

Tea Given at Historic Ranch House Honors Woman on Ninetieth Birthday

By MARY KILL

Gold Hill — A tea given in the stately Queen Anne style Chavner family home on April 26 honored Mrs. W. E. Thompson, the former Margaret Chavner, on her 90th birthday anniversary. Mrs. Thompson was born on the ranch in 1872, the daughter of Thomas and Margaret Chavner, well known Jackson county pioneer couple, and has lived there most of her life. Mr. Chavner laid out the original townsite of Gold Hill.

The house, built in 1891, is now the home of the honored woman's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Chavner Thompson, who were hosts for the tea. Guests were welcomed between 2 and 5 o'clock in the south - wing parlor.

In this room stands a rosewood piano that was brought around the Horn to Crescent City, Calif., and from there to southern Oregon by pack train. It is more than 100 years old. Mrs. Thompson is a pianist, as was her sister, the late Mary Ann Chavner Pryce. An oil painting, the work of Mary Ann, also adds interest to the room.

Mrs. Jack Mayer, daughter of Mrs. Thompson, came from her home in Portland for the celebration. She is the former Hortense Thompson.

Guests signed a memory book, a gift to the honoree from her daughter-in-law, who wrote an original message in gold. Cards and mementos of Mrs. Thompson's 90th birthday anniversary will be placed in the book. Mrs. Oscar Rosenbers, Gold Hill, took charge of the book. Pouring during the afternoon were Mrs. S. K. Vellequette and Mrs. Prentice Petty, both Gold Hill.

An arrangement of orchid lilacs stood in a gold trimmed crystal bowl on the tea table and gold lapers in crystal

olders completed the centerpiece. The lilacs were picked from original bushes that were planted after the house was built.

For the occasion the honored woman wore a floral polished cotton frock of aquamarine and lavender and her corsage was a lavender orchid. Mrs. William M. (Allie) Thomas, who is Mrs. Thompson's companion, was among the guests. Her corsage was a white orchid. Mrs. Thompson resides on the ranch in her own home that she and her husband had built about 1906. She has a view of the city of Gold Hill from her house, which is located just opposite the Rogue river. It was in this home where she and her husband reared their son and daughter.

Father Found Town

The late W. E. Thompson first came to this area because of his interests in the Blue Ledge mine near Copper City, Calif., and from there to southern Oregon by pack train. It is more than 100 years old. Mrs. Thompson is a pianist, as was her sister, the late Mary Ann Chavner Pryce. An oil painting, the work of Mary Ann, also adds interest to the room.

Mrs. Thompson's father was a prominent figure in the Gold Hill lore legend for which he named the town of Gold Hill. He laid out the townsite and donated it as such so that the railroad company would construct the railroad via this route. He furnished the pipe and tank for the railroad to encourage establishment of the station. The original water tank for the trains was located on the south side of the railroad tracks just about opposite the street from the old Gus Erickson house, on Second avenue. Thomas Chavner built the first bridge across the Rogue river above where the railroad bridge is now located.

This bridge was the Centennial Toll Bridge built in 1876. It was used as a toll bridge until 1888, the year of his death when he arranged

to sell it to Jackson county. He had hired Chinese workers to build the road which is known as the old South Pacific highway.

Ranch Large

The original Chavner ranch consisted of about four sections, 2,000 acres, of land in addition to the townsite of Gold Hill. It included the Dardanelle, which was an early-day settlement prior to Gold Hill. In that area there is now a restaurant, service station and trailer court. During the years about half of this land has been sold.

Mrs. Thompson had two older brothers and a sister. They were Michael Chavner, Peter Chavner and Mary Ann Chavner Pryce. She recalls that as infants all were taken out in a unique baby buggy. This old buggy, she said, was taken to Jacksonville when the family went to town and wheeled up and down the historical old streets while the parents shopped. Her own youngsters were both wheeled about the ranch in it, and on the streets of Gold Hill. It is now stored on the second floor of the Queen Ann house.

Mrs. Thompson's mother died when she was eight years old. She attended school just one week at the early day Dardanelle school, and received her education at St. Mary's academy in Jacksonville where she graduated in 1888. She went to Cincinnati College of Music to study piano during 1890, and in 1894 returned east for more study. This time three years were spent at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Mass.

Children Build Home

It was prior to her return to the east that the Queen Anne home was built. This took place after the death of her father, who died in 1888. The sons and daughters had the residence built and established it as the Chavner family home. It was constructed



Mrs. W. E. Thompson, who celebrated her 90th birthday anniversary April 26, is shown here with her son, Chavner Thompson, and her daughter, Mrs. Jack Mayer. Portland, and the elaborate Queen Anne type house which has been a source of interest in southern Oregon since it was built

ed by a man named Stewart who made quite a record for himself when he completed it in one year. The house, standing in a grove of Laurel trees, is a three-story structure with 12 rooms including two parlors; one in the south wing and one in the west wing.

A round kitchen, built of brick, has been modernized by Mr. and Mrs. Chavner Thompson, and windows added. The double parlor sliding doors are 8 feet high, and ceilings in the house are 10 feet. There is a fireplace in each of the two parlors downstairs and one fireplace on the second floor.

