

2013

## STORIES FROM MEET THE PIONEERS

Living History Tours presented in Jacksonville Oregon's Pioneer Cemetery

### 2013 – Year Eight

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# MEET THE PIONEERS

## 2013



### Character

Mrs. Amanda Bilger  
Miss Mollie Britt  
Mrs. Mary Fisher  
George William Holt  
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Mrs. Elinore Kubli  
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Isadora McCully  
Jane Mason McCully

### Player

Peggy Peffley  
Maddy Schwartz  
Carolyn Kingsnorth  
Brian Nicholson  
Lynn Ransford  
Jim Davidian  
Shirley Harris  
David Sours  
Emma Abby  
Vivienne Grant

### Character

Jennie Merritt  
Prof. John Merritt  
Mrs. Louisa Muller  
Charley Nickell  
Mrs. William Pernoll  
Thomas Reames  
Mrs. Emeline Turner  
Edward Wilkinson

### Player

Constance Jesser  
Robert Hight  
Marcy McQuillan  
Gary Miller  
Anne Peugh  
Neal Anderson  
Shirley Blaul  
Seth Weintraub

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### **Mrs. Mary Fisher, and the winter of 1852**

Mary Smith Peninger Fisher was born on January 7, 1816, in Hampshire County, Virginia. In 1836 she married John Peninger in Lewis, Virginia. In 1842 John, Mary and their two children, son David and daughter Elizabeth, moved to Iowa. While living in Iowa the family would be joined by two more sons, John and Amos.

In 1852 the family joined a wagon train lead by oxen and crossed the plains arriving in Jacksonville, Oregon on October 20, 1852. They were fortunate to have not only escaped the numerous Indian attacks that were occurring at the time, but also to have arrived just before winter settled in, and what a winter it would be. Sadly, as often was the case, they left a small, lone, unmarked grave on the Plains.

The winter of 1852 was known to the Pioneers as the winter of Hardships, Privations, and Starvations. With gold being discovered in late 1851 to early 1852 thousands of miners arrived in the area along with those seeking free land through the Donation Land Act. Most arrived late in the year of 1851 and had little time to prepare proper living quarters or gather food and supplies for the fast-approaching winter. The snow fell early and hard with several feet of snow in Jacksonville and the surrounding area. The mountain passes had even a greater snowfall which was reportedly over ten feet. This made getting supplies into Jacksonville and other towns by pack trains nearly impossible. With the shelves in the shops near empty and with very few supplies arriving in the valley, prices increased drastically. Flour was going for more than a dollar a pound; salt was like gold and was difficult to find and purchase at any rate. Men took to hunting deer by chasing them down and using an axe to kill them. The heavy top layer of snow allowed them to walk or run on it, but the sharp feet of the deer cut through the snow causing them to struggle in making their escape.

The weather and exposure to it, along with a severe shortage of food caused miners and other settlers to become quite ill. Mary Peninger and other women of the town became the care givers and nursed the sick as best they could under the terrible circumstances. Using some dried herbs that Mary brought with her across the Plains, she used to make tea for the sick in the fever-stricken cabins and tents. By collecting empty flour sacks and soaking them the women were able to make gruel from the flour that was caked in the corners. Mary and the others would deliver a big cup of the welcomed gruel to those who were ill. She was happy when she was able to obtain a pinch of salt to season the gruel. The poor homeless boys would return thanks with many a prayerful blessing for their Ministering Angel as they called Mary. Mary not only cared for her family but all the other newcomers who were in such need of a helping hand.

Later, John and Mary settled on a 320-acre donation land claim in the Willow Springs area. In 1853 they welcomed a daughter, Sarah, to their family. During the Indian Wars in 1853 their property was burned. Sometime later a military reservation was established, and a fort built on their land which was known as Fort Lane. John opened a trading post on the property and operated it until his death in 1855.

The fear of Indians overshadowed their lives. For months and months, the Pioneers prayed to God for aid and protection putting their trust in Heavenly promises. The women and children would all gather together for protection of each other. Mrs. Peninger would try to be brave and say, "All I ask is to be killed outright and altogether, -- We are as near Heaven here as anywhere on Earth."

