Southern Oregon Heritage Today

HISTORY AROUND EVERY TURN
Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour
ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON
A Memorial Mystery
MEDFORD'S 'FLOURY' PAST
The Valley's Merchant Miller

CAUTION
JACKSON COUNTY HISTORY AT RISK
(see page 2)

DATE CHANGE!
PUBLIC HEARING
NOW MAY 4
10:30 A.M.

MAY 2000
Vol. 2, No. 5

The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society
Jackson County Historical Societies at Risk!

With the upcoming meeting of the Jackson County Budget Committee on April 27, Jackson County museums are faced with a 27 percent reduction in funding. This would impact all services, with major cuts in museum and library hours, programs, exhibits, publications, and other vital services. Please help us preserve our current levels of funding and services by voicing your support.

Why Is History Worth Preserving?

In a recent publication from the American Association of State and Local History, the value of history in American society was discussed and included some of the following points:

1. People who share a history—even different sides of the same story—can discover the understanding, insight, and respect needed to build a common future. History provides the foundation for talking about things that matter in our communities today.

2. When people get involved with the past they begin to see themselves as connected to others. The result is a sense of belonging, direction, and meaning.

3. By preserving and presenting evidence of the past, and actively connecting past, present, and future through public programming, history organizations pass the gift of history on to future generations.

4. History organizations make their communities more attractive places in which to live, work, and visit. And they are themselves travel destinations, employers, purchasers of goods and services, and recipients of gifts and grants. History organizations are economic engines in their towns, cities, and regions.

5. When people understand the differences made by the actions of those who have gone before, they see that their actions can make a difference. They realize that they, too, can make history.

The Gift of History

In 1948 the Rogue Valley was booming. World War II had ended, returning veterans were demanding new and bigger homes, businesses flourished selling goods to fill those homes, and sawmills ran almost constantly to supply the much-needed raw materials to make much of this possible. New people were moving into the valley and rapid changes were an everyday part of life. Early pioneer families watched as elders died, taking their wisdom and values with them, and local historical landmarks were in danger of disappearing. Concerned citizens of Jackson County decided to place on the ballot a special, continuing levy dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting local history. The levy was approved by a majority of the voters and 25 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property valuation was dedicated to history. This was one of the few continuing levies in the state of Oregon, requiring no serial approval every few years. This was a pretty amazing thing to do! The historical fund currently provides core support-$1.7 million—for the Southern Oregon Historical Society and thirteen other historical organizations that make up the Jackson County History Museums Association (JCHMA).

The Southern Oregon Historical Society and the other organizations of the JCHMA make wise use of the resources and funding provided by those forward thinking citizens who, in 1948, cared deeply about their communities and pledged to share their heritage—the gift of history—with future generations.

Jackson County administrative staff has proposed a 27 percent reduction in historical funding for the fourteen organizations in the JCHMA for fiscal year 2000/2001. If you would like to support our efforts to preserve current funding levels, please join the JCHMA and me at the Jackson County Courthouse auditorium, at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, and let the Jackson County Budget Committee know how important it is that we preserve the past by connecting it with the present and the future. Or, send a letter supporting our efforts to the Board of Commissioners at the same address.

Thank you.
Al Alsing
President, Southern Oregon Historical Society

Your voice can make a difference.
Two ways to support maintaining current funding levels:

–Come to the Jackson County Budget Committee meeting,
Thursday, April 27 at 12:45 p.m. at the Jackson County Courthouse auditorium (10 South Oakdale, Medford).

–Send a letter to the Board of Commissioners,
10 South Oakdale, Medford, OR 97501.
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ON THE COVER
Lord of the eastern skyline, Mount McLoughlin, a slumbering volcano, towers over the Butte Creek basin on the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour.
The former Trail Creek Tavern, parts of which date to 1914, is now the home of the Upper Rogue Historical Society.

The Upper Rogue Historical Society (URHS) was organized and incorporated in 1988 for the purpose of helping to secure park and museum land in Shady Cove. That project did not materialize. In 1996, the URHS participated with the Spirit of the Rogue Nature Center located at McGregor Park by providing both staff and material for public display. That was our first mini-museum. Many things have happened since.

In February 1997, the old Trail Creek Tavern and grounds became available for purchase. Immediately, two members of the URHS bought the property in December 1998 and will have the mortgage paid off in January 2003. Of course, this would not have been possible without financial help from the Jackson County historical tax fund. The Society sincerely thanks the people who pay into that fund each year and the county commissioners who see to it that the fund monies are distributed back into the community.

URHS began the purchase of the property in December 1998 and will have the mortgage paid off in January 2003. Of course, this would not have been possible without financial help from the Jackson County historical tax fund. The Society sincerely thanks the people who pay into that fund each year and the county commissioners who see to it that the fund monies are distributed back into the community.

