

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

Today



PUTTING OUT THE FLAMES

Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department

THE GOLD PLAYED OUT, LEAVING...

Steamboat High and Dry

SHE KNEW HOW TO BILL A CUSTOMER

Madame DeRoboam

JUNE 2000
Vol. 2, No. 6



The Neracar:

MOSTLY A MOTORCYCLE

by Jon Shaw



The only motorcycle in the Southern Oregon Historical Society's collections is an unusual and little-known vehicle that never quite caught on, but which offered a glimpse of motorcycle developments to come.

Carl A. Neracher was an engineer for the Overland Car Company of Toledo, Ohio, when he found the financial backing he needed to build the vehicle he had begun to envision during the First World War. With money from a small group of investors, including razor-blade tycoon King C. Gillette, Neracher began producing his Neracar motorcycle in Syracuse, New York, in 1920.¹

The name Neracar is actually twice a play on words, the first being a corruption of the designer's name and the second a description of the vehicle's design.

The Neracar is "near a car" in important ways. Neracher's automotive background encouraged him to use pressed sheet steel in building the vehicle's chassis. This method was inexpensive and expedient in a high-volume production factory, and would be copied in various forms by many motorcycle manufacturers for years to follow. This particular design allowed the vehicle to have a low center of gravity, granting it better handling than a traditional motorcycle. It also gave the Neracar a more comfortable seating position with better mud, dirt, and grease protection for the operator so that it could "be ridden by either sex in whatever clothes befit the occasion," as a period advertisement stated.²

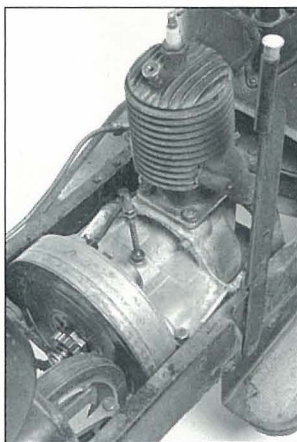
Its steering design was remarkable as well, and gave the

At the rear of the Neracar's 2.5 HP single cylinder engine the brass drive plate can be seen. The transmission's friction wheel, at lower left in the photo, moves in relation to the drive plate to alter the final drive ratio.

Neracar excellent handling for its time. One can plainly see the ancestor of the modern moped in Neracher's motorcycle.

The Neracar never pretended to be a sporty ride; its tiny two-stroke single-cylinder engine and practical design relegated it to a utilitarian role. Rather than hurting it, this helped the Neracar a great deal by making it more socially acceptable not only to gentlemen, but to ladies as well. No self-respecting hellion would be caught dead on a bike that provided good weather protection, or allowed a lady to wear a dress while touring the countryside at a sedate thirty-five miles per hour.

Still, the Neracar did have its moments of competitive victory. Neracars managed to win distance events popular at the time, the most storied being a 1922 ride from New York to Los Angeles by Cannonball Baker, a well-known motorcyclist of the era. The journey took twenty-seven days and covered 3,400 miles. It was completed in 174 riding hours at an average of 19.5 mph, returning a respectable fuel consumption of 87.5 mpg.³



The Neracar's compact design and low center of gravity resulted in fine handling, while the ample enclosure of the engine and wheels led to the English nickname "motorised mudguard."

Far left, the Goodyear emblem decorates a balloon tire.

The vehicle

also was built under license in the United Kingdom by Sheffield-Simplex at the former Sopwith Aviation works. The Neracar's short production life—four years in the United States and seven years in Britain—cannot be attributed to a lack of interest by the buying public, but rather resulted from the questionable business practices of the respective manufacturers.

It seems odd now, when looking back at the Neracar, that it fared better in England than in the United States. It exemplified characteristics that lay at the core of the American industrial ideal: it was practical, efficiently executed, and it reflected its designer's willingness to throw off the past and look forward—perhaps a little too far forward.

Jon Shaw is a collections/exhibits assistant for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

ENDNOTES

1. "Motorised Mudguard!" *Classic Motorcycle Magazine*, July 1987.
2. Neracar advertisement, *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 May 1922.
3. Harry Louis and Bob Currie, *The Classic Motorcycles*, (E.P. Dutton, 1976) pp. 70-71.

The Neracar's front wheel is held by swingarms. Steering is accomplished by a drag link between handlebars and hub.

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY
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Feature articles average 3,000 to 4,000 (pre-edited) words. Other materials range from 500 to 1,000 words. Electronic submissions are accepted on 3-1/4-inch disks and should be accompanied by a hard-copy printout. Cite all sources and construct endnotes and cutlines using the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The author is responsible for verification of cited facts. A selection of professional, unscreened photographs and/or line art should accompany submission—black-and-white or color. The Southern Oregon Historical Society reserves the right to use Society images in place of submitted material. All material should be labeled with author's name, mailing address, and telephone number. Manuscripts will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope stamped with sufficient postage. Authors should provide a brief autobiographical note at the end of manuscripts.

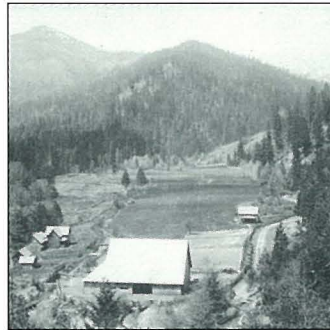
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HERITAGE
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PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

ON THE COVER

An assortment of badges testifies to the long history of fire-fighting efforts in Jacksonville stemming from a series of devastating fires in the mid-nineteenth century.

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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Call the Engine, Call the Engine!

Jacksonville's Volunteer Fire Department

By Sherry Wachter



Acc. #80.15.1



Acc. #2995,
80.15.1



Acc. #2995

Years ago, when our family lived in rural Eastern Oregon on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, a neighbor started what he thought was a preventive fire to protect a barley field. But when a stiff breeze whipped it out of control and the flames threatened two houses including ours, the reservation fire department, backed up by fire fighters from a nearby city department, managed to help us save our home.

As I looked at the tarry column of smoke, then at our house, drenched with water but still there, and listened to the firemen shouting to each other in their heavy turnout gear amid the shimmering heat waves, I was grateful.

Which was why I found myself visiting the Jacksonville Fire Department one warm, lazy day last summer. Dust puffed behind the stroller wheels as I pushed my son down Third Street, west of California. Huge trees shaded the path. Shop doors drowsed open. Tourists in shorts loitered on sidewalk benches.

And there was the fire station with a shiny red-and-white fire truck parked at

Firemen wore pocket badges indicating their rank and company, in addition to larger cap badges indicating Engine Company Number One.

Above, Jacksonville firefighters gained valuable experience during a "burn to learn" exercise at a home on East E Street in 1973.

the ready and a man tinkering in the garage. I manhandled the stroller over a bumpy patch of concrete and the man, who had been crouching over what looked like galoshes and yellow raincoats—the turnout gear, I realized—straightened up, squinted out at us and said, "Hi there." And that's how I met Tracy Shaw, Jacksonville's fire chief.

