Early history of SOHS, followed by a timeline from 1927 to 2015
SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORIANS NAME MAYOR PRESIDENT

Organization Outlines Projects With Museum At J’Ville Among First Plans.

Formal organization of a Southern Oregon Historical society was completed at a meeting of interested persons held yesterday at the office of Mayor C. A. Meeker. Acting with organization details was Lancaster Pollard, Portland, head of the Oregon State Historical society, who has been in southern Oregon to attend meetings here and in Klamath Falls.

Mayor Meeker was named president of the society, Mrs. G. Q. D’Albin was elected vice-president, Ralph Billings, Ashland, treasurer, and Lester Harris, secretary and historian Frank Hull Sr. Claire Hanley and Amos Voorhies of Grants Pass, were named directors and Walter Jones, E. H. Hedrick, Herb Grey, Miss Hanley and Billings were named to the membership committee by the new president.

Museum First Aim

First project of the new group will be promotion of the plan to have the old courthouse in Jacksonville converted into a museum, Meeker states. It is planned to secure petition signatures of sufficient quantity to assure a ballot measure at the next election asking for a special levy for the project, and the museum funds would be administered by the county court.

It has been the plan of those interested in the museum project to ask families of the area having objects and articles of historical value to loan them to the museum in order that they might be displayed for the general public. Meeker announces that the state society has promised support for the project and will loan back to the southern Oregon group for the museum certain historical articles now in state custody.

Value Seen

“It is believed the local historical group can be of great value in gathering local historical data and records, preserving objects, buildings and sites of historical interest and in co-ordinating the efforts of such historically minded groups as the Jackson County Pioneer association, Daughters of the American Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution,” Meeker states. “This section is rich in Oregon history and tradition and we have delayed too long in taking steps to properly care for these buildings and articles and in gathering and tabulating records and information.”

In addition to the Jacksonville museum, other projects to be considered are aiding the Klamath Falls society with a celebration to mark the 100th anniversary of opening of the pioneer Klamath Falls-Applegate road and planning a proper premiere performance of “Canyon Passage” film made in the county last fall by Universal Pictures of Ernest Haycox novel of early Jacksonville days.

The society is hopeful of having a membership of 1000 persons within the next few weeks. Meeker states that annual dues will be $2, half of which will go to the state society.
Paid Members of 1946.

Feb. 27, Clarence A. Keeker*  
Walter H. Jones  
Mrs. G. W. D'Albini  
Ralph Billings  
Mrs. Isabel Russell Lowther  
Miss Lydia McCall  
Mrs. Brenneman  

Mar. 6, Herb Grey  
Lester Harris  
Hugh Hanlin  

Mar. 8, Leon B. Haskins  
Frank Hull (paid state dues)  

Mar. 26, F. J. Hall, P.O. Box 72, Jacksonville  
Rev. L. H. Mitchelmore  
E. K. Peterson, 523 Fairmont  

Apr. 26, Frank Applezate  
George H. Carter  
Lona Hall Spencer  
J. H. Spencer  

May 8, Mr. and Mrs. S. B. McNair  
Mrs. Frank Jordan  

\[ \text{dues \$2.00} \]  
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SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FIRST LIST

Feb. 8, 1946

Mayo: Clarence A. Meeker *, President. S. A. R.
Mrs. G. S. D'Albini, Vice President, D. A. R. Ledford
Ralph Billings, Treasurer, Pioneers of S. Oregon Ash.
Lester Harris, Secretary and Historian

Directors

Frank Hull Jr.
Miss Claire Hanley, Pioneers of Southern Oregon
Amy E. Voorhies of Grants Pass Courier, S. A. R.