The museum is located in “downtown” Trail on Old Highway 62 at the end of the new bridge over Trail Creek. The museum is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thursday through Monday mid-April to mid-October. We are closed Tuesday and Wednesday except by appointment. The Society offers an activity program for youngsters of all ages on Wednesday afternoons. Winter hours are Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m. You get in free but must sign the guest book to get out!

We need volunteers in order to be open more hours. Membership is open to everyone. For more information about the URHS, call 878-2259.

This 1938 Macvey loader in the URHS collection was one of the first mobile log loaders used in the upper Rogue region.

This 1938 Macvey loader in the URHS collection was one of the first mobile log loaders used in the upper Rogue region.

A CALL FOR VOTES

You've read the stories; now pick a winner! Readers are being asked to vote for their favorite feature article writer from the 1999 issues of Southern Oregon Heritage Today. Your entry must be received by, or postmarked no later than, June 2. Submit your entry—marked SOHT—in one of the following ways:

- e-mail to www.sohs.org
- FAX (541) 776-7994
- call (541) 773-6536
- mail on a postcard to 106 N. Central, Medford, OR 97501

SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY

Reader's Choice Writers Award for 1999

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Among the three quarters of a million photographs preserved in the collections of the Southern Oregon Historical Society are three small images of a floral monument in front of Medford's Carnegie Library. One shows the monument from the vantage point of Main Street, with the library building behind it. One shows the monument with the Medford Hotel in the background. The third shows the monument looking east toward what then was library park. None of the photographs has any information on the back or in the donor files to help date or identify the monument.

In order to solve this mystery we must turn to the photographs themselves. The presence of the library building gives us our first clue. Medford's new Carnegie library opened to the public in February 1912. This establishes the earliest possible year the photograph could have been taken. The photograph from the opposite side of the monument provides additional clues. The most obvious clue is the lack of a sixth floor on the Medford Hotel. This addition was made in 1926, so we now have a cut-off date. Also missing in this photograph is the "wireless telegraph" antenna that once occupied the hotel's roof. This antenna was removed in the spring of 1913, after a more sophisticated array was built nearby. We now know that these photographs were taken between May 1913 and 1926.

A date range of thirteen years, however, still presents a formidable challenge in trying to pin down a particular event. Fortunately, the hotel photograph provides an additional clue to facilitate our search; the flag on the roof is flying at half-staff. If the flag is at half-staff in honor of the passing of an unknown individual, it will not aid us in narrowing down our search for an identification of the photographs. There is, however, one day every year when the nation's flags are traditionally flown at half-staff. That day, Decoration Day, is better known today as Memorial Day. If this photograph was taken on a Memorial Day, our search parameters are now very much narrowed. We need only consult the local newspaper for May 30 of each year.

A search of the Medford papers, however, proves discouraging. Every Memorial Day from 1913 through 1918 is recognized with a short parade down Main Street and a ceremony at the Page Theater, followed by a visit to the I.O.O.F. Cemetery to decorate the graves of the veterans. Nineteen-eighteen, the final year of the Great War in Europe, is a particularly solemn occasion, on the recommendation of President Wilson.

There is no mention of any monument near the library. It is not until 1919 that the mysterious origin of the floral monument comes to light. The Memorial Day celebration that year, described by the Mail Tribune as the "Most Impressive in Local History," includes "a big and beautiful floral monument on the library lawn [which] was made by the Red Cross women. "On the floral obelisk are the names of those from Jackson County who lost their lives during the recent war. The paper goes on to describe the ceremonies surrounding the monument and list the names on the monument. Our three previously unidentified photographs are now accurately dated and identified, documenting an event held eighty-one years ago.

Bill Alley is historian/archivist with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.
### PROGRAMS:
(see listings below for complete descriptions)

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<td>Cinco de Mayo Celebration</td>
<td>Fri., May 5, 3:30-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Children’s Museum</td>
<td>“Paper Flowers &amp; Banners” Traditional Mexican crafts</td>
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<td>Conversations with...</td>
<td>Sat., May 6, 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Children’s Museum</td>
<td>Laura &amp; Ken Jones, Billings family history</td>
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<td>To Mom from Me</td>
<td>Wed., May 10, 3:30-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Ashland branch</td>
<td>“Geologic Aspects of the Rogue Valley”</td>
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<td>Living with the Land lecture series</td>
<td>Thurs., May 11, 7:30-9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Ashland Elks Lodge 225 E. Main</td>
<td>“Land Use &amp; Settlement of the Rogue Valley”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs., May 18,</td>
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<td>“Southern Oregon’s Suitable Structures”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs., May 25,</td>
<td>Ashland Elks Lodge</td>
<td>Make a sunprint</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sat., May 13, 1:00-4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Ashland branch</td>
<td>Ceremony honoring preservation in Ashland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sat., May 20, 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>History Center</td>
<td>American Western Mythology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sat., May 27, 1:00-5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Beekman House</td>
<td>Visitors step back in time to 1911</td>
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<td>Family Day Sunprints</td>
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### Program Details
For times and locations, see schedule above.

