



# SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE

February 2000 Vol. 3, No. 2

*Today*

ON THE FENCE OVER SLAVERY  
HANDMADE BEAUTY TO COVER THE FLOOR  
ALMONDS STILL BLOOM IN THE SPRING



# Development Director Joins Society

Brad Linder, Society executive director, is pleased to announce the December appointment of Dorann H. Gunderson as development director for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Ms. Gunderson comes from Washington, D. C., and served for six years as the Executive Director of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Commission, a twelve-member Congressional commission responsible for the planning, design, and construction of the \$52 million presidential memorial in Washington, D. C.. Ms. Gunderson was originally appointed to that position by Senator Mark Hatfield, co-chair of the commission.

In addition, Ms. Gunderson worked for the George Bush (the elder) for President Committee, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and taught college preparatory English. She now resides in Medford.



Dorann H. Gunderson.

## Southern Oregon District Competition, National History Day

### FRONTIERS IN HISTORY: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND IDEAS



History Day!

Saturday, February 24, students, parents, teachers, judges, and volunteers will gather in the Stevenson Union at Southern Oregon University for first level competition of the National History Day Contest. This year's theme is "Frontiers in History: People, Places and Ideas." Coordinated by the Southern Oregon Historical Society, the local contest is part of the National History Day program sponsored by the University of Maryland. Local winners compete at the state contest held at Willamette University in Salem and state winners go on to compete at the national contest in Washington, D.C. Middle and high school students present dramatic performances, documentaries, historic papers, and table top exhibits based on research that they have conducted during this current school year. Teams of judges made up of a diverse cross-section of the community will chat with the students, scrutinize their projects, and declare the winners. Amid an

atmosphere of suspense and expectation, students will share their ideas about historic events in a supportive public forum and express what they have learned through creative and challenging outlets.

The Southern Oregon district competition of National History Day began nine years ago with one 6th grade class participating. Last year's competition hosted well over 100 students from nine local middle and high schools. It's exciting to see the program grow and to see so many young people involved in the pursuit of history. The public is invited to view presentations. For more information and viewing times, call 773-6536.

(continued from Members and Donors, page 15)

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Gold Diggers' Guild, A Peterson

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 outlines 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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Jackson County**

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SOHS #1643

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ACC #82.107

**ON THE COVER**

Hooked rug, from the Hanley Parlor.



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# Hooked Rugs

by Amelia E. Chamberlain

**T**HE CRAFT OF MAKING RUGS from rags is an old one; however, its origins are somewhat controversial. Ancient Egypt, medieval Spain, northern Africa, Scotland, northern England, Scandinavia, and colonial North America all have claims. Whatever their origins, hooked rugs were likely born out of need. In the days when new cloth was expensive and scarce, and houses were heated only by fireplaces, industrious homemakers transformed fabric scraps, whether leftover from sewing projects or the remains of tattered clothing and blankets, into warm, comfortable, and decorative rugs. Pre-1850 American rugs were usually designed at home by men and women who used their surroundings for subject matter and depicted them with childlike simplicity. The first commercially printed rug patterns were produced by a firm in Massachusetts in the 1860s.

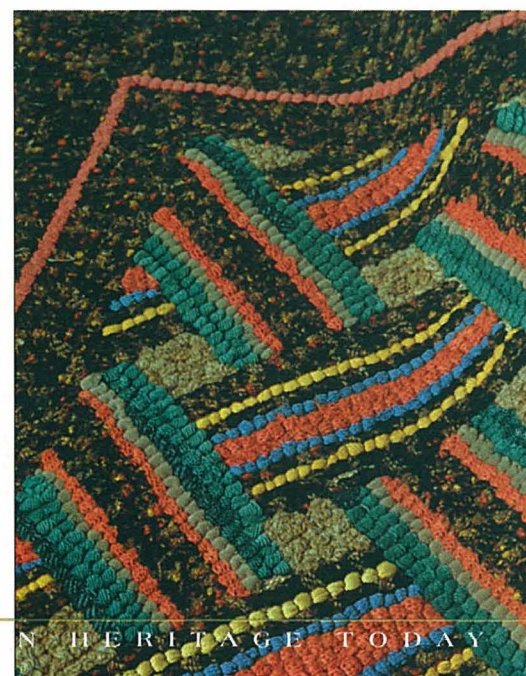
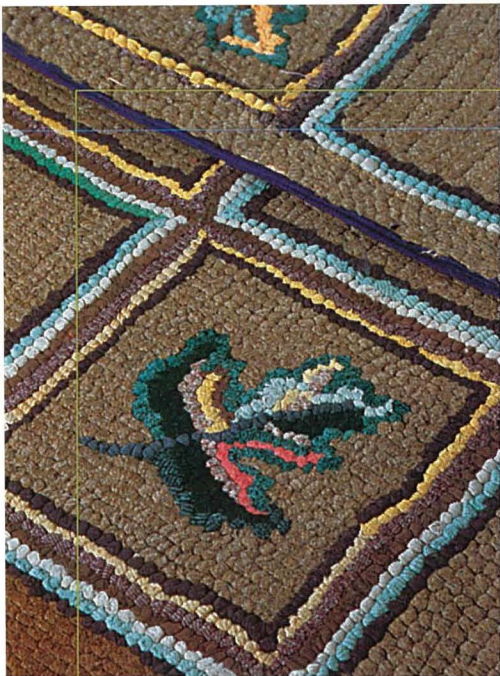
Nearly half of the Society's collection of hooked rugs and all but one of the rugs featured in this article are attributed to Claire, Alice and Mary Hanley. Did the Hanleys, like their thrifty predecessors, use scraps from leftover sewing projects and worn out clothing or did they purchase kits that included preprinted burlap backings and precut strips—much as we can do today? Recently discovered in the Hanley house is the beginnings of a hooked rug (*shown left*). The burlap is printed with a pattern stamped “#472 The Treasured Shawl/30” x 48”/An original design by Pearl K. McGown, of West Boylston, Massachusetts.” Another rug has “Buscilla”—a craft company still doing business today—printed on its edge. The Hanley collection includes at least two hooked rug catalogs from which the sisters could have selected a variety of patterns and tools, and a book *You ... Can Hook Rugs* by Pearl K. McGown. None of the tools the Hanleys might have used in the process have been found.

