

History of Towns Given for Club

The early history of three Jackson county communities was reviewed at the last meeting of College Women's Club of the Rogue River valley. Mrs. John M. Black spoke on Jacksonville, Miss Ruth Esther Hill, a school librarian in Ashland, told of early days there and Mrs. Bert Stanciliffe, Phoenix teacher, talked about that town. They were introduced by Mrs. W. H. Sutter, program chairman.

Mrs. Black stated that by 1851, there were several settlements in the Jacksonville area. The first house was built by Joel Perkins at the ferry on the Rogue. A man named Evans settled at the mouth of what is now Evans creek; there were also settlements on Wagner and Bear creeks. As these people needed protection, Governor Gaines sent Judge A. A. Skinner here as Indian agent, with headquarters near Willow Springs. By January 1851 there were 27 white men in the locality. One of these, a man named Sykes, who was an employee of Agent Skinner, is credited with finding the first "pay dirt" in a placer mine on Jackson creek in February 1852. Soon after this, two packers, James Cluggage and Joe R. Poole, who had camped near Jackson creek to feed and rest their animals, did a little prospecting on a tributary of Jackson creek. What they found set off a major gold rush in a country already hot with the gold fever.

Community Grows
Communication was slow in mid-century, yet within three months there sprang up a community of more than 1000 men. The first settled on adjacent claims to those of Cluggage and Poole; those who came later went up both forks of Jackson creek and over into the Applegate watershed to Poor Man's creek, Jackass, and Sterling creeks.

By the fall of 1852, lumber shacks appeared in the tent city. Some were homes; others were saloons and other places of business. In May 1853, the Cram Rogers company, Yreka, inaugurated messenger service to Crescent City with C. C. Beekman as the first rider.

Need for a stable government resulted in the establishment of a district court in 1853 with the Honorable Mather P. Deady appointed district judge for the Oregon Territory by President Pierce. A county government was organized January 12, 1852, with Jacksonville designated as county seat in 1853.

"In any frontier town," Mrs. Black said, "the cemetery played a significant role. Life was cheap and death considered an act of God, whatever the cause. Decent people held that mortal remains should have civilized burial. It was for this purpose that Jacksonville Lodge No. 10, IOOF, was organized in 1863. The Rebekah degree for women was instituted December 30, 1872. The lodge still meets in the same hall and on the same night. The Masonic order was organized March 15, 1855. The Masons built and still own the original building on the corner of California and Oregon streets.

First School
School district No. 1 of Jackson county was organized July 1854.

Jacksonville boomed again in 1860 when a rich quartz ledge was discovered near the site of old Fort Lane, near Gold Hill.

Disasters of epidemic and fire have struck Jacksonville intermittently but it has always "bounced" back. In the late 30's mining activity was renewed with the streets tunneled and the old placer mines reworked until World War II made labor and materials unavailable.

Miss Hill Speaks
Miss Hill said that even before the coming of the white

man, there was an Indian village on Ashland creek. On January 6, 1852, Robert B. Hargadine and a man named Pease settled on land known as the Applegate Farm, which is the present site of the Southern Pacific railroad yards. The first business was a sawmill and in 1854, Abel Helman built a flour mill near where the present Chamber of Commerce building now stands. On May 17, 1855, a postoffice was established with Mr. Helman as postmaster. Because Mr. Helman came from Ashland, Ohio, and be-

cause of the mills, the new town was called Ashland Mills. The "mills" part of the name was dropped locally about 1860 but it was retained by the postoffice department until 1871.

The building of the flouring mill was an outstanding event and was dedicated by a grand ball. The mill, located on Ashland creek at the entrance of what is now Lithia park, became the nucleus of the new town. A plaza was laid out in front of the mill and around it the business district developed.

Ashland school district was organized, the first teacher was the Rev. Myron Stearns, and he taught in the home of Eben Emery in 1854. The first school building was erected in 1860 on land given by R. B. Hargadine. With an addition or two the building served until 1880 when "a new and commodious two-story building was erected at a cost of \$2000 on the same site."

Memorable Day

May 4, 1884 was a memorable day in Ashland, for it was on that day that the first passenger train arrived. Many had gone to Phoenix in order to ride in on the first train. Mrs. Stanciliffe used as her

source a booklet, "Early Days in Phoenix, Oregon" by Marjorie Neill Helms.

Among the twenty-odd men in the valley at mid-century was Sam Colver, who took up a donation land claim where the town of Phoenix now is. He built a cabin on his claim directly across the present Highway 99 from the famous Colver House in Phoenix. Mrs. Stanciliffe quoted from Orsen Stearns' diary: "Sam Colver and John Davenport soon commenced to build the block house, which was intended to be a hotel, a store for general merchandise, and a rendezvous for settlers during Indian troubles." It was often spoken

of as "the Colvin mansion" and sometimes as the "Colvin House." However, it was not used as an inn until the 1920's when it was known as "The Blue Flower Lodge."

Phoenix was first called Gasburg for young Kate Clayton, who because of her quick repartee was known as "gassy Kate." After the Indian war a mail route was established between Phoenix and Sacramento and a postoffice was established across the street from Wait's gristmill. Mr. Waite was named postmaster and he took the name Phoenix from his insurance plate. Locally the town was Gasburg for another generation.

Guest Here

Miss Harry Lee, Berkeley, Calif., has been a guest of Mr. and Mrs. John G. Sprague and Jan Gilbouson at Rogue River lodge.

Entertainment was provided by the ninth grade ensemble of McLaughlin Junior High school, directed by Ray Lewis. They were introduced by Mrs. C. O. Larison.

