

# A Walk Through Time



**Walking Tour of  
Historic Jacksonville Oregon**

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**Text by Gail E.H. Evans**

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Jacksonville is a living depiction of an era long past. Many of the wood-frame and brick buildings that border the streets reflect architectural styles in vogue more than a hundred years ago. Tree-shaded streets and paths conform to the traditional Western American grid pattern of regularly spaced streets and rectangular blocks. Jacksonville streets were created for foot, horse, and wagon traffic. Surrounded by the wooded foothill ridges of southern Oregon's Siskiyou Mountains on the west, and open cultivated fields on the east, Jacksonville retains an atmosphere of tranquil isolation.

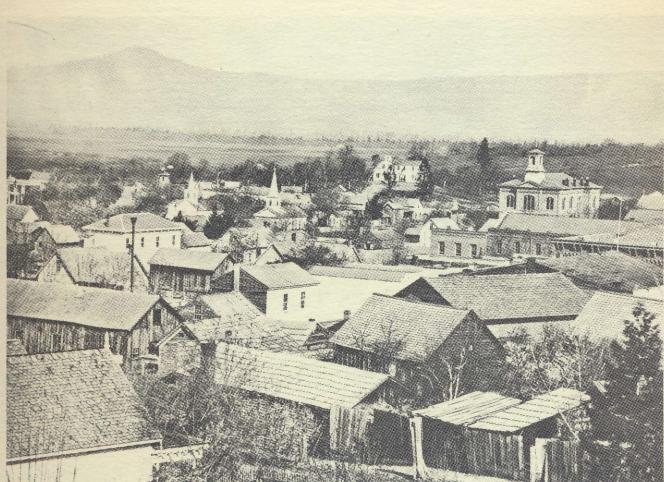
Jacksonville sprang up along the banks of three small streams later named Jackson and Daisy Creeks, and Rich Gulch. In early 1852, gold was discovered on the banks of Rich Gulch. Within weeks, fortune seekers from the Northern California gold fields flooded the region and quickly created temporary shelters; tents, wooden shacks, and log cabins dotted the landscape. Overnight the town of Table Rock City was born. By 1853, it was renamed Jacksonville, presumably after Jackson County, in which it is located. A year or so earlier, the county was given the name "Jackson" in honor of President Andrew Jackson.

For its first thirty years, Jacksonville thrived, becom-



ing the largest town in Southern Oregon. The town's early prominence prompted the Oregon Territorial Legislature to select Jacksonville as the site for the territorial university in 1855. From the 1860s to the 1880s, the town's population was estimated between eight and twelve hundred. Although placer gold deposits along the town's stream banks were quickly exhausted, gold mining continued in the surrounding mountain streams. The climate and soil of the broad Rogue River Valley was well suited to raising stock and cultivating grains and fruit trees. As a promotional gimmick aimed at attracting farmers to the Mediterranean-like climate of the Rogue River Valley, the *West Shore* magazine advertised the area as the "Italy of Oregon" in 1883. Jacksonville quickly evolved from an assortment of hastily-erected, rough-hewn wooden structures to a more ordered assemblage of wood-frame and brick buildings.

Jacksonville was unrivaled as Jackson County's center of agriculture, commerce, transportation, and entertainment, and, in 1853, became the recognized seat of county government. It served as the trading point for tireless miners and enterprising farmers. Early pack trains, Wells, Fargo and Company express carriers, and passenger stage lines traveled the several territorial roads that converged in Jacksonville. The city's saloons, various fraternal and church groups, local bands, and traveling dramatic troupes provided the entire region with social and cultural diversity. Jacksonville prospered during the 1860s and 1870s and the town witnessed continued building construction, plus road, sidewalk, and street lighting improvements. When the Oregon and California Railroad bypassed Jacksonville in the early 1880s in favor of Medford, the town's fanfare of activity faltered. Businesses shifted to nearby Medford, and Jacksonville quickly declined as a

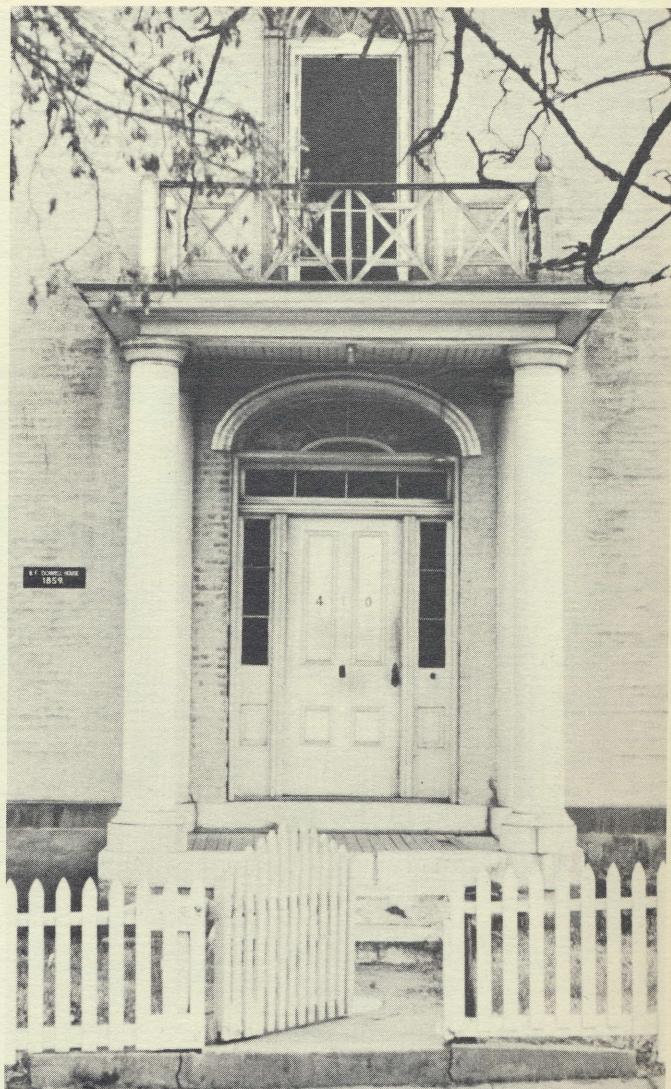


BRITT, CIRCA 1886, SOHS

trading center. By 1927, when the county seat was moved to Medford, Jacksonville's once unrestrained and self-assured vitality had long since subsided. In the impoverished days of the 1920s and 1930s, the town lay dormant, cast in a shadow of neglect and obscurity. Little money was available to improve or even to demolish buildings. Many families with meager incomes took refuge in the town's unmaintained buildings where rent was cheap. During the Depression years people once again became interested in gold mining and dug shafts and underground tunnels in backyards and under streets. These struggling times reinforced community ties but failed to revive the local economy.

Turning to the past for new life in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, local residents attempted to capitalize on Jacksonville's gold rush heritage. During that time, the city established an historical museum and initiated the annual Gold Rush Jubilee (now Pioneer Day). In 1946 the Southern Oregon Historical Society was created in response to the growing interest in the heritage of Jacksonville and Jackson County. Finally, in the 1950s and early 1960s, a few individuals took interest in Jacksonville's abundant unaltered pre-1900 commercial and residential buildings. Gradually, people who delighted in Jacksonville's pristine antiquity and small-town atmosphere restored some of the town's older buildings. The century-old Beekman Bank was the first commercial building to be restored. In 1964, a community effort involving several local residents, the Jacksonville Properties for Historic Preservation, and the United States Bank of Oregon, led to the rehabilitation of the United States Hotel. Located on California Street in the heart of the commercial district, this two-story, brick edifice stood as Jacksonville's most prominent building both in size and social importance.

