

2015

STORIES FROM MEET THE PIONEERS

Living History Tours presented in Jacksonville Oregon's Pioneer Cemetery

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MEET THE PIONEERS 2015



Character

Jeb Brown
 Judge Silas Day
 Alice Hanley
 Claire Hanley
 Bette Noble Hoskins
 Loretta Jane Langell
 Nathaniel Langell
 Col. Ruben Maury
 Miss Effie
 Miss Lillian

Player

Steve Casaleggio
 David Rowley
 Vivienne Grant
 Lara Strazdas
 Marcy McQuillan
 Anne Peugh
 Neal Anderson
 Robert Hight
 Ann Wilton
 Constance Jesser

Character

George Neuber
 Charlie Nickell
 Grace Noble
 Buster Posey
 Judge Paine Prim
 Harry Offenbacher
 Maybelle Offenbacher
 Flora Savage
 Sgt. Hobart Taylor
 Mrs. Vogel

Player

Robert Roos
 Gary Miller
 Carolyn Kingsnorth
 David Sours
 Jim Davidian
 Steve Carlson
 Mary Ann Carlson
 Lynn Ransford
 Seth Weintraub
 Cerise Stephens

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White Collar Crime - The Collapse of the Bank of Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Oregon back in the 1920's was a small town surrounded by farms and ranches that were owned and operated by honest and hardworking people. Most farmers needed to borrow money to get their crops in the ground, then after harvest time they would pay back the loans and with some luck, have a little money left over for them and their families.

One of those farmers was Harry "Ray" Offenbacher and his wife Maybelle Offenbacher who found themselves, along with many others, in a terrible and troubling situation back in the summer of 1920.

Ray had gone to town with a team of horses to deliver a load of grain that he sold and stopped by the Bank of Jacksonville where he planned to deposit the \$30 he just received for the grain sale. On arriving at the bank, Ray could not find a place to tie up the horses, something that he had never experienced before. He stood by holding on to the horses but since there was so much activity at the bank, he decided to go home and get another load of grain and then stop by the bank. Ray would learn later on that what he witnessed earlier that day was a run on the bank by depositors, explaining the rather large number of people.

The \$30 that Ray was trying to deposit and by fate was unable to, turned out to be all that Ray and Maybelle had to their name, and with a baby due in less than a month. Over time they had managed to accumulate some \$800 all of which was deposited in the Bank of Jacksonville.

Folks around town had trust in banks as after all they had been dealing with Mr. Beekman and his bank for years. Mr. Beekman was getting on in years and wasn't doing much banking. In fact, he closed his bank in August 1912. The Bank of Jacksonville opened its doors in the fall of 1910, on California Street. Folks were happy to have a bank of their own in town.

A similar level of trust was shown toward the Bank's President and Cashier, William H. Johnson, who was a community leader and thought of as a man of integrity. He was a deacon and leader of the Presbyterian Church, a husband and father. Some said that the loss of money was one thing, but the betrayal of trust was just as bad.

What happened was that Johnson and his half-brother Rowell D. Hines, the bank's Vice-President, conspired with some folks to overdraw their accounts. Those wanting to expand their businesses but lacking the funds to do so were allowed by Johnson and Hines to write bad checks, which the bankers then hid that from the State Banking Board. Two sets of books were being kept.

Things came to the surface when customers came along wanting to withdraw some of their money, and there were not sufficient funds to give to them. Reportedly at the same time Johnson and Hines were paying themselves handsome salaries.

All the businesses in Jacksonville were hard hit, and many of its citizens had their lifetime savings deposited with the bank. There was scarcely anyone who had not been seriously affected. On August 11, 1920, the state bank examiner locked the doors of the Bank of Jacksonville.

Johnson was indicted on 30 counts, including misstatement of the bank's condition, receiving monies in a known insolvent banking institution, false certification of checks, and making false statements to a bank examiner. Hines was indicted on 7 counts and charged with the same crimes. Both were sentenced to ten years in the state penitentiary in Salem.

The prosecuting attorney, E.E. Kelley called it "The most colossal bank failure in the history of banking."

Soon, dozens of prominent citizens were arrested and charged with "aiding and abetting a bank cashier to defraud a bank." C. H. Owen, who was working with Johnson, used bank money to invest in real estate, and his own personal bank account was overdrawn by \$60,000 when the bank's doors were shut. Chester Kubli, with Johnson's help, used \$16,000 of the bank's money to finance a cattle business. Kubli's own account was overdrawn by \$42,000 when the bank closed its doors. Both Owen and Kubli were convicted and sent to the state penitentiary.

