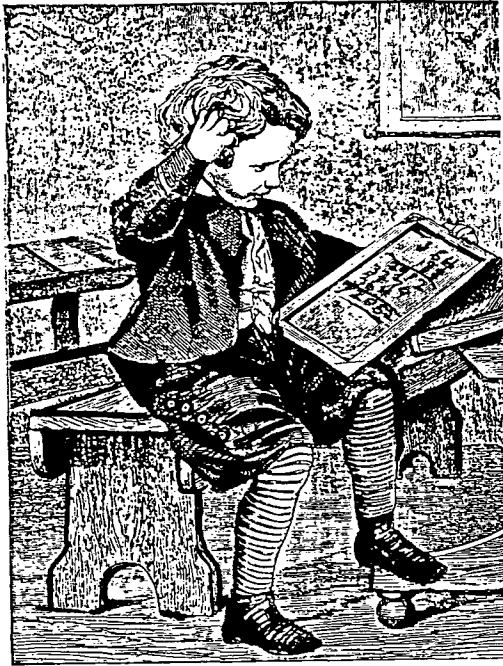
## HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Photographs by  
Doug Smith and Jane Cory Van-Dyke



Clockwise, top left: Eugene Bennett prepares for a retroactive show to be sponsored by SOHS; long-range planning seminar held for trustees and staff; the Dave Marston Singers in presentation at U.S. Hotel; (below) volunteer luncheon held at Rogue Valley Country Club; (above) Greg Gualtieri shows Miss Mary Hanley the deed of gifts for the artifacts in her home.





## JOHN W. MERRITT MASTER TEACHER

*PROFESSOR JOHN W. MERRITT, the teacher-principal at Jacksonville, 1875-1885, demanded high standards of scholarship and behavior. In a few years under his directorship District Number One became the top ranking school in the state. The last issue of the Table Rock Sentinel featured his early life and schooling, his arrival in southern Oregon, his marriage and the untimely death of his first wife, Molly McCully Merritt. His story is concluded in this issue.*

**T**here is no doubt that John Merritt, as principal of the Jacksonville school, was accorded great respect and allegiance by most of the citizens but even an ace can't win every trick. There were those who found fault. Any innovation or change in established procedure is always challenged by a group of carpers and die-hards, and when their concern is with public education, they can easily masquerade as defenders of cherished tradition. This malcontent minority is ever trying to recruit new members, and a successful educator usually has to contend with a detractor or two, snooping around to fix upon his vulnerable spot.

Dr. Francis Haines, the dedicated historian who researched all facets of life in southern Oregon, wrote in a chapter on education:

Those who taught and enforced discipline were bound to rouse fury in the hearts of the parents whose children refused to learn or who refused to discipline their [own] children...In any community there is a small, irreconcilable group of parents who object to methods of teaching, no matter what the method. The worst of the anti-school people (then and now) are those parents who expect the schools to correct all of the mistakes that they have made in raising their children.

William M. Turner, as editor of the *Oregon Sentinel*, felt that stirring up a disturbance was one of the duties of a newspaper man. John Merritt was not





Professor John W. Merritt

exempt from his attacks. In 1880  
Turner printed the following editorial:

#### OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL

It is gratifying to note the progress that the pupils of our public schools are making. Prof. Merritt and his assistants are earnestly at work training and educating the youth of this district. There is but one feature that is not as it should be, the system of corporeal (sic) punishment, not only for violating the rules of the school, but for failing to get the lesson, is kept up.

It is a custom that has long since been condemned and abolished in the best public schools and has been supplemented by more civilized and less degrading modes of punishment. It is evident that if you cannot impart discipline and knowledge by patient training and teaching, you cannot do it by whipping.

One may agree with the sentiments, but this moralizing comes from the pen of a man who, after a short stint as tax collector, was charged with embezzlement and attempting to collect bribes, accused of ripping-off the tax money when he served on the school board, and denounced for deserting his Indian wives and ignoring his two sets of half-Indian children. A spanked youngster was in all probability his least concern.