In 1966, the United States National Park Service designated Jacksonville a National Historic Landmark District—the first named National Historic Landmark District in Oregon. Jacksonville is recognized as one of the West's outstanding examples of a mid and late nine-

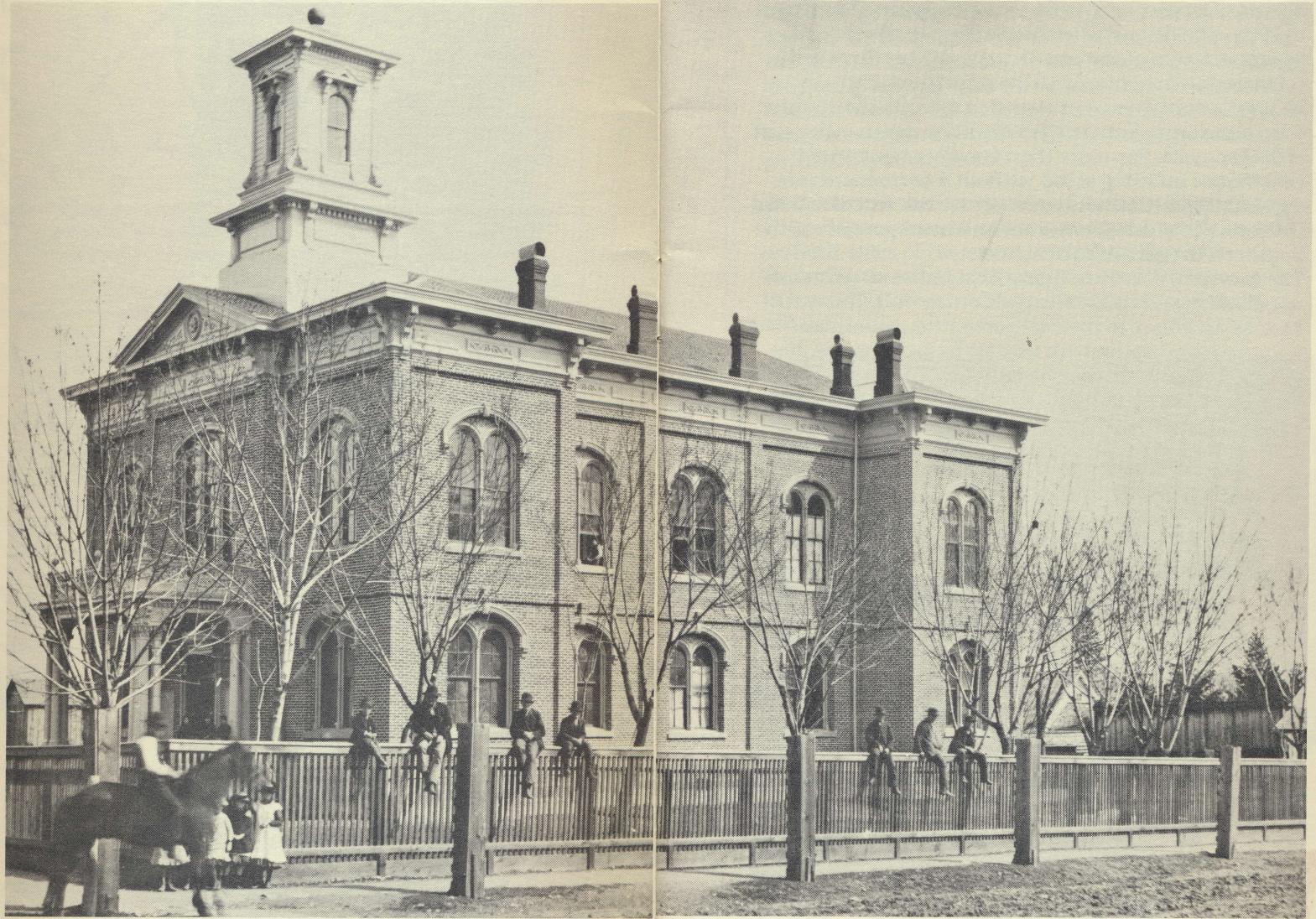


SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

teenth-century mining and agricultural town, nearly unaltered by the passing of time.

Several Jacksonville buildings are marked with historical plaques that identify the name of the building's first owner, and its construction date. Discrepancies that exist between information on building plaques and information in this brochure result from on-going research efforts that continue to uncover new facts about the town's bygone days. The author of this brochure has made every attempt to present to the reader the most accurate information currently available.

Much of Jacksonville's history is revealed in the town's commercial buildings, residences, streets, barns, and mounds of moved earth. Countless individuals who lived and worked in the town have left their mark, still readily visible to the observant pedestrian. The town's existing buildings and shaded grid pattern of streets, along with old photographs and newspapers, letters, diaries and local folklore, paint a colorful picture of this memorable western town.



Of the dozens of buildings that contribute to the overall historic townscape, only a few could be included in this walking tour of Jacksonville. The route suggested in this tour can easily be reversed by beginning at the Jacksonville Cemetery, which will give the walker a panoramic view of the entire town, as well as of the Rogue River Valley.

Jacksonville is a living historical town. Please note those buildings indicated as private residences and respect the privacy of individual property owners.

**The tour begins at the Jackson County Courthouse on North Fifth Street.**

**1. Jackson County Courthouse** (The Jacksonville Museum), 206 North Fifth Street, 1883-1884.

The Jackson County Courthouse, constructed in 1883-1884, was the seat of county government until 1927. A two-story wood-frame building constructed on this site in 1858-1859 was built by Jacksonville's

Masonic Lodge, and shared with County officials for many years. The new two-story brick-and-stone Italianate building was designed by G.E. Payne of Ashland to the specifications of the County Commissioners. Local mason George Holt laid the stone and brick. In 1883, this imposing edifice was proclaimed the "crowning glory of Jacksonville."

Although county business included such routine activities as issuing marriage licenses, overseeing the administration of public schools, and paying bills, occasionally courtroom trials attracted widespread attention. In 1885, Ashland resident Louis O'Neil was tried and convicted of murder. Nearly 200 tickets were issued for his hanging, which took place on the north side of the courthouse.

In 1927, the last trial held in the courthouse attracted nationwide attention. After a four-year manhunt that extended to Europe and South America, the three DeAutremont brothers were apprehended and charged with the murder of four railroad employees during the

holdup of a passenger train in the Siskiyou Mountains in 1923. The dramatic trial took place in the second floor courtroom of the courthouse; the brothers were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

In 1926, county residents voted to relocate the county seat to the burgeoning city of Medford, seven miles east of Jacksonville. For more than two decades, the old courthouse building stood without a permanent tenant. Finally in 1950, the courthouse was rededicated as the county historical museum and headquarters of the Southern Oregon Historical Society.

The two-story stucco building next to the courthouse was constructed in 1911 as the County Jail. Today it is used as an annex to the Jacksonville Museum, housing a children's museum with murals by local artists, historical artifacts that may be handled, and a small bookstore specializing in publications on local and regional history.

**Walk one block south on North Fifth Street to East California Street.**



SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

**2. John and Jane McCully House**, private residence, 240 East California Street, 1861.

This Classic Revival style residence was built in 1861 for John and Jane McCully. The McCullys arrived in Jacksonville in 1852 soon after gold was discovered on Rich Gulch. Although John McCully had received early training as a doctor, in Jacksonville he became more involved in local politics and business ventures. In 1853, he was elected the first Justice of the Peace of Jacksonville. In 1855 or 1856, John McCully constructed Jacksonville's first two-story brick building. One of the town's earliest general merchandise stores occupied the first floor and a spacious second floor room served first as a Jewish Synagogue, and later as hall where traveling road shows staged theatrical performances. The McCully Building, still standing at the corner of South Oregon and West Main Streets, is now the home of one of Oregon's oldest lodges of the International Order of Odd Fellows.