The year 1855, would be an extremely difficult one for Mary. On September 13, little Sarah died at the age of 1 year, 11 months and 21 days. Then a month later on October 15, son John died at the age of 11 years, 1 month and 16 days. Then sadly two days later on October 17, her husband John died at the age of 39 years, 11 months and 7 days. On February 13, 1856, just four months after John's death, a son, William Peninger was born to Mary.

On June 16, 1863, Mary was married to Daniel F. Fisher. It proved to be a good and happy union. In her final years Mary was surrounded with plenty. She was always ready to share, and no one ever went away from her door empty handed.

Mary died in June 1898, at the age of 82 years, 4 months, and 28 days. She outlived all but one of her children, son William H. Peninger. She was buried in the City Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery Block 217, Plot 2 and next to her first husband John Peninger.

Daniel Fisher died in 1899 and is buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 361, Plot 1.

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### **George William Holt and Madame Jeanne Holt**

At the time George and Jeanne were married on June 10, 1873, some considered it to be more of a business arrangement than love. He got to share the Madame's home and she got her new brick hotel. Whatever the reasons were, it appears that they had a happy marriage.

George was born in England in 1830 and arrived in Jacksonville some thirty years later. He set up shop and became a well-known brick layer. George made his own bricks using the nearby clay soil that lay along Jackson Creek. Putting up a "brick" as it was called at the time, was no small project. First the placement of a foundation had to take place. That meant quarrying and cutting stone, then hauling the big heavy pieces to the building site and laying each piece in its proper place. Then the bricks for the walls had to be made, this process was called "firing a kiln." A large building could require up to 100,000 bricks. George was responsible for building many of the brick buildings that replaced former wooden structures that were destroyed by fires. Many of his buildings still stand in Jacksonville today. He was either the contractor, or the brick maker, or the brick mason, or he did the foundation, or plastering - or sometimes he did all of those things!

Madame Jeanne DeRoboam was born in Bordeaux, France. She kept her birth date private as it could change depending on the circumstances. Reportedly she was no wall flower and was well known for her singing, sharing her stories and her exuberance for life. Jeanne arrived on the Jacksonville scene sometime in the late 1850's and operated the Franco-American Hotel and dining establishment. Both became very popular with residents, visitors and also served as a stage stop in early Jacksonville.

While her hotel was considered slightly notorious by some, all the best people stayed there, including George Holt, who would become her husband. George claimed it was love at first sight, but it took some time to get Jeanne's attention. However, once he heard about her dream of building a big fancy new hotel made of brick, all he had to do was tell her about his skills as a contractor and "brick man" and they were married within the year. Jeanne, who claimed to be drawn to George, also admitted her desire to build a first-class hotel and dining room to replace the old ramshackle collection of buildings on Oregon Street.

Two months before George and Jeanne were married on June 10, 1873, an old wooden structure on the corner of California and Third Streets burned to the ground. Approximately two years later the Holts had the opportunity to purchase the still-vacant property from the mortgage-holder, Cornelius Beekman, and began to plan building Madame Holt's dream hotel.

Preparations for building the hotel began in 1878. George cut and hauled a lot of stone to form the foundation and "fired" over 300,000 bricks for the hotel's walls. It took nearly a year to build the first floor, and then the second floor of the magnificent new building. While George finished plastering and with David Linn's help, the woodwork inside, Jeanne started planning the first celebrations that would use the new dining room and the grand ball room.

The first event to celebrate the opening of Madame Holt's new U.S. Hotel was a grand ball on July 4, 1880. It included a "grand supper" and music for dancing. Despite the fact that work on the hotel was not totally complete, the ball was declared a success.

A short time later the Holt's received word that U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife Lucy, along with Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman and other dignitaries were planning to spend a night in the new hotel. Well needless to say, work to complete the hotel and prepare rooms for the President and his party took on a feverish pace.

While the paint may have been still drying in some of the rooms, all was ready and in place for the President and his entourage when they arrived at the hotel on September 27, 1880. At dinner that evening the First Lady, also known as "Lemonade Lucy", turned her glass upside down to indicate she would not be drinking any alcohol. Cornelius Beekman served as Master of Ceremonies and introduced the President and his party to the citizens of Jacksonville who were in attendance. Despite a somewhat subdued response from the mostly Democrat audience to a Republican President, Mr. Beekman earned high praise from General Sherman for organizing the informal gathering. Madame Holt received high praise for the hospitality she provided to the President, First Lady and the presidential party.