John Merritt immediately rose to his own defense. Rejection is always hard to take, and one who has been generally acclaimed as a demigod may become a little spoiled and feel the sting of criticism more keenly that does a lesser achiever. He angrily fired back a letter in reply:

#### EDITOR OF THE SENTINEL:

"There never was so big a fool,

But that he knew how to teach a school."

...As your contribution essayed to criticise our methods of discipline, we consider it a privilege to remonstrate...[You are incapable of acting] as critic because of personal prejudice...When [your] true character is revealed, the criticism is robbed of its sting, and all, save the aggrieved one, are disgusted. Had more of our critic's flesh suffered from the unsanctimonious touch of the polluting rod...this hollow groan for humanity would never have escaped his lips.

We are willing to believe that he is in ignorant error when he asserts that corporal punishment has been abolished in our best schools. The reports of the San Francisco schools show that during the year 1878, with an enrollment of 38,672 pupils, 17,640 cases of corporal punishment were reported. No city in the United States with the exception of Boston alone, has as good schools as San Francisco. That corporal punishment has been abolished in certain parts we do

not deny; but we have yet to learn, that its abolition in any school or any locality has resulted successfully. In our own department of our public school we have enrolled nearly sixty different pupils during the present school year, and have found it necessary to whip but one of that number.

We do not approve of an indiscriminate use of the rod, but we recognize its advantages as a final resort for the enforcement of discipline. When necessary let it be used wisely and well.

[Your] suggestions we reject with contempt, lest [your] counsel may prove as disastrous to us as it ever has to you. Criticism we scorn, for if in [your] own house they had not spared the rod and spoiled the child, the criticism would not have been made.

The editor, having been duly taken to task, settled down good humoredly, and in future issues praised John Merritt resoundingly, especially when the fact was revealed that both of them belonged to the same political party.

At another time John Merritt found himself in a most unfortunate situation. A student of the elementary school, Alexander Berry, met his death in a tragic accident. At that time, in the event of the death of a pupil, a principal ordered the closure of the school so classmates of the dead child could attend the funeral and view his remains. On two previous occasions, Professor Merritt had closed the school-house before a funeral and had directed a procession of students to and from the church. For some reason, at the death of Alexander Berry, he failed to do so. He may have received no directive from the school board, and was reluctant to act without permission from the majority. Or the member assigned to inform him of the board's decision to close failed to complete his mission. In any case, sometime before the memorial service, Alexander Berry's father became considerably irate at the delay, and, seeking out two members of the board, demanded instant action. By this time John Merritt had closed the school, but bitter feelings remained. Berry sent a regrettable letter to the paper in which he denounced John Merritt.

#### TO THE PUBLIC:

The terrible accident that deprived my youngest born of life was met on Sunday... On Wednesday following we laid the poor lad in his last resting place. On the day of his burial, learning that Mr. Merritt, contrary to the usual custom, had refused to adjourn the school in order to give the school-mates an opportunity to attend the funeral, one of

these directors, at the request of Mr. T. B. Kent, another director, went to him and requested him to adjourn.

But Merritt declined and only adjourned when the third director went out and demanded that he should do so, and then after adjourning refused to form his pupils in a line (as had been his custom) and lead them in the procession that followed the corpse to the grave. But to their credit and my warmest gratitude be it said, the girls under their own leadership and the boys marshaled by T.B. Kent, one of the directors, filed in with the long procession of friends and acquaintances that paid their last respects to the dead on that occasion.

These are the facts as they transpired and neither Mr. Merritt nor his henchmen can or dare deny them. With no excuse other than already given for referring to the card of the gentleman, I leave the matter with the public.

A. M. BERRY  
Jacksonville, May 27, 1882

The "card of the gentleman" is in reference to an announcement from Judge J.R. Neill, which appeared in the same issue of the paper. In it Neil attempted to defend John Merritt. How Mr. Berry had learned the contents of the announcement before its publication was not revealed:

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Having been informed of the circulation of a report that Mr. Merritt was compelled by order of the Directors to close the school on the day of the burial of Alexander Berry, we, Directors, then and now declare that no such order was made, and that the report is utterly false.