One of the banks largest depositors was Jackson County which lost \$107,000 in the scheme. Jackson County Treasurer, Myrtle Blakely, was arrested and charged with "aiding and abetting a bank cashier to make a false entry in a bankbook" and "malfeasance of office." Her first trial ended in a hung jury as did the second and final trial.

Finally in 1930, the state bank examiner completed the investigation and was able to liquidate the bank's assets as of the date of closure. Most of the banks' customers, like Ray and Maybelle Offenbacher lost their entire life savings. After waiting ten years, most received a mere seventeen cents on the dollar.

Harry Ray Offenbacher died on February 26, 1978, at the age of 86.

Maybelle Daniels Offenbacher died on December 25, 1987.

Both are buried in the IOOF Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 340, Plots 9 and 10.

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The Story of Grace Moody Hamaker Noble

Grace's story, while filled with much sadness, is also about a strong, resourceful and determined woman with the will to survive and to raise and protect her family.

Grace was born on April 22, 1894, in Virginia City, Washington to a teenage mother, who handed her off to a passing stranger who had stopped to admire how pretty Grace was. If you want her, you can have her, and just gave her child away. Upon returning home, her father, Walter Moody found an empty house and his wife and child missing. He later found Grace living with the Colville Indians who had traded forty mules for her. They promptly returned Grace to her father as he was considered a friend by the tribe for helping them during a smallpox epidemic earlier on. Her father found her to be dirtier than any white child should ever be, but no worse for wear.

Walter's mother, Grandma Keeler, soon arrived and took Grace back to Auburn, California and raised her while showing more affection than Grace had ever known or experienced before.

After Grace graduated from high school in 1911, she attended a business college in Sacramento and became an expert in shorthand and secretarial skills. She returned to Auburn to be with her grandmother and friends and became a court reporter. After a while the Judge determined that the rough characters and raunchy language of the courtroom were too purple for such a proper and innocent young lady, and she was abruptly discharged.

Grace married John Hamaker on November 8, 1914, making their home in a spacious two-story home in Newcastle, about eight miles from Auburn. Their first child, Evelyn Virginia, was born in 1915. A daughter, Bette Francis, followed in 1917, a son Jesse Vernon in 1919, and their last child, John Robert, was born in 1921. Life was good and the family and farm thrived.

Then in 1927, daughter Bette, who was ten years old, was stricken with polio which affected her lungs. Grace, with instructions from the doctor, soon took on the task of massaging Bette's chest to pump air into her lungs to keep her alive. The ordeal went on for weeks and months before Bette's condition was pronounced to be out of danger.

John and Grace, like so many others, lost their home and farmland during the depression, which brought them to Jacksonville, Oregon. It was a cold winter in December 1932 when they moved into a house that had no indoor plumbing. Grace asked the family members if they wanted presents under the Christmas tree or new plumbing. All members voted for new indoor plumbing.

John opened Hamaker's Market in the old P. J. Ryan brick building, which is currently the Jacksonville Inn's wine store. Grace helped in the store when she could and also added notions, sewing supplies and household gadgets to the shelves. Things were going well until John's health got to the point where he had to finally close the store. John passed away in 1942 at the age of fifty.

With mounting bills to be paid Grace took a job at the newly opened Camp White in White City. She became like a mother to many of the young service boys who were so far from home and not knowing what their future would be.

Grace was offered the job of manager, cook, dishwasher and scrubber-upper at the Jacksonville Club on the corner of Third and California Street and gratefully accepted the job. Grace brought along a lot of customers as well. Many of the boys from Camp White would make their way to Jacksonville and the club when they had leave to see Grace and enjoy draft beer and the food she prepared. She called them her "Campwhiters."

While Grace loved her boys, the work was hard, so when she was offered a job at the Post Office, she happily accepted the position.

Around this time Grace, who was lonely following John's passing, began to see Jim Noble who came calling with his pure-blooded Irish charm. She knew he drank, but all the Irish did. What she didn't know was that he had no intention of working. They were married on April 14, 1943, and she became Grace Noble.

Grace was delighted when her daughter Bette found love and married Carl Hoskins on December 12, 1945.

In 1947, she gave up her position at the Post Office to become the caretaker of the newly formed Jacksonville Museum located in the U.S. Hotel. Years later when the museum was finally moved into the Old County Courthouse, Grace was not even considered for the job.