However, the next morning the mood changed slightly when the bill was presented to the President's secretary who was stunned! Reportedly he paid the bill, but not without telling Jeanne: "My dear Madame, we wished only to stay the night, not to buy the hotel."

Madame Jeanne Holt passed away four years later on April 14, 1884, and is buried in the Catholic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block E8, Plot 5.

After Jeanne's passing George continued to work in Jacksonville building a new brick structure for merchant P.J. Ryan, then a large brick structure for the International Order of Red Men called the Red Men's Hall and another for merchant Mr. Kasper Kubli.

In 1887 George Holt left Jacksonville and headed south to the little town of Montague, California where he bought a brick yard and made his home.

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### **Professor John W. Merritt and Genevieve (Jennie) Elizabeth Merritt**

John was born on October 30, 1846, on a farm near Syracuse, New York of New England stock. He was educated in the public schools of Oswego, New York, and later attended and graduated from Syracuse Normal. John also attended and graduated from the University of Syracuse. His diploma gave him life-long permission to teach in the schools of the state of New York.

However, in August of 1875 he headed west to Oregon and became principal of the public school of Jacksonville. It is believed that he accepted a call from the Jackson County School Board and came west to Jacksonville under a contract. John served as a teacher-principal from 1875 to 1885 and demanded high standards of scholarship and behavior from his students. In a few years under his directorship District Number One became the top-ranking school in the state.

However, there were a couple of times when Professor Merritt's policies or decisions were criticized in the press. One was with the school's policy relating to discipline of students which John Merritt defended as being necessary and which was evidently supported by the parents of the attending students. Another time was when Professor Merritt reportedly failed to order the closure of the school, as a result of the death of a student, which was the practice at the time. He did so in two previous occasions, closing the school before the funerals so classmates of the dead child could attend the services. There remains a question as to why he failed to do so on this sad occasion. Perhaps he did not receive a directive from the school board and was reluctant to act without permission from the majority. Maybe the member of the board assigned to inform John of the board's decision failed to do so? John closed the school for the funeral of the young student, but bitter feelings lingered for some time.

On July 27, 1877, John married Mary Belle (Mollie) McCully, daughter of Dr. John Wilmer McCully and Jane Mason McCully. The McCully's were very early Pioneers to Jacksonville arriving in 1852. Their daughter Mollie was one of the first children to be born in Jacksonville on February 7, 1857. Reportedly John was very impressed with the excellent work of Miss Mary Belle McCully in her private school. Admiration soon turned to friendship, courtship and marriage. The future looked bright and full of promise for this happy young couple. Two sons would be born to their marriage, James Mason and George H. Merritt.

John, who had taken note of the number of merchants who had become quite wealthy, who had built imposing homes, and had made reputations as wise investors, decided to give retail selling a try. Merchandising appealed to John, and it would still allow him to continue with his teaching position. Reportedly his annual salary at the time was \$1,500 which the School Board considered astronomical.

In 1883, John and his close friend Dr. James W. Robinson entered into a partnership and purchased the City Drug Store. The pharmacy had little stock having been operated over the years by various doctors who concentrated on the sale of prescription drugs and patent medicines. Dr. Robinson and Mr. Merritt immediately added to the merchandise available and introduced a line of cosmetic preparations as well as an attractive collection of gift items.

John, a man far ahead of his time, realized the advantages to be gained from clever advertising. He started to slip into the local and personal column of the newspaper amusing enticements such as: "Oh, Maria, did you see those new dressing cases just brought on by Merritt and Robinson? Well, they're the prettiest and cutest cases you ever saw, and so cheap. (In the day *cheap* was a complimentary adjective.) I wish Pete would get to see them and buy me one". A page or two later would appear a second paragraph: "Pete did get to see those dressing cases at Merritt's and Robinson's, and he bought one for Maria who just loves it. Why don't you call and look them over?" This was a pretty advanced form of advertising for 1883. It also demonstrated that Professor Merritt possessed a pronounced sense of humor which had not been revealed previously.

On August 11, 1883, John and Mollie's infant son James Mason Merritt died at the age of 9 months and 12 days. Sadly, just five months later on January 17, 1884, Mollie suddenly and unexpectedly died at the age of 26 years, 11 months and 10 days.