Membership Committee

Walter H. Jones, Ledford, S. A. R.
E. H. Hedrick, Supt. Ledford Public Schools.
Herb Grey, Ledford, S. A. R.
Miss Claire Hanley, Pioneers of Southern Oregon
Ralph Billings, Ashland, Pioneers of S. Oregon
THE SO. ORE. HISTORICAL SOCIETY
of Medford, Oregon

Meeting held in the rooms of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
May 8, 1946

MINUTES

Meeting was called to order at 8:10 P. M. by the President C. A. Meeker. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The Committee appointed to secure an estimate of the probable cost necessary to rehabilitate the court house building and make such alterations and installations as would probably be necessary for the establishment of a Historical Museum reported. One estimate was for $75,000, the other estimate was for $90,000. President C. A. Meeker also reported on the legal aspects with regard to the project, and of placing it before the voters at the November election. A round table discussion was held and it appeared to be the consensus of opinion that in view of the doubtful legality of a vote on the project, that the matter should be held in abeyance until an enabling act could be properly passed at the next session of the State Legislature. Also, that President C. A. Meeker, together with Attorney Frank P. Farrel, should prepare and present such an act to the State Society which in turn should present it to the proper committees of the legislature for consideration and enactment.

The meeting was adjourned, sine die, by order of the President at 9:10 P. M.

Walter H. Jones
Sec. Pro Tem
Paid Members of 1947

Jan. 31,
Mr. Guff  dues  2.00
Mrs. Hatfield  2.00
Mrs. Robert Jewell  2.00
Frank De Souza, 30 Western Ave.  2.00
Mrs. Arliene Butler Thompson  2.00
Francis Kimball, Jacksonville Sanitarium  2.00
Mrs. Wayne Carter  2.00
Dr. Peters  2.00
Mrs. Otto Hackert  2.00

May 27, 1947
Miss Venita Daley
343 North Grape St., Medford, Oregon
(Paid State Historical Society dues  2.00)

20.00
MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The meeting of the southern Oregon Historical Society was held Tuesday evening May 10, 1949, at 8:00 P.M. at the home of Walter H. Leverette. Notice of the meeting was by publication in the Medford Mail Tribune and by telephone call. Those present were:

Walter H. Leverette, President
Robert Dodge, vice-President
Walter H. Jones, Secretary
Ralph Billings, Treasurer

Also the following members and directors:

Miss Clair Hanley
Miss Mary Hanley
Mr. George Carter
Mr. Frank DeSouza
Mr. Shy Northland
Mr. Robert Lytle
Judge J. B. Coleman
Mr. William Perry
Mr. A. E. Powell
Mr. E. C Ferguson
Mr. E. W. Kubli
Mr. Donald Spencer
Mr. E. D. McIntyre
Mr. A. C. Van Galder
Mr. Lancaster Pollard, Secretary State Historical Soc.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Walter H. Leverette, president. The minutes of the last stated meeting were read and approved.
An informal discussion was had regarding the Jacksonville Court House Museum project, and the formation of a corporation in compliance with the Oregon statutes and the certified vote on the proposition successfully voted upon in the 1948 election.
Secretary Pollard of the State Society discussed and explained the law and the legal aspect of the Southern Oregon Historical Society and commented upon the value of history as an asset to the community.
President Leverette suggested that all present officers resign in order to get a more representative group for the permanent organization which will have control of the museum project.

Mr. Ferguson expressed himself in favor of the physical asset of the museum in preference to the history aspect of the building.

Judge J. B. Coleman was asked to express his views and in reply stated that he had come principally to listen, however, he then outlined the history of the organization of the museum society which had prepared articles of corporation. He stated further that he objected to affiliations with any up-state organization.

Secretary Pollard in reply to Judge Coleman cited the record of the local Society and explained the relationship between the State and the local Society and cited Medford as a splendid example of likeness of purpose among those interested.

Mr. E. C. Ferguson, who had been elected presiding officer of the proposed museum society, suggested that they disband in view of the statutes of Oregon, 1947, Chapter 246.

Mr. A. C. Van Galder expressed himself in favor of cooperation with the State Society and explained the interest and desire of cooperation of the City Council of Jacksonville.

Miss Clair Hanley told of materials and sources of materials present within the membership of the Society of Southern Oregon Pioneers.

