

Court House an Outgrowth of Small Fire in Pioneer Structure

YEARS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN REMOVAL PLANS

Lack of Fireproof Depository for Records Leads to Agitation for New Court-house—Two Votes Taken

The storing of valuable and pioneer records in the woodshed of the county court house at Jacksonville was one of the first seeds from which the magnificent and stately \$265,000 new courthouse, to be formally dedicated tomorrow, grew. One evening in the fall of the year, shortly after the war, a county jail trustee went to the woodshed for a load of wood and became careless with a cigarette. There was an incipient blaze which Sheriff Charles Terrill kicked out while yelling fire.

Before this Paul Janney of the Jackson County Abstract company, in prowling around to keep the titles straight, was frequent forced to go to the woodshed to get abstracts and was impressed with the inconvenience and loss if anything should happen to destroy the shed. He spoke to Geo. A. Gardner, then county judge, and County Commissioner Victor Bursell about it and they agreed that it was "poor business," but the county was cramped for space and the woodshed was the only place. In fact, the county was so cramped for space that it was necessary to purchase a concrete building across the street from the courthouse to house the county assessor and his voluminous records.

Safe Housing Urged

The Mail Tribune, editorially and in its news columns, urged that the county records be housed some place besides the woodshed, as a matter of good business and protection of valuable data.

Commissioner Victor Bursell and the late County Judge Gardner favored a betterment. The attorneys of the city and county also favored a change, and one day Attorney Porter J. Neff suggested to Commissioner Bursell that he might be able to build a structure at Sixth and Grant streets in this city suitable for courthouse use, if the county would sign a lease.

By this time civic organizations of Medford took up the cudgels for a bigger and better courthouse, and in 1922 the first step was taken in the calling and holding of an election for removal of the county seat to Medford. The measure was defeated, largely through the efforts of Col. H. H. Sargent, noted writer on military affairs and retired army officer, and Lewis Ulrich, a Jacksonville merchant and native son.

Following the election, the county court ordered construction of a vault and judge's chambers on the rear of the courthouse, and the county records were brought under lock, key and cover.

Election Finally Carries

The seeds sown in the preliminary move still lingered in the minds of the county court and the matter was discussed pro and con the length and breadth of the county for three years before the issue came to a head again, in a courthouse removal election held in 1925. This time the measure carried, through a united front presented by Ashland and Medford and some of the country districts. Because of sentimental reasons, many of the older residents opposed the removal to this city.

In 1927 Jackson county received its first O. C. tax refund check of more than \$1,000.00. Some favored that this money be used for the paying of road bonds, some for delinquent taxes, some for irrigation districts, and other purposes, but the county court, led by Commissioner Bursell, ruled that the money be distributed among the various county funds, with \$250,000 set aside for a new courthouse and a \$10,000 emergency fund for the same purpose. The city of Medford agreed to furnish a site and quarters for the county offices pending the construction of the new courthouse.

Attempts to Divert Fund

After the \$250,000 courthouse fund had been established and the county was "getting back to normalcy," several propositions were advanced to divert the fund to other purposes, and when agitation was launched to this end the county court had Representative John H. Carline of this county introduce a bill in the legislature prohibiting the use of the fund save for construction of a new courthouse. Before this the state supreme court declared the election and preliminaries thereto constitutional and in accordance with Oregon law.

In July, 1927, the county offices moved to temporary quarters in the Medford armory while the city of Medford was erecting a temporary courthouse and city hall at North Central avenue and Fifth street. The city hall was completed and December 1, 1927, the county offices moved into it.

The next important step was the selection of a site which Medford had agreed to furnish free. A site election was held and the Washington school chosen by a vote of the people. Several sites were advanced, including the city park, a site on North Central avenue and one on North Riverside.