### MAY CRAFT OF THE MONTH
**“Paper Flowers & Banners”**
Celebrate Cinco de Mayo all month with these traditional Mexican crafts. Families; 25¢.

### CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION
Celebrate the victory of the Mexican army over the French during Cinco de Mayo. Create a traditional Mexican decoration and take a swing at our piñata filled with treats. Families; free program with admission.

### CONVERSATIONS WITH...

### TO MOM FROM ME
Dads bring their children or Moms relax at the Jacksonville Museum and watch a historical movie in our “Mother’s Lounge,” while their children create masterpieces for Mother’s Day. For children ages 3-6. Fee: $3.00 members; $4.00 non-members. Preregister by Friday, May 5.

### PRESERVATION WEEK 2000: May 14-20
**“Taking America’s Past into the Future”**
National Trust for Historic Preservation

### LIVING WITH THE LAND
*Four-part lecture series on the history of Southern Oregon.*
The series features the following speakers:
- May 11-Monty Elliot, professor/chair, SOU Dept. of Geology; May 18-Jeff LaLande, Rogue River Forest Service Archaeologist; May 25-Pat Acklin, assistant professor, SOU Dept. of Geography; June 1-Carol Samuelson, Southern Oregon Historical Society library manager and photo archivist.
- Fee: $30 members/$40 non-members, or $10 per lecture. Preregister by calling 541/773-6536 by May 8; prepay by sending check to the History Center, or pay at door. Refreshments served. Tours of the Elks Lodge building follow each lecture. Parking at the rear of the building.

### FAMILY DAY SUNPRINTS
Drop in and create a sunprint using special photographic paper and various shapes and designs. Families; free to members; $1.00 non-members. Ashland Railroad Park. A and Seventh streets. Weather permitting.

### ASHLAND HISTORIC COMMISSION AWARDS
As part of Preservation Week, Ashland’s Historic Commission awards individuals and businesses that have contributed to the preservation of Ashland’s rich architectural history. Presentations will occur in conjunction with the Southern Oregon Historical Society’s exhibit highlighting the Skidmore District at the Ashland branch. Refreshments served.

### AMERICAN WESTERN MYTHOLOGY
Molly Gloss, award-winning author, will present “The Wonderful Country: How the Myths and Stories of the Frontier West Have Shaped American Culture.” (Program made possible by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.) The public is invited and admission is free.

### BEEKMAN LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM
Step back in time and meet the family and friends of Mr. and Mrs. C.C. Beekman. Open daily Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, the Beekman House will transport you to the year 1911 as you tour its rooms and hear its stories. Families. Fee: small admission for non-members.

### National Historic Register Open House
May 2, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Clark-Norton House
127 NW D Street, Grants Pass
**Exhibits:** (see listings below for complete descriptions)

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<th>Exhibit Details</th>
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<td>Ernest Smith, Butte Falls Photographer</td>
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<td><strong>Miner, Baker, Furniture Maker</strong></td>
<td>Jacksonville Museum</td>
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<td><strong>Hall of Justice</strong></td>
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<td>Children’s Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing ‘hands on history’ exhibit</td>
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<td><strong>Public Places and Private Lives</strong></td>
<td>Ashland Branch</td>
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<td>3rd St. Artisan Studio</td>
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**StreetScapes and City Views**

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

**Skidmore District**

Photo exhibit of the area between Briscoe and Granite streets owned by Reverend Joseph Henry Skidmore who operated the Ashland Academy (now Briscoe School) in the 1870s. Opens May 17.

**Putting a Spin on Fibers**

Rogue Valley Handweavers, Far Out Fibers and the Saturday Handweaving Guild will present a handspinning exhibit. Various fibers used in handspinning, tools and finished articles will be displayed. Spinners will be demonstrating this traditional art form with hands-on experience for the public. The exhibit runs through May 31.

**Archeology 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 archeology work. The exhibit is traveling to local historical societies over the course of the year.

**May Mystery Object:**

This box has a handle, a lid, and hole in the front. It could have been used to change things and might be made of old soap boxes. It measures 4"Hx13.5"Lx6"W. 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.

A pril’s mystery objects were telephone pole spikes. Congratulations to February’s Mystery Object Winner, Vivian Rice of Yreka, California, who correctly identified the object as a percussion musical instrument.
Big Butte Creek tumbles over the falls that lent the town its name in this early photograph by Ernest W. Smith, one of the community’s leading citizens.

A fenced log cabin in a clearing was home to members of the Parker family, Butte Falls-area homesteaders.