Items made by hand held much value for this family. Never a moment wasted, hands always busy, these rugs were crafted for the pleasure and satisfaction of making something by hand. The quality of work reflects a pride of craftsmanship. The back is nearly as presentable as the front, and the stitches are even and ordered in long, neat rows. Even though the source of the materials may be unknown, the rugs themselves connect us to a past where people valued doing things by hand and took the time to make many of their material goods. 🏠

Amelia E. Chamberlain is the programs director for the Southern Oregon Historical Society.



HOOKS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



*Clockwise from left: Abstract designs, often influenced by patchwork quilts, were a good way to use up small amounts of different colors. A hand-operated "rug machine" that made the work of rug hooking light, easy, and speedy. One of the most eye-catching of the rugs uses a more primitive style of hooking with wider strips. Final four rug designs, with flowers and leaves worked in bright colors, cheered up the living room through the long, dark winters.*

*The Society is presenting a hooked rug workshop on February 10. See News and Notes (page 6) for more information.*

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT, ACC. #82.107.456, #82.107.512, #82.107.496, #82.107, #82.107.497, #82.107, #82.107.497

# SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Things To Do in February

PROGRAMS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
February Craft of the Month	Museum hours	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Victorian Valentines and Rebuses; families, 25¢ fee
Genealogy Fair 2001	Sat., Feb. 3, 10 am - 4 pm	SMULLIN CENTER 2825 Barnett Rd., Medford	Speakers, videos hands-on computer use, DNA research project
Chinese New Year	Sat., Feb. 3, noon - 5 pm	U.S. Hotel and Children's MUSEUM	
Get Hooked!	Sat., Feb. 10, 10 am - 4 pm	HISTORY CENTER	Beginner's hooked rug workshop
"The Maps of the California Trail"	Sat., Feb. 22, 7:30 pm	HISTORY CENTER	Slide presentation; book signing

### PROGRAM DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

#### FEBRUARY CRAFT OF THE MONTH

##### *Victorian Valentines and Rebuses*

Families are invited to stop by the Children's Museum in the month of February and create their very own Victorian Valentines or Rebuses for the ones they love.

#### GENEALOGY FAIR 2001

Registration: 9:30 a.m. Bring a sack lunch.

10AM • Featured speaker Diahan Southard, BYU Research Project, Genealogy of the World, A Molecular Approach

11AM • Fundamentals of Genealogy

NOON • WWII Draft Registration Records

1PM • Climbing Your Family Tree

2PM • Locating the Family Homestead

3PM • Ancestors II video, medical episode

10PM - 4PM • Hands-on computers and family history/genealogy displays

10PM - 3PM • DNA Project, blood collection

#### GET HOOKED!

Participants will examine a variety of hooked rugs from the Society's collections, discover the history behind the rugs, and learn the craft by beginning a small project to be completed at home. Bring a sack lunch and a 14" embroidery hoop. We will provide a hooked rug kit of your choice which includes all the materials to make a cover for a brick to be used as a doormat, bookend, or decorative item. Fee: \$30 for workshop (\$40 for non-members) plus \$35 for materials.

#### CHINESE NEW YEAR

In support of the Chinese New Year Celebration in Jacksonville on Saturday, February 3, the Southern Oregon Historical Society will host cultural exhibitions and programs including a historic Chinese costume fashion show at the U.S. Hotel.

##### • U.S. HOTEL EVENTS

Admission: \$3/adult; \$1 ages 5-12; under 5, free. Ticket pre-sale begins January 26 at Scheffel's Toys and Jacksonville Barber Shop.

**Show One:** 11:30-12:30 cultural exhibits.

12:30-1:30 ribbon dancing, historic Chinese costume fashion show, raffle. **Show Two:** 1:30-2:30 cultural exhibits. 2:30-3:30 ribbon dancing, historic Chinese costume fashion show, raffle.

##### • OLD CITY HALL CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES *corner Main & S. Oregon streets*

Admission free, 11:30-3:30

Grace Christian School Art Exhibit; SOHS Discovery Box & Dragon Puppet Making; Chinese Youth Games & Activities; Video Demonstrations.

##### • CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ACTIVITIES *5th & C streets*

Admission free; activities 11:30-3:30  
Chinese storytelling; stamping activity; Chinese horoscope; firecracker craft (safe and nonflammable).

##### • DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE

Parade: 4:00-5:00, California Street; living history characters and demonstrations; U.S. Hotel exhibits open free to public 3:30-5:00.  
Call 773-6536 for more information.

#### MAPS OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Gregory Franzwa, author of "The Maps of the California Trail" will present a slide presentation by the same name on Thursday, February 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the History Center. Following the program the author will do a book signing.

#### UPCOMING PROGRAMS CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH:

March 3, 1 PM

##### • *A Woman's Place*

Ruch Public Library, 7388 Hwy. 238  
(Featuring slides of historic photographs of Rogue Valley women and explaining the roles they filled from the 1850s up to WWI.)

#### HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE LISTINGS:

February 15, 10AM - 3PM

- Enders Building  
266-300 E. Main, Ashland
- State Historic Preservation Office  
prd.state.or.us - click on "publication"  
PHONE: 503-378-4168
- Southern Oregon Historical Society  
PHONE: 541-773-6536

# EXHIBITS : (see listings below for complete descriptions)

	LOCATION	MUSEUM HOURS
Century of Photography: 1856-1956 The History of Southern Oregon from A to Z Talent Historical Society Sweethearts at Work and Play	HISTORY CENTER	Mon. - Fri., 9:00am - 5:00pm
Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker Jacksonville: Boom Town to Home Town Politics of Culture: Collecting the Native American Experience Camp White Military Uniforms Hannah Hall of Justice	JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00am - 5:00pm Sunday, noon - 5:00pm
Ongoing 'hands on history' exhibits	CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	Wed. - Sat., 10:00am - 5:00pm Sunday, noon - 5:00pm

## EXHIBIT DETAILS

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS, SEE SCHEDULE ABOVE.

### CENTURY OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1856-1956

Highlights the work of two area photographers, Peter Britt and James Verne Shangle, with cameras from the Society's collection.