John McCully left Jacksonville in 1862 reportedly to take up mining in Idaho and Montana. His wife, Jane,

and four children, stayed in Oregon. Jane McCully opened the first school for girls in Jacksonville in the 1850s. Over the years, Jane McCully sought to bolster the family income with various real estate ventures. She unsuccessfully attempted to develop several hundred acres of land south of the McCully House known as "McCully's Addition."

**Walk east on the south side of East California Street.** You will pass several well-maintained historic houses on both sides of the street, including the Cool-Beekman-Armstrong House, the Jean DeRoboam House, the Catherine Magruder House, and the Max Müller House.



EVANS, 1980, SOHS

**3. Cornelius C. and Julia Beekman House**, 470 East California Street, circa 1873.

The one-and-one-half story Beekman residence was the home of one of Southern Oregon's most widely known and well-respected individuals. The 1950 Centennial edition of the Portland *Oregonian* listed C.C. Beekman as one of Oregon's outstanding leaders of the previous century. C.C. Beekman came to the fledgling gold mining community of Jacksonville in 1853 where he was first employed by Cram, Rogers and Company as an express agent. By the mid 1850s, he had established a banking house and express office; and in 1863, Beekman accepted a position as express agent with Wells, Fargo and Company.

Local folklore claims that most of the gold found in the district passed over Beekman's business counter. Beekman conducted his banking business in the wood frame building at the corner of Third and California Streets for over fifty years. His banking firm is thought to be the second-oldest in the Pacific Northwest.

Beekman was involved in various mining operations around the county and invested heavily in real estate. In 1878, Beekman was nominated by the Republican party for the office of governor and was defeated by a narrow margin.

Cornelius and Julia Beekman were married in 1861 and built their new vernacular residence in the 1870s.

The Beekman property on California Street remained in the Beekman family until 1959 and is still furnished entirely with family heirlooms.

The Beekman House and its outbuildings, including a fruit and vegetable house and outhouse, are owned by Jackson County and administered by the Southern Oregon Historical Society as a house museum. It is open to the public during the summer months.

**Just east of the Beekman House is the Thomas G. and Lucinda Reames House.**



SEUFERT, 1970. SOHS

**4. Thomas G. and Lucinda Reames House**, private residence, 540 East California Street, 1867, 1880/1890s, later additions.

The substantial and spacious home of Thomas and Lucinda Reames began in the late 1860s as a simple one-story building. Over a period of about thirty years the house was extensively enlarged, and by the turn of the century it had become one of Jacksonville's most palatial residences. The variety of detail in the exterior woodwork is characteristic of the Queen Anne style of architecture.

Throughout his life, Thomas Reames was involved in politics and business. During the 1860s he served as deputy sheriff and later was elected sheriff of Jackson County. Beginning in the 1870s Thomas Reames and his brother Evan R. Reames were partners in a mercantile business that grew to be one of the most prosperous in Southern Oregon. The Reames Brothers store, advertised as the Temple of Fashion, was located on California Street. In 1881, a branch store was established in Klamath Falls, ninety miles to the east across the Cascade Mountain Range. In later years Thomas Reames became a partner with C.C. Beekman in Beekman's banking business. He was brigadier general of the First Brigade of the Oregon Militia and was appointed postal inspector for the Northwest in 1886.

Thomas and Lucinda Reames raised ten children in their home on California Street. A son, Alfred Evan Reames, became a United States Senator in 1938.

**Return west along the north side of East California Street to the corner of North Sixth Street.**



CIRCA 1890. SOHS

**5. Presbyterian Church**, 405 East California Street, 1880-1881.

The Presbyterian Church is probably Jacksonville's best example of Victorian Gothic architecture. The pointed arch and vertical emphasis of the building, universal features of Gothic architecture, can be clearly seen in the window and door openings, the pattern of wood on the walls, the steep pitch of the gable roof, and the soaring steeple.

When the church was completed in 1881, a local newspaper proclaimed the building a "model of architectural beauty" with "no superior in the state." Jacksonville builder and furniture maker, David Linn, constructed the frame building. It is suspected that the design of the church may have been inspired by a plan from one of several architectural pattern books that were widely circulated in the later part of the 1800s. The total cost of construction was about \$6,000. Banker C.C. Beekman contributed heavily toward the erection of the building, and traveled to San Francisco to purchase the one-thousand-pound bell which hangs in the belfry.

Reverend Moses William organized the Presbyterian congregation in 1857. From then until the completion of the church in 1881, members of the congregation held services in Jacksonville's Methodist Episcopal Church, or in schoolhouses or private homes.

**Walk north on North Sixth Street two blocks.**

**6. Kahler Family House**, private residence, 310 North Sixth Street, circa 1910.

The Kahler family was among the first pioneering families to settle in the Rogue River Valley. In 1852, they crossed the plains to the Oregon Territory from their



EVANS, 1980, SOHS

home in Ohio. Several children of William and Georgiana Kahler became stalwart, well-respected residents of Jacksonville and other small communities scattered throughout the valley.

Robert Kahler, who in 1879 purchased the property on which the present house stands, was a Jacksonville druggist, with a shop on California Street. In the late 1890s the residential property passed to Robert's brother, Charles Wesley Kahler, a prominent Jacksonville lawyer and an unsuccessful candidate for circuit court judge in 1880. George Kahler, a third brother, was a physician and surgeon and practiced in Jacksonville in the 1870s and 1880s. Although it is unclear which of the family members occupied the Kahler House, the property remained in the family's hands from 1879 until after the turn of the century.

The modest Queen Anne style Kahler Family House dates from about 1910. Prior to that time a simple wood-frame dwelling stood on the lot. Notice the imbricated, or fish scale, shingles that add a distinctive texture to the upper wall of the gable end facing East D Street.

**Continue north on North Sixth Street to East E Street and turn right.** Straight ahead in the distance you will notice the two-story brick Jacksonville School, completed in 1908. Fire destroyed the two previous schoolhouses that stood on the top of Bigham's Knoll. The first school building on this site is dated to 1868. A notable graduate of this school was "Pinto" Vance DeBar Colvig, the animated voice of many early Walt Disney cartoon characters, and the creator of Bozo the clown. **Turn left on Blackstone Alley and proceed north.**

**7. John and Amanda Bilger House**, private residence, 540 Blackstone Alley, circa 1863.

The Bilger House, somewhat reminiscent of the early nineteenth-century Federal style of architecture, was constructed about 1863 and is one of the few brick residences in Jacksonville. The one-story wood frame portion attached to the rear of the house probably predates the two-story brick portion facing the street. Originally,



SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

a wooden porch extended the length of the main brick facade.

John and Amanda Bilger were both born in Germany. John Bilger settled in Jacksonville in the 1850s and established a tin shop on California Street. Over the years John Bilger expanded his line of goods to include a wide variety of hardware and farming implements. After John Bilger died in the cholera epidemic of 1877, his wife Amanda continued the business under the name Pioneer Hardware.

Narrow, quiet, and little-traveled Blackstone Alley characterizes the special small town quality of Jacksonville.

**Return south on Blackstone Alley, turn right on East F Street, and walk one block to the intersection of East F and North Fifth Streets.**

**8. B.F. and Anna Dowell House**, private residence, 470 North Fifth Street, 1861.

Benjamin Franklin Dowell, named after his famous ancestor, built this painted brick Italian Villa style house in 1861. Originally, the building was capped by a flat roof. The one-story section in the rear was added later. By the late 1800s the house was surrounded by a lush garden, and the front yard contained a fountain. Although most Jacksonville houses had stoves for heat instead of fireplaces, the Dowell house has four open fireplaces, one with a mantel of black onyx and the other three with mantels of imported Italian and local marble. Notice the sills at the base of the windows and front porch steps, also of marble.