When her longtime friend, and former boss at the Jacksonville Club, died he left Grace the tavern building and its contents. Grace sold the tavern in order not to have to struggle and have more time to volunteer and work with the garden club.

John Bates Hamaker died on May 23, 1942, at the age of 50.

James Blaine Noble died on February 20, 1976, at the age of 85.

Grace Virginia Noble died on March 11, 1977, at the age of 83.

All are buried in the IOOF Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 524.

Bette Frances Hamaker Hoskins died on November 11, 1971, at the age of 54 and is buried in the IOOF section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 81.

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Memories of Southern Oregon's Civil War

2015 marked the 150th Anniversary of the end of our Nation's Civil War. This presentation was to remember and honor all those who served, both Confederate and Union.

Some people are not aware of the impact that the Civil War had on Oregon and its population despite it being so distant from the battlefields. Those pioneers who traveled so far to come west seeking a new life came from all over the United States, including those states that now made up the Confederate and Union States. Most still had families, fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins and others that were now caught up in the fighting back east and still had some allegiance to those and the states they left behind.

While some residents of Southern Oregon went off and joined the armies fighting back east, the majority stayed in Oregon and joined local regiments. People remained very involved and were eager to keep up on the news of the war coming from back east. The war not only divided our nation, but here in Southern Oregon, it divided families, neighbors and towns.

Colonel Ruben Fry Maury was appointed by President Lincoln to be commander of the first regiment raised in Oregon. He opened a recruitment station in Jacksonville in the fall of 1861. It started with eighty men, mainly from Jackson County, and they were called the Baker Guards. One of those early recruits was David Hobart Taylor who enlisted in December of 1861 and was stationed to Camp Baker which was located near Jacksonville in Phoenix, Oregon.

Camp Baker was named for Colonel Edward Baker, an Oregon Senator and close friend of President Lincoln. So close was the friendship that Lincoln named his second son, Edward Baker Lincoln. Tragically, Baker was shot dead by a rebel sharpshooter only six months into the war. These sharpshooters were feared, and it was said they could shoot a button off a shirt at 200 yards. They took a huge toll on the officer ranks, their prize targets.

The accommodations at Camp Baker left much to be desired. The barracks were constructed in a hurry so the troops could move into them in November of 1861. It was an especially cold and wet and bitter winter. Sergeant Taylor's first entry in his journal on January 1, 1862, read; *"officers very pleasant, but the soldiers slightly inebriated...slept some and froze the balance of the night"...*

While the weather made it unpleasant for all, there were other challenges for the officer's including desertion. Soldiers, who were sent out to protect the settlers and miners from what Indians remained off the reservations, were sneaking off to try their luck in the gold fields. A Private's pay of \$31 dollars a month looked pretty poor when they saw miners raking in gold nuggets worth hundreds of dollars.

At the time, punishment for desertion was anything from having your head shaved to six months of hard labor chained to a twelve-pound ball or worse. In the case of Private Francis Ely, with the First Oregon Cavalry, who was caught on his government issued mount on the road to the gold fields, he was charged and convicted of desertion and being a horse thief,

and was sentenced to be executed. On the day of his execution, his Captain was so certain that a reprieve would be granted, he posted sentries along the road so that any arriving courier could be rushed to the camp. When no message was received by the appointed 2:00 p.m. execution time on March 6, 1864, Private Ely, seated on his coffin on the back of a wagon, was taken out of town and stood before a high wooden fence with his head covered with a black hood while a firing squad blasted four musket balls into his chest. Private Ely was the only soldier on the Pacific Coast to have been put to death by the military during the Civil War.

Many people wondered why there was a need for a military presence in Oregon with all the Civil War battles taking place clear across the country. However, the conflict was felt everywhere. Sides were taken and strong emotions often got the best of people. Even when Oregon came into the Union as a free state, laws were passed to keep negroes outside its borders. It was no secret that Ashland had many people who sided with the Union, while Jacksonville was full of Southern sympathizers.

An incident involving a Confederate flag being raised on the main street in Jacksonville was cause for a bit of commotion. When Aunt Zany Ganung, wife of Doctor Lewis Ganung, saw the flag flying on a pole across from her home, she took an axe to the pole and, in no time at all, she had that flag pole down. A short time later smoke could be seen coming from the chimney of Zany's home and leaving no doubt in anyone's mind as to what happened to the flag.