Around this same time the State University in Eugene offered John a position as professor of elocution at a salary of \$2,000. He turned the offer down in part because of the recent death of Mollie and his responsibility to their young surviving son George. He was also concerned with having sufficient funds for George's higher education and his own retirement given the lack of an old age compensation plan at District Number One. While he was a gifted orator and much in demand, there was little or no financial compensation to be realized and while the praise he received was pleasant, it didn't pay the bills.

In May 1884, after his third contract year expired and with nine years of teaching behind him, John resigned. He did not seek a larger salary but decided to make a complete change in his career.

John's interest and plans for retail merchandising remained paramount and, that June, he announced the opening of his new store, Merritt's Cash Store. While the idea of customers being offered discounts for paying with cash was not original with John Merritt, it was however a new concept in Jacksonville and Southern Oregon. During the next few years, the Merritt Cash Store grew in sales and stock and carried nearly every kind of goods except for hardware. In 1886 John sold his half-interest in the City Drug Store to his partner, Dr. Robinson in order to devote his full time to the Cash Store.

With the final decision being made that the railroad line would not be going through Jacksonville, several merchants departed the town for more promising locations. John was perceptive to understand that things were going to change for Jacksonville and its residents. In 1887, despite several years of fair success, he moved his store to Central Point where almost immediately he began to realize unexpected returns. He was able to make a substantial investment and greatly increase his inventory. He then opened a second store, this one in Gold Hill and placed the management of the store in the capable hands of Robert Moore.

John became acquainted with Jennie Elizabeth Moore, Robert's sister, and they were married on December 10, 1891. A daughter, Esther Louise was born to them in 1893.

Jennie, who was born in 1868 in Missouri, came to Jacksonville, Oregon with her parents arriving in 1875, the same year that John Merritt had arrived. An interesting note is that both John and Jennie entered School District One at the same time, he as principal, she as a student in the primary classes.

Jennie graduated from high school and taught school in Sams Valley. She was very involved with the Presbyterian Church of Medford, a well-known leader of the Merritt Circle, and a member of the Nevita Chapter, Order of Eastern Star of Central Point.

In addition to his stores John was also extensively engaged in sheep-raising on six thousand acres of land between the years 1893 and 1903. He had wisely invested in country lands and owned five farms with some five hundred acres raising grain, fruits, hay and general produce. John was also the treasurer of the Pearl Mining Company, incorporated with a capital stock of \$100,000.

John Merritt's political life was focused on the principles of the Republican Party. He was elected to the state legislature in 1890 and served on the committees of commerce and engrossing and served in those same capacities when he was re-elected in 1892. John also served on the City Council of Central Point for twelve years.

John W. Merritt died on June 15, 1921, and Jennie Elizabeth Moore Merritt died on October 17, 1936. Both are buried in the Masonic Section of Jacksonville's Cemetery in Block 265, Plots 10 and 11.

Mollie McCully Merritt is also buried in the Masonic Section of the cemetery in Block 445, Plot 2 and, next to her, is her and John's son, James Mason, in Plot 1.

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### **Jane Mason McCully and daughter Isadora (Issie) McCully**

Jane Mason was born in Alloway, Scotland in 1824. At the age of eleven she came with her family to America, first settling in New York, then Indiana and finally Iowa.

It was in Iowa that she met John Wilmer McCully. Jane, who had a good education, was teaching school. John had completed medical school and was in practice with one of the local doctors. Jane would say that perhaps it was a matter of opposites attracting, and in June 1848 they were married.

After gold was discovered on the west coast, they became caught up in the romance of the west from all the stories they heard. It wasn't too long before they joined a wagon train bound for Oregon and arrived in Salem in the fall of 1851. When gold was discovered in Rich Gulch that winter, they joined the exodus of miners heading south.

Table Rock City, as it was known at the time, was nothing more than tents, a few shacks, a trading post and dozens of saloons. Jane was reportedly the second respectable woman to arrive in town. Dr. John McCully hung out his shingle announcing his practice, but there was little demand for a doctor. With no call for a teacher and needing an income, Jane took to baking. She baked breads, cakes and pies and sold them for a dollar each. They were well received by all the miners in town and soon Jane had a nice little business going.

The next few years saw an influx of settlers and Dr. McCully's services were finally in demand and his practice grew. The McCully's began to prosper along with the new town of Jacksonville. John and Jane's first child, a son, named James Cluggage McCully was born on August 27, 1853. Reportedly he was the first white male born in Jacksonville and was named after one of the town founders.

