

NOTED BRITT FAMILY LEAVES MANY EARLY-DAY MEMENTOES

Priceless Historic Items To Remain As Remembrances

Records of Family Found Interesting

By HARRY NORDWICK
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

With the death of Miss Amalia (Molly) Britt of Jacksonville last Oct. 13, the history of one of southern Oregon's most famous families was closed.

However, the benevolence of her will, involving a \$250,000 estate, will leave many material and incorporeal remembrances to southern Oregon residents in the form of priceless historic items and scholarships for worthy students.

One of the first provisions of the will was the bequest of what is probably the most famous residence in the area, the Britt home and gardens, to the Southern Oregon Historical Society, Inc., of which she was a member.

Will Has Proviso

The bequest was made with the proviso that the place be maintained by the Historical society as a museum and historical monument in honor of the memory of Peter Britt. The will also provided that if the society accepted the terms and conditions, the sum of \$25,000 was to be placed in a trust fund to be used by the society for care and display of the property. However, only \$1,000 could be used annually for such purpose and an equal sum was to be provided by the society.

In event the society was unable to maintain the home as a museum, the will stipulated that the \$25,000 should go toward making up a \$50,000 trust fund to provide scholarships for graduates of Jacksonville high school.

After numerous other gifts, including \$25,000 to the Shriners' hospital for crippled children, and smaller amounts to various relatives and friends, the will leaves the remainder of the considerable estate to the Oregon state board of higher education to be used exclusively at Southern Oregon College of Education, in Ashland.

Society Investigates
After an extensive investigation, the Historical society found it could not maintain the Britt home as a public museum on the money available, even though some charge be made for admission. Instead, the SOHS suggested to Herman L. Lind, Portland, executor of the estate, that a special display of Britt items be placed in the Jacksonville museum. He agreed, and a selection of relics will be made by a committee of SOHS members to be named by the society's president, Miss Claire Hanley, the executor and representative of the state board of higher education. The balance of the items will be sold.

Also, under interpretation of the will, it was felt that the real property could go to the city as a memorial park. No action has been taken yet on this matter. If such a park were to be dedicated, the historic residence would probably be removed.

Uncommon Lot
The real property involved is Lot 5 Block 28. The "lot", however, is not of the common city variety. In fact, the county assessor's office says there's nothing quite like it in all of Jacksonville.



PETER BRITT—Shown is one of Jacksonville's most famous early citizens, Peter Britt. He arrived in the mining camp in 1852 and set up a photographic studio in a log cabin. In 1854, he built a studio of lumber and hung out his shingle for a "daguerrean artist." The picture, a self-portrait is from a stereopticon, old-time viewer for four images, apparently taken by Peter by using a mirror.

son county. Its measurements are, on the east side (fence), 346.5 feet; south side (barn), 325 feet; west side (old Britt ditch), 376 feet, and north side, 357 feet.

On the land are many rare trees and many first plantings in southern Oregon. On June 23, 1947, the Oregon Federation of Garden clubs gave a posthumous award to the heirs of Peter Britt for planting the first garden in southern Oregon and for his life-long interest in promoting horticulture in the early days. Many of the plants and shrubs in his garden are the parents of those that beautify Jacksonville today. The plot also provided seasoning and fruits for the pioneer settlers.

Sequoia Tree
Of notable interest are several plantings. A sequoia tree was planted in 1862 by Peter Britt, the day his son Emil was born. Today it is 93 years old and is 16 feet 8 inches in circumference two feet above the ground.

Earlier plantings include a pear tree in 1858, which is said to be "granddaddy" of the Rogue valley's fruit industry. The tree still produces a heavy crop at the age of 96 years. A willow peach tree, planted in 1856, bloomed and bore fruit for 56 years, before being felled by a heavy snow storm.

Others include a dwarf Japanese maple five feet high, a dwarf maple 4 1/2 feet high and a Ginkgo tree 25 feet high.

Seeds From Washington
The esteem of Peter Britt as a horticulturist is shown by a letter from Senator Binger Hermann in 1881. It stated he had sent Peter a package of choice seeds selected by the superintendent of the U. S. Botanical gardens in Washington, D. C.

The local history of the Britt family begins with the story of a pioneer of the old tradition, Peter Britt, who arrived in the new mining camp of Jacksonville on November, 1852, according to information compiled by Mrs. Myrtle P. Lee, curator of the Jacksonville museum and friend of the family since she was a small child.