I learned a lot that afternoon: that Jacksonville had an unofficial volunteer fire department consisting of a hook and ladder wagon and whoever heard the alarm prior to 1861, making it one of the oldest in Oregon; that Engine Company Number One—Jacksonville's first formal

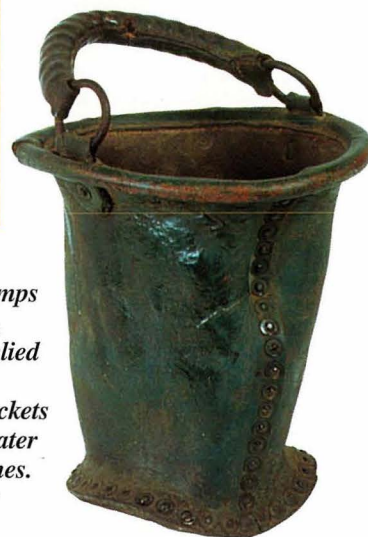
volunteer fire department—was formally inaugurated on May 14, 1883, more than thirty years after the walls went up on Jacksonville's first log cabin; that the volunteers do a lot more than just fight fires, and have a strong tradition of community involvement as well; that Jacksonville has a "combination" fire department, with a career fire chief and a volunteer staff; that there was a safe somewhere filled with journals, minutes, and fire calls; and that there was newspaper coverage of the department from around 1861 on. It sounded like there was a story to tell.

ACC.
#83.3.58

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JACKSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Far left, the long, wide brim on this leather helmet from the Jacksonville Hook & Ladder Company helped keep cinders and water off a fireman's neck.

At left, Jacksonville's original hook and ladder wagon, with its rows of leather buckets, gave early firefighters some of the tools they needed.



ACC. #522.24

Fire fighting in the early days, 1861-1888

The story of Engine Company Number One begins with the story of a fire—several fires, actually. Like many boom towns, Jacksonville was originally built with expedience rather than durability in mind. Most of the town was housed in tents and wooden frame structures. That wasn't unusual; frontier towns built in forested areas like Southern Oregon frequently were built of cheap, easily available lumber instead of brick or adobe.

That made them particularly vulnerable to fires. According to former Fire Chief Louis Applebaker, who started with Engine Company Number One in 1931, many of the earliest buildings in downtown Jacksonville have a thick barrier of dirt between roof and ceiling—a fire prevention measure in case the town was attacked and flaming arrows lit the roofs. The roofs would burn down to the layer of dirt, and burn out. Or at least that was the theory.¹

In reality, flaming arrows don't seem to have played any part in Jacksonville's fires. Arsonists, faulty flues, whiskey, and "unknown causes," on the other hand, repeatedly leveled large parts of the town. A big part of the problem was the frame buildings, built in many cases far too close together. Compounding the problem were the sheds, shacks, and shanties jammed between the hotels, saloons, stores, and businesses that made up Jacksonville's downtown district. The sheds provided housing for miners and laborers, storage for furniture, fabric, gunpowder, alcohol, feed, and sundry other supplies—and a nearly continuous fuel source. Jacksonville's lack of plentiful, reliable water completed a recipe for disaster.

The town was aware of the problem and took steps early on to alleviate it. In March of 1861, just about ten years after the town was born, the city voted to purchase a hook and ladder wagon—complete with grappling hooks, leather buckets, and ladders—from John S. Drum and Henry Klippel, who had petitioned Jacksonville's Board of Trustees (later the City Council) to take over the Jacksonville Hook and Ladder Company.² The board also elected two fire

Before pumps and hoses, firemen relied on riveted leather buckets to carry water to the flames.

inspectors to check the town over, identify potential danger areas, and inform property owners, who were required to clean up the fire hazards. Those who refused could be fined up to twenty dollars.³

In April 1862, building plans for a combined firehouse and records office (the Old City Hall) were submitted and approved. In September of the same year the board attempted to pass a tax to pay for a fire engine. On October 4, 1862, the citizens voted the tax down. The "economy" of 1862 resulted in a series of disastrous fires—fires that could have been contained with much less damage had the city had adequate fire-fighting equipment. There were precautions that could have been taken—and which were even mandated by Jacksonville's laws—about

Left, Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department members wore older uniforms as they pulled a restored pumper in a 1973 parade.

Below, volunteer firemen wore ceremonial leather belts like this one to parades and on other special occasions.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JACKSONVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



ACC. #87.1.2320

Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!

Here's a brief look at Jacksonville's major fires. Bear in mind that in most cases, property owners were uninsured. A fire meant starting over, literally from the ground up.

1867—The Linn and Hall lumber mill and kiln, located on Oregon Street between California and C, burned, taking with it 5,000 board feet of lumber. According to the report in the *Oregon Sentinel* on February 16, 1867, "the fire spread so rapidly that it was impossible to save any portion [of lumber]...in the kiln."¹²

1873—On April 3, the *Morning Oregonian* reported, the "most destructive fire that has ever occurred in this place [Jacksonville] broke out. The fire started in the United States Hotel (just east of the Beekman Bank) and spread with fearful rapidity toward the eastern portion of town. In less than fifteen minutes it was completely beyond control. ...There was no fire engine and the main reliance was in tearing down buildings, which was done as rapidly as possible."¹³

Again, there was no really effective way of battling the blaze; the hook and ladder equipment helped to contain it and limit the damage, but once a building caught fire, it was essentially lost.

1874—Almost exactly a year later, fire broke out just up the street in a "row of old frame buildings on the southeast corner of Oregon and California streets, and which were among the pioneer structures of the place," according to the *Oregon Sentinel*.¹⁴ The newspaper reported that "so rapid and violent was the spread of the flames, although

scarcely a breath of air was stirring that the majority of those hurrying to the scene were enabled to make a bee line of their race, guided by the burning buildings which lighted up the town in all directions in less than five minutes after the alarm."

The hook and ladder truck arrived, and citizens set about tearing down the sheds between the two brick buildings to prevent the fire spreading to the new frame homes nearby. While the townsfolk struggled to contain the fire on the southeast corner of the intersection, it jumped California Street and began burning on the north side of the street. The bucket brigades were soon driven back by the heat on California Street, and turned to salvaging goods out of the stores. With the fire contained on the southeast side, the crews with the grappling hooks turned to the northwest side, and began tearing down the sheds and shanties that filled the area between the buildings flanking California Street and David Linn's cabinet shop, which occupied the corner and center of the block to the northwest of the fire. "By placing blankets all over the east front of the building and wetting them with water this building was saved and the fire prevented from spreading in that direction," continued the *Sentinel*. With the fire essentially contained to two blocks flanking California

Street, the firefighters set about salvaging what goods they could from the buildings now on fire. The flames spread so rapidly through the frame buildings, though, that little could be saved, "many of the citizens in the vicinity of where the fire started barely escaping with their lives," the *Sentinel* reported.

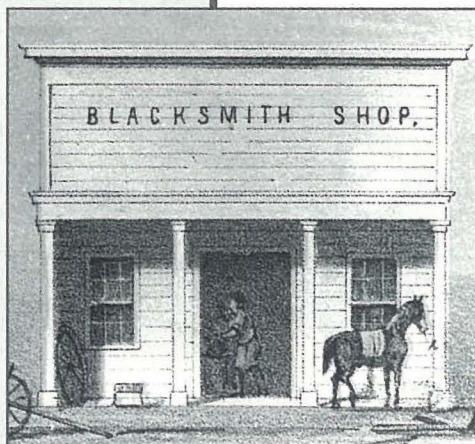
While the fire ran nearly unopposed through the wooden frame buildings, it is worth noting that only one brick building burned, that housing the offices of Fisher, Judge and Nunan, and owned by David Linn. "It was the last building to burn and for a time threatened seriously to communicate with the cabinet shop of David Linn, but all the force was concentrated on that point and by a scratch the property was saved and the spread of the conflagration checked."¹⁵

This fire helped shape the face that Jacksonville wears today. The *Sentinel*, in detailing the damage and describing future plans of building owners, repeatedly noted that they planned to rebuild with local brick.