Will Jackson  
J. R. Neil

There was obviously considerable disagreement among the members of the school board, with each faction expressing its side publicly and with John Merritt serving as the pawn tossed between the two contending sides. A public apology or explanation could only have intensified the strong emotions of the contestants, and none appeared. John Merritt cannot be accused of having been unsympathetic. The misunderstanding was surely cleared up eventually, but the settlement was not aired for the general enlightenment of the public. The attack and the extended controversy, however, must have made teaching public school as a permanent career seem a lot less rewarding. No doubt he experienced other unpublicized indignities, as well, that had to be settled by compromises with only partial satisfaction.



Aunt Ibbie is pictured standing by the gate in her front yard. She assumed the task of raising George H. Merritt after the death of his mother. This photograph was taken in the 20s and is from George Merritt's snapshot album.

At the end of his sixth year in the Jacksonville school when his contract again expired, he coolly demanded another boost in pay, this time asking for \$1500 a year. When the directors met to consider this astronomical figure, they found a large crowd of parents already at the school house, all of them eagerly demanding that Professor Merritt be rehired on his own terms. The citizens had developed great pride in being number one scholastically, and they didn't want to risk losing that acclaim. The school board yielded to public pressure, and offered John Merritt another three year contract at his specified figure. He signed on the dotted line.

Always a firm Republican, he decided early in 1882 to enter politics. Registering as a candidate for District Attorney, he ran against T.B. Kent, the erstwhile schoolboard member who had done little to support him during the Alexander Berry episode. Kent proved to be the favorite with the voters, and Professor Merritt lost by a narrow margin, a great blow to his hopes and pride.

Jacksonville was still a thriving little city with many well-stocked, profitable stores. In spite of keen competition, several merchants had become wealthy, had built imposing homes and had made reputations as wise investors. Merchandising appealed to John Merritt and he decided to try his hand at retail selling, while at the same time conservatively retaining his teaching position. Among his close friends was Dr. J. W. Robinson, and in 1883, acting in partnership, they purchased the City Drug Store. The pharmacy had little stock, having been operated over the years by various doctors, who had concentrated chiefly on the sale of prescription drugs and patent medicines. Dr. Robinson and Professor Merritt at once added to the merchandise and introduced a line of cosmetic preparations as well as an attractive collection of gift items.

John Merritt, far ahead of his time, realized the advantages to be gained from clever advertising. Before he

began writing copy, local store owners felt that a card with the name of the business and a list of especially low priced items, was a sufficient appeal to the public. The new City Drug Store featured more amusing enticements. An item, for example, slipped into the local and personal column of the newspaper announced: "Oh, Maria, did you see those new dressing cases just brought on by Merritt and Robinson? Well, they're just about the sweetest, prettiest and cutest things you ever saw, and so cheap. [In those days *cheap* was a complimentary adjective.] I wish Pete would get to see them, and buy me one." A page or two later would appear a second paragraph: "Pete did get to see those dressing cases at Merritts and Robinson's and he bought one for Maria who just loves it. Why don't *you* call and look them over?" That's pretty advanced stuff for 1883, and shows Professor Merritt possessed a pronounced sense of humor which was not revealed in previous news stories about him.

About this time the regents of the State University in Eugene offered him a position as professor of elocution at a salary of \$2,000 a year. He rejected the offer. Editor William M. Turner, in the *Sentinel* editorialized:

We acknowledge selfishness when we say that we would regret almost any offer from abroad that would deprive this community of Mr. Merritt's services. He is the peer of any educator in the state in culture, moral and intellectual...The reasons for his declination of the proffered offer are best known to himself and we can only congratulate this community that it is not to be deprived of the services of an educator who has served it for eight consecutive years so satisfactorily that his removal would be a public loss.