With the site question out of the way, the unwinding of the long strands of red tape necessary before construction could start was begun. County Judge Hartnell had been called by death. Alex Sparrow, of beloved memory, was appointed to the vacancy. With characteristic zeal and thoroughness, aided by Commissioners Bursell and Alford, he plunged into the task of clearing away the preliminaries. John Barneburg succeeded George Alford, to the county commissionership.

Guard County's Health



Left to right: C. I. Drummond, county physician; Josephine Koppes, secretary; Blanche Runchel, nurse, and Sybil Walker, nurse.

CLERK GREAT AID

In all the vast preliminary work the county court was aided by County Clerk Delilah Stevens Meyer, who possessed an intimate knowledge of all numerous details and was well acquainted with the work.

After selection of a site, architects of the northwest submitted plans and specifications. After weeks of discussion, the plans of J. G. Link of Billings, Mont., were accepted. Then came many weeks of conferring with the architect, and finally they were completed.

On November 9, 1931, bids for the construction of the new courthouse were opened, and the following day, November 10, 1931, the contract was awarded to the L. H. Hoffman Co. of Portland, Ore. They started excavating early in December and started pouring concrete late in January, the work being held up by bad weather.

Many civic leaders of the city and valley gave liberally of their time and knowledge to the building of the courthouse. It stands today a beautiful monument to the spirit of progress in Jackson county—and a far cry from an incipient blaze caused by a jailbird's cigarette in the woodshed of the old Jacksonville courthouse.

Anderson Creek

ANDERSON CREEK, Aug. 31.—(P) Mr. Thomas sold his home to Mr. Donica, and Mr. Thomas plans to spend the winter in Ashland.

Geo. McAnally was in Medford Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Hale were in Medford Wednesday.

Harold Thomas went to Klamath Falls Monday where he expects to spend a while.

Frank Centers spent Wednesday with his daughter, Mrs. James Mays.

Edward Smith, Ruth Mays, Robert Thomas and Lorin Close were in Medford Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Hansen and son, Gerald, and Loula Rohrer returned home Thursday after enjoying several days camping near the Milo Conley ranch.

Mrs. Fred Bloomingcamp and children of Hornbrook, Cal., visited her brothers, G. A. and W. M. Hansen, and her sister, Mrs. L. J. Rohrer, last week. Friday they enjoyed a picnic on the creek above Butte Falls.

Mr. and Mrs. Nate Thornton had as guests Monday, Mrs. Thornton's father and mother from Washington.

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OLD COURT HOUSE ROMANTIC RELIC OF PIONEER DAYS

Jacksonville Structure Completed in 1883 Was Seat of Justice During Stirring Period in County

Protected by aged trees, which have shaded accused and complainant, lawyer and criminals, whose names found important niches in stories of the early days, as history of southern Oregon flamed into being—the old county courthouse at Jacksonville stands today, apart from all that has to do with law and its interpretation. Floors which have rounded to the tread of attorneys' feet, to the tap of the nervous murderer's heel, and walls which echoed and reechoed the words of the marriage service in the days of 1884, are silent, as all eyes turn to the pioneer's successor, which will be dedicated in Medford tomorrow.

The once "magnificent" construction is today a landmark, a relic of an old romantic past. And the hall in which justice was sought, in eloquent words of the bar, now rings with the songs of Grangers, who have made of it a peaceful meeting place.

Built in 1883, the Jacksonville courthouse was constructed in 1883, and was dedicated New Year's eve at a fancy dress ball, which was attended by all the elite and aristocrats in southern Oregon, pioneers recall.

Horses with tasseled harness, carriages with fancy fringes, transported the guests to the dedication, and the dance music continued through midnight and long into the morning, as the splendor and color that was this city, in the 1880's, held away. Jacksonville in the 1880's held away. Cost Near \$35,000.