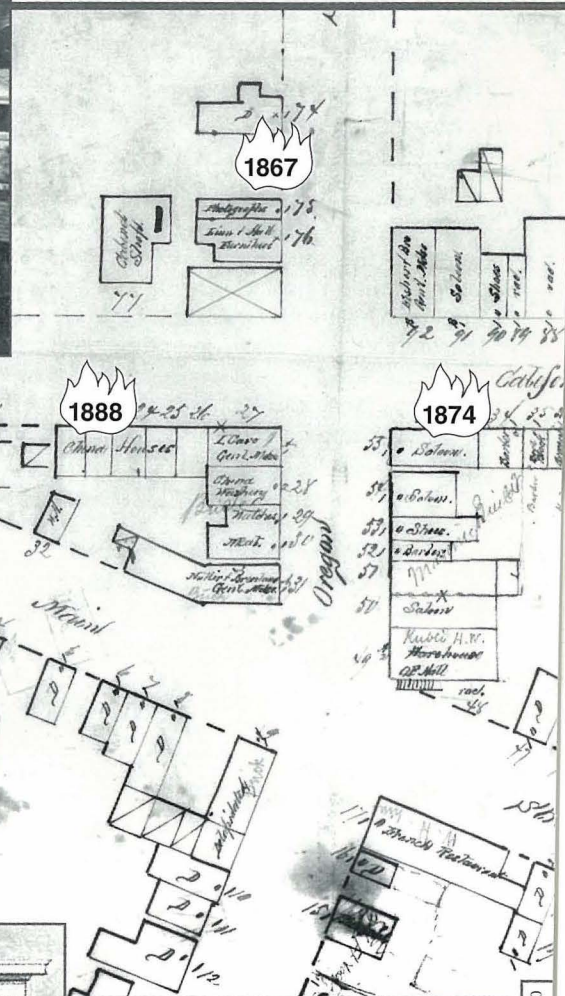


The long, white building in the middle rear of this early view of Jacksonville is the U.S. Hotel before it burned in 1873. Many of the flammable wooden structures in the foreground belonged to Chinese residents, and burned in a later fire.

SOHS ACC. #G4294.J2G46 1867.12 (DETAIL)



SOHS #688



This 1856 map of Jacksonville shows how much different the town and its many landmark buildings were previous to the five major fires of the late 1800s. The "flames" indicate the areas where each fire began.

At left is a sketch of the blacksmith shop that burned in the 1874 fire, which destroyed many other wood-frame pioneer structures. It was later rebuilt with brick.

0625TH SHOS

After the 1884 fire, which destroyed the New State Saloon, Howard's store, the Post Office Store, and P.J. Ryan's building, new construction was of fire-safe brick. The photo shows construction well under way on the new Redmen's Hall and Kubli buildings, far left, next to the burned-out section.

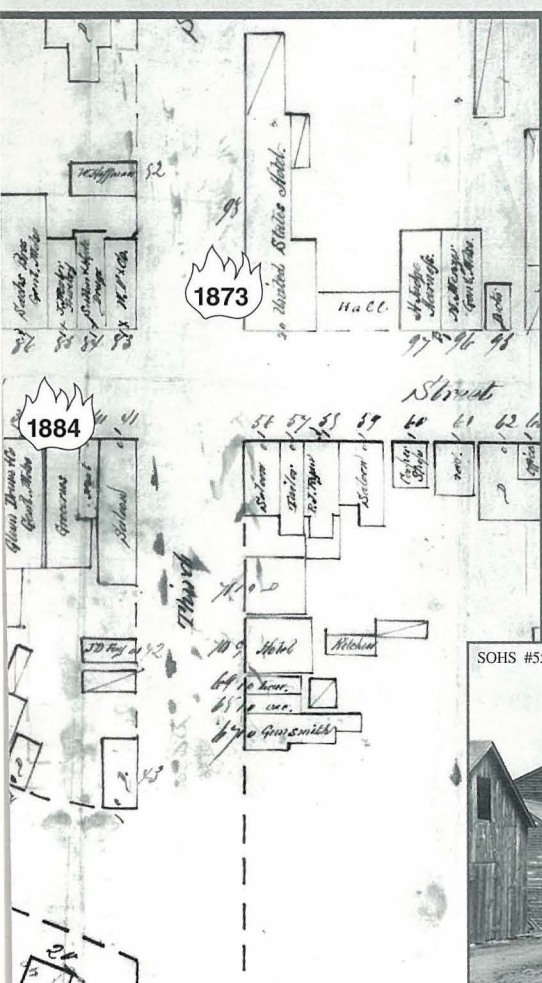
SOHS #1950



While the bricks were firm enough for construction purposes, they were too soft to be durable if left unprotected from the weather, which is why most of Jacksonville's historic brick buildings are painted.

1884—The fire of 1884 could have been prevented had the fire prevention measures the town had taken been better implemented. The *Democratic Times* of January 4, 1884, reports, "Had there been water in the cisterns and the engine operated in the correct manner, the fire could have been confined to the New State and Howard structures. As it was, the water supply proved none too great; besides, some inexperienced person forgot to attach the strainer to the suction hose of the engine, which allowed rocks and other rubbish to accumulate in the valves and thus rendered the machine useless."¹⁶ The New State Saloon, Howard's store adjoining the saloon, the Post Office Store, and P.J. Ryan's building adjoining that were lost.

1888—The last of the major fires in Jacksonville, the fire of 1888, destroyed David Linn's planing mill, two homes, the upper story of a warehouse, and the "Chinese buildings" across from the planing mill. ☹



SOHS #5558



Above, a view of California Street prior to the 1888 fire shows the planing mill on the left and the Chinese buildings on the right. In the photo at left taken after the fire, those buildings are missing. The rubble in the streets and the blackened building at far right are further evidence of the fire's toll.

cramming sheds between existing structures, and storing flammable materials improperly. But newspaper coverage of the fires provides ample evidence that not only did the citizens vote down a much-needed fire truck, they largely ignored the safety precautions that could have helped to limit the scope of the fires that burned much of the city in 1867, 1873, 1874, 1884, and again in 1888.

