



STILL WORKS—This old manual machine in the tax department of the Jackson county sheriff's office, still operates. Mrs. Marjorie Brooks recently demonstrated. But its high speed electric successors, now in use, have made it possible for four employees to carry on the ever increasing load of work in the tax division.

Mrs. Brooks Resigns As Chief Tax Deputy

By EVA HAMILTON
Mail Tribune Staff Writer
Automation must be the answer to a situation which has continued for over 38 years in the tax department of the Jackson county sheriff's office, from which Mrs. Marjorie Brooks is retiring, effective July 1.

There were four employees in the department when Mrs. Brooks, Phoenix High school graduate, went to work in the old courthouse at Jacksonville. There are still four employees today in the department where Mrs. Brooks has been chief tax deputy since 1936.

But there has been a "tremendous" change in the volume of business handled and in the equipment via which the employees turn out the work. Mrs. Brooks emphasized this as she displayed some of the manual machines, preserved but relegated to the back room.

How four employees have managed to care for the tax business of Jackson county, which has multiplied (no one was prepared to say how many times) with the passing of the years, is a natural question to ask. The answer is to some extent an obvious one in this machine age.

Next Question Obvious
But the next question is obvious, too. Why can't other departments install machines which will accomplish this same result?

This question wasn't answered by the woman, who says she is going to go home (where she doesn't have a calculator or a typewriter) and just enjoy life with her family for a while, her husband.

Ira Brooks, 1180 Spring st., Medford; her daughter, Mrs. Norman Vance and children, Medford; and her son, Gerald Brooks, and children of Mt. Shasta.

The Jackson county government has actually made three moves since Mrs. Brooks started working for the tax department in 1925.

Through election in 1926, the county seat was changed from Jacksonville to Medford. The new courthouse was to be Medford's present city hall at the corner of North Central ave. and Fifth st. But the building was not ready for the county's occupancy on the scheduled date so the Medford Armory was seat of government until the fall of 1927 when the move was made to the city hall.

Land Acquired
In 1931, land was acquired for the present county courthouse. The old Washington school, which occupied the corner of West Main st. and Oakdale ave., was razed, and the courthouse construction began with J. G. Link, architect, and H. L. Hoffman, contractor.

Official dedication of the new building was held Sept. 1, 1932. C. B. Lamkin of Ashland was then county judge. The planning had started under the leadership of County Judge Alex Sparrow, whose name also appeared on the programs with those of County Commissioners Victor Bursell and John Barneburg. Judge Sparrow lost his life in a fall while inspecting buildings in Klamath county.

Thinking back to the Jacksonville courthouse, Mrs. Brooks recalled the D'Autremont trial, last history-making event in the pioneer courtroom. It is more clearly remembered, of course, by members of the criminal division of the sheriff's department, she commented, but other employees did slip into the trial whenever the opportunity occurred.

Aware of Unfolding
Everyone connected with county government in those days was aware of the unfolding of the drama growing out of the train robbery and death-dealing explosion in the Siskiyou tunnel, to which the D'Autremont brothers eventually confessed.

The theft of ballots cast in the 1932 election caused the greatest excitement during Mrs. Brooks' years in the present courthouse, she said.

Again, the criminal division of the sheriff's office was more aware than the tax department of the robbery, the arrests and the trials which followed, all closely interwoven with the tragic shooting of Constable George Prescott. Mrs. Brooks' division has always been "strictly tax minded."

Have Open House
Friday afternoon the personnel of the sheriff's department entertained with an open house in the tax department, honoring Mrs. Brooks from 3 to 5 p.m. All courthouse employees were invited.

The business of Jackson county has grown tax wise as well as every other way since Mrs. Brooks started work with the office in Jacksonville. Ralph Jennings was then sheriff and George L. Howard, best known as former operator of the Diamond Lake resort, was chief tax deputy.