### THE HISTORY OF SOUTHERN OREGON FROM A TO Z

Do you know your ABC's of Southern Oregon history? Even local oldtimers might learn a thing or two from the History Center windows along Sixth and Central as each letter of the alphabet tells a different story about the people, places, and events that have shaped the region we live in. Before Bigfoot there was "Reelfoot," the huge grizzly bear that wreaked havoc in the Rogue Valley in the late 1800s. After that, Bozo was clowning around in Jacksonville, and how about that guy named Fosbury whose big success at the 1968 Olympics was a real flop?

### SWEETHEARTS AT WORK AND PLAY

The Southern Oregon Antiques and Collectibles Association's mission is to promote growth of knowledge in the antiques and collectibles fields. To this end, it donates reference books to Jackson County Library Services and displays collections at branch libraries. Because of common goals, SOACC and the Society continue to partner in displays and programs. During the months of February, March, and April, SOACC will feature old-fashioned valentines like this (right) in a delightful new exhibit.

### MINER, BAKER, FURNITURE MAKER

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

### JACKSONVILLE: Boom Town to Home Town

Traces the development of Jacksonville.

### POLITICS OF CULTURE: *Collecting the Native American Experience*

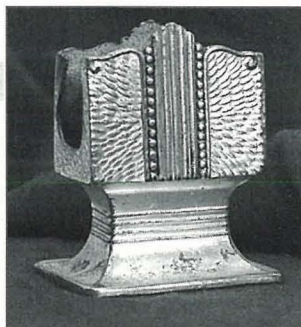
Cultural history of local tribes and discussion of contemporary collecting issues.

### HALL OF JUSTICE

History of the former Jackson County Courthouse.

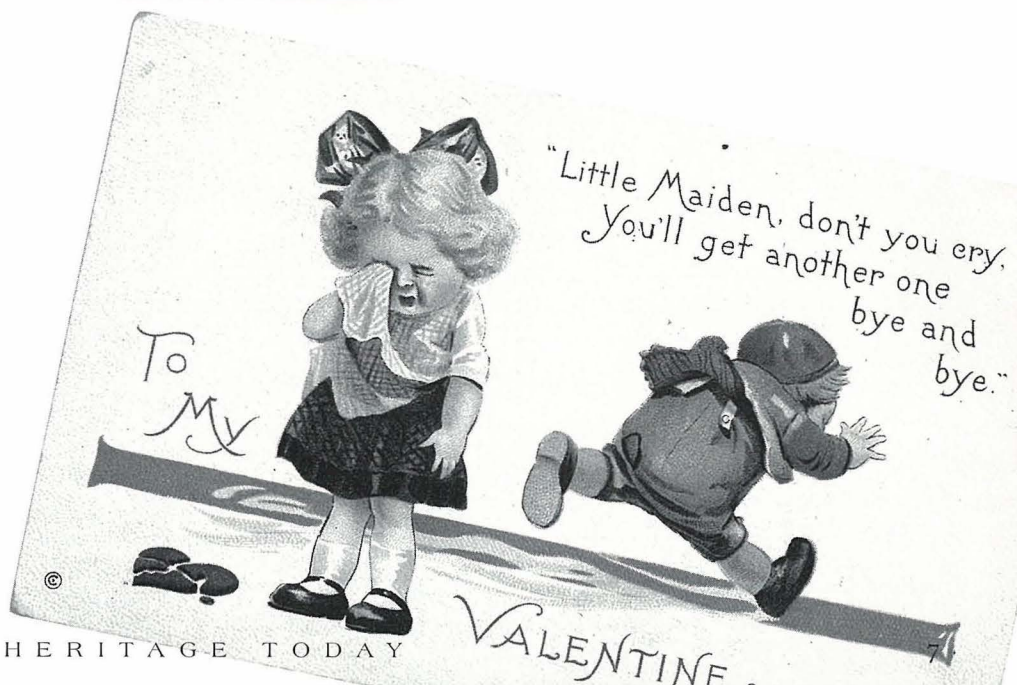
### CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

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



November's Mystery Object was a match holder. No winner this month.

Look here for December mystery object winner! We're on the hunt through our collections for even more challenging mystery objects. We'll return later in the year.



## SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITES

PHONE: (541) 773-6536  
unless listed otherwise

FAX (541) 776-7994

EMAIL [info@sohs.org](mailto:info@sohs.org)

WEBSITE [www.sohs.org](http://www.sohs.org)

### HISTORY CENTER

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

### RESEARCH LIBRARY

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

### JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5th and C, Jacksonville  
Wed - Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm  
Sun, noon to 5:00pm