From 1861 to 1883 the town's most effective method of fighting fires was to literally pull the buildings down before they burned, creating firebreaks.⁴ The sheds and shanties that filled the gaps between the wooden buildings made fighting the fires a nightmare. Bucket brigades doused embers, hung soaking wet blankets on buildings facing the blaze, and in general did what they could. At this time the "volunteer fire department" was composed of whoever heard and answered the bell, which apparently was far from everyone. After the 1884 fire, the *Oregon Sentinel* commented that "full credit is due to all the citizens generally for their promptness in hurrying to the fire and their increasing efforts to save property. ...There (were) some shirks, but they were observed and may need assistance themselves some time, when they will be likely to receive such as they gave, at least by those who noticed them."⁵

One reporter commented acerbically after the Linn and Hall lumberyard fire of 1867: "We are lead [sic] to make a suggestion, which, if carried out, we think would be of great advantage in subduing fire. ...We have hooks, ladders, buckets, axes, etc., all placed conveniently and

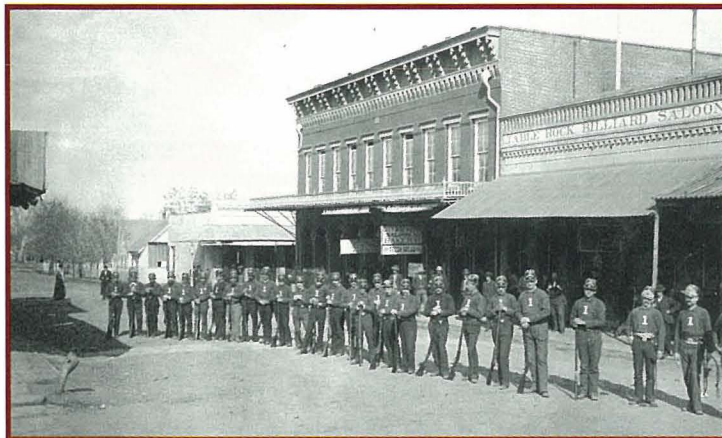
compactly on a truck; and it seems to us that the first and most sensible thing to be done in case of fire, would be to run the truck to the scene of action, instead of going there without anything with which to work."⁶

In 1883, after three devastating fires that destroyed much of Jacksonville, the town board (led by David

Linn, who had lost a great deal of property in several of the fires) finally approved funds for a pumper truck—a Rumsey built in Seneca Falls, New York—and formed a volunteer fire-fighting department. The pumper wagon wasn't delivered without drama. Even though the last spike had been driven in the Union Pacific Railroad nearly fifteen years earlier in 1869, and the Northern Pacific

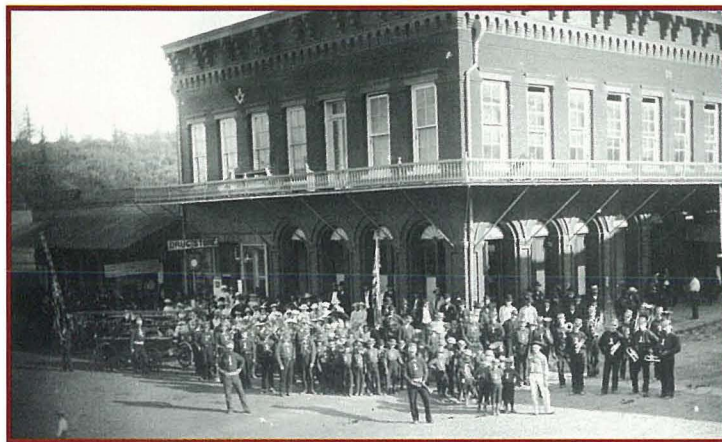
Railroad was nearing completion, large items such as the Rumsey pumper wagon still got from east to west by going south—way south, around Cape Horn. All went well until the ship reached Portland, where it foundered on a sandbar. Though the engine was unharmed, Jacksonville had to pay a percentage of the salvage costs.⁷ The pumper made the remainder of the journey by rail to Glendale, and then by horse team to Jacksonville, arriving in Jacksonville in May 1883 to join the fledgling volunteer fire department.

Realizing that the new pumper would be useless without a plentiful water supply, the townsfolk had dug cisterns along California Street into which the pumper's hose could be dropped. By the time the pumper arrived, the volunteer fire department had been formed and the water supply was in place. In theory, that should have been the end of Jacksonville's major fires.



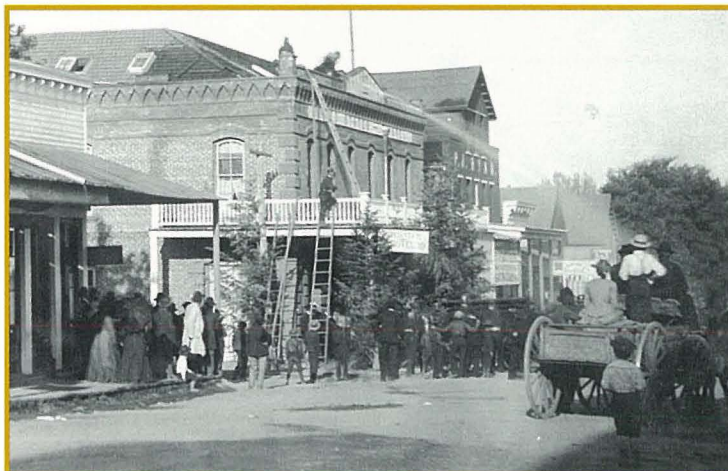
Above, members of the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department served as honor guards on March 12, 1886, for the hanging of Lewis O'Neil who was charged with murder.

SOHS #2111

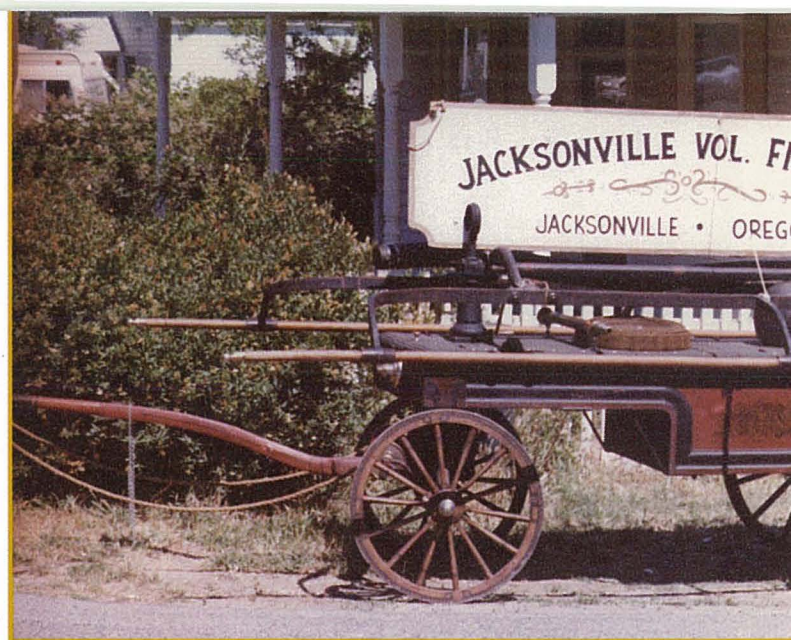


Above, volunteer firemen proudly gather for a portrait in front of the Masonic Building.

At right, crowds watch in 1883 as firefighters test the new pumper truck during a fire drill at the rebuilt U.S. Hotel.



SOHS #873 (DETAIL)



Above, the city acquired this Rumsey pumper in 1883; it was restored in 1974. It took six men on each side working the pumping bars to provide enough water pressure in the hoses to fight fires.

In 1884 the fire bell rang again. The fire crews assembled and dragged the pumper to the scene of the fire, dropped the hose into the cistern, and began to pump, in itself no easy task. There was a trickle, then nothing. The crews hadn't placed the necessary filters over the end of the hose before dropping it into the cistern, and muck had clogged the pump. Despite its less than distinguished beginning, volunteering in the Hook and Ladder Company of Jacksonville became popular. Once the initial grit was worked out of the system—literally—the pumper and fire department proved their worth: The days of major fires in Jacksonville were almost over. While individual businesses and homes have since burned, there have been no fires on the scale that swept the town from 1867 to 1888.