B.F. Dowell received a law degree from the University of Virginia in 1847 but, like many early residents of Jacksonville, he was first engaged in trading and packing in supplies for the miners in the area. By the late 1850s, he began practicing law in Jacksonville. Although Dowell maintained his residence and law office in Jacksonville until the mid 1880s, he became associated with an attorney in Portland. He frequently traveled throughout Oregon, and in the mid 1860s spent a year-and-a-half in Washington, D.C. Dowell was elected as



SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

prosecuting attorney for the Third Judicial District of Oregon for one term in 1862, and four years later was considered a candidate for governor of Oregon by the Republican party.

From 1864 to 1878, B.F. Dowell owned the *Oregon Sentinel*, Jacksonville's newspaper. During his tenure as owner, the *Sentinel* was the first newspaper in the Northwest to support the abolition of slavery, and the election of General Grant as United States President. Anna E. Dowell, acquiring an interest in law from her father, studied law as a young woman, and is thought to be the first woman to practice law in Oregon.

**Turn left on North Fifth Street and walk south two blocks.**



KNACKSTEDT, 1975, SOHS

**9. Methodist Episcopal Church (Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church), 305 North Fifth Street, 1854.**  
Built in 1854, the Methodist Episcopal Church was the first of three church buildings constructed in Jackson-

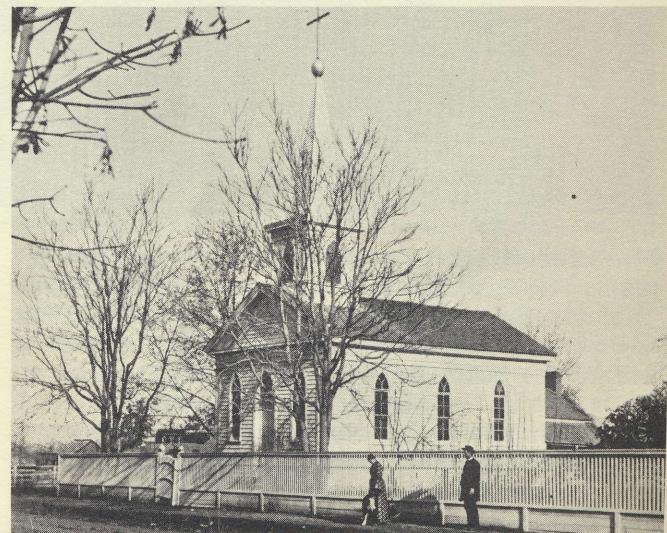
ville and is the oldest known wood-frame building in town. This simply designed Classic Revival style building is claimed to be the oldest existing church in Southern Oregon. A bronze tablet commemorating the dedication of the church in 1855 states that the building was the first church built in the Rogue River Valley. Local folklore has it that the money needed to erect this pioneer structure was raised by canvassing many of the gold mining camps in the district. Reverend R.F. Royal, who organized and directed the building of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Jacksonville, was also instrumental in erecting at least five other churches in the state.

The church was originally built on the rear portion of the lot, with its main entrance facing North Fourth Street. Soon after the Oregon and California Railroad bypassed Jacksonville in the early 1880s in favor of the new town called Medford, North Fifth Street became the major road to Medford, and the church was turned and fronted on the more heavily-traveled road.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has been used as a meeting place for several Protestant denominations. In 1928, the Methodist Episcopal congregation disbanded, and the building was used occasionally by various church groups. The Methodist Episcopal Church recently became the home of Saint Andrew's Episcopal congregation in the early 1980s.

The Medford Rose Society established the Old Rose Garden on the north side of the church to perpetuate some of the lovelier older varieties of roses. The garden was dedicated in 1960.

**Turn right on East D Street and walk one block to the intersection of East D and North Fourth Streets.**



CIRCA 1890, SOHS

**10. Saint Joseph's Catholic Church, 280 North Fourth Street, 1858.**

This Classic Revival style building with Gothic pointed-arch windows and door is the first, and presently the oldest-standing, Catholic parish church built in

Southern Oregon. As with the Methodist Episcopal Church, miners in the region were approached for money to erect the church building. In the mid 1850s, however, placer gold deposits were depleted, and in 1856 Father James Croke wrote from Jacksonville, "The poor miners, on whom alone I count, have nothing just now." Finally in 1858, John Anderson, a prominent Jacksonville merchant, was authorized by the church fathers to solicit and receive subscriptions for the construction of the church. Saint Joseph's Catholic Church was completed and dedicated in November 1858 by Archbishop Francois Norbert Blanchet, Archbishop of Oregon City.

From 1863 to 1888 Reverend Francis X. Blanchet, the nephew of Francois Norbert Blanchet, was the parish priest of Saint Joseph's Church. In 1865 he established Saint Mary's Academy in Jacksonville, which moved to Medford in 1908. During the 1869 smallpox epidemic, which claimed many lives in the area, Father Blanchet and the sisters of Saint Mary's devoted endless hours to caring for the sick. Reverend Blanchet and several of his successors resided in the Catholic rectory at the corner of North Fourth and East C Streets.

**Continue one block west on East D Street.**



EVANS, 1980, SOHS

**11. Lewis/Keegan House** (Chris Keegan House), private residence, 105 East D Street, circa 1908.

The Lewis/Keegan House was constructed about 1908 and is one of the few remaining houses in Jacksonville with vertical board-and-batten siding. In the early 1900s, Minnie Lewis owned almost all of the block on which the Lewis/Keegan House now stands. For years she and her husband, George, resided at 355 North Fourth Street, on the east side of the same block, which also contained a small pond, a barn, and scattered outbuildings. Minnie Lewis probably had the board-and-batten house built as a rental property. In 1919 Minnie's daughter Bertha, and her son-in-law Chris Keegan, became permanent occupants.

**Turn left on North Third Street and walk half a block.**



LANGO, 1972, SOHS

**12. Matthew G. Kennedy House**, private residence, 240 North Third Street, circa 1855.

The Matthew G. Kennedy House is Jacksonville's oldest documented residence, constructed in 1854 or 1855. Over the years subsequent owners enlarged the house with additions to the north side. They applied new shingles and clapboards to the roof and walls, and relocated windows and doors. In 1970 the house appeared deceptively "modern" and showed no signs of antiquity. In the early 1970s it was learned that the recently applied asbestos siding concealed century-old clapboards and unpeeled logs that had served as wall studs. This discovery sparked research into the building's history that eventually revealed its true age. After close examination of historic photographs the owner carefully returned the house to its 1880s appearance. Notice the stacked sandstone foundation without mortar; this type of foundation was once typical of very early Jacksonville buildings.

Matthew Kennedy gained considerable stature in Jacksonville during his brief residence here. In 1853, when he was about twenty-three years old, he was appointed the town constable and shortly afterwards became the first elected sheriff of Jackson County. Kennedy owned a group of small wood-frame commercial buildings on California Street and used one as his tin shop in the mid 1850s. About 1858 Kennedy left Jacksonville and later settled in San Francisco. At one time, Matthew G. Kennedy was the president and a major stockholder of at least two San Francisco-based corporations.

The Matthew G. Kennedy House is like many historic Jacksonville houses whose true antiquity is disguised by more recent alterations.

**Continue south on North Third Street.** On the right notice the home of John and Anna Love built around 1867, and the 1886 C.W. Kahler Law Office. Straight ahead is the California and Oregon Street Commercial District where the majority of buildings date from 1855 to 1885.