### U.S. HOTEL

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

### JACKSONVILLE HISTORY STORE

Sat, 10:00am to 5:00pm  
Sun, 11:00am to 5:00pm

### THIRD STREET ARTISAN STUDIO

3rd and California, Jacksonville  
Reopens Memorial Day

### C.C. BEEKMAN HOUSE

California & Laurelwood, Jacksonville

Reopens Memorial Day May

### CATHOLIC RECTORY

4th & C streets, Jacksonville

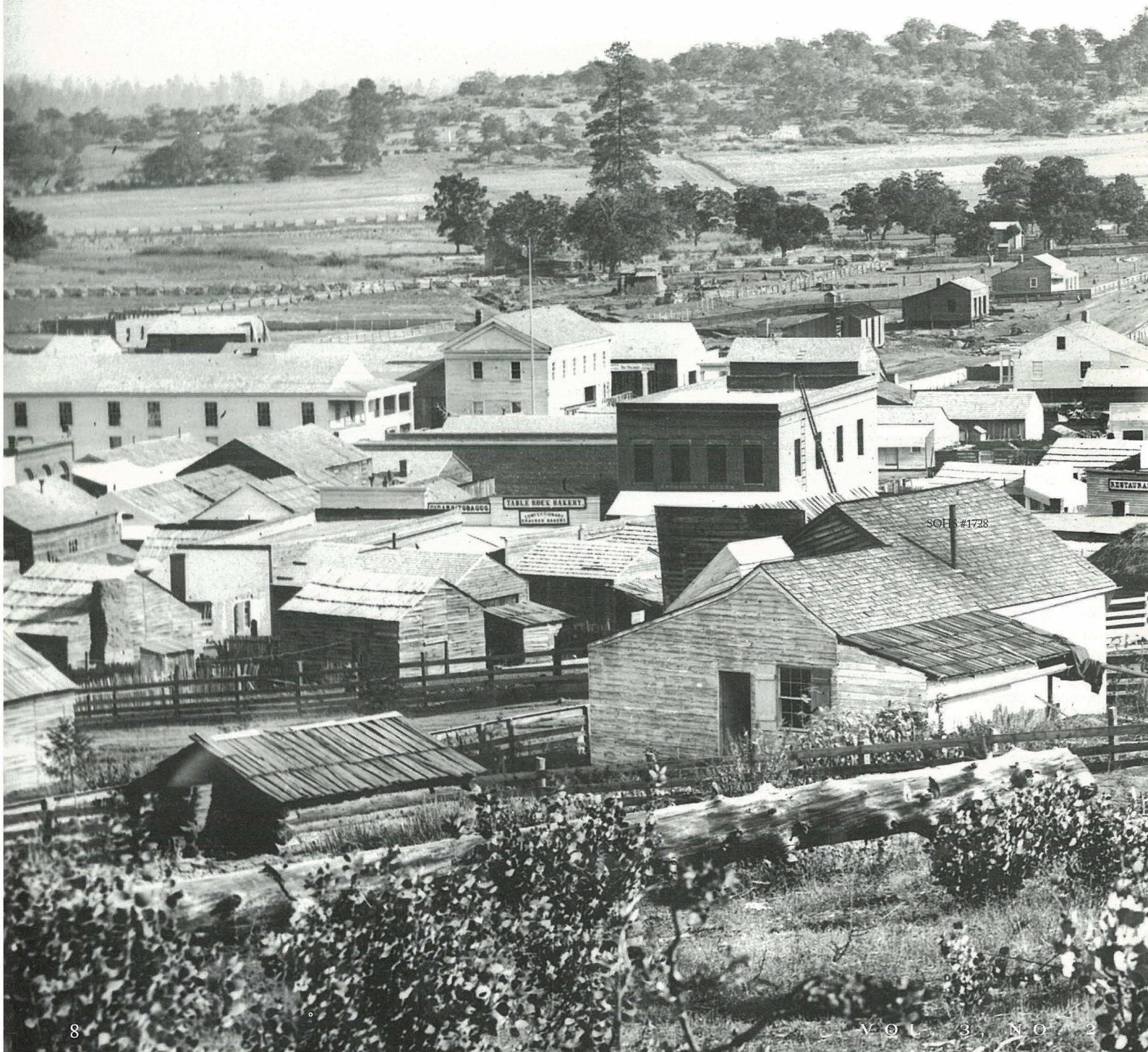
### HANLEY FARM

1053 Hanley Road  
(open by special appointment)  
(541) 773-2675.

# YANKS WITH REBEL TENDENCIES:

## The Issue of Slavery in Jackson County

by Rodney Coleman



*A visitor to Jacksonville in 1858 would have seen a few African Americans among the populace, and might have overheard the slavery issue being argued in the bars and on the street corners.*

## GENERALLY, HISTORIES RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY IN OREGON AND THE EXCLUSION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS FROM THE TERRITORY BETWEEN 1840 AND 1860

portray Oregon's pioneers as bigoted, rugged individualists who came to Oregon to "get rid of Saucy free Negroes"<sup>1</sup> or to "keep clear" of a "most troublesome class of population" and escape the "great evils" taking place at the national level over the issue of slavery prior to the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> However, despite the existence of territorial laws that prohibited slavery and excluded free African Americans from the territory, evidence of both slavery in Oregon and African American immigration to the region during this period exists, including documented cases of slaves who either bought their freedom or successfully sued for the freedom of family members. Particularly noteworthy are the cases of Lou Southworth and Robin Holmes. Southworth, who came to Oregon as a slave in the 1850s, eventually earned \$1,000 to purchase his freedom by mining in Jacksonville and playing the violin for dance schools in Yreka, California.<sup>3</sup> Holmes, a former slave brought to the territory from Missouri by Nathaniel Ford in 1844, secured his children's release from bondage through the legal system in 1863, when Judge George Williams ruled in the U.S. District Court of Polk County that slavery did not legally exist in Oregon.<sup>4</sup>

Just as interesting, however, is the relatively large number of African Americans present in Jackson County during this period. Roughly one third of the 124 African Americans who migrated to the Oregon Territory prior to 1860 came to Jackson County.<sup>5</sup> This is significant, given that Jackson County voters exhibited strong opposition to their presence and provided more support for slavery at the polls than any other county in the state. More than 93 percent of Jackson County's settlers casting ballots in the territorial election of 1857, for example, voted against "free Negroes" in Oregon,<sup>6</sup> and 48 percent voted in favor of allowing slavery to exist in the proposed state.<sup>7</sup>



One explanation for the inconsistency between the attitudes expressed at the polls and the number of African Americans present in Jackson County during this period stems from the discovery of gold near Jacksonville in 1852. The number of African Americans mining in Jackson County during this period has been estimated as high as twenty-six,<sup>8</sup> and one historian maintains that two African American sisters who settled west of Jacksonville in 1853 after becoming "caught up in the excitement of the gold mining and the attention they received from the men" were among the new faces arriving in the area during the early 1850s.<sup>9</sup>

The tendency for miners in the region to ignore territorial laws and overlook the presence of African Americans during this period relates primarily to the nature of the gold camps themselves. Single women were few in number in Jacksonville and in other mining towns, and the furious pace at which gold miners worked in hopes of striking it rich left little time for seeing to the expulsion of African Americans from the territory. One historian describes day-to-day life in nineteenth century mining towns as a "tumult of activity" in which "miners had no time to bury the dead and barely paused in their work to assist in cases of illness or injury."<sup>10</sup> In addition, territorial laws passed in 1849 barring African Americans from Oregon did not apply to African Americans already living in the region, and it would have been difficult to prove that African American miners had not come to Jackson County from other parts of the territory.