The offer from the university came shortly after the death of Molly McCully Merritt, and John Merritt probably felt a great responsibility for the small son who survived her. He may also have set his ambitions on something higher than \$2,000 a year.

Although, for a teacher, he was certainly making a substantial salary and realizing some profits on his partnership in the drug store, he had to face the fact that his motherless son, George H., who was being cared for by adoring Aunt Issie, must eventually be given a college educa-

tion and the opportunity to enter an important career. Money must be set aside for that as well as for his own retirement. There was no old age compensation plan at District Number One, and if he continued to teach he would be guaranteed nothing, not even an honorary gold watch. He was in great demand as an orator, but these engagements gave him little more than praise. Gratitude is pleasant but it doesn't pay the grocer. He realized he must seek a more lucrative position, one which would give him real security.

**I**n 1884, when his third contract expired, after nine years of teaching, he resigned. He made no demands for a larger salary; he had decided to make a complete change. William Turner, in the *Sentinel*, tendered his regrets:

Yesterday was the last teaching Professor J. W. Merritt will do as principal of District Number One. During his stay he has built the school to a standard not inferior to any in the state, and it is with regrets that the parents of this district see him go. ..Both pupils and parents will remember him kindly and wish him good fortune in his new occupation.

John Merritt's interest in retail merchandising was still keen, and during his last year of teaching he had made specific plans to extend his resources. In June he announced the opening of his general merchandise store, Merritt's Cash Store, in the Red Men's building, probably in the space adjoining what is now the J'Ville Tavern.

## Merritt's Cash Store.

The Only Cash Store in Jacksonville!

Spring Stock!

New Goods,

NEW PRICES!

Coffee C. Sugar, 13 lbs. for.....\$1 00	French Calf Sewed Boots.....\$5 00
Powdered Sugar, per box..... 3 00	Carpets, Floor and Table Oil-
Choice O. R. Coffee, per lb..... 14	cloth in excellent patterns
Fair O. R. Coffee, per lb..... 10	Good Calf Boot..... 3 75
Choice Oolong Tea, per lb..... 60	Good Kip Boot..... 2 50
Oysters, per can....12½ and.... 15	Boys' Suits, 12 to 17 years..... 6 00
Gloss Starch, 5 lb. box..... 65	Men's Suits, fair.....10 00
Assorted Jellies..... 25	Ladies' Stockings.....10 to..... 60
Good Lard, 10-lb. cans..... 75	Ladies' French Kid Shoes..... 3 50
Sardines, per box....10 and.... 15	Ladies' American Kid Shoes.... 2 25

Dress Goods!

Fancy Gingham!

The idea of a store where customers could be offered discounts for paying cash was certainly not original with John Merritt, but it was surely a novelty in southern Oregon. For years merchants had offered credit because they felt they must wait for the farmer to sell his annual cash crop and the miner to make a strike. The newspapers were full of announcements of store owners trying to collect long overdue accounts through the courts. A cash store not only appealed to the thrifty shoppers, it also was sound business practice, and Merritt's Cash Store soon prospered.

The year, 1884, was an eventful one for John Merritt although not all of the happenings were pleasant. In January he was elected a member of the state board of education, but in that month Molly died. In May he closed his teaching career and one month later opened his new store. On the Fourth of July he delivered an oration in Jacksonville, and in September he actively entered politics, beginning a tour of the state, at the request of the Republican headquarters, to stump for candidates.

During the next few years the Merritt Cash Store grew in sales and stock. Nearly every kind of goods was offered except hardware, and John Merritt wisely left that to the sturdier men who had experience with heavy equipment. Besides, who could display Fancy Gingham with his hands still smudgy from showing dusty pipe fittings and tarred rope. In 1886 he sold his half-interest in the City Drug Store to Dr. Robinson so he could devote all his time to the Cash Store.