Firefighting 1889-1949

Engine Company Number One became more than a fire prevention unit. It became a social organization, and sometimes even a security force. The Jacksonville Silver Cornet Band was largely made up of firemen and performed at many social and community affairs. The firemen served as honor guards at two executions.

In 1906 the town acquired a new fire wagon, this one fitted with chemical tanks for soda and

This bib-front tunic is a reproduction of an early uniform worn by the volunteer firemen.



SOHS #2029, Acc. #523.2



Acc. #83.3.65

acid. The two were mixed at the fire, and the resulting foam used to blanket the fire—similar to the way modern fire extinguishers work. The firemen were uneasy about the chemicals involved, and there was even a movement afoot to sell the engine. The movement came to nothing, and when the department bought its first Model T in the early 1920s, the hooks and ladders from the original hook and ladder wagon, the hose and ladders from the Rumsey pumper, and the chemical tanks from the chemical fire wagon were loaded onto it.

Thus began a trend that the department has followed ever since: the accumulation of old equipment. As subsequent fire trucks were purchased, equipment was transferred from the older truck to the newer again and again. A good part of this was necessity; since its beginning the fire department has worked within a tight budget, sometimes to the detriment of equipment. At one point in the 1930s, the equipment became so old that one of the hoses rotted out in several sections. Training was sketchy and equipment inspected infrequently in those days, so the problem didn't surface until the hose was needed—at a fire. The hose burst, and the building was lost. There was an inquiry, and the decision made to disband the department, at least temporarily.

During the thirties and forties the volunteer fire department became an informal, at times inactive, organization. Former Chief Applebaker describes how fire alarms were answered in 1931: "The bell rang on City Hall and everybody just ran. I was in high school, and when that bell rang we

boys ran down the stairs and through the lower grades and out the door. The superintendent stopped us one day and said, 'Slow down a little, boys, you're disturbing the lower grades.' But we just ran when the bell rang," which sums up fire fighting in Jacksonville prior to 1950 quite well.⁸

Reorganization 1950

The volunteer fire department virtually disappeared during World War II. When the war ended, Jacksonville's volunteer firemen came home, along with the rest of the returning soldiers. The decision was made to reorganize the department. There were connections with the past—the department members voted to continue with the guidelines first adopted in 1883, and Applebaker, a long-time Jacksonville resident and volunteer fire fighter, was appointed chief, a position to which he was re-elected repeatedly until he retired in 1967.⁹

The year 1950 also marked a major event in the fire department's history—for the first time in the nearly seventy years since its formal organization, the department acquired a motorized fire truck that had actually been built as a fire truck—an American LaFrance. The department also obtained training uniforms—white coveralls—and used them regularly in rigorous training exercises. The arrival of the fire truck and the training uniforms signaled a new era for the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department. It had become

(story continued on Page 12)

This ceremonial fireman's cap dates to the 1880s, and looks very much like a ball cap of today.

At right, early 1960s photo shows the Jacksonville Fire Department's equipment lineup: a 1951 panel truck, a 1951 American LaFrance pumper, and a 1961 Ford one-ton equipped with Darley pump.



SOHS #2923



SOHS #1975

By 1975, the department's equipment was more sophisticated, with an Army surplus brush rig; a 1971 Ford with 750 gallon-per-minute pump; a 1977 Ford pumper with, 1250-gpm capacity (still in service); and the 1961 Ford one-ton with 500-gpm Darley pump.

UNIFORM COURTESY OF RUSSELL MCINTYRE
PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP



Things To Do in June

PROGRAMS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	<u>DATE & TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
June Craft of the Month	Museum hours	Children's Museum	"Pinwheels"
Summer Sunday in the Park	Sun., June 4, 2:00-3:00 p.m.	Lithia Park Band Shell	Native American Flute
Conversations with...	Sat., June 10, 1:00 p.m.	Power Plant, Ashland	Field Trip with Daryl McVey
54 th Annual Meeting	Fri., June 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m.	History Center	"...State of Jefferson"
Photograph Scrapbook Workshop	Sat., June 17, 9:00 a.m.-noon	History Center	"Hands on" class
Summer Sunday in the Park	Sun., June 18, 2:00-3:00 p.m.	Lithia Park Band Shell	Mexican country music
Jr. Docent Training	Mon., June 19, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Children's Museum	Preregister, Ages 8 & up
Siskiyou Trail Field School	June 19-23 or June 26-30	Southern Oregon University	Week long archaeology field trip
Open Studio Tour	June 24 & 25, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	3rd Street Artisan Studios	Historic Artisan demonstrations
Archaeology of Upper Rogue	Sat., June 24, 1:00 p.m.	432 Pine, Butte Falls	Slide Presentation

Program Details

For times and locations, see schedule above.

ANNUAL MEETING & BUSINESS SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Members are invited to enjoy an evening of decadent desserts, announcement of newly elected trustees, a program titled "The Moving People: The Ulster Mind and the State of Jefferson," and recognition of business sponsors.

Recognized for their special contributions during the past year will be: 99 Productions, AVISTA Utilities, Image Marketing, Lippert's Carpet, Lithia Motors, RAM Offset, and SPRINT.

Since 1855, the State of Jefferson movement has sought to create a new state from Oregon's southern-most counties and California's northern border counties. Fred Reenstjerna (above), research librarian for the Douglas County Museum, and Stephen Mark, Crater Lake National Park historian, will present "The Moving People: The Ulster Mind and the State of Jefferson." Program made possible by Oregon Council for Humanities, affiliate of National Endowment for Humanities.



Please join us for an entertaining evening. RSVP by June 14 by calling 541/773-6536.

SUMMER SUNDAY IN THE PARK

Samuel Kurz will present a program of contemporary music with a Native American flavor featuring the Native American-style flute. He feels his music is a gift from the Creator and is inspired by the beauty of nature and the creatures that live in it. Free.

CONVERSATIONS WITH...

Daryl McVey, plant supervisor, will lead the tour to the water treatment and power plant that was badly damaged by the 1997 New Year's Day Flood. We will also visit the Ashland Municipal Powerhouse that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Gather at 208 Oak Street to carpool. Free.

PHOTOGRAPH SCRAPBOOK WORKSHOP

A Creative Memories hands-on class to learn how to turn your photos and memorabilia into keepsake, photo-safe albums. Learn techniques for cropping, layout, mounting, journaling and more. Bring 6-8 photos of one event as you will complete your first page at this class. All other materials for your first page as well as educational handouts will be provided. Albums and additional supplies will be available for purchase. Fee is \$10 for members; \$12 for non-members. Call 773-6536 to preregister and prepay by June 14.

SUMMER SUNDAY IN THE PARK

Los Jilgueros presents a concert of Mexican country music. The program will include dance tunes and romantic songs. This four-piece band features accordion, guitar and vocals. Its leader, Godofredo Juarez, has been performing with this band in the Rogue Valley for four years. Free.

JR. DOCENT TRAINING

Looking for something fun and exciting to do this summer? Become a jr. docent and participate in a variety of projects at the Children's Museum and libraries throughout Jackson County. Ages 8 and up. Bring a sack lunch and join us for our annual training session. Call 773-6536 to preregister. Free.

SISKIYOU TRAIL FIELD SCHOOL

Join Southern Oregon University and BLM archaeologists as they investigate Siskiyou Trail sites during two, 5-day workshops. Learn skills of archaeological excavation, site mapping, and artifact field processing and identification. Class size is limited to 5 participants. Choose from the following sessions: June 19-23 or June 26-30. Participants will leave from SOU at 8:00 a.m. and return by 5:00 p.m. Call 773-6536 to preregister and prepay (required) before June 14. Fee: \$50 per 5-day session.