Around 1855, John began investing in real estate. He purchased land in Jacksonville and then became a part owner of a saloon and a dairy. John borrowed money against the land in order to build, what was at the time, the costliest structure built in Jacksonville. It was a large two-story brick building on the corner of Main and South Oregon Streets which today houses the Odd Fellows Hall.

The building was completed in 1857, the same year John was elected to the Territorial Legislature from Jackson County. John and Jane's second child, Mary Belle (Mollie) McCully was born on February 7, 1857. John now considered himself a man of stature and decided that the family needed a handsome new house to reflect their newfound status. Despite being deeply in debt, a fact that Jane was unaware of, work began on the McCully House, the most elegant home in Jacksonville at the time.

The McCully's third child, Isadora (Issie) was born on December 16, 1859, just before the new home was completed. The family moved into their new home, but John was way in over his head. John's creditors were unforgiving and began to demand payment.

Now faced with being ruined financially, the loss of his land, business interests, home and most important his reputation, John boarded a morning stage and left his family and Jacksonville behind.

Jane now faced an uncertain future with three young children to raise, creditors to deal with and almost \$8,000 in debts.

John McCully was never seen in Jacksonville again and Jane told her children never to mention his name in her presence.

### **Isadora (Issie) McCully**

Isadora, or Issie as she was known by her family and friends, never knew her father, as he skipped town when she was only a few months old. Her mother was the only parent she ever knew, and she looked upon her as a teacher as well.

After her father, Dr. John McCully, abandoned his family it was up to Issie's mother Jane to somehow support the family and keep them together. Issie explained that with her mother's education and teaching background she wanted to open a school, but it would take time to get books and supplies. So, Jane went back to baking for the miners and other local residents of Jacksonville. She also rented out the downstairs rooms of their beautiful new home to be used as a boarding house.

Then in 1862 the McCully's old cabin became the first classroom, and every desk was occupied with a student. At the end of that first year, and with sufficient parents wanting their children to attend, Jane moved classes into the main house. Jane was a great believer in education for all and many of her students went on to university, ranking at the top of their classes!

Issie attended and graduated from Willamette University, as did her brother James and sister Molly. Issie, who was a good student, had no particular calling. While at the university she missed home and her circle of friends in Jacksonville and was grateful to be able to return after finishing school.

Reportedly, there was a young man in her life at one point, even with thoughts of marriage, but with no future for the young couple, the relationship ended. There were rumors about the why and ifs, but they were just that, rumors. Sadly, Issie's only solace at that time was cooking and eating.

In 1884 Issie's sister, Molly Merritt, unexpectedly died leaving a young son George to be cared for. The boy's father, Professor John Merritt, was mourning the loss of his young wife, and the family all agreed that perhaps the motherless little boy could be better raised by his aunt.

Issie adored George and even left Jacksonville and moved to Eugene to provide a home for him during the six years that he attended the University of Oregon. After that, Issie returned to Jacksonville while George went to Boston. There was an unfortunate and brief marriage to Grace Wick, a vivacious actress and feminine activist.

When Issie passed in 1945, she was still living in the McCully House, surrounded by her family treasures and memories, and with her nephew George at her side.

Issie was very much like her mother Jane, strong, determined, well-educated and a survivor.

Jane Mason McCully and her daughter, Isadora (Issie) McCully, are both buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 445, Plots 4 and 5.

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### **Assassination of President Garfield**

On July 2, 1881, the citizens of Jacksonville, Oregon received the shocking news that the nation's new President, James A. Garfield, had been shot! William Turner, editor of the Oregon Sentinel and his pressman were in the process of printing the regular weekly edition of the newspaper when the clicking of the telegraph delivered the awful news.

The town's big July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration was only two days away and with all the preparations in place, William immediately got word to Charley Nickell, the event's "President of the Day." The Fourth of July, the Glorious Fourth, was an important day of celebration which even surpassed the Christmas and New Year's activities. A full day of activities were planned out starting with a parade, noonday picnic, band concert, speeches, games, dancing and ending with fireworks.