The Big Butte Creek Falls seemed to the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company like the perfect spot to build a sawmill to process the old-growth timber being logged in the area. This early 1900s photo includes a note pointing to “where B.K. Harris was gushed from platform and washed over falls.”

If some beautiful day you find yourself reluctant to spend it chiseling away at that list of chores, why not take a giant step back in time and spend it, instead, deep in a forest rich in multicolored splendor and a silence alive with the tales of the folks and forces that helped shape our landscape and our history?

Indeed, what a perfect day to take the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour. With modern conveyance and a detailed map, you can follow the path of pioneers who, fueled by dreams of possibilities and a sense of adventure, left their comforts to wrestle with the hardships of frontier life. This self-guided sixty-mile tour winds on mostly paved roads through a beguiling portion of the Rogue River National Forest.

The Big Butte country must have resembled a bit of heaven to the hardy trailblazers of the past. Here were seas of trees one could drive a wagon through, streams rife with fish, game in abundance, a “kitchen” of edible wild plants, and scarlet fritillaries and trilliums among the hundreds of wildflowers to soothe the spirit.

Native Americans, who’d hunted and fished in the area for centuries, came for the same reasons. They didn’t take kindly to the intrusion by European American hunters, trappers, and packers, or the ranchers who followed. Nor were the newcomers pleased with their inhospitable welcome. For a while it was unsafe for both sides, until, sadly, the Indians were “obliged” to retire to the reservations.

Settlers taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862 filed claims for 160 acres of wilderness and got busy clearing land, building cabins, and planting gardens. When the first sawmills appeared between 1870 and 1890, small logging outfits began harvesting the first timber from the forests of Big Butte. It didn’t
take long before locals and outside entrepreneurs recognized a bonanza in the old-growth stands of sugar and ponderosa pine just waiting to be harvested.

In 1906, the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company built a small sawmill at the falls of Big Butte Creek; the following year a larger mill was added. This meant workers, which meant houses, stores and schools. A town site was surveyed on the land above the falls, and Bert Harris, a timber cruiser from Michigan, laid out the town with a 300-foot-square plaza at its heart. The community began to grow; in 1911, local citizens voted to incorporate and Butte Falls officially became a city.

The town is where the loop begins, but for an interesting and relevant preface to the tour, just before entering Butte Falls from the west on Butte Falls Highway, take a left on the gravel access road just after crossing the cattle guard; follow the sign to the falls and the remains of the mill. Had you been here in 1907 you would have seen a mill that could produce about 25,000 board feet a day, bustling with up to twenty-five employees. Prior to 1998, you’d have seen a neglected, disheveled, abused area. Today, thanks to the efforts of Butte Falls’ students and generous community residents, you can appreciate nature’s intention once again. From a wide viewing deck you can watch the falls and listen to its mighty roar, or picnic at a wooden table under the cool canopy of trees.

“This is one of my favorite places,” says forester Alan Buchta. “I walk here in the remnant footprints of the mill surrounded by trees once again, and I’m reminded how triumphantly nature renews itself.”

Do take one more engaging and informative detour: as you enter Butte Falls, population 450, make a left on Pine Street to the Bill Edmondson Memorial Museum located in the Dr. Ernest W. Smith House. This museum commemorates the lives of two of the town’s most celebrated characters. Here you’ll find Dr. Smith’s rare and beautiful photographs going back to 1906 in his pictorial history of Butte Falls.

Smith was a fine photographer, but he was also a teacher, a chiropractor, a U.S. Forest Service fire watchman, a surveyor, and an inventive tinkerer who, among other things, invented the alidade, which helps firefighters pinpoint forest fires.

Edmondson was a timber faller and an artist who created intricate wood carvings documenting life in the early logging days. He began whistling during the Depression, when time was about all he had, never imagining his work would someday be exhibited at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. “One should not miss this museum,” says Joyce Hailicka, chairperson of the Big Butte Historical Society. “Dr. Smith’s 1930s house has been furnished with pieces depicting the era. That, along with his priceless photographs, will give you a special flavor of the time.”

**Butte Falls, STOP 1.**

Edmondson’s life-size carving of logger Ralph Bunyan, Paul Bunyan’s younger brother, greets you in the Ernest W. Smith Memorial Park near the gazebo, in Butte Falls, STOP 1 on the tour. The gazebo, made of eight massive yew wood posts and four other locally milled woods, offers a window into the past through seven interpretive panels illustrated with original artwork and photographs.

On May 11, 1996, the Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour dedication took place in this park. Four years of planning, designing and construction made the dream of Butte Falls community leaders come true. With local timber-related jobs vanishing, their hope was to attract tourists to the area to establish a new economic base for the town. The Butte Falls Economic Development Commission adopted the loop tour project in partnership with the Forest Service.