OPEN STUDIO TOUR

The Society is proud to be a part of the Arts Council's Third Annual Artists and Performer Open Studio Tour. Stop by the 3rd Street Artisan Studio each day to see artisans demonstrate historic pottery making, weaving, and spinning.

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Development Director. Southern Oregon Historical Society, is seeking a full-time development director to design & implement a comprehensive fund development strategic plan for the organization. The successful candidate will be responsible for building & expanding individual, corporate, & major gift programs, including obtaining support from foundations & implementing special events for prospect cultivation & donor recognition. Position requires excellent organizational, interpersonal, writing, & speaking skills & minimum five years' experience in development with proven track record of success. Capital campaign experience not required but a definite plus. Salary is competitive, with comprehensive benefits package. Send resume, references, letter of interest to: Brad Linder, Executive Director, SOHS, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501.

EXHIBITS: *(see listings below for complete descriptions)*

	LOCATION	MUSEUM HOURS
Century of Photography: 1856-1956 Ernest Smith, Butte Falls Photographer	HISTORY CENTER	Mon.-Fri., 9:00 am-5:00 pm Sat., 1:00-5:00 pm
The Shape of Fashion: 1900-1925 Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Jacksonville: Boom Town to Home Town Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience Hall of Justice	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	daily, 10:00 am.-5:00 pm
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibit	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	daily, 10:00 am.-5:00 pm
High Water Public Places and Private Lives Skidmore District Streetscapes and City Views	ASHLAND BRANCH	Wed.-Sat., 12:00 -4:00 pm
Archaeology of the Upper Rogue	BIG BUTTE HIST. SOC. Butte Falls	call 865-3310 for hours

Exhibit Details

For times and locations, see schedule above.

CENTURY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1856-1956

Highlights Peter Britt and James Verne Shangle, with cameras from the Society's collection.

THE SHAPE OF FASHION: 1900-1925

Women's fashion changed dramatically during the early years of the 20th century, reflecting the changing role of women in society. On display June 23 through December: selection of daywear, evening gowns, and undergarments that shaped women's fashion from the hourglass form to the boyish silhouette.

MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

Explores the development of the Rogue Valley and the impact the industrial revolution had on the settlement of Southern Oregon.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Explore home and occupational settings from the 1850s to the 1930s through "hands on history."

HIGH WATER: A Traveling Exhibit from the Oregon Historical Society

Dramatic photographs of Oregon floods from 1862 to the present. Many Oregonians, from early settlers to today's generation, have suffered from high water floods, a recurring part of Oregon life. On display June 21 through August 12.

A special exhibit focusing on local floods of the last 150 years will be on display through fall 2000.

SKIDMORE DISTRICT

Photo exhibit of the area once owned by Reverend Joseph Henry Skidmore who operated the Ashland Academy in the 1870s.

STREETSCAPES AND CITY VIEWS

Explores the visual history of Ashland through the eyes of yesterday's photographers.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE UPPER ROGUE

For almost thirty years, archaeologists have studied the history of the native peoples of the Upper Rogue. The BLM and Southern Oregon Historical Society have designed a small traveling exhibit reporting this archaeology work. The exhibit is traveling to local historical societies over the course of the year.

THE BALDWIN PROJECT:

Echoes in Time

A Photographic Journey into an Era Past

Opening Reception

June 9, 7:00 p.m.

The Baldwin Hotel Museum

31 Main Street, Klamath Falls

An exclusive fine art photographic exhibit, held within the walls of the grand old Baldwin Hotel itself, presented by Peter Firth. Prints of work by Firth and Thomas Cooley will be for sale as a fund raiser for the Klamath County Museum Endowment Fund.

Call 541/883-4208

for further information.

May's
Mystery
Object:
ballot box



May's Mystery Object was a ballot box. Votes were slid into the hole in the front and removed by opening the hinged door on top. No one guessed the March mystery object which was a camera self-timer.

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unless listed otherwise

Fax: (541) 776-7994

Email: info@sohs.org

Website: www.sohs.org

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106 N. Central, Medford
Mon - Fri, 9:00am - 5:00pm
Sat, 1:00 - 5:00pm

RESEARCH LIBRARY

106 N. Central, Medford
Tues - Sat, 1:00 - 5:00pm

JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C, Jacksonville
daily, 10:00am - 5:00pm

C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

California & Laurelhurst, Jacksonville
daily, 10:00am - 5:00pm

THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIO

3rd and California, Jacksonville
Saturday, 11:00am - 4:00pm

U.S. HOTEL

3rd and California, Jacksonville
Upstairs room available for rent.

HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road
Beginning July 1
Fri. & Sat., 10:00am - 4:00pm
Sun., 12:00am - 4:00pm
(541) 773-2675.

ASHLAND BRANCH

208 Oak, Ashland
Wed - Sat, 12:00 - 4:00pm
(541) 488-4938

JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE

Mon. - Sat., 10:00am - 5:00pm
Sun., 11:00am - 5:00pm

MYSTERY OBJECT OF THE MONTH

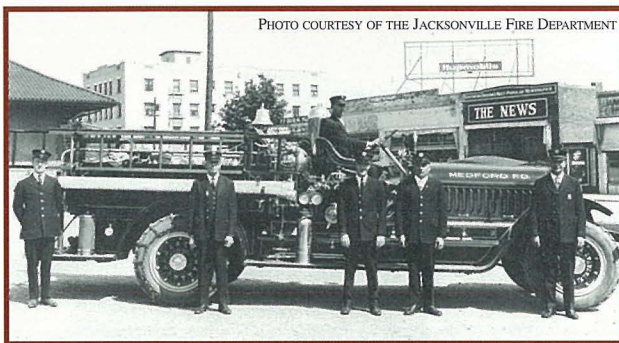


June Mystery Object:

This item when stored is 10" long and when the hook is pulled it extends to 15". It is one of a set. Can you give us a hand with this? Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and phone number to: News & Notes Mystery Object, SOHS, 106 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501, or by email to info@sohs.org.

At right, this Stutz triple combination pumper was used by the Medford Fire Department from 1925-1959.

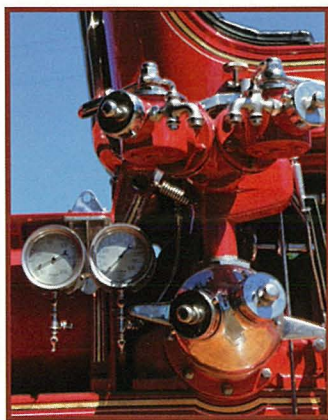
Below, the Stutz was donated to the Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1962 after its decommissioning. Since 1979, members of the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department have spent thousands of hours and many dollars restoring the spectacular fire engine.



celebration each June. In conjunction with the Boy Scouts, the department also runs an Explorer program that gives interested teenagers a chance to learn the fundamentals of fire safety, train with the firemen, and even accompany the fire department on calls.