At this time Jacksonville, as county seat, was thriving and busy. Competition was keen and most of the citizens were prosperous. But in 1882 the city had been dealt a disastrous blow with the announcement that the railroad would not go through the town, and in the ensuing four years several of the merchants had departed for areas with more promise. John Merritt was perceptive enough to see that a rosy future for Jacksonville was no longer a certainty. The store

was showing profits, but he determined he could do better in another location.

In 1887, after four years of fair success, he wisely moved his store to Central Point where almost at once he began to realize unexpected returns. He was able in a short time to acquire stock worth \$10,000, an impressive figure in 1887, and to make plans to add to his investment. A few years later he opened his second store, this one in Gold Hill, and stocked it with \$15,000 worth of merchandise. This establishment was put under the able management of Robert Moore.

Robert Moore was a brother of Jennie Elizabeth Moore, a young lady who, with her parents, came to Jacksonville from Missouri in 1875, the year of Professor Merritt's arrival. Jennie and John Merritt both entered School District One at the same time, he as principal, she as a student in the primary classes.



Jennie Elizabeth Moore

When Professor Merritt resigned from his principalship, Jennie was a young lady of sixteen, and had been enrolled in some of his classes. After her graduation from high school as an honor student, she took the teachers' examinations and easily passed them. Applying for a position at the Sams Valley school, she was accepted and taught there for several years. In 1890, when Robert Moore became manager of the Gold Hill store, Jennie and John Merritt renewed their acquaintance, and their relationship eventually developed into a mutual affection for each other. Although he was over twenty years older than she, they were married in 1891. He had made a name for himself in both education and business, but, with Jennie at his side, he realized his full potential as a financier, politician and citizen. He was considered by those who knew him to be one of the most progressive and enterprising men in southern Oregon.

A complete record of his accomplishments is unavailable. Just as he refused to permit his orations to be published, he modestly refused to be interviewed, avoiding notoriety in any form. Newspaper records reveal some of his achievements. (These are in addition to those which have been previously mentioned.)

He became a stockholder and secretary of the Southern Oregon Lumber and Manufacturing Company.

He was one of the directors of the Jackson County Agricultural Association.

From 1893 to 1903 he was extensively engaged in sheep raising on 6,000 acres of land.

At one time he owned five farms, a total of 500 acres, where he raised grain, hay and general produce. His agricultural holdings included several orchards.

He was treasurer of the Pearl Mining Company, Incorporated.

He was elected to the State Legislature in 1890, serving on the committees of commerce and engrossing. He was reelected in 1892.

He was a member of the City Council of Central Point for 12 years.

He dealt judiciously in real estate. In 1902 the *Sentinel* announced that

J.W. Merritt had sold lots 5 and 6 of Block 59 in Central Point to J.H. Hodge.

In 1918 a news item reported that he had sold 650 acres of timber land to R.K. Hockett, of the First National Bank and C.C. Presley of the Standard Oil Company.

He purchased a large tract of land which had been used as the county fairgrounds and had it cultivated.

There are other announcements of the sale of real estate realizing from \$20 to vastly larger sums.

**T**he Merritts happily settled down as conscientious citizens of Central Point. Jennie, having been baptised when a child at the Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville by the illustrious Moses Williams, became active in church activities, John Merritt was constructively occupied in accomplishing the goals he set up for himself. In 1893 a daughter, Esther Louise, was born. From early childhood she displayed a strong aptitude for music and began piano lessons when she was a small child. Her half-brother, George H., who was nine years old when Esther was born, divided his time with the Merritts and Aunt Issie, although he received his schooling in Jacksonville.

Esther, after attending school at St. Helen's Hall in Portland and Anna Head's College in Berkeley, married Bridane L. Sanderson. They had a son Jack, who lives in Medford. (He and his wife maintain the Merritt family heritage and have a collection of many of his papers.) Esther was an accomplished pianist and sang professionally. For several years she served as soloist at the Westminister Presbyterian Church in Medford. She died in 1945.

