

# Hopes For Saving Britt Property Are Brighter

Hopes for saving the historic Britt property in Jacksonville from oblivion have taken a turn for the brighter. The newly-formed Jackson county parks and recreation commission appears interested in its acquisition as a county park area. The county court has received no formal recommendation from the commission. But last week's land swap offer from Southern Oregon college, which owns the property at present, is being studied.

Dr. Elmo Stevenson, SOC president, told the commission last Wednesday the college would trade the Britt house and gardens for 5 or 10 acres near the Howard Prairie reservoir.

**Land Use Exchange**  
He has since explained the swap would not be an outright switch of ownership but rather a long-term "land use" exchange.

This proposal provides a new wrinkle for those who have followed the Britt property's wavering fortunes and wondered at its fate. Last month, Dr. Stevenson had stated the college was considering putting it up once more for bids.

Should the county decide to acquire the property, either by land-swap or by actual purchase through public bidding, the Siskiyou Pioneer Sites foundation could breathe easier.

**Met with Frustration**  
The foundation has met with frustration so far in its efforts to raise private funds for purchasing the property from SOC to restore it as a historical monument.

SOC came by the property as residuary legatee to the estate of Miss Mollie Britt, daughter of Peter Britt, pioneer



**BRITT HOME** - The fire April 29, 1957, gutted part of the house built by Peter Britt, pioneer photographer, nearly 100 years ago has made the property more than a "white elephant" for its present owner, Southern Oregon college. Britt's former studio on the left now has two skylights, one of glass and the other of charred wood.

lar, passed up the responsibility. The city of Jacksonville reportedly declined it as well.

**Pass to SOC**  
And so, while the historical society has since salvaged Britt's photographic equipment and hundreds of pictures, as well as furniture and other antiques, the house and grounds themselves passed to SOC.

The college for a short time retained a gardener to keep the grounds in shape. But his salary, reportedly \$350 or \$400 a month, was considered too great an expense.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Jones were then employed as caretakers. Jones, in return for housing for his family under the Britt roof was simply in Dr. Stevenson's words "to keep it (the property) from going to rack and ruin."

Twice SOC tried to dispose of it through calls for public bidding. On both occasions, it is understood, no acceptable offer was received.

**Structure Damaged**  
Then, on April 29, 1957, a fire fanned by high winds gutted the studio and other second floor rooms. Flames, smoke and water damage together destroyed an estimated 50 per cent of the structure.

Scorched, roofless and thus a prey to wind and rain as well, the Britt house after the fire was more than ever a "white elephant" for the college.

The sites foundation, led by Mrs. Dwight Houghton of Medford and other members, has maintained a watchdog interest in the property's fate. Hoping at first to restore the house itself, some members more recently admitted with reluctance that this would be impractical. Their sights were lowered to a plan for acquiring and maintaining just the gardens, with the house, or at least its damaged parts, to be razed or restored as a shell only.

**Money Stumbling Block**  
Money, however, has been the stumbling block. The foundation offered last year to lease the property at \$1 a year for 99 years and to set about its rehabilitation. But the state board of higher education, to which SOC must refer for final authority, turned this down.

Dr. Stevenson last month announced the college was planning to place the Britt property once more on the selling bloc. He then reportedly agreed to a postponement until a "propitious" time.

Don Lewis, SOC business manager, said the state board had asked that bids be called only if the college received written expressions of interest in bidding. None had been received.

The appointment of nine members for the county parks and recreation commission May 21 spurred the county into the picture.

**Talk of Buying**  
There was some talk that the foundation might raise the estimated \$2,000 necessary, buy the property and then turn it over to the county for maintenance. But in view of the difficulty in getting donations, an outright purchase by the county from budgeted funds is considered more plausible.

Should the county decide to make the purchase, it would, according to Lewis, have to take its chances in submitting a sealed bid. "We'd have to follow the let-

ter of the law," Lewis said, meaning the property would go to the highest bidder regardless of who it might be or for what purpose the property might be wanted.

The commission included the Britt property in a tour of potential park sites June 10. Dr. Frank Haines, president of the foundation, commented last Thursday that acquisition by the county would be "the best possible development." Dr. Haines said that at this time the foundation had shifted its money-raising efforts to another Jacksonville project more suitable for restoration.

**Gleam of Hope**  
If the county should decide against acquiring the Britt property, Dr. Haines said, the foundation would certainly discuss the matter further. But for the time being at least the county's interest provides the only real gleam of hope for the property's future.