JULY FOURTH, CIRCA 1907, SOHS

### 13. Historic Commercial District, California and Oregon Streets.

When Jacksonville was surveyed in September, 1852, the town's grid pattern of streets and 200-foot-square blocks was formally established. Yet even at that early date, Oregon and California Streets were emerging as the main commercial thoroughfares in town. The early wood-frame buildings that lined these streets housed a wide assortment of shops or "stands": saloons and bowling alleys, bakeries, general merchandise stores, stove and tinshops, saddleries, a carpenter and furniture store, blacksmiths, livery stables, druggists, and an express office. Some two-story buildings had sleeping quarters on the second floor.

California and Oregon Streets were the hub of business and social life in Jacksonville. Mules packing supplies for hungry miners and, later, freight wagons and stage-coaches, carrying goods and people from the Willamette Valley and San Francisco, entered the town on Oregon and California Streets. Fraternal groups, wedding marches, and funeral processions paraded down the muddy center of both streets. President and

Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes and a traveling party, including General William Tecumseh Sherman were welcomed to Jacksonville in 1880 by the town's brass band, positioned directly in front of the United States Hotel on California Street.

Like many Western pioneer towns, Jacksonville's tight cluster of original wooden commercial buildings proved especially vulnerable to fire. Between 1873 and 1884, three major fires engulfed the row of attached buildings on California Street. In 1873, a fire originating in the early wood-frame United States Hotel building destroyed everything on the north side of California Street between Third and Fourth Streets. Less than a year later another fire consumed a number of the town's pioneer structures on the south side of California Street between Oregon and Third Streets. And ten years later, in 1884, flames ravaged many buildings on the east end of the same block. The various construction dates for the buildings along California Street bear testimony to the damage caused by these three disastrous fires. Most of the buildings that now line these two commercial streets are second-generation struc-



CIRCA 1885. SOHS

tures which have succeeded Jacksonville's original wooden buildings.

Such harsh experiences with fire caused merchants to use fireproof brick in favor of wood framing for commercial buildings, and to insure their stock and buildings against loss caused by fire. In 1878, the city passed an ordinance banning the construction of wooden buildings on California Street, and requiring brick for all new construction. Materials for making brick were available locally, and most of the early brick was molded and fired in brick yards in the area. Since the brick tended to be soft and porous, many brick buildings were painted to protect and preserve them from deterioration. Iron shutters, placed at door and window openings, often served to fortify the fireproof qualities of brick buildings. Although the two-story McCully Building on South Oregon Street is the only structure that has retained all of its iron shutters, many buildings still have the brick-embedded iron rings that once supported them.



BRITT. CIRCA 1885. SOHS

It is doubtful that any of the California and Oregon Street commercial buildings were designed by architects. The round-arched window and door openings with their vertical emphasis and arcaded effect, the ornamentation on the false fronts or under the eaves,

all represent the commercial Italianate style of architecture, a style popular in scores of Western towns between about 1870 and 1895. Wood awnings or balconies typically extending from the front of nearly every building facade on California and Oregon Streets, not only provided effective protection from the intense summer sun and damp winter drizzle, but offered a convenient place for merchants to display signs. The awnings and balconies on the United States Hotel and most buildings on the north side of California Street have recently been reconstructed.



CIRCA 1885. SOHS

In recent years new brick buildings have been designed to blend with the old. The Pacific Northwest Bell Telephone building and the U.S. Post Office building, both on North Oregon Street, and the Jackson County Federal Savings and Loan building on East California Street are good examples of compatible new construction.

As you walk along California and Oregon Streets, look closely at the storefronts for signs of the past—worn stone steps, faded advertisements painted on brick walls, bricked-in windows, and stone tablets with the name and construction date of the building. Present-day Jacksonville merchants are friendly and knowledgeable about the history of their building and the town. Feel free to ask them about their building.

**At the intersection of Oregon and Main Streets cross to the southeast corner.** The sidewalk on this corner is made of large flat sandstone slabs. Locally quarried sandstone, as well as brick and wood, were commonly used for sidewalks in the commercial part of town before the turn of the century. Watch for remnants of sandstone sidewalks at other street intersections.

**After exploring the Historic Commercial District, pick up the tour at the intersection of California and Third Streets. Walk half a block south on South Third Street.**



BOUCHER, 1971. SOHS

**14. P.J. Ryan's Dwelling House**, private residence, 125 South Third Street, 1865.

Patrick Ryan, a native of Ireland, was a long-time Jacksonville merchant who owned several brick commercial buildings in the town. By the 1880s, Ryan had also invested in several residential properties.

This simply-designed brick building, erected in 1865, has housed a greater variety of businesses than any building in Jacksonville. Although the building may have originally been Patrick Ryan's home, by the late 1860s the building was advertised as a hotel. It served later as a restaurant, and then as the office and residence of Dr. S.F. Chapin, one of the town's physicians. In the 1870s, Ryan's Dwelling House once again served as a hotel, and by 1879 was known as the Jacksonville Hotel. By the 1880s the building was converted into first a butcher shop, then an ice cream parlor. In the 1890s, Ryan's once bustling building stood vacant. New life was finally injected when Harry Luy and Chris Keegan opened a saloon in Ryan's Dwelling House after the turn of the century. The double front doors suggest that the building may once have accommodated two different businesses simultaneously.

Ryan's Dwelling House and the Eagle Brewery Saloon, (16 on the walking tour) were among the first buildings to be restored in Jacksonville during the early 1960s.

**Walk half a block south on South Third Street to the intersection with East Main Street.**

**15. John and Helen Orth House**, private residence, 105 West Main Street, circa 1880.

This Italian Villa style brick residence was built for John and Helen Orth about 1880, just as Jacksonville's economic vitality began to subside. A native of Bavaria, John Orth arrived in Jacksonville in the early 1860s, and he soon became one of the area's leading butchers. In 1872 he constructed a two-story brick building on South Oregon Street, a portion of which housed his butcher shop.

Orth's expansive building still stands in the Historic Commercial District and can easily be identified by the stone tablet set into the wall above the second-story windows. In addition to his commercial property, John Orth also owned farm acreage east of Jacksonville. He served as a city councilman for several years, and was elected county treasurer for one term in 1878.



EVANS, 1980. SOHS

The brick Orth residence replaced an early wood-frame dwelling built for J.A. Brunner, one of Jacksonville's earliest merchants. Shortly after the Orth's two-story home was completed, the Brunner House was relocated to the southeast corner of South Third and Fir Streets, where it stands today. The Brunner House is one of several buildings in Jacksonville that has been moved from its original location.

**Continue south on South Third Street to the intersection of Third and Pine Streets.**

**Excursion 1. Jacksonville Neighborhoods.**

**At this point in the tour a slightly longer route may be taken by those who wish to explore more of Jacksonville's quiet shaded streets. Continue south three blocks on South Third Street to Elm Street and turn right. Walk one long block to Applegate Street and turn right:** This extended portion of the tour passes many early Jacksonville homes identified with historic plaques, and several unmarked older houses that have been substantially altered.

**Continue north on Applegate Street.** Just past Oak Street you will see a small concrete obelisk marking the first site in Jackson County where gold is believed to have been discovered. The uneven contour of the grassy, tree-covered area just south of the gold marker is evidence of later turn-of-the-century hydraulic mining activity. The irregular-sized mounds are mine tailings, waste rock and dirt left behind during the search for gold. **Rejoin the shorter tour at the Eagle Brewery Saloon on South Oregon Street.**

**Turn right on West Pine Street and walk one block to South Oregon Street. Turn left and walk about a block. On your left will be the Eagle Brewery Saloon.**



EVANS, 1980, SOHS

**16. Eagle Brewery Saloon**, private residence, 355 South Oregon Street, 1861; 1981, later addition.

The Eagle Brewery Saloon stands near the site of what was probably Jacksonville's earliest brewery. The brewery buildings stood about sixty feet behind the saloon and housed a mash tub, malt kiln, beer kettle, and cooler. The Eagle Brewery advertised its lager beer as the best in Southern Oregon. Although the brewery buildings were demolished several years ago, the saloon, built in 1861, was rehabilitated in the early 1960s and stands in excellent condition. In 1981 an addition was built onto the north wall of the original Eagle Brewery Saloon.