It was rightly moved and seconded that the president appoint a committee of three to make nominations, motion carried. The committee consisted of E. C. Ferguson, Shy Northland, Robert Lytle with president Leverette as ex-officio member. The nominating committee reported as follows:

For President Miss Clair Hanley
For Vice-President, Robert Dodge
For Secretary, Miss Venita Daley
For Treasurer, Mr. Frank DeSouza
For Directors: Mr. E. W. Kubli
  Mr. A. C. Van Gilder
  Mr. William Perry
  Mr. Bert Lowry
  Mr. A. E. Voorheis
  Mr. A. E. Powell
  Mr. Walter H. Leverette
  Mr. E. C. Ferguson
  Mr. Ralph Billings
It was rightly moved and seconded that the report of the nominating committee be received and that the secretary be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for those nominated. Motion carried. The secretary so cast the ballot. Miss Clair Hanley then took over the gavel of authority. It was rightly moved and seconded that the Society extend a vote of thanks to Mr. Lancaster Pollard for his presence at the meeting and for his assistance in matters pertaining to the establishment of the museum and the incorporation of the Society. Motion carried. It was rightly moved and seconded that the appreciation and thanks be extended to Walter H. Leverette, the host of the evening. On order of the president the Society was adjourned to meet Friday evening, May 13th, at 8:00 P.M. in the office of the County Judge, Medford court house.

Signed Walter H. Jones, SEC.
Approved by C. Hanley
OLD COURTHOUSE DEDICATED AS MUSEUM—The old Jacksonville building which once was Jackson county's courthouse was dedicated as a southern Oregon historical museum at ceremonies in Jacksonville Saturday. A crowd estimated at more than 2,000 persons gathered on the lawn of the historical structure, and heard a description of the building's early days by Gus Newbury, Medford attorney (standing above), who at one time was county clerk with offices in the building. Other speakers included County Judge J. B. Coleman, and Jimmy Dunlevy was master of ceremonies. On the speakers' stand in the picture are officials of the county and of nearby cities, officers of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Inc., and other dignitaries.—(Brainerd photo.)
Timeline for Southern Oregon Historical Society

1927 Jacksonville Courthouse was left empty when the Jackson County courts moved to Medford

1927 Pioneer society of Southern Oregon, Sons of the American Revolution and DAR proposed to make it a museum

2/17/1945 Sons of the American Revolution proposed a project to preserve local historical data, possibly in the courthouse

6/18/1945 Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Pioneer Society met

2/22/1946 Sons of the American Revolution voted to turn over the courthouse Museum Project as soon as a Southern Oregon Historical Society was formed

March 1946 First meeting to form SOHS was held, plans were made for a petition to assure a ballot measure for a special levy

4/26/1946 First official meeting of SOHS, discussion of courthouse renovations

5/8/1946 Two estimates for courthouse renovations were $75,000 and $90,000 - amounts which would require taxation

5/8/1946 Referendum would require a legislative enabling act, the SOHS board determined to have the act prepared and presented to the State Legislature

3/10/1948 Passage of the enabling legislation was expected

5/10/1948 Enabling legislation had passed and work began for a ballot measure of a historical tax.

11/2/1948 Historical tax measure passed. 7,431 county residents voted for it, 7,132 voted against it

5/10/1949 SOHS Articles of Incorporation were signed

5/2/1905 State historical society asked SOHS to supervise repair of the Beekman Bank Building (state society would pay for the work)

11/28/1949 Work began on the courthouse

2/12/1950 Courthouse opened to public, although renovations were not complete

12/11/1950 Carrie Beekman proposed that SOHS take over the Beekman Bank, which she would eventually donate. They agreed

12/11/1950 Board voted to accept and store "all material offered"

5/8/1950 Mary Hanley replaced Mrs. Myrtle Lee as curator in 1955 (only other employee was a maintenance person)

1954 Amalia Britt died and left Britt house and grounds to society, but society rejected the gift, requesting only Peter Britt's studio and photographs for safekeeping

1956 First inventory of holdings

1957 Received Dorland Robinson's paintings from University of Oregon Museum of Art on indefinite loan

1950 Board designated one room of the courthouse museum as a library

5/7/1956 Oregon State Historical Society demanded an increase in dues. SOHS members had been paying $2.00, with $1.00 going to OSHS. OSHS demanded $1.50. SOHS made it an option for members instead of a requirement, but did not increase dues.