The anti-government sentiment got so strong that secret societies sprang up all over the country to defeat and intimidate any pro-union or anti-slavery forces. One such group called the Knights of the Golden Circle was thought to have about 2,500 members in Oregon alone. The group wanted Southern Oregon and Northern California to secede from the Union and form their own country which they planned on calling the Pacific Coast Republic.

One important incident occurred in 1862, when the group tried to ship weapons from British Columbia to Jacksonville. They were meant for a group of pro-Confederates in Jacksonville who planned to join up with a larger force in San Francisco. The whole scheme fell apart thanks to the freight-line workers who got suspicious of the large, heavy box that was labeled "Books for Jacksonville." The workers must have figured out there weren't enough literate people in Jacksonville for all those books. A plan was made to drop the box at the next shipping point so the box would break open. This was done and indeed over one hundred rifles were found instead of books. Arrangements were made for the disposal of the rifles to keep them out of the hands of the 100 Confederate soldiers that had been formed in Jacksonville as the Knights of the Golden Circle.

The Civil War droned on for four bloody years. The Union Army finally prevailed, ending the war and stopping the worst carnage the country has ever seen. In only one day, during the Battle of Antietam, there were over 23,000 casualties and the total number for the entire war is now thought to be 750,000. More than all the wars we have ever fought combined!

It was a terrible price to pay, for sure, but the Union was preserved, and three new Amendments gave the negroes freedom, liberty and justice, at least on paper. Many of those secret societies died away after the war, but some came back with a vengeance, like the Ku Klux Klan who claimed they represented the ghosts of dead Confederate soldiers coming back to keep the Negroes in their place. In 1877 all Federal troops were withdrawn from the South. Then violence, lynching, and Jim Crow laws kept much of the discrimination in place.

These soldiers did all they could do in their time to help this country live up to the spirit of our constitution that said all men are created equal. Now it is up to those who follow to carry on this task so that as President Lincoln said, *"This nation of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."*

Colonel Ruben Fry Maury died on February 20, 1906, at the age of 84 and is buried in Block 198 in the City Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery.

Sergeant David Hobart Taylor died on October 3, 1882, at the age of 51 and is buried in Block 382 in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery.

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The Savage Children

During an inventory project of the cemetery grounds in 2006, volunteers discovered four small headstones, as well as four footstones, piled on top of one another and buried in the ground near a large tree. Fortunately, only one of the headstones was broken. It was repaired and along with the other three, all were placed back in the cemetery blocks where they belonged according to cemetery records. The stones appear to have been crafted and placed around the same time, although the children died eight years apart.

Why these stones were buried in the ground is unknown, but their discovery did lead us to questions as to who were these children, what did they die from, and what happened to their family. Sadly, we were not able to answer too many of the questions that we and others had but can share what we learned.

Charles Woodbury Savage and his second wife Louisiana Hull Savage, moved to Jacksonville along with his daughter Flora and son Charlie. Charles's first wife and mother to Flora and Charlie, Phebe Walling Savage, had died and he remarried. Flora was only four years old, and Charlie was two when their mother died. Shortly after Charles and Louisiana's first child, a son was born, Albert Walling, Phebe's brother and Flora and Charlie's uncle arrived for a visit and to check in to see how his niece and nephew were doing. Albert is the same Walling that wrote the first book on the History of Southern Oregon.

For whatever reason, when he departed, he took both Flora and Charlie back to Portland with him. Flora lived with Uncle Albert, while Charlie was adopted by another family. No reason or explanation was ever given to the children as to why they were taken away. Did their father want to get rid of them to start a new life with his new wife and children, or did their stepmother dislike them that much?

Charles Savage was a prominent member of Jacksonville society, was a businessman and owned a saloon, a grocery store and a number of hotels. He was also a delegate in the Republican Party and a U.S. Tax Assessor for Southern Oregon. Additionally, he was a member of several fraternal organizations including the Masons which explained why the three grave sites were in a beautiful location in the Masonic Section of the cemetery.

When Flora was seventeen her father sent for her as he and his wife had four more little ones and he thought she could help with the housework. Flora managed and did the best she could. During the second year, her father gave her permission to attend a town dance. Flora was very excited and even made her own dress. Sadly, on the very day of the dance someone in town broke out with smallpox, and the dance was called off. The town was placed under quarantine, schools and churches were dismissed, and a pest house established.

Flora left Jacksonville and returned to Portland and lived with the Williams family, the same kind family that adopted her brother Charlie. Flora stayed with them until she was twenty and married George Richardson. They had nine children, and Flora lived to be eighty-nine.