Miss Jane Snedcor and Mrs. S. E. Trent were hostesses. Mrs. James Medley, social chairman, was assisted by Mrs. Mrs. L. H. Bohrer, Mrs. J. W. Murray, Mrs. H. L. Snodgrass, and Miss June Wheaton.

MAJ. TRIBUNE Medford, Oregon, Sunday, March 22, 1959 3A

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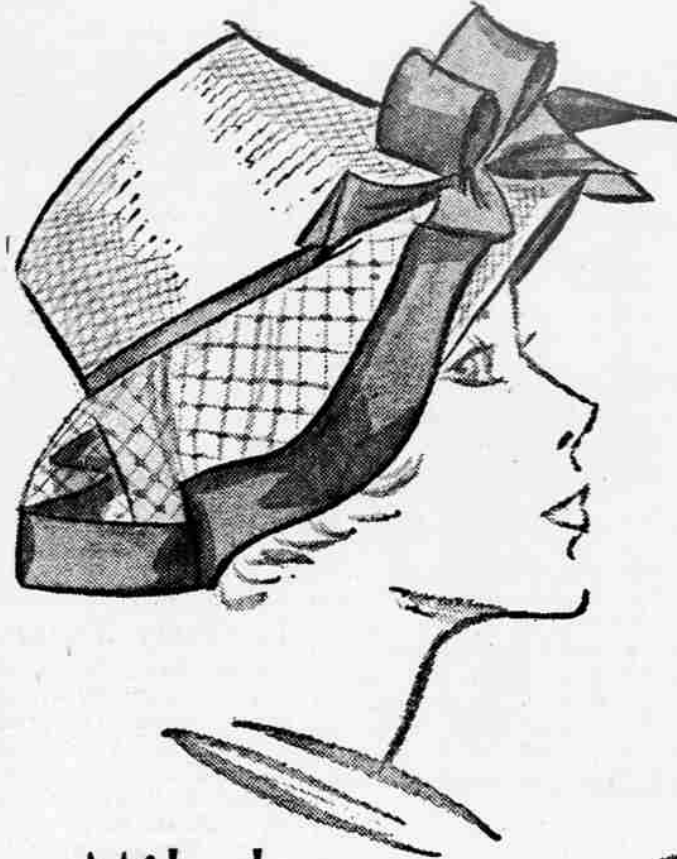
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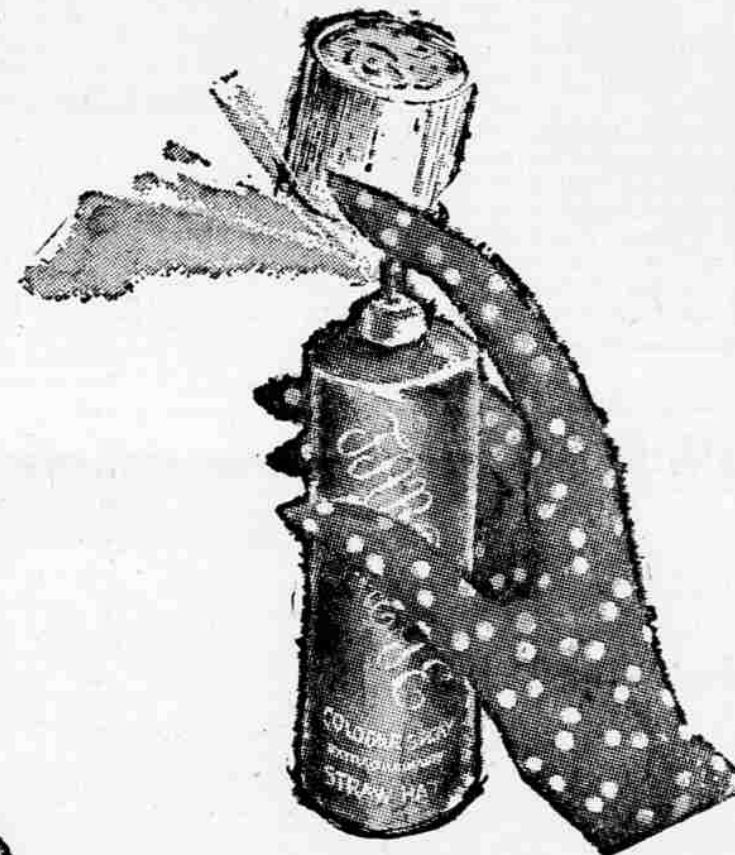


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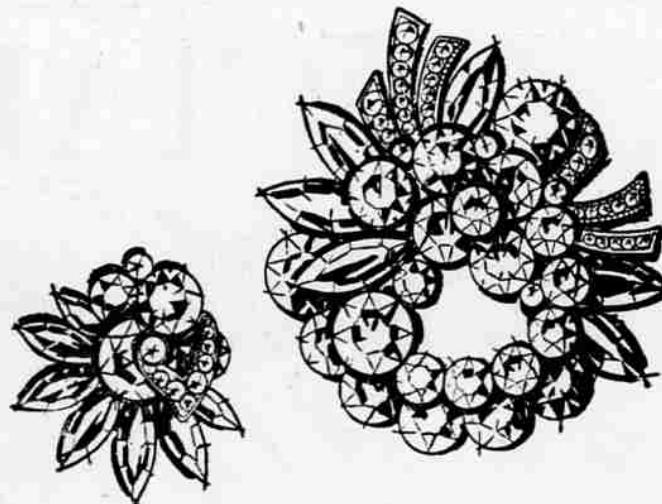
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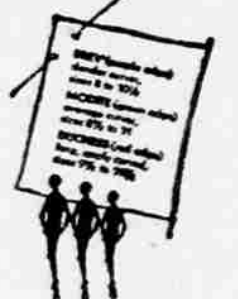
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