What shape will the department take in the future? Chief Shaw says he would like to see the department grow. "It was a big part of the town in the late 1800s," he says. "There was the cornet band, the junior firemen, the events—it was a big part of town life. I'd like to see that happen again. I'd like to start the band up again. And I'd like to raise funds to restore the Stutz fire engine to running condition. It's a big part of our history." 14

Sherry Wachter is a writer, illustrator and graphic designer.



a more formal, professional organization. Training went from being "stuff your beard in your mouth and run into the building," as Tracy Shaw describes the early days, to involving a regular, intensive drills. Turnout times—the time between when a fire alarm is sounded to the time the fire truck rolls out of the firehouse—dropped dramatically. Fire damage decreased. Insurance rates also decreased. During Applebaker's tenure as fire chief, the department's Insurance Service Organization (ISO) risk rating improved from a ten to a seven. During Russell McIntyre's term the rating fell again from seven to five, and later the rating dropped further to a four.¹⁰

The department moved from Old City Hall to the current fire station in 1953. In the time-honored tradition of the Jacksonville Volunteer Fire Department, Applebaker—a mechanic and handyman when he wasn't being fire chief—climbed up on the town hall roof, removed the best siren, climbed back down, built the tower on which the siren sits today, and re-mounted it. That siren, which first had served as an air-raid siren, has called volunteer firemen to the station for more than fifty years.¹¹

Since its reorganization, the department has continued its tradition of not only offering prompt and professional fire and emergency response, but of community involvement. In addition to playing in the cornet band and helping to officiate at hangings and other civic events, the volunteers have hosted a "nearly annual" Firemen's Ball; decorated the town for Christmas (and undecorated it in January); and hosted the Pioneer Days

COLOR PHOTOS BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP



Gauges and valves on the fire department's 1977 Ford pumper are far more complex than that first hook and ladder truck acquired well over a century ago.

ENDNOTES

1. Author's interview with Louis Applebaker, 5 January 2000.
2. "Jacksonville's Volunteer Fire Protection in 92nd Year," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 9 November 1952.
3. Ibid.
4. *Morning Oregonian*, 4 April 1873.
5. *Oregon Sentinel*, 18 April 1884.
6. *Oregon Sentinel*, 16 Feb 1867.
7. "100 years of Firefighting," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 9 May 1983.
8. Author interview, 5 January 2000.
9. Ibid.
10. Author interview with members of Jacksonville Fire Department, January 2000.
11. Author interviews with Applebaker, Russell McIntyre, and Tracy Shaw, 5 January 2000.
12. *Oregon Sentinel*, 16 February 1867.
13. *Morning Oregonian*, 4 April 1873.
14. *Oregon Sentinel*, 18 April 1874.
15. Ibid.
16. *Jacksonville Democratic Times*, 4 January 1884.

Above, close-ups show the attention to detail required to restore the Stutz to its original grandeur.

Why have a volunteer fire department?

Here are two reasons that Jacksonville's firefighters came up with for maintaining a volunteer fire department:

Lower taxes: A well-trained volunteer fire department costs a city less than a paid fire department. Volunteer fire departments vary widely in terms of charters, reimbursement and benefits. Jacksonville's firefighters are reimbursed a small amount for each training session and call they attend. There are no regular salaries, and the reimbursement barely covers gas expenditures. Likewise, much of the labor for maintaining the firehouse and equipment is provided on a volunteer basis. And therein lies a hidden benefit. Volunteer firefighters are just that—volunteers. They all make their living in other ways, which means they bring a variety of skills and talents to the department, and by extension, to the city.

Lower insurance: A second major benefit of a well-trained and maintained volunteer fire department is lower insurance rates. Rates are based in large part on a department evaluation by the state fire marshal's office and on the ISO ratings mentioned above. The lower the ISO rating, the lower the insurance rates property owners must pay. Because Jacksonville's volunteer firefighters train regularly, Jacksonville residents pay less in homeowners' insurance than they would otherwise.

Training, however, is not the only factor. The reality of the modern world is that volunteering is no longer as easy as it used to be. Many employers resist employees' leaving—literally at a moment's notice—to fight a fire. Many potential volunteers work too far from Jacksonville to answer the four-minute turnout time. Daytime coverage is the most difficult to maintain, says Shaw. He hopes to hire two full-time firefighters to alternately stay in the fire station dormitory and augment the volunteer force that currently provides daytime coverage. Without the regular positions, says Shaw, turnout times could increase, and with them, homeowners' insurance rates.

A second issue is equipment. While the department is thoroughly comfortable with the idea of using old equipment—some of the equipment from the hook and ladder wagon purchase in 1862 was still in use well into the next century, and the department currently still uses a 1977 Western States triple combination pumper as a backup—the age of some of the equipment is starting to become a concern, says Shaw. "Those things are all factored into the fire marshal's report," he



PHOTO BY DANA HEDRICK-EARP

From left, current Fire Chief, Tracy Shaw; Louis Applebaker, firefighter from 1931-67 and chief from 1950-67; and Russell McIntyre, chief from 1967-84.

says. "If they lessen our ability to put fires out quickly and efficiently, they become part of the report." And the fire marshal's report plays a key role in determining insurance rates property owners must pay.

For many, volunteering in the department is something of a family tradition. Joe Applebaker became an official member of the fire department in 1911. His son, Louis, became a part of the department in 1931, while he was still in high school, and after going off to war, was voted fire chief in 1950 when the department was reorganized. Louis Applebaker was succeeded as chief by Russell McIntyre, his wife's cousin—assistant fire chief for much of Applebaker's tenure. He served until 1984, when he retired.

Members of the Matheny family have been a part of the department for years—often more than one at a time. At one point six were volunteering at the same time. The tradition continues; Gary Matheny has been a volunteer fireman off and on since 1971.

Dave "Okie" Edwards, owner of Jacksonville Janitorial and a volunteer since 1972, is the oldest volunteer fireman on the rolls today at 55. His son, Jeff, is second to the youngest, at 21. The two are related to two more of the firemen, John Stagg and Steve Kukert. Fire fighting does indeed seem to run in some families.

Even more important, though, is the sense of camaraderie that membership in Engine Company Number One seems to create. "The fire station's more than that," says former Chief McIntyre. "It's a place where the guys just drop in and talk, have coffee in the mornings, talk. It's like a club in some ways. A lot of the wives are friends."

And perhaps that relates to one of the most significant reasons Jacksonville's volunteer fire department has survived as an informal entity for nearly 150 years, and as a formal entity for nearly 120 years—the brotherhood of volunteer firefighters extends not just throughout the present, but into the past. Sitting in the firehouse and listening to the firemen talk about when "we" got the Rumsey, when "we" got the training overalls, when "we" moved from the old town hall to the new fire station, when "we" installed the alarm, when "we" served as guards at various functions, it is easy to see that in a very real sense the past is alive and well and surviving not just in the equipment and the old records, but in the hearts of the firemen themselves. 🕒



Over the years, men from all walks of life have given their time and risked their lives to keep Jacksonville safe from fire. The brave men pictured above were those in service in 1971.

Take a Ride to Steamboat

by Connie Fowler

PHOTO BY MAGGIE JAMES

Steamboat Cemetery is about all that's left to testify to the community that once existed here.

You can still visit Steamboat, the site of a gold mining community in the mountains of the upper Applegate basin. But the only boat you're likely to see is a fishing boat or sailboat skimming along the surface of Applegate Lake, sprawling below the Red Buttes Wilderness. You'll pass the lake on the way to the Steamboat area, which lies about six miles up Carberry Creek (once called Steamboat Creek) just a few miles west of Copper, a town site now submerged beneath the reservoir waters.