Across from the park, buildings still in use date to the early 1900s when Butte Falls was a prospering logging community with a post office, schools, stores, hotels, bank, dance hall, and even an athletic club.

The Pacific and Eastern Railroad line connected Butte Falls to Medford. After the first train rumbled into town on November 15, 1910, the hotels and campgrounds soon filled with folks eager to escape the valley’s oppressive summer heat and relax in the refreshing mountain air.

Today, the Butte Falls community is intent on resurrecting those “good old days.” This tour is only one example of their commitment. Notice the new cast-iron street lights, reminiscent of the old gas lamps. Turn right at the blinking light to see the 1890s caboose, now a museum. That caboose, originally owned by Southern Pacific Railroad and later owned by Medco, was sold as scrap at one point in its career before it was recovered and returned to Butte...
Falls. Across the street, you may recognize the Casey Jones Station Restaurant from Medford. It bore such a resemblance to the old depot in Butte Falls that when it was for sale the community bought and moved it to its new site to become the library. October 11, 1990, was a big day for the children of Butte Falls. Not every day does a school close so the children can watch a depot roll into town.

Visit the Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management office at the edge of town for a trail pass if you intend to hike, and look at their treasury of maps, brochures, and books relevant to the area. Call ahead for reservations if you intend to camp overnight at one of the sites on the tour; the number is (541) 865-2700.

The Fish Hatchery, **Stop 2**, provides a picnic area, restrooms, and a show pond full of hungry rainbow trout visitors feed. This hatchery is one of the oldest in Oregon, its water some of the purest. The state Department of Fish and Wildlife has announced plans to close the hatchery, but concerned citizens are lobbying hard to preserve the historic facility.

The hatchery goes back almost to the town's incorporation. In 1915, the Michigan-based Dewing Company, under the name Butte Falls Lumber Company, sold just over ten acres to the Oregon Game Commission for ten dollars to be used for a hatchery to raise salmon, steelhead and trout to stock lakes and rivers. Even today, if you fish in the Coquille River you're probably catching chinook and coho salmon released from this hatchery, as are the rainbow trout in Howard Prairie Lake and the coho salmon in the Umpqua River.

A few miles from the hatchery going east, on the right-hand side of the highway, a marker identifies the Brownlee Olds Logging Company's Camp Three. When Olds sold to Owen-Oregon Logging Company it became their Camp One (1925-1928). You can still see the cinder quarry that later provided the ballast for the railroad along with remnants of the old railroad bed, but you'll have to use your imagination to see the tents and shacks that once housed the tired logging crews.

**The Whiskey Spring Interpretive Trail and Campground, Stop 3**, is a perfect place to spend a night or more. Botanists, birders and historians will find an added bonus. As you walk among the magnificent bounty of pines, firs and cedars, or marvel at the ponds and marsh created by the beavers' ingenuity, it's difficult to imagine that the area was clearcut in the 1920s. In 1922, Whiskey Spring was part of a 5,000-acre timber tract along Fourbit Creek sold for harvest by the government. By the early 1930s, the area had been totally harvested. Pine stumps along the marsh edges attest to those railroad logging days.

Whiskey Spring Interpretive Trail was officially dedicated by the Forest Service in June 1994. A mile-long, wheelchair-accessible loop trail with footbridges, viewing platforms, and interpretive signs guides visitors. Historian and forest archaeologist Jeff LaLande provided the sign text, interpreting the past and present natural and human history along the trail.

A small campground and trail were built at Whiskey Spring in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps camped at South Fork. The campground was modernized in the 1960s and offers thirty-five sites, picnic tables, stoves, restrooms, and gravity-fed water to faucets. Overnight campers: while you're sitting by your campfire listening to what Siberian natives call "the whispering of the stars," imagine the clangor of the logging machinery and the steam engines that once roamed through this now peaceful space that is once again a healthy forest.

A mile and a half north of Whiskey Spring you'll cross Fourbit Creek at the entrance to the Fourbit Ford Campground, with seven sites, hand-pumped well water, and good fishing in the creek. According to LaLande, Fourbit Ford got its name in the 1860s when a soldier lost a coin at the creek crossing. According to LaLande, Fourbit Ford got its name from a native lost a coin at the crossing in the 1860s when a soldier lost a four-bit piece (half-dollar coin) when fording the creek. Soldiers and teamsters crossed this stream when traveling on the Military Wagon Road (1863-1909) between Jacksonville and Fort Klamath. As you head south on Forest Road 37, you'll cross the old wagon road, marked by a wooden sign.
This rusty piece of equipment is all that is left of a logging arch, used to straddle and lift one end of a heavy log so it could be skidded to the railroad landing. Below right, a man and three children stand on a plank over the mill race that once channeled Big Butte Creek's water to power the sawmill.

LOGGING ARCH, STOP 4.

