

# Boots Tailor-Made in Medford Are Tramping 'Round the World

By EVA HAMILTON  
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There is a man in Medford whose boots are tramping 'round the world. On the feet of doctors, lawyers, merchants, loggers and a few Indian guides.

From the Canadian Rockies to the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. Down the halls of hospitals in Paris, France. In the desert of Iran. And in every state of the Union, including the two new ones, Alaska and Hawaii, shoes made by Wilbur L. Stevens are being worn by comfortable and busy feet.

His present shop is on North Grape st. But he has worked in several locations during the almost 30 years that he has been making and remaking boots in Medford.

**Five Years in Roseburg**  
Stevens spent a few years in Roseburg where he learned many things from Emil Sandquist, formerly of Sweden, he recently recalled as he bent over his lasting jack to talk while keeping the sole in place on a leather boot.

Sandquist, others who knew him relate, made the boots for the King of Sweden's guards and was recognized as one of the best men in his line. He is now in Payette, Idaho.

When Stevens, known as "Steve, the boot maker," started west from Minnesota, he was told if he ever got a chance to work with Sandquist to take it.

"He was the best boot maker on the coast," Steve declared. Steve got the chance and he took it.

### Patterns Hang on Wall

Hanging on the wall of his shop today are patterns of many feet. In his files are many more and on the floor are stacked lasts, too many to count - but only two for women. The largest shoes he has made were size 14 for a lineman. The same week he made a pair of size 5 boots for a man. The widest boots he ever made, (almost as wide as they were long) were for a full-blooded German. The customer said "That's what you get when a German marries a German, wide feet."

Asked if this were true, that he could tell a person's nationality from the shape of his feet, Stevens said he had never pursued the subject far enough to know. He had been too busy making the shoes to fit the feet.

Many people view shoe making as strictly an old country trade. In Stevens' shop are many things to justify this



**SOME HAND SEWN**—Wilbur L. Stevens, on an old English stool, he measures the Medford boot maker, finds there is still a cord in the traditional manner of shoemakers prefer their flexibility. Seated here

viewpoint. The stool, on which he sits for hand sewing, is more than 100 years old and came from England. He bought it from the successor to an old English shoemaker, who came to this valley from Tonopah, Nev.

Stevens' favorite shoemak-

ing tools are from Sweden. "Sweden has the best steel," he explained. "The good steel Germany uses comes from Sweden."

### Been Offered Prices

Stevens has never paid fabulous prices for these tools, he prizes so highly. He has,

however, been offered fancy prices for them by people who have seen them in his shop. The Swedish hammer, he

prefers, cost him 35 cents. "You get accustomed to the feel of certain tools," he said. "You like the feel of something in your hand and you can do a better piece of work."

His boot making supplies many needs, that is the great satisfaction he finds in his trade. He thinks of the man with one foot one size, the other foot another; the man who needs one "built-up" or extension shoe - he illustrated by showing two pairs. In one pair, size seven fit one foot and size five the other. The wearer in one case needed five extended, the other customer needed seven built up.

### Need Better Shoes

Then there was the day when his own son needed a better pair of shoes. Wilbur, Jr., know as "Stevie," started to school. He got his feet wet in the first September rain. Determined to get him better shoes, Stevens took over the shopping assignment. He found that his wife had covered the town. The kinds of shoes needed just were available. So, Steve made Stevie the shoes. When he wore them to school he announced to his teacher that his father had made him new shoes.

"You mean he bought you new shoes," the teacher corrected. "No," insisted Stevie, "He made them."

The teacher found out that he had. "First thing he did," Stevens completed the story, "was try them out in a puddle. Sur-

prised he came home to report that his feet weren't wet." Stevens' slippers for doctors have supplied physicians in cities of the world. They were advertised in medical and dental journals. He doesn't advertise them anymore, he can't take care of the business. Person to person advertising brings him all the business he can handle. Most of the shoes for doctors are white. However, Stevens makes them in other colors for other people, including himself. He had on a pair when interviewed.

How his shoes get into so many far away places, Stevens isn't sure. In some instances it happens through Medford friends. Someone knows someone in Saudi Arabia or Iran. In one instance, however, the contact was via Florida. Stevens said he had been making shoes for a dentist in Florida, who seemed to be ordering a wide variety of sizes. He later learned that one of his colleagues in Paris, France, was getting some of them. He realized this when a doctor wrote from Paris wanting the same kind.

If the Royal Mounties are wearing boots by Stevens, Stevens doesn't know it. Indian guides and hunters in Canada, however, are. They like the ones with the foam crepe soles. "Stitch down," Steve calls the boots he makes for hunters and hikers. They are sewn with two threads where one would do and are more flexible. "This way," he ex-

plained with threads in his hand, "you get a lock." He uses 10-cord linen for all boot work and boar bristles instead of needles for pulling the cord through the leather.