Starts With \$5
He had only \$5 when he arrived, after a wagon and oxen



STUDIO—A portion of Peter Britt's photographic studio is shown. A number of cameras with lenses for different size photos can be seen on the left. A self-portrait is shown next to the baby's chair, and the center male portrait is a painting of Col. Davenport (Davenport, Ia., is named after him), which was one of Peter's first commissions before coming west to Oregon from Illinois. Scenes of early Jacksonville appear below.

trip across the plains to Oregon, accompanied by three others as far as Portland. His first sight of the valley and Mt. McLoughlin is said to have reminded him of his native Switzerland. He left there and came to America in 1845 when 26 years old, with his father and brother. They settled in Illinois. In 1847, Peter took up daguerreotyping, after instruction from J. H. Fritzgibbons, St. Louis, a leading daguerreotypist. The process involved use of a silver plate.

When Peter arrived in Jacksonville, it was a frontier city of tents and log cabins. He took up a donation land claim adjoining Jacksonville, later adding 80 acres.

Thus began a career that eventually was to include the occupations of photographer, gold miner, painter, freighter, money lender, horticulturist, weather observer, wine maker and wholesaler, and probably some others.

Had Gold Claim

Like many early pioneers, he was successful at almost everything he turned a hand to. A claim on the south fork of Jackson creek produced for him and two others about \$500 a day while working a pocket, according to information from Mrs. Lee.

To meet a growing supply problem caused by the influx into the mining camp, he went into the freighting business to serve the area in 1853. His pack train travelled to Crescent City, via the Applegate, until 1856 when he sold out. Two of the pack saddles are now at the museum.

First Studio

The first log cabin built by him served as a home and studio until 1854, when he built a separate studio from lumber, with a skylight for illumination. Living quarters had been added to the studio by 1856. The studio had an outdoor sign stating "daguerrean artist," and did a prosperous business, according to his son, Emil.

In 1856, Peter went to San Francisco, where he purchased a larger and more complete photographic outfit. Among the equipment was a Harrison lens, weighing 30 pounds. From then on, he was actively engaged in photography in a big way until 1900, when he retired.

Many Portraits

Some of his early photographs included landscape scenes of the region and hundreds of pictures of early day figures such as Judge P. P. Prim, and Orange Jacobs, who later became governor of the Washington territory (they were opposing lawyers in first regular trial at Jacksonville in 1853); Judge Deady, Capt. W. W. Fowler, "A" company volunteers, 1853 (who also built first log cabin there); Henry Klippel, who surveyed the first township in 1852; U. S. Hayden, first alcalde (judge); Mathew G. Kennedy, first sheriff; B. F. Dowell, lawyer, and many other important personages of the Oregon territory.

His historic pictures and paintings of the time, including many types of photography, daguerreotypes, melainotypes, tintypes and others, are among the richest items in historical value left with the estate. A large collection of old time photographic equipment, including several cameras, many lenses, five large studio backdrops and other items, is still intact. Peter's first camera, a heavy wooden box used for making daguerreotypes, is included.

House Described

The main part of the present Britt residence was erected in 1860. A rear portion, including another large studio room on the second floor, was added in the early 1880's. The house as it stands now has 14 rooms, three stories, with a large wine cellar. There are three bedrooms on the first floor, a dining room, waiting room for the upstairs studio, hothouse, personal living room, parlor and kitchen. A small bedroom over the kitchen was also included for extra help. The hothouse was heated from the personal living room. Oranges



WINE CELLAR—Shown are several of the 15 wine casks still preserved in the Britt residence cellar. Peter Britt had a 15-acre vineyard and produced excellent wines for the wholesale trade under the name Valley View Winery. Records show he gathered four tons of grapes to the acre. Such wines as claret, zinfandel, muscat and cabaret were produced. An individual cask's capacity was 200 gallons, allowing a large storage capacity for the operation.

and lemons were grown there, as well as a number of cactus and rare potted plants.

The second floor was devoted entirely to a studio with two large skylighted rooms and printing and developing rooms. The studio room walls were covered by photographs and paintings, with some 3,500 small pictures which have been catalogued by Mrs. Lee, acting for the executor.

The third story was used for storage of photographic plates and painting material.

Wine Casks
Still in the cellar are 15 wine casks of 200-gallon capacity each, plus 13 glass jugs in wooden cases and smaller jugs.

These remnants tell another successful enterprise of Peter Britt, the Valley View winery. Britt, who was reared in the grape district of Switzerland, is credited with bringing in the first tame grape plant to the area and starting a vineyard of 15 acres.

Mrs. Lee reported that his motive for setting out a vineyard was to prove that where wild grapes grew so prolifically, the tame grape plant would do as well. He obtained his first vines from California in 1854-55, which were of the mission variety.