Joseph Wetterer owned and operated the Eagle Brewery Saloon for nearly twenty years. His main competition in Jacksonville was the City Brewery of Veit Schutz, which once stood on the south side of West California Street near the entrance to the Britt Festival grounds. (Evidence of the stone cellar of the City Brewery can be seen near the north entrance to the Britt Garden.) Joseph Wetterer, his wife Fredricka, and their family of seven, lived in a house north of the Eagle Brewery Saloon. Look for the narrow strip of sandstone bordering the sidewalk that is inscribed with the moss-filled lettering "J. Wetterer."

Walk north on South Oregon Street to West Pine Street.

**17. Herman and Augusta Helms House**, private residence, 312 South Oregon Street, 1878.

When the Italianate two-story Helms House was completed in 1878 it was proclaimed "one of the most elegant residences in town" by the local *Democratic Times*. Once circled by a picket fence, this carefully restored house is now shaded by graceful aging black locust trees. The rear one-story portion of the house is thought to be an earlier residence of the Helms family. Both Herman and Augusta Helms were born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in the early 1850s. By 1856 Herman Helms was a resident of Jackson County. For over half a century the Helms name



JULY FOURTH, CIRCA 1885, SOHS

was closely associated with the operation of the Table Rock Billiard Saloon, located a block-and-a-half north of the Helms home between Main and California Streets. Jacksonville abounded with saloons during its heyday, although many drinking establishments were short-lived. Herman and his son Edward were involved in the operation of the Table Rock Billiard Saloon for nearly sixty years. When the saloon closed its doors in 1914, this well known establishment was eulogized as the social and political headquarters of Southern Oregon. The building is still standing in the Historic Commercial District.

The Helms family had more than its share of tragedy: one daughter died before reaching the age of two, two teenage daughters died of typhoid fever, and an older daughter was shot and killed during a family dispute in Portland in 1907.

**Turn left on West Pine Street and proceed up the hill to South First Street. Turn right and walk about one block to the entrance of the Peter Britt Gardens.**

**18. Peter Britt Gardens**, near the intersection of South First and West Pine Streets.

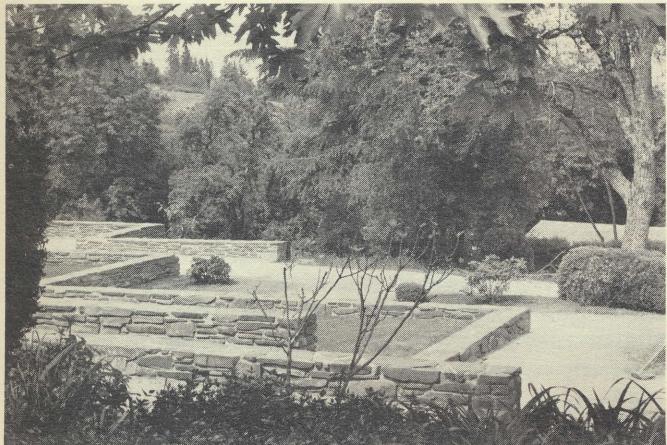
The present Peter Britt Gardens were designed in the mid 1970s as a Bicentennial project by Robert Lovinger, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Oregon. Some of the plantings are part of the original gardens that surrounded the Peter Britt House, now gone. A soaring redwood tree on the western fringe of the Britt Gardens was planted in 1862 at the birth of Peter Britt's first child, Emil. The beautifully detailed Gothic Revival Britt House, built in about 1860, was enlarged in the 1880s. After two devastating fires in 1957 and 1960, little remained of the Britt residence and it was demolished. The stone and mortar wall that you see today is a recreation of the foundation of the Peter Britt House.

Swiss-born Peter Britt arrived in Jacksonville soon after gold was discovered on Rich Gulch. After a short



BOYCHUCK, 1957, SOHS

stint as a miner and packer he turned his attention to painting and finally to photography, in which he had received training before he arrived in Oregon. For fifty years Peter Britt's camera recorded the people, places, and events of Jacksonville and Southern Oregon. He kept up with advances in photography by employing a variety of photographic processes and plates including daguerreotypes, tintypes, ambrotypes, and stereographs. In 1874 he was the first person to photograph Crater Lake. In addition to his photographic skills, Peter Britt was an adept horticulturist and one of the earliest vintners in Southern Oregon. Britt experimented with a variety of fruit and nut trees. He also kept the earliest weather data records in Southern Oregon—records which proved valuable to later agricultural development in the Rogue River Valley.



EVANS, 1982, SOHS

Since 1962 the Peter Britt Music Festival has been held in August on the Britt grounds. The Britt Pavilion, where the Britt concerts are now held, was completed in 1978 on the sloping hillside just south of the Britt Gardens. The Peter Britt Gardens and Pavilion are owned by Jackson County.

#### **Excursion 2. Peter Britt Gardens Hike.**

The low ridges that encircle the southwestern section of Jacksonville are laced with hiking trails. For the adventuresome walker a short half-mile trail begins at the west edge of the Peter Britt Gardens. This level well-trod path starts about fifteen yards uphill from the Emil Britt redwood tree and follows an abandoned irrigation ditch which once diverted water from Jackson Creek to the Britt property.

The Jackson Creek stream bed is below the path to the north. After following the path for a short distance, watch for several washed-out and overgrown sections of a railroad bed along the creek. During the first two decades of this century this railroad carried carloads of lumber from nearby logging operations. In springtime the path is resplendent with a variety of wild-flowers and the lush green of young moss and ferns.

*Retrace your route to the Britt Gardens to continue the tour. Walk down the hill to the corner of South First and West Pine Streets.*



SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

#### **19. L.J.C. Duncan House (Hanna House), private residence, 285 South First Street, 1868.**

For more than seventy years, the L.J.C. Duncan House was the residence of three of Jackson County's most respected judicial and political figures. The house was built in 1868 for Legrand J.C. Duncan, an early Jackson County sheriff. In the 1860s Duncan was elected Jackson County judge. After Duncan retired from service in county politics the Jackson County census gave his occupation as "gentleman of leisure."

Hiero K. Hanna purchased the house after Duncan's death in 1886. Two generations of the Hanna family resided in the house for more than fifty years. Hiero K. Hanna served as city attorney and later as a trustee in Jacksonville city government. In 1878 he was appointed circuit court judge of Jackson County; thirty years later Hiero's son, Herbert K. Hanna, followed in his father's footsteps and filled the position of county circuit court judge.

Situated on the side of a sloping hillside, the L.J.C. Duncan House commands a broad view of the rooftops of Jacksonville's commercial streets and of the distant city of Medford. The colorful multi-paned glass windows that now enclose the second-story sunporch on the north side of the house were added not long after the house was built.

Continue one block north on First Street, then turn right on West Main Street.



#### 20. Original Commercial Block and later Chinese Quarters, West Main Street between First and South Oregon Streets.

In the early 1850s, when Jacksonville was still known as Table Rock City, the original business district of town was located on this block of Main Street. Most of the buildings fronting Main Street were hastily-erected one- and two-story wood-frame buildings. Few records can tell us about the businesses that once occupied these rude structures; however, it is believed that the Table Rock Saloon was first located on the south side of the street, as were a hotel, a hardware store, and several general merchandise stores.