The historical record also reflects the difficulty (or lack of interest) associated with removing African Americans from Oregon through legal avenues. The only successful attempt to enforce Oregon's exclusion laws through the courts during this period occurred in Oregon City on August 25, 1851, when Judge Thomas Nelson acted on a complaint sworn out by Theophilus Magruder and ordered Jacob Vanderpool (a West Indian living there since 1850) to leave the territory within thirty days. A similar attempt to remove Mr. and Mrs. Abner Hunt Francis from the territory in September of that year failed, however, after 225 Oregon citizens (including former trapper and territorial legislator Robert Newell) filed a petition to exempt the couple from exclusion.<sup>11</sup>

Other explanations for the relatively high number of African Americans living in Jackson County during this period include the presence of slaves in the territory despite laws to the contrary, and free African Americans enjoying the support of white immigrants who had shared the experience of traveling across the United States with them. Henry Overbeck, for example, brought a slave named Jack Baker (also known as Jackson Berry) with him to Jackson County in 1852,<sup>12</sup> and Woodson Tucker allowed an African American family with whom he had traveled west in 1853 to farm on his Donation Land claim, as the family couldn't legally own land under territorial law.<sup>13</sup> The relatively high number of African Americans present in the region during this period has also been attributed to the classification of children born to mixed couples during the mining boom as African Americans in the census data.<sup>14</sup>

The journals of Thomas Fletcher Royal, a local minister and schoolmaster in Jacksonville during this period, include evidence of at least one mulatto child in Jacksonville and illustrate the sharply defined color lines then existing in Jackson County. In an entry dated December 29, 1853, Royal wrote about an incident that occurred



The Rev. Thomas Fletcher Royal and his family, circa 1860. Royal's journals record the hatred some in Southern Oregon had for African Americans, including agitation to keep them out of public schools, and to prevent a local congregation from allowing an African American minister named Isaac Jones to participate in their prayer meetings in 1854 (in journal fragment below).

while he was away on business in the Little Butte Creek area. During his absence, "a young man" had expressed "dissatisfaction with the school," and had told his brother "a number of ... scholars" had stayed out and would not return unless an unnamed "colored girl" was prohibited from attending the school. The man added that the parents of the scholars "can not bear the thought of sending their children to school with a Negro--it will be throwed [sic] up to them as long as they live."<sup>15</sup> In an entry dated May 15, 1854, Royal noted the animosity displayed by the "rabble" (local miners) toward his congregation for allowing Isaac Jones, an African American he referred to as "a local Preacher," to participate in their prayer meetings:

Again they would be ready to mob us for allowing a Colored brother - Isaac Jones a Local Preacher to come into our meetings and pray with us. They swore they would take Isaac out if we called on him again - and cursed us for being abolitionists. But we hardly ever failed to call on Bro. Jones at every prayer meeting. For he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. And when he prayed we always felt manifestations of Divine power.

An article in Jacksonville's *Oregon Sentinel* attributed to "Sambo" that featured stereotypical African American pronunciations of the English language indicates that the open denigration of African Americans was commonplace in Jackson County during this period:

SAMBO ON WOMEN.—"Dey may rail against women as much as dey like, dey can't set me against dem. I hab always in my life found dem to be fust in lub, fust in a quarrel, fust in de dance, fust in de ice cream saloon, and de fust, best, and de last in de sick room. What would we do widout dem? Let us be born as young, as ugly and as helpless as we please, and a woman's arms am open to receibe us. She am it who gubs us our fust dose ob castor oil, and puts cloze upon our helplessly naked limbs, and cubbers up our foots and noses in long flannel petticoats; and it am she, as we grow up, fills our dinner-basket wid doughnuts and apples as we start for school, and licks us when we tears our trowsis."<sup>17</sup>

Other than the previous examples, however, there is little surviving evidence of open hostility toward African Americans in Jackson County during this period. But it should be noted that the figure of twenty-two African Americans included in the 1870 Jackson County census represents a significant drop from the forty listed in 1860. Although the exodus of miners following the end of the gold rush could partially explain these figures, the numbers also suggest that free African Americans living in Jackson County during the mid-1800s had little incentive to stay. Only eight African Americans listed in the 1870 census, for example, had been present in the region in 1860.<sup>18</sup>

Most Jackson County settlers, however, only expressed opposition to free African Americans in the territory at the polls. For example, Welborn Beeson noted in his diary in 1857 that he voted "against the constitution, against slavery, and against the admittance of Free Negroes into the Territorys [sic],"<sup>19</sup> but a year later only casually mentioned the "Negro Colnel [sic]" that Jim Downey "had to cook for him." Beeson described the man as "a good cook" and noted "he used to cook in the mansion house in Ottawa," but expressed no disapproval at the colonel's presence.<sup>20</sup>

Whether Jim Downey's cook was actually a slave or not is unclear. What is apparent, however, is that pro-slavery and popular-sovereignty rhetoric in Jackson County was primarily confined to political commentary in newspapers such as the *Table Rock Sentinel* (one of five "rabid slavery advocates" in Oregon)<sup>21</sup> during this period, and that few Jackson County settlers were abolitionists, despite the fact that 52 percent of the population voted in 1857 to prohibit slavery in Oregon.<sup>22</sup> The lack of support for abolition is also reflected in the 1860 presidential election returns from Jackson County, which indicate that the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, received only a little over 25 percent of the votes cast, 394, while Vice President John C. Breckenridge (widely seen as sympathetic to the South's position on slavery, but also popular in Jackson County because his running mate, Joseph Lane, hailed from Oregon) received 675, or 43 percent. Stephen Douglas, a popular-sovereignty Democrat, received only slightly more than Lincoln with 406, or 26 percent, and John Bell (whose only issue was to preserve the Union) received 88, just under 6 percent.<sup>23</sup>

As was the case in national politics during this period, the Democratic Party in Jackson County split into pro-slavery and popular-sovereignty camps, the latter believing it was up to the voters of each state or territory to decide whether to allow or prohibit slavery. Both pro-slavery and popular-sovereignty Democrats freely expressed anti-Republican sentiment, however, and were quick to avoid having terms such as "Black Republican" or "abolitionist" attached to them. Local newspapers frequently used these terms to describe Republicans (for example, the July 17 edition of the *Jacksonville Herald* listed senators and representatives elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1858 under the headings

"Democratic" and "Black Republican") and political candidates attempting to alienate competitors in local elections found them to be useful as well. The anger generated by these terms and the political issues dividing the Democratic Party in Jackson County during this period are evident in Ogden Barrett's public response to such an attempt:

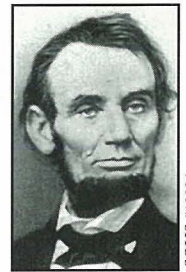
*Editor Sentineke*--I noticed in your issue of March 6th, a communication from "J.A.G." of Magnolis, finding some fault with me for representing Butte Creek, on the ground that I am a Black Republican, or you say, "he is called a Black Republican." The first vote I ever cast in Oregon was for Joe Lane, for our Representative in Congress. I have always been a strong advocate of the Kansas Nebraska bill, and have always believed in the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and believe the decision made in the Dred Scott case to be Constitutional and right; have always believed a Negro to be inferior to a white man; and have, on several occasions offered to be one of four who would send one hundred dollars to assist Walker in reinstating himself President of Nicaragua, and went for the Constitution without slavery. But I hope that the refusing to support slavery in Oregon is not the reason of Mr. J.A.G.'s calling me a Black Republican. If so, then I fear we should have to alter our Salem Platform, which the Jackson Convention refused to recommend.<sup>24</sup>



PHOTO COURTESY DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN PORTRAITS



SOHS #4185



SOHS #13926

*In the 1860 presidential election, Jackson County voters favored Vice President John Breckenridge, left, and his running mate, former Oregon Territorial Gov. Joseph Lane, center, over Abraham Lincoln or Stephen Douglas.*

*Pioneer Welborn Beeson and his wife, were early settlers in Jackson County. Echoing the indifference of many early residents on race matters, Beeson in 1857 voted against slavery, but also voted to keep "Free Negros" out of the Oregon Territory.*



SOHS #15991



SOHS #1643

*An unidentified African American plays a banjo in front of the Jackson County poorhouse in this undated photograph. As mining activity slowed, the number of African Americans recorded in census records as residents of the county fell from forty in 1860 to twenty-two in 1870.*

However, other than the rhetoric appearing in local papers and the 1856 Republican platform's resolutions suggesting "old dividing issues had passed away or had now faded into insignificance before the one great question,"<sup>25</sup> agitation over the slavery issue in Jackson County and in the state of Oregon paled in comparison to events occurring at the national level. The rhetoric bandied back and forth in the local newspapers never produced violent confrontations over slavery like those taking place in "Bleeding Kansas" in 1855, and the political debate over slavery during the 1857 constitutional convention in Salem (characterized by Charles Carey as "one in which much heat was generated")<sup>26</sup> fell far short of escalating into anything resembling the May 1856 caning of Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks on the floor of the United States Senate.

Although some historians have suggested Jacksonville was "filled with Southern sympathizers"<sup>27</sup> during the Civil War period and was home to one of ten secessionist groups in Oregon affiliated with the Knights of the Golden Circle<sup>28</sup> (a secret antebellum society seeking to create a slave empire to dominate agricultural production in the Western Hemisphere), conclusive evidence substantiating the Knights' presence in the region has yet to be produced, and changes taking place in the local press during this period indicate the majority of Jackson County's settlers were not "rebels." By 1858, local newspapers that had sided with slave holders on issues such as the Lecompton Constitution (which would have made Kansas a slave state) and the Dred Scott decision had begun reprinting articles expressing the need for slavery-related agitation to be "choked off and made to bite the dust."<sup>29</sup> In 1861, the *Oregon Sentinel* became "Republican in sentiment" after its editor, James O'Meara, left town,<sup>30</sup> and in 1862 the *Jacksonville Gazette* was one of a number of Oregon

newspapers "suppressed ... for treasonable proclivities" by local citizens.<sup>31</sup> A possible explanation for the inconsistencies between historical accounts and the lack of evidence substantiating the Knights' presence in Jacksonville during this period is included in the Texas State Historical Association's *Handbook of Texas Online*, in which Christopher Long suggests the Knights "quietly dissolved during the war" and that charges against anti-war Democrats accused of belonging to the group during this period were "largely unfounded." He adds that "although KGC forms and symbols were sometimes used by other groups, the Knights evidently had no organization in the Northern States."<sup>32</sup>

While many who settled in Jackson County between 1840 and 1860 displayed bigoted behavior consistent with historical stereotypes of Oregon's pioneers, excluding African Americans from the territory, establishing a slave economy, and participating in sectional struggles thousands of miles away were generally not priorities for pioneers carving out a living, pursuing wealth, or subduing indigenous populations in the region during the Civil War years. Consequently, pro-slavery and abolitionist rhetoric seldom reached the moral high ground in Southern Oregon that had characterized it on the national level. Participation in the war was also minimal in Southern Oregon because "the military pay of \$16.00 per month in wartime greenbacks—which depreciated in value and became unpopular as currency everywhere in the West—could not compete with the pay of private employers or the mines where wages were as high as \$6.00 a day in hard money."<sup>33</sup> Evidence of war-related disturbances in Jackson County following the outbreak of hostilities in 1861 is limited to the arrest of a "secesher ... hurrahing for Jefferson Davis" in 1862,<sup>34</sup> and a legend recounted by Richard H. Engeman in his book, *The Jacksonville Story*:

Legend has it that at one time during the Civil War, a Confederate flag appeared one morning flying from the town flagpole. This so outraged Zany Ganung, wife of a local doctor, that she marched out to the pole with her hatchet, chopped it down, and dragged the offending flag off beneath her apron and used it to stoke the stove.<sup>35</sup>



SOHS #6675

*Zany Ross Ganung, the wife of a Jacksonville physician, is said to have become so incensed at the sight of a Confederate flag in town during the Civil War that she chopped down the flagpole and burned the Stars and Bars in her stove.*

However, even legends and isolated incidents are rare in the historical record, indicating that most Jackson County residents were content to be a part of the Union during this period. The majority (whether they supported slavery or not) were apparently "Yankees," despite the "rebel" tendencies that stood out in the historical record and gave Jackson County the dubious reputation as having been the Oregon county where "Southern sentiment was most pronounced" at the time.<sup>36</sup> ■