Steamboat got its start when prospectors tracing loose gold up the streambed discovered a rich gold pocket in the canyon in 1860. At its height, the once-thriving community included a sawmill, a post office, a school, and a cemetery. But the locality's history mirrors that of many communities in the Applegate gold country, its fortunes wavering between mining and farming, feast and famine.¹

It was William Billups and Frank Fetterman who discovered a likely quartz ledge above the creek in February of 1860. It was known variously as the Applegate Quartz Mine, the Steamboat Ledge, or Fowler Lode. Two other shareholders, G.W. Keeler and W.W. Fowler, put up the "grub stake" needed to develop the strike.²

By June, the miners had built an arrastra—a heavy grinding wheel for

Below, the fertile pastures along former Steamboat Creek lured ranchers as the canyon's gold played out.

Bottom, a sketch of a water-powered arrastra, in which heavy boulder attached to a wheel were used to crush the ore underneath.

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crushing the ore to free the gold trapped within it—and began to recover commercial quantities of gold. But things really paid off when they uncovered an extremely rich pocket in the ledge, producing enough gold to pay all previous expenses. Newspapers of the time reported income from the mine at as much as \$10,000 a week. The mining company added four new arrastras and made other improvements as the mine continued to yield its golden bounty.³

According to state geological records, the mine is said to have produced \$350,000 in gold by 1869.⁴ But paying quantities of ore later dwindled and the owner eventually abandoned the claim. Other hopefuls continued to work the claims for a few years, but without much success.

In the late 1860s and 1870s, Chinese miners reworked the tailings left over from the initial mining efforts to recover overlooked gold values. Other prospectors fanned out hoping to find new veins and pockets.

Eventually, the Steamboat Mine lay quiet, abandoned until 1890 when a new owner, Quartz Smith, developed it further, taking out a little more gold before

eventually selling the mine to a Portland developer, who supposedly took out an additional \$100,000 worth.⁵

In 1933 and again in 1936, miners returned to the Steamboat Mine, which yielded several thousand dollars worth of the metal.

Mining activity may have boomed and collapsed, but ranching and farming continued in the vicinity. In 1889, Steamboat residents formed a school district. Area children learned the three R's in the square-log schoolhouse until 1912, when the district was discontinued and students transferred to Applegate school. Steamboat's post office operated out of the George Culy home and served the community for twenty-seven years from January 10, 1888, until August 15, 1915.⁶

The cemetery at Steamboat is all you will find today. The 150-square-foot plot is near the road on the north side, surrounded by a fence.

The riddle of how Steamboat got its name remains part of the mystique of the mining era. According to Lewis McArthur's *Oregon Geographic Names*, mines that failed to meet expectations or had played out were said to have been "steamboated."⁷

So you won't find a steamboat at Steamboat, although you might find some gold if you happen to have an arrastra with you. For certain you will find a pleasant, scenic drive through some historic gold country. ☼

Writer Connie Fowler and her husband, Ben, ranch in the Applegate Valley.

ENDNOTES

1. Maude Ziegler, "Steamboat, Oregon," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 22 May 1966.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Howard C. Brooks and Len Ramp, *Gold and Silver in Oregon*, (Salem: Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, 1968) p. 264.
5. John and Marguerite Black, *Ruch and the Upper Applegate Valley*, (Jacksonville: Webb Research Group, 1990).
6. Ziegler, *Mail Tribune*, 1966.
7. Lewis McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names* 4th ed. (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974) p. 695.

Directions: For a nice loop, drive from Jacksonville on Highway 238 to Ruch. Turn left at Ruch on Applegate Road to Applegate Lake. Turn right on Carberry Creek and keep driving. Watch for Steamboat Cemetery. Continue on the well-maintained dirt road, turning right on Thompson Creek Road, which reconnects with Highway 238.

Steamboat's children learned their lessons in this log schoolhouse until 1912.



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Madame DeRoboam

PIONEER HOSTESS OF JACKSONVILLE

by Louise A. Watson



SOHS #1671

Left, the United States Hotel, rebuilt of substantial brick in 1881, became the city's premier stopping place.

Above, Madame DeRoboam brought French culinary skills to her role as hotel hostess.

All right, so she drank wine, pinched snuff, and was rather pushy for a woman of the 1860s and seventies. But Madame Jeanne DeRoboam Langier Gilfoyle Holt was always known as "madame," never "a madam." She not only built Jacksonville's United States Hotel but also won an argument with the nation's nineteenth president about the size of his hotel bill.

The facts of her life are sketchy. Jeanne was born in the Bordeaux region of France in 1820, and arrived in Jacksonville sometime before 1860. In the raw mining town, she used her French culinary skills and good business sense to run the Franco-American hotel with her first husband, Charles Langier. Her light biscuits and tender steaks won raves from the miners panning for gold along the Applegate River. And although Jacksonville whispered about the "sagging walls and spicy history" of the Franco-American, there is no record that Jeanne was ever "that kind of a girl."¹

She did make sure the Franco-American became Southern Oregon's premier stage stop, and she gave grand balls, which earned glowing write-ups in the local papers. It is unclear what happened to Charles Langier, but by 1865 Jeanne had married John Gilfoyle, and continued as an innkeeper. The Gilfoyles were childless, but their family grew with the 1871 arrival in Jacksonville of Jeanne's brother, Jean St. Luc DeRoboam, and his family. They helped Jeanne run the hotel.



John Gilfoyle died in 1872 and Jeanne married George William Holt, a bricklayer, around 1875 or 1876. Now the bride set about fulfilling her ambition of building the finest brick hotel on the West Coast. The owner of the original U.S. Hotel, Louis Horne, couldn't make the mortgage payments, so banker C.C. Beekman bought the property on California Street and resold it to the Holts. Work began on a new U.S. Hotel to replace the wooden one that burned in 1873.²

The hotel was still unfinished in September 1880 when Jacksonville learned that President Rutherford B. Hayes and his party of seven would soon pay a visit. Jeanne brought in special foods and even bought an expensive

carpet just for the presidential suite. As the presidential party prepared to leave the next morning, Jeanne presented her bill of \$150, in an era when most hotels charged more like six dollars per day. Legend has it that General William Tecumseh Sherman, a member of the president's party, protested the charges, saying "Madame, we did not want to purchase the hotel. All we wanted to do was stay in it." But Jeanne didn't budge and she got her money.³

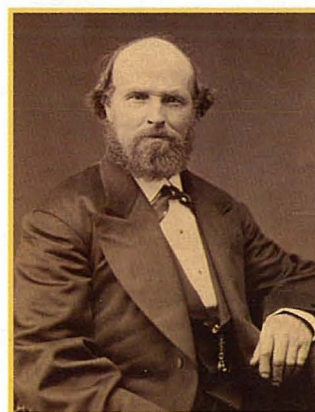
Jeanne continued feeding hotel guests and collecting their bills right up until her death in April 1884. ☛

Louise A. Watson is a Medford freelance writer and editor.

Endnotes

1. Maxwell Fanning, "Don't Call Her Madam!," *Frontier Times*, October-November 1978, p. 6.
2. Ibid, p. 26.
3. Fanning and Medford *Mail Tribune*, 18 December 1960.

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At right, Madame DeRoboam's third husband, George Holt, was a bricklayer whose skills helped his wife achieve her dreams in rebuilding the U.S. Hotel.



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