Charley Nickell, who was responsible for Jacksonville's 4<sup>th</sup> of July shindig, was at a loss on how to proceed given the serious condition of the President and sought some good advice from Henry Klippel, the Parade Marshall. The initial shock and concern that the residents of Jacksonville had for the President, soon turned to real anger for the assassin Charles Guiteau, many calling for him to be hanged.

With news coming across the wire that still wasn't too reassuring as to President Garfield's condition and town folk asking if the celebrations would be cancelled, a special meeting of the City Trustees was called for on Sunday afternoon, July 3. While the news from Washington on the President's condition was a bit more encouraging that afternoon, it was decided that the planned July 4<sup>th</sup> events should go on; however, the City Trustees requested that Mr. Nickell and Mr. Klippel eliminate the more frivolous parts of the day's activities and rather focus on the patriotic aspects.

The committee carried out the wishes of the City Trustees and Jacksonville's 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration of 1881, came off with precision and the best of order. The day began before sunrise with the ringing of church bells and the firing of giant firecrackers. At half past nine, a large but subdued crowd gathered to watch the parade. As there was no time for the members of the band to learn more somber music, they led the parade playing the familiar, spirited marching tunes. The parade wound its way through the streets of Jacksonville and eventually gathered in the Court House yard where benches and temporary platforms had been set up.

Chaplain Moses A. Williams offered an introductory prayer and was followed by Benjamin Beekman who read the entire Declaration of Independence before introducing the Orator of the Day, Judge E. B. Watson. It was during Judge Watson's speech that word was received of President Garfield's worsening condition. One could sense the feeling of doom and dread in the Judge and in the crowd. At the conclusion of the program, a makeshift choir sounded good on a solemn anthem with Miss Carrie Beekman making her portable organ sound like a heavenly instrument.

The formal service was followed by the “great feast” provided by the Dinner Committee and then an afternoon of games. But the participants were less than enthusiastic, mostly gathering in groups to discuss the tragedy. By late afternoon Bybee Park was deserted.

Around supper time the people’s spirits began to rise, after all, some said, the 4<sup>th</sup> was a once-a-year- holiday, and when it was gone, it was gone forever. So, the citizens freshened up, donned their pioneer spirit with their Sunday best and went to Madame Holt’s grand ball at her U.S. Hotel. It was a brilliant success, and the day - which had threatened to fizzle like a wet firecracker – ended with a bang.

Like the day itself, President Garfield’s condition had its ups and downs over the next two and a half months. One day, the reports had him rallying, and the next, the news was grim. In time the event of his attempted assassination was no longer the principal topic of conversation in Jacksonville. Life had to continue. Charley Nickell even hinted that he might be making a romantic announcement in the near future involving Miss Ella Prim.

Mrs. Emeline Turner, wife of William Turner, editor of the Oregon Sentinel, said that despite her husband’s best efforts to convey the latest news on the ups and downs of the President’s condition, readers were left wondering what to believe.

Finally, on September 19, 1881, at 10:30 p.m. the President cried out in pain and, in a few minutes time, died.

Editor Turner put his newspaper into mourning with columns separated by heavy black lines, and all humor in the stories was winnowed out. He even eliminated the editorials attacking the opposite political party for two or three issues – because the death of the President was everyone’s tragedy.

Jacksonville showed some respect. Schools and every business were closed, and the bells of the three Jacksonville Churches tolled for an hour.

Over 3,000 people turned out on September 26th for a memorial service that retraced the steps of the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and participated in a tribute to their late President. The people of Southern Oregon felt they could have done no less, and certainly they could have done no more, to show their respect and genuine sorrow.

Rest in peace.

Amen

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## **Jacksonville's Baseball Team**

Like so many other small towns in the late 1800's and early 1900's, Jacksonville residents loved the game of baseball and their local team the Jacksonville Gold Bricks. Huge crowds would gather to watch the games, along with some serious betting. Local teams would play against one another with each community attending the games and supporting their team in spirit and with bets. Early games were played out at Bybee's Grove, William Bybee's homestead out on Old Stage Road. Then a new field, the Neuber-Taylor field was built on 5<sup>th</sup> Street across from the old Dowell place and where Ray's Market now stands. The new field was constructed with an eight-foot-high fence surrounding it as a way to discourage any spectators without tickets from watching the game, and to make sure that those long balls stayed away from town.