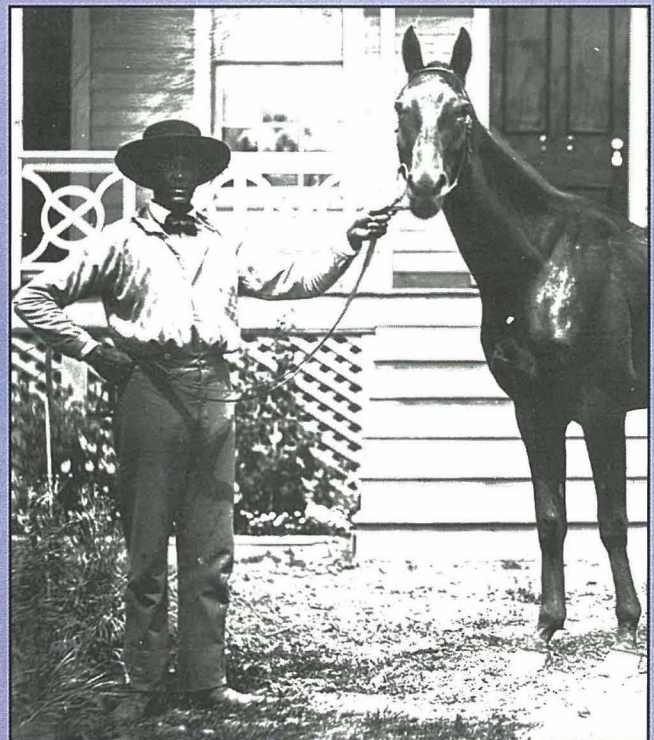
*Rodney Coleman is currently a student at Southern Oregon University.*

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*Peter Britt took this undated portrait of an African American woman. Hard-working miners who were starved for female contact apparently did not object to African American women in early Jacksonville, even though the law discouraged their presence.*



*An unidentified African American man tends a horse in front of Peter Britt's home.*



# Lower Klamath Refuge

y Doug Foster

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, LOWER KLAMATH LAKE sprawled over 80,000 acres straddling the Oregon-California border. The lake was so big that steamships provided transportation among the ranching communities along its shores. When Audubon Society naturalist William Finley visited the lake in 1905, he said it was "perhaps the greatest feeding and breeding ground for water fowl on the Pacific Coast" and "perhaps the most extensive breeding ground in the West for all kinds of inland water birds."<sup>1</sup> In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the lake and surrounding marsh as a national wildlife refuge. But just ten years later, the sole source of water to the lake was cut off as part of a reclamation project and the lake slowly evaporated. The refuge remained dry and barren through the 1930s.

Today, the refuge encompasses nearly 50,000 acres of ponds, marshes, and grain fields. Dikes now crisscross the refuge, slicing the land into rectangles connected by a complex plumbing system of canals and pumping plants that control the flow of water—mostly recycled irrigation water—which allows refuge biologists to manage the habitat for wildlife. Once again, the refuge teems with waterfowl.

Visit Lower Klamath Refuge in late spring and early summer to see nesting terns, herons, grebes, ducks, and geese.

Go in late October or November to see huge swarms of migrating ducks and geese; 80 percent of the waterfowl migrating down the Pacific Flyway funnel through the Klamath Basin, with peak numbers exceeding a million birds. On the last weekend of October in 1997, more than half a million pintail ducks were seen at Lower Klamath Refuge.

Go in January or February to see bald eagles; the Klamath Basin hosts the largest concentration of wintering bald eagles in the contiguous forty-eight states, usually more than 500.

In early March swans and big flocks of "white geese"—snow

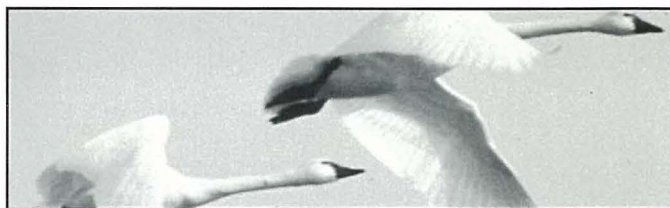
geese and Ross' geese—stop over at the refuge en route to their Arctic breeding grounds. A springtime flock of these gregarious white geese can number more than 10,000. On the ground, a flock looks like a huge patch of crusted snow, then the geese rise up and swirl about like a blizzard, turning the blue sky white. At closer range, their black wing-tips begin to show; closer still, individual geese appear within the flock. While the call of a snow goose sounds like a high-pitched bark, the call of a tundra swan sounds like a hollow, wheezy ululation: an eerie, nasal "whooping" sound. These huge birds, cousins to the mute swans seen in city parks, are the first waterfowl to migrate to the northern breeding grounds. Lower Klamath Refuge is listed on the National Register as both the first national waterfowl refuge and the first large area of public land in the United States set aside for wildlife.<sup>2</sup> 🐾

*Doug Foster is a writer and historian living in Ashland.*

## ENDNOTES

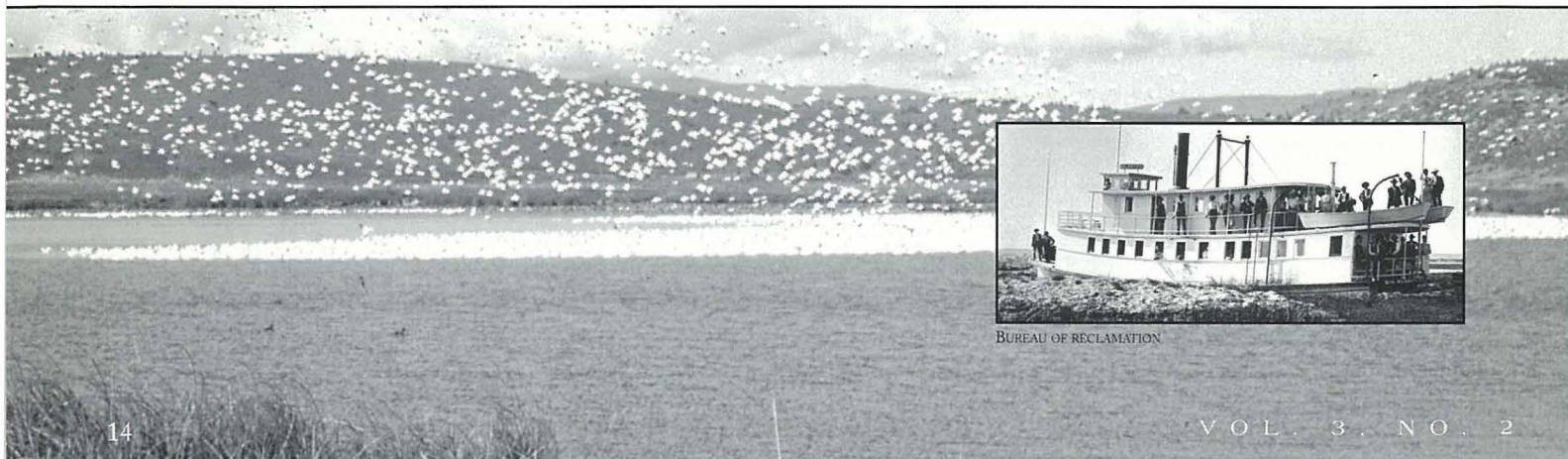
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**DIRECTIONS:** From Highway 97 about twenty-five miles south of Klamath Falls, turn east on Highway 131 and continue for just over nine miles; at the big wooden sign marked "Lower Klamath N.W.R.," turn south (right) onto a gravel road. This is the start of the auto tour route through the refuge, which is suitable for passenger cars. To get to the refuge visitors center, which has displays, a gift shop, and restrooms (open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), continue on Highway 131 east for another eight miles to Hill Road; turn south (right) and go four miles.