George H. Merritt graduated from Jacksonville High School and attended the University of Oregon. Aunt Issie went with him to look after him and see that he attended to business. It's so difficult to let your nephew go off to a strange college town where temptation lurks at every corner. At university he occasionally entered oratory contests and knocked

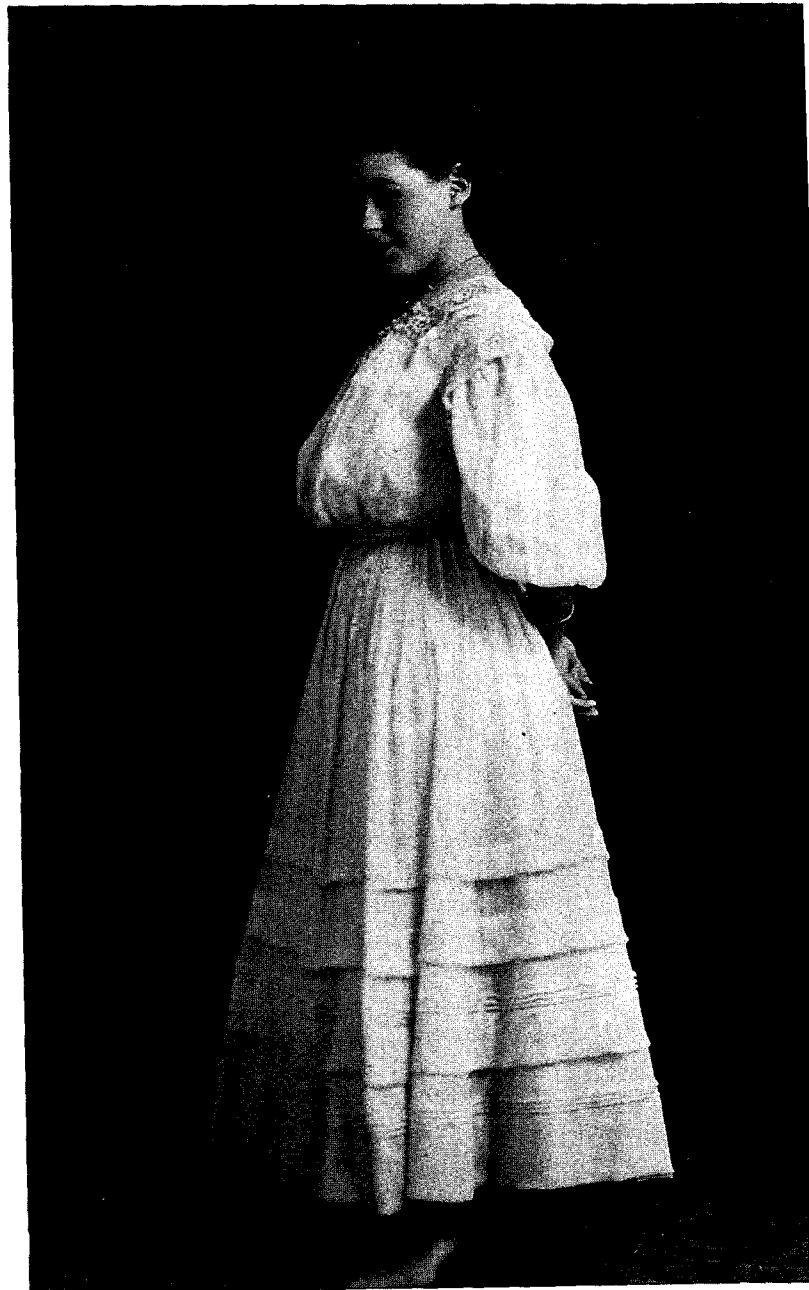


For a time George Merritt tried to emulate his father, but eventually he gave up and switched his interest to the ladies. Pictured above is George with Miss Helen Heaversham, one of his admirers in Boston.