The Jacksonville Gold Bricks were a major attraction at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade marching along in their blue and gold uniforms and drawing wild cheering, whistling, and applause from the crowd as they passed along the parade route. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations always included a parade, ceremonies at the courthouse, then a noon picnic which was followed by the big baseball game at 2:00 p.m. The day concluded with fireworks.

On one game in particular, back in late July of 1904, between Mr. Court Hall's Medford team and George "Bum" Neuber's Jacksonville team, thousands of dollars were bet. Reportedly both Hall and Neuber were both mighty sly about the true abilities of their teams, playing down their own teams so as to encourage more betting. Neuber even challenged Hall for \$1,000 which Hall quickly accepted. Out in the crowd, there were bettors with sacks of twenty-dollar gold pieces placing bets on one team or the other. Some say that more than twenty thousand dollars was won on that one game, which by the way, Medford won. Mr. Hall announced he made \$4,000 on the game. Many felt the heavy betting soured the game.

One of the biggest games to be played in Southern Oregon was on November 17, 1913, when the New York Giants, champions of the National League, and the Chicago White Sox of the Association, played their only exhibition game in Oregon in Medford. Special trains were run by Southern Pacific from Redding and Northern California and Roseburg. The Rogue River Valley Railroad even ran extra trains between Jacksonville and Medford to accommodate those wanting to attend the game. Crowds gathered early at the train depot hoping to get a seat and not be late for the game.

Among those in the crowd waiting for the train was Mr. Edward Wilkinson, Mr. Fletcher Linn and Mrs. William Pernoll who shared stories while passing time. Mrs. Pernoll reminded them of the time the Boston Bloomer Girls team came west and played in Medford and Ashland. The games attracted quite a crowd at both games. The ladies left town on their Pullman Palace train car, \$96 dollars richer and still claiming to be the Champion Baseball Ladies of the world! Mr. Wilkinson had the crowd laughing with his story of a game he attended in Yreka, California with the longest home run? The ball not only went out of the park but clean out of town. Everyone laughed and said that couldn't be possible, but Mr. Wilkinson said he saw it with his own eyes and went on to explain. Al Connelly, center fielder, was up to bat, and he hit the ball long and hard, heading right for the railroad tracks just as a freight train was pulling through the yard. That ball went through the open door on one of the boxcars and went all the way to San Francisco!

A number of players from Southern Oregon went on to play professional ball, such as Eddie "Midget" Mensor, with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Ken Williams, with the St. Louis Browns, Benjamin "Biddy" Dowell, with Portland, Mrs. Pernoll's son Henry "Jud" Pernoll, with the Detroit Tigers and Mr. Wilkinson's son Edward "Eddie" Wilkinson, with the New York Yankees.

Just in case you are wondering how that Exhibition Game between the New York Giants and Chicago White Sox turned out, the Giants won the game 3 - 0. The game was called after the fifth inning due to a steady driving rain. Both teams departed Medford that evening on the Portland bound train, then on to Victoria, British Columbia where they boarded a ship for Japan and another exhibition game.

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## **Gala at the New County Courthouse**

In December of 1883, Jacksonville celebrated its "mostly completed" new County Courthouse with a Christmas Ball. The prominent families of Jacksonville put on a magnificent Ball, a benefit for the builder, Mr. L. P. Marsh, who saved the taxpayers over \$2,000 in construction costs. The Ball was held in the new second floor courtroom which was turned into a wonderland of evergreen branches festooned with colorful ribbons and tinsel. Gentlemen in their finery and ladies in their silken dresses danced and enjoyed an eighty-eight-course supper at midnight.

Let's join Mesdames Muller, Kubli, Bilger and Miss Mollie Britt at the beautifully decorated punch bowl table as they talk about the festive Ball and all of Jacksonville's society in attendance.

Mrs. Louisa Muller is so excited that the Invitation Committee managed to fill the ballroom with guests. Her husband, Max Muller, who was a member of the committee, told her that every important person in Jacksonville bought a ticket for this evening's festivities.

Mrs. Elinore Kubli added that while tickets to the Ball cost \$3, a bit high, supper was included. She was on the Soliciting Committee which raised money from the businesses in Jacksonville that covered the cost of using the ballroom, the orchestra and the grand decorations.