The old hand operated machines were slower than their electric successors, which today do the work with just an assist from human hands. The accuracy was the important thing then, however, just as it is now. Mrs. Brooks emphasized, the results were the same, at least to this extent—neither machine could reduce taxes.

Hearing Set on Proposed District
The Jackson county court Friday set a public hearing on proposed formation of the West Side Water district in the Medford area for 2 p.m. Aug. 7 in the county court room.

County Judge Earl M. Miller noted that petitions with 128 signatures were submitted to the county court May 17. The county elections department verified that 103 signatures were those of legal property owners and 109 of registered voters. State law requires such petitions must bear signatures of 25 per cent of the legal voters of the area or 100 signatures.

A water district to insure pure drinking water for the West Side area was deemed necessary following discovery by the Jackson county public health department that a number of wells in the Westwood subdivision were polluted by septic tanks.

It was decided during subsequent public meetings of area residents to form the district as the district's board of directors could seek federal funds for an engineering study for a possible water system for the area.

After the public hearing, any person affected may ask

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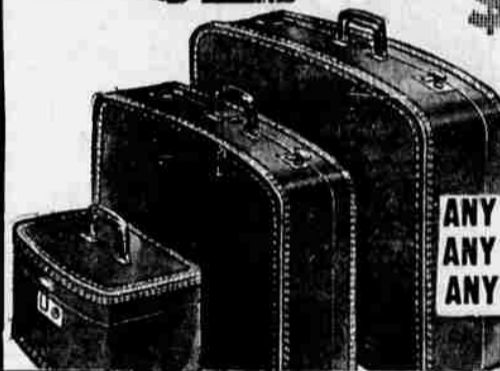
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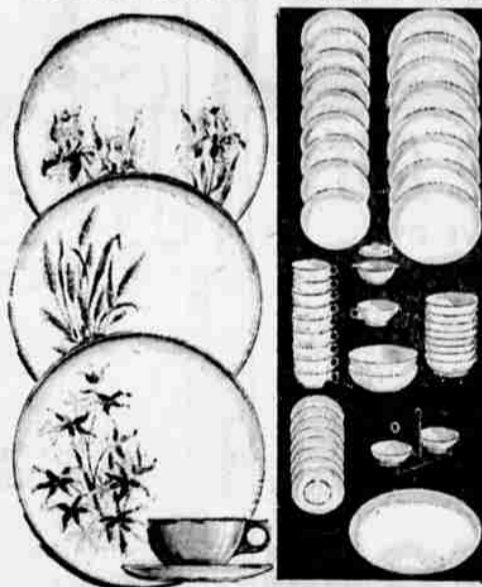
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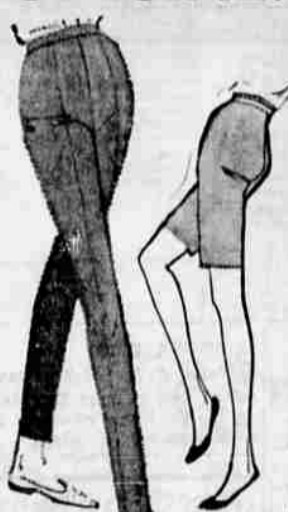
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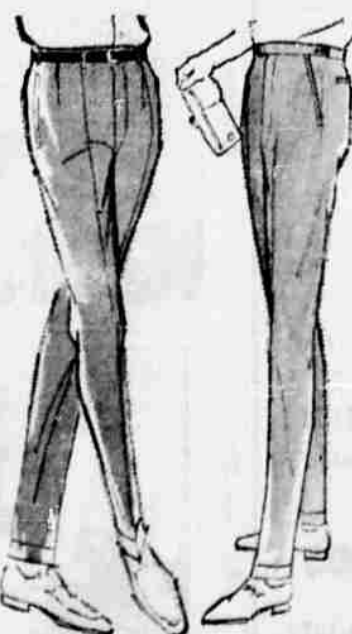
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