out a little poetry from time to time, and although none of his efforts approached the standards of his father, he did graduate with a law degree. In 1912 he joined a law firm in Boston, and while in the east married the colorful actress, Grace Wick, who later became well-known in Portland for her political stand and her campaigns for bizarre causes. She was, in fact, George's only claim to prominence. In the early years of their marriage, while they lived in Boston, they were a happy, devoted couple, but after George brought her home to Aunt Issie, they began to disagree violently. Grace unfortunately failed to adjust to Jacksonville's idea of propriety, and George, apparently influenced by

his doting Aunt Issie, who felt no woman was quite good enough, divorced her. After Issie's death, George sold the McCully property and left southern Oregon. Research, to date, has failed to reveal where and when he died, although rumor has it that he was buried in the late forties somewhere in the Willamette Valley. It is ironic that the son of such an illustrious father would make such an insignificant and unheralded exit.

In 1916 John Merritt closed his place of business in Central Point and he and Jennie moved to Gold Hill where he devoted most of his energies



Esther Merritt Sanderson





Hon. John W. Merritt, after retirement to the store there. He was seventy years old, but, having provided handsomely for his retirement, he wasn't interested in retiring.

Five years later, on June 15, 1921, at his death, southern Oregon lost one of its most honored and useful citizens. His devoted wife, Jennie Moore Merritt, lived on until 1934.

**J**ohn W. Merritt excelled in everything he did, and his successes clearly reveal his towering in-

tellect and his profound integrity. After he left the Jacksonville school, he was probably contented with his new way of life, and one must not assume that because he was an exemplary teacher, he would rather have continued teaching for a lifetime. He may have felt a reluctance to leave his last class of pupils, but one doesn't miss students he has never had. John Merritt surely considered his teaching as a temporary phase and left it with few regrets. His directorship of District Number One didn't assure that school of perpetual success. In only a few years after his departure, the local paper bewailed the fact that of the entire class of eighth graders who took the required state examinations, only one student passed. The teachers gave the routine set of excuses, but, at that time, they hadn't yet decided that their failing pupils were victims of nuclear fallout.

In retrospect, however, one must conclude that since dedicated teachers such as John Merritt are few and difficult to come by, some means should be found, acceptable to citizens, tax payers, and fellow-teachers, to make it possible for such an effective and inspirational educator to remain in the profession, if he desires to do so. Tomorrow's citizens, who are in school today, deserve that much.



## SOME HIGHLIGHTS ABOUT GRACE

Grace Wick Merritt was a fascinating woman. When she met George in 1916, she was appearing with an English troupe of Shakespearean players--the only American member of the company. Shortly after coming to Jacksonville George sued Grace for divorce, and Grace and her three cats moved to Medford where she had acquired a large group of friends.

In 1925 she went to Hollywood to make it big in silent pictures. Unfortunately her two screen appearances weren't very impressive, and she supported herself posing in photographic illustrations for *True Story*.

In 1927 she went to Portland where she became active in politics. She ran for Congress and for Mayor of Portland--unsuccessfully. She never backed a winning cause. She died in 1958, leaving a dog and four cats.

## THE SOCIETY WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

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MRS. ELIZABETH BERG, Springfield

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MR. and MRS. MELVIN BURNETT, Gold Hill

THOMAS and VIRGINIA BURNS, Gold Hill

JAMES and CAROLINE CARROLL, Medford

HELEN CHURCHILL, Downey CA

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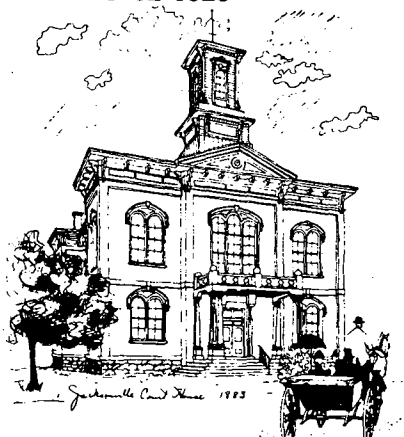
## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

206 N. Fifth St., P.O. Box 480, Jacksonville, Oregon 97530, (503) 899-1847

Volume 3, No. 5, May 1983

ISSN: 0732-0523

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