A short, easy trail leads to this rusty reminder of logging technology in the 1920s. "These ungainly looking hydraulic contraptions straddled a load and lifted the lead end of a log off the ground, thereby permitting easier skidding to the railroad landing," says LaLande. Eventually this arch was broken, left behind, and forgotten until Forest Service workers discovered it in the 1980s. It was further damaged by a falling tree in the winter of 1999.

Before leaving the Big Butte Municipal Watershed, you’ll pass Snowshoe Plantation, where seventy-two acres of ponderosa pines were planted in 1912, the oldest successful plantation of its sort in the Pacific Northwest. In more recent years, it has been selectively thinned to keep the trees healthy.

At the intersection of roads 37 and 3065 is a sign for the temporarily closed Snowshoe Campground. In the winter of 1910-1911, a Forest Service planting crew camped here in more than four feet of snow, sleeping and eating in large canvas tents. Their job was to re-seed the burned hillsides of the Cat Hill Burn. Day after day they went about the task on snowshoes (hence the name), but that did, few have survived.

CAT HILL BURN, STOP 5.

If you look with some imagination to the east, you can see the hills of the 1910 burn that scorched almost 20,000 acres. No fire fighters are around today to describe the terror of facing a blazing Armageddon crackling all around them. None are here to tell us how long they stayed immersed under the shallow waters of Twin Ponds to avoid being burned alive. It was the intensely hot, dry summer weather that created the conditions for the maelstrom that swept throughout the Pacific Northwest that summer, and it was the change of weather and the fire fighters from the Forest Service and the U.S. Army, that finally subdued it.

The Forest Service began clearing brush and debris and planting the very next winter, but reforesting those hot, dry hills proved to be difficult and frustrating. Experimentation with different species went on for years with little success, but the foresters' determination was finally rewarded. Janice Schultz, a Forest Service employee since 1981, was a member of a tree-planting crew during the 1980s. "We had a twenty-five-person hoed crew and a thirty-five-person auger crew planting ponderosa pines and Douglas firs that spring," she says. "Now, the place is thick with trees again."

SCENIC VIEWS OF MOUNT MCLoughlin, STOP 6 at the junction of roads 37 and 3770. Unless it's having one of its shy days hiding behind the clouds, you're in for a treat. Located in the Sky Lakes Wilderness, Mount McLoughlin, at 9,495 feet above sea level, is the highest point in Southern Oregon and one of the loveliest. If you're fortunate, you'll see the cone-shaped volcanic peak towering through the trees when you reach the junction of Road 37 and Road 3770. Be careful to whom you're speaking when you call it Mount McLoughlin, though. There are local old-timers who argue that its rightful name is Mount Pitt, as it was called for years due to the confusion of some early map-makers, though early settlers called it Snowy Butte. If Peter Ogden, a Hudson's Bay Company explorer, were here, he'd argue that its name is Mount Sastise. After all, he was the first European American to see and name it. However, Ogden's boss, Dr. John McLoughlin, often referred to as the "Father of
Oregon," was a more influential figure in regional history. Thus, Mount McLoughlin it is. If you want to see this mountain from a closer vantage point and have the time for a twelve-mile round trip, take Road 3770 to the end at Blue Rock. The Forest Service has a "Climbing Mount McLoughlin" brochure that includes a brief description of the history, geology, plants and wildlife of the mountain. 

Back on Forest Road 37, Parker Meadows Campground, (elevation 4000 feet) is accessible by car less than a half mile from the road and offers huckleberries and good hunting in season. The "Adirondack-style" open shelter was built by the CCC in the 1930s. 

**LOWER SOUTH FORK TRAILHEAD, STOP 7**

is reached just after you cross the South Fork of the Rogue River. The trail is an easy 5.3 miles beginning at Forest Road 34, ending at Forest Road 37. It's usually free of snow from July to October, but not always free of mosquitoes in late spring and early summer. There is convenient parking at both ends of the trail.

Don't be surprised if you encounter deer, elk, bears, or even a curious cow on your loop tour trip through the Rogue River National Forest. campground facilities. These structures have been maintained and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In LaLande's "Brief History of Imnaha Guard Station," he writes, "The Imnaha Guard Station residence is a classic example of CCC construction. Note especially the Forest Service's 'pine tree' symbol in the gable ends, the curved knee-braces at the front entrance, the wrought-iron hardware and other details of the door, and the chimney constructed of lava rock from a nearby quarry." For fifty dollars, you can spend the night in this historic residence by making reservations through the Butte Falls Ranger District at 541-865-2700. For free you can spend the night outside in your tent, throw horseshoes, picnic, and take a short walk up the path to see a mammoth eighty-six-inch-diameter Douglas fir.