We never learned how these three little ones died, but back then, many children died from disease, epidemics, and accidents as life was difficult and without the medicine and medical care we enjoy today.

Flora's father, Charles Savage moved his family on to California for business opportunities which helps to explain why no other family members are buried around them. It is believed that before he and his wife departed for California, they purchased the headstones that were placed on the grave sites of their three children.

Harry, his brother John and their sister Julia are all buried in Block 271 in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery.

John Savage Died in November 1859, a few days after his fourth birthday

No bitter tears for thee be shed

Blossom of being, seen and gone

With flowers alone we strew thy bed

Oh blessed departed one

Julia Savage Died in February 1864, six years old

The golden bowl is broken

Sever the silver chain

Our darling has departed

Never to come again

Harry Savage Died in August 1867, just six days after his second birthday

Under the autumn leaves

Under the heaped up sod

We have only laid the casket

While the jewel is with God

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Nathaniel and Loretta Jane Hensley Langell (pronounced lawn-jell)

Nathaniel, who was born in Nova Scotia, Canada on January 6, 1831, lost his mother when he was just nine years of age. That left his father Joseph, a boat builder and merchant, with six children to care for. After finishing school, Nathaniel apprenticed to a boot maker. When he was twenty-three years old he, his brother Arthur and their father came west to the Oregon Territory sailing around Cape Horn.

Loretta, who was born in Missouri on January 10, 1839, came to Oregon in an ox-team wagon train with her family when she was fifteen years old. They spent the first winter in Salem before moving down to Jackson County and settled on a 320-acre Donation Land Claim on Butte Creek in 1854.

On June 1, 1858, Nathaniel and Loretta Jane were married and settled on a Donation Land Claim on the Rogue River. Ten children would be born to the union with all but four living a full life.

In 1868, Nathaniel, his brother Arthur, and their father Joseph purchased 4,000 acres of land in Klamath County. There they drained an old lakebed on their property with the idea of growing cranberries. At the time some say the draining of the land was possibly the first reclamation project in all of Southern Oregon. The idea of growing cranberries was later abandoned in favor of raising stock. Nathaniel used both his extensive land holdings in Jackson and Klamath Counties as a base of operations, driving as many as 2,000 head of cattle between these two points. The Valley became known as the Langell Valley, reportedly as they were the first white settlers in the area. In addition to his land holdings and driving cattle, Nathaniel was Jacksonville's first cobbler and boot and shoemaker, a trade he apprenticed for years ago. It was said that men were so proud of the boots that Nathaniel made for them they would tuck their trousers inside the boots in order to show them off.

Nathaniel was elected to the State Legislature from Jackson County in 1872 and later was appointed Deputy Internal Revenue Collector, a position he held for a number of years. He was also a member of the Jacksonville Masonic Lodge and served as Master of the Lodge in 1866.

Following the death of Nathaniel's father in 1879, he and Loretta returned to live in Jackson County where he continued to run his boot and shoe store and repair shop in Jacksonville. The following year Nathaniel disposed his share of the Klamath County property to his brother Arthur, who continued to operate the family ranch until his passing in 1894.

One of Nathaniel's and Loretta's cherished memories was the wedding of their daughter Eliza to Mr. William Hale on the evening of October 29, 1879. The Jacksonville Democratic Times wrote on Friday, October 31, 1879, that *"One of the most noted social events in our City's history took place in the residence of Nathaniel Langell on Wednesday evening, October 29, 1879. We refer to the marriage of William C. Hale of Lake County, to Miss Eliza Langell, of Jacksonville, the Rev. D. A. Crowell conducting the nuptial ceremonies. The groom's and bride's supports were Messrs. Robert Miller, Ted Cameron and the Misses Nettie Howard and Mary Langell."*

The event was duly celebrated by a throng of guests drawn from different portions of the State. The bride's parents are extensively and favorably known in this community and throughout the State and have hosts of friends; and the bride by her many accomplishments, lady-like bearing and pleasant address has endeared herself to a large circle of friends, who, while earnest in congratulations of her choice, were saddened at the thought of her departure from their midst. The bridal attire was rich in exquisite taste, as was that of the attendants."

The happy couple received lavish wedding presents from almost everyone in Jacksonville, Mrs. McCully, the Britt family, the Beekmans, and Alice Hanley to name but a few. Nathaniel was to have said that he wasn't sure who was happier with the celebration, the bride or his wife!

In 1894, Nathaniel's brother, Arthur, was shot and killed by Frank Swingell during a dispute over a break in a fence on neighboring property.