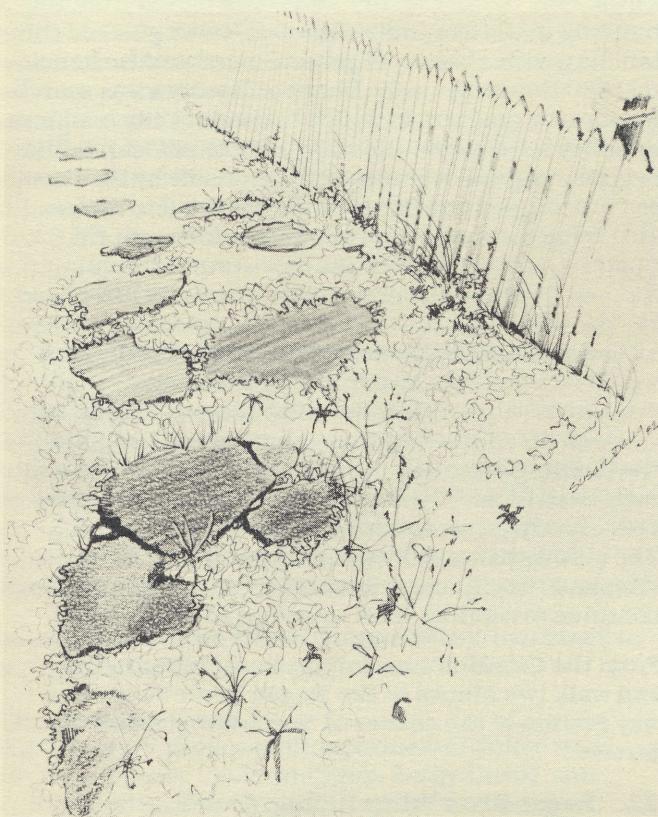
Jacksonville's business center shifted east as the new fireproof brick buildings were erected on Oregon and California Streets. Subsequently, the Chinese moved into the old wooden buildings on Main Street, and the area became known as the Chinese Quarters. Many artifacts, such as Chinese earthenware and porcelain, and opium containers and pipes, have been uncovered in this area and tell the story of this distinctly different cultural enclave in Jacksonville.

Although the Chinese remained socially isolated from the mainstream of the community's life, they came in significant numbers to Southern Oregon to work the placer mines that white miners abandoned. Others

helped to build the Oregon and California Railroad during the 1880s. In Jacksonville some Chinese residents operated boarding houses or worked as cooks or servants for the wealthier town residents. Both state and town governments passed stringent laws that severely discriminated against the Chinese. Over the years the number of Chinese in Jackson County dwindled. In 1861 about 900 Chinese lived in the county, but by 1880 only 323 Chinese were recorded in the county census.

Fire took its toll in the Chinese Quarters as it did in other sections of town. In 1888 the Chinese Quarters along Main Street were dilapidated and nearly deserted when fire ravaged the pioneer wood-frame buildings on the north side of the street. Soon after the turn of the century the remaining structures were destroyed.

Walk to the corner of West Main and South Oregon Streets.



#### 21. Jacksonville City Hall, 205 West Main Street, 1880-1881.

For over a century, the Jacksonville City Hall has been used continuously as the meeting place for the city fathers. This commercial Italianate style building, completed in 1881, replaced an earlier one-story building. The predecessor of the present city hall was the first brick building in Jacksonville and the first to be built with brick burned in a local kiln. This early brick structure, constructed in the spring of 1854, was the heav-



SEUFERT, 1970, SOHS

ily-stocked general merchandise store of Maury and Davis. Shortly after Maury and Davis moved from the building in the late 1860s, Morris Mensor stocked the building with a variety of general merchandise items. By 1880 the Jacksonville Board of Trustees was searching for new quarters in which to conduct city business, and they selected the site of the old Mensor store. The old building was determined to be unsafe by the trustees' building committee, and they decided to reconstruct the building using brick from Mensor's old building. In August 1880 the *Democratic Times* assured its readers that the town's new city hall would be "the latest and most convenient, and Jacksonville will have a building she may feel proud of and which would be a credit to much larger places."

A century later, in 1981, the city hall was painstakingly restored. In addition to the main meeting hall room, the building has a two-cell jail, and a truckhouse originally used for storing fire trucks. Although the open belfry has been reconstructed, the bell is original.

The old city hall is still owned by the city of Jacksonville, and the city council and various city commissions continue to conduct their meetings in the building.

**From the City Hall turn left on South Oregon Street and walk two blocks to the Rogue River Valley Railway Station at the corner of North Oregon and West C Streets.**

## 22. Rogue River Valley Railway Station, 185 North Oregon Street, 1891.

This small hipped-roof depot represents Jacksonville's last attempt to sustain its economic vitality and its pre-eminent position in county government. Less than four years after the last spike was driven in the railroad that connected Portland and Sacramento through the newly-established town of Medford, the Rogue River Valley Railroad and Improvement Company laid track between Jacksonville and Medford. The track ran down the middle of C Street to Sixth before leaving the road and turning toward Medford. Short pieces of the track



EVANS, 1980, SOHS

can still be seen embedded in the pavement on C Street.

The Jacksonville Depot, which served as a ticket and dispatching office, was constructed early in 1891. The wide overhang of the eaves provided protection for passengers and freight waiting for the next train. A few feet west of the depot stood a small freight house, and an engine and car house.

Ownership of the railroad changed several times, and, sometime after the turn of the century, electric interurban cars utilized the track. In the early 1920s the tracks fell into disrepair due to financial difficulties, and in 1925 they were torn up. In recent years the depot has been turned 180 degrees on its site and restored to its original condition. The Rogue River Valley Railway Station is presently maintained by the Southern Oregon Historical Society and is used by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce as an information center during the summer months.

Across North Oregon Street from the railroad station is the 1868 home of Henry Breitbarth (Plymale House), who operated the Bella Union Saloon on California Street in the late 1860s. The Saloon building still stands in Jacksonville's Historic Commercial District.

**Continue north on North Oregon Street one block to the Emil Britt Bridge over Jackson Creek.**

## 23. Jackson Creek.

The history of Jacksonville is intimately linked to its three waterways: Jackson Creek, Daisy Creek, and Rich Gulch. James Cluggage and James Poole, two pack train operators supplying goods to the Northern California gold mining camps, are credited with the discovery of gold on Rich Gulch early in 1852. Cluggage claimed the land around the site of discovery under the Donation Land Law of 1850, and the town of Jacksonville was platted in the southwestern corner of his 160-acre claim.

Later, water from these creeks was diverted into hydraulic mining pipes and the powerful spray which issued from their mouths moved thousands of tons of earth and permanently altered certain sections of

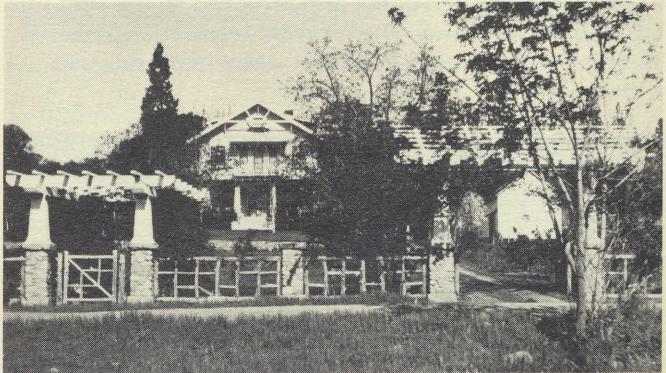


the town's topography. These small streams at first also provided water for drinking and livestock, and later watered gardens and farmland. Occasionally then, and still today, Jackson and Daisy Creeks overflow their banks, flooding streets, washing out yards, and changing stream channels.

Jackson Creek is a reminder of the important role of these streams in the town's history, and today it enhances the town's rural setting and village atmosphere.

**Walk north on North Oregon Street to the intersection of West E and North Oregon Streets.** On a sloping hillside ahead of you on the left, the Frank and Elizabeth Tou Velle House stands several hundred feet back from the road.