1959 Carrie Beekman left the bank to the Oregon Historical Society and the home to the University of Oregon
Timeline for Southern Oregon Historical Society

1955  Society opened exhibits in the old jail/annex
1966  SOHS began spending funs for upkeep of Beekman House
1967  SOHS had to ask county for additional funds
1968  SOHS borrowed funds from county
1965  SOHS Curator Mary Hanley assisted the U.S. National Bank in their opening and dedication
1966  SOHS purchased Wilson House for exhibit space
1960  SOHS leased the bank and the Beekman House
1961  University of Oregon announced plans to auction off furnishings of the Beekman house; they postponed the auction after hearing protests
1965  Jackson County purchased the Beekman House, allowing SOHS to become custodians
1966  Robbie Collins purchased the former Catholic Rectory, and apparently owned it jointly with Ray Reter
1968  Rectory was given to Jackson County by a Catholic Church women's group that had purchased it. SOHS took over but there was controversy and the house remained closed to the public
1967  SOHS agreed to 10 year lease on the Methodist Church
1967  Second concrete block building built on courthouse grounds
1967  SOHS purchased property where Rogue Valley Railroad Depot was located and agreed to move it to new site
1968  SOHS agreed to be custodians of the PP&L original power house building

1974  SOHS budget increased because County had been using wrong formula in previous years
1975  County commissionders abolished the SOHS "sinking fund", putting all funds into the general fund (commissioners had approved the sinking fund in 1972, and $17,322 had been placed in it)
1980  SOHS budget: $677,039 (had been $84,000 in 1970)
1976  First professional librarian/archivist was hired (Richard Engeman)
1978  children's museum in the Annex (old Jail) was opened

1975  Jackson County transferred ownership of county records to SOHS in the 1950s, this was declared illegal in July 1975 but nothing was done
1978  SOHS began sponsoring bus trips, first one to King Tut exhibit in Seattle
1970s  SOHS worked on the U.S. Hotel project, completed in 1982
1975  Beekman Bank ownership transferred to Jackson County from Oregon Historical Society
1976  Catholic Rectory opened to visitors
1967  SOHS signed 10 year lease with City of Jacksonville on Methodist Church, began renovations
1976  SOHS terminated lease on Methodist Church because city would not deed it to SOHS in exchange for preservation
1983  Richard Engeman "resigned in frustration" due to inability to obtain additional library space (SOHS Board tried, but plans were rejected)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Armstrong house was converted into a house museum, then it was converted to office space, which disappointed the Gold Diggers.</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Plans for a Public Resource Center were invested in, but not successful.</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>SOHS was offered Hanley Farm by Mary Hanley. SOHS took over all maintenance and upkeep, while Mary continued to live there.</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>SOHS agreed to lease first floor of Swedenburg house in Ashland for $100,000 for 25 years, plus expenses. SOHS required establishment of a branch museum in Ashland as a condition.</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
<td>SOHS helped save Grand Hotel by investing $31,000 in an option to purchase (probably recovered all or most of that investment).</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
<td>Library had moved from &quot;a small cluttered corner of the museum&quot; to 2 rooms and considerable space in the &quot;new White City collections building.&quot;</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>SOHS purchased the J. C. Penney Building in Medford.</td>
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<td>1990s</td>
<td>Archives mezzanine was built and movable shelving was installed.</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Oregon voters passed law to allow counties to absorb historical society levies into their general funds.</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>SOHS attempted to sell the J. C. Penney building but could not find an alternate location.</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>SOHS lost all tax funding and failed to gather enough signatures to put a new historical district levy on the ballot.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>SOHS closed Jacksonville Museum.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>SOHS initiated its History Made By You program and reopened the SOHS Library with volunteers.</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>SOHS signed 5 year lease with Kid Time to share space in Penney building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>SOHS negotiated with the county and with the City of Jacksonville to transfer ownership of Jacksonville courthouse, Rectory, Beekman buildings to the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>SOHS gave up its interest in the U.S. Hotel in Jacksonville to the County in exchange for bridge funding ($400,000?).</td>
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