In 1898, at the age of sixty-seven years of age, a time when other men think about retiring, Nathaniel became a Forest Supervisor earning a salary of \$5 per day. He said it wasn't about the money, rather than being of service and helping to guard the forest against the destruction of timber by fire or otherwise. Nathaniel finally retired sometime in 1902, and life slowed down for him and Loretta. He often told the story of how I. J. Carson, familiarly known as Kit Carson, worked for the forest service under Nathaniel. Carson's horse was named Napoleon, and when asked why that name, Kit responded with "he already had the bony part."

Loretta passed on October 31, 1913, at the age of 74. Nathaniel died at the home of his daughter Eliza and his son-in-law, Judge William Hale, in Grants Pass on May 15, 1919 at the age of 88.

Nathaniel and Loretta are buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 384, Plots 9 and 10.

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The Jacksonville Cannonball

They say it was the residents of Jacksonville who really stirred up the idea of having a north-south railroad for Oregon. Well, in 1883, when the railroad finally came through the Rogue Valley, the builders kept it on a straight line and it bypassed Jacksonville in favor of Medford. This decision left a lot of folks upset and there were some bad feelings. In the end Jacksonville got its railroad. The Rogue River Valley Railway Company, that offered daily service between Jacksonville and Medford.

Most if not all of Jacksonville's residents who had been pushing for a railroad that would run north and south through the state assumed Jacksonville would be a featured stop on the route. After all they were the County seat and the largest city in Southern Oregon.

Well, once construction got as far south as Roseburg, a rumor surfaced that the plans called for the rail line to go straight through the center of the Rogue Valley and would miss Jacksonville by nearly five miles. In addition to being cheaper to build on a straight path rather than curving off to Jacksonville, the railroad planners saw little or no opportunity for freight business from a non-industrial town like Jacksonville.

Judge Prim was trustee for Jacksonville, Banker Cornelius Beekman and three of his associates who owned land in the middle of the Rogue Valley, and exactly where it made sense to route the new railroad. The railroad planners were approached with a plan and soon deeds were filed at the County Courthouse in Jacksonville conveying nearly twenty acres to the railroad and forty-one alternating city blocks in what would soon become the new city of Medford.

While most folks in Jacksonville were still angry, they did agree that at least there would be a rail line through the valley, and not too far away.

George Neuber, a prominent Jacksonville resident said that once things settled down, the good citizens of Jacksonville still saw a rail connection as being vital to their survival. The citizens of Medford agreed and pledged \$7,500 as a bonus for the completion of a rail line to Jacksonville from Medford by January 1891. The residents of Jacksonville sweetened the pot with another \$12,500 and soon the Medford and Jacksonville Railway Company was incorporated.

The editor of the Jacksonville Democratic Times Charlie Nickell, reported in January 1890, that with a \$2,000 bonus deadline only a year away, there was a blur of activity, at least initially.

A Corvallis firm was hired to build and operate the railway. Rails were ordered, albeit used and a bit light weight, and a surveyor was engaged to lay out the route between Jacksonville and Medford. By October 1890, construction was under way and the Medford Town Board authorized a depot at the corner of Main and Evergreen Streets. Jacksonville's depot was constructed at the corner of Oregon and C Streets and still stands today and is home to the Jacksonville Chamber and Visitors Center.

By December and with no rails being delivered, the Corvallis construction firm walked off the job. Then, and much to everyone's surprise, the Portland rail supplier, Honeyman, DeHart and Company was awarded the entire contract and suddenly, delivery of the rails was at hand!

Following the delivery of the rails the next question was what to run on them? With \$20,000 in bonus money on the line, Honeyman, DeHart and Company leased an engine and railcar from Union Pacific to make the initial run from Medford to Jacksonville. The twenty-five-ton engine was much heavier than the equipment on order, and those light rails were looking somewhat questionable, especially since they had been quickly laid on a roadbed but with no ballast.

In what was typical Jacksonville style, on the night before the big "bonus run", an impromptu dinner and grand ball was held at the U.S. Hotel to celebrate. The next day that heavy Union Pacific engine split the lightweight rails almost immediately and went off the rails and into a ditch.

The contractor said not to worry and kept at it until they had that engine back on the tracks. Then on the morning of January 16, 1891, the locals suddenly and happily heard a train whistle and the approaching Union Pacific engine rumbling into town. Confident of a rosy future, Honeyman, DeHart and Company incorporated as the Rogue River Valley Railway Company. The city fathers happily extended the bonus deadline to May. To collect the bonus the rail line had to have its own engine.