**24. Frank L. and Elizabeth Tou Velle House**, Bed-and-Breakfast, 455 North Oregon Street, 1916.  
This spacious house is distinguished from most of Jacksonville's earlier houses by its broad overhanging



CIRCA 1920, SOHS

eaves, shingled exterior walls, and thick-tapered porch posts, features characteristic of the Craftsman style of architecture. Constructed in 1916, the Tou Velle House was probably the last residence of such grand scale and proportions built in Jacksonville. Frank Tou Velle constructed his house on the site of two earlier houses, both occupied by the William Hoffman family. The original home of William Hoffman and his family was an unsubstantial log cabin, replaced in 1866 by a Gothic Revival wood-frame and clapboard structure. A portion of the second Hoffman house is thought to be incorporated into the foundation of the Tou Velle House.

Frank L. Tou Velle was just one of many affluent easterners lured to the Rogue River Valley between 1905 and 1920 by the temperate climate and by the promise of prosperity in the valley's booming new orchard industry. Soon after Tou Velle arrived in the valley in 1905 he began to acquire apple and pear orchard property. He gained considerable stature in the region when he was elected Jackson County judge in 1913. Later he was appointed an Oregon State Highway Commissioner. Tou Velle Park, located on the banks of the Rogue River northwest of White City, was named in honor of Frank Tou Velle and his wife Elizabeth.

**Turn left on West E Street and walk the last eighth of a mile to the Jacksonville Cemetery.** From the winding cemetery road there is a panoramic view of the town of Jacksonville and the foothills of both the Cascade and the Siskiyou Mountains.

#### **25. Jacksonville Cemetery.**

The Jacksonville Cemetery is a twenty-four acre woodland hilltop dotted with oak, ponderosa pine, and the striking reddish-orange trunks of madrone trees. The cemetery was surveyed in 1859, and succeeded a smaller burial ground located just northeast of the present cemetery. The first burial in the new cemetery was in 1859. Earlier headstones may be found, since the graves in the original cemetery were removed to the present cemetery grounds in the 1860s.

The Jacksonville Cemetery includes several subdivisions for various religious denominations, nationalities, and fraternal orders. At one time there was a Chinese section of the cemetery but around 1920

a Chinese mortician came and removed all the remains for reburial in China. The recently restored Sexton's Tool House was built in 1878; it was sometimes used as a mortuary.



CIRCA 1975. SOHS

The Jacksonville Cemetery vividly depicts much of the fascinating history of Jacksonville and the Rogue Valley. Many of the headstones portray the colorful origins, lives, and deaths of those who have contributed to the growth and development of Southern Oregon.

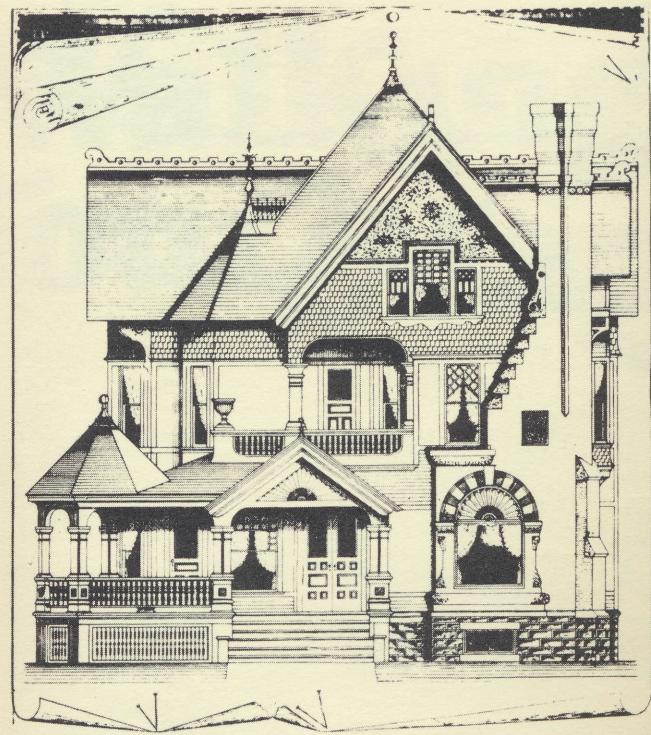
Among the stones to be found here are those of the families of banker C.C. Beekman, photographer Peter Britt, merchant Thomas Reames, butcher John Orth, brewery and saloon operator John Wetterer, and many others. Some headstones mark the graves of people killed during early Indian uprisings, or victims of the smallpox epidemic of 1869. Still others died of causes that are now relatively unfamiliar to us—gangrene, dropsy, consumption, scrofula, and injuries caused by a kicking horse. Early headstones were shipped from San Francisco; later stones were sculpted in Ashland, Jacksonville, and Medford from locally quarried stone.

#### **Excursion 3. Nunan House.**

*For a glimpse of what is regarded by many to be Jacksonville's best example of Queen Anne style architecture, return to North Oregon Street, turn left and walk about one quarter mile to Gold Terrace Drive. Just past this intersection on your left will be the Jeremiah and Delia Nunan House.*

#### **26. Jeremiah and Delia Nunan House,** private residence, 635 North Oregon Street, 1892.

Jacksonville merchant Jeremiah Nunan commissioned the plans for this house from Tennessee architect George F. Barber, who conducted a mail-order plan business. It was built in 1893 by local builder H.F. Woods. Woods had erected the now-vanished house of Dr. J.W. Robinson on an adjacent lot, also from plans by Barber.



FRONT VIEW.

**DESIGN No. 143.**

Cost to build, \$6,000 to \$7,500.

SOHS

**Jeremiah Nunan** came to Jacksonville about 1870 and worked in the saddlery business. By the time he built his Queen Anne style house, he was a prosperous general merchandise dealer with a wife and five children.



MACAPIA. 1982

**This ends the walking tour of Jacksonville. To return to the Jackson County Courthouse, walk down Cemetery Hill to North Oregon Street, walk one block south to West C Street, turn left and walk two blocks east to North Fifth Street.**

# Walking Tour Map

## Walking Tour of Historic Jacksonville Oregon

1. Jackson County Courthouse
2. McCully House\*
3. Beekman House
4. Reames House\*
5. Presbyterian Church
6. Kahler Family House\*
7. Bilger House\*
8. Dowell House\*
9. Methodist Episcopal Church
10. Saint Joseph's Catholic Church
11. Lewis/Keegan House\*
12. Kennedy House\*
13. Historic Commercial District
14. Ryan's Dwelling House\*
15. Orth House\*
16. Eagle Brewery Saloon\*
17. Helms House\*
18. Peter Britt Gardens
19. Duncan House\*
20. Original Commercial Block and later Chinese Quarters
21. Jacksonville City Hall
22. Rogue River Valley Railway Station
23. Jackson Creek
24. Tou Velle House
25. Jacksonville Cemetery
26. Nunan House\*

\*Jacksonville is a living historical town. Please note those buildings indicated as private residences (\*) and respect the privacy of individual property owners.

0 200 400 FEET



## Acknowledgements

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Carolina Rose

Central Point State Bank

City of Jacksonville

Down Home Interiors

Flatebo, Weaver and Associates, Inc.

Jackson County Federal Savings and Loan Association

Jacksonville Bakery

Jacksonville Books

Jacksonville Emporium

Jacksonville Glass Company

Jacksonville Inn

Jacksonville Wine and Gift Shop

J'ville Tavern

Maples Emporium

Mimi's Yarn Shop

Northwest Traveling Traders

The Old Curiosity Shop

Oregon Trader

Plymale Cottage

Pride and Joy

Rogue Small World

Silver Lining/Jacksonville Stoneware

State Farm Insurance (Jacksonville)

The Warehouse Store

Wicker Workshop

Yankee Designs

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