Notations in his records showed that he gathered about

Shingle Weavers Study Wage Boost

Portland—(U.P.)—Portland and southwest Washington shingle weavers were to meet here Saturday afternoon to consider a 7 1/2-cent hourly wage increase offered by employers.

AFL workers have asked for a boost of from 25 to 45 cents and hour, saying they have not had an increase since August, 1930. Shingle mills at Grays Harbor, Wash., and seven in the Portland area have been closed by what operators termed a "slowdown strategy" to enforce wage demands.

Verne Newcomb, attorney for the employers, said workers also have been offered any further benefits worked out by the joint labor and management board recommended by the fact-finding panel which studied issues of last summer's lumber strike.

Provisions also were made for opening wage negotiations within the contract term, Newcomb said. He said crews from Portland Shingle Mills' operations here and at Ridgefield and Kelso, Wash., were to attend the meeting.



PARLOR—One of the showpoints of the Britt residence in Jacksonville is the ornate parlor. The floral-design carpet, which was purchased in 1884 by Molly Britt, is extremely well preserved. The ceiling fixture has been converted to electricity from gas. The picture on the left is a scene painted of Mill Creek falls, near Prospect. An unscratched Steinway grand piano is just out of sight on the left.

perature was 106 in August, 1901, and lowest was 5 degrees above zero on Feb. 4, 1899. The average number of days each year that the temperature rose above 90 was 20, and average for under 32 degrees was 75 days a year. Average annual precipitation was 27.74 inches.

One of the most consistent weather beacons was the croaking of frogs in the lily pond before each storm, a common weather report entry.

Besides the bustle of activity during the '50s, and '60s, Peter

found time to marry Amalia Grob in 1861 at the old Henry Kubli home on the Applegate. His wife was a former childhood sweetheart whose first husband had died, leaving her with one child, Jacob. She arrived here by stage after a steamer trip from San Francisco to Crescent City. The Kubli home where they were married was a night stop on the stage line.

Children born to Peter and Amalia were Emil, 1862 (died January, 1950), Arnold, 1863 (died August, 1864), and Amalia

D. (Molly), 1865 (died October, 1954). Jacob, son of Mrs. Britt from her former marriage, died in July, 1896. Mrs. Britt died in 1871 and Peter died in 1905.

The Britt were active in community affairs. Peter served in various capacities throughout his life, and Emil served on the city council for 15 years and was mayor for six years. Amalia (Molly) was worthy matron of Adair chapter, Eastern Star, 1903-5, 1913-14 and in 1922. She held office in the chapter for 50 years straight, a record equaled by few.

Atomic Sub Scheduled To Start Trials on Monday; Extensive Sea Tests To Be Held

Washington—(U.P.)—The atomic-powered submarine Nautilus, first vehicle of any kind having nuclear power, will begin sea trials Monday.

The Navy announced Friday night that the 2,800-ton vessel, built at a cost of more than \$40,000,000, will leave the dock at Groton, Conn., and head down the Thames river for builder's trials.

Trials Delayed
Its tests at sea were delayed for three months when it was discovered last fall that the wrong kind of piping had been installed.

The Navy announced that "initial trials at sea will be held on the surface to conduct underwater tests of the propulsion plant and the other systems common to conventional submarines." Informed sources disclosed that the Nautilus' atomic reactor has been producing heat for several days.

Last Dec. 30 it was learned that the Nautilus was scheduled to begin sea trials in mid-January. Later that same day, the Navy announced that the trials would not begin until early March.

Extensive Tests
The Navy said that exact timing of trials during early stages cannot be predicted because of the "developmental nature of this submarine." Tests and adjustments at dockside and at sea will be more extensive than in previous submarines.

Tests of the reactor and steam propulsion equipment now are near completion at the General Dynamics Corporation Electric Boat division, which built the sub and is building a sister ship, the Sea Wolf. The other atomic powered subs are now in the Navy's building program.

"When the Nautilus casts her lines off the dock and heads

down the Thames river," the Navy said, "it will represent the results of years of development of nuclear power by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Navy."

The submarine, which was commissioned last September, will be able to cruise at unprecedented speeds and distances under the surface.

U.N. Secretary Meets With Formosan Envoy

United Nations, N. Y.—(U.P.)—Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld plunged Saturday into a round of diplomatic appointments, informing U.N. chief delegates of his free-the-fliers mission to Red China.

Hammarskjöld's first caller

was Nationalist China's Dr. Ting-fu F. Tsiang, who was eager to learn the reaction expressed by Red Chinese Premier Chou En-lai to the threat of an attack from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Formosa stronghold.