In March of 1891, the long-awaited equipment arrived, a ten-ton Engine #1, but it shortly proved to be too small and just couldn't produce the power needed to climb the uphill grade from Medford to Jacksonville. So, the Union Pacific engine was kept on and the citizens of Jacksonville settled in and enjoyed their twice-a-day rail service to Medford and back, occasionally stopping in Perrydale for a passenger.

That May, the bonus money was paid to Honeyman, DeHart and Company.

Charlie Nickell reported that in no time the railroad was indispensable moving passengers and freight. He pointed out that it was also a constant source of amusement for the local kids who loved to "grease the tracks" to see if they could bring a train to a stop! Mr. George Neuber, who owned the Jacksonville Gold Bricks, a local baseball team, travelled with his players to many games on the Rogue River Valley Railway as did their fans.

The railroad was not a money maker and, after a couple of years it was leased to William Barnum in 1893. Barnum was a one man show, he would be out on the platform and yell "All Aboard" then hurry to the cab, taking off his cap and swallow-tale coat, and toss a few sticks of cordwood into the burner; set the throttle for about four miles per hour; and then put his cap and swallow-tale coat back on and leap on to the ground. When the end of the coach came by, he would swing onto the rear platform and enter the car through the back door, ambling down the aisle calling out: "Tickets Please." Finally, he would climb over the tender, take off his cap and coat, and be fireman, engineer and owner for the rest of the run.

While under Barnum's management the line occasionally made money, but problems continued to occur. In February 1898, the engine ran off the track near the depot and, in May of that year, the passenger car left the rails. The following March the engine went into a ditch on the curve entering Medford, and the passengers had to walk the rest of the way into town, some carrying the mail!

So, the name "Jacksonville Cannonball" just evolved naturally!

By 1899, Honeyman, DeHart and Company sold the railroad to Barnum for \$12,000 which turned out to be a shrewd purchase.

Changes came, one of which was electrification, and the company that brought electric trolley service to Medford soon purchased Barnum's railroad and electrified it as well.

Mr. Barnum received \$125,000 for his railroad, a pretty substantial increase from the \$12,000 he paid for it fifteen years earlier.

Despite a later run at the line between the two cities, Barnum, unable to find a formula for success, dismantled the line in 1925.

Charles Nickell died on April 20, 1922, at the age of 65 and is buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 273.

Judge Paine Page Prim died on August 7, 1899, at the age of 77 and is buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 274, Plot 4.

George Elmer Neuber died on August 29, 1929, at the age of 64 and is buried in the IOOF Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 338, Plot 9.

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Southern Oregon Pioneer Association

On November 4, 1876, a notice, which was signed by ninety-eight of the Rogue Valley's most prominent citizens, appeared in the local newspapers. The notice was inviting the pioneer men and women of Southern Oregon to meet at the Court House in Jacksonville on November 18, at 1:00 p.m. to organize a Pioneer Society. The purpose was to promote good fellowship among these early pioneers and help to preserve the stories of our early history. The newly formed association would continue to meet annually to remember and honor the pioneers until sometime around 1964.

In less than a month following the very first meeting, by-laws were in place and the new association was well under way. The following September, after the farmers had finished with their harvest, the first annual pioneer reunion was held in a grove in Ashland. The orator for that first reunion was General E. L. Applegate, a pioneer of 1843, who by all accounts did an outstanding job and motivated the gathering. There were also a number of Impromptu speeches made including the one given by Colonel Ross, famed Indian fighter and Captain of a forty-wagon train that came to Oregon in 1847. He married Elizabeth Hopwood. and theirs was the first marriage performed in Jacksonville, right on the corner of California and Third Street at the town pump. The speeches were followed with a sumptuous feast and individual stories were shared.

Judge Silas Day served as Secretary of the Southern Oregon Pioneer Association for twenty-six years. His daughter, Mamie Day Nelson then assumed the position and served for the next twenty-seven years. Silas was a pioneer of 1852 and a Veteran of the Indian Wars of 1855.

Alice Hanley was the daughter of early pioneers Michael and Martha Hanley who with a lot of hard work turned their 636-acre Donation Land Claim into one of the best known and one of the Valley's most prosperous farms. Alice, whose parents were members of the Association, served as President in 1926, at which time the Southern Oregon Pioneer Association celebrated its 50th Anniversary, the "Golden Jubilee." By that time many of the original pioneers were gone or quite along in years. However, the children and grandchildren of those early pioneers were in attendance and the stories of those early days were shared with one and all.