With the exception of a few years, the house has been continuously occupied by members of the Chavner family.

The husband of Mary Ann Chavner was an Englishman who was one of the first physicians in Medford.

During the earlier days, Catholic priests came from parishes in Jacksonville, Medford and Grants Pass to hold mass in the west wing parlor. Until about 1920 the priests alternated between the Chavner home and other places in

the valley to conduct the services. About 1945 Mass books and vestments kept at the Chavners were turned over to Father Nicholas Deis at the Medford parish. During the years that Mass was held in the west-wing parlor, the family piano was used as an altar.

An early-day priest, Father Blanchet, who conducted religious services in the original Chavner home about 1854, used an old cupboard for an altar, and it is now stored on a porch at the Chavner Thompson home.

Mrs. Chavner (Ruth) Thompson has added to the Chavner house some of her own prized possessions. These include a black pottery pitcher which her parents brought from England and which is 160 years old, a set of china dishes which belonged to her mother and an heirloom plate about 160 years old. She also has pieces of amethyst which her father, Thomas F. Slater, mined in Italy.

Ruth Thompson is an ardent horsewoman, and she also enjoys assisting her husband on the ranch.

The family stresses that neither the premises or the house are open to the public.

Mrs. Chartier To Be Installed

Mrs. Ellis Chartier will be installed president of the West Side School's Mothers club at a meeting Wednesday, May 9, at the home of Mrs. Robert B. Webber at 8 a.m.

Others to be installed will be Mrs. Charles Sabin, vice-president; Mrs. E. L. Jack, secretary, and Mrs. M. R. Doty, treasurer.

Members are reminded of the West Side School Student Hobby show to be held at the school Friday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m. Many of the activities, including the cake and plant sale and hamburger fry, are arranged by the parents through the Mothers club.

To Elect

Elections will be conducted during a meeting of the Little Garden club of Medford when they meet Wednesday, May 9 at 7:30 p.m., in the home of Mrs. Dale Graham, 817 Peach street.

Mrs. C. T. Basom will be cohostess.

Mood Indigo Theme of St. Mary's High Prom

Mood Indigo was the theme for St. Mary's High school junior-senior prom held Friday, May 4 at the Rogue Valley Country club. Decorations were done in various hues of blue and purple in keeping with the theme. James Calhoun and Miss Barbara Lewis were the general chairmen.

Roy Taylor's band furnished the dance music for the event which was attended by 33 couples.

In charge of the decorations was Miss Kathy Hout, while Miss Linda Metz was publicity chairman. The programs and tickets were arranged for by Miss Mary Lee Lowry and Miss Laura Batzer was chairman of the chaperone committee.

Guests were the Very Rev. Carl Mai, the Rev. William

Noon Luncheon Set By Mistletoe Club

The only meeting scheduled for this month for Mistletoe club of the Royal Neighbors of America lodge, is slated for Wednesday, May 9 at 12 noon. Mrs. David Fraysher will be the committee chairman.

Those who attend are asked by the officers to take a hot dish, salad or dessert.

FOE Auxiliary Group To Meet

Past Presidents of the auxiliary to the Crater Lake chapter, Fraternal Order of Eagles, plan a luncheon meeting at 1:30 p.m., Friday, May 11 in the home of Mrs. Jesse Wagner, 112 Cottage street.

Kibben and Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Friel. Chaperones were Mr. and Mrs. Jack Batzer, Mr. and Mrs. Van Calhoun, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Darland, Mr. and Mrs. Quentin Lewis and Mr. and Mrs. David Lowry.

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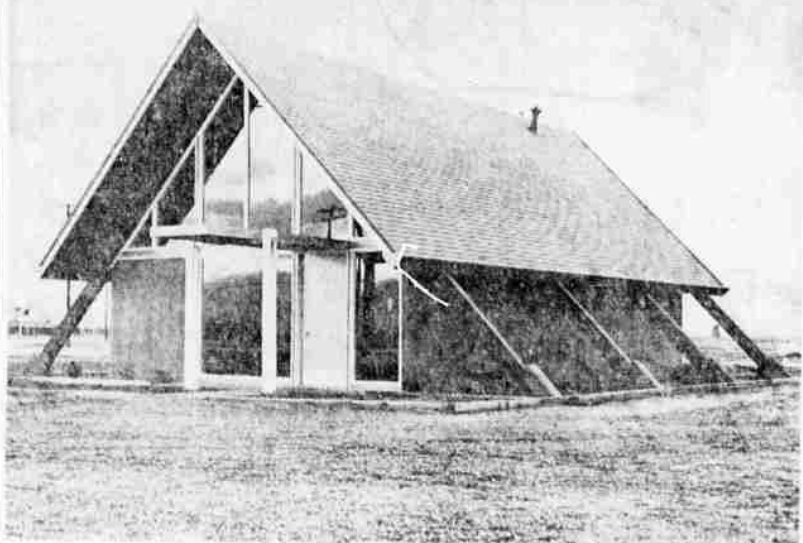
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