Everyone Afraid
In his first public disclosure of details of his mission, Hammarskjöld was asked Friday whether Chou had expressed fear of invasion from Formosa. "One of the most curious and upsetting features about the present world situation in the East is that everybody is afraid of everybody," Hammarskjöld replied.

Others expected to see Hammarskjöld during the day were Selim Sarper of Turkey and Arthur S. Hall of India. First to receive a full report was U. S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., who was closeted with Hammarskjöld shortly after his arrival Thursday night from Peiping.

Ruptured Men Get \$3.50 Gift For Trying This

Kansas City, Mo.—Here is an improved means of holding rupture that has benefited thousands of ruptured men and women in the last year.

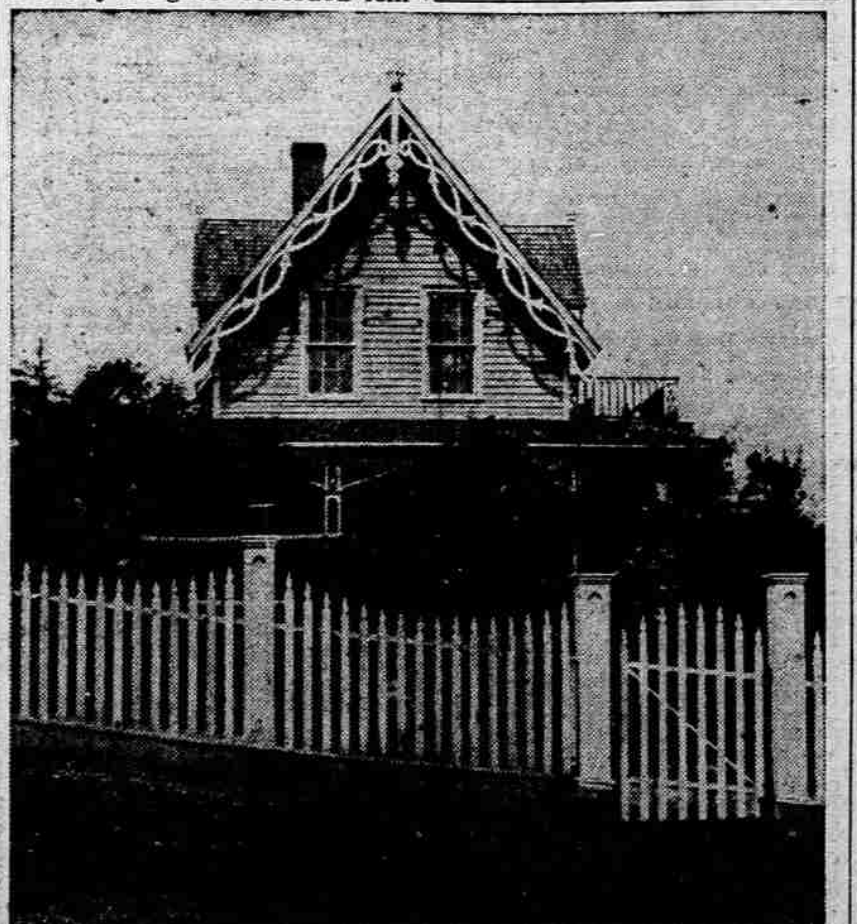
Inconspicuous, without leg straps, elastic belts, body encircling springs or harsh pads, it has caused many to say, "I don't see how it holds so easy. I would not have believed, had I not tried it."

So comfortable — so easy to wear — it would show you the way to joyous freedom from your rupture trouble.

You can't lose by trying. It is sent to you on 30 days trial. You receive a \$3.50 special truss as a gift for making this trial.

Write for descriptive circular. It's free. Just address Physician's Appliance Company, 1686 Koch Bldg., 2906 Main, Kansas City 8, Missouri.

But do it today before you lose the address. (Paid Adv.)



RESIDENCE—Pictured is the historic Britt residence at Jacksonville sometime prior to 1912. The main portion of the 14-room house was erected in 1860, with a rear addition in the early 1880's. An elaborate photographic studio covered the entire second floor of the building. The gardens surrounding the home contain many first plantings in the valley and rare trees and shrubs.



PORTRAIT—Shown are three of the Britt children. Emil is seated left with the magazine, Amalia (Molly), center, and Jacob, Jacob was Mrs. Peter Britt's son by a former marriage. He died in 1896. The portrait was taken, probably in the early 1880's, utilizing studio props. Both Emil and Molly were active in Jacksonville affairs during their lives.

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