One of the more important but sad duties of the officers of the Association was to recount for the members, each year, the names of pioneers passing since the last reunion. The Association even helped to compile obituaries for their families, to make sure that their pioneer contributions to Southern Oregon were duly noted in the community.

The featured speaker, Professor Vining, the grandson of the Association's first secretary, spoke eloquently about the early history of the Rogue Valley and the many trials and tribulations faced by the citizens right here in Jacksonville, including the scourge of smallpox, the ravages of two disastrous fires and a cloudburst! He went on to say that the community had faced those issues with a stout heart and had survived gloriously!

Claire Hanley, Alice's, niece came to live with her when she and her sisters were orphaned in 1904. Claire saw the need for an expanded organization to preserve not only the stories of the pioneers but artifacts and even buildings from the pioneer era. She was instrumental in establishing the Southern Oregon Historical Society in 1946 and was its President from 1949 until her death in 1963.

Claire's sister Mary, prior to her passing in 1986, bequeathed the family home, Hanley Farm, to the Southern Oregon Historical Society to provide future generations with a glimpse into agricultural life from the pioneer days to the mid-20th century.

Judge Silas Day's many years of Pioneer Association records, and those of his daughter, Mamie Day Nelson, are a part of the collection of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

Jacksonville Pioneer Jane McCully wrote some words that really captured what the early settlers were all about. Her "Pioneer Song" (Tune 'Auld Lang Syne') was a part of many an annual reunion a verse of which is below.

'Twas here we met as Pioneers,
So many years ago;
We pitched our tents, staked off our claims,
Prepared to mine and sow.

Together dangers here we met,
Beset by savage foes;
Together in this far-off land
We shared our joys and woes.

Our valley teems with beauty now,
Great plenty crowns our cheer;
Give honor to whom honor's due,
The brave old Pioneer.

Judge Silas J. Day died on December 30, 1909, at the age of 83 and is buried in the IOOF Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 396, Plot 2.

Alice Eliza Hanley died on July 3, 1940, at the age of 81 and is buried in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 362, Plot 11.

Claire Hanley was buried on June 26, 1963, at the age of 66 in the Masonic Section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in Block 363, Plot 2.

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Jacksonville's Saloon Ladies

From the very beginning saloons were an important part of Jacksonville's landscape and especially to the male population who far outnumbered that of the females. Miners and others would look for a little female attention and companionship and found it at the local saloons. Attention from the saloon ladies was forthcoming along with dancing and drinks. These ladies, who managed to make a meager living, and the saloons where they worked, were both looked down upon by most of the respectable residents of Jacksonville.

It was just a short time after gold was discovered that businesses started to appear in Jacksonville, some of which were housed in just simple tents. They sold much needed supplies and necessities, which included whiskey, to the miners and others. The number of miners seeking to strike it rich increased dramatically and quickly reached several thousand. This substantial change to the population also brought more saloons and saloon ladies, many of whom followed the gold rush from one mining community to another.

These early communities, instant cities or tent towns, where saloons and other enterprises grew side by side in a business district which might be interspersed with residences, would spring up virtually overnight and were either abandoned in a relatively short period of time or, as in the case of Jacksonville, developed into a corporate town and trading center for the surrounding area.

Miners, seeking a break from the hard and lonely work out on their claims, would come into Jacksonville seeking a couple days rest in a hotel's comfortable bed, a hot bath, a good meal and some female companionship. The saloon ladies, or dance hall girls as they were also referred to, were ready and available to help these men relax and enjoy their time in Jacksonville. Providing conversation, most likely it was more a case of listening, ensuring the drinks kept coming, and perhaps an occasional dance was all that was necessary. In some cases, the ladies were provided with a small room or screened off cubicle, depending on the size of the saloon, to sleep. They were also given a percentage from the alcohol sales, certainly an incentive to keep those drinks coming. The ladies also depended on the generosity of those miners and others who they spent time with.

The working environment could be rough and dangerous for these ladies. The heavy drinking, male egos, gambling, and those carrying fire arms all made for a concerning work environment. Reportedly at one time there were over thirty saloons in early Jacksonville, one of which was the El Dorado Saloon, considered to be one of the more notorious in all of Jacksonville.

The miners, after spending a couple days in town, would pick up their supplies and head back out to their claims while looking forward to their next visit to town and with the saloon ladies.

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