The maintenance of the house and gardens meanwhile has been a subject of discussion as well.

"We have been instructed by the state board's office to spend no money on the place," Lewis reported Friday.

The \$25,000 in matching funds for maintenance in Miss Britt's proposed legacy to the historical society has all been spent on SOC's Britt Student Center, according to Lewis and Dr. Stevenson.

SOC after all, Lewis said, is "in the education business" not the business of historical restoration.

**No Purpose Seen**  
As for replacing the fire-damaged roof of the house for protection against the elements, Lewis commented,

## 4-H Club News

**Ruch Woolies**  
The Ruch Woolies held their sixth meeting at the home of Lynda Bettencourt, June 13.

Richard Bottinger gave a report on the different kinds of sheep.

We decided that we would have a swimming party June 23 at Twin Plunges. We will leave at 11 and return at 6 p.m. Billy Deter came to visit.

Mrs. Bettencourt served refreshments.

Lelah Mae Deter, Reporter.

The Griffin Creek Dairy club met June 11 at the home of Marthanne Goodwin on Marshall ave.

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Clark. The minutes were read by our secretary, Bonnie Brantley. In order of business, Judy Nelson gave a demonstration on showmanship. The meeting adjourned and refreshments were served.

The next meeting will be held at the home of Russell Fields on Jacksonville highway, July 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Marthanne Goodwin, Reporter.

"there seems to be no purpose in putting one on." He added that there did not appear to be much to protect. Besides, he said, the college had hoped the sites foundation might acquire the place and put on a new roof itself.

Fred Jones and his wife have continued as caretakers since the fire, living in the rear of the house. "We don't expect them to do much, frankly," Lewis said.

Jones, a cabinet-maker, has remodeled his family's quarters in the house, made a front gate, effected some utilities improvements and constructed a stone terrace in the rear, among other things. The Joneses have converted a vacant lot across the street to a vegetable garden.

Jones maintains a considerable quantity and variety of woodworking tools and materials about the premises, and does a certain amount of work for customers or friends in the valley. He has expressed an interest, incidentally, in acquiring the Britt property himself if he could raise the money.

**Occasional Purchases**  
With respect to equipment for maintaining the gardens surrounding the house, Lewis said, "We buy them some stuff occasionally." He mentioned a hose and sprinkler.

"He hasn't asked for much and we haven't given him much," Dr. Stevenson said of Jones. "He can requisition it and we'd give it to him." Perhaps, he admitted, the college could have gone further.

Dr. Haines described Jones' gardening as "erratic," and commented: "He hasn't killed anything."

Lewis said he thought the gardens were "in pretty good shape this spring."

"I can see no one having any criticism on the care of the grounds," he added.

Some shrubbery appears to have suffered from over-pruning. The driveway is in poor repair. Generally, however, while the gardens are hardly "neat as a pin" they do reflect definite efforts.

## GOLD HILL Church To Be Painted

**By MRS. CLYDE KELL**  
Gold Hill—Officials of the Gold Hill Community Methodist church at the corner of Fourth st. and Fourth ave., have announced that the church will be painted in July.

Ladders, spray guns and brushes will be needed and persons who wish to volunteer the use of these items or their services in scraping and preparing the surface, and the actual painting project, may contact Ferd Jones, chairman of the board of the church.

Mrs. Sam Jones played a selection on her accordion for the music portion of the Sunday school hour June 14, at the Gold Hill Community Methodist church. E. R. Griggs furnished a vocal number accomplished by his electric guitar.

During the worship service on that date, Mrs. Jones accompanied the congregation with her accordion in the absence of the church organist, Mrs. John Bruce. A piano solo was played by Miss Marie Jones as a special selection.

Miss Rose Drake, who is serving in the medical corps of the Woman's Air Force at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, has been promoted from third class to second class. Miss Drake is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Everette Drake, Lazy Acres motel, north of Gold Hill. She graduated from Crater Lake school with the class of 1957.

Mr. and Mrs. Volney Baldwin of Spokane, Wash., were guests, June 11 at the home of his aunt, Mrs. Minnie Byerly, Sixth ave.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Newham, Gold Hill, and Mr. and Mrs. Veltie Biles left for Orange, Calif., Saturday, June 13. The Newhams will be houseguests at the home of his sister, Mrs. Alice Morris, while there, and visit other relatives in that area. The Biles will go on to San Diego, Calif., where they will visit their son, Jim Biles, who is in the Navy.