**GIANT SUGAR PINE AND SOUTH FORK TRAILHEAD, STOP 9.**

If you haven’t come across any cows on the road yet, and you’re up for a good ten-minute walk uphill, you’ll discover a tree estimated to be 535 years old, one of the largest sugar pines growing on the Butte Falls Ranger District. An interpretive sign by the tree offers statistical information on this tree and its historical uses. If you prefer a short easy hike, cross the road and take the relatively new trail down to a section of the South Fork Trail; listen to the whitewater gushing along the South Fork of the Rogue River below you. If you’re a hiker or a mountain biker, remember this spot.

**SOUTH FORK BRIDGE, STOP 10**

is on this tour for aesthetic and photo fanatics, and for a refreshing drink of cold water from the campground pump. South Fork Campground is small and intimate, with six sites, good hiking, and fishing along the South Fork of the Rogue.
Lodgepole Kiosk, Stop 11.

Railroad logging is an integral part of the history of Butte Falls. The interpretive sign here describes those early days when a steam engine hauled logs from the Big Butte country down to the mills in Medford. You can still see the old railroad grade behind the kiosk. When it became more efficient to haul logs by truck, railroad logging was phased out. In 1962, the final load from Butte Falls was hauled out by the steam-powered Baldwin locomotive “3 Spot.”

Along Lodgepole Road (Forest Road 34), depending on the season, you’ll see Pacific dogwoods and serviceberries among the ponderosa pines, Douglas firs, incense cedars, and white firs. Mushrooms await the experienced picker, too, but if it’s the railroad logging was phased out.

Steam engine hauled logs from the Big Butte country down to the delicate matsutake (pine licenses, seasons, and locations. As you cross the cattle guard and re-enter Butte Falls, know that the town gained national attention when “Ripley’s Believe it or Not” proclaimed it to be the only city in the world with a cattle guard at each end.

But that isn’t why Joyce Hailicka, who also chairs the Butte Falls Economic Commission, helped to develop the loop tour: “We wanted to share our community with others, both our history and the natural wild beauty we’re blessed to have,” Hailicka says. “Our hope was that in doing this we could benefit the community at the same time.”

According to Alan Buchta, Butte Falls community coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management, and who was also involved in developing this tour: “The response we’ve had assures us that we’re realizing our dream. In an effort to help deal with economic difficulties, we’ve created a valuable opportunity that is being enjoyed by so many. I feel privileged to have been a part of this program.”

But don’t think for a minute the Butte Falls Economic Commission and the town citizens are relaxing in their rocking chairs. A community water-bottling company is on the way, and commission members envision a visitor’s center as well. Maybe someday visitors will take a tourist excursion train between Butte Falls and the Medco Pond—not just any old train, mind you, but the very same train that chugged through Butte Falls carrying lumber to Medford. We’ll let you know when this happens, and you can skip that garage cleaning again and enjoy another day in the beautiful Big Butte country.

Nancy Bringhurst writes lyrics and poetry from her mountain house in Ashland.

ENDNOTES:
5. Jeff Lalande, “Historical Interest Narrative for the Butte Falls Discovery Loop.”

Butte Falls Discovery Loop Tour Driving Guide

MILE | Stop 1: Town of Butte Falls and Gazebo. Crossing the cattle guard
0.0 | Leaving town, set your trip meter to zero.
0.5 | Stop 2: Butte Falls Fish Hatchery.
7.4 | Willow Lake Recreation Area Resort/Campground road to right.
9.1 | Turn left onto Forest Road 3065, visit kiosk.
9.4 | Stop 3: Whiskey Spring Interpretive Trail. Road junction left to trail and campground.
10.5 | Fourbit Creek and Fourbit Ford Campground
12.9 | Stop 4: Old Logging Arch.
13.7 | Snowshoe Plantation
14.2 | Snowshoe Campground
14.8 | Straight ahead on Forest Road 37.
15.4 | Stop 5: Cat Hill Burn.
18.1 | Junction with Forest Road 32, go straight
18.9 | Junction of 37 and 3770. Stop 6: Scenic Views of Mount McLoughlin.
19.5 | Parker Meadows Campground
21.1 | Cross the South Fork Rogue River and Stop 7: Lower South Fork Trailhead.
26.6 | Junction Roads 34 and 37—turn right.
27.0 | Junction Roads 37 and 3780—turn left.
28.9 | Junction Roads 37 and 3785—turn left.
31.2 | Stop 8: Imnaha Guard Station.
32.7 | Caution: make an abrupt left turn here to Forest Road 3775. (Straight on Forest Road 37 leads to Prospect).
34.2 | Loop Road—stay to left.
40.3 | Stop 9: Giant Sugar Pine and South Fork Trailhead.
41.6 | Turn right on Forest Road 34.
41.9 | Stop 10: South Fork Bridge.
42.1 | South Fork Campground
49.7 | Stop 11: Lodgepole Kiosk. Turn left onto Butte Falls/Palace Highway.
50.2 | Site of Medco Camp Four 1940-1960
58.5 | Turn right to Butte Falls.
59.1 | Cross cattle guard into Butte Falls.
A.A. Davis and his second wife, Ida, break ground in Medford in 1905 for what became the Pacific and Eastern Railroad. Lured by the Medford Board of Trade, Davis built the flouring mill at left in 1889 at Ninth and Front streets to process the burgeoning grain crop produced by Valley farmers. Fire destroyed the structure in 1925.