The midnight supper, some eighty-eight courses included roast turkey, with oysters from the coast that were used in the dressing, smoked venison, ham, beef and rabbit. Mrs. Amanda Bilger, who worked on the Supper Committee, added that a pig was also roasted. There were mashed potatoes, turnips, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, French and Spanish pickles, sweet-pickled grapes and beets. Mrs. Bilger went on and on about all the wonderful desserts, Christmas plum pudding, cheesecakes, peach pie, lady fingers, almond and hickory nut macaroons, mince pies with pecan butter sauce, apple fritters, pecan pie and more!

Miss Mollie Britt, who was on the Decorating Committee, described what fun it was turning the ballroom into a wonderland with evergreens, ribbon and tinsel. Mollie added that Jacksonville is so fortunate to have this wonderful new building with a beautiful and large ballroom, the largest in the county, that allowed over two-hundred people to dance at one time. I understand that Mr. Marsh was heartbroken that the magnificent winding staircase at the front entrance was not finished in time for the Ball. They are his particular pride, and he claims that they will be a masterpiece and a perfect piece of cabinet work in the Valley. Guests did not mind using the temporary steps that the carpenters put in place or that some of the rooms were unpainted.

They all agreed that Mr. Marsh did an exceptional job in building the new Courthouse and that he even came in under budget. Reportedly it was the cheapest building of its size ever erected in Oregon. Some \$6,500 was spent on the foundation alone with the stone coming from Kanaka Flats. It took a total of 150,000 bricks and 70,000 shingles to complete the building.

The old courthouse looked like a barn, and not even a very good looking one at that added Mrs. Muller. Even the Grand Jury condemned the old building as being insufficient, and the city couldn't get insurance because of problems with the staircase. Mrs. Kubli said that Dr. Robinson stated that the few rooms set aside as hospital rooms in the old courthouse were unfit for patients. It was a ramshackle eyesore and a disgrace that only cost \$116 to tear down and now in its place is this magnificent building.

Well, Mrs. Muller added, those folks in Ashland sure didn't want us to build it. They thought that they and the City of Ashland deserved to be the County Seat since their population wasn't as rowdy as ours in Jacksonville. But the commissioners ignored them - they turned stone deaf to their pleas.

The ladies reminisced about the laying of the cornerstone, only six months prior, and some of the items residents offered to be put in the metal casket that was placed there. Miss Mollie Britt noted that \$20 in Confederate money, along with two shillings and an antique Roman coin were included. She also pointed out that Dr. Will Jackson, the local dentist, donated a set of upper false teeth. Mrs. Bilger said let's not forget the quart of whiskey, courtesy of Mr. Herman Helms and a picture of all the presidents from Washington to Grant. There was a copy of the local newspaper, a baggage check for the train from Vicksburg to Canton and a memorial medal of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The ladies agreed that folks all wanted to contribute something and just put in doodads that they happened to have in their pockets or bags.

Mrs. Kubli announced that it was most fortunate that the floor managers were not kept busy this evening dealing with any "ill-bred hooligans" crashing the party or anyone behaving rudely especially around the punch bowl!

All agreed that the music was wonderful and that local musician and the town's star baseball player, Pat Donegan, did a superb job in hiring the orchestra. Pat was a very popular pianist as well as a ball player.

Miss Britt announced that she was off to find her escort and have some supper. She was quite anxious to try the chiffon cake which her father, Mr. Peter Britt, warned her that she would need to hold down with a finger as it was so light it might float up to the top of the twenty-foot ceiling. This resulted in much laughter among the group around the punch bowl.

Still laughing, Mrs. Bilger said she was ready to dance to the music of this wonderful orchestra and was going to join Mr. Bilger. Mrs. Muller departed to join her husband who was across the room talking with Judge Hanna and Mr. Nunan.

In April 1884, four months following the "never to be forgotten" Christmas Ball, the lowest blow of all hit Jacksonville when the railroad was completed through Medford and not Jacksonville. The beautiful new courthouse did continue to serve as the Jackson County Courthouse for over forty years. But over these years, businesses and even schools left Jacksonville for Medford, which became the biggest and most important city in Southern Oregon and in 1927, the county seat. It was soon to become clear to the esteemed citizens of Jacksonville, most of whom attended the Christmas Ball, that the dominance of Jacksonville as one of the most successful and wealthy cities in Oregon was ending.

Today, the old County Courthouse serves as Jacksonville's City Hall. It has been beautifully restored and continues to be a place of great pride for the city and its residents.

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