L. S. P. March was contractor on the construction, which cost between \$32,000 and \$37,000 (at that time considered a gigantic sum). H. K. Hanna, father of Herbert Hanna of this city, was the first circuit judge to occupy the new bench. Thos. B. Kent was district attorney, when county officials entered the new building. Henry Klippel was county clerk, Wm. Bybee, father of Frank Bybee, was sheriff, and Silas I. Day, county judge, commissioners were A. Alford and W. S. Cook.

The building continued as the seat of county government until 1927, when by a vote of the people Medford, more centrally located, became

Engineer and Assistants



Left to right: Paul B. Rynning, county engineer; Eida Gheirald, stenographer; Byron Seaman, draftsman, and Roland Smith, draftsman.

the county seat of Jackson county. Officials were then moved into temporary headquarters in the Medford city hall on North Central, which was to house them until adequate funds were available for construction of the new building, which was not to be delayed more than five years.

The election agreement has been fulfilled, and tomorrow the new building will be visited by thousands from all sections of the state, who will view and admire its limestone and marble trimmings, welcoming the new era in Jackson county history.

ROXY ANN GRANGE TO CHANGE MEET NIGHT

A large crowd attended the meeting of the Roxy Ann Grange Friday night and it was decided at the session to change the meeting night from the second and fourth Friday; to the first and third, in order to enable all members to attend.

Following the business session, a supper of ice cream and cake was served. The next meeting will be held Friday, September 2, and all Grangers are cordially invited to be present.

RESISTS PAYMENT OF \$250 NOTE TO COACH

A demurrer to the legal action taken by Ed Schwabacker of San Francisco, against Charles J. Erb, former University of Oregon football star and coach at the University of Idaho, for the collection of \$250, allegedly due on a promissory note, Erb was awarded a \$7500 verdict against the Consolidated Truck company last year, as the result of an accident on the Pacific highway, near Grants Pass. The demurrer avers that the Schwabacker action was not taken within the time limitations.

MRS. BEACH'S MOTHER PASSES IN NEBRASKA

Mrs. R. G. Beach received word the first of the week of the death of her mother, Mrs. W. W. Cross of Lincoln, Neb. Mrs. Cross died Sunday following a month's illness.

She is remembered in Medford by many friends, having visited here often, during former years.

August special. Three loads 15-in. slabs for \$6.75. Med. Fuel Co. Tel. 531.

CONSTRUCTION PLAN IS PROGRESSING AT STAR STATION IN APPELATE

APPELATE, Aug. 30.—(Spl.)—Forest service is erecting new buildings, installing new machinery and putting on eleven fire guards at the Star ranger station. At present the men are living in tents while building a mess kitchen and a two-story bunk house. Robert Case of Eagle Point is employed as cook, who hammers on a tin pan every morning for the breakfast call.

Plans are to destroy the old barn and build a new standard barn on the hillside pattern.

A 3000-gallon spruce water tank has been installed with a new pump and pipe line from the spring. The tank is placed high on the hill above the buildings. A truck is in use also. A storage room where the fire truck will be kept is to be built where the barn now stands after the ground has been cleaned and graded.

A 400-gallon gas tank and pump for filling the fire truck will be put up soon. If there is money enough appropriated a machine shop will be built where repair work will be done on the machinery used in the fire work. F. E. Williams, Jr., of Portland visited the Star ranger station last spring and picked the site for

CIRCUIT COURT SESSION FRIDAY

A session of the circuit court, Judge Norton presiding, will be held Friday, when a number of routine and equity matters will be considered. Due to the confusion caused by moving to the new courthouse, the court this week has been writing decisions and opinions in a number of cases before him.

Circuit Judge Norton will hold a session of court in Grants Pass, the week starting September 12, a petit jury being drawn yesterday. The following Monday the petit jury will be called for this county. Several civil suits are pending. No new petit jury will be drawn.

No session of the present grand jury, of which Josiah Hibbard of Butte Falls is foreman is anticipated. A new grand jury will be drawn for the October term of court, which starts the third Monday in October. A new petit jury will be drawn at the same time.

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