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

*Signs of spring at Lower Klamath Refuge: a raft of noisy snow geese swirls into the skies on the migration north. The larger tundra swans, right, also pass through the refuge in the early spring. Now a patchwork of fields, open water canals, lower Klamath Lake at the turn of the century was so large that steamships transported people and goods along its shores.*



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(continued on page 2)

# Almonds Bloom Early

by Donn L. Todt and Nan Hannon

**A**LMONDS ARE AMONG THE FIRST flowering trees to welcome the Rogue Valley spring. Their pale blossoms contrast strikingly with the trees' dark trunks and limbs. The blossoms arrive so early that falling petals sometimes mix with the flakes of a spring snowfall.

Our local almond trees are rooted in the history of Southern Oregon's orchard industry. Before pears became the predominant orchard tree, there was a great deal of experimental planting to find a commercially viable orchard crop that was adapted to the Rogue Valley climate. In 1866, Orlando Coolidge, who established the first plant nursery in Jackson County in 1862, purchased land extending up the hill from Ashland's North Main Street. He planted thirty-five acres in fruit and nut trees, especially almonds.<sup>1</sup> They gave their name to Almond Street. In Jacksonville, Peter Britt planted almond trees before 1873.<sup>2</sup> When the introduced almonds began bearing nuts in Southern Oregon, Steller's and scrub jays responded to them as they do to acorns: they cached them. Today, jay-planted almond trees may still be found near the sites of old orchards.

While almonds didn't succeed as a commercial crop in the Rogue Valley, remnants of abandoned orchards survived neglect, for though the flowers appear delicate, almond trees display a hardscrabble self-sufficiency characteristic of our native plants. Their roots penetrate deeply into the soil like those of our oaks and pines, allowing them to survive dry summers. Seedlings occasionally sprout in the midst of native trees and shrubs as well as along roadsides and field edges not far from parent trees.

Have you ever cracked open an almond, put the seed into your mouth and then quickly spit it out? You've encountered the bitter almond. Five thousand years ago nearly all almonds were bitter. The wild

*Early Ashland orchardist Orlando Coolidge planted acres of almonds above town, giving Almond Street its name.*

*Almonds failed as a commercial crop, but a remnant of the orchard blooms while snow still blankets Grizzly Peak.*

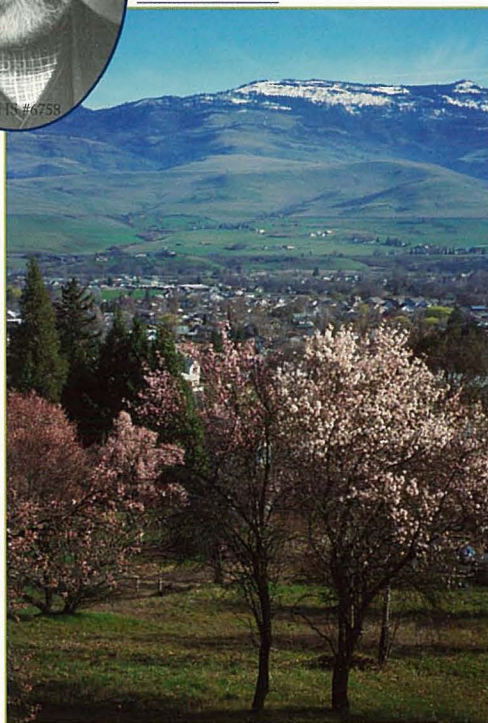
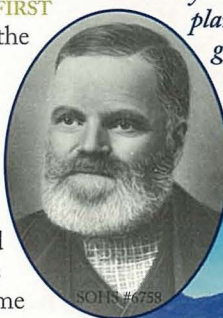


PHOTO BY DONN L. TODT

seeds rather than from cuttings or by grafting.

When almond trees bloom in our hedgerows and remnant orchards, they are reminiscent of the countryside in southern Spain, France and Italy. There, almonds are such characteristic trees in the landscape that they seem to be native. However, these trees of southern Europe descend from ancestors introduced from the Eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia, where wild almonds grace the mountainsides. Seed propagation allowed almonds to be easily spread around the Mediterranean Basin by early seafaring peoples, including Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans. Almond seeds even turned up in King Tutankhamen's tomb.<sup>3</sup>

Southern Oregon's almond trees link us to the stories of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultures that reach back to the mysterious beginnings of agriculture. Rogue Valley almonds are surprisingly similar to the sweet and bitter almonds sown by early farmers in the vicinity of the Fertile Crescent. They are a heritage to be cherished.

A good place to admire almonds in flower is on Almond Street in Ashland, where survivors and descendants of Orlando Coolidge's orchard frame views of the Cascades. 🏡

*Ethnobotanist Donn L. Todt and anthropologist Nan Hannon garden in Ashland.*

almond's intensely bitter seed, containing a cyanide-producing substance, made these nuts a problematic food source for hunters and gatherers. Early agriculturists in Mesopotamia solved the problem by planting out seeds from the occasional sweet-flavored almond trees found in the nearby mountains. The bitter principle is governed by a simple genetic mechanism that makes seeds either intensely bitter or pleasingly sweet. Three-quarters or more of the seeds planted from sweet almonds yield trees with sweet seeds. Thus, unlike most orchard trees, almonds may be grown from

## ENDNOTES

1. A.J. Walling, *History of Southern Oregon* (Portland: Walling Printing Company, 1884), p. 355.
2. Kenneth J. Guzowski, "Landscape Interpretation at the Catholic Rectory, Jacksonville, Oregon," 1990, report on file at the Southern Oregon Historical Society, p. 21.
3. Daniel Zohary and Maria Hopf, *Domestication of Plants in the Old World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 173-176.



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