The Governor brothers will start construction of the new home of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Newham, sometime this week, Mrs. Newham said. The new residence will be located at the corner of Second st. and Fourth ave. in Gold Hill.

Miss Terry Turner and her brothers, Mike, Bobby and Randy Turner left June 10 for Torrance, Calif., where they will be guests several weeks at the home of their father, George Turner.

**MAY TAKE CRUISE**  
Paris (UPI)—Newly married French actress Brigitte Bardot may spend part of her honeymoon cruising the Mediterranean on a yacht, informed sources said yesterday. The "Sex Kitten," who married actor Jacques Charrier, went into seclusion with her groom in her Paris apartment after the wedding Thursday, but there were reports the newlyweds planned to leave soon for a cruise on producer Raoul Levy's yacht.

Arriving Thursday, June 11, from Spokane, Wash., for a four-day visit at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Ross and children, Glenda and Dickie, were his cousin, Mrs. Louise Williams, her daughter, Miss Connie Williams, Mrs. Bud Williams Jr., and infant daughter, Jackie, and a family friend, Miss Marilyn Smith.

Coming here Friday, June 12, from San Francisco, where he is on duty with the U.S. Navy, was Bud Williams Jr. He visited at the Ross home until Monday, with his wife, and little girl, who had come from Spokane with his mother, Mrs. Louise Williams Sr.

Mrs. Fred Butler and daughter, Miss Joycelyn Butler, of New York city were guests at the home of Mrs. Butler's niece and family, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Parker, and daughter, Lindo, on Lampman road from Wednesday, June 10, until Monday, June 16.

Mrs. Parker had not seen her aunt for 30 years. The Parkers took their guests to several of southern Oregon's scenic spots including Crater Lake, Diamond lake, and the Oregon caves, as well as the Jacksonville museum.

Glenda Doss was honored at a party on her eighth birthday, June 12, given by her mother, Mrs. Darrell Ross at the Ross home on Highway 99 north.

Guests included two sets of twin sisters, Cheresse and Clerisse Ofrutt of Central Point and Janice and John Czmowski of Gold Hill. Other guests were Patty and Larry Washburn, Kenneth Maerz, Bobby and Patty Boye, Donald Arnold, Barbara Jean Morris, Betty Birdsong, Trudy Brown, Billy Smith, Teresa Brown, Jimmie Martin, Mrs. Louise Williams, Mrs. Bud Williams and infant daughter, Jackie, Miss Connie Williams and Miss Marilyn Smith, all of Spokane, Wash.

Assisting Mrs. Ross with the party was Mrs. Jack Arnold, Mrs. Vernon Czmowski, and Mrs. Jack Cline, all of Gold Hill.

Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Ross and children, Glenda and Dickie, took their houseguest from Spokane, Mrs. Louise Williams, Mrs. Bul Williams Jr., and daughter, Jackie, Miss Marilyn Smith and Miss Connie Williams, to the coast Monday, June 15,

where they visited the trees of mystery and scenic spots at Crescent and Brookings.

Mrs. Roy Eskew and daughter, Donna, attended graduation exercises at Oregon State college on Monday, June 8. Among the graduates was the Eskew's son, Jerry Eskew. He was a student of engineering in the field of production technology.

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Ness and son, Buddy, who have been residing in Klamath Falls while he attended OTI, have moved to Medford where he is employed at Roberts Motor Co. He is a graduate of OTI. Mrs. Ness is the

former Beth Eskey, a daughter of the Roy Eskews.

Miss Donna Eskew, a student in education at Southern Oregon college in Ashland has completed her junior year. She will reside in Gold Hill during the summer months with her parents while she has employment in Medford.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Eskew, Donna, and Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Ness and son, Buddy, have returned to their homes after attending the Rose Parade on Saturday, June 13, in Portland and the wedding of their son, Jerry Eskew, which took place on Sunday in Portland.

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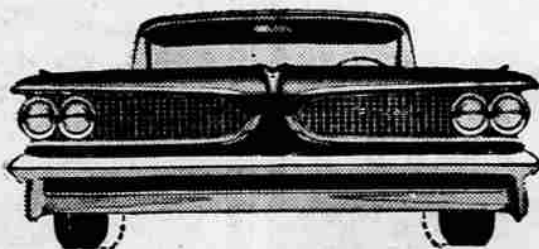
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