There is still room for individualism in this machine age in the sewing of shoes, according to Stevens. The man with a long arm uses a long thread, the man with a short arm, a shorter thread. Stevens demonstrated. By taking the thread around the arm and through each finger he gets exactly the right length for the stitching.

### First in Harness Shop

This Medford boot maker started working for himself 49 years ago, first in a harness shop in Iowa. He may have stayed there except for the advice of his uncle, "a pretty sharp fellow."

"You are serving a dead trade," Steve remembers his uncle telling him. "No one is going to be wanting harness, cars and tractors are going to take over."

"I couldn't believe it," Stevens said. "I felt that snow would prevent it and I insisted that in winter horses would still be doing the work and furnishing transportation. How will they get the snow off the roads? I asked uncle. 'They'll find a way,' he answered. 'I knew uncle was right. Then I'll go into a shoe repair shop, I told him. Uncle thought a while, then answered, 'Yes I guess people will always wear shoes.' 'So far they do,' Stevens said.



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## 59 Phoenix Seniors Receive Diplomas

Phoenix - Fifty-nine 1963 graduates of Phoenix High school received diplomas at commencement exercises last week in the school gymnasium.

Dr. Esby C. McGill, assistant to the president at Southern Oregon college, gave the

### Court Suggests Beer License for Store

The Jackson county court Friday recommended a package beer license for Floyd Bubb, operator of the Brownsboro store, but not a tavern license.

County Commissioner Edwin Taylor said a majority of the residents within a two-mile radius of the store opposed having a tavern in their area. He made a house to house check. He suggested that Bubb wait awhile before applying for a tavern license again to allow public opinion to "cool off."

Last fall a large delegation of Brownsboro residents crowded into the county court to protest granting a tavern license in that area. Later Bubb presented petitions containing 39 signatures of residents he said approved having a tavern.

County Judge Earl M. Miller said there was only "a slight differential" between petitions for and against the tavern. Earlier, the county court had suggested Bubb wait a year, but take out a packaged beer license.

### ROCKET BASE VISITED

Moscow - (UPI) - Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev visited a Soviet strategic rocket base Thursday, the official Tass news agency reported today.

commencement address. Following the address, J. Allen Harris, chairman of the board of education, presented diplomas to the graduating class.

Faculty award medals were presented to students making outstanding contributions to the school. They were Dorothy James, outstanding senior girl; Rickey Richey, outstanding senior boy; Richard Coulter, boys activities; Penny Simmonds, girls activities; and Sandra Nelson, citizenship. Rickey Richey was also presented the student body president key.

Honor students were presented medals. They were Richard Coulter, Laura Griffith, Dorothy James, Robert McAlaster, Sandra Nelson, Gail Scharfe, Penny Simmonds and Jan Stone.

A plaque was presented to Harris in recognition for his service on the school board.

Seniors receiving diplomas were: Carol Kay Anderson, Roland Craig Arvo, Joseph Curtis Barnes, Patricia Louise Bentley, Rodney Spencer Biddle, Penny Ann Black, Richard Perry Boltz, Garvan Blake Bowman, Loraine Kay Braun, Darlene Coffman, Greg James Conner, Richard Arthur Coulter.

Teresa Jean Diederich, James Edward Glasscock, Laura Jean Griffith, Danny Lester Harris, Donna Louise Hill, Gordon Walter Hills Jr., Judith Marilyn Hobbs, Priscilla Mae Homer, Robert Allen Hunter, William Joseph Illingworth, Dorothy Millicent James, Richard Forest Jennings, David Rae Johnson, Larry Owens Johnson, Arda Renee Johnson.

John Edward Kerns, Mary Margaret LaFleur, Kenneth Lee Luper, Ronald Meredith Mankins, Louis Oliver Maudlin, Robert David Montgomery, Sandra Lee Nelson, Robert David McAlaster, Maria Montalvo, Timothy Garnet O'Mara, Franklin Leroy Perkins, Natalia Jean Reichenberg, Larry Frank Richey, Rickey Ray Richey, Betty Jean Roberts, Roger Arnold Roy, William Dane Sauve, Teresa Caroline Sauve, Gerald C. Scharfe, Sharon Ann Shultz, Penny Joy Simmonds, Wayne Weidon Singley, Linda Carol Sommer, Judith Gayle Stewart, Jan Noel Stone, Sally Kay Strong, Johnny Burdette Turner, Mary Louise Van de Kamm, Shirley Ann Walker, Raymond Keith Wallace, Starlene Mae Wilkins, and Marcie Yvonne Willoughby.

### Dennis the Menace



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