Bill Miller is a library assistant with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

ENDNOTES
2. Medford Mail Tribune, 15 February 1966, p. 6A:1. The Davis home was at Eighth and Ivy—now the site of the Medford Post Office. The mill stood on the northeast corner of Ninth and Front.
4. Medford Mail, 17 August 1900, p. 3:4. Davis's second home is now the Britt Festival headquarters, at 517 W. 10th Street.
5. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 April 1930, p. ??.

By 1910, too many fields had been turned into orchards as the pear industry bloomed. Davis sold his mill, which burned down in 1925, and moved to California. He died in April 1930, never fully recovering from his collision with a bicycle-riding newsboy the previous Christmas. His contributions to the economy and success of the Rogue Valley have seldom been matched.²

Bill Miller is a library assistant with the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

ENDNOTES
2. Medford Mail Tribune, 15 February 1966, p. 6A:1. The Davis home was at Eighth and Ivy—now the site of the Medford Post Office. The mill stood on the northeast corner of Ninth and Front.
4. Medford Mail, 17 August 1900, p. 3:4. Davis's second home is now the Britt Festival headquarters, at 517 W. 10th Street.
5. Medford Mail Tribune, 11 April 1930, p. ??.

At left, Davis's first home stood at Eighth and Ivy, a site now occupied by the Medford Post Office. Above, his second home on Tenth Street today houses the offices of the Britt Music Festivals.
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SOUTHERN OREGON HERITAGE TODAY
Camas: MEADOW FLOWER, EDIBLE ROOT
by Nan Hannon and Donn L. Todt

In 1806, when Meriwether Lewis first spotted camas meadows, he mistook the expanses of blue flowers for “lakes of fine clear water.” Today, grazing animals, the plow and the bulldozer have destroyed camas meadows in valley floor locations in much of the West, including Southern Oregon. Often, a few plants surviving along fence lines are all that remain of vast camas meadows that once fed Native American families.

Camas, a plant found only in western North America, grows in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, coastal Northern California, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. Camas is originally a Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) Indian word meaning sweet. 2

Native Americans prized camas as a carbohydrate-rich food that could be harvested in large quantities and stored through the winter. In the Southern Oregon region, harvest took place in May and June, as family bands camped near camas meadows. While men hunted, groups of women pried mature camas bulbs from the earth with their digging sticks.

Native American harvest practices actually made a camas meadow more productive over time. Digging loosened the soil, providing a good germination bed for camas seeds and better rooting conditions for growing plants. Indian women kept the big bulbs that they dug, but tossed small ones back to keep growing. Released from competition with larger bulbs, the young bulbs flourished. As women worked through a camas patch with their digging sticks, their accidental nicking of bulb coats stimulated the plants to produce daughter bulbs. 3

Camas requires slow cooking to convert its indigestible starches to sweet and nourishing fructose. Indian women constructed earth ovens by digging pits at the edges of camas meadows, lining them with rocks and letting a fire burn to ash inside. Then they placed the camas bulbs on a layer of skunk cabbage leaves or other foliage laid atop the ashes and covered the pits with earth. Fires burned on top of the ovens for a day or more, until the camas baked to the consistency of roasted potatoes. Botanical explorer David Douglas likened the flavor to baked pears. 4

Women shaped the cooked camas into loaves that could be stored for years. Today camas lilies can add native beauty to a perennial garden bed. Each plant flowers for a month-long period, as three-inch blossoms open up along the stalk. Although the quamash subspecies grows to two feet and leichtlinii to four feet, their sturdy stems require no staking. After bloom, the grasslike basal leaves are inconspicuous among companion plants.

Plant bulbs six inches deep and six inches apart in a sunny, moist location where the lilies can naturalize undisturbed. Since camas can take five years from seed to flowering size, and bulbs should not be removed from the wild, buy mature bulbs from native plant nurseries. In our garden, we interplant camas with Ranunculus gramineus, the wild yellow buttercup that often grows naturally with camas in wet meadows and blooms at the same time.

To enjoy camas in the wild, look for the tall, blue flowers along the lower portion of the trail to Upper Table Rock in May. Or from late May to early June, visit the northern portion of Howard Prairie, east of Ashland. In the large meadow to the left of the intersection between Howard Prairie Reservoir and Dead Indian Memorial Highway, camas still blooms in such abundance that the meadow looks like a lake.

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

ENDNOTES